

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MACKEREL COBIA ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

**Town and Country Inn
Charleston, South Carolina**

October 5-6, 2022

Transcript

AP Members

Ira Laks, Chair
Stephen Donalson
Charles Griffith
William Jones
Charles Locke
William Palmer
Benjamin Shepherd

Tony Benevento
Steve English
Rusty Hudson
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Attendees and Invited Participants

Dr. Matt Freeman
Ashley Oliver

Frank Helies
Meg Withers

Other attendees and invited participants attached.

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Town and Country Inn in Charleston, South Carolina on October 5, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Ira Laks.

MR. LAKS: Hi, guys, and I want to welcome you to the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel. We'll get started here, and what we're going to do is go around the table, and, if you can introduce yourself and what you do and where you're from, that will be great, and so why don't we start over there, and we'll work our way around.

MR. SHEPHERD: My name is Captain Ben Shepherd, and I'm from Virginia Beach, Virginia, and I've been running fishing charters for a little over twenty years now. I just got added onto the council here, and this is my first meeting, and so everybody be patient with me, and I will bounce my way around, and we'll feel this out.

MR. GRIFFIN: Hello, everybody. I'm Chuck Griffin, and I'm also new to the council meetings, and so maybe we can help each other out, and I don't know, but I have been a charter captain and commercial fisherman for thirty-five years, and I actually used to hold commercial kingfish permits, and I haven't in a while, and I'm excited to see what the meeting is all about. I haven't done it yet, and so --

MR. DONALSON: Stephen Donalson, St. Augustine, Florida, and it's my second go-round on the Mackerel and Cobia Panel, and I'm glad to be back, and I'm glad to see some familiar faces face-to-face, finally. A little background, I'm a recreational angler, a one-time professional king fisherman, and I have degrees in marine science biology and marine affairs business from the University of Miami and Ekherd College in St. Pete, and I look forward to being here.

MR. PALMER: My name is Bill Palmer, and I'm a first-time member. I was a marina owner, and I did recreational fishing, mostly, and I had charter fishermen and snapper boats in my marina in St. Augustine, and I'm from Green Coast Springs. I'm a commercial builder, doing -- If you've ever been to Disney World, you've seen the Fort Wilderness Resort Hotel, and I built that. I have fished all up and down Florida, and pretty much nowhere else, and I try to just stay in Florida.

MR. KELLY: My name is Aaron Kelly, and I run a charter boat out of Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, and I think I've been doing it for twenty-five years, and I grew up in Kittyhawk, North Carolina, and I've got four charter boats, three light tackles and one bigger express-style boat, and we're pretty much all for-hire, and I have, let's see, the four boats, and five kids, and so, if you need a business model for having no money in the bank, I'm your man.

MR. LOCKE: I'm Charlie Locke, and I live in Wanchese, North Carolina. I'm a full-time commercial fisherman, probably 75 percent of the year gillnet fisheries, and then snapper grouper hook-and-line, and I longline sharks, just kind of whatever it takes to keep it going. I just got appointed with Thomas, from North Carolina, to kind of represent a little bit of what we're dealing with with this northern sector and not having enough quota, and I'm just looking forward to working with everybody and trying to resolve the stock assessment and maybe get us some more fish for our area.

MR. ENGLISH: I'm Steve English, and I'm from Port Salerno, Florida, and I've been a commercial fisherman for almost fifty years now, and I represent commercial fishermen in Florida, and in North Carolina too, and so I know about their fishery, too.

MR. WOODWARD: Good afternoon, everybody. I am Spud Woodward, and I am currently an at-large member of the council, in my second term, and I live in Brunswick, Georgia. I have spent thirty-four years working for the Department of Natural Resources, and I retired, and I decided to join on the council process, and I'm also the Chair of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which I believe everybody knows manages mackerel through an interstate plan, and so I look forward to hearing what you all have to say, and I certainly appreciate you all's willingness to serve as advisors to the council. It's extremely important for us to have you all's open and honest and candid input as we try to work through some of these challenges, and so thank you, all.

MR. LAKS: My name is Ira Laks, and I'm a charter and commercial fisherman, for almost forty years, out of Jupiter, Florida, and I'm just glad that we're all back in-person and can get this meeting going.

MS. WIEGAND: I'm Christina Wiegand, and I'm the staff social scientist with the council, and also the FMP lead for the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Plan. I am the one that's been emailing you constantly and haranguing you to get ready for this meeting, and so I'll be sort of facilitating, and, as always, if you guys have questions, any time of the year, and it's not even when we're just having meetings, but please feel free to reach out.

MR. BENEVENTO: I am Tony Benevento from Jacksonville, Florida, and I'm a recreational fisher, and I hate to tell you, but sixty years of recreational fishing. I grew up in Fort Lauderdale and moved to Jacksonville in the 1970s. Much like Stephen, I have fished all over Florida, and I have fished kingfish tournaments, probably forty, and I have placed in a couple of them, and so, if I win the next thirty, I will be in the positive, but this is my first meeting on the council, and I am looking forward to finding out what it is we do and how we can influence better decisions.

MR. JONES: I'm Will Jones, and I'm a full-time fishing guide, for seven years, in the Beaufort/Morehead City area of North Carolina, and I'm also a first-timer on the AP as well, and so I'm excited to learn some things and try to effect change as well.

MR. PHILLIPS: I am Brad Phillips, and I'm from Wilmington, North Carolina. I have commercial fished, charter fished, tournament fished, and one good thing though, lately, is I sold my boat, and so I'm just a captain-for-hire now, but, anyway, I'm looking forward to this meeting.

MR. HUDSON: It's good to see all of you all, for the first time in almost three years, but, with that said, I'm Rusty Hudson, and I have been working very closely with the king mackerel fishery since 2007, with regard to the science and the management, and we have attained a lot of benefits for the industry in that period of time. I started fishing, myself, with my grandfather and my uncle in 1964, as a mate on the boat, catching king mackerel, and then, as time grew on, besides snapper grouper and everything else, and running shrimp boats, and getting a hundred-ton captains license, and whatever I did, I encountered a lot of different kinds of fisheries, and so, as a result, I wound up advocating for the shark industry, and I succeeded, in a lot of ways, but then, at the same time, the science -- They never collected the data.

With the king mackerel, when I came in on that, that was the second group of people that asked me to do that, and so I did that, and, when we did, we found that there was a lot of things that weren't going on. We had gone four years without an AP meeting, and stuff like that, and there was other data that we needed to collect. By the time we got through, what had been a Gulf-of-Mexico-controlled stock is now an Atlantic stock over here, and we're sort of on our own, in a way, and we need to be able to catch our allocation, and it's available, and so hopefully we will, in time. Thank you.

MR. NEWMAN: My name is Thomas Newman, and I'm from North Carolina. I got on this council I guess right ahead of COVID, and I think it's my first in-person meeting, but I've been pretty heavily involved with this process for the last four or five years. I recently took a job with an NGO in the state, earlier this year, part-time, just because North Carolina has so many issues going on right now, up and down the coast, with federal and state management, and I'm just here to try to help make some changes and do good and get the information out there, and I'm like Rusty. I was born into the industry, and I've been on the fish house side of it, and I've been on all kinds of different boats, and this is a way of life. I've seen a lot of changes in my thirty-five, or thirty-six, years, and it's time to start making some changes and start keeping what we have left.

MR. ROLLER: Hi, all. My name is Tom Roller, and I know most of you guys, and I served on this advisory panel for a couple of terms, and now I'm a council member from North Carolina. I'm a full-time for-hire fisherman, and I've been doing it for over twenty years, out of Beaufort, North Carolina. I also serve on our state's marine fisheries commission, and so, as Thomas said, we've got a lot of issues in North Carolina, but I just want to thank you all for being here and being part of this valuable process, and I'm looking forward to hearing your input, and so thank you.

MR. LAKS: Before we get started, a couple of you guys I know are new here, and some of us haven't been here in a while, and so, if we have a question, we're going to raise hands, and I'm going to call on you. If I don't see you, have someone point it out, and, if you guys can turn your name tags over, so I can see them a little better. I have a hard time with my own name sometimes, but, other than that, welcome, and we're going to approve the minutes of the 2021 meeting. Does anyone have any revisions? I don't see any revisions. Any hands up? No. Those minutes are approved. Now I'm going to turn it over to Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Ira. I am going to just hit the high points of this, because, most of the things I'm going to talk about, we're going to dive into in much deeper detail. The Mackerel Cobia Committee met during the last council meeting in Charleston, which was on September 15, and we got an update on current amendments in the process from NMFS, and we got updates on the Gulf king mackerel management, based on SEDAR 38, and we made a couple of motions.

Just as a reminder, especially for some of you new folks, we jointly manage king mackerel with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and so, whenever they do something, the South Atlantic Council needs to make complementary actions, or we can modify it, and you will hear a little bit more about this as we get into Amendment 33, a little later, but we took a few sort of housekeeping motions on that, and nothing real significant.

We spent quite a bit of time talking about Atlantic Spanish mackerel management, and Christina gave everybody an overview of the kind of the history of it, and, as I mentioned earlier, in my

introduction, you know, we manage through state regulation, an interstate fishery management plan, as well as federal fishery management, and so you've got a lot of moving parts in this, and, right now, we've got some sort of out-of-sync issues, in terms of -- You know, for example, when federal waters close, state waters can stay open, and there is a benefit, and there is a downside to that, depending on sort of your perspective.

We got kind of a historical perspective on it, where we've been and where we are, and then we got an update on SEDAR 78, which is the Spanish mackerel assessment, and we've been pushing for this assessment. You know, there's a lot of demands on the stock assessment folks at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and at the state level, and there's always a jockeying for position, to get these stock assessments done, and we've been pretty emphatic about the importance of this assessment, so that we can update Spanish mackerel management to adapt to some of the things that are changing, the needs in the north, and these fish are moving farther north than they used to, and there is opportunities up there, but those opportunities are being constrained by some of the current management structure.

It was disappointing, to say the least, that that assessment has not been approved for management by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and there's lots of reasons for that, and we'll get into them in a little more detail, but, again, we communicated the urgency of having assessment results that we can use for management, so that we can move things forward, and we've got some concessions from NOAA Fisheries to look at some of the issues and to run some analyses that may give us an opportunity to move this along faster, and it was a significant list of deficiencies. I mean, it was a lot of them, and so we've asked them, and so I expect, I guess at our December meeting, we'll have some feedback, and hopefully we might can move this assessment into at least a condition where it can be used as a basis for improving management.

Then we had several topics that we wanted to bring before you all, which we'll be discussing later on, and one of them is, you know, an ask from some folks about false albacore management, and this came up a few years back, but we committed to at least revisit it, in the context of current interest in potentially bringing little tunny, false albacore, under federal management, and so that's something else that we'll be talking about a little more, and so that's pretty much, I think, all that I want to hit on, because we're going to get into it in much more detail, and so, Ira, thank you.

MR. LAKS: Thank you, Spud. All right, and so we're going to start out here, and Christina is going to give us an update on recently-submitted amendments, and so I will turn it over to Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: There are a couple of amendments for mackerel that have been in the process for a while that I wanted to give you all an update on. The first is Amendment 34, and, if you can remember way back when, to the meeting you had late last year, this is the amendment that addresses the king mackerel updated stock assessment as well as allocations, and, luckily, you know, king mackerel weren't overfished or undergoing overfishing, and, in fact, due to a number of years of strong recruitment, the catch levels increased substantially, and so there were also a couple of modifications to management measures, through that amendment.

Of particular note was this AP's request to look at the requirement to land head and fins intact for king and Spanish mackerel. This was a requirement for the recreational sector, and so, through this amendment, the council has proposed to allow recreationally-caught king and Spanish

mackerel to be landed as cut or damaged from natural depredation, as long as the sort of piece of fish that's left meets the minimum size limit, and this provision is already in place for the commercial sector, and so the council approved that amendment back in March. It has been submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service for rulemaking, and they are working through their rulemaking process right now.

The next amendment, and this one was just recently approved, was Amendment 32, which was the Gulf cobia stock assessment update. Unfortunately, Gulf cobia were not looking as great as king mackerel. They weren't overfished, but they were undergoing overfishing, and so the amendment made several changes, in order to end overfishing of Gulf cobia, and, just as a refresher, and I know it's been a few years, but Gulf cobia is managed on the east coast of Florida through the Gulf Management Council's jurisdiction. Anything north of that Florida-Georgia state line is Atlantic cobia, and that's no longer managed by the council. That's managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Then there are a couple of other amendments that are currently underway, but I am going to forego talking about those right now, because we'll talk about them in a bit more detail later on, and so, before we leave this, are there any questions specific to those two mackerel amendments? All right. Seeing no one jump up, I will just let you know that this document that was in your briefing book also includes other management actions that are going on within the snapper grouper fishery, within the dolphin wahoo fishery, and so feel free to look that over, and, if you have any questions, let me know, and I can certainly point you in the right direction to the staff member that would be able to get those questions answered. We're going to switch the agenda around a little bit, and Roger is going to come up here and talk to you all about the climate change scenario planning update. Steve.

MR. DONALSON: That cobia amendment, I think it was Number 3 on your list, and, again, this is probably a dumb question, and I'm just still trying to catch up mentally, but that's all federal and not state waters?

MS. WIEGAND: Correct, but I do believe that Florida FWC is going to mirror these regulations in state waters, and I don't know whether they have gone through the process of doing that yet, but, for the purposes of that amendment, federal waters.

MR. DONALSON: Okay.

MR. PUGLIESE: Good morning, everyone. I'm Roger Pugliese, and I'm a habitat and ecosystem scientist, here to dive into some bigger-picture things that the council is involved in, and I think it's probably pretty important to especially this advisory panel, given what is going on in our region, and throughout the world, and throughout the Atlantic coast.

Today, I was going to go through an effort, the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning, and provide you an update on how we are advancing. First of all, we had discussions, a number of years ago, and actually had representatives of the New England Council, and the Mid-Atlantic, come to the council and sat down and had some preliminary discussions about -- Really in anticipation, and they were already seeing some issues, and significant ones, in their region, and how do we move forward, and it was really identified as a two-pronged approach, one being to

focus on governance and management and another to look at technology and data and activities that are going to support a lot.

What we're seeing is a lot of this, which they are inherently tied at the hip, or joined at the hip, but this focuses a lot on how do we prepare for the governance challenges that are going to be in the future, and so the initiative's objectives were really how to explore how the east coast fishery governance and management issues will be affected by climate-driven changes in our fisheries, particularly changing stock availability and distributions, and so basically hearing about shifting populations, populations showing up in regions they haven't, and disappearing in ones that are traditional, and the other one is to advance a set of tools and processes, and to really provide a flexible and robust fishery management strategy to continue to promote fishery conservation and resilient fishing communities, and, again, address uncertainty in this era of climate change that we live in today.

This process is really -- Well, it was discussed in the fall of 2020, and it really kicked off in the summer of 2021, and it's a multistage that looked at orientation, scoping, to come up with what some of the big drivers were here, moving into exploration and how you really pin down and analyze and use those drivers to support how we look into the future, and then an actual narrative creation session, and then into application, and then, ultimately, into monitoring, and there's going to be -- That's one thing I will say, from the beginning, is there's going to be a lot more opportunities for advisors and our members in the region to have input, as the council really gets into the weeds, after we get through some of these processes, and try to actually look at implementation of new things that can be effected.

I mean, this panel is already under one, with the extension of our range and how the council has addressed that, by bringing in representatives into our managing bodies to be able to work with that. As it continues to evolve, is there ways to address that into the future?

This first -- One step I mentioned, in the middle, was actually, once you had those kinds of baselines of information to move forward, creation of scenarios, and, now, a number of members, council members as well as advisory panel members in this room, were involved in a three-day workshop that we had in Arlington, Virginia, and we had about seventy-five stakeholders and staff, and it was really productive, in terms of really trying to start, from kind of just conceptual discussions, into creating narratives to look into the future, and, really, it was trying to focus on put yourself twenty years into the future, and what are the big challenges, and what are the big things that are really going to be affecting and guiding the attempts of the efforts here.

This effort really provided a foundation to get all the way down to build some narratives from which to really kind of touch the extremes of the situation, the best-case scenarios and worst-case scenarios and a number of places in between.

At this workshop, it really constructed, and was based on, ultimately two really critical uncertainties, and the first one -- What happens to the stock production/species as climate change continues out to 2040, and what you have is that extreme range, from mostly declining populations to maintained, and the reason it says "maintained", or it really should say "increasing", is we did a little bit of premise of your amount of biomass is going to be consistent in the ocean, overall, and, you know, you only have so much potential in different places, and how it can shift through

there, and so you're going to have increases, but, in this one, it's talking about those populations are fairly healthy, and I think that's one of the biggest situations, and so that two sides of these.

The other component in uncertainty also had to do with the predictability, and really the ability of science to actually assess what's happening by 2040. Unpredictable changes and conditions and low ability to assess on one side, and the real ability to, you know, really understand what you're doing, and not only do that and really be able to adapt and really understand the entire system you have.

What it set up is the creation of a scenario framework that, providing those intersections here, you end up with -- You end up with -- When you start at the top-right, stocks are maintained, but they're essentially hard to assess and locate. As you move down, it's kind of the worst-case scenario, and stocks are not only declining, but they're also hard to assess and locate, and so you have just a lot more challenges with that, and then stocks are declining, but your ability to assess is there, and so it's bad news, but you're able to address that, and then the kind of one that some had individuals had issues with this one, just because it looks forward, almost too rosy, is stocks are maintained, or increasing, really, in this case, and you have really the ability to have the technology and different aspects to assess the populations, to assess the environment, integrate all the different players in there, and locate where the fisheries are. It's kind of the best-case scenario, and so it's almost one that I think was discussed as something that you could almost shoot for, if you could ultimately have the best-case scenario for these types of situations.

The term, on the one, is the ocean pioneers, and that's kind of what we had considered almost like the wild west, and it's new ocean users, and people are risk taking, and taking advantage of the populations, but there's a lot of unpredictability, but it's still ultimately positive, because of the production, and, again, we actually gave it a name, stress fractures, because it's the world where multiple sources of stress, on the operators, on the managers, on the industry, basically fractures between individuals, and really a micro version of winners and losers, with reduced populations, reduced stocks, and reduced capability.

If you move over to the seafood lemonade side, and you are looking at a world where the science is good, but, again, now this is a situation where the news is bad, and so you have good science to be able to monitor your declining populations, and lower catch limits, et cetera, and then, again, the checks and balances is where strong science combines with collaborative management to help mitigate and adapt to climate-driven change in the oceans.

Diving even a little deeper, under ocean pioneers, you really have weird weather, crazy conditions, and the fishing operations, and fishery managers, really are facing challenges in 2040. Life in the ocean is remarkably different, compared to twenty years ago, and your climate change has promoted more investment in alternative energy and aquaculture and other ocean activities. The seasons and locations of fisheries change unpredictably. The traditional science is really unable to make accurate assessments. Despite this, the fishermen seem to report fairly plenty healthy populations in the system, and success doesn't come easy though. It requires taking risks, such as investments in new data-gathering technologies, a lot of resources, dollars, to make it happen, and the ability to really ride out a lot of the uncertainty that may come in there.

The next area is stress fractures, and that really is several sources of stress have led the east coast fisheries to basically the breaking point by 2040, and shifts in ocean currents and extreme weather

events have tipped the ecosystem out of balance, and major storms have led to more pollution and degraded habitats. Healthy stocks are scarce, and low abundance leads to reduced harvest, and protected species regulations close several fishery grounds.

Science is really unable to help, as stock assessment data cannot cope with such changeable and volatile ecosystems. The trust between stakeholders is in short supply, and it's illustrated by the debates over siting offshore wind installations and other offshore activities. Operators are really forced to shift into lower-trophic-level species, and government support is needed to even save a few selected fisheries at that point.

We're shifting, again, to the lower-left quadrant of this matrix, and you have a sweet-and-sour seafood. The science is good, but the news is bad, and, in 2040, climate change is affecting the ocean and stock condition in ways long predicted by scientists, and stocks have shifted their range, and productivity and abundance have declined for most of the relevant species. Better forecasting technologies help fishermen prepare for heatwaves, localized die-offs, and other impacts. Aquaculture provides a much-needed alternative, as the wild seafood declines. Better science ensures that any pollution dangers are minimized in this situation, and there is signs of a few smart management decisions, such as limits on newly-arrived species, adaptation from fishing operators, but most management approaches have not adapted to the tougher conditions of today and those are on the horizon.

That brings us to the checks and balances, and good science, smart collaboration, tolerable conditions allow east coast fisheries to cope with the challenge of climate in 2040, but nothing is easy. Stocks shift and expand their range, and we have busier coasts. New offshore activities create accessibility challenges for commercial and recreational fishermen, and investments in habitat protection and restoration begin to reverse decades of damage and loss, and the science capacity is boosted, delivering improved ocean monitoring, real-time catch reporting, and population monitoring, and a prosperous ocean economy leads to competition between fisheries and other things, such as aquaculture, but also collaboration.

As fisheries science is boosted by say some of the activities that are going on on the ocean, deployments of wind and other structural systems, opportunities to take advantage of new platforms for collecting information, integrating into other systems, and it provides a foundation to move forward together. However, there are still some concerns over gentrification, still creating accessibility issues, especially in the recreational sector.

With all those, that kind of gives you the gamut, and you have to jump into really thinking that far into the future, and it's tough, because all the challenges we have today are immediate, but the whole approach here is to try to go there with a number of different spectrums, so that you can anticipate where we are now. If we are there, at that point, is the system going to be able to adjust? What are the real challenges to make sure that at least we are planning, and being prepared, for some of the challenges at any of these different spectrums, and so really look at what may be extreme, what may be probable, and all that, and so we held deepening webinars, once we did the narratives, in August.

That provided us to kind of round-up the way the narratives are laid out and structured, and then we just added in an additional phase that had, or a component of a phase that had, brainstorming sessions, and so what we did is brought together representatives from the New England Council,

the Mid-Atlantic Council, the South Atlantic Council, ASMFC, and NOAA and had just informal manager brainstorming sessions on looking at these different types of narratives and then focusing on how would you begin to address these into the future.

What are going to be the management challenges, the significant issues, for you, for your region, for the coast, as we move forward, and what that was doing was really just trying to get some seeds of ideas, to give us the beginnings of that, and so then what we're going to do is move forward with meetings of each council, and I think ASMFC is going to be the first out of the gate to begin to tackle this, almost more like a workshop, to begin to take these, to look at those, and then figure out what are going to be some of the things that are going to be immediately be able to be addressed, the longer-term, what are the challenges, you know, begin to really address, you know, management adaptability and flexibility, nimbleness in the systems, and do we have that? How do you get there, and what are the data and science challenges that we have now, and then these types of situations are going to be dominos.

Also, what are the significance of the alternative ocean uses and how that's going to -- You know, where we are now, today, is going to be a whole lot different twenty years from now, and, I mean, if we think it's busy out on the water now, wait until we get that far down the road, but I think that's the challenge, and opportunities, and I think that's one of the things that is -- It's opportunities to take advantage of some of these things, and maybe requirements for, you know, putting in fisheries monitoring capabilities as these are moved forward. You know, starting to think outside the box to plan for the future.

Then, ultimately, you know -- Our council, I think we're going to be addressing it on December 5, the first day of the council meeting, and having a session here, and then the other councils have a couple of days in between, during their December meetings, to do the same thing, but, ultimately, each one is going to get apart and discuss this and begin to look at kind of where can we go from here, you know, the regional focus, the bigger-picture focuses, and then that is supposed to feed into what's going to be a summit.

In February of 2023, the idea is we take those ideas and combine those and set the stage for a broader discussion on Atlantic-wide, with the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic, and the commission and NOAA Fisheries, on how do we -- How do we advance this into the future, and what are short-term tangible types of things, and how do we go, and, as I mentioned, on that monitoring side, a lot of it is going to be things that maybe an individual council can work on, right upfront, and some are going to be a broader sense, on how you do it for the region, and then some are going to expand to, you know, how do we get to resources that address the science needs that are going to be uniform through some of these different areas.

I think that really is going to provide the idea of what types of management and governance structures will support or be -- How do they need to be adjusted, modified, or use tools that you have in your hand now to advance and be prepared for any of these different types of futures, and so think about it, and so, instead of us going down the road and then, all of a sudden, it drops out of the sky that we have to deal with this, and this sets the stage, and we can have those discussions and deliberations and have the science and have the management, kind of thought out, as least as far as we can go, with you know looking into the crystal ball, and set the stage for what needs to be done.

That is kind of a quick review of where we are with the scenario deepening initiative and our scenario planning initiative, and I would open it up for questions or comments from the panel, and, as I mentioned, I think you all are seeing some of this right now, and so this is, I'm sure, significant to this entire group.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Roger, thank you for that. I just have one question, and it had to do with the checks and balances, and you have the investment in ocean coastal uses, but the last part of that sentence is the wind energy installations, and I've been seeing some stuff recently about larvae being affected by the electric currents and stuff coming from those wind devices, and the power lines, and I had also commented on that stuff, like the sharks and messing with their ability to sense things, because of the way that their nose -- You know, for their face, to feel the energy, and is that any part of that, because they're wanting to build these things everywhere.

MR. PUGLIESE: Rusty, I think it's an important one, and I think there's a number of different levels of that type of information, or potential impacts, that are, to a great degree, already being looked at, and at least being thought about what the implications are, as they look at how these places are going to be laid out, where the pathways for the cabling are going to be put, and different things, and so I think it's important that, from a fisheries standpoint, these types of things be highlighted earlier on.

There are guidance documents that have been done in the Northeast Region, through the GARFO group, that I think -- One of the things that we're going to be discussing is updating our energy policy in the future. Our Habitat Advisory Panel is going to be meeting in November, and we're going to have updates on all of these, and that's one of the springboards, is to discuss that, and so, as we move forward, we can more accurately and effectively capture those in recommendations on the policy that is being developed, and so that's going to be an important opportunity, and, yes, I think that --

MR. HUDSON: One last thought about all this. With a lot of the young-of-the-year, with whether it's our sharks or mackerels, the larvae and all that, I know that they had the small little king mackerels mixed with the small little Spanish mackerels in North Carolina, real thick at one point in the last year or so, and it was kind of messing with prices, but those size animals, in the year-one, whether it's -- Any kind of -- They're all usually nearshore, and where all this electricity is going is right into those, you know, bays and whatever, to access the people, and I am just kind of worried about the long-term on this electric.

MR. LAKS: Stephen.

MR. DONALSON: Thanks. Can you go back a couple of slides? You had a bullet point about - I think it was about marine mammals. It was about stocks being affected by their numbers, and I was just curious what science was pulled to get that information.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. This is it, and seafood lemonade, and it's got here unsuccessful regional struggles to develop effective responses, like shifting stock and new marine mammal interactions, and what that -- This is looking in the future, and what it's saying is that, in this case, we're looking at the situation where the populations are down, and -- Let's see how we have this.

MR. DONALSON: Which populations?

MR. PUGLIESE: Well, this is mostly -- In this case, most of the managed populations are declining, and this is on the bottom-end of things, and this is where the drivers are saying that the populations are down, and so, if the populations are down, you may have a problem in responding to interactions, in this situation, and this is not being driven by like anticipated future science right now, and this is ideas that, if you have that decline, you don't have the science, necessarily, to do that, and you may have increased interactions.

MR. DONALSON: Okay. I don't understand, but maybe we can break off there and talk about it. If we have current state, and we're trying to predict future state, I'm kind of curious what current state -- What species are we talking about at the lower level versus the high level, and I know it's not the right panel for marine mammals, but that just caught my eye, and that's the only reason that I asked, and there just didn't seem to be anything backing it up, and that's all.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes, and some of this -- On that, I think that probably came from some of what was going on, what's been going on, in the Northeast, because I think they were some of the players that worked directly on this one specifically.

MR. NEWMAN: This was actually my group, and I was at this presentation, and, yes, we had a lot of folks from Maine in our group, and they were looking at, like you said, the right whale stuff coming up, and wind energy, and there was definitely a lot of talk from the Northeast sector about this.

MS. WIEGAND: Just as an example, and I'm sure this is happening with a variety of marine mammal species and changing interactions, but of particular concern over the last few years, as I'm sure many of you are aware, and we'll talk about right whales later on in the meeting, but, in New England, like Thomas was saying, they have seen a shift in where those whales are foraging. They are moving further north, and they're tending to interact with vessel traffic up near, you know, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, more specifically.

Then, down here, more relevant to the Southeast Region, during calving season, we have seen recently, through aerial surveys, where the calves used to be found mostly along, you know, northern Florida and Georgia, and we've actually seen that shift a little bit north, up towards South Carolina, and a little bit even into North Carolina, sometimes, and so we are seeing shifts like that. That's just one example, and I'm sure there are many other things going on with marine mammals, but that's just the one that I am most familiar with and that is perhaps relevant to the Southeast.

MR. LAKS: Steve, they were also talking about seals. They have a much bigger seal problem up there now too, and this exercise -- Thomas and I were there, and it was more of a theoretical thing, like what could happen, and it wasn't really based on a hard scientific evidence, and it was more what do we think, from what our observations are, could happen in the future, and it was a little difficult to kind of get the concept, and I'm sure I asked some questions that probably kept some people on their toes, but it was -- All-in-all, it was trying to get every scenario that could happen in the future and what you can narrow down from that.

MR. DONALSON: We have a little seal that shows up in St. Augustine every year, and we didn't see him this year, and so we're a little worried about what happened to him.

MR. LAKS: Bill, did you have a question?

MR. PALMER: I was just wondering, and have they come up with any reason for the right whale moving north on the birthing, because we're still getting -- You know, in the St. Augustine area, the Jacksonville area, we're still getting them, but I have not heard, before you just said that, that they had moved up into as close as South Carolina.

MS. WIEGAND: I will admit to not being an expert on North Atlantic right whale changes, and so I would make a broad assumption that there are thoughts that I could be driven by climate, and I'm sure there are many other things that could be driving that, but I do not know for certain, and I can go back to some old presentations that were given, to find out. I know that they have shifted the aerial surveys, that they do every year, to focus on areas a bit further north, to sort of look at the extent to which they are seeing that shift.

MR. PUGLIESE: I think the key on that one is that you're seeing some shifts in those areas now. Twenty years from now, that's going to be another layer of complications, and this may be the shift that you're seeing now, and you've got some dramatic shifts in populations of species, black sea bass and lobster, and all these different things, and we have some major ones, and the marine mammals. Well, twenty years down the road, it may be even more complicated, because, as the temperature changes, they're going to have a lot higher temperature shifts in their region than we have in the Southeast. We have nowhere near some of the shifts, so far. Now, that's so far.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: Just one question on that temperature shift, and you're only considering that they're going up, and you're not considering that they may go the other way, and go down, and they shift back the other way?

MR. PUGLIESE: Well, again, this is conceptual, and I think, in most models, you're having increases in most areas in here, but, in our region, that's a valid point, because what are the implications of increased upwellings, and I think that is something that -- It's different in some of the other regions than here, and it's to what degree may that actually change in the other direction, just exactly what you said, and increased upwelling events, and reduced temperatures in some of those regions.

I remember going from very reduced numbers to very frequent, and then backing off again, and so I think there is -- It's one of those things of being prepared for multiple areas, but, in some of the areas along the coast, those trajectories of temperatures, I think, are, you know, kind of set in motion, at least in some of what we've seen.

MR. LAKS: Any other questions for Roger? Well, thank you, Roger.

MR. PUGLIESE: Thank you, and you will get posted as we continue moving on and taking some of the next steps, and, as I said, engagement, especially in these fisheries here, are probably going to be some of the ones that are more impacted, or affected, as we see the ongoing changes into the

future, and, like I said, the one good thing is that we've been anticipating, you know, expansions in the past, by some of the changes, and so there are mechanisms that our council has already started in the past to do some of this, and so hopefully we can keep that on and just have a wider view of the potential. I mean, like you said, you don't know, and maybe you could have some shifts in the other direction, but at least plan for a gamut of different types of things that may hit us into the future. Thank you.

MR. LAKS: Thank you, Roger. I think we're going to go into commercial logbooks now.

MS. BROUWER: Hello. Just bear with me while I pull my presentation up. Good afternoon, everybody. I am Myra Brouwer, and I am Deputy Director for Management for the council, and I used to be the lead staff for Snapper Grouper, for many years, and so I'm most familiar with that fishery, and I don't recognize a lot of you, and I know some of you, and so welcome, and I'm glad that you guys are here.

I am going to give you a very quick update on something the council has been working on, kind of for a long time, and that is to bring the commercial logbook, the logbooks that are part of the Coastal Logbook Program, from paper to electronic, and so the logbook program is the one that, as many of you know, collects data from commercial vessels, and they do this in the Gulf of Mexico and throughout the Atlantic, and so there are several FMPs that would be affected. In the South Atlantic, commercial fishermen that have snapper grouper permits, dolphin wahoo permits, or the CMP permits are required, as you know, to fill out a paper logbook within seven days of completing your trip and then mailing that in to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

In 2001, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center expanded the logbook program to add an economic survey, and so there is 20 percent of vessels that are selected each year to fill out this additional part of the logbook, and those are economic data that the Center collects, as well as the discard logbook. These surveys are required only if you're selected, and, like I said, there is only 20 percent of the vessels that have to do this each year. These are mailed out separately from the coastal logbook.

Reporting requirements were initially implemented for the snapper grouper fishery in 1992, and, more recently, in 2004, for dolphin wahoo, and they've been in place for the CMP FMP since 1985, and so that's the longest, and so this is mainly what we're intending to do with this amendment, is go from the paper logbook to an electronic format.

The benefits of this would be to accommodate vessels that have multiple permits, and so everybody wants to have this one-stop reporting and to reduce duplication of effort, or course. Right now, there are still some vessels that are having to do two logbooks. They have permits in the Greater Atlantic Region, in GARFO, as well as the Southeast, and so there's a disconnect there, and so bringing everybody to the same platform would benefit those folks. There would be an increase in compliance, where it's hoped that this would help compliance, and, also, timeliness for when you're renewing your permit. If the system was electronic, it would presumably make that a lot more streamlined, and then, finally, it would provide managers with more accurate information.

In terms of what will change, the data fields that are in the paper logbook, and those that have already been integrated into eTRIPS, which is the platform that's been developed, that has been piloted thus far, already have been made compatible, so that they are standardized throughout the

Atlantic. Most of you probably are familiar with ACCSP, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, and so this is a partnership that standardizes all the information that's collected, and, in a minute here, I'm going to bring up a spreadsheet that is going to show you the comparison between what is currently required in the paper logbook and how those fields are going to change. It's a very small change, but a change nonetheless.

In terms of the voluntary programs, as I said, these are just -- Unless you're selected by NMFS, they will be -- Vessels will be allowed to submit this information if they want to, unless they're selected, and so it's going to stay the same. Just by nature of how the platform is going to be different from the paper one, obviously, and the fields are going to look a little bit different. For instance, for the discard portion of it, that information is going to be collected based on length disposition of the catch, for example, and so I will tell you a little bit more about that when I bring up the spreadsheet, so you can see more clearly what I am talking about.

Basically, everybody wants to know why are these changes necessary, and why can't we just have the exact same things that we have in the paper logbook, but in an electronic format, and, basically, there's going to have to be a way to streamline the data collection so it's the same, like I said, through ACCSP for all the partners in the Atlantic, and so everybody needs to agree to the fields of information that are being collected, and then, of course, to accommodate vessels that have the multiple permits, so the correct information is being collected.

In general, the additional fields are either -- They are not going to collect additional information. They're going to collect the same information, but in a little bit different way, and, like I said, when I bring up the spreadsheet, you will see what I'm talking about. If there were to be any more significant changes, or additions to the fields, then the entire committee of folks that agrees on these fields, the ACCSP committee, would have to agree to those changes, and so that, obviously, takes a little bit more time.

AP MEMBER: What is the acronym ACCSP for?

MS. BROUWER: So that is the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, and it's a partnership along the Atlantic, to make sure that fisheries data are being standardized, and I guess I'm not going to go into all the details, not just because I'm just that familiar with it, but it might take a little bit of time to explain.

Moving on, the timing of when we're expecting this amendment to move forward -- Right now, we are -- You know, we're meeting with you guys, and the Snapper Grouper AP is also going to meet this month, and I guess I failed to mention that this is a joint amendment with the Gulf, because it's a joint amendment, and you guys know how that works, because of the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP, and it's also a joint plan, and the Gulf Council needs to also review the amendment, and so we're putting it together with them, and we intend to get the councils to potentially approve it to submit to NMFS in early 2023, and so hopefully -- You know, tentatively, the regulations could be effective in early 2024, and the issue there is just tweaking the actual software, and the eTRIPS application is the one that has currently been developed and has been piloted, over a number of years, and the Science Center has been working closely with ACCSP to make that platform be the one that everybody uses.

I guess I've already pretty much covered this, and we're obtaining input from you guys, and other advisors, in the fall, and then we'll come back and have public hearings in the winter, so the AP will have another chance to submit comments or ask questions or whatnot.

Then one thing I will just mention, and I put this link at the very end of the presentation, and it takes you a YouTube video that was put together by folks in the Mid-Atlantic to showcase how to use eTRIPS and how quickly you can input the information. Folks, when they -- The thing that comes to mind is like how much longer is this going to take for me to submit the information that I need to do, and so there is concern, obviously, for, you know, additional burden that this might cause on fishermen.

It seems to be, you know, something that is not going to cause a lot of burden, other than the initial getting used to using the platform, but it does have the ability to sort of remember, or like have favorites, for example, so that you don't have to enter the same information over and over again, and so it does go pretty quickly. It's a rather long video, and so I'm not going to show it to you guys, but, if you play it and go to like minute-eleven, that's where it really shows you how quickly it can go, and Rick Bellavance is the captain who demoed this, and he's in the Mid-Atlantic, and so, anyway, I think that's all I had for you guys, and so let me pull up the spreadsheet, so we can go over what the data fields would look like.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: Just before we get into that, is this going to be linked up with the Northeast logbook? They're already online right now, and he said it's going to be hooked up with the Atlantic, and their system works great, and I love it. It's faster than the paper stuff, and I don't have to deal with mailing things off, and their platform is super simple, and that's what I keep struggling with, is why is it taking the South Atlantic so long to get this going, and, I mean, the template is there, and it would be awesome if it would all be streamlined, because I have not heard of the eTRIPS, and I don't think that's what I am using currently.

AP MEMBER: I just started the eTRIPS, and I've got Northeast and Southeast permits, and it's the only online that reports to both, so you don't have to dual-report, and it's very easy. Like I recommend all the recreational guys start eTRIPS, because it's that easy, and so, I mean, and that's the one that is streamlined with the Southeast and the Northeast.

MS. BROUWER: So correct, and the idea is to make it all the same for the entire Atlantic, for the GARFO region and the Southeast, and so I'm glad to hear that some of you are already familiar with it and finding it easy.

AP MEMBER: So the Northeast platform is eTRIPS?

MS. BROUWER: Yes. What GARFO has been using is the eTRIPS platform, and that's been developed through ACCSP. Thomas, did you have another question?

MR. NEWMAN: I was just wondering if I could sign up to get on the -- To do my South Atlantic -- So I can submit that to the South Atlantic as well, if I download the app.

MS. BROUWER: You can. I mean, fishermen in the South Atlantic can use it right now. It is not a requirement, and that's what this amendment would do, is make it so that everybody who is part of the Coastal Logbook Program is going to be using that platform, and NMFS -- You know, the vendors that put together these platforms, apps and things, it doesn't necessarily have to be eTRIPS, and there could be another vendor that comes along, that comes and develops something that is flashy and better and whatever, but, currently, eTRIPS is the one that, like I said, has been tested and piloted for quite some time, and fishermen are already familiar with it, and so the idea is to just make that the one that everybody uses.

MR. LAKS: Myra, I have just one thing, before I lose it out of my head, and I'm assuming that, when this goes through, there is probably going to be a desire to enforce the time limit a little better than -- It's been very lenient over the years. One thing that the council needs to take into -- To look at is that, those boats that are required to do the economic data, you don't always get your check within seven days, and so you literally can't fill it out. Some fish houses don't pay you on the spot, and, until you get your check in the mail, or go to the fish house, there is no way to actually process the economic data within seven days, and so maybe a longer time limit for those boats that are in that subset of economic data.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. Thanks for that. I didn't know that was an issue, and so I will definitely bring that back to the team.

MR. ENGLISH: I'm glad that you're going to do something with this, because I'm going to tell you that renewing permits right now is the biggest nightmare of all the fishermen in south Florida. My wife does it for a lot of the fishermen, and she's on the phone for hours and hours and days, to get a permit renewed, because of these logbooks, because you send them in, and you will send ten in that were not sent in, and they will lose the one in the middle. Well, now you have to prove to them that they lost it before they will even talk to you in a civil manner, and then you will get it through, and it's a nightmare.

In fact, at this meeting, I was hoping to get a consensus that we take the renewal of permits and the logbooks -- That we separate them, because I am telling you that it's a nightmare getting -- We had fishermen, last year, that couldn't even go fishing, because they couldn't get their permit renewed, because of all the logbook mess, and so this eTRIPS is going to -- If you do it right, and get it done right, that computer system for the renewals, you will be okay.

Right now, we report logbooks, and the fish house reports them, and we report them, and why do we do double reporting? Will this take away that, to where, when you come in and weigh your fish up, you can fish out your logbook for the fish house and boat right there on the spot, at the dock, and that's covered? If you do it right, this can be a good thing, but, my gosh, don't do it like you did the computerizing the permit renewals. It's a mess.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: Just a point of clarification too, being you brought up that it takes seven to fourteen days to get your paycheck, and the Northeast permit requires you to fill your trip ticket out before you land, and so, before I get to the dock, I have to fill my trip ticket out. I have to give the fish house my trip ticket number, whereas the Southeast permit -- I have to wait until I get the hard numbers to submit it, and so there's that sort of disconnect between the dual-reporting as well.

MR. LOCKE: Let me add that I just went through all of this, because -- My question was, like Thomas says, with the Northeast, you have to -- I have to give the fish house a VTR number as soon as I land, and it's an estimate, and so, when I give them an estimate, say 500 Spanish or whatever, 500 sea bass, and it may be 485, and you have to go back and amend it, but the Northeast is, when you get to the dock, it has to be turned in, and the Southeast -- I mean, shoot, I've waited two months and sent a ton of logbooks in before, just being slack, but what I do like about the eTRIPS though is, like with discards, especially in the shark fishery and stuff that I'm in, I forget what I discarded a week ago. I mean, like, with this, if you're doing it that day, I can -- You know, seven dusky or whatever, because we need that data, to show what's out there, and I think that's going to be a big help in this.

MR. ENGLISH: Can I say one more thing? If you get this eTRIPS down right, if you get the logbooks down right, and get everything right, there is no reason, at all, that you can't put that over to the recreational sector, and, if you do that, now you will have concrete numbers from the recreational sector, and you won't end up with the scenario we had this time on the mackerel, Spanish mackerel, assessment, to where they took the numbers and made them up to fit what they wanted, and we ended up with a nightmare, and so you'll eliminate that problem, but you definitely need to work on a reporting system for the recreational sector.

MR. LAKS: Stephen.

MR. DONALSON: Is there time for questions after this? I hate to hold you up, because I --

MS. BROUWER: This is you all's discussion, and so --

MR. DONALSON: I don't want to step all over your spreadsheet or anything else that you had. I know you've got a lot of smart people working on this, from an application platform standpoint, but three years is kind of old in that world. Is the eTRIPS a platform application, and like can I get it on my phone, my iPad, my laptop, and what kind of access do we have to that data, meaning can we run reports on it, and can we run -- Is there anything else we can do with it besides just enter in logs?

MS. BROUWER: That's a good question. I have included another attachment in your briefing book, and I believe it's Attachment 4b, and I wasn't going to bring it up, because it's just a document with a bunch of stuff on it, and it's not a presentation, but it's a compilation of questions that have some up from council members, at discussions we've had with them, and also those of us putting the amendment together, and so it's like a list of questions and answers, and I believe we do address that specific question that you just brought up, as far as, you know, what else can you do with your data, how can you access your own data. Right now, off the top of my head, I don't have an answer for you, but I would encourage you to look at that Q&A, and I will look it up as well here, when we --

MR. DONALSON: Steve, I agree 100 percent with you on that, and, again, that goes back to my original meaning for these questions. If we allow both parties access to that, there's a lot of work, on the backend, that has to be done, for protection purposes, and like I could go in there and just say, hey, I'm Steve English today, and I caught 5,000 pounds of Spanish, and so there's got to be the right drop-downs, or the right security, and password protected and --

AP MEMBER: It is, and you have to have a log-in. It's just like you're getting online.

MS. BROUWER: Real quick, let me just kind of walk you through this, just very quickly, and, I mean, it's a lot of words and stuff, and this is not the best visual, but, basically, it just -- We have compiled, you know, the list of data fields in the far-right column, Column A, and I know you can't see it up on your screen, but you can look at this on your own time, but those are the data fields that are currently required in the paper logbook.

Column B is the data fields that would be required if we were to go to eTRIPS, right, and the green fields are the ones that are being added, and so these are what we're calling additional fields, but, like I said earlier, it's not different information that the platform is collecting, and so we have a trip start date, and they have added just a trip start time, just to collect better information about that particular data field, and so you can see that there is not that many green fields for the regular logbook. If you scroll down to the bottom, below this blue-horizontal line are the questions that are the part of the economic logbook, and so there's a few more that are being added to the economic logbook, and that's the one that is only for a select 20 percent of vessels. The red fields are the ones that would go away, and so, if you just tally up, it is a net difference of four additional bits of information that, overall, vessels would have to enter through the electronic platform.

You can look at this spreadsheet on your own, and it tells you a whole bunch of information, as far as what NMFS does with the information, what the information is for, and how it's entered, the kind of type of information that is being collected, and so it's a really useful little spreadsheet, and, you know, council members were very interested in, you know, details, mainly, like I said, to make sure this wasn't going to cause, you know, an additional burden on fishermen, and so I will pause here and see if you all have any more questions or recommendations.

MR. DONALSON: Sorry, and I hate to geek out on this whole thing, but this is my world, and where does all this data live?

MS. BROUWER: The data goes through ACCSP, and, you know, we commonly refer to that as the data warehouse, and like the ACCSP data warehouse is basically where all the information is collected. Partners have access to that information, and the idea is to standardize all the data, to make sure that everybody is using the same information, which, obviously, you want for management. You want to make sure that all the management agencies are utilizing, you know, information that has been validated and that's been cleaned up, or standardized, and so that's usually -- That's where it lives.

MR. DONALSON: You might not know the answer to this, but is it an on-premise data warehouse, or is it in the cloud?

MS. BROUWER: I don't know that. That's beyond -- Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: It's managed on premise, and then it has offsite multiple backups on tape, and so they don't necessarily rely on the cloud, you know, as the sole source of backup, as I understand it anyway. Sometimes old school is the best school.

MR. LAKS: Any other questions for Myra? Well, thank you, Myra. That was great, and I know, for one, I will be very happy when we don't have to put out all that redundant information about our phone numbers and boat numbers and all that stuff. Guys, let's take about a ten-minute break, real quick, and we'll see you back here in ten minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LAKS: All right. Julia is going to fill us in on the citizen science and what's going on with that.

MS. BYRD: All right. Hi, everyone. For those of you guys who I haven't had a chance to meet yet, I'm Julia Byrd, and so I run the council's Citizen Science Program, and so I'm just going to give you guys a few updates on kind of what's been going on with the program, and then I wanted to share some results from a pilot project we did called FISHstory that I think I shared information with you guys on a while ago, and so I just wanted you all to see kind of the outcome of that pilot project.

The first thing I wanted to mention is one of the kind of most exciting things, to me at least, that has happened over the past several months in the Citizen Science Program is we've hired a new person, Meg Withers, who is our Citizen Science Project Coordinator, and she is leading the charge on our Release project, which I will mention in a couple of minutes, but she started at the end of June, and kind of jumped right in, and she has been a real wonderful member of the team, and so we are really excited to bring her onboard.

The next thing I wanted to share with you guys is a little bit of information about a new project that we've gotten funded and that will get underway this month, and so it's a project where we are working with a group called REEF, which is a group that works with recreational divers, a citizen science group, and SECOORA, and, basically, what the project is focused on is partnering with recreational divers to try to collect more length information on some of our data-limited species, and so it's a three-year pilot project that's being funded to develop kind of an underwater camera that recreational divers will be able to dive with, and take video, and then that video can be analyzed to get length information. This project is kind of to develop and test that camera, and then to kind of test it with recreational divers down in the Florida Keys.

We just had our first kickoff meeting, just earlier this afternoon, and so that's kind of a new project that's getting underway, and then I also wanted to mention a project that is being led by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and we've been kind of helping kind of coordinate and plan some dolphin stakeholder workshops. We worked with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center on a series of workshops on dolphin and wahoo, back in 2020 and 2021, and so this is kind of building on that work.

What these workshops are really doing is we want to learn from fishermen, kind of what their preferences and priorities and concerns are with the dolphin fishery in their area, and try to use that information to help kind of evaluate future management strategies, and so the first workshops are being held on the east coast of south Florida this week. We will be going up to New England and the Mid-Atlantic in early November, and then we'll be hitting the Carolinas and Virginia in January. This information is going to go into a dolphin management strategy evaluation, and so

we're really wanting to learn, from fishermen, what kind of objectives they want out of their fishery, kind of in the different regions that the council manages all along the Atlantic coast.

One other project that I wanted to briefly mention, that I know some folks around the table were involved in, but we've been working with Rick Bonney, who is with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and he is kind of a citizen science expert, and he has been advising our program, over the past couple of years, and we are working with him on a project that is trying to gather kind of some information on kind of folks' knowledge about their kind of attitudes and confidence in using kind of citizen science to kind of collect data used for fisheries management.

The information gathered through this project we're working with him on will help us kind of evaluate our program, to see if it's meeting one of its goal that is focused on like collaboration and engagement with people, and so, as a first step in that process, he interviewed six fishermen, six scientists, and six managers, to kind of gather information from them, and then we're going to use the information gathered through those interviews to develop kind of a broader survey that will be given to a larger group of fishermen, scientists, and managers, and so I just wanted to briefly mention that and say that the results of this work are available online, and so there's a link in the presentation that you guys can check out if you're interested.

The next thing that I wanted to talk about, really briefly, was a project that we have ongoing right now, and I've mentioned this to you all before, and so I will make sure to be brief, but this is the project where we're hoping to collect information on released fish, using a free app called SciFish, and we're really focused on trying to gather information on the size of released fish and then information that helps us better understand how many of those released fish survive, and so what depth were they caught, did you use a descending device, or did you vent the fish before you released it, things like that, and so some kind of new things for this project.

We added data collection for red snapper into the SciFish app in April, and so folks are logging information on ten species of grouper and red snapper in this app, and we're working with kind of commercial, for-hire, and recreational folks, and what we've really been focused on, or Meg has really been focused on, is kind of doing outreach to get new and more people involved in the project and kind of make sure to remind people to continue logging information on their released fish, and so, if any of you guys are interested in learning more about that project, I would be happy to talk with you wherever, and I will be around today and tomorrow, at the meeting.

What I really wanted to talk to you guys about today is share some results from one of our first pilot projects, called FISHstory, and this is a project that is using kind of historic recreational photos to help us learn more about kind of what species were caught and the size of species that were caught back in a historic time period, before they were catch monitoring programs in place, and so Rusty Hudson, who sits around the table with you guys, was heavily involved in this project, and so this is actually a picture of a young Rusty with a red snapper.

Before I get into kind of details about the project, I just wanted to emphasize how much of a kind of team effort it truly was, and the project wouldn't have been possible without so many amazing volunteers and partners, and, in particular, Rusty provided all of his family's historic fishing photos for the project, and digitized them. Ken Brennan, with NOAA Fisheries, and Amber von Harten, Allie Iberle, and Chip Collier, who are kind of council staff, or were council staff, were very important to the development of this project, and then we had a ton of volunteers that served on a

bunch of different teams, and we had many outreach partners that helped us kind of share information about the project, and so I just wanted to mention that first, before getting into project details.

The project itself has kind of three main components. The first one is to kind of digitize and archive some of these historic fishing photos, and so, through the pilot, over 1,370 photos were digitized and archived. The second part of the project focused on analyzing those photos to get for-hire catch composition information, and, to do that, we used volunteers, through an online crowdsourcing platform called Zooniverse, so that members of the public could go in and help us kind of count and identify fish within the photos, and so, through the pilot, we had over 2,100 volunteers that made over 35,000 classifications, and so that's 35,000, over 35,000, individual kind of counts of species and counts of people in photos.

We also had a validation team, and so, when the volunteers had disagreement about what was in a photo, we had a team that was made up of fishermen and scientists who were experts at species ID that reviewed photos, and so they reviewed about 180 photos for part of this project, and the third part of the project focused on trying to develop a method to estimate the size of the fish in the photos, using kind of the lumber in the leaderboard where the fish were hanging as a scale, and then, once we developed the method, we tested it on king mackerel, and so all of the photos in the archive were reviewed for king mackerel, and we got king mackerel measurements, and so we were able to make length compositions, which I will show you guys in a few minutes.

The first thing I wanted to do is give you guys an overview of the photos that were included as part of the king of FISHstory photoset that Rusty provided, and so these really can help show the ramping-up of kind of the for-hire fishery in the Daytona Beach, Florida area, and so the photos ranged between 1949 and 1975, and the majority of photos were for the 1960s, and then there were kind of similar amounts from the 1950s and 1970s, and so the kind of donut-looking graph on the left side of the screen shows the percentage of photos by decade, and then the graph on the other side of the screen shows that there were kind of photos from all twelve months of the year, with the highest number of photos between April and August, which likely mimicked the effort in that for-hire fleet over that time period.

The photos, again, were all from Daytona Beach, Florida, for this pilot project, and they departed from Inlet Harbor and Timmons Fish Camp, and so you can see the orange kind of star on the map, and that gives you a general idea of kind of the location that folks were leaving out for these trips, and, in the photos, there were at least seventeen vessels included in the photos, but the majority of photos were from kind of the five vessels that you see here on the screen, the Flamingo, the Mako, the Broadbill, the Miss Juanita, and the Marianne.

I just wanted to show you a couple of examples of the photos, just to give you an idea of the difficulty level in trying to count and identify fish in some of the photos in this project, and so this kind of photo on the screen is one of the ones we call an easier photo. The fish are all hanging on the leaderboard, and they're kind of spread out, and they've not overlapping one another. There is no people that are kind of overlapping a fish, and there's not that many species, and so there are king mackerel and little tunny in there.

On the other end of the spectrum, we have a photo like this. It's in color, and the resolution isn't great, and there are a ton of different species overlapping one another. If you kind of see there,

there are stringers of fish that are over one another, and there's a wheelbarrow full of fish, and then there are also people standing in front of fish, and so I just wanted to show that, to show kind of the range of difficulty levels and analyzing the information in these photos. Some were easier than others, and so some were certainly challenging, like the one on the screen now.

The next thing I wanted to mention is, you know, a lot of this project dealt with kind of developing processes to analyze the photos, and I am not going to get into the nitty-gritty of all that, and I'm just showing that each little circle represents a different step to try to analyze these photos, and so there are lots of steps, kind of collecting this data, and, right now, we're kind of in the phase of the project where we're sharing results with all of you.

Before I get into some of the findings from the project, I thought that it might be helpful to understand how the data were collected, and so, for the kind of for-hire part of the project, where we had volunteers kind of helping kind of count fish and people in these photos online, through kind of this Zooniverse platform on a computer, we had kind of two different tasks, or workflows, that people used to collect data.

One of them was easier, where we had people use kind of a marking tool to just count the total number of fish and the total number of people in the photos, and so, in kind of the photo on the screen, you can see kind of the green dots counting the fish and the blue dots kind of counting people, and so we had ten volunteers kind of complete each photo, in this kind of easier workflow. We didn't have any validation team review, and all of the photos in our archive were completed for this kind of easier workflow.

The harder workflow is when we actually had volunteers go in and identify and count the fish into sixteen species, or species groups, and we also asked them to document some obstructed fish that they weren't able to identify, and so we did this through kind of a tiered data collection. They had two steps to kind of analyze these photos, and so the first was for the species that appeared most frequently in the photos, and for those that the council managed, we had them use a marking tool, and so they were marking four different kind of species groups with different colors, and so red snapper, an amberjack species group, king mackerel, and then a grouper species group, and then we also asked them to mark any obstructed fish.

Then, once they had that, before moving on to the next photo, the second step was they provided binned counts of these other species that occurred way less frequently in the photos, and so the table on the left-hand side of the screen -- You can see the different species that fall in there.

Since this was a harder thing for volunteers to do, we had twenty volunteers review each photo, and then we had that validation team of fishermen and scientists review photos where the volunteers couldn't agree on what was actually in the photo, and so we completed a thousand of the photos in the photaset through this kind of harder workflow.

Now that we've kind of walked through how the data were collected, I wanted to show some of the -- Kind of highlight some of the findings that we found, or that we learned, from these photos, and we can kind of learn, moving forward, as the project expands, and, over the next couple of slides, I am going to show some box plots like this, and so I just wanted to take a second to orient folks as to kind of what is being looked at.

If you look at the kind of dark line in the middle of the box, that's kind of the median, or middle, value of the data that were collected, and the box itself shows the middle 50 percent of the data that were collected, and then the whisker things going up out of the top and the bottom of the box show kind of interquartile ranges, and then sometimes you will see a dot, and, if the dot is above those kind of whiskery things, that means that that data point was outside of the interquartile range.

This graph on the screen shows the total landings per angler, in kind of five-year time blocks, and so the landings per angler was kind of highest in this 1955 time block, and it was over three, and then, for the later time blocks, in the mid to late 1960s and 1970s, early 1970s, it was lower. The catch rate was lower, around a little bit over two fish per angler in the photos.

The next thing that I wanted to kind of walk through is there were 180 photos that both the validation team and our volunteer citizen scientists did, and so we wanted to compare if they were getting -- If similar information was being collected from both groups, and so this graph kind of shows that, and so, on the bottom of the screen, you can see the different kind of species groups and obstructed fish, and, on the side of the screen, you can see something called difference, and so, the closer the boxes are to zero, and the smaller they are, it means the less difference was seen between our validation team and our citizen scientists, and, if there was a positive difference, that means the validation team counted more of whatever species it was. If there is kind of a negative difference, that means that the volunteers counted more of whatever species it was, and so, when you look, at a whole, in general, the groups match fairly well.

There are not a lot of biases seen, except for a couple of species, and so, for black sea bass, and for snapper other, which was any snapper but red snapper, the validation team tended to count more of those two species, and I think the reason for that is, in the photos, a lot of times, the black sea bass were near the bottom, or in like wheelbarrows, or in a pile of fish on the ground, and so I think it was easier for volunteers to maybe miss them, and then, for snapper other, I think there could have been some volunteers that misidentified another snapper with a red snapper, and so that may play into that.

The biggest differences between these two groups were seen with black sea bass and the other snapper, and then two other groups, the red snapper and the obstructed fish, although you don't see the same biases there, and so, for obstructed fish, we learned, very soon, that people -- That was pretty subjective, and people counted obstructed fish very differently, and so we weren't surprised to see big differences there, and, with red snapper, they appeared most frequently in all the photos, and so we think that plays into some of the larger variation that you see there as well.

Then another thing is, the other species that occurred less frequently in the photos, you see smaller differences, and they were kind of more rare-event species in the photos, and you see smaller differences between the groups, and that is probably, in part, due to just the low numbers that they were seeing within the photos.

Now I just want to share a little bit more information on the catch rates for these four species groups that occurred most frequently in the photos, and so this graph shows the landings per angler for these four different species groups in this five-year time blocks, again, and one of the first things I will point out is that the scales are very different between the different species groups, and so, for instance, red snapper was one of the fish most frequently seen in the photos, and so the kind of scale goes from zero to ten.

If you look at the grouper, they were much less frequently caught in the photos, and so the scale goes from zero to one, and so you can see that the kind of catch per angler for grouper was kind of highest in the 1960s, and early 1970s. For red snapper, the median value was kind of highest in 1960, and then, for king mackerel and amberjack, the highest kind of median catch per angler was highest in the 1950s, and so that's just some examples of the information we gathered through the photos, and we can do -- It's a lot of data, and so we can look at seasonality, when people were catching things at different months during the year, all kind of stuff like that, but the next thing that I wanted to briefly show you guys is I wanted to compare some of the kind of information that we collected through the FISHstory project with kind of the headboat logbook survey, which began in kind of the 1980s, kind of all along the coast.

This next graph is going to show you a comparison of the angler trips, by month, for the FISHstory project and for this headboat logbook data, and it's probably worth noting that these two data sources don't overlap at all, and one ends in the 1970s, and the other one starts in the 1980s, but we were interested in seeing if we saw the same sort of pattern between the two datasets.

I will say the headboat survey was kind of filtered, and so it just represented kind of the area around Daytona, so you were kind of looking at an apples-to-apples comparison, and for trips that caught the same sort of species, and so, for FISHstory, in the 1950s, you can kind of see the peak of trips was in July, and you see kind of a small peak in April, and then it goes up in July, and kind of drops off a lot after August, and you don't see a lot of trips taken in the winter, or late fall, months. In the 1960s, you see the same sort of pattern, with the highest trips in January, and you're starting to see more effort kind of in the winter, and the late fall, and then you see a similar pattern kind of in the 1970s as well.

When you look at the headboat survey data, you see the same sort of pattern. The highest trips are in July, and you see kind of a blip, a little blip, in April, and then it goes up in July and goes down in August, and that's for 1990.

AP MEMBER: So those surveys are for the same area?

MS. BYRD: Yes. It's filtered for kind of the same area and trips that were taking the same -- That caught the same sort of species. Any other questions? Sorry that I'm just going. We were happy to see that you're seeing similar patterns between what we gathered through the photos and what was captured in those logbooks, as far as effort goes, trips go.

Then there's one other thing that I wanted to show here, and so what this is is a kind of a relative ranking based on these four species groups and the number of landed catch, based on what we saw in the FISHstory photos and what was collected versus the headboat survey, and so it's giving you an idea of relatively which of these species was more important than the others over time, and, in the 1950s, king mackerel seem to be very important, based on the FISHstory photos, and then red snapper became very important, and then grouper seemed to become important in kind of the 2000s, when the red snapper populations were lower than they had been earlier on.

Again, we're starting to do more comparisons between the FISHstory data and kind of the headboat logbook survey, which was kind of one of the first catch monitoring programs in place in the region, just to kind of compare what we're learning from the photos versus some of what we

learned from the catch monitoring programs, and, again, I should say these were filtered, and so they're covering the same sort of geographical area.

Then now I want to move over to the last component of the project, and this is where we used -- We kind of developed a method to estimate the size of fish in the photos, using kind of the lumber where they were hanging as a scaler, and then we tested that method on king mackerel, and so, again, this is just -- We set up a process, and there were lots of steps, and so now we're at kind of the last stage, where we're sharing results, and so, as part of the project, all of the photos in our archive were kind of reviewed for king mackerel.

King mackerel occurred in about 42 or 43 percent of the photos, and all of the king mackerel in the photos, where we were able to get measurements, we had length analysts measure those fish, and so there kind of was a range. Some of the photos had zero mackerel, and some of them had as many as fifty-four mackerel, and so we can produce kind of length compositions for every year. However, the sample size between different years varies a lot, and so, for this plot, you can just kind of see the modal length, which is just kind of the length that occurred most often in each year, from 1950 to 1974, and so you can see that it ranged between about kind of nineteen and thirty-seven inches fork length, and you can see sort of an increasing trend, from kind of the late 1950s through kind of the mid-1970s.

Then I also wanted to show this to you guys, just looking at it a little bit differently, and so this is plotted by decade, and so this is kind of the length composition in the 1950s, and kind of the peak there is at twenty-nine inches fork length. If you look at the 1960s, it shifted a little bit smaller, and then, if you look at the 1970s, it shifts a little bit bigger, and you get those kind of two -- It kind of looks like Batman to me, but two kind of peaks there, and so I think, you know, we were really excited that we were able to produce kind of length compositions from these old historic photos, and we have some stock assessments, and like the king mackerel stock assessment begins back in like 1900, and so there is some information from landings data that are available for use in the assessment, but there's really no length information to help inform the assessment, and so, if we're able to get photos from kind of a larger area, I think some of this information could be helpful.

MR. NEWMAN: Did you have the length compositions from the 1980s and 1990s and 2000s from the charter boats, from that data?

MS. BYRD: That's kind of the next step that we're going to look into, and so, unfortunately, I don't have that for you guys right now, but, as we kind of add that information in, I'll be happy to share it with you guys. Then the last kind of things that I wanted to share was just some key kind of takeaways from this project, and I think kind of the methods that we developed to kind of analyze historic photos show a lot of promise.

I think we showed that volunteers can make really valuable contributions, but identifying fish in some of these photos is really hard, and so I think we -- Through the pilot, we've come up with some ideas to try to try simplify how the data are collected, to help improve data quality, and another thing we certainly learned is that this project took a lot more time and resources than we had anticipated, and so citizen science isn't a no-cost endeavor, but I think a lot of the things that we learned through the pilot, and the work we did in the pilot, such as making all these processes

and writing code for data analysis and stuff like that, will make the project more efficient, moving forward.

One of the things we also learned is that fishermen seem to be really interested in sharing their historic photos and stories, and I think, you know, one of the most exciting things around the project, when we were kind of promoting it and sharing information about it, was when other fishermen reached out to us and said, you know, I have some photos like this, and could you use them for something like this project, and so I think we can learn a lot from these older photos about kind of the early part of the for-hire fishery in this region.

Then I just wanted to take a second to do next steps, to tell you what else is happening in this project, and so the pilot was successful, and we're trying to move it to a full-scale project, and so we've been putting together grants to get funding to grow the project, and we just submitted one, not too long ago, and we'll find out next month if we get funded, and what we really need to do, and one thing I'm asking for your input on, or help on, is we really want to expand the geographic range of the photos we have.

Right now, all the photos are from Daytona Beach, and so, if we can get photos from other places throughout the South Atlantic region, the data would be more valuable, and it would be more representative of what was going on along the coast in that historic time period, and another thing -- We were talking to some of the stock assessment scientists about this, is, right now, we have photos that go through the early 1970s, and so there's no overlap for when the data monitoring and catch monitoring programs came into place, and they said it would be really valuable if we were able to get photos through the 1980s, so there's an overlap between the information collected from the photos and the information collected from things like the headboat survey, so you can kind of compare them to one another.

We're also interested in trying to kind of estimate length compositions for more species, now that we were able to do it for king mackerel, and red snapper is kind of the next species on the list, and then, also, we're really interested in trying to add in an oral kind of history component, and so one of the most valuable things about the project was talking to Rusty about the photos, and learning more about the fishery from that time period, and so I think we can learn a whole lot from fishermen who may be willing to provide photos for this project.

That is kind of the kind of results from the FISHstory project, and it's, honestly, been one of my favorite things that I have worked on in my whole career so far, and it's been really cool, and so one thing -- I am happy to answer any questions about any of the things that I have talked about, but one thing I would love to get input from you guys on, and it could be kind of on the record, or you can kind of grab me afterwards, is if you know -- If you, or you know of folks, who may have historic photos, or people who I could potentially reach out to, to try to gather more photos from different areas, I would really love to hear if you all have any input on that, but I'm happy to take any questions as well.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Julia, you probably -- This last thing, about explore oral history component, I believe I have sent you some of those newspaper articles that I've been able to pull out, and some of them going back into the early part of the twentieth century, some of them dealing with

describing the fish caught, and sometimes even the weights and things like that, and I just know that there's a big inventory there, but the resolution is not real great on a newspaper that is then scanned like that, but the verbiage tells a lot of the story, and that's where -- You remember "Skippers of the Week", the Dennis that did this as a newspaper guy, and he did it for like a decade, and he would interview these different people and their boats, and then he would describe all of the different histories and stuff, and so there's a lot of stuff out there.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: This is super interesting to me, and I've been involved with it a little bit with you, and I don't really know my species well enough to help you identify, but I know I talked to you on the phone about the Northeast Observer Program is putting cameras on a lot of these boats, because they're looking to do 100 percent observer coverage on commercial boats, and they are in the process of developing the technology to identify the fish species and length compositions in real-time on these boats, and that could be a huge -- It could fill a hole, this black hole that we have, of recreational data, if we could get this on some of these charter/for-hire boats and it could actually see these fish and document what the discards are, because this is hard data.

This is some of the only hard data that we have on the recreational fishing industry, and, I mean, this is special. This is something that we didn't have before, and I think that is a big key to going ahead in the future, is getting some of this real data and seeing these fish in live time, to see what we're actually removing and what fish we're interacting with, but this is a -- I think this is a huge stepping stone, and I think you all should be getting grants out the wazoo to pay for this project, because it's actually giving real data for an industry that doesn't have any.

MR. LAKS: Steve.

MR. DONALSON: This is great stuff. I was at the first meeting when you guys rolled this out, and so it's really neat to see it not just to get legs, but to come to this, and I think that it would be interesting to see, now that you've come this far, to maybe overlay some historical data on marine data, as far as marinas that are open, marinas that are closed, why are they closed, and like I know -- You know better than anybody that one of those marinas in Daytona is probably not there anymore, and so you may have seen a drop-off in the number of pictures, and, again, I'm making this up, but stuff like that might be interesting to see what the socioeconomics had on the data collection, you know what I mean? Anyway, great job. This is really, really neat stuff.

MR. LAKS: Tony.

MR. BENEVENTO: They probably have pictures, but I would contact Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament. They've got forty-five years' of data, of one through twenty-five, and aggregates, and so forth. Now, it's going to be skewed, because you didn't weigh-in, you know, your little snake, and so it would be bigger fish, but I would think, if there's -- There is a tournament up here, and there is two or three out of St. Augustine, and they have -- I know the Jacksonville tournament has records going back, and probably can get some pictures as well.

MR. DONALSON: When we originally started talking about this, we all were talking about that, and, well, my marina does this, and my marina does that, and I think they started smaller, with the sample size at Daytona, because there's so much other there, and so that was talked about, and like

the local tackle shop in Jacksonville, Stan's, has been there for seventy or eighty years, and Avid Angler has been there forever, but there was just so many pictures coming in, and so much data, that I think it was one of those baby steps, and those are bigger fish, and I'm not sure -- That was probably the only species that was pictured, was the kingfish.

MR. LAKS: I'm sure, Julia, you've checked with the West Palm Beach Fishing Club, and I also have, you know, probably a ton of pictures from the 1980s, and the length comparison of my hair was probably a lot longer back then, and it was probably a much better stock too, but I can definitely gather some pictures from my area from the 1980s.

MS. BYRD: That would be awesome. Thanks, Ira, and Steve just walked out.

MR. HUDSON: I know of at least four restaurants that is loaded with pictures, all on their different walls, a couple of them in the Daytona and Ponce area, and there's one in Sumpter, South Carolina. I mean, it's amazing. Willie Ethridge, up in North Carolina, when he had his restaurant, he had all kinds of pictures there too, and so there's a world of stuff out there.

MS. BYRD: A couple of things, just to -- Thank you for all of this kind of feedback, and I wanted to share -- First, Steve, on something you said, like overlaying marinas and looking at kind of infrastructure, and I know that's something that Christina and I are very interested in doing and trying to catalog kind of fishing infrastructure, to see -- We know that working waterfront is a big issue, and there's a lot less infrastructure now than there was back then, and so that is certainly something that we feel very passionate about, and we're trying to get some funding to start looking into some of that work.

Then the other thing that I wanted to note is that, as part of the grant that we put in, we're hoping to get kind of a portable scanner, and there's some money to kind of travel around, so we could -- What we had kind of talked about is doing kind of like in-person scanning night at a council meeting, and try to kind of highlight it, and, if people brought in photos, we could scan them quickly and then give them a digitized copy of the photos, as a way to try to gather photos for more areas too, and, if we did something like that, you know, we could potentially try to -- There are a couple of other people who have said restaurants, and like there's a couple other restaurants that people have mentioned to us.

If there's something like that, and we could talk to a restaurant owner, and, if we could go in quickly and -- You know, we don't want to take apart their whole restaurant, but, if we can scan as many photos as we can kind of on the road, that may be helpful too, and then another thing that Alana Harrison pointed out to us, and she's up at Hatteras, is libraries. The North Carolina library has a lot of old fishing photos too, and so there's a lot of places to try to dig to try to find some of these photos that can help kind of expand the project.

MR. ROLLER: So a question. So, when we look at this, most of the photos from that era are, you know, for-hire, headboat, and has there been anything to do to look at like the more commercial component, and is there any photos available, because there is very little hard data from commercial fisheries in that time period as well.

MS. BYRD: We haven't done much looking for commercial photos, but I'm sure there are some that are out there too, and so I think that's something we can learn as we kind of go into this next

step of -- We really wanted to try to do this small-scale pilot, focused on kind of Daytona Beach, Florida, to see if it worked, and it seems to work, and so now we're going to try to expand it, and so I guess -- I'm sure there are, but I don't have much information on that.

I guess one other thing that may -- I don't know if it's worth -- That is maybe worth mentioning is so one of the stock assessment scientists who helped put in this last grant with us was really interested in the for-hire sector, and headboats the most, because he is hoping that, if we're able to grow the project enough, you might be able to develop kind of a relative index of abundance from these photos, from headboats, that you could compare with the index from the headboat survey, just to see if they kind of jibe with one another, and, if you can get overlapping years, you could calibrate one to the other, and so that is -- I mean, Rusty provided all these photos, and they are from the for-hire sector, and so that, obviously, was our first focus, but then, after someone reached out to us kind of about that, that's why we've been so focused on kind of for-hire right now.

MR. LAKS: Another thing you might want to look at is, I know back in the 1970s and 1980s, when I worked on a headboat, the news channels, the local news channels, would come by and do a fishing report, once a week, and, you know, it was a celebrity little fishing guide guy that would come by, and I don't know if they archive all that video, but it might be something to look at. Rusty, you had something?

MR. HUDSON: The five to the sixteen boats, whatever has been used in the photographs, back in the 1950s, most of those boats were six-packs with a mate and a captain, and so they were mostly trolling, and that's why you -- Then they would do some bottom fishing, and it just depended on the conditions, but the big deal is that, once they started building a few headboats, you know, multi -- Like ten or twenty people on a boat, and then thirty and forty, and then a hundred, and, well, a lot of that began in the early 1960s to later on, and it really ramped up in the early 1970s.

All the photographs were professional photographers that took these photographs, and, yet, those same boats, come April, March or April, they would start their for-hire stuff. By September, Labor Day, they were done, and you could see the drop, and some of that is also the peak of hurricane season, but then they would commercial fish.

They would put bandit reels on, or they would go rod-and-reel fishing, and, yes, some people might have took some photographs every once in a while, and I have commercial photographs too that I took, but, quite honestly, it was the professional photographers, from the late 1940s until about the mid-1970s, and then, after that, it was just amateur photographers, or the wife of the captain would take pictures, and stuff like that, and so there's more of that kind of stuff, but that will get you into the 1980s, for sure.

MR. DONALSON: Just to comment about what you're talking about, getting the same kind of picture data from commercial fishermen, that's kind of -- I hate to use this word, but that gray area between commercial fishermen and charter captains, and so, in St. Augustine, charter captains have the same place they hang their fish up and take pictures, but the commercial guys aren't taking pictures of their catch, and so just, for what it's worth, if you delineate those two, you will probably get different, or better, results, and does that make sense? Okay.

MR. LAKS: Does anyone else have any other questions for Julia? Well, thank you so much. That was absolutely great.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, y'all.

MR. LAKS: All right. We're going to jump right into the right whale issue and the vessel speed rule, and so we need to slow down.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, guys, and so we are going to talk about the North Atlantic right whale vessel strike reduction rule, and I know we've spent a lot of this afternoon going over some sort of bigger-picture issues, and so not mackerel-focused issues, and I promise this is the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, and, come tomorrow, we will start to dig into the nitty-gritty of those fisheries, but we did want to talk to you guys about this vessel strike reduction rule, because we know it could have an impact on a lot of your fishing activities.

The council talked about it in September, but, before I sort of get to their comments, I wanted to briefly go over what this proposed speed rule means for you guys, and so there are sort of three main things that are being done with this proposed rule.

The first is broadening the spatial boundaries and timing of those seasonal speed restriction areas, and so, to pull up a map here, really fast, if you look at this, those purple lines are where the original speed zones were. The places in color along the coast are where the expansions are planned, and so, as you can see, whereas, in North Carolina in particular, it used to just be this small area off the central coast, it will now encompass the entire coast of North Carolina, as well as the entire coast of South Carolina, as it was before, and then, with Florida, the seasonal zone is now being extended down to a little bit south of the Cape.

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

MS. WIEGAND: It depends on the area, but I can pull up exact coordinates for you guys, if that is helpful.

AP MEMBER: Stephen, it's like fifty miles off of Jacksonville. If you look at the map, you see that right there, and then down below is the scale, and so you will have a ten-hour ride to the ledge and back.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, getting back into this, those speed zones are important, because they are expanding the mandatory speed restriction of ten knots to include most vessels that are going to be thirty-five to sixty-five feet in length. Vessels that are sixty-five feet in length and greater have already been subject to this speed restriction for some time now, and it's through this proposed rule that they're expanding it to include vessels thirty-five feet in length or greater. Additionally, they are creating mandatory dynamic speed zones that will establish a ten-knot transit provision when whales are detected outside of a designated area.

Again, sort of the biggest impact we expect you all to see, as fishermen in the South Atlantic, is from this expansion to vessels that are thirty-five feet in length or greater, and particularly off the coast of North Carolina, where they are seeing these small seasonal zones expand to cover the entire coast.

We presented this information to the council at their September meeting, and they directed us to write a comment letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service explaining how these proposed rules may impact fishermen that operate within our managed species, and they recommended a couple of things, one being that NMFS spend a significant amount of time doing more outreach to the boating and fishing community and soliciting public comment from them. They also expressed concerns about available law enforcement effort to enforce this mandatory speed restriction and concern that enforcement of the speed restriction may impact the level of enforcement that's available for fishing regulations.

Additionally, they made a couple of suggestions for alternative regulations, understanding that there needs to be a balance between protecting the extremely-endangered North Atlantic right whale while not having negative social and economic impacts to the fishing industry. They suggested spending more money on monitoring North Atlantic right whales, so that they could do only dynamic management zones, instead of the permanent seasonal speed zones.

They talked about partnering with other groups to provide boats with real-time information on whale locations, and this is something that is done up in New England, and then they also talked about limiting the scope of the current regulations that are proposed here to vessels with inboard motors only and exclude all vessels that have an outboard motor.

I've got a couple of questions for you, but, before I go into that, I did want to show you some data that we pulled. The Permits Office provided us data on vessel lengths for permitted fisheries, and I'm going to focus mostly on coastal migratory pelagics, given that that's this advisory panel, and so, as you can see here, there are a chunk of vessels that are not currently affected and would not be affected, based on the length of the vessel, in the coastal migratory pelagic fishery, and those are the guys you see in green. The blue are the ones that are sixty-five feet in over, that are already affected by this speed rule, and then in red here is the percentage of vessels in the coastal migratory pelagics fishery that would be affected by this proposed change.

If you scroll down here, you can see, in a bit more detail, the types of vessels that are thirty-five feet in length or greater. In 2022, you can see most of them were vessels that have a coastal pelagics charter permit, followed by Spanish mackerel and king mackerel vessels, and, just as a note, this number of vessels isn't additive, because some vessels may have multiple permits on their boat, and so do keep that in mind.

Scrolling back up, the council did want to get some information from this advisory panel on how the proposed regulations may impact fishing for king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia specifically, and then if the AP had any suggestions on alternative regulations that would, again, balance the need to protect the North Atlantic right whales without a substantial cost to the fishing industry, and so, with that, I'm happy to answer any questions, but we're really looking for some discussion from this AP.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Christina, maybe you could bring that map back up and enlarge it, so you can really point out the timeframe of the seasonal zones, because I think that's extremely important in understanding what the impacts of those zones might be to fishing activities.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Tony.

MR. BENEVENTO: Again, I am going to focus on the proposal, and I assume -- When you said you want to know how it will affect kingfish, mackerel, and cobia fishing, I am going to assume that that yellow is put in place, and it will be put in place for Florida on November 15 to April 1, and that's the time of year when our beach gets cold, and so there will not be cobia or kingfish caught in close, like they are during the summer, and so it would mean that the -- You know, during that time of year, and let's use December, for instance, and you're going to run out thirty miles before you get warm enough water to hold kingfish.

The cobia will come in on the reefs, and it may not be that far, you know, fifteen to eighteen miles, but, again, at ten miles an hour, you're really wiping out fishing for either kingfish or cobia, and the kingfish really don't come in close until, you know, April-ish, in that range.

The other thing I would like to point out is that, from the commercial side, the charters that go out of St. Augustine and Jacksonville -- That is the end of them, because they can't run out there at ten knots and expect to catch -- You know, have clients pay for that, you know, basically a boat ride.

MR. DONALSON: They will run two a day, and so they will leave in the morning and fish a half-day and come back and pick up another charter and go back out and fish another half-day. They won't be able to get a full day in under that, and this is out in the blue water.

MR. BENEVENTO: Can you scroll down just a hair? Thank you.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charles.

AP MEMBER: I am just curious to see what data there is on the vessels that actually strike whales, thirty-five feet to sixty-five feet, and I have never heard of one, in my life, and I've done it a long time.

MR. DONALSON: There was one last year, and it came out of St. Augustine.

AP MEMBER: Well, there's one. I mean, the economic impact on everybody, all the way from boat builders and you name it, and taxes, and everything is going to be affected by it, and it just - - It makes no sense. I can see the ships.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: I want to say a little bit, because I'm on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction, and we lost a fishery in Mayport. We started a gillnet fishery down there, me and a couple of guys. Back in 2005, there was a calf killed that they associated with a gillnet. They shut the fishery down, an emergency closure, and we had a bunch of meetings. Anyway, we lost that gear, and, the next year, a charter boat, called Outer Limits, was running to Mexico, in Cancun, and he hit a whale, a fifty-five foot boat, right off of Georgia, and he limped into port, and they didn't know what killed the whale.

Barb Zoodsma, she's on the team, and I called her, and I said, look, Barb, I know what boat hit that whale, and she said, well, it had two thirty-six-inch propeller marks across its back, and it severed its spine, and I knew the guy that was running the boat, and so we had just gotten shut out of a fishery, and so we were hot. We were like, dude, this friggin' charter boat killed a whale, and we're shut down, and what's going on, and so here you go, all these years now, and, what is it, two years ago in St. Augustine, the same thing. A charter boat hits a whale, and it barely gets to the dock.

This has been brought up at the Atlantic Large Whale Take Team, because it falls in those parameters of under the sixty-five foot, and I've got tons of charter guys, and I don't want to see them affected by this, and so the thing that we've talked about dynamic areas, these DAMMs, they call them, dynamic area management measures, or whatever, but they're handicapped, and I have brought this up. Like, instead of closing this for November 1 to April 30, when there might not be a whale within a hundred miles to 500 miles of the area, and they don't have the authority to implement it fast enough.

It's like there's a lag there, and you probably know what I'm talking about, and they're talking like a week to two weeks, but they've got to put it in the Federal Register. By the time they do something, the whale could be out of the area, and so everybody is handicapped on this without being able to act quicker. Nobody wants these closures. Nobody wants long-period closures, but, I mean, we're at this 90 percent risk reduction.

This is part of this 90 percent risk reduction, and we're mandated, by a lawsuit, to do something, and this is all part of it, unfortunately. I mean, everybody's hands are tied on this, but, until we can get some kind of like the plane flies and sees a whale, and, within twenty-four hours, you can say, okay, you need to do ten knots in this hundred-mile area, we're going to be looking at possibly something like this, which is going to suck for everybody, you know, commercial and charter, everybody.

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

MR. LAKS: Christina can answer the question.

MS. WIEGAND: According to the draft environmental impact statement that was put out for this proposed rule, since 2008, which was when the original speed reduction rule went into place for vessels that are sixty-five feet in greater has been put into place, there have been twelve lethal whale strikes, five of which were vessels less than sixty-five feet in length.

AP MEMBER: Over what time period? How many years?

MS. WIEGAND: That was since 2008.

AP MEMBER: 2008? Okay.

MR. LAKS: Bill, did you have a question?

MR. PALMER: The issue I have with it is that a lot of boats are less than thirty-five, and they're out there running forty or fifty miles an hour. During that time period, they're going to go the

stream, out of St. Augustine and Jacksonville, because you can't catch anything from the stream in, hardly, on a regular basis, and so you go to the stream, and you can catch some wahoo. The cost to boat owners is going to be horrific. People are going to see thirty-five foot, and, well, I will just buy a thirty-three, or I'll buy a thirty-four, and I will throw my three engines on it, and I will still run fifty or sixty miles an hour, and I can get out there and I can fish. I can carry a charter out that far, on a big center console, and they can get a half-day fish in and come back and go again.

Something has got to be -- If we're trying to protect the whales, and I'm all for that, but, from November 15 to May 15, that's a long period, and it's going to kill a lot of businesses, and the charters -- I don't see them -- Like you, I don't see how they can make a living, at least in north Florida, because they're going to run two charters at ten miles an hour, and most of those are going to be thirty-five or better in length. Have you got something?

MR. KELLY: Yes, and so it would basically castrate the charter boats at Oregon Inlet, and it would -- It's a bluefin fishery, and it's a yellowfin tuna fishery, and it would castrate us. I'm actually under thirty-five, but how could you let a fifty-foot guy be restricted and have a Freeman that can go forty knots have free range? That makes no sense, to me.

Then you've got these weather windows, and so, if you go ten knots out there, four hours out, and ten knots back, that's eight hours. With the weather windows we've got, you just eighty-sixed us, and so I've got to say that's a bad -- Why is it that it's only inboards, and what's the difference between an outboard and an inboard?

MS. WIEGAND: That's not something that is in the proposed rule. That is something that the council sort of briefly discussed as a suggestion they could make to the National Marine Fisheries Service, to try to lessen the impact, but that's not something that is currently proposed in the rule, and the rule is all vessels that are thirty-five feet or greater.

MR. KELLY: Okay, and, I mean, all the winters we've fished up there, all these years, I have never -- We used to fish next to the whales, and catch the stripers, and I never heard of anybody hitting a whale, ever, and there was days when there was 500 boats out there, and that's not like that anymore, because we don't have any ocean striped bass left, but the yellowfin fishery out of Oregon Inlet, which is a big, big fishery, would be castrated.

MR. LAKS: Steve, did you have something?

MR. DONALSON: I did. I am going to try to get all of this out, because I know that this is the Mackerel Cobia panel, and we want to eventually talk about the effect it will have on mackerel fishing, but not to sound mean about -- Because I do care about the whales, but I care about our livelihoods, to your point, and we've got to figure this out, so it doesn't shut you guys down, but, at the same time, commonsense has got to prevail, to where fair is fair and it makes sense, if that's possible.

As far as kingfish go, I would have to check calendars and stuff, but the only thing I can think of is that time of the year, in certain parts of the Southeast, there are still kingfish tournaments going on, and that's where the boats go to catch the bigger kingfish. I don't know what that effect would have on any kind of stock pressure, or whatever, but there is no fish on the beach at that time of -

- Well, that's an inaccurate statement. People aren't fishing for kingfish on the beach, or within ten miles, that time of year. They're going out thirty, forty, or fifty miles, to the rolldown, 120 feet to 800 feet. Christina, that's the only thing that I can think of that would affect it, and cobia are a bycatch at that point. They just show up.

MR. LAKS: Ben and then Charles.

MR. SHEPHERD: As far as the dates that are listed on there for the cobia and mackerel, I would say between Oregon Inlet, Hatteras, Ocracoke Inlet, and all the way up into Virginia Beach -- I believe, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe you all start to get your cobia mid-April, and we start to get our cobia, up at Virginia Beach, the latter half of May, and so there's not very many people in thirty-five foot or bigger running to catch cobia up in the beach, Virginia Beach.

I know, down in Oregon Inlet and Hatteras and Ocracoke, they will have some bigger boats, but the same as down south, and it will cripple our broadbill fishery, and it will cripple our sea bass fishery, and it will cripple our tilefish and groupers and tautog, absolutely everything else that we would fish for, because we don't have anything nearshore, and all of our fishing is thirty to eighty miles offshore, not to mention the bluefin fishery as well.

AP MEMBER: My question is how is this going to be policed? I mean, is every boat going to have to get an AIS on it, and then they're going to prove it, and, you know, there's a point where Big Brother is going to be there to -- You know, once it starts, I don't know where it's going to end. You know, we've got a pinfish situation or something, and, okay, we've got to shut it down in the creeks, and, I mean, it's just -- I don't know what this is going to lead to. It kind of worries me.

MR. LOCKE: Well, let me say one thing. This right whale stuff is -- Just to give you all context, Maine catches about fifty-five million pounds of lobsters, and they're talking about shutting the Maine lobster industry down basically over this, and this right whale has so much power, this endangered species has so much power, and it's scary.

I mean, one of the proposals, and I'm a gillnet fisherman, was a complete closure from November 15 to April 15 of all gear, gillnet, any fixed gear, pots, traps, from basically Maine to -- I mean, it encompassed everywhere, all the way to Florida, and, I mean, they were going to close it all the way to Sebastian, for just the months of December and January, but just to have that proposal out there, to me, it blew my mind, because it was like how can you shut down a billion-dollar industry, you know, and that be a proposal, but that's where it's at. I mean, unfortunately, that's where it's at with this right whale stuff, and it's crazy.

MR. LAKS: Tony, go ahead.

MR. BENEVENTO: Well, I'm kind of going to repeat the same things that have been said, that there's a lot more economic effect than just shutting that down, because there's going to be boat builders that aren't going to be building boats, because people are saying I can't go there, and there's tackle shops, and, obviously, the gasoline bill is going to go way down, but, you know, this proposal is just completely out of whack.

You know, I saw something in here where it said, you know, maybe some suggestions of how to avoid these whales, and I go out three to five times, when the weather lets me, and, every time we come in, we see the whale plane, and it's got two little fins on the back, with that little motor that's on the -- That's how we should find the whales. I mean, I don't go -- I stay away, the 500 feet, but, you know, if anything, I would suggest that whoever is proposing this buy a bunch more of those planes and get out there and stay on those whales, you know, like they're a Russian submarine, because, shutting that down, you're killing tons of industry, and billions of dollars.

MR. LAKS: Thomas and then Tom.

MR. NEWMAN: You can correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty certain the Endangered Species Act doesn't give a rat's butt about economics, and like there is no economic figures in any of that, and the Endangered Species trumps everything, and it's not like Magnuson, where they have to do an environmental impact statement to justify their actions.

MS. WIEGAND: So, I will say there has been some look at -- All federal regulations, very similar to how we do our fisheries regulations, there does have to be some analysis on the economic impact of the regulation. It's limited, based on the available data, similar problems that we struggle with in fisheries, but they did estimate that a little less than 16,000 vessels would potentially be affected and that the total estimated costs were around \$46 million, and note that that's not just to the recreational boating industry, and that's to every possible boating industry that could be affected by this.

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

MS. WIEGAND: It was, specifically, 15,899 vessels. If you guys are interested in digging into the, you know, how they've done this economic analysis, I can send you a copy of it, and it's called the regulatory impact statement, and I can send you a link to that, and it's a little dry, but it does provide information on how they calculated the costs to the boating industry.

MR. ROLLER: This was touched on a little bit at the council meeting, and I was just curious if I could get some feedback from the AP regarding whether or not you feel that these speed zones could impact safety-at-sea, you know, specifically if you -- We all knowing traveling at slower speeds can be dangerous, and this may force people to fish in poor conditions or whatnot, and so I'm curious to hear some feedback from you all, if you feel the need to.

MR. LAKS: Steve and then Thomas.

MR. DONALDSON: The first thing that comes to mind is what we're going through right now, after a storm, and people are going less than ten knots, because they're going to hit a dock and not a whale, and it's a big problem right now, and it was during Matthew. All those docks come out the St. Johns River, because it flows north, and it spits all that crap out into the Atlantic, and so just for what it's worth, yes, we're worried about boater safety, but because of that, more than we are anything else.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: I am a nine-knot boat, and, with these fuel prices, I'm now a seven-knot boat, but it's going to be a huge safety issue. I mean, I don't know how many times I've been offshore and a nor'easter hits, and you're getting in as hard as you can go, and, plus, with the thirty-five-foot rule, like these guys were saying, what's going to stop these charter boats from buying a thirty-four-and-a-half-foot boat and then trying to carry a six-pack offshore?

I mean, just being in that smaller boat, traveling across that water, in that time of year, is dangerous in itself, and you talk about a low-sided thirty-four-foot boat, you're going to have idiots falling overboard all the time. I mean, it's hard enough to keep them in a big boat, and there's going to be a tremendous amount of risks.

MS. WIEGAND: So, I will note that there are exemptions to the speed rule, and one of those being when things like gale warnings are in place, to allow fishermen to get in faster, in the case of bad weather, but I do think information like people moving to smaller boats, and if it's having a big enough impact on your business where you feel like you're going to have to go out despite the conditions not being ideal, and I think that's important information for the council to hear from you all and include within their comment letter.

MR. LAKS: Let's go to Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: The 90 percent risk reduction, if you're familiar with what we've been going through with the whale stuff, is it's a cooccurrence issue, which means they look at the amount of whales that are in an area, and the amount of gear, and this is for commercial guys, and that's how they assess risk, and so, when you have a lot of whales, and a lot of gear, you have way more risk. In the Southeast, we almost -- We weren't really looking at any measures south of Cape Hatteras, really, to implement commercially, because there wasn't a lot of risk there. All the risk was up from like Cape Cod north.

I think that's important for the council to bring up, because the risk is really low. I mean, granted, the risk that they're worried about is the calves, and the calves are what they are worried about, and is there going to be five calves, or one calf, and, I mean, the recruitment, and, down in the Southeast, that's where they calve, and so that is the risk that they are really looking at with this speed zone, but, overall, there is not a lot of whales that we're encountering in this area, and the council has to have some kind of say in that, because, you know, Cape Hatteras south, or, really, Cape Cod south, the cooccurrence is really low with whales and gear, and even vessels.

MR. LAKS: Charles, go ahead.

MR. GRIFFIN: What are the proposed penalties? Let's say you're doing thirteen knots, and we get caught doing that? I mean, what are they talking about? Are they going to confiscate your vessel, or what are they going to do? I mean, honestly, and it's crazy.

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

MR. GRIFFIN: Then everybody is going to speed. They could care less. I could tell you that right now.

MR. ROLLER: These are also questions that have been asked to the council, but, if you go back to our briefing book and look at the law enforcement report from the Southeast, you will see fines and convictions for speeding currently, and some of them are big.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. DONALSON: You said spend more time getting feedback, and how much time are we talking? Three months, two years, five years? Do we know?

MS. WIEGAND: So this proposed rule -- The deadline for comments was originally the end of September, and they've extended it to the end of October, and so all comments have to be submitted within the next month.

MR. LAKS: So I have a question for Charlie and Steve and Rusty. What I could see it affecting the commercial king mackerel fishery is not major, because most of the boats are probably under that size, but it could impact if you're fishing in that little bit of speed getting in for the day and unloading, and so that potentially could cost someone the next day, and do any of you guys know, up in the Jacksonville area -- I imagine the bigger boats are up that way, that would fish out there, and if you guys can talk about that. Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: Where it's going to bother the kingfish guys is the Cape, Cape Canaveral to New Smyrna. That's where, Rusty, I think there is probably a third of the fleet that's over thirty-five foot, at the Cape, and there's a lot of big boats at the Cape that fish kingfish, and that's the ones that will be affected in the king fishery. They're the ones that will be hurt, because they fish that Cape Canaveral to New Smyrna that time of year, and that's where the kings are.

MR. LAKS: Yes, and it only looks like a small distance, but, if you take that each way, and trying to get back in from a day trip, it -- If you have to run along the beach, but it could affect if you can get in to unload, and, if you can't unload that day, you can't fish the next.

AP MEMBER: Charles, maybe you can answer this, but who is driving this? Is it the council, or is it NOAA, or is Biden?

MS. WIEGAND: So this is driven by federal regulations like the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and it's the National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resources Division is the one that will implement these regulations, and this is not something that is driven by the council. We are, like you guys, as individual fishermen, able to make comment on the regulation and talk about how it will affect our fisheries that we manage, but this is not a regulation that is being driven by the council.

MR. LAKS: Rusty, did you have something?

MR. HUDSON: On this measurement, I did see where it said, if you had outboard motors, you didn't have to worry about the speed, but, with the measurement, is that on the keel, or is that overall?

MS. WIEGAND: I do not know the answer to that, but it's fantastic question, and we will find out and get you that information.

MR. HUDSON: Because there is a difference there.

AP MEMBER: Most of them are length at the waterline, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Christina, how did that -- When you click on that thing for comments, it says September 30, like you mentioned, and is that a typo, or is there an October 31 version out there somewhere?

MS. WIEGAND: It does still say September on the regs.gov, but you can continue to comment until October 31, and so it's just something that has not been changed on that website since they extended the deadline, but it's the same link, and you can continue to comment there.

I certainly can't speak, with any sort of authority, on whether this will happen or not. I will say that North Atlantic right whales are incredibly endangered, and, like Charlie was talking about, we are legally required to have a 90 percent reduction in risk, which is going to require substantial changes, and there are sort of two things going on to try to meet that risk reduction. There is this proposed rule that looks at the speed zones, and then you've heard Charlie talk quite a bit about what's going on with the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, and that's an effort that's separate from this specific rule.

They just wrapped up scoping for some of the regulations that they're considering, and the take reduction team is going to have several meetings, is currently having meetings, to talk about what sort of regulations they want to propose. The council is going to receive an update on those discussions at their December meeting. Like Charlie mentioned, there are some pretty substantial discussions happening right now, in terms of gillnets and allowing gillnets in these areas during the calving season. Where that will go, we ultimately don't know, and the council will get more information in December, and then certainly we will be talking to this AP about those as well, but, again, that's ultimately not a council decision. We're just able to provide input on what is ultimately a National Marine Fisheries Service decision.

AP MEMBER: All of this is in our briefing book, this presentation?

MR. LAKS: Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Jimmy Hull, who is chair of the Snapper Grouper AP, or was, and Charlie Phillips, who used to sit on the council, and also does stuff with, I guess, the large whale plan, and they've been working with that ropeless stuff, and they have this way of firing the signal down there, and they can get the rope to come right back up, and it looks like that's going to be a useful choice, but I'm just wondering if that's going to fit into the picture here, too.

MS. WIEGAND: You're correct in that Charlie Phillips has been involved in a lot of the research related to ropeless gear, for black sea bass pots specifically, and he's on -- He's the council's liaisons to the take reduction team, and so he's certainly involved in all of those conversations. The extent to which that will ultimately fit into decisions that are being made on this very short timeline, to get to the 90 percent risk reduction, I can't say for certain.

MR. HUDSON: Back in the day, I was actually sitting on the large whale, as well as the dolphins and other types of things, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the New England Aquarium figured very prominently in there, and there's a lot of NGO effect that's been going on for a quarter of a century or more, and this isn't the only things that are facing closures, perhaps, but I still look at the idea of the better mousetrap, as my grandfather would call it, when you deal with the ocean.

Those ropeless things might be the technology for some of the folks, and, when I was running my shrimp boat, if I'm up against the current, it would be 1.8 knots, but, if I was with the current, it would be about three knots, and then, you know, as far as the right whales, they would be all around me, with a calf and stuff like that, just north of the BAB building there at NASA, and you would find them up and down, but, every once in a while, we'll get a mother and a calf, and they'll go down below the Cape, sometimes around the Keys, and there were a couple of them documented all the way to Texas and back, and what happens to the Gulf of Mexico with all that kind of -- I mean, there's not that many of a population, but, if we got the population back to where we had it, and we had at 400, and then we got it up to 500, and now it's down to 300, and I'm just wondering how much ship strike is it, and how much other kinds of issues, with like shark depredation, because, you know, it doesn't take a long time for great whites to, you know, find something and make their effect, and that population is exploding, out of Long Island all the way down south, and these whales -- They're going to be moving, and those whites will be following them, just like the one off of Georgia. They filmed them eating the one out there.

MR. LAKS: Tony.

MR. BENEVENTO: To the point, again, of offering solutions, there is a thing in Jacksonville, and you probably all know about it, OCEARCH, where they tag great whites, and I would suggest, again, that we tag these whales, and they won't let you within 500 feet of them, probably, but tag these whales, and there's only 350 of them, according to the science. Then, you know, we can follow them, like you do the big sharks, and, by the way, the great whites do eat the babies, and I have seen it off of Jacksonville.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Aaron.

MR. KELLY: How about like, for example, like Charlie, and he's a phenomenal commercial fisherman, and he cleans his gear up, and he's clean, and he loves his environment, and he's a good steward of the area, and what about these guys that like -- They leave their gear, 300 or 400 conch pots, during a storm, and they never clean it up, and so you've got all this loose gear floating around everywhere, and maybe a reduction, or a way to pick up, or clean that stuff up, and, I mean, it's -- I mean, is there any penalties or anything? You can just leave stuff out to float indefinitely? I don't know, but there's a lot of gear floating around there that could be cleaned up, and that would help the problem too, I would think.

MR. LOCKE: I would make the suggestion, to help move on from this too for everybody, but, just from what I know about this, with the low cooccurrence in the Southeast, if we were to, as a committee, like put a statement for the council, and it would be to just -- To push for this, the like dynamic area measures, where we can have the aggregations of the whales, know they're there, and they have to -- There's so much money that they're talking about taking away from everybody, with these measures, and there's got to be a way to do that, to speed that up, to speed that -- You know, I've pushed that in these whale meetings. I mean, I hammer them with it.

I think that, from the council's standpoint, or from the Mackerel AP, if we can -- The low cooccurrence, combined with, you know, pushing some sort of -- When you see the whales there, close the area for a hundred-mile or 200-mile grid, a ten-knot rule, and I think everybody would live with that.

I think anybody at this table that runs a charter boat would agree with that. If you know there's whales there, everybody is going to agree to go slow, and I think that would be a good, you know, motion to put towards the council of really pushing for these dynamic area measures, versus a total four or five-month closure of a ten-knot rule.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. DONALSON: Ira and Christina, is this something that we can make a motion about? **I move to make a motion on his recommendation.**

MR. LAKS: Charlie, is that the motion that you're going to make?

MR. LOCKE: I mean, I don't know if you all want to word it a little bit differently, but --

MS. WIEGAND: Let me get some wording up on the board.

MR. LOCKE: I mean, there's already a -- The Large Whale Take Team will tell you that the cooccurrence is super low in the Southeast. It's not really an issue, and the whales are north, other than the calving pairs, but there's just got to be some way of pushing forward this monitoring of opening and closing areas within twenty-four hours' notice. I mean, everybody has a radio on their boat, and the weather. They put fisheries closures up and down on the VHF all the time, you know, when they're stopping fishing, and that's what I recommended to them.

You know, you have -- I think, most of the time, during November 15 to April 15, they put on that right whales are in the area and, you know, be aware, and so everybody is kind of already aware of it, and you could just, you know, marry on to that, of, hey, there's been whales sighted within this grid, and please, vessels, reduce your speed, but just a blanket rule -- I mean, if there's a way of pushing that forward, I think, from our position as a team here, that's going to be our best bet, to try and curb this. I mean, anything would help.

MR. LAKS: Charlie, does that motion look good to you?

MS. WIEGAND: I can read it into the record, if you want.

MR. LAKS: Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: **So, right now, what I have on the board, it says the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel recommends the council notes a low cooccurrence of fishing activities in North Atlantic right whales in the Southeast and recommend regulatory measures focus on monitoring and dynamic management zones, as opposed to the seasonal management areas.**

MR. LOCKE: **I would say that looks good, and I motion to submit that to the council.**

AP MEMBER: Second.

AP MEMBER: It will say right whales are in the area from December through -- Now, I don't know if they are or not, but I know that's what --

AP MEMBER: Well, they do that as blatant during the calving season, and they do that every day, I think just as a way of letting mariners know what's going on.

MR. DONALSON: Not to split hairs, but do we have to second that in the group before we can make changes?

MR. LAKS: First, Charlie, are you okay with "reasonable"?

AP MEMBER: Sure, or put a specific -- 100 miles, you know, that's Jacksonville to Canaveral.

MR. LOCKE: Yes, but a hundred miles -- The way these whales move, they move a lot. I mean, they will move overnight, and so, I mean, I'm just going to tell you that these people are way -- They want to shut it down, and so, you know, 200 miles would probably be better than a hundred miles, to be honest with you, and I just know, from dealing with them, that they are scared of anything happening to these whales, and so you have to give a little bit, and they give a little bit, and hope you meet in the middle, but I just think that you have an argument that there is very low cooccurrence in the Southeast, of vessels and gear. I mean, we're talking about vessels, in this instance, but I think that would just be a good motion to put towards the council, the low cooccurrence factor, and they should do some kind of dynamic closures, when they know whales are present.

MR. LAKS: And you're okay with the "reasonable" put in there?

MR. LOCKE: I mean, I don't know how they're going to look at that. They may take that one word and -- I mean, you focus on monitoring and dynamic management zones, as opposed to seasonal management, and I think take the "reasonable" out of there, myself, personally.

MR. LAKS: That is the motion, and now does someone want to second it? Bill, did you second it? Okay. The motion is seconded. Spud wants to say something.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, and I just wanted to echo what Charlie Locke is talking about, and correct me if misstate it, but the Protected Species people, in their risk analysis, have stated that that population cannot experience a single human-induced mortality a year, not a single human-induced mortality, and recover. That is sort of the context for the severity of the measures that they're talking about implementing.

MR. LOCKE: Yes, and so what they call it, it's called PBR, potential for biological removal, and it's zero with right whales, zero, and like I'll just give you an instance. Bottlenose dolphin in North Carolina, I think it's twenty-four, or twenty-six, and, Tom, you might now, and I can't remember, but, basically, the law says twenty-four, or whatever the number is, bottlenose dolphins can be taken, basically, before action is -- It's zero with right whale, and that's why we lost gillnets in the Southeast.

We had a one-strike-and-you're-out rule, and that's kind of what they're doing with this vessel strike thing, and now they've had two vessels kill a whale, and they're already like we really should have done something before now, and so we're kind of like behind the eight ball, honestly, on this.

MR. LAKS: Rusty, go ahead.

MR. HUDSON: I kind of thought that we needed the words "electronic monitoring", because of the fact that we had suggested this back in the late 1990s, and early 2000s, about being able to know that Snowcone had a device on her, and was able to be, you know, tracked, and the only ones that should be left to having to put some kind of monitoring device on would have been the calves, as they were born, but they didn't want anything like that done.

For the amount of money that's been spent over all this quarter-century, they could have easily had every one of those right whales tagged and monitored and then do like Charlie is saying and let someone know. You don't have to go a hundred miles at that point, you know, as far as closing things down, and you will know how many is in the area, give or take a couple of calves.

MR. LAKS: I just don't know, from this body, if a specific tagging program is really going to be something that we want to put in there, but we can discuss it further. Go ahead, Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: I was just going to say that I have heard them talk about the tagging discussion, and they said it would cause undue stress to the whales, to get that tag on them, and that's what they do with the southern right whales. They actually have all those tagged, and they do something similar to what we're suggesting, but they have already said that it causes too much undue stress, and they're afraid that they might lose a right whale during the tagging process.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Sort of towards what you're talking about, Rusty, they are deploying some passive listening devices now off of high-shipping-activity areas, to document the presence of them, and that -- You know, if a grid like that, or a network, were expanded, it would complement sort of the visual surveys, and then you would have real-time data to feed in, but it goes back to what Charlie was saying. If you can't enact that in a real-time manner, then it's ineffective, and so you've got the typical constraints of governance and being able to make a quick decision, even when you have the data to do it, and so all of that needs to be sort of restructured, I think, and that's one of the challenges, is, even if you have the technology, you've got to be able to put it into place quick enough to make a difference, but there are things out there that can be done to increase awareness of where whales are in time and space and real time.

MR. LAKS: I just want to know if any of you guys think this should be changed or if we're okay with this, and, I mean, if that looks all right to everybody, I think we can go with it, unless anyone has any objection to it.

MR. DONALSON: I think that, since we only have twenty-seven days for comments left, asking for a tagging program, even as a motion from us, is not going to do any good.

AP MEMBER: Tagging is not going to work. We've been done that road a bunch of times, and they're never going to do it.

MR. LAKS: I think this shows our concern, and we can bring it to the council, and they can bring it to NOAA Fisheries, and so is everyone good with this statement? That's it. **The motion passes.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, just to sort of let you guys know what will happen from here, like Steve just noted, comments are due by October 31, and so the council is already working on drafting a letter, and so we'll include this motion in the advisory panel report that will go to the council in December, but we'll also make sure it's included when we send the draft letter out to be reviewed by council leadership, so that they know this was the recommendation that the Mackerel Cobia AP made and why it's been sort of included in the letter for them to consider.

Then, once council leadership has approved the letter, we will send it off to the National Marine Fisheries Service for consideration, and so, again, this is not a council-proposed regulation, and the council, ultimately, has no ability to impact whether this regulation goes through or not, and we simply provide comment. I would also encourage all of you to express your concerns individually, through the regulations.gov program, and comment on the rules as well, in addition to the comment letter the council will send.

MR. LAKS: Guys, I want to thank you for that discussion. I know it was difficult, dealing with that, but we're going to move on to the CMP goals and objectives, and Christina is going to take us through that, and this will be a short one, to let us think about it overnight, and that will get us through the end of our day.

MS. WIEGAND: So we're a little bit ahead of schedule, and next on the agenda is the Spanish mackerel discussion, but I feel like you guys are going to want to talk about that for more than the twenty minutes we have left, and so what I'm going to do now is sort of briefly go over the Coastal Migratory Pelagic FMP objectives, so that you guys know what they are, and then, overnight, you can sort of think about some big-picture thoughts on how you would like to see, you know, the CMP fishery management -- What are your goals and objectives for that, and then we can talk about it tomorrow.

Objectives for fishery management plans are something that is mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the council intends to sort of revise them, as needed, to make sure that they reflect the most up-to-date information and the most up-to-date goals and objectives of the fishery and the fishermen involved in those fisheries, and so, for the CMP FMP, it's actually been quite some time since these have been reviewed and updated, and it was Amendment 6 that last updated them, which was back in 1992, and so they are definitely in need of a good look-over and some discussion from this advisory panel.

There are currently eight objectives. The first objective looks at talking about making sure that FMP stabilizes yield at the maximum sustainable yield, allows recovery of overfished populations, and maintains population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment. Then you've got Objective 2, which talks a bit more about making sure there is a flexible management system that will minimize any sort of regulatory delay, while still allowing sufficient time for public input and management decisions in a way that can allow management to rapidly adapt to any changes in

resource abundance, new scientific information, or maybe changes in the way the fishery is prosecuted.

You've got Objective 3, which looks at providing the necessary information for effective management and establishing a mandatory reporting system for monitoring catch. Objective 4 endeavors to minimize gear and user group conflicts, and then Objective 5 looks at distributing the total allowable catch, or, in this case now the annual catch limit, of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between the recreational and commercial sectors in a way that would mirror what was occurring during the early to mid-1970s, which was prior to the development of the deepwater runaround gillnet fishery, and before the resource was considered overfished.

Then you've got Objective 6 to minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery, and Objective 7 makes sure that we're providing management to address specific migratory groups of king mackerel. If you will remember, everything in this fishery is broken up into an Atlantic migratory group and a Gulf migratory group, and then, finally, Objective 8 is to optimize the social and economic benefits of the CMP fishery.

The council did talk about these objectives at their September meeting, and they passed several motions. First, they wanted to add a new objective to achieve robust fishery reporting and data collection systems across all sectors for monitoring the CMP fishery which minimizes scientific, management, and risk uncertainty. With that objective being added, they proposed removing current Objective 3, which, again, looks that that, you know, information for effective management and mandatory reporting. With that new objective, Objective 3 seemed kind of redundant, and so the council proposed to remove it.

They also looked at making some modifications to the Objective 1 language. Instead of using that "maximum sustainable yield" language, they modified it to have the goal be to achieve and maintain optimum yield, to allow recovery of overfished populations, because this more closely mirrors the language that's in National Standard 1.

We're really looking for quite a bit of information from this advisory panel, when it comes to review of these objectives. Like I said, they haven't been looked at since 1992, and certainly there have been some pretty substantial changes in this fishery since that time, and so we don't need to sort of dive into this right now, because I expect it to be a lengthier conversation than the, you know, fifteen minutes we've got left here in the meeting, but I did want to sort of go over the questions, so that, tonight, when you guys are relaxing and having a beer, whatever you intend to do after the meeting, you can maybe roll around some of these questions in your brain, because these objectives sort of help drive how the council ultimately intends to manage the fishery, and so these may seem like some pretty large, abstract ideas, but they are, in fact, very important to how the council chooses to manage.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: Before we go over the questions, can you restate the removed Objective 3, and so Objective 3 is crossed off the list now, and is that correct?

MS. WIEGAND: That's correct. Objective 3 has essentially been removed and then replaced with this new objective.

MR. NEWMAN: In line of -- This objective amends the language of the Objective 1, or the replaced objective is on the page now? I am just confused.

MS. WIEGAND: So Objective 3, as listed in the table, the council has proposed to remove, and they proposed to remove it because, under Bullet Point 1, they have added this new language that talks about achieving robust fishing reporting and data collection systems, and, essentially, the two are redundant, and so they removed the old one, to replace it with this more up-to-date language.

MR. LAKS: Does that help?

MR. NEWMAN: Kind of, and so why did you put Objective 3 on here, if it's supposed to be removed, is that my question is.

MS. WIEGAND: To make sure that the AP could see both the removed language and the new language.

MR. NEWMAN: So the new language is Objective 1, and I don't see anything about monitoring catch in the Objective 1.

MS. WIEGAND: If you look at Bullet Point 1 here, under the changes that they made at the September 2022 meeting, and apologies that this wasn't clearer.

MR. NEWMAN: Yes, and I understand that, and that's why I was trying to find the rewritten Number 1. I see it now. Thank you. Thank you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so here are some of the things that I would like you guys to think about overnight, and so, those eight objectives, do they accurately reflect the current needs of the fishery, both Atlantic and Gulf king mackerel, Atlantic and Gulf Spanish mackerel, and Gulf cobia? Any changes that are made to this will have to go through the Gulf Council, because this is a joint fishery management plan, and so these goals and objectives do need to reflect the needs of both Atlantic and Gulf fisheries.

Then, aside from sort of big-picture stuff, reflecting on what the needs of the fishery currently are, there are some objectives that we have questions about. Are there still significant gear and user group conflicts that are occurring within the coastal migratory pelagic fisheries? You know, sort of in the past, back in 1980s, when this fishery was first implemented, there were a lot of individual gear quotas, and a lot of conflict between these gears, but is that something that is still occurring in the fishery that needs to be addressed?

Then, in particular, the Spanish mackerel objective is fairly specific, and so does this AP feel like the annual catch limit for Atlantic Spanish mackerel -- Should sector allocations still be based on catches that occurred in the early to mid-1970s? It's important to note that reliable landings data may not be available this far back in time. When we revised allocations for Atlantic king mackerel, the Science Center indicated that data from back this far wasn't really reliable for allocation decisions.

Now, that certainly doesn't mean -- There are many ways to allocate a fishery, aside from just quantitative landings-based, and so we posed this question to the AP of do you feel like that timeframe is still how you would like the sector allocations to be reflected today. Then there is also a lot of talk about waste and bycatch in these alternatives, and is that still an issue in the coastal migratory pelagics fishery that needs to be addressed?

Then, finally, Question 5, are the separate migratory groups of king mackerel adequately being addressed, and there's been a number of changes since 2017 on how king mackerel is managed. If you can remember way far back, even before my time with the council, there were shifting zones for king mackerel, based on where the Atlantic and Gulf stock was thought to be at a given point during the year.

Now we have that set boundary at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line that's in place year-round between Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel, and so the question to you all is, is that the appropriate way to be managing king mackerel, or are there still some concerns about these two migratory groups not being properly addressed through management? I know there are a lot of big-picture ideas there, and I encourage you all to think about it at the bar tonight and come ready to talk about it tomorrow morning.

MR. LAKS: All right, guys. Well, I want to thank you very much for a productive afternoon, and we are going to meet here at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, and we'll finish this up. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 5, 2022.)

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OCTOBER 6, 2022

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Town and Country Inn in Charleston, South Carolina on October 6, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Ira Laks.

MR. LAKS: Good morning, everybody. We're doing to start day-two here. One thing we have to do, to start, is offer public comment to anybody who is online or in the room that wants to make public comment to the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel.

MS. WIEGAND: If you're online and would like to make public comment, you will simply need to raise your hand, to indicate that you would like to do so. It's the little turkey-looking thing that is on your webinar control panel.

MR. LAKS: I checked in the audience, and nobody wants to make comment back there, and so I hope you all had some coffee and we're ready to jump into Spanish mackerel.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. We're starting the morning off with a big issue, and so what I wanted to do for you guys this morning was sort of go over a similar presentation to what I went over with the council in September, to give you all some context and history as to sort of how we've gotten to where we are with Spanish mackerel, and so this all really started back in 2019, before the stock assessment had been completed. There started to be a lot of commercial closures, and this AP, back in 2019, expressed a lot of concern about participation in the commercial Atlantic Spanish mackerel fishery and how this increase in participation may affect Spanish mackerel in the long-term.

Of particular concern were closures, and so, during the 2018-2019 season, the Northern Zone closed, and there was not a transfer of quota from the Southern Zone to the Northern Zone, because the Southern Zone has also been getting very close to hitting their quota, and, just as a refresher, the two zones for commercial Spanish mackerel are the North Carolina-South Carolina line north up to the New York-Connecticut-Rhode Island line, and that's the Northern Zone, and then the Southern Zone is that North Carolina-South Carolina line south to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line in Florida, and so those are the two zones that we're talking about here.

Then, again, during the 2019-2020 season, there was no transfer of quota. The Northern Zone closed early, and the Southern Zone did not close, but got very close to meeting their quota as well, and so the council did request input from the Mackerel Cobia AP, and, during their April 2019 meeting, the AP had recommended a couple of different ways the council could consider managing effort in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery, including a limited-entry permit.

Right now, the commercial Spanish mackerel permit, which is a permit for all Gulf and Atlantic fishermen, is open access, and then they also suggested a gillnet endorsement, with qualifying criteria, particularly for the Southern Zone, and, of course, working with state management agencies, due to the fact that a significant portion of the Spanish mackerel fishery is prosecuted in state waters.

In response to that feedback from the advisory panel, the council chose to set a control date for commercial Spanish mackerel permits of March 7, 2019. This was the first date that the council sort of begun discussing the idea of limited access for the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery, which is why they chose that date, and so that control date is in place right now.

The second thing they decided to do was start work on CMP Framework Amendment 9, and they had sort of reviewed a white paper that looked at effort within the fishery and decided that the best way to sort of create a stop-gap measure, something to put in place while the stock assessment was going on, was to look at modifying accountability measures for commercial Spanish mackerel and to look at lowering the commercial trip limit in the Northern Zone, which is, again, that zone that has been experiencing a lot of early closures, getting consistently earlier and earlier each year.

We took that information back to the advisory panel in October of 2019, and you all had a really in-depth discussion on Atlantic Spanish mackerel management. You again talked about how, for the commercial sector, being able to harvest Spanish mackerel at a time when they're available and profitable to harvest is incredibly important, and then, sort of on the flip side of that, for the recreational sector, high abundance is really key for them, making sure that encounter rates remain high, particularly during peak fishing seasons.

The AP members also expressed a lot of frustration with the current sector allocations. Right now, the sectors are allocated 55 percent commercial and 45 percent recreational, and there was a discussion about a desire to see modifications to the Northern Zone trip limit system, and, again, a consideration of limited entry for the commercial fishery and the gillnet component of the commercial fishery within the State of Florida.

Now we're to December of 2019, and the council is looking at Framework Amendment 9, and, ultimately, they decided that they did not need to address accountability measures at this point in time, based on information they had received from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. At the December meeting, the commission clarified that states are not required to close their waters to commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel in response to a federal closure, and so you will see what's currently in place right now, where, in the event of a federal closure, states will keep their waters open to commercial harvest, oftentimes, depending on the state, at a lower trip limit. I think, for example, in North Carolina, they drop down to a 500-pound trip limit.

Then, in March of 2020, the council looked at some analysis, to see how the trip limit reduction for the Northern Zone that was in Framework Amendment 9 would ultimately impact the fishery, and it looked like lowering that trip limit was only going to result in an extra two, to maybe, five days of fishing, and so the council felt that it wasn't really a worthwhile management decision to make at the time, and they decided to completely halt work on Framework Amendment 9 until after the stock assessment had been completed.

Now we're in 2020, and I think we're all aware that some things happened in 2020 that disrupted normal progress. The council did make it clear to the Science Center, at the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, that the Spanish mackerel assessment was their top priority, and it asked the Science Center to prioritize getting the Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment completed, and so the Science Center agreed to sort of work with the states, to see if they could get some help processing age samples and get this assessment up and running.

As a note, this assessment was originally scheduled to be a standard assessment that started in 2019. The assessment was then pushed to 2020, in order to accommodate other council priorities at the time, and then it had to be further delayed, because of the 2019 government shutdown and, of course, the pandemic, but it did eventually get up and running, but, during the 2020-2021 season, we did, again, see early closures for the Northern Zone, this time in July of 2020, and the Southern Zone also closed early to harvest, on February 3 of 2021.

Some other things started to happen within the fishery. Within the Southern Zone now, NOAA Fisheries came to the council with a request for them to consider modifying the trip limit step-down system that is in place in the Southern Zone. What happens there is there's an adjusted quota, and, once 75 percent of that adjusted quota is met, the trip limit drops down to 1,500 pounds from the original 3,500 pounds. Once that adjusted quota has been met, it drops down to 500 pounds, and then, once the full quota is met, the commercial harvest is closed in the Southern Zone.

Unfortunately, due to late reporting issues, and other issues associated with projections, these trip limit step-downs are coming so close together that they're ultimately not functioning anymore, and, for the last few years, the Science Center, or the Regional Office, has had to move straight from the 3,500-pound trip limit to a closure, without actually implementing those step-downs, and

so they came to the council, asking the council to look at modifying that system, and the council, again, sort of said that we're going to wait and take a holistic look at Spanish mackerel once the stock assessment has been completed.

I promise that we're almost getting up to present time. Work on Spanish mackerel began in the spring of 2021, and, again, we saw early closures that year. The Northern Zone closed on June 28, and the Southern Zone closed on January 21, and so, again, closures are coming earlier and earlier for these zones, and so work on SEDAR 78, which is the Spanish mackerel assessment, wrapped up, and the final assessment was made available on May 13 of this year.

Then the Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed that assessment, at their August 4 meeting, but ultimately decided that more work would need to be done on it before they felt they could consider it the best scientific information available. I am not going to get too into the weeds right now on the SSC's discussion. If that's something you all are interested in, we can sort of dive into it, and Dr. Judd Curtis is here, and he's the one that helps lead the SSC, and he can provide some more detailed information, if that's something that you all are interested in.

Now we're up to September of 2022, the council meeting just a few weeks ago, and the council has requested that the Science Center rerun SEDAR 78 with some new landings that look at to address some of the uncertainty issues with the MRIP estimates. The SSC is going to be reviewing those changes at their upcoming October 2022 meeting, and, ultimately, they're sort of asked to determine whether they think those changes are sufficient enough that they can then recommend the stock assessment be used for management, or, if additional changes are needed, and those changes are substantial, this assessment is going to have to go back on the SEDAR schedule as a research track assessment, which would ultimately delay any sort of management measures that could get into place significantly.

Additionally, given the continued early closures that are occurring within the commercial sector, the council has asked if staff will put together the allocation decision tool, so that they can look at sector allocations, as well as regional allocations, between the commercial Northern and Southern Zones at the December 2022 meeting, and so that will be discussed then, which brings us up to present time.

The Southern Zone still remains open to harvest, but, again, their fishery tends to kick up later this year, and so it's still possible that they will close early. The Northern Zone closed to harvest on June 21 of this year, and so that's an update on where we are with Spanish mackerel, and I am sure that this group has a lot of discussion, and the council didn't ask for any specific input. Again, we're still in this sort of waiting game, to see what happens with the assessment in October, but I think they would certainly love to get feedback from you on what management measures need to be sort of adjusted in the short-term to remedy some of the issues that you all are seeing in this fishery, as well as any input you would like to provide on sector allocations, as well as regional allocations, since that will be a topic of discussion in December.

MR. LAKS: All right, and so we're going to discuss this now, and I'm going to turn to some of the guys who fish the Spanish mackerel, and I would love to hear your thoughts on it, both commercial and recreational, and get an idea of where the fishery is and what you all think needs to be done. Charlie, go ahead.

MR. LOCKE: So, as you all saw, we started with a November closure in the northern sector, you know, which was pretty much at the end of our fall run, and it didn't really affect us that year, and maybe a fewer bigger fish that we caught in the king nets that we had to discard, but that was before the 500 pounds, that we could go to a 500-pound, but, you know, you look at this year, and June 21.

I mean, our Spanish don't even show up until about the first week of May, and so we basically got not even two months to fish, and we were at 500 pounds, and it's just the bulk of our fishery, if you look at North Carolina landings, always came in the fall. Our fall fishery was our hugest, you know, production, and we haven't had that in four or five years now, and it seems like -- Well, since twenty-whenever-it-was, the first year it started closing in July, and it really -- For us in the northern sector, going way back to when it was split, there was concerns, from day-one, that we were going to -- You know, we didn't get enough of the northern -- Some of the years they chose were kind of hurricane years, and there wasn't a lot of landings.

Not to get into all that, but we definitely need an answer to this, because our production is down in the fall. It was a big fishery for us, and I think everybody agrees that it's one of the healthiest stocks that we had, and I had some concerns with what we looked at yesterday, where we were looking at the -- You know, taking all the gillnet landings from way back in the 1980s and discarding that information, when it comes to allocating between recreational and commercial.

You're looking at both user groups, of who is using the resource, when you come up with allocations like that, and, I mean, yes, everybody admits that there was a lot of fish caught back then, with roller rigs, and, I mean, one boat would catch a million pounds in a season, but, to kind of discard that with such a significant commercial, you know, fish, when you weigh-in allocation, especially going forward, when that was when a lot of the landings were happening, and not only -- There's a lot to discuss on this, but, for us, in North Carolina, we've never been pleased with the split.

We never were pleased with what we got for the quota, and we think we need about a million pounds, and we're still going to close on a million pounds, but a million pounds would just be a - - You know, a better number than what we've got now, but Thomas will probably reiterate what's going on up north. The Virginia guys are starting to catch them, and people are starting to fish for them that never used to fish for them, and so it's not just North Carolina. You know, everybody thinks it's North Carolina with this quota, and we catch the bulk of it, but, you know, Virginia is becoming a bigger player, and even up into Maryland they're catching Spanish, and so this is going to be an issue, if we don't address it, for sure.

MR. LAKS: I'm glad you brought up about states to the north catching fish, because that really needs to be taken into account of what's going to be happening in the future. Go ahead, Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: I had a few questions. That stock assessment was terrible. I took off work and spent three days to go through that stock assessment, and I know it like the back of my hand, and it didn't include any independent fisheries data north of Cape Hatteras. It didn't include any of North Carolina's dockside fish monitoring, where they measured fish, and they had thousands of measurements for the last several years, and it went back for a long time.

They had a lot of recreational fishing measurements, and none of that stuff was included in that stock assessment, and it's a damn shame, because they had way more data. The State of North Carolina had way more data available there, and they could have quadrupled the amount of data they had, but, anyway, I'm glad they didn't approve it, and I really wish the SSC would have actually rejected it and went research track, which I know is going to set us back, but I had a question about it.

With the new MRIP calibrations, the South Atlantic landings still are showing the old landing methodology on the website, and, reviewing that, and reviewing the MRIP stuff that I've got on my computer right now, the recreational landings have doubled, and quadrupled, in most years, and is that going to affect the total overall ACL bump when this stock assessment finally does go through, like we've done in a lot of other fisheries? I know they went back and recalibrated those MRIP landings in the past, on some other fisheries we've done, and that's given us a total ACL bump for the coastwide stock, for recreational and commercial, and I was just curious to what maybe Judd or Christina thought about that, coming up. We didn't get that far in the stock assessment, because the stock assessment wasn't the best that it could have been, but I was just curious what you guys thought about that.

DR. CURTIS: Thomas, thanks for tuning in for that SSC review, and I know you had a lot of good input, and it's great to get some public comment during the SSC reviews as well, and so the MRIP new currency is the reason for doing the new assessment, is to produce everything into new FES currencies, and that was a big sticking point with the assessment and with the SSC, and kind of one of the more major points that was contentious, and why they did not want to accept the review, right, and so, currently, for the last council meeting, the council recommended that, and the Science Center agreed, to go back and look at some of those later years in the MRIP estimates, particularly at least 2020, where we had a huge increase, specifically in the shore-based landings estimate.

The Office of Science and Technology is going to look into smoothing that over, to see how much that's going to affect -- How much that affects the projections, and so, unfortunately, being that it was in the terminal year of the assessment, that then has a huge impact on what the projections are, moving forward, and so, if they are able to smooth that over, to something that is more reasonable, with what's in tune with on the water, then that could reduce the projections substantially.

As it is, it was still considered not overfished and not overfishing, but that's only because we take a three-year average of the last fishing rates, essentially, and so the last 2020 assessment, or 2020 year estimate, was above that threshold, but 2019 and 2018 are below it, and so that average kept it below, but, if you were including 2021, then it might be over, and so, yes, we are seeing that increase in the MRIP trends in the recreational sector. They're going to look at that with a smoothing factor, and we'll see -- They're supposed to get that done for the SSC to then review again in October, and see how that changes the estimates.

MR. NEWMAN: I appreciate that, Judd, and my question was kind of more towards -- Like with the recent king mackerel FMP update, the recreational landings were tremendously higher, and so we got a huge overall quota bump, and so then both sectors, the recreational and commercial, also got a total quota bump, and is that something we might be seeing with the Spanish mackerel, coming up, because, traditionally, the recreational sector has been well below half of harvesting their ACL, and, looking at these MRIP numbers, most year, their landings is well over the 2.7

million pounds of ACL they have. Some of the landings are six-million, four-million, going on back, and they have doubled their quota, their catch, some years, and is that going to bump up the total ACL and possibly give the northern sector more quota, is what I am trying to get at.

MS. WIEGAND: I think the answer to your question is both yes and no. What you will have to keep in mind is those FES numbers look substantially higher, but that also means the recreational sector was harvesting much more than we thought, and so, while it's likely that we will see a higher, perhaps -- Depending on how the assessment goes, there's a lot of sort of ifs, ands, or buts here, but, in an example of where there is a higher ABC recommended by the SSC, that doesn't necessarily reflect higher available catch, because the recreational sector was harvesting more than that old CHTS number made it seem.

Whether or not that then results in say the commercial sector, and then the Northern Zone, seeing a bump in available quota to harvest, it will depend a lot on how the council decides to address allocation, and so, for example, with king mackerel, they kept the current percentages in place, and that did ultimately represent, you know, a bump for everyone.

King mackerel was a little bit of a different situation than Spanish mackerel, because not only were we seeing that switch to the FES currency, but there was also a number of years of good recruitment that additionally brought up that acceptable biological catch level, and so I'm not sure that's really a helpful answer to your question, but I think, ultimately, it's going to depend.

MR. NEWMAN: Yes, that helps, and I know there's a lot riding in the air, and that's the bad part about it, but it's just something that we need to start discussing, because, with us, with North Carolina, North Carolina harvests 96, or 97, percent of the northern quota right now, but Virginia is also building a commercial fleet, and they're increasing every year.

I don't think they'll get to the numbers where we're at in North Carolina, but it's something we've got to take into account, and, with us going to a 500-pound bycatch in the fall fishery, we've started building nets that are much bigger than what we've traditionally fished, and so we're essentially high-grading, and catching larger fish, and letting a lot of these smaller fish pass by, that we used to always harvest, and that is accounting for letting a lot more fish travel south and go to Florida and have a chance to live an extra few years, and so the stock is booming. I mean, it's exploding. I mean, it's just unreal how many Spanish are around. You cannot fish -- I think Charlie Locke was saying that he caught Spanish in his gear twelve months out of the year last year. He saw Spanish every month of the year. You know, they weren't big Spanish, but there were still Spanish hanging out in North Carolina waters for twelve months out of the year.

North Carolina has always harvested pretty close to a million pounds. I mean, when we got that 600-pound quota, and people started making the deal out of us busting our quota, we were busting that number, but we were not harvesting any more fish than we always have. We were right there where we have always been, and we just got shorted a quota. A stock assessment happened, and a new FMP was done, and we just were given a quota that was unrealistic for our state to have, but, when we were doing the SSC study, it popped into my head that there's no independent fishery study north of Cape Hatteras, and so I just Googled NEAMAP data, and the first thing that popped up for Spanish mackerel was our gear isn't designed to catch Spanish mackerel, but we see enough of them, and it's a significant species, that we record what we see, and NEAMAP had more Spanish mackerel, in the last three years of their study, than SEAMAP showed.

They were showing young-of-the-year fish just north of Delaware Bay, and so these fish are going further and further north every year, and they are spawning further north, and so you've got a lot of fish that those states don't even -- They see Spanish mackerel, and they're like they don't care, and they don't want to harvest Spanish mackerel, but the trends are increasing, and they are starting to harvest more up that way, but there's a lot of safe fish that never see any pressure north of Virginia, north of North Carolina, and, like I say, it's a very important species, and, if the season is closed for us, you can't physically fish for anything else without catching Spanish mackerel in the commercial fishing industry, and it's like you're going to have them as bycatch.

We need to, at the bare minimum, keep this 500-pound bycatch rule going, whatever way possible, because it's just -- There is no sense in wasting a resource that's there. I mean, we're doing our best to catch less fish with larger nets, and, without the 500-pound bycatch, you're just going to have unnecessary regulatory discards, and there is no sense in having an unnecessary regulatory discard on a very healthy, robust stock.

MR. LAKS: I have a question about that, too. I think one thing that confuses me is, when I look at SERO's ACL tracking, it's in the Coastal Household Telephone, and then, when you go to the stock assessment, you're using the new FES, and so why are we still tracking it in that? I think it adds confusion to the fishermen, when they look online and see that the recreational catch is not as high, and then you get these numbers that come in, and I just think it really adds a lot of confusion, and it needs to be cleared up.

MS. WIEGAND: So, right now, my understanding is that everything that's in FES landings has been back-calculated to CHTS landings, and they do that because the ACL we have in place is set in CHTS landings, and so they have to continue to track it that way until we update the ACL to FES landings.

MR. LAKS: So we're still showing way under in the recreational catch, and so if I look at -- Right now, I'm looking at NOAA's website, and, for your 2021-2022 year, the total reported catch was a-million-six, out of 2.7, and so it's showing that the recreational industry is not catching the fish, but then, in the assessment, you're saying that they're catching a lot more, and so it adds to the confusion. Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: That same year, MRIP is showing 9.8 million pounds is harvested by the recreational sector, versus the one-point-whatever you just said.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

AP MEMBER: And our Spanish mackerel are bigger this year than they have been. Not just more, but bigger. Do you agree with that?

AP MEMBER: Yes, sir.

MR. ENGLISH: Yes, and that's the concerning part of this whole thing, is the MRIP mess. If you all recall, and I don't know if you do, but, the last meeting we had before the pandemic, when we quit having meetings, at this very meeting, it was stated what their intention was. Their intention, with recreational people, and I won't bring out names, but their intention was to take all the fish

that we knew we were going to get, because this fishery is booming, and we know it's got more fish in it, and leave them in the water.

The way they wanted to do that was they had to change the MRIP numbers to get more fish, and their whole concern, with this, was allocating more fish to the recreational sector, and that was their concern. Our concern was taking as many fish out of the fishery as the market would stand and allocate them to the states that needed them, so that everybody would benefit, catching them on a basis to where we didn't oversupply the market, but we didn't undersupply it. That's the commercial side of this, and so we've got two different things going on here.

That's why this thing is so fouled up. Excuse my French. To me, and I'm just a layman, and I don't understand all these terms, and I don't get into all the scientific mess and all that stuff, but, to me, if you've got a sector, the commercial sector, that has concrete numbers, and our numbers are concrete. They are not made up, and they're not extrapolated, and they're not anything. They are concrete numbers.

If you have a sector of that fishery that is concrete, and is a big sector of it, why can't you just take that sector that you know the numbers and go off of that, as to what the numbers are? You know that the effort is -- You use the effort-to-fish ratio is what they used to calculate this stuff out with, and we knew we put in less effort to catch more fish, and, therefore, there is more fish, and, I mean, that's why we set this whole thing up. Why not take your concrete numbers and use them, and the recreational sector will fall in line.

Their numbers can't change. If the recreational sector catches too many fish, because we don't know what they are, it will show in the commercial catches. It will show up. It will show up in the numbers, and so, to me, if you just take the concrete numbers and work off of them, we'll have the proper stock assessment, and we may not want to give it all out. If the numbers are what I think they should be, it ought to double or triple. I mean, there's just that many fish out there, and we don't need that many. We need to calculate the market, and that's the other thing that I want to emphasize on this, and I want to make sure I've got this on the record.

We've got the commercial sector and the recreational sector, and well, that's not the case. We have the consumer sector and nobody, nobody, talks about the consumer. The consumer has a right to the fish, just like everybody else does. The recreational sector catches them for the consumer, and we have the recreational sector, and that's the fishermen that just go out and have fun, but we have the commercial recreational sector too, and those are the ones that push leaving all the fish in, so that they're easier to catch and all this stuff, and so we need to clarify that and know that that's what we're dealing with. When we know all the facts, then maybe we can come up with the right thing and allocate the fish accordingly, and so I just hope we can get a proper stock assessment, with concrete numbers, and not keep playing this MRIP game. It's just wrong.

MR. LAKS: Stephen.

MR. DONALSON: Good morning. Steve, can you define the commercial recreational sector?

MR. ENGLISH: Yes, and your charter boats and the people that make money selling the trips to, you know, the charter fishing. The charter boats are behind 90 percent of the changes to the -- In Florida in particular, and the charter fishermen -- Two or three charter fishermen can change the

whole state law, and they're the ones that always push it, because they're commercial, just like we are.

Anybody that sells trips, or sells fish, or sells -- It's the same thing, and we're both commercial, and then you have your recreational people that like to go out and catch a fish and take it home and cook it, and they're competing against the charter sector, who wants to catch them and turn them loose, but we end up with a mess with that, and I think we could do a better job.

MR. DONALSON: The charter sector is -- Correct me if I'm wrong, Christina, but that volume is captured underneath the commercial quota, correct?

MR. ENGLISH: No.

MR. DONALSON: It's got its own quota? There's three quotas?

MS. WIEGAND: So there are two quotas and we just have --

MR. DONALSON: So a charter captain counts as recreational for Spanish mackerel, but nothing else?

MR. ENGLISH: Yes, and that's why I said we've got two commercial groups, and we need to recognize that. Once we recognize that, now we've got all the facts on the table, and I know it's difficult, and we don't want to do it, but we've got all the facts on the table when we do that. Let's understand what we're dealing with.

MR. LAKS: Steve, as I have understood it, and I could be wrong, but the MSA states that there are three different sectors. There is for-hire, there is commercial, and there is recreational. The for-hire and recreational fish off the recreational allocation, but, technically, they are two different sectors. Go ahead.

DR. CURTIS: Thanks. Just to kind of address your concerns with the stock assessment and the different data forms for commercial and rec, and I agree the commercial data is a lot more reliable, and it's always a lot more precise than the recreational data, and especially with MRIP coming in, and they're still trying to figure it out.

The issue, from a stock assessment perspective, is you need to have some sort of index of the recreational sector and the effort, and so you can't necessarily tie just the commercial landings and then extrapolate from there to the recreational sector. They need their own index to go into the stock assessment process, to answer your question.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: So here -- This isn't really something you can put into a stock assessment, but so, for the last four years, I think we've closed by the end of the summer, and we didn't get our fall, and so you're talking -- I have spot fished, and I've got spot and sea mullet. I fished for something else, and I got my 500-pound bycatch, and I was one of the first to argue for a 500-pound, because you couldn't get away from Spanish. Like Thomas says, you can't fish for anything without catching Spanish, at that time of year that they're coming through.

If you would have had a fishery that never closed, the last four years, we could have been pushing two-million pounds. I mean, seriously, because there's that many fish around, and I don't know how that factors in, but we were at a million-eighty last year, for the northern sector, and is that what it wound up -- It was really high, and then it came down to like a million-eighty, and it would have been double that, if you wouldn't have had the 500 pounds, because guys like myself are fishing for other things, and you're on a 500-pound trip limit.

This year, fuel, man, is friggin' ridiculous, and, a lot of guys, they're not even going to go catch their 500 pounds, because they're going to go bottom fishing, or tuna fishing, or something else that's worth more, and so I don't know how that can be added into whatever they're going to go to revise it, but, on a 500-pound, to catch, you know, what we've caught, it would literally be double, and, I mean, wouldn't you agree, Thomas? It could be -- We could be pushing two-million pounds in the northern sector right now.

MR. NEWMAN: The catch per unit effort has expanded greatly since we went to the 500-pound catch limit. We're using half the amount of gear that we normally use in the fall. Like I said, we've almost -- We've increased our mesh sizes 25 or 30 or 40 percent. I mean, we used to use three-and-a-half-inch stretch gear, and now we're using -- Some guys are using almost five-inch stretch gear to catch Spanish.

I mean, I'm currently using four-and-a-half-inch stretch, just because we don't want to catch more than our limit, and that right there is just -- We're catching a fourth, or a fifth, of the fish we would normally be catching this time of year, because of the reduced trip limit, like I said, and that's something that I tried to document with the SSC, how our catch per unit effort has gone through the roof, you know, with our limited -- Because, also, North Carolina has also -- I believe it was 2019 that they reduced the amount of yardage we could use in internal waters in our Spanish mackerel fisheries, and, traditionally, we had used around 2,400 or 2,500 yards, and they reduced our yardage to 1,500 yards, and then, after the 500-pound closure, that 1,500 yards was further reduced to 800 yards, was all the amount of gear we were able to use in internal waters, and so they essentially cut our gear to a third of what we were used to using, and so, to have us still catching this many fish, with such a reduced effort, is unreal. I mean, it should -- That alone should show that the stock is very robust and the trends are on an upward trend in the population numbers.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: That's the other thing too, what I was alluding to on -- Even if we get more fish on the quota, we still need to take the markets into consideration. Florida, we've got a 3.2-million-pound quota, and I would say over half of that quota goes to the freezer, or probably over half of it will go to the freezer, at super low prices to the fishermen, and that's fine. That's fine, if we've got the fish to catch, but, when we go to the 500, if we get the people out of it, the price will go up.

The problem is, when the fish are closed down in Florida, everybody stays in it, and the price doesn't go up. We've got fifty or sixty boats that still do it. They will drop out. This year, they dropped out, and the price kind of hovered, and then it started to go up, and ten or fifteen of them come back. Well, what was happening was, on our 500-pound trip limit, they weren't being checked, and they were bringing in 2,000, or 2,500, on our 500-pound trip limit, and selling them

under all different licenses and everything else. We have to change that. That has to be changed, and that's on the state level. We've got to do that in the state waters.

We can't really get an accurate picture as to whether, under 500 pounds, the price, with the number of fishermen that we have, forty or fifty boats, would go up, and we would get a better price for our fish, and that's what we look at, is catch less fish for a better price and a fair price for the fair market, and so, if you get more quota in North Carolina, which is fine, but are you going to then get to where you also have a freezer market, or are you just going to glut the market, fishing for a low price, until the quota is caught, and then, when you go to 500, get a better price on your fish, and, I mean, that's what the fishermen have to look at.

Yes, you could use more fish on the northern quota, and, if we get more, that's where they should go, is to the northern quota. Florida doesn't need any, because we're sending ours to the freezer as it is, and we have to consider the markets in this thing, when we're considering stuff like this.

MR. LAKS: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: This is a little bit of a question for our North Carolina commercial fishermen here, and I'm just curious if you could just detail a little bit how the fishery changes for you when you go from fishing when the federal waters is open to the 500-pound limit. Meaning like how do you change your gear, and are you normally fishing in federal waters, and I just think that would be helpful, to get some clarification on that.

MR. NEWMAN: I would say that 99 percent, if not 100 percent, of North Carolina's fishery is in state waters. There's really not anybody fishing in federal waters. If it is, it's just a fluke thing, to be honest, but most of our fishing is done either in internal waters or within a mile of the beach, or really probably a half-a-mile, but, when we get to the 500-pound trip limit -- We've hit it so this early this year, and the summer fishing slows anyway, and so we just keep kind of fishing during the summer like normal, but, during the fall fisheries, when the fish really show up, when they're migrating back south to Florida, we have changed our -- Instead of setting four nets, we're setting one and two nets, and we're also using a lot larger mesh size.

Like say, traditionally, in the fall, I believe you use three-and-a-half and three-and-three-quarter stretch mesh, is what we always traditionally used, and everybody used four or five nets, and now we're setting anywhere from four-inch to five-inch gear, and using one or two nets, and not letting them soak.

I mean, we used to let them soak for thirty minutes, or an hour, on the first set, right before daylight, and now guys go out there and wait for the sun to get up, and we kind of take our time, and we're just trying to catch the larger fish, the larges and the jumbos, or XLs, because they're usually worth more than a medium-sized Spanish mackerel, and, plus, the medium mackerel are -- Obviously, there is more of them, and so we don't want to go over our limit and have to have regulatory discards, and so we target larger fish, and hopefully for a better profit, and also to stay within the 500-pound trip limit.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: So I bottom fish in the summertime, and so sometimes I would stop before it went to 500 pounds, but, most of them, when it went to 500 pounds, that's when I would turn the page and go bottom fishing, but then, like in July, it would blow southwest for two week straight, thirty -- You can't get offshore, and I would go down and catch my 500 pounds and set shark gear and longline some blacktips, to add to it, because 500 pounds is -- Especially in the summer months, they're mediums. They're straight mediums, and they're little fish, and sometimes they're cheap, and, like I said, with fuel the way it was, it wasn't enough. You had to have something to go with it, to add to it.

When it becomes not a directed fishery, which is basically what the 500 pounds is -- I mean, yes, it's directed, like Thomas says. With the bigger net, you catch the larger fish. Our 500-pound limit, last week, was like twelve-hundred-bucks, because we were catching large and jumbos, you know, versus, when they're a dollar, and you're catching 500 pounds, and that's that 500-bucks, and that's not really worth time and effort, and you've got a crew on there, and you've got to pay them a percentage and everything.

We have had to fish differently in North Carolina, to try to increase -- You're trying to make the most of what you have, and you've got 500 pounds, and how can you make the most of it, but it's kept a lot of people out of it in the fall that used to depend on it. I mean, some of the older guys, Tommy Danchese and Jimmy Taylor, I mean, these guys -- They live for the fall Spanish run, and now they don't -- I mean, to them, it's not really worth the 500 pounds. They don't want to go out there and, you know, build the gear for -- Our nets are way expensive now, ten-bucks a pound for webbing, and I don't know if anybody knows what petroleum -- Maybe you all have some similar experiences, and everything has gone up.

It's a very costly fishery for 500 pounds, and so you don't have a lot of people, you know, doing it if it's not worth it, and it's kept a lot of the guys that really used to produce a lot of fish out of the fishery, by being in the 500 pounds.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Tony.

MR. BENEVENTO: What was the thought process behind the 500 pounds, instead of having, you know, like the commercial sector, and when you hit, and I'm going to make this up, but a million pounds, no matter who catches it?

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: That started in Florida. When we hit our quota, we went to the state, and we said there are millions of pounds of fish out here, and the market still needs fish, and they still need fish, the fresh market, and the State of Florida agreed with us, and they said, yes, let's just do a 500-pound trip limit, to keep the fresh market. You're not closing the fresh market, and that's how it started originally, in Florida, and then, of course, when North Carolina started hitting their quota, we encouraged North Carolina to do the same thing, and they did, and now Virginia did. The first year, they kept it at 3,500, but, this last couple of years, I think they went to 500, but Virginia lets you stack permits, and so there 500-pound trip limit could be 2,000, or 3,000, or however many - - They are open-access permits, and so anybody can get one, and so, if you can stack permits, you can put all you want on a boat and catch all you want, and so that's where the Atlantic States has

to come back, and all get together, and decide, you know -- The 500-pound trip limit, I feel, is appropriate.

It appears to be working. It allows you to catch enough to go, and it allows enough to maintain the market, and so everybody kind of -- It kind of works in favor like that. Now, the unlimited is great, and, I mean, the market will stand more than the 500, at times, but then only so much more, and then, like I said, they go to freezer fish, and that's a whole different thing.

MR. LOCKE: What you guys might not understand, that don't commercial fish, is we've lost markets, over the years, when we have no fish to produce it. If you take a -- The restaurants depend on it, and it's on the menu, and, all of a sudden, you eliminate that, and you lose that market share. The next thing you now, they're buying basa or something from overseas, to fill that gap, and you may never get that market share back, and so, as a fisherman, we never want a closure. We would rather have less, year-round, than a lot at a certain amount of time, and then the quota is over, because, if you lose that market, you never get it back.

MR. LAKS: There is also a bycatch issue, with having 500 pounds, where, if someone strikes a net for something else, and they get 200 pounds of dead mackerel, there's no sense in throwing it away, right, and it's a wasted resource then, and so bycatch is also an issue, and having somewhat of a season open. Thomas and then Rusty.

MR. NEWMAN: Another reason they had the 500-pound allowance was we weren't reaching our total ACL. The recreational sector was underharvesting by 50 to 70 percent, most years, and so there was a caveat in the FMP that says, if the total ACL wasn't being met, that we could still have a 500-pound allowance, per state.

MS. WIEGAND: I just want to -- As we talk about this 500-pound allowance, I want to sort of reiterate that that's something that was decided upon by the states and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. That, in and of itself, is not a council regulation. Federal waters still have to close once the commercial quota has been met, as mandated in the FMP. This 500-pound allowance was established by the states, and, ultimately, because the council sort of found out that the commission had this allowance in place, they decided to wait to do regulations until after the stock assessment, because that allowed the fishermen to keep fishing, but it is a state regulation and not a federal one.

MR. LAKS: Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: One of the last council meetings I think I was at, Steve Poland was still sitting on the council for North Carolina, and, each year, your Spanish mackerel were increasing, and then you got shut down, and, of course, you're indicating most of that Spanish are being caught in state waters, and you all have a lot more nets, because our few nets that we have in Florida have to fish in federal waters, and so we have a little cast net fishery, I think, down there in Martin County, but, as far as Spanish mackerel, I didn't represent them, but I looked out after them, and I sat down with Steve Poland, and he was trying to figure out what to do, because you all were going to have to throw everything back.

I looked at him, and I said, well, go talk to Jessica, because we already have a 500-pound allowance in our state waters and stuff, and we can keep it open, and, yet, we weren't catching ours, and so

you all's prices, when you had high volume of Spanish, kind of affects our prices down there in Florida too, but it's mostly a hook-and-line, I guess, fishery, predominantly, since they had regulated those nets in Florida.

Overall, the hope was to get the Spanish mackerel assessment and see the proof in the pudding, that everything was a lot better than people knew. Just like our king mackerel is an awesome rebuilding story, but, as it was, and at least you all now have the 500 pounds, but, until you get that research track done, and all that kind of stuff, you don't know what you're going to have. With our king, we didn't know what we were going to have until we got what we got, and now we have to figure out how to catch it, and so hopefully this research track, and stuff, the assessment results, will be of use, as opposed to being stuck in the mud, and this is all I'm saying, and it's the same old story, but just a different year and a different fish.

MR. LAKS: I think, at this point, I would like to ask our two council members, and staff, and really what do you want from this body, because there is a big state issue, right, and, I mean, we can't really determine what's happening with the 500 pounds in the commercial fishery, and this body, three or four years ago, suggested that we start working on Spanish mackerel, and I think I put it as let's start the equation, and we could plug the numbers in after, and we were told let's wait for the assessment.

Well, here we are, and we waited for the assessment, and it's like waiting for Christmas morning, and we got a lump of coal, and so where do we go, as a body? What really do you want us to discuss, and what can we help you with? You know, I think it's the same issue, but, Spud, you're particularly -- With your state commission role, it's important to --

MR. WOODWARD: Sure. I mean, we were pretty frustrated with this outcome, and I guess we're cautiously optimistic that the situation will improve with these other analyses, but we really don't know, and, you know, to kind of get back to what Thomas was talking about, you know, there is an expectation that, if your recreational catch estimates go up, there obviously had to be higher productivity from the stock, in order to produce those catches.

The expectation is you end up with hopefully a higher acceptable biological catch, but, because of the nuances of the way all this assessment stuff works, you know, you've got forward-looking projections, and, in the situation with king mackerel, they were optimistic and gave us a higher ACL, because we had a higher ABC. Well, Judd, correct me, and Christina, but we're not looking at that with the current assessment. We're looking at the opposite of that, but that doesn't comport with what we all know to be the situation on the water, and so nobody wants to see the assessment delayed, but there's a lot at stake here.

Our ability to change, you know, the quantity of fish that can be caught is constrained by that assessment. I mean, we don't have the ability to say, well, we're going to make our own sort of ad hoc adjustment, based on what we're seeing on the water, and we're going to bump up this ACL, because the Scientific and Statistical Committee is the one that sets the ABC for us. I think, in the short-term, is there anything that the council can do, under the existing ABC and ACL, to remedy some of these problems?

You know, we don't need a new ABC to revisit allocation, and we don't have to. Circumstances in the fishery can change, and we can examine allocation, and that's why we're going to use the

allocation decision tool, at the December meeting, to take a fresh look at the circumstances that exist now and what we have available as the pie, if you want to call it that. We've got a pie of a certain size, and how do you divvy that pie up, regionally, by sector, to address the needs in the best fair and equitable manner, and what can we do, in the short-term, through the tools we have available to us, framework actions or whatever it might be, to address some of this and get some relief,

If the SSC does not accept that assessment, and it has to be a research track, we're looking at what, Judd? 2028. I mean, we're going to live five more years, you know, under the circumstances, but, if that's what happens, that's what happens, and so what can we do to fix things, in the short-term, to make things better?

MR. LAKS: So that makes me a little frustrated, because I know that this body personally asked for port meetings for mackerel, okay, and we discussed all these problems before, and where is this fishery going to go in the future, and we brought up the point that the numbers are always going to change, but how do we want the fishery to look, and, you know, I think, at this point, do we have to paint all the Spanish mackerel red to get some care about this fishery? I mean, do we have to put red snapper suits on them?

You know, we're down the road now, and we're all sitting here, and we wanted port meetings, and we asked for, you know, some sort of summit with the states, to figure out how this fishery can go forward, and we've gotten nothing but wait for the assessment, and so I know, personally, it eats at me a little bit that we've done nothing, right, and we've waited five years, and talked about this, and it was wait, wait, wait, and here we are, and it's basically wait, wait, wait again. The numbers are always going to change, with every assessment, but how do we make this fishery, and how do we start working on fixing the issues that are in the fishery, regardless of the numbers, and that was my concern. I have Thomas, and then Charlie, and then Stephen.

MR. NEWMAN: This takes me right back to the MRIP versus the South Atlantic reported landings. In 2021, MRIP has the harvest, the dead discards and landed fish, at 9.8 million, but, yet, the South Atlantic shows that it's, what, 1.8 million, and they're showing the recreational industry is only harvesting half of their quota, and so you're telling me that their quota should be twenty-million pounds of fish, according to -- If you doubled the MRIP catch, that would be a quota of twenty-million pounds for the recreational sector.

I just don't know where the -- If we were going to look at reallocation, are they going to be looking at the recalibrated numbers, that the South Atlantic uses, or are they going to use the MRIP numbers that don't have a -- The MRIP numbers aren't reflective of a current recreational ACL, and that's where the confusion, for me, comes, because, right now, what do we have to reallocate? Is there anything left in the quota to reallocate, and that's my concern.

MR. WOODWARD: My understanding, and this is what we've been told since these FES recalibrations happened, is that those are now the best scientific information available, and that's what has to be used in stock status determinations and, subsequently, in setting ABCs, and so that's sort of, I guess, the conundrum we're in, is we don't have a new ABC set in that currency, and, I mean, is that an accurate way to describe it?

Absent that, we can't ad hoc take the MRIP estimates and say, well, we're going to, ourselves, as a council, we're going to set a new ACL based on those. I mean, I think, obviously, we would like to be able to do that, but that's not within our purview, and I certainly understand the frustration, and trust me. I hate to set on my hands when there is problems going on, you know, and we've put a lot of, I guess, faith in getting something that was going to give us enough fish to start addressing these issues, as well as expansion of the fishery, because that's the whole other part of this equation that we're going to have to deal with, is what happens when these landings in the Mid start coming in and start affecting the timing of quota closures, and it's going to aggravate an already existing problem. Until you get more fish, hopefully, to compensate for some of this, you're sort of stuck, and, I mean, it's a frustrating thing for everybody.

MR. LAKS: Thomas, if it's quick and to that point, and then we're going to Charlie and Steve, and then Tom Roller after that.

MR. NEWMAN: Well, that's the only thing I could see the council would be able to do, is to reallocate. My question is what is there to reallocate, because we can't take something that's not there, and so it looks, to me, looking at the South Atlantic information, that the recreational sector traditionally only averages about harvesting half of its quota, and so that would leave about 1.3, or 1.4, million pounds that could possibly be reallocated, and is that what the council would be looking at to reallocate?

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I mean, I assume that would be within our ability to do that with the Coastal Household Telephone Survey numbers, because that's what we have as an ABC and an ACL, but the danger of that is that, going forward, the recreational harvest is going to be estimated based on FES, and you would blow through -- I mean, you will blow through the CHTS quota anyway, because you already are, since the numbers you showed illustrate that, and so that's -- Judd or Christina or Tom or somebody have anything to that?

MR. NEWMAN: But who is to say that the recreational ACL is not going to be quadrupled, when you start using the new currency, and that's the unknown, is where is the new recreational ACL going to be with the new currency.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, what's unknown is the total ACL as well. I mean, that's the big unknown, is how many fish will be available to be caught, period, and then you divvy that -- Because what we did in king mackerel is, obviously, we had an ABC that increased significantly, and then, you know, we were just -- By the way the numbers worked, in leaving the allocation percentages the same, you ended up with a larger ACL for both sectors, but the tricky part is that, if we set it based on the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, there will be a time when everything is measured in that new currency, and that's when you will end up having a disconnect.

MR. NEWMAN: Well, the trends aren't following. Like I said, the South Atlantic harvest trends, what they're showing with the calibrations, they aren't -- The trend is not following the MRIP trends. The percentage of -- What was the percentage of the last three or four years that the South Atlantic shows that the recreational sector harvested?

MS. WIEGAND: I don't know the last few, the exact percentage the last few years, off the top of my head, but it has averaged around 50 percent.

MR. NEWMAN: It's averaged around 50 percent, but MRIP is showing 2019 landings were 4.8 million, and, in 2020, it's 8.2 million. In 2021, it's 9.8 million, and so the landings have doubled, according to MRIP, but they haven't doubled according to the South Atlantic landings, is what I'm trying to convey.

MR. LAKS: They're in two different currencies though.

MR. NEWMAN: But if I have an exchange rate in another country, the exchange rate is the same, and it doesn't -- If a hundred dollars is worth a dollar in another country, a hundred dollars is worth a dollar, but, right here, 4.8 million was half the quota, but 9.8 million was also half the quota, is what I'm trying to -- Is how it got --

MR. LAKS: Right, and the assessment is going to make that exchange, but it had problems, and that's going to get a little more technical, and I want to move into just the bigger picture of the fishery, and we're going to go to Charlie, Steve, and then Tom Roller and then Will.

MR. LOCKE: So, when you start talking reallocation, I get very nervous, because I have dealt with two fisheries, one bluefish, and I'm on the bluefish advisory for the Mid-Atlantic, and my recommendation to them was no reallocation until we get a handle on what the recreational is catching. I mean, to me, that's what is driving this, and a good example -- Like I'm with Thomas. The first assumption would be, if the MRIP is showing they're catching all these fish, there's going to be a bump in the overall quota that is going to help us, but that's not been the case. That has not been the trend, just like with cobia.

We got this, all of a sudden, one-point -- It went from a 600,000-pound recreational to 1.6 million pounds, and our commercial was 78,000, and it was going to double, to 140,000, and, when all that came out, the recreational side cried foul, like, oh my god, it's a windfall for the commercial, and that's too many fish. We had an 80 percent quota, and then they went back and reallocated and took 4 percent of our quota, and gave it to the rec side, when they're already got 1.6 million pounds, and so we were stuck with the same amount we had always been catching, and so this MRIP data -- It's great for the stock, and you get all these extra fish, but we're not getting the benefit of it.

It's like Steve said, and the unspoken person at this table is the consumer. There is nobody speaking for them, and so you take a stock of fish, and then you start talking about reallocating, and it's always going to the recreational on this pie-in-the-sky data, MRIP data, that nobody is really -- I mean, it's the best available, but it's kind of like -- It's kind of weird data, you know what I'm saying, and it's all over the place, and so I would caution, when you start talking reallocation, without even knowing what we're talking about yet.

I mean, even though we have more of the quota than they do, we've got to get a handle on recreational landings, and we've got to get some -- We've got to get, you know, eTRIPS or whatever, but reallocation is scary for me, because we always lose in the end.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: On the reallocation, that's what I was saying, is we don't need to be doing that. The best available science, 100 percent concrete numbers on the commercial sector and made-up

numbers on the MRIP sector, extrapolated numbers, and what's the best available science on that? Is it the MRIP numbers, or is the concrete numbers you have? You've got the concrete numbers, and go by them. Go by the concrete numbers. That's the best available science and not the numbers that are just nobody knows what they are, and they can be manipulated and twisted and turned and made to be whatever they want. It will benefit both fisheries. It will benefit both fisheries, just by going by the numbers you know. You know the numbers. That's all I've got to say on that right this minute.

MR. LAKS: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Another discussion question, if we could, based off of some previous discussions, as a follow-up. Since a lot of this discussion is regarding the Northern Zone, the Northern Zone quota, I'm just curious what the fishermen are seeing in the fishery. As we know, in North Carolina, state fisheries are in a bit of upheaval. Our southern flounder fishery is shut down, and the striped bass fishery is collapsing, and so I'm sure there is a lot of movement in the commercial industry, and so I'm just curious what folks are seeing in the last few years for participation and that sort of thing.

MR. LAKS: Let's get to that effort, and I think there were a few people that were still talking.

MR. ROLLER: That's fine.

MR. LAKS: Will, did you want to say something? Judd, did you want to jump in?

DR. CURTIS: The best scientific information available kind of criteria, you know, it's split between kind of the commercial and the recreational sectors, and it needs to be, and so, looking at -- Just because of different reporting requirements, the way they're prosecuted, and so, you know, we can call it BSIA for commercial, but then we also have to determine a BSIA for the recreational sector as well, and, at this point, the SSC has voted, or recommended, that the FES be considered the BSIA, and so that's why that is being used right now for estimating recreational effort.

MR. LAKS: Will.

MR. JONES: I don't have a lot to say as far as, you know, how the commercial fishery works, but, from our point of view, as for-hire vessels, especially in North Carolina, like Charlie was saying, reallocation, and I would be worried about if the allocation for recreational was lowered, whether we use the allocation or not, and, like you were saying, the fish being in the water, and they're more valuable in the water for the recreational sector.

If we -- I would hate to see, and I think I can speak for other recreational for-hire vessels, and I would hate to see the allocation lower for recreational. I think there is other ways to solve it, like reallocating between the regional zones or with the different types of gear and how they're fishing them, timing of the fishery and everything, and I just would not like to see the allocation for recreational lower, and that would be worrisome for the whole recreational fishery, I think.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: I don't know, and I guess you're new, but we had discussed this in a meeting, several meetings back, and they had got all the paperwork, and Christina did a paper, from the beginning of the mackerel to now, until present, and we discovered on that, thirty years ago, that they reallocated a percentage of the commercial sector fish to the recreational sector, for thirty years, and that was never utilized, never. The rec sector never needed it, and we could have used it, in those thirty years, from time to time, and that wasn't even taken into account on the stock assessment.

Thirty years, and it was about 1.4 million pounds a year, is what I calculated it out to be, and so, for thirty years, 1.4 million pounds of the commercial sector was allocated to the recreational sector that they didn't use, and we couldn't use it, and they didn't need it, and didn't use it, and so you've got that many fish laying there right now that you could use to solve some of these problems, but we just look at it, and we don't even talk about it, and it's like it doesn't exist.

MR. JONES: I think that's a valid point. I think, given the problems with the data collection that we have, probably the last thing we should think about is going after the recreational allocation, and I think we need to attack the problem from other angles, like getting better data, like you all said. You know, in North Carolina, especially in the recreational sector, for-hire and everything, we're used to, you know, losing fisheries, and so I think attacking it at every other angle first would be a lot better than just going after the recreational allocation.

MR. ENGLISH: I agree with you. I agree with you. 100 percent, I agree with you. What we should be doing -- To me, what we should be doing is 95 percent of the Spanish mackerel quota is caught in state waters, and there's only about 5 percent of it that is caught in federal waters, right there at Cape Canaveral down in Florida, and that's the only federal-water fishery there is.

To me, the federal agency should set how many fish can we take out of this quota, out of this body of fish, before we hurt it. That's what they should set, and, since it's all caught in the states, now we should get the states together, and we should come up as to how we're going to catch it, but that should be the only job, is not to allocate it between everybody, but just to set how much can we take out of this fishery and not damage it, and that is called MSY, I am thinking, maximum sustainable yield. That's what we used to go by, years and years and years ago, and that's how much can we take out, but what scares me about that is, once again, these MRIP numbers, where we can modify them to be anything we want to accomplish a goal of allocation, and that's the whole part of this thing that messes the whole system up.

There's enough fish out there for everybody. God, there's plenty for everybody, and everybody should get more, but we need to address it properly, instead of -- I said this at that one meeting, is let's don't start playing politics with these fish, and let's do what we can to make sure we don't over catch them, but where everybody can catch fish, and that's my goal.

MR. LAKS: Christina, did you want to summarize a little bit of the history?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, and so I just -- While we're talking about allocations between the commercial and recreational sector, I did want to sort of provide you all the history, so you had the context for where we started and how we ended up with the current allocations we have now, because the paper that Steve mentioned was put together back in September of 2019, I think, and

so I'm not sure if many of you have even had the chance to look at it. I can send it out, though do note that the data in that is, obviously, a little bit old at this point.

Spanish mackerel allocations were set way back in the 1980s, in Amendment 2 to CMP, and that was when they originally sort of separated them out to be a Gulf stock and an Atlantic stock, and, at the time, the Atlantic stock was allocated between the two sectors based on data from 1979 to 1985, and, based on that landings stream, you had a commercial allocation of 76 percent and a recreational allocation of 24 percent.

Then, about a year later, the council decided to reallocate Spanish mackerel equally between the commercial and recreational sectors, and so a 50/50 percent allocation, and they chose to do that, one, because they felt that both user groups were capable of harvesting the entire available catch, and so the most equitable allocation was that 50/50. Additionally, there was some qualitative information that indicated that recreational catches, in the early to mid-1970s, had been affected by increasing commercial effort in the 1970s, and so they decided to go with that 50/50 split.

Then, about ten years after that, there were concerns that the recreational sector was not catching the majority of their quota, whereas the commercial sector was bumping up against theirs, and so they shifted 5 percent of the allocation over to the commercial sector, which is how we've ended up with the 55 percent/45 percent commercial/recreational allocation that we have today, and so just to provide you all some historical context for where we started and how we ended up with the current sector allocations.

MR. LAKS: Brad, did you have something?

MR. PHILLIPS: I wanted to add a little something. You know, like we're talking about recreational, and like the charter boats normally -- You can tell what they caught, but the recreational fisherman, who goes out there and catches ten to twelve Spanish mackerel at a time, that's never allocated, never, ever allocated, and you don't know how many they caught and what they did, and so the recreational side, on that, is never delegated, and that's all I wanted to say about that. You have no idea how many fish were caught.

Then I want to go back to the stock assessment, and I have been to Florida, and the data is like seven years old. By the time it goes through the system, and does this and that, the data is actually about seven years old, and so it's really not a good stock assessment, and is that correct?

MR. LAKS: Yes, the data is definitely old, but how do you gather it in real-time and do it, and so, I mean, I think that's with any kind of research, right, and you can't just do a project and say what do we have today, and it doesn't work like that, and so that's definitely a flaw in all processes.

One thing I would like to say, getting back to the point that I made before, and maybe a little bit to your comments, Spud, is, when you talk about waiting for the assessment and plugging it in, like we did in king mackerel, king mackerel is a much more regulated, hammered-out fishery, and there's people at this table that did a lot of work on that, and other council members, and we had port meetings that the council members came to, and we really did a lot of work to make that fishery into what it is.

Yes, the framework was there to plug the numbers in, and the problem here, again, is there's no framework, and it's all over, and we do have -- You know, as Steve was saying, and Charlie, the states have the freedom to do all these things, and so, unless everybody gets together, you know, you can't do that with king mackerel, because the states have followed the federal regulations in king mackerel, and so it's a different animal, when it comes to Spanish mackerel. The states are not going to follow, necessarily, what the federal government does, and so we need to get everybody onboard, to get a plan for this fishery, and the allocation tool -- I don't remember if it was this body, or if we had a little subset of members on this, on a call when you were developing the allocation tool.

I know I was asked if I thought that it should be used -- If climate change should be introduced into the allocation tool, and I said yes, but I think the council ultimately decided not to use it, and this is the foremost fish on the edge of climate change. I mean, this is the fish that is racing north more than any other, and so it's kind of a little scary to think that you're going to plug that fish in first to your climate tool, or to your allocation tool, that doesn't have any climate science in it, and that would concern me. Go ahead, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: Thanks, Ira, and so I do want to talk about that point, specifically, and thank Ira and Thomas, who both sat in on that allocation decision tool call and provided really great input. Ultimately, the council decided to not include climate change factors directly into the allocation decision tool, because the vast majority of the species the South Atlantic Council manages do not have regional allocations. Spanish mackerel and king mackerel are the one exception to that rule.

However, one of the things that we do include in consideration in that decision tool is fishery performance reports, which you guys have put together for a couple of years now, and most recently for Spanish mackerel, back in April of 2021, I think is when that one was put together, and those fishery performance reports do include information on climate change, and then that does get funneled into the allocation decision tool.

To give you guys a bit of information on how that tool works, we put together, and I am going to try to do this very briefly, and there are sort of three broad sections of information that's put together, the biological information, on things like stock status, economic information, and then social information, and we go through sort of a tree process, and what ultimately comes out of that are a series of recommendations that the council can then move forward with to design the alternatives that will go into an amendment.

Then they'll go through the whole amendment process and ultimately decide what will be their preferred alternative, and so this tool doesn't necessarily spit out something that says the allocation for Spanish mackerel should be, you know, 75/25, or what have you, and it just spits out the key things that the council needs to be considering, based on biological, economic, and social factors, when designing the different alternatives they want to consider and when deciding how to ultimately allocate in the fishery. While climate change is not included in that in a sort of concrete, quantitative way, it is included in a qualitative fashion, through the fishery performance reports that you all put together.

MR. LAKS: I've got Steve and then Tony.

MR. BENEVENTO: I am kind of lost. We've got a Spanish mackerel mess, where we're using assessments that are seven or eight years old, that we more or less can't count on, and we've got states that are regulating with different rules, shutting down and opening up at 500 pounds and unlimited, and a federal closing that comes based on a stock assessment that is -- You know, who knows what the recs are doing.

I want to go back to what Ira said, and what can we, as this group, recommend, as an advisory group? I've heard some recommendations, and then I've heard, no, don't do that, and so is there anything -- I mean, in my mind, you're not going to get the coastal states to all agree to give up their jurisdiction on this, and that seems to be, you know, one of the big, major problems here, is that there is no central regulatory body, I guess, on this issue, but is there -- I don't want to mess it up any more, but is there anything that we can, as a group, like we did yesterday, put a recommendation, a motion, that says we should hand this on to our other group, because, otherwise, I'm afraid we're just making lots of conversation.

MR. LAKS: Well, the conversation is always good, right, because the conversation is in the record, and the council members are here, and there's going to be a report to the council, and so the conversation, in and of itself, is always a valuable process. We don't even have to make an official motion, and we can make a recommendation, and there's a lot of things we can do, but it's just, at this point, without having the issue of the stock assessment being resolved yet, it's kind of hard for us to make a recommendation, and we're kind of caught right now, and so, again, I feel like we have a task that we really can't handle at this point, and so I think we're all doing as good a job as possible here to answer these questions in the situation we're in, and I appreciate everyone's candor in it, and thoughts, and I think, Steve, you were next, and then I've got Thomas, and then I've got Steve English.

MR. DONALSON: Ira and Christina, I'm going to lean on you a little bit, for some history here, because, Ira, you go back further than me. At one point, we were two different groups, and we were cobia and mackerel, and we came together as a combined group, and was it 2019, or 2020, that we kind of cleaved off a separate cobia advisory, but then the advisory -- This almost feels like something -- If we're focusing on a certain group of states, and do you know what I'm talking about? You were here, and, again, this is all great conversation, and I appreciate it all, and not that we're spinning our wheels, but it might be something that would fit that same model, to have more conversation around that, before we make any kind of motion that's going to go anywhere, and does that make sense? Did I say that right?

MS. WIEGAND: I think what you're talking about is back when we were working on Atlantic cobia management and talking about removing them from federal management and turning over management to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The council formed a cobia sub-group, and they did that for a couple of reasons, one of which was, at the time, we didn't have a lot of representation from the Mid-Atlantic area on this, and we have remedied that a little bit now, with Ben and Chris, who are now our Mid-Atlantic representatives, but they formed this smaller sub-group to talk about cobia specifically.

I will also note that, related to Spanish mackerel, the council has talked about having -- Not forming a separate sub-group, but having joint meetings with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Spanish Mackerel Advisory Panel, so that we are getting input from both you guys, who represent, you know, sort of the federal management side of things, as well as the fishermen

that work with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, representing the state side of things.

The commission is going to get an update on what's going on with Spanish mackerel at their upcoming meeting, and we work very closely with them, and certainly it is the intent, for the council and the commission, to work together on determining how to move forward with Spanish mackerel, and Spud, as chair of the commission, I'm sure can speak a bit more to that, but there's definitely an intent to make sure that these two groups are working together to create management that works for federal and state waters.

MR. WOODWARD: I mean, Christina has pretty much accurately described it, but the commission -- The commission was formed in 1942, and it's a voluntary compact of all the Atlantic coast states, including the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and we have an overarching law, called the Atlantic Coastal Act, that we all agree to manage fish, through interstate fishery management plans, so that we don't overfish, and we spread the benefits of those fisheries as fairly and equitably as we can up and down the eastern seaboard.

We have an interstate fishery management plan for Spanish mackerel, and then you have this federal fishery management plan, and what we try to do is synchronize those two, to eliminate, or at least minimize, conflicts and maximize the benefits. Well, right now, the commission is stuck in the same place as the council. You know, until there is a new stock status determination, we can't make any more decisions, necessarily, although I think there's a willingness, at the commission, to make changes, if those changes are warranted, to address some of these things in the short-term.

You know, we operate under a different governance environment than the council does, and it's not the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and we don't function under that, but we're trying to make sure that whatever we do complements each other and it's another tug-of-war, you know, and it was somewhat controversial when we said we were not going to close state waters, you know, but it was recognizing some of these issues, that you've got an imperfect situation, and it's giving people an ability to turn some unavoidable bycatch into something that's profitable, and so we've got those things going on, but, anyway, just -- You know, suffice it to say that we're trying to make sure that both of these trains are running down the same track, to the best place that can be.

MR. ENGLISH: Part of it is I think what we're doing at these meetings is we're educating all of us to all the facts, so we're all information gathering, and I think that's the most beneficial part of what we're doing, is we'll all be on the same page, and we'll know what we're talking about. One question I've got is we know that the stock collapsed because we caught too many fish out of it, and how much was that, back in the 1980s, when the commercial boats were -- Christina?

MS. WIEGAND: I am going to level with you, Steve. I wasn't paying much attention to fisheries back in the 1980s.

MR. ENGLISH: I bet you weren't.

MS. WIEGAND: I do not know that number, off the top of my head, but we can go back into old amendments and find out approximately what the landings were back then and get back to you.

MR. ENGLISH: That's my question. We know how many too many is, we do, and we've just got to find that number. Once we know how many too many is, we know not to approach that number, and we can come up with something in between there, until we get a concrete number, to make sure that we don't reach that point. That's just my thought on it, commonsense-wise.

MR. LAKS: Thomas, real quick, and then we're going to take a break here, in a few minutes.

MR. NEWMAN: Just to answer Steve, I believe it was twenty to thirty-million pounds, is what we were landing back in the early 1990s with those roller rigs, and it's in the stock assessment, but my original comment was I'm kind of leaning towards, as much as I hate to say it, just keeping everything status quo for the northern sector right now. I mean, what we've got is definitely not perfect, but we're making it work.

The states are handling their side very well, and they have reduced our gear in internal waters, and we're constraining our harvest greatly, to not catch too many Spanish mackerel. We're going over our quota, yes, but we're staying right there at our historic catch levels. The fisheries is not going to grow. We don't have the real estate for it. The fisheries is 70 to 75 percent in Dare, and a little bit of Hyde County, because Ocracoke County is considered Hyde County, but all those landings in our state are out of Dare County, and, the way we see it, it's off the beach, and out to fifty or sixty feet, and the fish aren't running that whole area. They are running a depth. They're either running at fifteen feet or they're running in sixty feet, thirty feet, forty feet, whatnot, and we have to set beside each other.

When I first started doing it, I had to go around the point of Cape Hatteras to get a set, and, nowadays, there is plenty of room for everybody in the fishery to set between Cape Hatteras and Hatteras Inlet. The real estate is going to limit the amount of participants in the fisheries.

There has been -- This small fleet in Hatteras is only ten to fifteen boats that regularly go out, and two of those guys have laid in the last two months, because they're just old and tired, and they just -- The fisheries isn't going to get out of control, and I know that's been a discussion before, with limited entry, and I'm looking at Charlie, but, if we're not going to be -- If we're not hard on what the recreational numbers are, and we don't really know what we have to reallocate, we're not looking to take quota from anybody, because everybody is pretty much maxing their quotas out, and status quo would -- And that research track assessment. I guess my request is also to the SSC, is to reject the stock assessment, and, as bad as I hate to say it, do it properly in a couple of years, and do a research track.

MR. LAKS: Did you have a point?

DR. CURTIS: Thanks, Thomas. As I mentioned, kind of the timing for that is they're going to revise those MRIP numbers, and the SSC is going to review it in October. As you well know, that was not the only sticking point with the non-acceptance of the assessment as well, and so there were a lot of issues with the selectivity and just the age distributions across different gear types, and so just the MRIP numbers was one of many issues with that, and so, you know, not to lead the discussion or anything like that, but the option is that, if the SSC determines that this is not BSIA, and not recommended, then a research track would likely be the recommendation that will follow.

MR. LAKS: Okay, you guys. We're going to take a ten-minute break. When we come back, Christina is going to summarize a few things, and I think Bill has got one little comment, and then Tom wants his question that he asked before, and he will repeat it, to be fleshed out from some of you North Carolina fishermen, and maybe we can put together a statement, or something, from this group that we want the council to look at. All right. Ten minutes, guys.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LAKS: All right. Christina, do you want to summarize some of that?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, and so I'm going to try to get us in a direction where we can -- You know, we've had a lot of really great discussion that, of course, we'll present to the council, but sort of providing some context and putting us in a direction forward, and so, like Judd talked about, there are sort of two outcomes that can come from the October SSC meeting.

They will smooth over this point, and we might be able to get management recommendations from the SSC. I would keep in mind that those recommendations are not certain, but I would say unlikely, to result in a substantial increase in available catch, the way you saw with king mackerel. The other option is that they decide a research track is needed, and, if that's the case, the stock assessment has to go back on the schedule, and the schedule is booked out pretty far in advance. We're going to have to try to squeeze it in at some point. The best-case scenario is we're looking at having management recommendations in 2028, and so just keep in mind that that's sort of the best-case scenario and the really long-term worst-case scenario.

What I am hearing from this group, sort of broadly, is that there's not a strong desire to make a lot of management or allocation changes without a new stock assessment, which, again, we may have coming out of the October SSC meeting, and we also may not, and we're looking at, you know, a very long timeframe to get new recommendations, and so, if it sort of the broad recommendation from this AP that we don't want to sort of change any management measures right now, my question is, I guess, first, is that correctly what I am hearing from this group? If it's not, then we should certainly have a bit more discussion about what changes you guys would like to see.

If it is true, Ira had mentioned port meetings, and is there a desire, from this AP, to have the council sort of go down a route that would have people perhaps going up and down the coast and talking to fishermen about Spanish mackerel and trying to get a sense of how fishermen up and down the coast broadly would like to see management? Those would be my two questions. Am I correct that you guys don't want to see any management changes at this point, and do you want port meetings?

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: I think you're correct in that. They sure don't want to see it go down, and so, I mean, we're pretty much stuck. If we don't keep what we've got, then we're going to lose, the way it stands right now, and so I don't see how we can see we've got to change.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charles.

MR. GRIFFIN: I was curious, and how are we determining the for-hire, or I should say recreational, allocation, and is it mainly from the for-hire studies? Is that where we're getting a lot of the landings? I am just ignorant of exactly how we're getting it.

MS. WIEGAND: Right now, the Spanish mackerel sector allocations are not based on a landings time series. They were -- The original allocations, back in the 1980s, were based on the time series from 1979 to 1985, and so it was whatever landings were available back then, and certainly reporting back then was not the same as it is now, but then the council started making allocation decisions based on qualitative information and their knowledge of the fishery, and so, right now, it's not based on any landings data.

MR. GRIFFIN: Well, I just figured, with the CHP permits and all, that we always have to fill out our forms, and I'm just wondering if that's where it's coming from, and I'm sure that's considered the recreational, and I'm sure some of it has got to be coming from there, somehow, but I was just wondering where the numbers come from, and are these true numbers of really what we're catching recreationally or not, and so how much of that science is really that good, and I don't understand exactly how --

MS. WIEGAND: I mean, that's how landings are currently tracked, and it's not how the allocations are set.

MR. GRIFFIN: What I was meant was landings. I'm sorry. I am using that term wrong, but I'm just curious exactly how we come about that number and then decide, you know, how much should be allocated for the commercial versus what the recreational gets, and that's all.

MS. WIEGAND: It is tracked based on reporting data, MRIP and the headboat survey.

MR. GRIFFIN: Okay.

MR. DONALSON: Unless there is someone at the boat ramp, when you come in, counting fish, they're not going to know. If I catch ten Spanish, and I go home and clean them and eat them, nobody is going to know.

MR. GRIFFIN: That was my whole point, and so it's hard for us to make a good recommendation.

MR. DONALSON: It's that much of the catch.

MR. GRIFFIN: We all do that, I guess, but I'm just curious exactly how it was actually come about.

MR. LAKS: Bill.

MR. PALMER: Piggybacking on what you were just talking about, we are guesstimating what the rec is catching, and that's all it is, is a guess, and, if we're just guessing, where we have hard numbers for our commercial, and we're not using -- It's also a guess that we're not even using all of our rec allocations, and then something needs to be done, as far as accountability.

The rec fishermen have got to have some form of accountability that is trackable, and that's going to be on all of our fishery, and not just the Spanish, but on everything, and I'm a rec fisherman now, and I see that we've got an issue that is going to plague our commercial fishermen for years to come, unless something is done that will make accountability mandated for the rec side, because there's a thousand boats going out every weekend in Florida, and they're catching Spanish, and they're catching whatever, but I would venture to say there's not as many of them catching Spanish as what we're thinking they are, if we're just talking Spanish, because most of them are wanting a bigger fish, or they're going out for, you know, kings, or they're going out for your mahi, things like that. I don't know, and it just seems like we're running around in circles right now, because we're not mandating something for allocation for the rec that can be tracked.

MR. LAKS: I'm going to just address that a little bit, because I hear a lot of frustration that recreational catch is not tracked, and it's a survey and extrapolated. Part of the problem is that it's a big burden on recreational fishermen, right, and I'm not saying it shouldn't be, but, to really get data that can be used, it has to be validated, and now you're talking about some sort of tracking, where someone has to hail-in or hail-out, because just voluntary reporting is not going to be something that can be validated for science to be used. Now you have to impose this on recreational fishermen, and they're not very willing to do that, and so you have that problem.

You also have a problem of funding, right? Someone has to pay for all of that, and all of this information that comes in, and most of these agencies don't have the money, and so we all might want it, and we all might wish it was there, but the system we have right now is probably going to be there for the foreseeable future, and, again, that's best available science.

It's not best science, and it's best available, and so I think that's something we just all have to take into some sort of context when we have this, that this is what we have, and it's very hard to deal with, and we know it's probably not 100 percent accurate, and it's probably the frustration of the council as well, and every manager that has to deal with it, and so that's where we are. I hear you. I hear you all, but it's just where we're at, and that's the tools we have, and that's the hammer we have to hit the nail with. I'm going to let Charles talk to that, and then Tom is going to jump in.

MR. GRIFFIN: I just wanted to say that I kind of work closely with the South Carolina DNR, with our charter/headboat permit stuff, and we have to report every trip and that kind of stuff, and, with the new apps we have now, you can get it done in a minute or two on the phone, on the way home. Somehow, we're going to have to, in the future, to get accurate data, if you have a fishing license, you need to be reporting something, if you make a trip.

I don't say have -- I don't agree with the AIS stuff and tracking people, but, even if you get the voluntary data, even though some of it's going to be flawed, it's got to be better than what we're doing now, and I think a lot of us, that really care about the fishery, is going to want to do something like that, if we want to maintain our recreational fishery, and it's getting easier, with the apps and with our data nowadays, and then you have a collection point, and it's not as expensive as it used to be.

Yes, it's hard, but part of the monies has gone to -- We've done a really good job, in this state, and we're kind of the model for a lot of other states, with some of this reporting, and it's taken some time, but we've already got some of the stuff there, but I realize that trying to mandate and getting

people to do that is going to be tough, but I think education is the only way to do it, but that's another road, but it's just something that I just wanted to say about it.

MR. LAKS: I'm just going to speak to that again, because I've been passionate about this for a long time, and, again, if you can't validate it -- Inherently, any voluntary information is biased, and it's just not going to be -- It's not going to be better than MRIP, and it's just not, because you're going to get a certain subset who does it and other people that don't care.

MR. GRIFFIN: I understand, but I just figure that some data has got to help.

MR. LAKS: Even with the South Carolina system, unless you do a hail-out, and you know that somebody did a trip, where they can be accountable for it, that data is just going to be a guess, and so there are things that you can use out of the data, as far as like overall effort and stuff, but, to track catches, it has to be something in line with what the commercial guys do, where the fish house is also writing a ticket, and so you have a double thing, so that we know what's caught, and that's a lot of imposition to put on recreational fishermen.

MR. GRIFFIN: I get it.

MR. LAKS: And a lot of money to do it, and I'm going to let Tom jump in.

MR. ROLLER: I think Ira covered what I was going to say pretty well, because, you know, we hear this frustration with MRIP data all the time. You know, we hear it in fisheries that are really common, like Spanish mackerel, where they're caught by lots of people, and we hear the frustrations by more rare-event species, like deepwater species, but, as we have this conversation -- I mean, you know, here at the council, we're talking about reporting for grouper snapper, and going with what Ira said is probably less practical with a large fishery like this, but, you know, what's the pleasure of the advisory panel? What do you have to say? What do you want to see that it looks like with mackerel?

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Bill.

MR. PALMER: I say we do like Steve has said and leave it like it is, and that should be a recommendation to the council from us, to leave things just the way they are, no matter what the stupid allocation -- The assessment comes in at, because it's a guess also, and, if you change it, and you go to a guess, it's no better than what we have now, and you could hurt the commercial, particularly. I don't think changing, for the sake of changing, is worth doing it.

MR. LAKS: My thoughts, if we're going to make a statement to the council, would be something on the lines that, without any more information, we're hesitant to recommend any changes, right, but we do recognize that we need more information, and we suggest something along the line of port meetings or, you know, something where the Atlantic States and the council get together and look at the future, especially of the Spanish mackerel fishery, and please make this sound better than I am, Christina.

I would value all of your opinions on how you would like to craft that, to get the voice of what we're all saying. You know, I think we realize that changes have to be made in the future, but, at

this point, there's not enough information to recommend any changes. I 100 percent suggest port meetings.

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

MR. LAKS: Well, a new stock assessment will be on the agenda, and it's just the problem is that it's going to be seven years until it becomes anything that management can use, at least.

MR. ENGLISH: I don't know if everybody is familiar with it in this room, but we're going to lose half our quota in about four years. We're going to be allowed to catch half of what we're catching, and that can't happen. We all know that's totally backwards. We know that, and so I don't see how we can't do -- I mean, we have to stay at least where we're at and not go backwards on -- Like North Carolina, and their quota was like 960,000 or 980,000, right at a million pounds every year, and now it's -- Last year, it was 600,000, and that's -- So they're even backwards from where they -- They should be at a million pounds.

MR. DONALSON: So what we're saying for the statement though is do nothing until that stock assessment is complete, and like leave it at 600,000, and I'm just picking that one area, and do we want to word that, Ira, somehow?

MR. LAKS: I don't know if you want to say until the stock assessment is complete, because there are things that probably could be done. Like I said, we can build the equation along the way and then stick the numbers in.

AP MEMBER: That's why I said -- However you want to word that, but you're just trying to say let's just make sure, in seven years, when we have nothing to catch.

MR. LAKS: Well, that's going to be determined on the next stock assessment. We're not going to be able to change the timeline, and that's kind of built in, but there are things that we can gather information from the public that might be able, under the system we have now, to make some changes that are better. I just don't think we've explored that enough to have enough information to do anything at this moment.

AP MEMBER: I wanted a point of clarification from what you said, Steve. You said that in four years that our quota is going to be half, and is there a predicted drop in the biomass, where the overall ABC is going to drop?

MR. ENGLISH: That's my understanding as to what the stock assessment came out with. In about four years, we would be at half of what we are now, and that's my -- Am I correct in that? I don't want to say something misleading.

DR. CURTIS: The assessment that the SSC reviewed, that operational assessment, if it was approved, recommended to the council for approval and then approved by the council and implemented, it would result in a pretty substantial reduction, like 40 percent, of the ABC across all regions, and so that is if it's accepted. If it's not accepted, then it goes back to the status quo, with the numbers that are on the books currently.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: Another question for you, Judd. That was all led by the high MRIP landings on the terminal year, correct, and they're also working to correct those numbers on the terminal year, and so that 40 percent may be reduced greatly.

DR. CURTIS: In theory, yes. The projections were largely driven by those high MRIP estimates in the terminal year, and so, if that does get smoothed over and is reduced, then you would expect to see a commensurate reduction in -- Or an increase in those projection yield streams as well. How much, I'm not sure. We'll have to wait to see what the assessment comes out with. Also, as I mentioned earlier too, the MRIP was just one kind of sticking point, and there were some other issues with the assessment as well that need to pass muster from the SSC review before they would recommend it for -- As BSIA and for management advice.

MR. NEWMAN: For the record, there was four or five issues that were brought up by the SSC reviewers, and I think only one reviewer really gave a positive review, at the SSC review, and it was not well taken.

MR. LAKS: So you guys see the statement on the board. Is there anything that anyone feels should be added to it? Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: So I like what -- I mean, we're going to talk about albacore later on today, and a lot of that is going to be getting ahead of management, before there's an issue, and we've talked about the climate change scenario, and he mentioned NEAMAP, that has all this data from up north that we're not even using in the assessment, and I think it would be good to -- This is almost like a -- Like you said, this could be a model fish, to get ahead of some of that stuff, and I don't know if that's -- If the suggestion for the new model runs is in there, but all that information should be calculated in there, that NEAMAP survey, and maybe even the climate change scenario stuff, and I don't know if that's -- But I think that would be a good recommendation, to include all that, if we're going to go through all this again, and I don't know if that's -- It's probably already in there, but I think that should be evaluated.

DR. CURTIS: Thanks. Great points, and certainly the research track format is conducive for incorporating all that information, and that's what they want to do with these research track assessments. We saw this in gray triggerfish, which just went through a research track, and the data workshop was trying to integrate some of the NEAMAP surveys and just kind of that further expansion and the distribution of that species, like above the North Carolina-Virginia line, and how that might impact the stock, and then the catch levels, for this region. Those things are definitely going to be integrated into research track assessments, and we certainly can in the Spanish mackerel one as well.

MR. LAKS: So does everyone feel good about this statement? Any other things that anyone would like to add and put our voice to the council?

MS. WIEGAND: Do you want me to read it into the record?

MR. LAKS: Yes, please.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, right now, the statement currently says: Given the complexity of the issues and current data availability, the AP does not feel comfortable making any recommendations for management changes at this time. The AP suggests conducting port meetings to gather information from fishermen on how to properly manage the Atlantic Spanish mackerel fishery.

MR. LOCKE: I've got one more question, Ira.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: This was brought up, and so this is just a thought to me, but there is really no federal fishery for Spanish anymore, and, I mean, I used to go to the Cape, and Steve knows that I would go down there and gillnet in federal waters off the Cape. I have done that fishery, but it's pretty much a state-water fishery, and so is the ASMFC taking it over -- Is that something that would fast-track management measures, and I guess that's my question. If the South Atlantic Council were to say let's give it to ASMFC, is that going to cause more hurdles, or would that help or hurt?

MR. LAKS: Spud, I will gladly let you respond.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I'm sure that my fellow commissioners will probably crucify me at the next meeting, but I had actually thought about that, and I guess one challenge is that a lot of the recreational fishery is prosecuted in federal waters, and so the commercial fishery is -- The majority is prosecuted in state waters, but you've got a lot of federal waters recreational fishery going on, and so that would be, I think, an issue that had to be considered, and, now, we did it with cobia, Atlantic cobia, and we did it with red drum, and, you know, it takes a while to work all that out.

Perhaps that would be a good subject for council and commission leadership to just sit down and have just a frank reality-check conversation about this, to see whether or not there is some merit to that, but, you know, I'm always in favor of looking for the best, simplest solution, if it exists out there, and so I don't know. It's probably worth thinking of, unless Christina tells me that it's absolutely impossible.

MS. WIEGAND: I am absolutely not telling you that it's impossible. If that is something -- If the AP would like the council to consider whether or not removing Atlantic Spanish mackerel from the CMP FMP is something that is feasible -- Like Charlie mentioned, we're going to talk about false albacore later on in the meeting, and I will go over this idea in more detail then, but the Magnuson-Stevens Act essentially outlines ten criteria that help determine whether or not a fishery is in need of federal conservation and management.

When we removed cobia from the FMP, one of the things we had to do was go through those ten criteria and determine whether or not cobia sort of no longer met those criteria. In the case of cobia, it was determined, given the fact that the majority of landings occur in state waters, that federal management was no longer appropriate for this species, and we removed it, and so it's been done in the past, and it can be done, and those ten criteria sort of help determine whether or not that's a legally-feasible route to go, and so if that's something the AP would like the council to consider, you can certainly recommend that they look at the Atlantic Spanish mackerel fishery in

comparison to those ten criteria, and we can talk a little bit more about those criteria later on, because that's what the council is asking us to do for false albacore.

I will say that I do believe there is a federal-waters fishery in Florida that fishes uses gillnets, which are not an allowable gear in state waters, and so that would also be something to consider, when talking about possible removal of Atlantic Spanish mackerel from the CMP FMP.

MR. LAKS: So my personal opinion on this right now is that I would like to see port meetings and more information gathered from the public, before we made a statement on that. That's always something we can come back to at another meeting, but, without the information up and down, I don't think we have enough information, at this table, to recommend something like that right now. I'm going to go to Steve and then Thomas.

MR. ENGLISH: Christina, you got it. In Florida, we have the only federal fishery for Spanish mackerel. It occurs at Cape Canaveral, Florida, from Cape Canaveral to Stuart, Florida. That is the only federal waters where Spanish mackerel are caught, basically, and recreationally, too. They're all caught in state waters. They're not caught in federal waters. Rarely do they catch one or two, and so that would be my concern with doing that, is because we do have a gillnet ban, and where would that leave us, and, once again, we're not going to get in that position, and we would fight that.

I still think that the federal -- Because they are so wide-ranging, and they cover so many states, the federal should set the quota, the total amount that we're allowed to take out of the stock, and the states should get together and say, okay, how -- Commercially, and the recreational sector takes care of itself, but, commercially, how are we going to allocate these fish fairly and equitably between the states and the consumers, so the consumers get their -- That's my goal, but, no, I don't think we ought to go to the states commission now.

MR. LAKS: I am going to go to Thomas and then wrap it up, unless someone has a major objection to the statement we have up there.

MR. NEWMAN: I was just going to follow-up on the port meetings. If there's a small, minute chance they may happen, they need to go ahead and go in the northern states, and like you need to go into New York, because these fish are up there. They're catching them, and they're spawning up there, and you just don't need to focus on the South Atlantic states. You need to see what's actually going on, because Maryland -- I know, in the stock assessment, Maryland recreational landings tripled, I think, in the last two years, and so every state is catching fish on the east coast, catching Spanish mackerel.

MR. LAKS: Christina, do we need to read the rest of it again, for the record?

MS. WIEGAND: So, added onto that, I just put "include states throughout the entire management area, which is New York through Florida".

MR. DONALDSON: Do we need to put the Dade County-Monroe County line?

MR. LAKS: I think that through Florida -- That's our jurisdiction, in Florida, and so I think that would cover it.

MS. WIEGAND: Yes.

MR. LAKS: Are you guys good with this? Is everyone good? All right. Well, I say this is what we send to the council.

MR. LOCKE: I've got a question, real quick, for Spud. With red snapper driving the South Atlantic Council's train of thought, this is -- That's the reason I said, you know, is it possible for ASMFC to take it over, and is there more resources, and just like cobia, and we still catch cobia in federal waters. It didn't close cobia, just because it went to the states, and we still catch them offshore and bring them in and sell them, and so it would be kind of the same thing with Spanish. My question was is there more resources, funding and time, for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries to address this than the South Atlantic Council, with everything we have going, and I don't know much about that.

MR. WOODWARD: Not really. Not really. I mean, we're struggling. We have twenty-six plans, under the commission, everything from lobster to red drum, and so we don't have a lot of resources, but, I mean, the one thing I can say is the commission is more nimble, for what it's worth, in terms of decision-making, but I think, you know, have these port meetings, and think this through, and look for the pitfalls, you know, that would be associated with some sort of management and governance change, and think it through. I mean, we're always looking for what suits management the best and most efficient, and, you know, again, if the majority of the fishery, commercial fishery, is being prosecuted in state waters, then, you know, that certainly adds credence to at least doing the analysis and talking about it.

I will point out that it's kind of like cobia though, and Chuck and I were talking a little bit about this, and, you know, we catch our Spanish in federal waters. I mean, every once in a while, you'll catch some, off of Georgia and South Carolina, in state waters, but the majority of them -- Just like cobia, and our cobia, except for Port Royal, they go by in the EEZ, but we worked that out with cobia, and I'm sure there would be ways to work out some of these other things, if that was the best solution.

MR. LAKS: If I am correct, it would be a little more difficult with Spanish mackerel, since it's a joint plan with the Gulf?

MS. WIEGAND: It would be very similar to the process we went through for cobia, if we wanted to remove it, and we would only be removing Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel, and Gulf migratory group Spanish mackerel would be retained in the FMP, the same way that we removed Atlantic cobia and didn't remove Gulf cobia, and so, if you were around for Amendment 31, when we did this with cobia, the process would be very similar.

MR. LAKS: All right, and so I think we're good with this, and we're going to move on to something else.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so that brings us back to what we concluded yesterday, with the CMP FMP goals and objectives, and so we already went through all of these objectives and the changes proposed at the council meeting, and so I want to go ahead and dig into these questions

with you guys. I hope you spent a lot of time, you know, having a beer last night at the bar and really pondering these questions about the FMP.

Starting us off with the first question of do you feel like the goals and objectives that are currently included in the CMP FMP actively reflect the needs of the CMP fishery, and so are they getting at what Atlantic king mackerel needs, what Atlantic Spanish mackerel needs, what Gulf cobia needs, out of a management plan?

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: Obviously they're not getting it right with Spanish mackerel. The king mackerel, I think we're on track with them. In fact, personally, I think our quota is too big on king mackerel, but, on Spanish mackerel, no. We're totally way off-base.

MS. WIEGAND: Well, maybe it would be helpful if we start with some of the more specific questions and then rope back around to the broader question, and so what about significant gear and user group conflicts? Again, these original objectives of the fishery were last updated back in 1992, and, back in the 1980s, there were a substantial amount of gear and user group conflicts, which is why there were commercial gear allocations. Those allocations don't exist anymore, and so we would be curious to get input from this AP on to the extent that which gear and user group conflicts still remain a concern within king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, or cobia, and we're talking about all of the coastal migratory pelagic fisheries now.

MR. LAKS: Again, king mackerel, like Steve said, I think we're pretty good with that. I know, Tom, you might have a question for everybody, in this regard.

MR. ROLLER: So I asked this question earlier, and I'm going to restate it, and I don't know if this is the best question for it, but I think it fits best in, and what I asked you all earlier for some feedback in is, because we've discussed it here at the AP over the years, is what are you guys seeing in the fishery, whether it's recreational or commercial, but particularly commercial in the Northern Zone, and are you seeing more people? Are you seeing less people? Is the fishery changing, because, you know, the data we have in North Carolina indicates the fishery is growing rapidly. We have a lot of people moving into the fishery, and there's a lot of different reasons, potentially, for that, because we have some other state fisheries issues, and so I would love to hear some feedback from you all on that, if possible.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: So I've been -- I moved to North Carolina in 1991, from Florida, and the commercial fishery used to be like this, and the recreational fishery was like this, and now the commercial fishery is like this, and the recreational fishery is like this, and so I have said this -- I mean, we're the last of the Mohicans, man. I mean, there's nobody getting into this. I have a twenty-three-year-old son, and I have every permit you can have, and I have all the gear you could ever have, and he doesn't want nothing to do with fishing. I mean, it's not expanding.

When I first started fishing out of Hatteras, like you said, if you didn't get up at about two in the morning, you didn't get a set, because the whole beach was taken up. Now, you go out to the inlet, and you might have to go a couple of boats past somebody to get a set, and there's nobody left.

The older guys are out of it, and there's not a lot of young guys. There is young guys in it, and I hate to say it, but they're crackheads, half the time, and they're the worst thing for the industry. They're the first person to do something wrong, and they're the first person to break a law, leave a net unattended, and we've got to do better at that, at weeding that out, but, as far as like responsible, you know, people running a business, there is nobody, and it's not expanding, in North Carolina. I mean, it's just not happening.

MR. LAKS: I will go to Steve and then Thomas.

MR. ENGLISH: For Florida, what Charlie said about the crackheads, the same thing. The same thing, and that's who is getting in it. Florida is different, and we have the potential for so many people to get into it, because it's a cast net. You get a little boat, and you go out two miles, and you're in the fishery, and that's where we saw our problems, and there used to be twenty-five of us down there that threw cast nets and caught the mackerel, and now there's a 125, or 200, and, I mean, it's just amazing how many people got into it, and that's where they kill our prices, and they -- It used to be, in Florida, the reason that we never reached our quota, in the early years, after the net ban, when we developed the cast net fishery and the hook-and-line fishery, is because we would catch mackerel, and, when we started catching them, we would go out there and, by two o'clock, we would have 3,500 with the cast net.

We would catch them for two days, and the fish house would say the market is full, and you all don't go catch them, and we wouldn't fish for four or five days, and everybody quit. Now we've got a fish house into it that went to the freezer market, and he doesn't stop. We tried to stop, several times, and the conflict between three fish houses was just out of control, and so now it doesn't stop. Now, when it starts, it's a push from now on and get them caught.

That reminds me, and talking about the 3,500, and downgrading to 1,500, and we are glad, the regular fishermen in Florida, that you don't do the step-down. We would just as soon not to do it, and we want to get the quota caught and go to the 500, for those of us who fish normal.

AP MEMBER: What mackerel are you talking about? I'm from North Carolina, and so I'm very confused what mackerel you're cast netting.

MR. ENGLISH: Mackerel is Spanish mackerel.

AP MEMBER: You are cast netting Spanish mackerel?

MR. ENGLISH: Yes.

AP MEMBER: We do not do that in North Carolina.

MR. ENGLISH: No, and you won't do it in North Carolina.

AP MEMBER: They're big, but --

MR. ENGLISH: It's a total different thing. In North Carolina, the fish are spread. In Florida, the fish come down and concentrate in a hard ball, and they don't feed. In Florida, they lose their

weight, and they don't feed, and that's when we catch them. Then, when they start feeding and going back, you all catch them.

AP MEMBER: Excuse me, but cast net? Really? Okay. I cast net bait, and menhaden is what I do.

MR. LAKS: Well, necessity is the mother of invention, and, when the gillnet ban was issued in Florida, there had to be another way to catch them.

MR. LOCKE: Ira, can I address one more thing to Tom?

MR. LAKS: Certainly.

MR. LOCKE: I think what you're seeing, and what you're hearing in the state too, is transition of fishermen. It's not necessarily new fishermen getting into it, especially the float net fishery in the sound, and I will let Thomas -- Crabbing was our -- You know, that's been the biggest money-making industry in North Carolina for years, probably shrimping and crabbing back and forth, but crabbing fell off, and it got very expensive to get into it, and a lot of guys shifted from crabbing in the summer to the mackerel fishery, and so it wasn't necessarily new guys getting into it, but it was fishermen that were already in the industry and just transitioning gears.

You may have -- It may look like that, but, you know, you can go back and look at the landings, or the licenses, and, what were we at, 5,000, at one point, and now we're down to like less than 3,000, and, of that, maybe 1,500 of them are being used, and so the data is not showing an increase in commercial fishermen, and it's just maybe transitioning from fisheries.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Charlie, and that's kind of what I was getting at, is how this fishery is changing, and it has definitely transitioned from other fisheries, right, and we know the commercial sector in North Carolina is not growing, but it would appear that there is more people getting into the Spanish mackerel fishery, and so I really appreciate that feedback and how that could potentially affect you guys, as serious business owners.

MR. LAKS: I am going to go to Thomas and then Will.

MR. NEWMAN: I just wanted to address you, Tom, and it's like Charlie said, and we're constrained on the federal level with catch quotas, and we're constrained on the state level with fisheries quotas, and we're constrained by our gear limitations now, and the industry is not growing. We are constrained by market value, and we can only harvest X number of pounds of fish, but they're worth anything, and the commercial industry has been constrained for -- We've been bottlenecked, and we've been choked out, for twenty or thirty years now, and there is no -- The industry has shrunk. I mean, there is very few guys left, and it's just not cost-effective to do anything.

I mean, we're struggling, right now, with the striped mullet in the state, as you know, and we're looking at a reduction on striped mullet, and those guys that striped mullet are old. I mean, they're fifty or sixty, and those guys ain't going to go jump on a boat and go Spanish mackerel fishing. They're not going to do it. These guys are just -- These guys are getting out of it, and they're getting out of it and retiring. I mean, they've all got bad knees, and they're rough. Like I say,

several of the guys in the Spanish fleet, they haven't finished any this summer, because they're just old and tired, and they're tired of it, and they just -- It's not growing.

The charter, the charter/for-hire, fleet is going crazy. I mean, it's gone nuts, and you guys, and this council, should have put a hit on that years ago, and why are you discussing commercial fishing? You should be discussing the charter/for-hire industry exploding, and the recreational numbers exploding, because that's where all the questionable data is coming from, is that side of the industry. The commercial industry is constrained. We don't have the resources, or the legal ability, to grow. I mean, that's off the table.

MR. LAKS: That's great information. Just watch the fifties and sixties being old.

MR. LOCKE: I want to say, along that too, because I was talking to William earlier about that, and, you know, in our area, Oregon Inlet, East Oregon Inlet Fishing Center and Pirate's Cove, that was it. That was your two marinas, for charter boats. You had some inshore guides, and you had some mostly offshore, and now you've got Wanchese Marina, and, I mean, there's like three marinas.

Go to the boat ramp, and I can't tell you how many charter guys are trailering, and they've all got their boats wrapped, and they've all got their websites, and they've all got their puffy shirts on, and it's like, if I was a charter guy, like Aaron, I would be pissed, because, I mean, the guys that have been doing it for twenty and thirty years, there is every Tom, Dick, and Harry running charters now, because all you've got to get is a six-pack license, and it is to the point of getting out of hand, because it is a big user group, and the guys that charter fish and depend on it, like yourselves, when you're limited -- You know, just like in our industry, with the crackheads, there is probably a lot of fly-by-night charter guys that get in there and don't treat their people good, and don't produce fish, and leave a bad name for the guys that are really serious about it, that take their industry seriously and are proud of it, and I don't know how the council gets a hold of that, but, I mean, seriously, that's the -- It's getting out of hand on a lot of ends on that.

MR. LAKS: I am going to go to Will, and I just would like to say that, yes, it would be very helpful if the charter fleet was professionalized.

MR. JONES: It's certainly a big can of worms. Basically, I just want to second what you all just said. I don't know about how much the commercial fleet is growing or shrinking in North Carolina, but the boat traffic on the water, and the amount of recreational fishermen, and fishing guides, has exploded, even since I've been doing it, and I haven't been doing it anywhere close to as long as you all have, and so it's been a huge explosion in the amount of people participating in the fishery and getting into the for-hire sector and just recreational fishermen. I don't even know how many, and there are probably two or three-times as many boats on the water these days, and so it's been a crazy growth.

MR. LAKS: I am just going to speak to the overcapitalization in the for-hire industry. If you guys really feel strong about that, I think we can make a motion, or a statement, to the council. Personally, I've been fighting that fight for a very, very long time, and I've had some hard times in this particular room with bringing that issue up, and, if that's something that you would all feel strongly about, I would support making a motion that we have the council look at reintroducing -

- Not reintroducing, but have the council take a look at introducing a limited-entry system in the for-hire industry, for CMP specifically, since that's our purview.

MR. BENEVENTO: What barriers would you put in place? I mean, I've been fishing for sixty years, and I say, wow, wouldn't it be nice now to become a charter guy, and is it simply because I didn't choose, forty years ago, to get in it, or -- What I'm saying is what are the barriers to getting into business?

MR. LAKS: I really don't want to hijack our whole meeting on that, because, believe me, I can, but so there are ways in, right, and it's pure commerce. You can buy a permit. I mean, to get into the charter industry right now is not cheap, and you had better have some money for boats and all that, and the price of a permit is not going to be extraordinary, compared to your whole investment, and it's the one thing -- You know, when I fought this fight, I said, you know, I got into charter fishing, and I lost my hair, and I lost my sanity, and I lost my marriage, but my permit would have been worth something, right, and my boat wasn't, and so the initial investment to get into it is not that significant, and there is other ways to set it up, but that would be more of a conversation down the line. I think this would just be to see if we can introduce it. I think someone else should make the motion, and not me, and have it seconded.

MR. ENGLISH: It should come from the recreational sector.

AP MEMBER: I second the motion.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. **Just to read the motion into the record, it's have the council look at introducing a limited-entry system for the coastal migratory pelagics for-hire permit.**

MR. LAKS: Charles and then --

MR. GRIFFIN: I was just going to talk about the commercial fishing here in Charleston, king mackerel fishing. Years ago, I used to commercial fish and charter fish a lot, and I don't commercial fish much anymore, but you would be fighting five or six kingfish boats, and we would be all in the same areas and getting the bites. The last guy, in Charleston, that I know is doing it has now got cancer and is selling the boat, and that's it. Nobody is doing it here. There is a few boats out of Murrells Inlet that were doing it, and maybe a few in Little River, but I think Murrells Inlet is probably going to not do real well this year, with the storm, and so I don't see -- It's definitely greatly reduced, and even the bottom fishing boats, and I'm not seeing what I used to see. They're coming from up north more than anywhere else.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: This comment goes back to earlier, when we were discussing the commercial industry, but it also relates to the motion we're making here. The charter/for-hire industry is a whole hell of a lot more lucrative than commercial fishing. I've got a buddy that has commercial fished his whole life, and his boy turned eighteen, and he started a charter business, and he made \$150,000 his first year, working four months. I mean, nobody is going to turn that down to go commercial fishing and barely break even at the end of the year, and so the charter/for-hire industry, in North Carolina, is a whole hell of a lot more lucrative than commercial fishing is, and

that's where you need to be worried about capping the number of people participating in that fishery, because commercial fishing is capped, and it's been capped.

MR. LAKS: Steve.

MR. DONALSON: I know we need to vote on this, but I don't want to forget Tom's original question, as far as input on -- I want to make sure that, one, we answer your original question that you brought up about what we're seeing, but, also, when we vote, if we vote no, can we put a comment as to why the no vote, or are we not doing that anymore?

MS. WIEGAND: When I put together the report, I will present this motion as-is, and I will present the vote numbers, and so there were X many in favor, X many against, X many that chose to abstain, and then I will include descriptions of the discussion, both for and against the motion, and so you don't need, necessarily, to do a formal statement, unless you would like to, but I will include the discussion on both sides of the issue for the council to see.

MR. DONALSON: I would just like to know more about what you said, as far as the commercial industry know represents this, and the recreational, or the for-hire, represents this, and what is that? What is that delta, and what timeframe are we talking about? Before we make a decision on something like that, I would want to know, and is that ten boats, or is it 400 boats, over two years? That's kind of a vague statement, and not to be argumentative, but I'm just curious.

MR. LOCKE: Well, what I'm saying is Tom's concern was the expanding commercial fishery, and I was simply saying that it's not expanding from new entrants, and it may be looking like there is more Spanish mackerel participants, because they're shifting from one fishery to another fishery that's more lucrative, trying to survive, because, like he said, there is very thin margins, with costs and everything nowadays, and so guys -- The guys that are failing in commercial fishing aren't good businessmen. I mean, you have to just run a business, just like anything, and you have to go for what's the most profitable, that you can make the most money with the least amount of cost, and that's why you see this shift, but the charter industry, and everybody agreed, even the charter guys here, it's gotten just out of hand.

When I said that, you had COVID, and you had all these different things that happened in the last couple of years, and people got out on the water, and people had a little bit of extra money, and they bought boats. The boat sales were through the roof, and there is no doubt that there is more recreational fishermen, and the trend is only increasing, and so what I'm saying is we're kind of capped, but they're just skyrocketing, and I don't think that's understatement, by saying that.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Charlie, and I just -- I want to go back, to just clarify my current question, and it wasn't like a concern that it's exploding, but mostly how it's impacting you guys, who are really dependent on this fishery, right, and that was a big part of my question, and so I just wanted to make sure we're clear there, because, you know, I'm a full-time fisherman myself, and there is, obviously, like you said, a lot of fly-by-nighters too, that have, obviously, been a concern of mine in my fishery.

MR. LAKS: We do have a motion on the board, and I want to try and clear that up, before we go to anything else, and just one thing, Steve, and for-hire is not a commercial fisherman. It's a commercial venture, but they're not commercial fishing.

MR. DONALSON: (Mr. Donalson's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. LAKS: Right, It's not a pure recreational. I'm going to go to Steve and then Rusty.

MR. ENGLISH: I will just let you all know, and I'm sure some of you all that know me know, but, since I've been on this, I've been pushing for limited entry in the commercial sector, because I saw what was coming in Florida, and I'm talking about Florida, and so I knew that was coming, and North Carolina disagreed with me on it, because they saw how North Carolina was doing it was constricting, and they were just changing fisheries, and the same thing with the recreational industry.

As you are allowed to only catch one flounder, then they're going to go out there and catch one flounder, and they're going to go out and catch flounder and then go catch Spanish mackerel, because a recreational fisherman wants to catch fish, and he'll catch whatever is available, and so it's shifting also, and so that's what we've got, is a bunch of shifting fisheries, because we're closing some down, and we're restricting fisheries, and so everything is shifting, and Spanish mackerel is so abundant that that's where it's shifting to.

MR. LAKS: I've got Rusty, and then we'll go to Tony after that.

MR. HUDSON: Ira, I have a clarification question with regard to the for-hire permit, being that we have a certain universe of headboats. Now, headboats, versus a charter boat, there can be a small headboat, because of the way they do their business, and, of course, they have to report, and that's been a good thing, but there's twelve-passenger -- They call them charter boats, but, technically, they were, in my opinion, a small headboat, and so, really, who are we including? Is it the entire universe, with the headboats, or just people that don't have a for-hire permit?

MR. LAKS: Well, there is a federal for-hire permit that's either for a headboat or a charter boat, and so it really doesn't distinguish, and so I think that's what would be included. The council has always struggled with what they define as a headboat and a charter boat. You know, you can have twenty-five people that all know each other on a charter, or twenty-five unaffiliated people, and they call it a headboat, but it's really -- The way the vessel operates is no different, but the permit is the same, and there's not a headboat permit, and there's not a charter permit. You know, it's a charter/headboat permit, and it covers both of those avenues to take for-hire fishing out.

MR. HUDSON: That said then, when Ken Brennan is collecting the data for NMFS, those fifty-some-odd headboats are the ones mandated to do their reports.

MR. LAKS: Right. Under the council's definition of a headboat, they would be considered, but, you know, there are headboats without federal permits in south Florida that don't fall under that, and they stay in state waters, and so it's more of a -- It gets to be what the council considers, and what the Coast Guard considers, but the permit covers both of them, as far as the council is concerned.

MR. HUDSON: Well, I was just kind of wondering if there were any drift boats, like when my cousin bought the Sea Love II and took it from Sebastian up to St. Augustine, and I don't know exactly what its name was back then, but it would all do drift fishing, and some of it would be in

state waters, on this big sixty-foot boat or whatever, and it was all one side, because of how the current would affect stuff, and so I just keep thinking about maybe some of that Spanish showed up on some of those headboat reports too that would fish in state waters, and I don't know what it's like in North Carolina, if it's bad weather that they would stay in the state waters, but it was just something that I was trying to get wrapped -- You know, get my mind on.

MR. LAKS: Tony, did you have something?

MR. BENEVENTO: Yes, and I really can't support where it says, "limited entry", and that sounds like there's only a thousand licenses, and that's it, and, if we change that to "a more regulated entry system", I could support that, which would be -- I mean, right now, you get a six-pack license, and then you're in business?

MR. LAKS: So there's a certain amount -- Any vessel that takes for-hire passengers out into the EEZ, which is in federal waters, is required to have a charter/headboat permit for the three main fisheries of CMP, which is what we are, coastal migratory pelagics, dolphin wahoo, and snapper grouper. If you have been in the fishery, you should have those permits. I believe there is, off the top of my head, probably somewhere from 1,300 to 1,800 in each of the various fisheries right now.

At what point do you keep allowing that to expand, and when does it become -- In the area that I fish, I have quit charter fishing, because it's overcapitalized. The prices are not rising, because there are so many people competing for the same dollar. The costs are going up, and the charter rate is the same, and it's a math equation that I can't do anymore, and so where do you draw the limit of how many? You know, the resource is only so big, and this is the argument for it, and I'm not trying to convince you, but where do you draw the line to say, okay, to have a functioning charter fleet, that can maintain itself and be profitable, how many can it have, and there is probably more capacity than allocation in the charter fleet, and there are so many charter fleets that they could catch all the allocation in some of the snapper grouper fisheries.

Like there is more capacity in whole for-hire industry than red snapper available for the two-day season, and so, you know, the Gulf of Mexico has a limited entry system, where there are a certain amount of boats that are capped in it, and, again, there's ways to do it where you can allow new entries in, with different -- That's a way-down-the-line discussion, but, you know, there is always the good, common capitalism, where, if you want to get into it, you have to buy into it, just like the commercial fisheries.

You couldn't enter a commercial fishery, and you would have to buy a permit, in most of them, unlike -- Spanish mackerel is one that you don't, but, any of the other ones, you have to buy your way into the fishery. It's a lifetime permit, following that you don't do something to have it revoked.

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

MR. LAKS: Yes, it's an owned permit, and you can either pass it on to your family or sell it at any time you want.

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

MR. LAKS: I know more about drinking alcohol than selling it, but Charles, and then Steve, and then Aaron.

MR. GRIFFIN: Well, I want to speak, after being a charter captain for thirty-five years, that's it's definitely a problem. We've got way too many people doing this, and we've got a lot of people that shouldn't be in this business, but what we've done here in South Carolina, and it's been hard to do, but it's gotten better, is we've got to have a charter/headboat permit. Just South Carolina, you have to have a charter captain, and so that keeps a rein on who they are, and they want to know what's going on, and it makes us report.

If you do any offshore stuff, you've got to have a -- They won't even issue that charter permit unless you have the permit, the for-hire permit, for offshore stuff, and pelagic and bottom fish, and what we're finding though is these little boats, on nice days, run out there that don't have these permits, and they go to the reefs that are fifteen miles out and catch cobia and catch king mackerel and come back, and they don't have the licenses. That's a problem.

Second of all, we had the charter permit was only \$150 a year, and we proposed that, okay, the guy that wants to go fish ten times a year, at a reduced rate, and he cuts the price, just to pay for his boat, is not going to go buy that permit, and he will pay \$150, but he's not going to pay more, and they bumped the permit up, and we were saying \$500 or \$600, and they were like, no, we can't do that yet, and so we got it to it's like \$250 now. It has helped a little bit, but it definitely changes some things, and I kind of am beginning to -- I used to not agree with that the Gulf kind of did, about is it fair to the guy not having to buy this big permit to fish, but it's getting to the point where we've got so many people doing it, and we have a lot of disadvantages.

I have seen the big, giant redfish population here is just getting destroyed by these guys fishing, and they're not releasing fish properly, and things like that, just from lack of experience, and we're also finding out that like you get the kid that failed out of the first year of college, and his dad put him through c-school eighteen times, and he finally passed the test, and he bought him a boat and a truck, and let me tell you. He doesn't know what he's doing, and he's dangerous, and, half the time, that kid smoked it up before he got on the boat, you know, that kind of stuff, and so something has got to change, in that respect.

The legitimate businesses need to be able to keep going, but you've got to be able to do something to -- I think regulate it. Shim Creek got to the point here that nobody could park a boat to eat dinner, because all the charter boat guys were coming back and drinking up, at the end of the day, and taking up the dock spaces, to where they had to tell them that they couldn't stay there anymore. You know, it's kind of crazy stuff like that, and so I don't -- I definitely agree that something has to be done.

You know, if they have to buy a \$5,000 license for the rest of their life, that's fine, you know, and should it be \$100,000? No, or whatever, but something has got to be done, at this point. It used to not be a problem. When I started this, there was ten or twelve offshore boats in Charleston, and now there is just everybody, and so, anyhow, that's my two-cents' worth.

MR. LAKS: As much as I would like to talk about this for about three weeks, this is really off of our agenda that we had. Aaron, I know you were waiting patiently, and you can comment quick,

but I would like to then just take a vote on this and see how we feel, and we can pass it on to the council and get back to our agenda.

MR. KELLY: We're inundated with guides, and I think we all know that. The problem we have is even long-term guides that I know -- A lot of them have pulled away from the permits. Anything outside of three miles, they're just like I'm going to relinquish them. The new guys don't know and don't care, and so there is no real accountability, or respect, in my mind's eye, for new entrants, which is a big problem, because you don't have any -- You don't know what is going on, and then it's a moving target.

I am all for free enterprise, and let the guys shake it out where they want to shake it. I don't like it any more than anybody else does, because, every spot you look, there's people on your spots, but maybe a state level, and like North Carolina, for example, sells these blanket permits, and there's no cap, and there needs to be a cap, and so maybe a state level might be a better way to look at some of these things, but, as far as outside of three miles, these guys just aren't -- They're not buying the -- They're not complying, and they're not going to comply, and, if cobia are out there five miles, they're going, and they're not getting caught. It's not being enforced.

Someone like me, I fill out my little eTRIPS, and we do this, and we do that, and a pretty day, like you said, a slick, calm day, they're out there ying-yanging around out there, throwing poppers at yellowfin tunas. It's a pretty bad situation, and so that's all I've got to say.

MR. LOCKE: I just wanted to add, when we're making this motion, for some people that don't know, this would still just be a federal permit, and it's like what he touched on. You've got guys in every state that fish only in state waters, and so we can make this motion, but we're back talking to a state-water fishery, that is basically maintained in state waters, and you can make the motion for these people to get a permit, but it's like he said.

In our state, we don't have to have a Spanish mackerel permit. You know, I've got a Spanish mackerel federal permit, but, what would you say, 80 percent of the participants in the Spanish mackerel don't have a permit, and it's just state waters, and they don't have to do a logbook, and they don't have to do anything, and so it would be the same thing with this. I'm not sure if Aaron's not right that it should be handled on the state level, because that's where it's all going to be taking place, basically.

MR. LAKS: Well, I don't think this is just for Spanish mackerel. It's also for king mackerel and just the overall industry, and so I think we really need to -- Like I say, I could talk about this all day, but let's --

AP MEMBER: Hold on. Real quick, just for the record, less than six months ago, I was not fifty, in case anybody is wondering.

MR. LAKS: Okay. **All those in favor of this motion, raise your hand.** Did you get them?

MS. WIEGAND: I had eight, including you.

MR. LAKS: Okay. Eight, including me. **All those opposed, two. Any abstentions? Rusty. The motion passes.**

MR. HUDSON: Ira, on my abstaining, I feel a little rough about that “limited” word in there, also. Just, straight out of the gate, it’s going to create a big problem, and our need is information from those people and not a reduction of them right out of the gate, and that will cause an uproar, I would believe.

MR. LAKS: Well, it wouldn’t be a reduction, right? Those people who were legal would probably get a permit, and so --

MS. WIEGAND: What typically happens with limited entry, and we talked about this earlier, in the Spanish mackerel discussion, and what the council has the option to do, and whether or not they will do this is ultimately up to the council, but they can set what’s known as a control date. For the Spanish mackerel commercial permit, they set it in March of 2019, I think, which was the first time they talked about limited entry, and what this control date essentially does is says, as of this date, if you have a permit currently, you are guaranteed to have a permit under the limited entry system. If you get a permit after that date, you’re not necessarily guaranteed to have a permit if a limited-entry system goes into effect, and so it prevents this sort of rush on permits.

The council can set that control date, choose to use it, not choose to use it, or they can revise it in the future. It can be flexible, but that is sort of the system that’s in place, and so we’ll bring this motion to the council, and they can discuss it, and they may or may not choose to set a control date, and they may or may not choose to move forward with looking at this, but there is sort of a system in place to cap permits before discussions begin.

MR. LAKS: Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Well, since we were all encompassing with coastal migratory, and we have Gulf king and Spanish king and Atlantic king and then mixing zones, and so it gets a little complicated, I believe.

MS. WIEGAND: So we don’t have mixing zones anymore. We just have the firm line at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line for both king and Spanish mackerel. Unlike the commercial permit, the for-hire permits are separate, and so there’s a separate Gulf permit that I believe is limited access, and then there’s our Atlantic permit, which is open access, and so doing this would not affect fishing, for-hire fishing, for Gulf king mackerel and Spanish mackerel in any way, because that’s entirely separate permit.

MR. HUDSON: What about the Keys down there? Isn’t that 50/50 on both councils’ contribution to the Keys on king mackerel?

MS. WIEGAND: So, right now, management is set at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line, and so, in the Florida Keys, that is all considered Gulf fish.

MR. HUDSON: I still think it was Gulf fish, on the sense of them being in the point for a lot of decades, and I think that there is a mix of 50/50 of the stocks going through, and it’s like 4 percent that comes north now, compared to what was 100 percent Gulf coming up the Atlantic coast, early on.

MS. WIEGAND: Certainly, from a sort of biological standpoint, there is that mixing zone between those two stocks. Prior to 2017, we had the management boundary would shift, based on the season, and so, if you were fishing in the Keys in south Florida, sometimes you were fishing on Atlantic fish, and sometimes you were fishing on Gulf fish, depending on the season. With CMP Amendment 26, they stopped that shifting and set the management boundary itself at Miami-Dade/Monroe, and so we manage to that line, but certainly, Rusty, you're right that there is mixing of Gulf and Atlantic fish throughout that area, but we just manage by that firm line now.

MR. HUDSON: But we've had an established line between the Gulf Spanish and the Atlantic Spanish for quite a while now, compared to that.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, really quick, and I know it's getting close to noon, and we're getting hungry, but I would like to try to get through the objective conversation before we break for lunch, and so there's a couple of big questions that are still left, and one of them is related to Spanish mackerel.

There is currently an objective in the FMP that states that recreational and commercial sector allocations should be based on catch from the early to mid-1970s. Again, we don't have any, you know, reliable quantitative landings data that far back in time, and certainly we have qualitative information that may help us get a handle on how recreational and commercial fishing used to compare back then.

If this objective remains, the council sort of has to base their rationale for any allocation decision with these objectives in mind, and so the question we pose here is whether or not you think this is still appropriate rationale, an appropriate objective, for setting allocations within the Spanish mackerel fishery, and, if not, then you could either recommend a new objective, or you could just recommend that this objective be struck from the FMP.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: We're in this position because we don't have any accurate data, and why would we go to something with no data and try and make decisions? That is nothing but a way to manipulate numbers to achieve a goal, and absolutely not. I am 100 percent objecting to that.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: To that Objective 5, I mean, I don't know, and that's -- We don't even have any data to look at, in front of us here, to decide whether or not that's good years to base stuff off of. I mean, I think our allocations are pretty close to where they need to be, recreational versus commercial, and it's just North Carolina really doesn't want to go over our quota, the commercial sector, and we don't -- It's not something we want to do, but we just want to be at a level where we have historically harvested Spanish mackerel, which is around one-million pounds, but, other than that, all of the allocations, I would say, are pretty close, recreational versus commercial. Florida doesn't want any more fish, commercial, because of market issues, and I think 1.2 million pounds in the northern quota would cover us, as long as the fisheries don't explode up north in the commercial sector, but, as far as talking about the mid-1970s, I don't have any information in front of me, Christina, to base my decision off of, to whether or not that's the best years to use or not for allocations.

AP MEMBER: I agree with what everybody is saying, and I don't think we should -- I think we should get rid of that objective.

MS. WIEGAND: So, to clarify, getting rid of this objective certainly doesn't prohibit the council from considering what the fishery may have been like back in the 1970s, and it just opens up a much larger swath of options, and it doesn't sort of pigeonhole them to only consider this.

MR. LAKS: Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Historically, the Magnuson Act went into effect in April of 1976, under President Gerald Ford. Before that, we had a twelve-mile line to the international waters. The Cubans, the Russians, the Japanese, until we did that, and they were shoved out to 200 miles, but they definitely had impacts after the end of World War II, all the way up until that date, and then other countries followed suit.

MR. ENGLISH: Do I need to make a motion to eliminate this option?

MR. LAKS: Go ahead.

MR. ENGLISH: **I make a motion to disregard this option, eliminate it.**

MR. DONALSON: Second.

MR. HUDSON: The reason I brought it up was because of that early to mid-1970s issue there, and it gets a little fuzzy with the impacts that were going on back in those days.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. **The motion would be to remove Objective 5 from the CMP FMP. Objective 5 currently reads to distribute the total allowable catch of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between recreational and commercial user groups based on the catches that occurred during the early to mid-1970s, which is prior to the development of the deepwater runaround gillnet fishery, when the resource was not overfished.**

MR. LAKS: Is there any more discussion on this? Steve seconded it. Is there any more discussion on this? **Is anyone in opposition of this? The motion passes unanimously.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Thank you, guys. Moving on to the next question, we had are there concerns about waste and bycatch in any of the coastal migratory pelagic fisheries, and so Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, or Gulf cobia?

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: The only, and the biggest, concern I have with the waste in the Spanish mackerel commercial fisheries is if we have a closed season in North Carolina, because, like has been stated and overstated, you cannot have any gillnet fisheries in our state without seeing Spanish mackerel in our gillnet gear. That would be my only concern, and it's not a concern right now, but it would be in the future, if the stock assessment were to somehow impede our season.

MR. LAKS: Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: Well, I would go along with what Thomas said. The 500 pounds -- You know, I think that's some of our concern, by status quo. You know, we don't want to lose the 500 pounds. I mean, we have to have that in order to fish for anything else. Now, granted, in the wintertime, the Spanish aren't there, and it's not an issue, but, in the months that they're there, without the 500-pound bycatch -- It at least allows us to either target the larger Spanish, you know as a targeted fishery, or to fish for other things without the waste, and nobody wants waste.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: On the king mackerel fishery in Florida, we hook-and-line king mackerel, live bait hook-and-line. Of course, we catch rudderfish and everything else with them, and we can't sell them. We're not allowed to sell our recreational catch of them, and we should be able to do that. That would eliminate some waste and bycatch on us on the king mackerel hook-and-line live bait fishery.

MS. WIEGAND: What I am hearing is that, yes, reducing waste and bycatch in these fisheries is still an important objective, especially considering, you know, any potential closures into the future, so that this objective should be retained.

AP MEMBER: What do we know about catch-and-release mortality in the recreational fishery?

MS. WIEGAND: We certainly have an estimate for it, and I don't know the discard mortality rate used in the assessment for Spanish mackerel for the recreational. We can certainly -- You know what? Can we get back to you after lunch? We have those numbers, and we've just got to look them up.

MR. LAKS: Any other comments?

MS. WIEGAND: Then the last question, before I let you all finally leave for lunch, is getting back to a little bit of what Rusty was talking about, and do you feel like the separate migratory groups of king mackerel, and so Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel, are adequately addressed right now with management, and, again, right now, there is a line between the two at Miami-Dade/Monroe that does not shift throughout the year.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Yes, and we worked hard to get there, for many years.

MR. ENGLISH: Yes.

MR. LAKS: I would concur, yes.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Well, then I assume that maintaining that is important, and we'll note to the council that we do feel like that objective is adequately being addressed with current management measures, based on what I'm hearing, and so that's all I had for objectives, and so I will turn it back to you, Ira, if you think these guys have earned their lunch.

MR. LAKS: I think they've earned their lunch. We'll meet back at 1:30. Guys, go enjoy lunch, and we'll be back at 1:30.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LAKS: All right, guys. We're going to get started here in just a few seconds. Christina is going to guide us through CMP Amendment 33.

MS. WIEGAND: Actually, we've got Matt Freeman, who is a member of the Gulf Council staff, who is going to be walking us through Amendment 33 and how they're looking at modifying allocations for Gulf king mackerel, and then, once he's gone through this presentation, we'll have a little bit of discussion with you guys on how you feel like those changes may impact the price of mackerel on the Atlantic side of Florida. With that, Matt, I believe you're unmuted, and so you should be able to speak up, and I will get your presentation pulled up.

DR. FREEMAN: I will be starting with Amendment 33, which is looking at sector allocations between the commercial and recreational sectors for Gulf king mackerel. A little background on what started this document, and there was a Gulf king mackerel update through the SEDAR 38 update in 2020, showing that Gulf king mackerel is not overfished, nor was it experiencing overfishing.

Initially, there were two actions in this document, and the first was to modify catch limits, the OFL, ABC, and ACLs, and, subsequently, after development of the document, that portion was moved into a separate document, Gulf CMP Framework 11, and that also shifted the currency for those values from CHTS into FES. The Gulf Council took final action on Framework 11 at its June 2022 meeting, and that is under review by the Secretary of Commerce at the moment. The remaining action that is in CMP 33, as I mentioned, looks at the allocations between the commercial and recreational sectors. Currently, they are at 68 percent recreational and 32 percent commercial, and those have been in effect since 1985.

The reason why the Gulf Council is considering proposed modifications is that the commercial sector generally lands or exceeds its sector ACL. In contrast, the recreational sector does not land all of its sector ACL, and so reallocation, therefore, is being considered to address those differences between sector landings relative to their sector ACLs, while accounting for those adjustments in the historical recreational landings from MRIP CHTS data into FES data.

Moving forward, our purpose and need, we also had to update those after the split between CMP 33 and moving that other action into Framework 11, and so the current purpose, as I mentioned, is to revise the Gulf king mackerel allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors, in order to address the differences in sector landings relative to sector ACL and to continue to achieve optimum yield from the Gulf king mackerel stock.

This kind of highlights, again, those differences. If you look at the second-to-last column and the third-to-last column, and so the overhead is the percent of sector ACL landed, and it's broken down by commercial and recreational. You can see, under the commercial segment, on several instances that are highlighted, where the commercial landings were exceeding the sector ACL,

and, even in those cases where they did not exceed it, they were coming extremely close to that ACL.

On the other hand, for the recreational sector, they were much further below their sector ACL, and so, again, the Gulf Council is looking at shifting, again, some of that allocation from the recreational sector over for use by the commercial sector, and we can move into the next slide, and these next few slides go over the alternatives that the Gulf Council is currently considering.

The first one is our no action alternative, and this would maintain the 32 percent commercial and 68 percent recreational sector allocations, and that was derived using the average landings from the years 1975 through 1979. I do want to note, here, as we move into the other alternatives, that we do not have an alternative that examines 1975 through 1979 average landings using FES data, because estimates for the landings prior to 1981 are no longer available in any recreational currency, and so the council has, in essence, been forced to consider other ways to modify that sector allocation.

Alternatives 2 and 3 use information from a simulation model that was developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and so, here, they used FES recreational landings data in the SEDAR 38 model instead of that CHTS recreational landings data. In doing so, they were able to generate a hypothetical OFL and ABC that represents what the catch limits from SEDAR 38 would have been had FES data been used at that time, and so, in Alternative 2.

In just a few slides, I will kind of show the numbers that were generated through that model, but Alternative 2 looks to modify the sector allocation by taking 25 percent of the average difference between the total landings from the 2016-2017 fishing year through the 2019-2020 fishing year, using that MRIP-FES data, as well as the total simulated ACL, and shifting that to the commercial sector. In doing so, the resulting sector allocation would be 42 percent commercial and 58 percent recreational. As I mentioned, after I sort of talk through these alternatives, we'll see how those numbers sort of pan out, in an overview, and how they were generated.

Alternative 3, likewise, uses total landings from those same fishing years that I just mentioned for Alternative 2, again using MRIP-FES data, and the total ACL simulated through Model 2, and reallocates 50 percent towards the commercial sector, whereas Alternative 2 would have only reallocated 25 percent. As a result, the new sector allocations would be 53 percent commercial and 47 percent recreational.

Looking at the top table, that shows the total landings for both sectors, using our MRIP-FES data, and the column next to it, using that Model 2 that was generated by the Science Center, shows what the total projected ACL would have been, and then the following column takes the difference, and so it looks at what the projected ACL would be under Model 2 for each of those individual fishing years and subtracts out what the total landings are, again using our commercial data and then our recreational data through MRIP-FES.

Then, taking an average of the differences in that previous column, we see that the average difference is just over four-million pounds, and so, in the bottom table, Alternative 1 shows, again, the recreational allocation and commercial allocation, with no changes, being 68 percent and 32 percent, and then Alternative 2, we, in essence, take 25 percent of that average difference, which

I mentioned just a moment ago is that like 4.1 million pounds, which is in that last column of that top table, and shifts that over to the commercial ACL.

Again, when we went through Alternative 2, we see that the resulting allocation would be 58 percent to the recreational sector and 42 percent to the commercial. In Alternative 3, if we were to take 50 percent of that 4.1 million pounds, and, again, shift it from the recreational sector over to the commercial ACL, or, sorry, to the commercial sector, we see what the resulting recreational ACL and commercial ACL would be, as well as what the recreational and commercial allocations would be.

This is something that was requested by one of our Gulf Council members, and they were interested in seeing what the average recreational landings and average commercial landings might be, compared to those proposed alternatives, and so I will walk through each portion of this table.

The top portion looks at the average recreational landings in FES, and that was just over 4.6 million pounds, and, when we compare that average to Alternative 2, we see that that would suggest that the recreational sector may harvest just over 80 percent of that proposed ACL. Now, again, that's not to say that is what actually would happen, but we're just, again, using the average of historical landings and comparing it to the proposed alternative. If we do that for Alternative 3, which, if you recall, was shifting even more of the recreational sector allocation over to the commercial, those historical average recreational landings is a much larger percentage of the recreational ACL under Alternative 3, and that would comprise 97.6 percent of the rec ACL.

As we move down into the next portion, you will see we have two different versions of average commercial landings. The first is a simulation, again provided by the Science Center, and that is, again, through that Model 2, where they said, you know, if we had FES data available to input into SEDAR 38, and we had generated different OFLs and ABCs, this is saying what the commercial landings might have been.

The commercial landings, and, as you saw in that previous table, where I had landings highlighted, you see that they were fairly often constrained by their sector ACL, that, had their ACL been higher, they perhaps would have harvested more, and so this is saying that the average commercial landings would have been just over 4.1 million pounds. In comparing that to the commercial ACL shown under Alternative 2, that would comprise just over 97 percent of that sector ACL. With Alternative 3, where the proposed commercial ACL would be higher, it comprises 78.2 percent of it.

The last portion is what the average commercial landings actually are on the books, and so this is not simulated, and, there, you will see it was about 2.85 million pounds, and so, in comparison with Alternative 2, those average historic landings are about 67.3 percent of the proposed sector ACL, and, under Alternative 3, it's about 54.1 percent of that proposed sector ACL.

This was a table generated for us by the Southeast Regional Office, by one of the data analysts, and so the bag limit, on the recreational side, had been increased, and that's the recreational daily bag limit, had been increased to three king mackerel per person per day, back in 2017, and so this bag limit distribution again sort of shows that, even when the bag limit was increased on the recreational side, it's still very much geared towards one king mackerel per person on those trips, because that was a question that the council had, was are the landings on the recreational side

perhaps lower than the sector ACL, because the bag limit is constrained then, and perhaps they would have caught more and been closer to that sector ACL, had they had a larger bag limit.

Moving forward, the Gulf Council's next meeting is the week of October 24, and we'll be presenting a public hearing draft at that meeting. If it's approved for public hearings by the Gulf Council at that time, before we hold public hearings, we would bring the document to the South Atlantic Council, at its meeting in December, and then, assuming that both councils approve it for public hearings, we would look at holding those in January and February of next year, and it would be a combination of in-person public hearings, virtual public hearings, and then, as we often do, promoting the opportunity to comment via the Fish Rules app, and I believe the next slide is simply the questions slide, and so I will stop there for any questions, and I'm available as well when there is any discussion.

MR. LAKS: I have one question, and that would be this extra allocation -- Would it be divided into the percentages that your zones are in now?

DR. FREEMAN: That's an excellent question, and, yes, it would be. That's something that was sort of briefly discussed outside of the document, was whether or not the council, at this time, wanted to consider any sort of reallocation among the zones, and, currently, that's not something that the Gulf Council was interested in exploring, and so it would use the current percentages for zones within the commercial sector.

MR. LAKS: Just a little bit of a follow-up, and so the recent trends have been way down, if I'm seeing it right, and is that correct, in landings?

DR. FREEMAN: Are you referring to the landings? I apologize.

MR. LAKS: Yes, and it seems like, the last two years, they're not catching as much, and I know probably some concern to our fishermen over here would be if the behavior of fish are acting a little different, as far as the hook-and-line fishery, and it would be pretty much the gillnet fishery, in the near future, if the fish are behaving like they are, that would really benefit.

DR. FREEMAN: Sure, and that's a good question, and, if you give me just a moment, I can check in our document, and I am trying to remember which table it is. Christina, do you mind opening the document for me? It should be in Table 2.1.2, and that's on page 18. I would say that's the actual page numbers and not the PDF page numbers. That is showing the landings in comparison to the ACLs by the commercial zones, and I think that may help address some of your question, and you may have a follow-up question, after seeing that.

MR. LAKS: Yes, and I'm looking at the current landings, and like, for the Western Zone, they're at 15 percent, and they're normally closed by now, and that could have something to do with the storms last year, and infrastructure, but, from things I'm hearing, the western Gulf is just not seeing the fish like they used to, and so, just to clarify it for our guys, we're looking at possibly another million, or two-million, pounds than the ACL used to be, or approximately?

DR. FREEMAN: You're saying for the commercial side?

MR. LAKS: Yes.

DR. FREEMAN: If they go with Alternative 2, that is roughly -- It's just over a million-pound increase, and, if they go with Alternative 3, it's just over a two-million-pound increase, in comparison to the current commercial ACL, and I do need to preface. When I say the current commercial ACL, that is in reference to that Framework 11 that I mentioned, which is under review by the Secretary currently, and so, assuming that is approved, that is what would go into effect next year, and so we were using those numbers as our Alternative 1, no action, scenario.

MR. NEWMAN: I assume we're either going to choose status quo or an alternative action, and I was just curious if the Gulf Mackerel AP has looked at this and what they chose as their option.

DR. FREEMAN: That's a great question. Our Mackerel AP is not being convened until -- I believe it's that week after Thanksgiving that is like partially November and partially December, and so we have not had an opportunity to hear from them with the current version of the document, and so great question.

MS. WIEGAND: Just as a note, this AP can certainly recommend a preferred alternative to our council that you can also choose to defer to the Gulf Council and the Gulf CMP Advisory Panel. Our council did have concerns about how this increase, this potential increase, in available commercial catch might impact market prices for king mackerel, knowing that market prices for Atlantic king mackerel and Gulf king mackerel are often closely intertwined, and so the council was hoping to get some information from you all on how you expect the potential increase to maybe affect your business.

DR. FREEMAN: Christina, I did want to add, because that was a great question from one of the South Atlantic Council members, concerning that, and I did check with the SERO and Science Center economists, and they confirmed that, and I apologize for using heavy-duty econ language here, but the response I got back was that they did not have what they would call own-price flexibility estimates available for Gulf or South Atlantic king mackerel. In essence, they did not have the sort of data that would be required to analyze what the projected impacts might be, and so they also expressed interest in hearing from your AP on what those impacts might be.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: Just from a standpoint of looking at it, it looks like, in some years, they were just over their limit, and, a couple other years, they were right at it, and so they don't need that many more fish to stay within their landing limits. I mean, I would go with the lower one, and I would think you would go with the lower one, to be conservative, and you can always come back, in three or four years, and look at it again, and, if it goes the other way, go back the other way, or, if it needs more, up it, rather than go the full amount.

I mean, if you're going to do it, that would be, you know, a commonsense way that I would look at it, and I would go with the lower one, just to get it -- That million pounds, spread out amongst the three sectors, the three or four different sectors, probably wouldn't hurt your prices, because, really, it only affects them mainly in the North Carolina run there in the fall, if they continue that western sector, and that's what hurts them, and it hurts us a little bit, with that southwest run, down there around Naples, but not that much, because we're all catching fish at that point anyhow, and

the price is where it's going to be, and so I would say, if you're going to do anything, go with the smaller amount, if you're going to do anything.

MR. LAKS: I would tend to agree, that the smaller amount would probably not have as much impact on the fishery. Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: I just want to make sure that I'm following the conversation correctly. When you guys are referring to the smaller amount, are you referring to Alternative 1, which would be the no action alternative, which would retain the commercial allocation at 32 percent, or are you talking about Alternative 2, which would up it to 42 percent, based on that sort of equation that Matt was talking about earlier?

MR. LAKS: I would think to where it's the 1.1 million pounds. We're going to go to Tony and then Thomas.

MR. BENEVENTO: My question is why is the recreational dropping so far below its percentage? Is it people not fishing or not catching? If there is a surplus there, then I can see it going to Alternative 2, but, if it's because there is a shortage of fish and people aren't catching it, it's not a good idea.

MR. LAKS: There are some trends to show that -- I believe that, at some of the Gulf Council meetings, fishermen were saying that there is some issues with king mackerel, but, generally, king mackerel is just not targeted that much, and it's just not the fish -- There's a lot of stuff to catch in the Gulf, and king mackerel is not the first choice of every angler, and they just -- Nobody wants to go out and catch, you know, twelve king mackerel to take home, and so your catch limits are generally lower for the recreational sector. Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: I was just considering that they bump up so close to -- The commercial industry has been bumping up so close to their ACL, and, given the last two years, there has been a landings drop, but you've also got to figure that they've had some pretty devastating storms down there, and so, if the guys have some extra opportunity to land a few more fish, it may be beneficial to the local economies that have those hardships of the hurricanes coming through the Gulf coast of Florida over the last -- Over the last week or two, with the hurricane, and they're going to be needing some help as well.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: If I remember some of the discussion we've had, we were trying to up the limit, landing limits, on the recreational sector from two to three, and there was no interest in doing that, just no interest, because there's not that much interest in the kingfish, and I think we went through it, if I recall right, in the Gulf, and that's just what they land, and they just don't target them, and so that's why I would say, if you're going to do it, go the conservative route, you know do the lower number, and, that way, down the road, if something changes, you can change it back, or you can go a little more and tweak it a little better, you know, and that's just -- I have always promoted -- I said we need to take the fishery that we're allocated and take a percentage of what's not caught and put it in a pool, and either the recreational or the commercial sector can draw from that pool, if they need it.

We have discussed that before, and, of course, we've never gone anywhere with it, but, to me, that would be the optimum way to do it, and, that way, either sector that needed them could benefit from them, or we wouldn't be leaving the fish uncaught, and we would just be better off, I would think.

MR. LAKS: I don't know if we need an official statement or anything, but I would say, without the economic data, that probably the conservative choice of Number 2 would probably be something that we should stick with, where it's allowing them to get a few extra fish, but, not knowing the impacts it could fully have on our fishermen, I would be a little hesitant for the two-million pounds. Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Thank you, Ira. Will there be, in their public hearing document that they're going to be viewing in October, and then we'll be viewing in December, an economic analysis that's not in this particular draft, as far as prices per pound and flow charts that show what that means, and what it could mean, like Ira was saying?

DR. FREEMAN: Yes, sir, and so staff is preparing the effects sections of our amendment. In this case, the effects that are being examined are limited to the Gulf recreational and commercial sectors. As I mentioned earlier, after I checked with the NMFS economists, we would not have the sort of information available to analyze what the impacts might be on a larger market, outside of the Gulf region, but, in terms of the analysis between the recreational and commercial sectors in the Gulf, we should have that hopefully posted to our website, for our October council meeting, by next Friday.

MR. LAKS: Would someone like to make a motion?

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

MR. LAKS: Anyone oppose it?

MS. WIEGAND: I will read it. **The motion is the AP recommends selecting Alternative 2 in CMP Amendment 33, and then the alternative language is listed below.**

MR. LAKS: **Is there any opposition to that? The motion passes.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so I do want to note one thing, for those of you who might be a bit newer to the joint management plan process, and so, because this is a joint management plan between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and this is a full plan amendment, it must be approved by both councils, and both councils have to agree on a preferred alternative before it can be approved and moved forward to NMFS for rulemaking, and so, if the Gulf Council -- This is all hypothetical, but, if the Gulf Council, at their next meeting, selects a preferred alternative that is in opposition to what the South Atlantic Council ultimately selects, they will have to sort of go back-and-forth until there can be some agreement on the correct way to move forward. Is there anything else, Matt, that you feel like you need from this advisory panel related to CMP 33?

DR. FREEMAN: I think it's very helpful, hearing the discussion and the questions, and so I think I'm good, moving forward with the document, and I appreciate the opportunity to present to the AP.

MR. LAKS: Thank you, Matt. We appreciate your presentation. Is everyone good with 33, and we can move on to the next item in our agenda?

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so next up on the agenda is a discussion of false albacore, and we're going to sort of do what I am lovingly calling a mini fishery performance report, and so I will pull up that document and explain to you guys why we're talking about false albacore.

Back in September, the council received a letter from the American Saltwater Guides Association requesting that they reconsider adding false albacore, little tunny, albies, bonito, and they're called a number of different things up and down the coast, but I have been using the term "false albacore", and so that's what I am going to continue to use.

In response to the letter requesting that the council reconsider adding false albacore to the CMP FMP, the council directed staff to develop a white paper that's going to examine if false albacore meets the Magnuson-Stevens Act criteria for a stock that's in need of conservation and management, but, before I get into sort of these ten different criteria, I want to provide you guys, again, with some history on what has happened in terms of management of false albacore over the years.

When the CMP FMP was originally implemented, back in the early 1980s, false albacore was included in the fishery management plan, though there were no management measures tied to false albacore, and it remained in the plan until Amendment 18. Amendment 18 was the amendment in response to the revision of the Magnuson-Stevens Act that required implementation of annual catch limits and accountability measures. The council felt like there wasn't a need to implement those types of regulations for false albacore, and, as a result, they removed it from the CMP FMP. The thought, at the time, was that perhaps states might manage false albacore at their own level, and that it wasn't necessarily in need of federal management, but it would still sort of be picked up by various tracking mechanisms.

Now, this letter has asked us to reconsider, and so the council is doing just that, and there are sort of ten main criteria that help guide the council when determining if false albacore should be added back in as a formally-managed species with annual catch limits and accountability measures.

There is also a second way to add this species back into the FMP without those requirements, and it would be to add them as an ecosystem component species. If you guys were around when we were looking at bullet and frigate mackerel, when adding them into the Dolphin Wahoo FMP, they were added as ecosystem component species, and so that is another route, but what the council has asked us to focus on here is to sort of start at the beginning and even see where false albacore falls relative to these ten criteria.

These ten criteria are looking at whether or not the stock is an important component of the marine environment, whether the stock is caught by a fishery, whether having a fishery management plan could improve or help to maintain the current condition of the stock, if the stock is a target of a fishery, if the stock is important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users, if it's important to the nation or regional economy, if there's a need to resolve competing interests or conflicts among different user groups, and if a federal plan could help further that resolution, the economic condition of a fishery and whether or not the FMP could produce more efficient utilization, the

needs of a developing fishery and whether the FMP is able to foster orderly growth, and then, finally, the extent to which the fishery is already adequately managed by the states or by another state/federal program.

Those are sort of the ten criteria that are intended to help determine whether a species is in need of conservation and management and formal inclusion within a fishery management plan, and so the council wanted us to sort of get some feedback from you all relative to those ten factors and sort of discuss whether or not you all felt that false albacore was in need of conservation and management, based on those ten factors, and so, to get at that, we're going to do sort of a mini fishery performance report.

We've got, you know, some very brief landings information since 2000, and total landings of false albacore have averaged right around 3.1 million pounds per year along the east coast, and recreational landings are at about 2.6 million per year, with commercial landings being a little less than half-a-million per year, and landings have stayed relatively consistent since 2000, with the exception of an increase in both commercial and recreational landings between about 2012 and 2019. Historically, those landings are occurring throughout the South Atlantic region, sort of North Carolina to Florida, though there have been some landings in the Mid-Atlantic as well as in the North Atlantic.

Just so you can see that visually, there are total commercial landings, total recreational landings, and then total landings in the gray line, and so, as you can see, relatively consistent since 2000, except for this one bump right around this 2011-ish time period, back to 2019, and, again, just to give you an idea, you can see the South Atlantic landings here in gray, compared to the North Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic landings, and see that the South Atlantic is the area that is primarily landing false albacore.

With that, I am going to scroll back up to these broad questions, and I think we'll just hit them one-by-one and allow you all to have some discussion about your experiences with the false albacore fishery, and then we can circle back to those sort of ten criteria, and so, just sort of starting throughout the South Atlantic, and the Mid-Atlantic as well, have there been substantial changes in fishing behavior and catch levels for false albacore over the last five years? Are you seeing people, you know, really getting into this fishery? Are you seeing changes in where you're seeing the false albacore, just generally over the last five years, and your impression of the biological aspect of this fishery.

MR. LAKS: Thomas and then Will.

MR. NEWMAN: I just had a point of clarification. I thought you said, Christina, there was a bump in the commercial and recreational, and what year was the bump in the commercial? The line looks pretty flat.

MS. WIEGAND: It was primarily the recreational landings that were driving that, and you're correct in that that commercial line looks fairly -- I misspoke, and it was the bump in the recreational landings.

MR. LAKS: Will, go ahead.

MR. JONES: Definitely in the recreational sector, over the last several years, just like any other type of recreational fishing, and it's become even more popular than it already was, and I think pursuing some kind of management for them has been wildly popular within the recreational fishery, and it has pretty broad support, but it's definitely getting more popular, and more people are getting into it than ever before, at least from what we see in the Carolinas, and, obviously, it's more popular for recreational fishing in North Carolina than it is in the rest of the South Atlantic.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: Do the recreational folks keep them and take them home and eat them?

MR. BENEVENTO: That was my question. Is it landings or actual putting them in a box? I mean, like we land them and throw them right back over, or some people use the belly for strip bait, something like that, but I am stunned by the amount of what they have up there, over six-million pounds of bonita.

MR. LAKS: Well, I personally see many of them hanging on a charter board on a really bad day, and so, I mean, if it's the only thing you've got to catch, it's a picture fish. Thomas and then Rusty and then Charlie.

MR. NEWMAN: Another point of clarification, and is this -- This is recreational landings, and it's not recreational harvest, including dead discards, and do we have any dead discard information?

MS. WIEGAND: I don't have dead discard information on me right now, and that's something that we could look into and get for you guys, but these are landings.

MR. HUDSON: The landings for the commercial, I would assume most of that is bait, and there could be some food process there, and, the first time I ever ate the meat, it was 1974, and we caught it on a headboat there out of Ponce, and the Bahama lady cooked it up, and it was awesome, when she brought it over to us the next day, and, otherwise, our commercial guys used a lot of it once we encouraged the shark industry into existence, between bonita and the other kinds of baits that we would use, like cownose rays or whatever, and, you know, it was the type of thing that normally just got discarded, and the strips, as I was recreational fishing since the 1960s, we would always cut the strips out for trolling baits and stuff, and that was always out of the belly, because it's nice and silver, and so it really would be nice to get down to are we just discarding most of these animals or are we utilizing some of them on the beach for something.

MR. LAKS: Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: This is one of the main reasons that I'm at this meeting, and I'm going to be honest with you. This is kind of an important fishery for me in the winter, and it's a little niche fishery, when it's blowing like thirty out of the northwest. We catch them on the beach. They have got the best eyes of any fish I have ever fished for in my life, and they do not hit a net easily. The only time you catch them is when it's blowing a friggin' gale, and they get up in the surf, and they're running down the sea, and they don't see the net, and you catch them.

About ten o'clock in the morning, it's done, and, as soon as the sun gets up, it's done. It's a very hard fish to catch with a net, but there's a fishery for it, and there's actually a really good food market for it that has developed, but it's not a big-volume to get the money. You catch 10,000 pounds in a week, and you've flooded the market, and it's just not a big-volume thing, but there is a food -- Rusty, you asked, and, I mean, it's -- A lot of Filipinos like this fish, for some reason, and that's where they mostly go, and Canadians buy them, and they go up north, and a lot of Filipino communities eat them. They just like the flavor of that fish.

I mean, I know this is pointing towards some kind of a management measure, and, since we've got this graph on here, the great unknown, to me, is the recreational landings. That is your jump, and that's your kind of all over the place, and commercial seems kind of steady.

I talked to the Saltwater Guides Association for about an hour the other day on this topic, and they're worried about expansion in this fishery, and one of their concerns was purse seine. They're like, well, what if the purse seine develops, and the purse seine fishery starts catching them, and so I would like clarification, and I know, in our state, you cannot purse seine anything but a menhaden, a fatback, bunker, or whatever you all call them, pogies, and I believe you cannot purse seine any food fish on the east coast, that I know of, right now. There is not a purse seine fishery for a food fish, and it's only for bait fisheries only.

There is really not an expansion in the commercial side of it, and I know, Ira, you all want to talk about the bait thing going on in Florida, and you're more familiar with that than I am, and the landings, but this is not like an expanding commercial fishery.

If you guys that have built nets to try to catch these in the winter -- Most of them cut them out of lines, because they saw that it was so friggin' rough that they didn't want to be out there that day, and so I don't see it like being an expanding commercial fishery. We are getting more money for them, and the value has definitely gone up, but it's still mostly a bycatch fishery. I'm one of the few guys that targets them, and, like Thomas will tell you, in the king net fishery in the fall, the guys that set at daylight right before the sun comes up, they will all have albacore in their nets, but, as soon as the sun comes up, they don't catch them, and you might have a guy catch ten or fifteen boxes in that morning set, and then you don't catch another one the rest of the day, and so it's kind of like a bycatch fishery, overall. Even in our Spanish fishery we catch a few, and it's not really like a fishery that's going to expand.

I think the desire for the for-hire fishery and the recreational fishery is just to continue to keep the false albacore as a viable fishery for the future, and, you know, prevent the fishery from -- You know, people depend on it, from New England all the way down to the Carolinas, and it's just this huge fishery, and I think having it completely unmanaged is just kind of -- For somebody that depends on it, it's kind of scary to think that there is no management for the fish at all, and so we just want to see -- We want to get the ball rolling and have some kind of management strategy for them going into the future.

MR. LAKS: Thomas and then Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: It makes me think that, once we put these regulations in place, and then somebody winds up using part of the animal for bait, commercial or recreational, and it's not been weighed-in, or somehow gone through a process, that could possibly bite somebody in the backside. Just

thinking about the uses and the 10,000 pounds, talking about the Filipino thing, and like the blue runners, and that's a big deal to them, and there's a huge population in Nevada that likes to get our seafood up here on the east coast, but I just kind of worry about the technicalities of rulemaking.

I love the idea of monitoring and knowing what's going on in the ocean, but, if it's then going to cause collateral impacts to commercial and recreational people, because of how they have utilized them for the last sixty years, that's a whole different quantity.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: I'm just going to kind of echo what Rusty said. If we start managing these fish, are you going to be allowed to cut them on your boat and use them for bait anymore? Is that going to be a cut-fish issue, and, also, these landings are relatively flat, even for the recreational industry, and you've got that peak around 2015, but it's flattened right back out to where they've always been, between two and three-million pounds, and, I mean, I don't have a problem with getting them on the table and starting to figure out what biomass we've got here, but, to start setting trip limits, or doing limited entry, or something like I have heard discussed, is getting a little bit ahead of ourselves, and I just think we need to have concern with setting any hard numbers before we even know what the biomass is on this species of fish, because they're really an HMS species, and they migrate all over the Atlantic Ocean, down to Brazil, and, I mean, they don't just occur in the South Atlantic region.

MR. LAKS: I think some of the problem with not having any management is we're not going to be able to get the numbers, right, and so there will be no emphasis to do that. Some of the things I'm seeing with the fishery is, you know, it was always a bycatch in our king fishery, and, up until the early 2000s, we weren't even able to get rid of them, and now we can sell a small amount, but we can't flood the market, but what I do see is a large bait market for them, and, you go to every tackle store, and there is Ziploc bags full of strips everywhere, and bellies for deep-dropping.

You know, I don't know how well that has done, and I also have a concern, and, like you said, when you see how is there five-million pounds landed, and, well, you go to every headboat in south Florida, and they're laying on the dock, and, when you have a fish that is unregulated by anyone, it's not respected, right, and you're just saying that it's just something that doesn't deserve to have any kind of management, and I'm not saying it needs to be, you know, hard-and-fast, like you're talking about, where you can't cut it for bait, but I don't know if it's not something that we need to look into a more comprehensive look, to see really what's going on, because these numbers aren't great.

I think some of our landing problems is just -- You know, around this table, we all call them something different, right, and so who even knows what people are calling them and what they are, but I know, in my area, I've seen a lot more people bait fishing for them, and I think, Steve, you could talk to that too, and we'll go to Charlie after.

MR. ENGLISH: I mean, you see the chart, and it's pretty flat, and, to me, we know that there is a developing -- A little bit of a developing call for them for a food fish, and, if that catches on, you're going to see that graph go up, and so, to me, the way it stands now, we ought to just closely monitor the thing, as best we can, and maybe try and get some -- Maybe try and get some idea of how much

of it is going into the bait industry, because the bait industry doesn't go through the fish house, a lot of it, and it just goes from boat to boat and people to people.

I mean, to me, I would think at least monitor it, to a point that, you know, put them on notice that it appears that there is starting to be a call for the fish and that it should be something that we closely monitor, and, if we see any sign of anything, jump on it and -- Have something in place that we can jump on and do something with.

MR. LAKS: I'm going to go to Charlie and then Rusty.

MR. LOCKE: The first question I would ask, and I think I asked this at dinner last night, and is it a restricted species in Florida, because, in Florida, and many of you all aren't sure about the way the license works, and there's an SPL, a saltwater products license, but then you have an RS species, which are restricted species, and you have to have a certain amount of landings to kind of get it, and so these guys that get in and try to get -- Anybody can kind of get an SPL, but, if they want to get a restricted species endorsement, they've got to go out and catch a certain amount of jack crevalle, or something that is unregulated, to get that RS endorsement.

If it's not a restricted species, the first thing the State of Florida needs to do is make it a restricted species, and that would help, and at least -- I know, just from social media stuff that I've seen, when you're talking about the bait fishery, unfortunately, the guys who are catching a ton of these is what I call crackhead fishermen that we deal with at home, and he's got a Carolina skiff, and he doesn't ice his fish, and he's throwing them in there, and he's -- I mean, full albacore, and, like you said, he's probably going to some back-room tackle shop and selling them under the table, and they're not even being recorded. I totally agree with doing something, and monitoring it and getting a handle on it, but, as far as worrying about like an expanding fishery, I don't know if there's a problem there.

MR. LAKS: One second, Rusty, and I'm just going to speak to what Charlie said. In Florida, it is a totally unregulated species, and that means that, recreational, you can catch a hundred pounds per person, and that's the limit in Florida, and any of you can be a commercial bonita fisherman, or little tunny, or false albacore, for fifty-dollars. You can go and catch as many as you want and sell them, and so it is a fishery that is very easy to get into, and it just seems too easy. Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Julia Byrd could supply a sample of pictures, starting in maybe the late 1940s, all the way to the mid-1970s, and you will see that, in these recreational for-hire, whether it's trolling boats or whether it was headboats, you would see the bonita hanging on the rack, because it was just something to do, and they would never be in the middle. They would all be like to the edges, where your king mackerels and red snapper and whatever, and maybe Charlie's dad has some of them pictures from back in the 1960s and stuff like that too, and I think you need to talk to Julia about that, and your dad, because, if we're going to do a stock assessment, we don't have a minimum size.

I think the biggest one that I ever had was around eighteen to twenty pounds, but then you've got little smaller ones, but you don't see as many of them. On the headboats, they were a nuisance in the 1970s, and, I mean, if you get one on, and you would have sixty people on the boat, and you would have twenty tangles, and be breaking out your pliers and just trying to redo the leaders and stuff, and so we didn't really relish having them in those kinds of circumstances, but, when we

were trolling, you bring in a king, and you bring in a bonita, and you throw the in the box, and they all came and got put on the rack, back in the 1950s, and the late 1940s is the oldest pictures that I supplied from the for-hire fleets out of the Daytona area, but there's got to be at least a way to get some more data that we can utilize, and the same thing with them doing the biologics, so that we can do an idea of what the population is, just so we can monitor it, because you've got a little bit of numbers of landings, and you're able to expand that out, but it's just something that -- An unregulated fish, in this day and age, just doesn't work out very well anymore.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: All right, and so the Mid-Atlantic Council -- This was included in like this forage fish thing, because Dewey Hemilright brought it to my attention, like five or six years ago, and he knew that I was like one of the only guys fishing for them, and he asked me, hey, what's a trip, what's a good trip limit, and what do you catch in a day, if you're targeting them, yada-yada, and I was like, well, you know, it just depends on the day, but they scrapped that, you know, because they realized that it wasn't something they wanted to put in that.

I can see the concern with the Saltwater Guides Association, and I can see the concern with Tom and these people. I know our state is doing a white paper, and Kathy Rawls has started on that, if I'm correct maybe, but I'm all for getting a handle on it and being -- I mean, every species should probably be regulated. I mean, we're in -- Those days are over, and everything has got to be managed, somewhat, and so to get a handle on it is probably a good idea, for sure.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for bringing that up, Charlie. As many of you know, this issue is pretty dear to my heart, and, for those of you on the AP, we passed my motion, like four years ago or something, regarding asking the council to look at doing something for this species, and I think the big question is what could that be, and it doesn't have to be something hard-and-fast, and, you know, touching on Thomas' comment, if I couldn't use them as bait, I would be pretty mad, and so, I mean, I use them for bait all the time.

The frustration that I've had with this fishery is, since the council removed them, and it was like 2011 or whatnot, and I was speaking to my council members at the time, Mac Currin, and, you know, the thought was that the state would do something, and we went to the states, and the states didn't do anything, and, you know, as a state commissioner, that was my motion, to ask the North Carolina DMR to put a white paper to look at managing them, but they've told me that they don't think the state should manage them, and so there's a lot of this going on. Everyone is pointing in different directions, and, at some point, we have to recognize that this is a super-important fishery. They're important recreationally, and they're important to you, Charlie, and they're important to a lot of commercial fishermen, and so they're too important to say no.

MR. LAKS: Thomas and then Will.

MR. NEWMAN: That brings up another question, and like who is going to be studying this fish, because I'm sitting here looking at their range, and they range all the way to the Mediterranean, and so it's basically an HMS species, and is ICCAT going to help us with some of our surveys for this species, because they don't just hang out in the South Atlantic.

MS. WIEGAND: In terms of putting together a stock assessment for a species like this, obviously, we don't have an extreme amount of data. The council does manage a number of species with data-limited approaches, and so that's an option for this species. They also manage species like dolphin and wreckfish, which have a much larger range, and many of those are unassessed, and so there are ways to set catch limits for species that are data-limited. The extent to which other international bodies would get involved in providing data is something that honestly has not been discussed, or even thought about, since we're at the very, very beginning of even discussing this.

MR. NEWMAN: Just for a follow-up, and that's another thing too, is I didn't know, until six or eight years ago, what the proper classification was in the Northeast logbook, and I have to mark them as LTA, little tunny, and I don't believe the South Atlantic classifies them as a little tunny, and what does the South Atlantic logbook classify them as?

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

MR. NEWMAN: That's what I'm saying. They don't even jibe on the management sectors here in the paperwork.

MR. LAKS: Will.

MR. JONES: To answer your question, or an aside to your question, Thomas, the ASGA is already starting to do some of their own studies with dart tagging, acoustic tags, and we're doing the fin clips, and we're going to do, in like mid-October -- We'll get a bunch of fin clips from North Carolina, Cape Cod, and Long Island Sound, and do a -- They're going to have a Cornell geneticist do a -- Develop a genome to try to see if those stocks are all the same spawning stock, and so even just the ASGA is already starting to look into this, and so hopefully some other, you know, governmental organizations will also help out, but we're putting our own efforts into it, and doing our own work into it, and so it shows how serious we're taking it.

MR. LAKS: Bill and then Aaron.

MR. PALMER: Where is their breeding grounds at? Does anyone know?

AP MEMBER: The ocean.

MR. KELLY: Yes, I know, but I was just curious. I am with Rusty, in one sense, of, when we get our hands on something, we all of a sudden want to control it, and, once we start controlling it, then more people want to come in and control it, and, before long, it's controlled to where we won't use it for bait. I mean, I've been cutting bonita up for twenty years, and it's some of the best bait you can put out there, and then you use it for sharks, what you've got left over, and catch a nice shark, but I am very leery that, if we don't -- If we make a ruling of trying to follow this fish, we need to make sure that, somewhere in that ruling, that it can be cut up and used. I don't know if that's something that can ever be done, you know, whenever the council gets ahold of it, but that's just something I am thinking of, because I would hate to see it gone as a bait.

MR. JONES: We all, even the guys that like us that flyfish and light tackle fish for them, use them as bait too, and so I don't think that anybody is opposed to that, and so I agree.

MR. PALMER: It's a big fish in my fishery, and we catch them daily, and people love to catch them, and we release the majority of them, but I do have some clients that eat them, and enjoy eating them. It's a huge bait fish. I remember seeing where they were going for about seventy-five-cents-a-pound, a couple of years ago, and it's gotten to a-dollar-fifty-a-pound, and so the problem that I see is it's going to get to three-dollars, or four-dollars, a pound, quicker than you think, and then you're going to have a problem.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: I think -- I don't want to sort of stop this really great discussion, but I do want to sort of get us back to what the council is actually asking for input on here, and so there's a lot of talk of, if we manage, we want to make sure that we can still cut up albies for bait, and I think that's important discussion, but we're sort of not really at that point in the process right now, and, really, what the council wants from you guys is your insights into the fishery, because, ultimately, they haven't decided whether or not to consider adding albies back into the management plan, or not, and they have not had those discussions.

They also haven't had discussions on whether or not an ecosystem component species might be a more appropriate designation for this species, and so, at this point, what they're really looking for is your insights into how this fishery is, or isn't, developing, those social and economic influences into this fishery, so that, in December, when they do look at this white paper that talks about these ten criteria, they also have your information from the fishery.

Then, if there is movement in the future to consider management of this species, in a formal way, a formal inclusion, it would come back to this AP for additional discussion about regulations or different management measures that may or may not be needed, and so, at this point, they're really looking for a much broader perspective of the fishery to help aid their discussion in December.

MR. LAKS: We'll go to Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: I definitely don't think it's a forage fish. When it was put in that, I even questioned it, because it's not like -- I mean, yes, blue marlin eats them, or a shark eats one, or something like that, but it's its own fish. It's its own fishery, and they move up and down the coast, big schools of them all together, and they're not like really mixed with other things. I mean, they are with Spanish and kings and all that, but it definitely needs to be looked at as its own fishery, and it's an important stock, and it probably should be -- I mean, I know you said it traveled to Brazil, but, I mean, they are caught offshore. The guys tuna fishing, they get into the green water, and they get covered up with them, even way offshore, but most of them are caught inshore, and so it's kind of like a coastal migratory pelagic, in a way.

Maybe put it back in with that and give it its own title, just like when we're dealing with Spanish and kings, and we start to keep an eye on it, and, you know, rough draft some stuff out, and I know it's important for the recreational community. He said \$1.50, and I got \$2.25 for them last winter. I got the most I've ever gotten, and so there is value to them, for certain people, but it's not a big market, and that's the thing. It's not a big market, and so it's something that we should probably keep our eye on. It could expand a little bit, and I don't see it expanding, but it's its own unique fish, and it's not a forage fish, and it definitely doesn't need to be lumped back in one of those categories.

MR. LAKS: We're going to go to Thomas, and then, after Thomas, we're going to try and see if there's some sort of statement that we want to craft to give some information to the council.

MR. NEWMAN: I was going to answer some of these questions, and, before I say anything, Charlie has got a very good market. He's got his own little market cornered, but we don't get those kind of prices that Charlie gets, and I have seen them as high as \$1.40, but that's it, and that's, I mean, if you're catching a hundred pounds, or 200 pounds. Most of the time, I've getting paid seventy-five-cents to a dollar, in the winter months, when I catch them as bycatch in the king mackerel fisheries.

There has not been any substantial changes in the commercial fishing behavior for the false albacore, as you can see from your table. I mean, you can't -- Like Charlie says, you've got catch them first thing in the morning, and you can't fish for them at night, and like I wanted to make that a clear statement, because, at night, you're going to fill up with sharks, and so it's a daylight fish. You catch them out there at the break of day, and you've got a very, very short window, if you even catch a single one, but I just wanted to answer a couple of those for you, Christina, so somebody answered your questions.

MR. ROLLER: I mean, I agree with Thomas, and you guys, obviously, know the commercial fishery better than anybody, but, if you really look at the data, if you go run a commercial catch query in particular, you know, it may be flat, but it's growing in some areas, right, and so Florida has been up and down, and they're the biggest harvester, and the North Carolina fishery has grown a lot, over the last ten years in particular, and the data really reflects that. That's one reason why we're talking about it at the state level.

MR. LAKS: Tony, did you have something?

MR. BENEVENTO: I suggest that we go very much along with what Rusty and the others have said, which is continue to monitor, but have no action at this time, because I don't think we have a crisis here, and I don't want to create one by over-monitoring. It's a suggestion.

MS. WIEGAND: Is it a formal motion or no?

MR. BENEVENTO: I would leave that to the group.

MR. LAKS: That would be up to you, if you want to make it a motion.

MR. BENEVENTO: Okay. **Then, yes, I suggest a motion that we continue to monitor false albacore, but no action recommended at this time.**

MR. ENGLISH: I will second that.

MR. LAKS: Is there some discussion on that?

AP MEMBER: Does that mean adding it to the CMP FMP?

MR. LAKS: No, and that -- I believe he would mean that would mean no action, and my personal concern with that is that we're not monitoring it, and so my personal concern with your motion is we're not monitoring it. Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: There are no monitoring programs specific to false albacore. They are picked up through usual methods, like MRIP and logbooks, but we're not getting things like length information or anything like that right now.

MR. LAKS: Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: It's a technical question. Can you begin a fisheries management plan and not have a quota?

MS. WIEGAND: So there are -- In terms of adding false albacore back into the CMP FMP, there are two routes. You can do it and say false albacore meets those ten criteria, and it is need of conservation and management, and formally add it back in as a managed species, which would, at a minimum, require an annual catch limit and accountability measures, per the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The alternative is to add it in as an ecosystem component species, which does not require management methods. There is a specific definition of ecosystem component species, and it can't just be sort of any species, and you have to be able to make an argument that it is -- Having it in the FMP is necessary in order to achieve ecosystem management objectives.

For example, for bullet and frigate mackerel, when they added them in as ecosystem component species into the Dolphin Wahoo FMP, they were able to be added in because they constitute a significant portion of dolphin, and I believe especially wahoo's, diet, and so maintaining that species was important to the continued success of the managed dolphin wahoo species. Those are sort of the two options. If the council went with the ecosystem component route, we would need information to justify why they needed to be included relative to king, Spanish, and cobia. Does that make sense?

MR. NEWMAN: Yes, that makes perfect sense, and that furthers what I thought, that this fish is a gray area. It's not really an ecosystem component fish, but, at the same time, I don't -- It doesn't meet all of these criteria, and maybe five or six of them, but I just hate to put it into an FMP plan and then set a bogus ACL and ABC for this species of fish that we don't know what the biomass is, especially being so worldwide.

MS. WIEGAND: So I would recommend looking at the motion on the board, given sort of what the council has tasked this advisory panel with, which is to sort of discuss those ten factors and provide a picture of the fishery. If your recommendation is going to be to not include them in the FMP in any form at this time, sort of make sure you're providing rationale for that, so that we can present to the council explicitly why you feel that these fish do not meet the criteria for conservation and management, because that's what they're going to be looking at in December, is that criteria and sort of where false albacore falls within that. They haven't gotten to the point where they are considering management measures yet.

MR. LAKS: Steve and then Charlie.

MR. ENGLISH: My real concern with this too is, if they add it into the management plan, we've got super low numbers right now, and we know how -- These numbers are so low that it's unreal, and now you're stuck with low numbers, and they're going to look and go, they only land a million pounds of year, and now they went to five, and the fishery may be able to stand thirty, and, I mean, we don't know that, and so you don't want to stick yourself somewhere you don't want to be, and so, like I said, I think that motion works for what we need to suggest.

MR. LAKS: Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: My question would be, in like the spot and croaker fishery, and I know this is not talking about the -- They had a stoplight approach to fisheries management, and, once they saw landings at a certain thing, it went to a yellow light, and it was a green light, yellow light, red light, and then they had to do something, and so I guess my question would be is there a recommendation of, you know, if the landings show a 25 percent increase, the council has to address what's going on, or is there a motion that we can put forward that would put like -- That Tom and everybody would feel comfortable with that would ensure that if, hey, all of a sudden, the landings are like, woah, what's going on, that the council has to act and do something? Is there something we can do like that, as far as a motion?

MS. WIEGAND: The AP could certainly recommend that, if there's a jump in false albacore landings, at X percent, that the council then consider going down this route. I will say -- I guess two things. One is that we don't receive updates on false albacore landings at our meetings, and we only receive updates from managed species. Certainly the council could request that the Science Center provide updates at every meeting on false albacore landings. The extent to which they would be amenable to that, I can't say, given that it's not a managed species. Also, a trigger certainly like that certainly wouldn't mandate the council to do anything, and it would be up to the council's discretion on whether or not to move forward based on that trigger.

MR. LAKS: I'm going to go to Will and then Thomas.

MR. JONES: What kind of ACL would people support, if we were going to add it to the CMP FMP, because I think, you know -- **I think some people would want to support adding it to the CMP FMP, and I would offer an alternative motion to add them to the CMP FMP.**

MR. LAKS: Well, I don't think you could just add an ACL. There would have to be some scientific basis for it, and so you couldn't just make a number up.

MS. WIEGAND: Was that a substitute motion?

MR. JONES: Yes.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Thomas. Is there a second for Will's motion?

AP MEMBER: I will second it.

MR. NEWMAN: I guess that makes it a good time for me to discuss this too, because this is the problem that we ran into with the Spanish mackerel stock assessment. We knew that we were

going to do a Spanish mackerel stock assessment, and we went to the stock assessment with no data, and so you're going to go in and set a quota with no data? The Saltwater Guides Association is going to start collecting data, and that's great, and let's -- We don't even have a white paper, and this is a mini performance report, and you're talking about setting an ACL? This is nuts.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Rusty and then Steve, and then we're going to try and wrap this up, because I think we're getting --

MR. HUDSON: I had one question, for clarification. What year was it that the little tunny was pulled out of the Coastal Migratory Pelagics?

MR. LAKS: 2011, I think.

MS. WIEGAND: It was through Amendment 18, which I believe was 2011 or 2012, and I can find the exact date in a second.

MR. HUDSON: Okay. You can see a bump-up in this chart, on these landings that occurs thereafter, and it's around 2011 or 2012 that you start seeing that upward rise. Now, the idea of putting it in there just for information collection -- We don't have a lot of precise information, as far as sizes and what's getting discarded and what's getting frozen and what's getting ate or sold, but I read, in your Fish Rules, that it said poor quality to eat, and high in mercury, and stuff like that, but, at the same time, that doesn't stop people from wanting to use it for bait, or some people wanting it to eat it, like, you know, Charlie talked about over there, or the Filipino sector.

With this peak that came up four years after you all wound up eliminating it -- I mean, just in 2014, the commercial had a little bump, on this landings in Figure 1, but, quite honestly, we need to at least have a way to do maybe an MLE, most likelihood estimated, approach, with what data you do have, and then figure out what data do you need down the road, in case somebody worries about a 25 percent increase in these landings that's been going on between both commercial and recreational, but it just begs to wonder, such it is such a frequent encounter, that -- It's not like catching an Arctic bonita, and that's a rare event, and that's a mighty-fine-eating animal, but this will be returned to further discussion, I would imagine, later down the road, and this is only for us on the east coast, and it's not anything to do with the Gulf of Mexico, and would that be correct?

MR. LAKS: Can I just suggest maybe a little way forward from this, because we have two motions that are diametrically opposed up there, and maybe we have something a little more broad that says that -- I think there's concern, from everybody here, that these fish should be monitored, more than they are right now, and that, you know, an unregulated species is really not a good thing to have, in this day and time, and that we encourage the council to keep moving forward with looking at them, or maybe working with the states somehow, to have a better track of landings and a better handle on what the fishery is doing, and I don't know if someone wants to make a motion like that, and I will let Christina --

MS. WIEGAND: My recommendation for moving forward would be to dispense with these motions, and they can be voted on or withdrawn by the makers, and then there could be a new motion proposed, the way Ira is suggesting, if that's something that the AP is interested in, but we can't do substitutes of substitute motions, and you all are testing my Roberts Rules of Order knowledge.

MR. LAKS: We first have to vote on the substitute motion, or have it withdrawn?

MS. WIEGAND: So the process would be that the substitute motion can be withdrawn, or we can vote on the substitute motion. If that passes, then it becomes the main motion, and we've got to vote on it again. If it doesn't pass, then we go back to the original motion and vote on that.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. ENGLISH: If I recall, we have a discussion on this with dolphin, and they're a high-seas species, and we've got no way to monitor them.

MR. LAKS: I'm not saying we do, and we can vote on the substitute motion right now, and we can figure it out that way.

MR. ENGLISH: We can do that, but I'm just saying that everybody should know that we had this discussion with dolphin and albacore, and they're a high-seas fishery that occur everywhere, and so we have no way to implement regulations, and we don't have a way, and so we're just beating our heads against the wall by doing this. Yes, we should watch them, and, if we see something huge happening, take care of it, but, other than that, I'm -- That's the last I will say.

MR. LAKS: Will, do you want to leave your motion up and have a vote on it? Okay. We're going to vote on --

MR. LOCKE: Can you clarify the CMP FMP and what that would do, because, if I'm voting on something, what would a CMP FMP do to false albacore, the way it stands now?

MS. WIEGAND: Okay, and so a couple of things for you guys to consider. One, when we're talking about this, and I am going to get to your question, Charlie. When we're talking about increased monitoring, more monitoring, the extent that the council can influence that is limited. They could add false albacore monitoring to their research priorities, and those research priorities are reviewed by the SSC, and ultimately get sent to the Science Center, but it would be competing with other species that we actively manage that are in need of stock assessments, and so keep that in mind.

Then, to Charlie's question, adding false albacore into the CMP FMP would -- Again, assuming that it does meet those ten criteria, and the council were to move forward, as the AP is recommending, it would require, based on the Magnuson-Stevens Act, setting of an annual catch limit and accountability measures. Other management measures would be at the discretion of the council to discuss, but it would require the annual catch limit and accountability measures.

MR. NEWMAN: Would that be immediate, or would they do a stock assessment first?

MS. WIEGAND: There would need to be some work done to identify catch levels. Given the state of data for this fishery, it would likely be some kind of data-limited approach to set catch levels.

MR. LAKS: Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: The thing I think I'm missing out on is the biology, and that's going to be a big part of when we approach an assessment, but, if you're the data collection mode, because you have this in the FMP, just to prepare for the future down the road, and Christina is right. You look at the SEDAR chart, and it's flat full for the next four years.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Will.

MR. JONES: I think, given the importance of the fishery to a lot of people in the South Atlantic and the Mid-Atlantic, this is just a good way to get started.

MR. LAKS: **I think it's time now that we vote on the substitute motion, and so all those in favor of the substitute motion, raise your hand, I saw two in favor.**

MS. WIEGAND: I think three.

MR. LAKS: Three in favor. **All those opposed, seven. All those abstaining, one. The motion fails.**

MS. WIEGAND: So that means that we're back to this motion.

MR. LAKS: So now we're going to vote on the original motion, which is to continue to monitor false albacore, but no action recommended at this time, but, again, I'm just going to point out that we're not monitoring them.

MR. BENEVENTO: Where did this data come from then?

MR. LAKS: That is just landings data, but it's not any kind of --

MS. WIEGAND: So false albacore are still reported through normal fishing reporting, and so they show up in MRIP, and commercial fishermen, when they catch false albacore, they report them in their logbooks, but that's the extent of any monitoring or research that goes on with false albacore. It's strictly landings, and that's it.

MR. BENEVENTO: I mean, I liked, Ira, what you said earlier about modifying somewhat, but, I mean, this is kind of like where are you going to stop? You know, are blue runners next? I mean, I look at the bonita, or whatever you want to call it, has saved a lot of trips. As I said earlier, it's the best bait I know, but, at the same time, I can't see putting it in the same class as these regulated species.

MS. WIEGAND: So, again, I want to sort of recommend, and I'm going to pull them back up, that, if the motion, this motion, passes, not recommending adding them into the CMP FMP at this time, it would be helpful for the council if you could sort of speak in terms of these ten criteria that help to determine whether conservation and management is needed, and so what I'm hearing, from Tony and from a couple of others around the room, is that you don't feel that they're in need of management, and it would be helpful to explain why they're not in need of management, based on these ten criteria, because this is sort of legally what the council has to follow.

MR. LAKS: I am going to give Tony the opportunity first, since it's his motion, but, if he's not ready, we'll go to Thomas.

MR. NEWMAN: I was just going to say Number 3, and an FMP is not going to improve or maintain the condition of the stock. The stock is doing fine. There is no user conflicts, Number 7.

MR. LAKS: Charlie.

MR. LOCKE: So the economic condition of a fishery, and whether an FMP can provide more efficient utilization, the economic condition, does that mean like market conditions, and would that be more pertaining to me? I think it's going to be a niche market for food fish, like we've all talked about. I think this is an ethnic fish that's being eaten. I can't speak on the bait part of it in Florida, what's going on there.

The needs of a developing fishery and whether an FMP can foster orderly growth, it's not really a developing fishery. There's not a developing fishery, and it's just I've got a little bit smarter how to catch them at a certain time, and I'm one guy, and I catch a few at a certain time of year, when the conditions allow me to, and it's not like -- Like I said, there's no purse seine type of thing, and there's not anybody really eyeing this as the next, you know, fishery, and so, just on those two issues, I would add that.

MR. LAKS: Tony, your motion is still up there. If that's good with you, we're going to vote on it.

MR. BENEVENTO: I have nothing more to add that other folks didn't.

MR. LAKS: **Okay, and so the motion on the board is to continue to monitor false albacore, but no action recommended at this time. All those in favor, raise your hand, six in favor; all those opposed, three opposed; any abstaining, two abstaining. The motion is approved. Go ahead.**

MS. WIEGAND: So I, I guess, have a recommendation for the AP to consider, based on this motion. Like I mentioned before, the only monitoring for false albacore is whatever pops up in the landings. Is this AP interested in seeing monitoring of the false albacore fishery added to the council's research recommendations in the future?

MR. LAKS: Does everyone agree with that?

MR. ENGLISH: Yes.

MS. WIEGAND: Then we'll include that recommendation in the AP report to present to the council.

MR. LAKS: I'm sorry, Bill. Go ahead.

MR. PALMER: Does that need to be made into a motion?

MS. WIEGAND: I got the impression that there was consensus, among the AP, to have it added to the council's research recommendations. If there are specifics this AP would like to see added, we can discuss that, but I don't think there needs to be a motion for that, and we can present it as a consensus recommendation from the AP.

MR. LAKS: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. DONALSON: Steve, you said something earlier about, you know, what is the consumer saying, and is there a consumer for this, other than the small percentage?

MR. ENGLISH: No, and it's very small. We land them with our kingfish, as a bycatch thing, and they sell -- I think the majority of them go for bait. I think the majority of the albacore go for bait, and, like I said, Charlie is one of the -- There is a very small food --

MR. DONALSON: I guess my specific question is, is there a demand? Is there a commercial demand? Like do you have fish houses and bait shops and people saying, wow, can you get me some false albacore, and I really could use some of that?

AP MEMBER: Bait shops will.

MR. ENGLISH: Yes, there is a commercial demand, but it's small. It's so small that it's not relevant, and that's what I'm -- I mean, we'll get a call for them. Some guy will call me and say bring me in twenty-five of them, if you catch them, and I need bait, but that's -- The majority of it is bait, and the fish houses -- I think the majority of theirs goes to bait, what they buy, because they will only buy -- We'll start catching them, and they might buy a couple hundred off of each boat, for a week, and then they'll cut you back to fifty pounds, just so you can land some of them and, you know, pay for your fuel and stuff.

MR. LAKS: But there is a high demand for bait. I mean, every tackle store is full of bonita strips, and so they're coming from somewhere. Go ahead, Charles.

MR. GRIFFIN: I would say probably the most economic impact is that the fly fishermen -- It's one of their favorite fish, by far. Like, in Morehead City, in the wintertime, or this time of year on, it's a big deal, and a lot of guys come there and pay for hotels and run charters and everything else, and that's the impact, and, of course, that's pretty much a release fishery, and it doesn't seem to impact the fish a whole lot, but I would just like to say that, that there is a big economic impact of this fish, and that would be the one reason to really manage it too, because it's such a -- It's considered a game fish, in that respect. Anyhow, so --

MR. LAKS: Well, I think that's enough of the little tunny for right now. We've got past them, and let's take a quick ten-minute break, and then we'll hit the home stretch.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LAKS: What do we got to get into now, Christina?

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Well, we are, like you said, hitting the end stretch. The last thing that we have on the agenda, that I really just wanted to mention to you all, are some National Marine

Sanctuaries. I know that both of these sort of fall out of areas where you guys are likely fishing regularly, but I still wanted to give you a heads-up.

First is the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary blueprint. They are looking at making some modifications within the National Marine Sanctuary down in Florida. Again, I know that's the Florida Keys, which is technically the Gulf stock of fish, but some of you guys in south Florida may regularly boat down to the Keys to do some fishing, and so I wanted to give you a heads-up about that.

The presentation is in your briefing book, and it's the same presentation that was given to the council just a week ago, or two weeks ago, for them to discuss. They will be providing a comment letter to the marine sanctuary on those proposed regulations, and so, if you look over that presentation and have any feedback, you're welcome to discuss it here, while we're all at the table, and you can also shoot me an email, and I'll make sure that feedback is included in the AP report for the council to consider when writing that letter.

The second one is the Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary, and this is a proposed sanctuary, and it's just at the very, very beginning of the designation process. It's located up in the Mid-Atlantic region, and it's about a hundred miles south of New York City, I believe, and it's one of the deepwater canyons that they have off the coast. There was a petition, many years ago, I believe, to designate this as a national marine sanctuary, and so they're just moving forward with the proposal now.

Again, it's still at the very, very beginning stages, but the council will also be providing a letter on that, and so, again, the presentation that they gave to the New England Fishery Management Council is in your briefing book. You're welcome to review that, and, if you have any, you know, comments, questions, or concerns, please let me know. I can work to get those questions answered and provide any comments that you may have to the council, and so I just wanted to note those two things and see if anyone, at this time, has any sort of questions or comments that they would like to make on the record.

MR. HUDSON: When I was looking over the Florida Keys National Sanctuary, it said something about adding -- It looked like 25 percent more size to it, and is that going to affect the yellowtail fishermen down there?

MS. WIEGAND: I will admit that the yellowtail snapper fishery is out of my area of focus. I don't believe they are proposing any regulations specific to the yellowtail fishery. That would be under the purview of the council.

MR. HUDSON: I guess it doesn't matter, if it's just yellowtail, and there is other fisheries that are close to the sanctuary.

AP MEMBER: Rusty, looking at the map that they have in here, it looks like it would be -- Jeez, I can't even tell, but it looks like, you know, how, when you're coming out of Islamorada, you've got to go about seven or eight miles before you get to the yellowtail area, and I can't tell if this is seven or eight miles, because there's no legend.

MR. LAKS: I think the ton of boats down there are affecting the yellowtail fishery more than any of that will.

MS. WIEGAND: So, if you look at this map, it's the green-dotted line that is the proposed expansion, and so you can see that expansion around Pulley Ridge, which I know the Gulf Council has had quite a bit of discussion about, and then some expansion around the Dry Tortugas region. All right. Well, I'm not hearing anyone jump out with questions or comments, but, again, if you guys are looking over these materials and have additional comments or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, and we can make sure to get those answered and those comments considered.

MR. LAKS: All right, and so we're in some Other Business, and I'm going to jump in, right here, with just one thing that I want to bring up, and it probably is not going to concern most of you, but, in the east coast Southern Zone in Florida, we worked hard to get our commercial limits and trip limits and seasons to what we needed for our fishery, and, through that process, not only has our stock ID changed, but the amount of fish we've got for allocation has changed, and so our rules, right now, are kind of convoluted and all over the place, and I would just recommend that the council look at that.

We actually start off the year in March, and we're at seventy-five fish. Then there's a little technicality that it has to be seventy-five in March, but then, from April through the end of September, if we go past a certain amount, there could be a reduction to fifty fish. Then we start Season 2 on October 1, and we have a rollover of the remaining fish that were left over from Season 1, and then we go to a hundred head in Season 2, and so it becomes just a little convoluted to follow, and crazy, and so I would suggest, and whoever else would like to recommend it, that we do something where we just have one season, and we stay at seventy-five fish until October 1, or maybe some analysis on what date that might be that would work better, and then we go to a hundred fish, and it would definitely free up some regulatory burdens that are on the council and the Fisheries Service.

It would just simplify everything, and it just makes a lot more sense, and it's easier. It's very hard for people who are getting into the fishery, or trying to look at the fishery, to understand all of how it works, and part of that was done because we were given more fish, and we had worries, at certain times, that there wouldn't be enough fish, or too many fish at other times, and so those would make our fishery a lot smoother, and, Rusty, if you have anything to add to that.

MR. HUDSON: There is several of the industry participants that have said just what you did, about having just one singular season, since we've done all of the assessment work and other changes, and that could possibly -- Would that possibly could be done in a framework, with the Gulf of Mexico cooperation?

MS. WIEGAND: So the South Atlantic Council does have the ability to change trip limits for Atlantic stocks through a framework amendment. I will have to double-check about changing seasons. If my memory serves me right, years ago, we wanted to change the season for cobia, and we didn't do it, because we couldn't do it through a framework, and so I would have to double-check the framework procedure related to a seasonal change, but certainly trip limits can be modified through a framework without cooperation from the Gulf Council.

MR. HUDSON: But, if we don't change the trip limits, which we're not doing, and we're just proposing to just make one season out of a two-season division. As far as the October 1 date, that can still remain in a framework as the hundred fish.

MR. LAKS: Yes, and I don't think the Gulf would have any objection, even we had to do something else, and, Steve, you had something to add to that?

MR. ENGLISH: Yes, and, I mean, we are changing the catch limits, because we're eliminating the fifty head, but we did all that prior to it going to a hundred head and us getting the big stock increases and all, and so this would just simplify things. **I mean, I'll make the motion to do it, but, even me, this year, when we went out to fish, this spring, I was under the impression that we were under the hundred head, and I was told that, no, we're only seventy-five, and so, even me, being here sitting in these meetings, it was confusing to me, and simplify.** I agree with simplify, and I think that's what we need to do.

MS. WIEGAND: I have questions, to make sure that I understand your motion correctly, Steve. You're looking to simplify regulations for Atlantic king mackerel in the Southern Zone, and so that would be the North Carolina-South Carolina line south through to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line. Is that the intent of the motion?

MR. LAKS: If I can jump in, it would just -- Really, it would affect south of the Volusia-Brevard line.

MS. WIEGAND: That's all you're looking at? Okay.

MR. LAKS: Right, Rusty, and we would not change anything above that, and it's just the -- I think the other part --

MR. HUDSON: Right, and it's a shift, and so I don't think that's a problem.

MR. LAKS: Right. As you guys can see, it's a little confusing.

MR. ENGLISH: (Mr. English's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. LAKS: Right.

MR. HUDSON: This sounds like a seamless, you know, one-action kind of thing.

MR. LAKS: Don't jinx it.

MS. WIEGAND: Steve, is that motion that I have on the board reflecting your motion accurately, to request the council simplify regulations for commercial harvest of Atlantic king mackerel south of the Volusia-Brevard County line in Florida?

MR. ENGLISH: Yes, it does, and it's just not specific, and so I think that's enough though.

MR. HUDSON: Isn't there just a little -- As far as the Volusia-Brevard, and then there's the Flagler-Volusia component at a different time, and I think we should just be as seamless as we

can, because everybody is under a certain kind of regulation that they've been living -- We're not changing the number of fish.

MS. WIEGAND: Right now, for king mackerel, there are sort of three de facto areas within the Southern Zone. There is north of Flagler, that has a 3,500-pound trip limit, year-round, all the way up to the North Carolina-South Carolina line. Then you've got just off of Volusia County, which has a specific set of regulations, but with the up and down, like Ira was talking about, and then, south of Volusia, from the Volusia-Brevard County line, down to Monroe/Miami-Dade, is a different set of sort of up-and-down regulations.

MR. HUDSON: But the trip limits remain the same, and it's just the season would change once we try to get this one season going, instead of the two seasons, for that whole section, from Flagler down to -- The Flagler-Volusia line south, because that's the component that we're talking about. We shift to the 3,500, or whatever it is, in our Volusia area, after that one date, and none of those trip limits would change, but it's just making one season out of two seasons.

MS. WIEGAND: Okay, and so what you're looking for here is to take the regulations that are in place from Flagler-Volusia down into south Florida, and keep the trip limit system the same, where you start with like seventy-five head in March, and then, off of Volusia County, it jumps up to thirty-five head, and it's different south of Volusia County, and keep the sort of ups and downs of the trip limit in place, but remove the split season that is in place.

MR. HUDSON: Correct.

MS. WIEGAND: Okay.

MR. LAKS: This will probably get easier when there's a little bit of analysis, if they look at it, or put it on paper, where you can see it side-by-side. It actually would take two or three regulations out of the code of Federal Regulations, the way it's done.

MS. WIEGAND: So, if I'm -- I feel like it's been a long time since I've dealt with king mackerel trip limits, and so, guys that deal with this day-to-day, please correct me if I'm wrong, but that split season is in place for the entire Southern Zone.

MR. HUDSON: Correct.

MS. WIEGAND: So are we wanting to remove it for the entire Southern Zone? Keep the trip limit system in place the way it is now, but have the entire Southern Zone -- Because it's -- Like off of South Carolina and Georgia, they still operate under that split season.

MR. LAKS: Yes, but there's really not even a fishery there, and so it doesn't -- I haven't really thought about that, but it could be done, right, and it's not going to change anything. That's more regulations that can actually come off.

MS. WIEGAND: So I am -- Let me try to wrap my head around this, because, right now, that split season, with the percentages, and it's based on -- I think it's 40 percent to Season 1 and then 60 percent of the Southern Zone commercial allocation is Season 2. If you want to retain the split season system for South Carolina and Georgia and the area north of Flagler, but not for the other

chunk of Florida, we would need to consider allocation for that area, and we would have to re-jigger it quite a bit to maintain the split season system up there but not further south. The simplest way, in my mind, would be to remove the split season entirely.

MR. LAKS: I would think that would be right, because they're under the same trip limit either way

MS. WIEGAND: Correct. We would maintain the same trip limit for them, that 3,500 pounds, but we would essentially be removing the split season entirely, and no one in the Southern Zone would operate under a split season.

MR. NEWMAN: Nobody is closing in that first season underneath that 3,500-pound trip limit, correct? That's what I'm seeing here, and so it wouldn't matter to remove the split, the 40/60 split.

MR. LAKS: No.

MR. ENGLISH: All the split season does is it makes sure that we don't catch more in the first half than we do in the second half.

MR. NEWMAN: But that's not a problem in the 3,500-pound zone.

MR. LAKS: Well, it's not a problem in the fishery at all. We did that before we got extra fish from the ACL, and so, at one time, it could have been a problem, and that's why we did it, but then we got more fish, after we did that, and so we actually have, in our zone, south of that line, we have a possible step-down, a rollover, and then a step-up, and so it's really -- At the time, there were reasons to do all of that. At this point, there is no reasons to have those.

MR. BENEVENTO: So this would make it consistent from North Carolina all the way to Monroe?

MS. WIEGAND: It would just be moving to a single season. The trip limits would not be consistent. They would still change based on the area you're fishing in.

MR. LAKS: But that's normal. That's what it is now, and it's just -- You're just changing literally what we had on the calendar to protect our fishery that no longer is needed, because we have enough fish, and it's -- I know it's extremely hard to, and, believe me, I'm struggling, and we've dealt with this for years and years.

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

MR. LAKS: Right, and our season starts on March 1, is when our year starts, and I'm not going to get into the history of why it starts on March 1, and that's a whole other conversation.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, Steve, this hasn't been seconded, and I've modified it a little bit, and I want to make sure you're still onboard with the modifications. **It now says: Request the council remove the current split season for commercial Atlantic king mackerel in the Southern Zone.** This is effectively requesting that, from the South Carolina-North Carolina line, south to Miami-Dade/Monroe, there would no longer be a split season, and it would just be one single season.

MR. ENGLISH: **Correct.**

MS. WIEGAND: Okay.

MR. LAKS: Does anyone have any more questions about this, or comments? **Does anyone object to anything up there?** Okay. **The motion passes.**

I am going to steal a little more time, if I could, and then I will open it up to you guys. I am part of a program called MREP, and it's not the one that does recreational catches, and it's the Marine Resource Education Program, and it's up on the screen right now. Especially for some of you new guys that just came on the AP, it's a valuable program that will teach you about all these little things that you hear about, and acronyms, and how these stock assessments are done and how the science is transferred into management.

It's a great program, and you're going to have people from the council there, and you're going to have people from FWC there, and you're going to have people from NOAA Fisheries there. We put you up in a hotel room, and you're going to be there with commercial -- It's very similar to this, and there is commercial, pure recreational, and charter/for-hire fishermen, seafood dealers, anyone associated with the industry at all.

There is people here who have been through it. It's a great program, and I have some cards here, and we're starting a program in a few weeks, but that one is probably closed out, but we're doing another workshop that I believe is going to be starting in like February, and then the second workshop will be, I believe, in May, but don't quote me on the dates. There is two workshops. We start with a science workshop, and then we do a management workshop, and anyone who feels like they want to learn more about this, and their industry, or their passion, I highly recommend it. Rusty and then Tom.

MR. HUDSON: Yes, and I already graduated, but do they still hold the actual event over at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Service's building, or commission's building, just down the street?

MR. LAKS: Our two workshops are in Tampa and St. Pete, or St. Pete for the science, because that's where the labs are, and where NOAA Fisheries is, and then we hold the second one in Tampa, for the management, and so you'll meet all the players in this and really get a good education on how all of this works.

MR. ROLLER: I did the MREP program, years ago, and it, quite frankly, was one of the best things that I did in the fisheries world, right, because it not only teaches you about this complicated federal fisheries process, but it's going to help you be a better AP member, a better advocate, and, also, to better communicate fisheries issues to your fellow fishermen, right, and one of the other things is I formed a lot of friendships, and relationships, in those two events that I carry to this day, right, and so people from across the sectors, and so it really opened my eyes a lot, and, if you -- You know, I would highly recommend, for anybody here who is interested, to give it a try.

MR. NEWMAN: The date for the Southeast one is November 8 to 10?

MR. LAKS: We're doing two this year, and, at this point, I don't know, if you haven't applied, if you can get into the one that's three weeks away, but we are doing a second one that I believe starts in February, and I apologize for not having the exact dates in front of me, but I do have some postcards here that I can give you, and you can look it up online.

MS. WIEGAND: If this is something that you guys are interested in doing, I encourage you to reach out to Ira or to me, and I can put you in touch in Kim Iverson, on our staff, who works directly with the MREP program, and she can provide you all the information you need to apply and be a part of the process, and so just shoot me a quick email, or come up to me, after today, and let me know that you're really interested, and we'll get you the information you need.

MR. LAKS: Call me if you want more information, and I have some cards here, some postcards, if you want one, and my number is on it, and so don't hesitate to call me at all. Is there anyone else that has any other business? Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: It was brought up earlier, now that we're sort of post-pandemic or something, that we may just do the physical, as we did in the fall, and do a virtual, and we just don't want to see another four years go by with no meeting.

MS. WIEGAND: The intent is to always, you know, at minimum, have one in-person meeting of this AP every year. There are occasionally times where, based on the council schedule, you guys will meet in-person say in April, and, by the time we get to the fall, the council really would like additional input on just one or two things that don't really warrant a full meeting of everyone down here in-person, but maybe just a quick half-day on a webinar, and so we'll schedule an additional meeting then, but the intent is still to always have this AP meet in-person at least once a year.

MR. LAKS: Well, anything else?

MS. WIEGAND: If there is no other business, we do have public comment.

MR. LAKS: Okay. Does anyone else have any other business? Okay. Then we're going to give an opportunity, if anyone is listening online, or in the room, that wants to offer public comment.

MS. WIEGAND: Again, if you're online, and would like to make public comment, we just need you to raise your hand. It's that turkey-looking thing on the control panel for the webinar.

MR. DONALSON: I wasn't sure when was the perfect time to bring this up, or ask, but I was asked by a couple of different offshore fishermen, and what's the appropriate council, or is it part of another council, to talk about lionfish? Is that a snapper grouper thing, or is that a --

MS. WIEGAND: So lionfish is not currently managed by the council in any way, and my recommendation would be to talk to FWC about lionfish.

MR. DONALSON: Okay. I mean, we didn't talk about albacore tuna until today, and so --

MR. LAKS: FWC has a lot of programs with lionfish. No public comments?

MS. WIEGAND: I am not seeing any hands raised on the webinar or anyone in the room who would like to make public comment. I just -- I know we've got some -- Excuse me. Hold on. We do have a hand up now. The first I see on the list is Summer, and I'm going to ahead and unmute you, so that you can make public comment.

MS. EARNES: My name is Summer, and I am the wife of a commercial fisherman, and I don't think that anything really needs to happen with the little tunny, bonita, false albacore, et cetera, because there is plenty of them caught, both in the Atlantic and in the Gulf, if you're talking about Florida's region.

The king mackerel data, there is only thirteen commercial fishermen for king mackerel in the Gulf of Mexico right now, and so, of course, all of the numbers and data will be lower than on the east coast, in the Atlantic, because there's, like was brought up previously, less going out and fishing for it, and so I think that that has to have like a regulated way of reporting for both recreational and commercial, before any changes could or should be made.

MR. LAKS: Thank you for your comment, Summer.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next on the list, we've got Will McWhorter. I'm going to get you unmuted, and you can go ahead and unmute on your end and make your public comment.

MR. MCWHORTER: Hi. I'm Will McWhorter, and I fish out of the southern part of North Carolina, and I just wanted to say thank you to everybody for your time. It's been a great two days, and so thank you.

MR. LAKS: Thank you, Will. That will conclude the public comment section, and Christina has got a few things.

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, and so just a heads-up, and I know some of you guys are a bit newer to the process. When I sent out the travel authorization, we also sent out an empty travel order form for you all to fill out with your expenses, the daily per diem, travel. If you have any questions about filling that out, please feel free to reach out to me, or to reach out to Cindy, and, once you've got that filled out, you can send it to her, so that we can get those reimbursements processed, and so, again, I can always send that out to you again, if you can't find it buried back in your inbox, and, if you've got questions, please feel free to ask me, but make sure you get those in sooner, as opposed to later, so we can get those reimbursements processed. Suzanna is going to send it out to you guys when you get back, so you don't have to dig back through your emails. Thank you, Suz.

MR. LAKS: All right. Well, I just want to say that it was good to see everyone here, back meeting here, and it's very good to meet our new members, and I wanted to thank everybody for a really productive meeting, and it was very helpful, and everybody have safe travels home, and that will conclude the Mackerel Cobia AP.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 6, 2022.)

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Certified By _____ Date _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
December 8, 2022

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**Mackerel Cobia AP
Meeting - October 5-6,
2022**

Attendee Report:

Report Generated:

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Webinar ID
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Actual Start Date/Time
10/05/2022 01:00 PM EDT

Duration
3 hours 46 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Addis	Dustin
Yes	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Buie	Jay
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	Chaya	01 Cindy
Yes	Dukes	Amy
Yes	Eames	Summer
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franke	Emilie
Yes	Freeman	Matt
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Iberle	Allie
Yes	McWhorter	Will
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	Patten	Willow
Yes	Ponte	Marisa
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Schmidtke	Michael
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Smillie	Nick
Yes	Thompson	Michael
Yes	Wiegand	01Christina
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**Mackerel Cobia AP
Meeting - October 5-6,**

Attendee Report: 2022

Report Generated:
12/11/2022 03:23 PM EST

Webinar ID
830-201-187

Actual Start Date/Time
10/06/2022 06:57 AM EDT

Duration
8 hours 51 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Addis	Dustin
Yes	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Buie	Jay
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	Byrd	Julia
Yes	Carmichael	john
Yes	Chaya	01 Cindy
Yes	Eames	Summer
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franke	Emilie
Yes	Freeman	Matt
Yes	Friedrich	Tony
Yes	Goldsmith	Willy
Yes	Hadley	01John
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Iberle	Allie
Yes	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	McWhorter	Will
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	Patten	Willow
Yes	Poston	Will
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Schmidtke	Michael
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Smillie	Nick
Yes	Wiegand	01Christina
Yes	Withers	Meg
Yes	kittle	christine
Yes	thomas	suz