

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18 Public Hearings

Pooler, GA
November 5, 2009

Summary Minutes

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Jackie Summers 17A: My name is Jackie – my name is Jackie Summers. I’m a very successful businessman. I’ve lived in Savannah my whole life. I’ve been fishing for about 65 years already. Most people here today is supporting conservation of fish. I was taught a long time ago; if you didn’t need the fish, don’t catch it. I’ve turned loose all my sharks and all the fish I don’t eat I turn loose. I may keep one, two fish that I’m gonna eat. I like grouper, I like snapper, I like blackfish, so I do mostly bottom fishing. It took me 60 years to get enough money to buy a boat, offshore boat. I spent \$600,000.00 for a nice Hatteras redid it to go offshore fishing. I paid cash for it I owe no money. I’m very lucky. It’s all paid for.

Now, we have – we have these problems. I’m not – I’m not disagreeing. I think some of the information that you see is flawed and not complete. Two years ago, they came in Savannah, the Georgia DNR, and we had a crab crash. No crabs were caught, marsh were dying, the crab – the crab catch was almost nothing. The next year, we had a bumper crab crop, and they said we would lose crab for years. The next year we had plenty of crabs. Some it was disease or something had a bad year.

Now, during my lifetime, when I was a kid, we went out here in our sounds and caught all the saltwater catfish we wanted. We caught hundreds of spots and croakers, and I haven’t seen those spots and croakers around here for years. Saltwater cats are gone. And that new species that they brought up from Florida that somebody turned loose, the lionfish. They are doing more damage to our reefs than our commercial fishing or head boats or recreation boats are doing total.

Now, the act – provide you all some power regulate all like this, but no money to do anything successful with. In New Zealand, I was fishing in New Zealand, went out with a charter captain. He told me an unusual story. The commercial fish have been wiped out, the red snapper hatchery – I mean fishery, in New Zealand. They build a red snapper hatchery in New Zealand and put the fish back in the ocean and they catch them again. But we don’t have the money to do anything. All we have money to do is say, “Let’s close everything.”

We – these problems, it’s more than just me. I’m a lucky one. I don’t have to worry. I make my income somewhere else. There’s an economic factor that you all aren’t factoring in on this thing.

The economic factor is a lot of the head boats and the commercial boats are financed for the SBA, other things. If they can't fish, they're gonna lose their boats and go bankrupt. Those are jobs too.

Now, the government has spent about \$1 million per job on this stimulus plan to create jobs, and here we're losing thousands of jobs by what you all are trying to do. Now, this – these economic factors is true. It costs – it costs on a stimulus plan over a million dollars for just one job. Last I heard, it was a million two to produce one job, and here the little regulations your guys are gonna lose thousands of jobs and bankrupt people, and there's no – like in the stimulus plan, it gives General Motors to keep – help keep going and all that, but you aren't giving us fishing captains no money. You all are just saying, "Let's stop fishing. Fend for yourself."

Well, I think it's very unfair. I think we should compromise. I'm not a genius to the best way to compromise, but I suggested to the DNR in Georgia when the fishing was bad and the sounds – let's close every other sound for one year, close the whole sound area, whole saltwater fishery in one sound. Do every other one, the next year open one and close the other one. Let's try to work with the fishermen and the commercial people to preserve our fishery and be reasonable and not put people out of business.

Now, if you take the number of days we have in Georgia to offshore fish, weather. There's 365 days, you've probably got 75, 100 days that a head boat or recreational boat can go offshore fishing. If you add all those fish, red snapper and grouper, they catch, the bottom fish they catch to the period of time they can go, that's only the output of a few of your commercial boats that has unrestricted fishing license. They don't catch that many fish in Georgia. They don't – it's a lot of – the charter boats go out and may catch one red snapper or two red snappers. I'm saying let's – let's limit the fish you catch and hold – and have big penalties if you're over – if you're caught with too many fish. And the size limits, really hold people to the size limits, have a real big fine if you go over the size limits, but let's work together on this thing. Let's work – make it work.

The only state that's making the fishery work is Alaska. They have let – they have allowed commercial fishing and recreational fishing and they have – they have maintained their pollock and halibut fishing and the crab fishing by having strict limits and enforcing them. They have not lost their fisheries.

Down here, I think it's – unless you think about the economic problems that we're having, with the captains and they're going bankrupt and the jobs we're gonna lose, you all are doing your job. And I really – most people feel like this is only a hearsay. You've already made up your mind anyway. You all already – in your own little meeting, you made up your mind what you can do, and this is just a public hearing is authorized. You all gonna do it anyway, but it don't mean anything to you.

I think you all should listen to the input; we should compromise to save our fishery and work together. A lot of us are conservationists, but it's like somebody trying to force something down your throat, you don't like it. But let's work together and let's try to do something constructive, without being fighting one another. If you ask these people here today, all of them's against you, completely. They're not against the idea of conservation. They're against the idea of being forced to do something, putting them out of business, losing their revenue. They don't want to do that. They are lost. They are actually lost.

It doesn't bother me because I have another business. I'm in the oil business. I mean – I mean, I supply a lot of them diesel fuel. I supply probably one out of every 10 gallons or six gallons in Georgia ourselves. So it doesn't make any difference to me, except I'm a concerned person because I'm a fisherman, and – and I'm a recreational fisherman. I'm worried about our fisheries.

I want our grandkids to have fish, but just think, I'm 74 years old now. If you all pass this, I won't be ever able to go catch red snapper again. How would you feel if you were me? I worked all my life to buy a boat and now I can't use it. I've got a nice boat. I put the very best into it, I paid for it out of my hard earned money, I don't own anything in it. I'm independent. I like to go fishing and catch one fish. I'm not saying catch every fish in the ocean. Let's – let's have our limits, let's enforce them, let's close some areas off. Let's say close – in Georgia, divide it into 50 mile segments. Close off this, open this, close this, open this, 25 miles, and protect some areas, give the babies a chance.

And let's do something about the lionfish. Let's – I mean, let's – you all should work on the government to do something about having to eliminate this lionfish problem. They're gonna destroy our fishery offshore here whether they like it or not, because they eat baby fish. They've got no natural enemies in this area.

And – and with this global warming and other things, we’ve got – have got problems. But we need to work together, all of us, and we believe – not the council, but we believe that you all have made up your mind, you’re not gonna try to work with us. You’re gonna say, “We’re gonna make the regulation,” that’s gonna be it. I think that’s the wrong attitude for you all to have. I’m willing to compromise. I think you all should be willing to compromise too. Any other question you want to ask me?

Duane Harris: Thank you, Mr. Summers. Charlie, do you have any questions?

Duane Harris: I will say that our minds are not made up. We have been working with the fishing community and trying to come up with some alternatives that would not require closing the areas to bottom fishing. We – we tried our best at – in Charleston to come up with an alternative that would do just that. There were members of the council that didn’t think that it would work. So there was another alternative put forth, and that’s on the alternatives that we’re considering. So, you know, our minds are not made up. We don’t even have a preferred alternative yet on this issue. And I know everybody always thinks that our minds are made up, but they’re not. We are struggling to find a way right now to not do what it looks like we might have to do. But, you know, I know that’s what everybody’s opinion is and we – we appreciate that.

Jackie Summers: Okay, now, I have one other comment.

Duane Harris: Okay.

Jackie Summers: The other comment is the vermillion snapper is not closed to us. We can fish most of the year. But if you close the bottom fishing from 100 feet out, 110 feet, 100-some feet out, that’s where the vermillion snapper are. So we can’t catch the vermillion snapper if you close the bottom. I mean, that’s – that’s – yes, you can fish for them, but you can’t go out there. So how can you fish for them? I mean, that’s another – I mean, think about that, now.

Duane Harris: I understand exactly what you’re saying, and I very much appreciate your testimony and we’re gonna do the best we can to try to work something out. So thank you very much for being here today, and we appreciate it.

Jackie Summers: Thank you.

Duane Harris: Yes, sir.

Charlie Phillips: Thank you, Jackie.

Judy Helmey 17A: Okay. Captain Judy Helmey, with Miss Judy Charters, and I'm a charter boat captain out of Savannah, Georgia. And I am – I am sorry to hear you're struggling, but I am glad and I hope you continue to struggle and maybe not close the Georgia coast to bottom fishing, because I think the devastation on the top side is going to be very, very bad.

And I also know that we have been working – and you know we worked very closely with all the other charter boat captains, not just the ones in Savannah, but the ones also down south of here. And we all – I mean, it was hard for us to even do this proposal, say, you know, we close this much, wanted to close this much bottom, not bottom fishing at all. You know, we – I just wish you all might consider something where we could survive in this business.

Number one, the charter boat to the south of us, they said – you know, they were happy with what we all came up with, because we all came up with it together. And that would give us something to work with, but if you close the bottom, if you find that you have to close the bottom, it – it is gonna be devastating. At first I didn't think it was gonna be so bad, but then I started – I put this information on my website, and on my website, I get over 400,000 hits a month because of the fishing report. And my fishing report, which is not just compiled of what I think, but compiled of all my fishermen, not just charter fishing now. These are regular recreational fishermen.

Well, I put this on the site, and the people thought it was already closed, and they quit calling. And I'm in a business – our business – we've been in business since 1948. No, I'm not that old, but we've been in business a long time, and I've been fishing a long time, but I've never not had fishing trips, never. But our phone literally has quit ringing for people that normally go in October, you know, because they think red snapper fishing is closed. They think bottom fishing is closed. So I had, you know, Deirdre, who works with me, she took it all off the website because it's – can you imagine what it's gonna be when it happens?

And it's not just me. It's not just Miss Judy Charters. You know, we talk to the other captains. They're having the same problem. So just the thought – see, you have to understand, with people, when you say fishing, you're talking about bottom fishing, because

when you say trolling, they don't even know what that is. I try to explain it to them. You know, well, what is – exactly what is trolling? So when you tell them all we're gonna be able to do is troll today, it's gonna be an issue.

Plus, another issue is I don't know how I'm gonna control six of the drunkest people I've ever seen in my life, cause if I'm trolling and not catching anything, they're gonna be drinking. So that right there, I give you a reason for not doing it, because, you know – but, please look at our proposal. I don't know if you all kept it as part of the record or even considered – I know you all considered

Male: _____ alternatives right now.

Judy Helmey: Considered but rejected, but maybe struggling to get back – okay. Well, you can see that we offered to – we didn't mind you closing all that bottom where all the red snapper pretty much were caught. And, yes, the areas that still hold a few red snapper, yes, of course, according to the mortality stuff, you know, you said they would die, but then you have all those red snapper over there in that corner. 50 – what, 50 miles. No, more than that, 60 miles of bottom where these – they can restore and – of course, we have so many red snapper now, there'll be – there'll just be tons more, and so that would be the – you know, that would be the place where you could close it and at least give us the bottom. Cause like I said, people in the south here don't really care. Or they do care. They don't – well, you know, I mean, they care. It's just where they fish is not – anyway, sorry.

Okay, now, also – and I know you remember this. Many years ago, but when all this started with the NPA's, and I'm gonna probably tell you the wrong terminology, but, you know, you allowed – you – the commercial fishermen were allowed to come in, and they picked spots. I was there, and they picked spots, just like we did as charter, and we – I know you were part of that. You all picked the spots, and I remember you all sitting at a table and saying, "Oh, no, you know, if we close this, that won't take care of this fishery, so we want to close this spot over here." So I don't know why you can't – you all worked it out, commercial fishermen worked it out, where you had spots that were not exactly all squared. You had spots – am I right about that? You had spots over here and spots over there and that one took care of the fishery?

Duane Harris: It took 12 years.

Judy Helmey: Well – well, you know what? If you – I’ll tell you what. If it takes 10 more years to do this, I’ll be retired. That’s how I look at it. And I’m like Jackie. The thought of me never being able to catch another red snapper is very upsetting.

I just want you all to really think. I know you are struggling with it, or you would have already had it closed by now. It’s just – it is about the jobs too. We’re already – we’re already feeling the effects. Forget about the recession. We already know that’s – that’s something you already know about, but we really do need to think about how it’s gonna affect everybody.

The people that just went in business will be out of business. It’s not – it’s gonna be devastating. Plus, it’s gonna affect a lot more people than I think that we’ve thought about. So I’m sure there’s other things I want to say, but I can’t think of them at the moment.

Duane Harris: You can say them in writing.

Judy Helmey: I did, I am. I wrote some more things down, so – but thank you very much.

Duane Harris: Thank you, Judy. Charlie, questions? Go ahead.

Charlie Phillips: They – we talked about catch shares in our last meeting and looking at options. Do you see any kind of way where recreational people could use catch shares somehow? Maybe split them up between their associations or something like that, where they knew they had X amount of fish to catch?

Judy Helmey: It’s my opinion, I think they’d be willing to do anything, as long – would this go along with having to close the bottom completely?

Charlie Phillips: We’re – like Tony said, we’re scratching and looking for every option, just like you are.

Judy Helmey: Okay. I think – I think if you came up with something other than this definite run into the wall type of thing, I think most anybody – you’ve already – you know, we’ve already looked down the road at what we’re looking at and it’s not good. So anything you come up other than what we’re looking at now, I think it would be like a Christmas present actually for us, because this is – I mean, this is good. This is not good. Whatever you want us to try to look at, we’ll be more than happy to. And it’s kind of – you know, I equate all this to, like, the recession. We’ll be much smarter businessmen when all this is over with, and now that we see the

worst of what you all are having to do, maybe we could come up with something. You know, we don't even know what are our options are at this point. Other than – so, thanks.

Duane Harris: Thanks, Judy. One other comment, and it's not a question, but I understand what you're saying about people thinking it's already closed, because I got a call from a guy in Hatteras, North Carolina today, a recreational fisherman, and he knew that vermillion snapper had just closed to recreational fishermen, and he was under the impression – they don't catch red snapper up there hardly at all.

Judy Helmey: Right.

Duane Harris: But he was under the impression that red snapper was already closed, and I said no. I said, "There are a lot of people that think that. I don't know why they do, but, you know, there are a lot of people," – you know why they do, or you think that?

Judy Helmey: I know why they think it.

Duane Harris: Okay, tell me why they do.

Judy Helmey: Well, from being on a charter boat for as long as I have, a red snapper is a red fish. It's red, and all of our customers, when they catch a vermillion snapper that is a red snapper. And that's just the technology – I mean, that's just all –

Duane Harris: It's because of the closure of vermillion they think red snapper –

Judy Helmey: That is correct. So anything – so people, when they come in, you know, if they've caught five – or until all this changed, if they caught 10 vermillions, they don't say, "I've caught 10 vermillions. My God, I caught 10 red snapper. And then if you throw in the big ones, then I caught 10 red snapper and two biggest ones you ever saw." So that's where we're at.

Charlie Phillips: At lot of that is because they are sold in stores as red snapper.

Judy Helmey: Exactly. Well – well, they are red snapper, you know?

Duane Harris: But that was 35 years ago.

Judy Helmey: I remember that.

Duane Harris: Yeah, that's what they were doing. And what did they call pink porgy?

Judy Helmey: They call – well, they called them –

Duane Harris: Pink porgy red snapper.

Judy Helmey: What did they call – what did they call –

Judy Helmey: Red snapper. They call it – yes, it is. It's called that too.

Duane Harris: If you can catch them in the – in the grocery stores to some extent. But, I mean –

Judy Helmey: But it is a red snapper. It's in the red snapper family.

Duane Harris: Well, it's not – it's not even the same genus though.

Judy Helmey: I know, but, see, that's not the point. A fish is a fish.

Duane Harris: Are we back on? Okay, we're back on. Holly, you have to identify yourself.

Holly Binns 17A: Sure thing. My name is Holly Binns. I'm here on behalf of the PEW environment groups and over fishing in the southeast campaign. And I appreciate the opportunity today to share some input with you all on Amendment 17A of the snapper grouper fishery management plan, and appreciate especially the hard work that the council has done and the council staff and NMFS staff have done to get the amendment this far. I know that there's been a ton of analysis and thought and – that's gone into getting it to this point. I know it's been just a really tough job for you guys, and I think that, you know, in the end, what we hope to all end up with are some plans that will end up with a sustainable red snapper fishery for the future. So just really appreciate all that you all have done on this.

And you guys know that after about 40 years of fishery management in the U.S., about one in five fisheries are in trouble in the south Atlantic with the 10 species undergoing over fishing. And as a result, we have fisheries that are yielding just a fraction of their potential value that – and that makes vulnerable both the resource and the folks who depend on the resource. With Amendment 17A, we're looking to end about 40 years of over

fishing of red snapper, and to do it within the stricter confines of the revised Magnuson Stevens Act.

Unfortunately, red snapper's previous rebuilding plan ended without a rebuilt population, and the revised Magnuson Stevens Act states that the chosen rebuilding schedule should be as short as possible and in a time frame not to exceed 10 years, although it does provide the councils with the flexibility to extend that timeline to T minimum plus one generation time, so 35 years for red snapper. But the SSC has recommended that red snapper be given a 70 percent chance of successfully rebuilding based on the scientific uncertainty and the biology of red snapper, and a rebuilding timeline of 25 to 26 years will comply with this recommendation. And so for – for that option, we support alternative three, using T Mid as the timeline instead of T Max. The council's preferred schedule of yearly catches also rebuilds the population within 26 years, and so that would support the use of that – that timeline, the 25 to 26 years.

And there have been a number of scientific and economic studies that have shown that rebuilding quickly has big benefits, both for the marine ecosystem and for the economies that depend on healthy marine ecosystems. And so we would just encourage you guys to really take a close look at alternative three and that mid – T Mid timeframe as you're thinking about the rebuilding timeline. We're gonna be providing much more detailed written comments to sort of – at all the hearings, so we thought we'd just take little snippets of it at each hearing to talk to you guys about during the public testimony part of it, but we're gonna be sharing some more detailed thoughts and – on the specific options throughout the document, but want to take this opportunity to share with you our thoughts on this specific one and answer any questions you have and just say thanks again for all your hard work and the opportunity to provide some input.

Duane Harris: Thanks, Holly. Charlie, questions?

Charlie Phillips: Nope. I'm listening.

Duane Harris: I appreciate it, Holly. Thank you very much for being here, and we'll see you in Jacksonville.

Holly Binns: Si, senior.

Duane Harris: Okay. Bye bye.

James Newman 17A: My name is James Newman. On the Amendment 17A, to start with, I think you have – and I'll ask you some questions too, cause I don't have notes and I'm doing this from memory. 17A, now, you have several alternatives of closure. Is that correct? And number three is the least intrusive, I believe, with – it's about the 100 foot level.

Duane Harris: Well, I don't have the amendment in front of me, so I can't answer that question for you.

James Newman: Well, I just talked to one of your fisheries guys down there and that's it.

Duane Harris: If that's what he said, then that's right.

James Newman: Right. Well, that – that to me is the only viable alternative. That gives small recreational fishermen – and that's what I am. I have run charters before. I did it for 15 years, but now for the last 20 years I've only represented individual fishermen, recreational fishermen. And that would allow – that would have the least economic impact, in my assessment of the situation. It would allow the small Joe Six Pack to go out in his boat, catch fish, and I believe, and I discussed this with your biologists down there, that the bigger fish, the fish that are more mature, that will spawn the most and produce the most offspring are in the deeper water to start with. And it was my experience that bigger snapper came from 120 feet to 140 feet of water, versus 90 to 100. So if you close that area, if you have to close anything – I'm really opposed to any closure, but if you have to do any closure at all, that would be the least –

Duane Harris: Impact.

James Newman: Impacted situation for the – all fishermen concerned, as far as recreational fishermen. I can't speak for commercial. I don't know, you know, what they would think about it, but that's my opinion on that. Now, the next amendment is amendment – which one?

James Newman 17B: And that is for what? Would you –

Duane Harris: The other nine species that are over fished. We have all of them in one –

James Newman: That's sea bass and –

Duane Harris: Right, all those –

James Newman: All those other –

Duane Harris: All separate other species.

James Newman: Well, that – if you close those completely, I believe that would have a catastrophic impact, such as blackfish in particular, cause that's what you catch on the reefs and the – in the smaller areas. And the reefs do produce fish, believe me. Monday I was out at the BL reef and I got two 42 inch red fish. Limited out on weak fish, 30 croaker and a handful of whiting. So those reefs do produce fish. They all – and the jay buoy does produce a lot of – for small boats, a lot of blackfish. A lot of them are throwbacks, I'll admit that, but as the season wears on, they do mature. But the impact of closing that fishery, I think would just stop all fishing offshore. People just would not go there. Now, 18A, I believe is commercial only for –

Duane Harris: 18.

James Newman: 18, rather, is for –

Hank Braner 17A: Now I'm on. My name is Hank Braner. I'm a recreational fisherman, and I fish the waters off of Savannah and Florida since 1971. And then particularly I've fished off of the Savannah area. I have seen the fishery improve off of Savannah ever since the late 70's, all the way up until the present. And the thing that concerns me is the way that this is trying to be presented to the Congress and to the powers that be, is taking data, and you take a picture and you put up a graph that shows 1945 with some fictitious numbers sitting up here.

And we come down in the 1980's, and in the 1980's, we've got all this electronics that we've got now, all of the better equipment that we have now to – to manage fishing and to know what – with cameras, we can drop it down into the bottom of the ocean floor. We can see what's going on. We've got more recreational divers out there, seeing what's going on. So from the 80's until now, according to the graph that they presented themselves, I see nothing that indicates we've harmed anything. Instead, I see a flat – just a flat base going along, and I can't see where that warrants just totally closing down recreational fishing. It does not make any

sense at all. In my opinion, people are being falsely informed as to what the real – what is really happening out there.

Now, I'm not opposed to making some adjustments and changing some things. I am not in this business to make a living, and I think we've got enough really, really good sport fishermen, enough head boat captains and charter boat captains. These are the guys that are out there every single day. These are the guys that know what's happening out there. And I feel like they should have a heck of a lot more input into what's happening and how this should all evolve.

And I don't think we should just up and slap the door closed at them, put them out of business and then destroy the opportunity to get all of the – all of the information and all of the resources that they have back – being fed back in. Once they're not out there anymore, we don't know what's going on out there. We're left at the hands of the bureaucracy, at the, quote, "scientists." And I'm a professional person. I graduated from medical school. You know, I understand that science is important, but I think that real life tells us more about what's happening out there than just all this, quote, "scientific data," that we're seeing being presented to us.

And I haven't – I haven't met a charter boat captain. I've done – I've done Coast Guard physicals on a whole lot of charter boat captains. I've fished from here all the way to the Keys. None of them – none of them will support the fact that the snapper/grouper fishery is being over fished. Not a single one of them will support that – that statement.

And so my – my suggestion, my opinion is that we need to back up a few steps. Let's take a better look at what you're doing here. Let's get a little better input from the people that are really out there, really involved in this thing, and let's start looking at real data from the 80's until now. Let's – if we have to, let's tighten down some more on size limit and that sort of thing. Let's go with the circle hook idea. It's a pretty good idea to me, you know? You can – you can release more fish that way without having to lose fish bringing them up. Maybe close some patches of areas, some specific patches of area that you can identify with your GPS or your LORAN, but don't close the whole ocean down. And that's my comment.

Duane Harris:

Thank you, Dr. Braner. I appreciate you being here, and Charlie, you have any questions?

Charlie Phillips: No, but I will make a comment, because I've gotten several e-mails from at least two doctors and one nuclear pharmacist down in Florida, and they were mostly talking about spear fishing. And they were basically telling me the same thing you are. So you're not alone. I don't think the council – I know the council does not want to close these huge areas. We're trying to stay within what the – the guidelines that we're given, that we have to act under, and we're steady, like you were looking for ways to try to make it work for everybody best we can.

Duane Harris: And I will say we're looking for flaws in the assessment too. We've been looking to see if there's something in the assessment that was not considered. You know, something that was wrong in the assessment. To date, we haven't found anything. They've had other scientists come in and say that the data are flawed and give us their opinion. We've reviewed their reports and considered those in conjunction with our stock assessment report and the scientists that produce that report.

And so to date, I haven't seen anything personally that changes my opinion about whether red snapper or these other species are over fished. I do believe they're over fished and undergoing over fishing, and the law requires us to act. But it's – as several people have said, it's about as draconian a measure as you can do, and none of us like it. We're looking for a way out while still complying with the law, but, you know, we're trying to figure out how we can do something different.

Hank Braner: I just don't understand how a flat curve represents over fishing.

Duane Harris: Well, you know, Roy Crabtree, I think, gave a pretty good summary of that. Dr. Roy Crabtree is the regional administrator from St. Petersburg and he's on our council. And this fishery has been over fished for so long, but it's rocking along at a low level and even has climbed up a little bit in recent years, maybe because of the 20 inch minimum size. We don't know what the result – what the reason for that is, and it also has produced some really good year classes in recent times, and that's why the fishermen – red snapper, for example, are seeing so many fish out there, even a dramatically over fished stock can put out some pretty good year classes.

We've had them so close together that fishermen are seeing more fish, catching more fish now than they've caught in 20 years. We recognize that. Most of these fish that they're bringing in that have been aged are three and four years old. Most of them are three and

four years old. For a fish that lives 54 years, that's not a very health population and it's not good for the population.

So I believe red snapper are over fished. You know, the question, I guess, is – and you talk about the 1945 data and how it drops off pretty precipitously, I don't think that's the key. I don't think the key is what the biomass was in 1945. What it does is it gives you an idea of how bad it is, but that's not what tells me that it's over fished. I mean, it's just rocking along at that very, very low level, and some of those data, not – maybe not the one at the top, but when you get into the 70's, those are good population estimates, good catch data. So you've got those to go by and all they simply did was project out what it probably was before that. We had tremendous snapper/grouper fishing off the coast of Georgia in the late 60's, and most of them were boats from Fernandina Beach, Florida that came up and really wiped out our snapper/grouper. Cause in 1970, when I came down here and started working and started diving –

Hank Braner: Commercial boats that came.

Duane Harris: Yes. Started diving out there – Well, because recreational fishermen didn't have any – I mean, you didn't put LORAN A on very many recreational boats. But all these commercial guys had LORAN A. They could go right back, or pretty close to the same spots time and time again, and we'd dive out there at the Brunswick Snapper Banks. We hardly ever saw a red snapper or a grouper out there. See some black sea bass and some vermilion and some porgies and some other fish, but we didn't see a lot of snapper – red snapper and grouper. Just tremendously over fished back in the late 60's. So, you know, I don't disagree with you about those early years data, but that's simply back projecting based on a stock assessment as to what they think the population might have looked like. There's no way to tell whether that was true or not, but even if it – even if it – you took 1970 or 1965 and you just drew that line at that level that it was back then, it still drops off pretty dramatically.

Hank Braner: Because of the commercial boats coming –
Drops off I think because of the commercial boats coming in, much more so than the recreational –

Duane Harris: Well, they were – they were the ones –

Hank Braner: Cause we even had less recreational boats out there.

Duane Harris: Yes. They were the ones at that time that were responsible for the over fishing. No question about it. There were very few recreational boats out there at that time.

Hank Braner: And when we seen them disappear more –

Duane Harris: The commercial guys.

Hank Braner: Yeah. We don't see the commercial guys out there now like we used to.

Duane Harris: Yeah, not like we used to.

Hank Braner: Nowhere near like we used to.

Duane Harris: There weren't a lot of boats. There were, like, five boats that we used to see out of – because we'd have our research vessel out there, and they were all from Fernandina and they were coming up – they'd already wiped out the fish off northeast Florida, so they were coming into Georgia and fishing the snapper bank areas, the 90 to 130 feet areas, and they were just killing those fish. And they just pounded them time and time again until they wiped them out, and then they moved someplace else.

Hank Braner: Well, I support your efforts at improving the fishery. No – no question there. I totally agree. It's the manner in which you want to do it. That's the problem. And –

Duane Harris: We understand completely.

Hank Braner: With the electronics that we have today, with LORAN and GPS and everything that we have today, you can take a lot smaller places out there in that ocean to cut off and close off some – some specific areas without just shutting down the whole thing.

Duane Harris: We're trying –

Hank Braner: And then we can take – then we can take those areas that you've left open and we can be watching those areas and see is this recreational fishing really doing damage to those areas. Are we seeing a decrease in the fishery in those areas that we've left open, as compared to the areas that we've closed off. We're taking the entire fishery that way and giving us a chance – even if we only did it for a couple of years, I think you might get less grumbling

from some of us. If you were able to show me some kind of data like that than you're getting from the way we're doing it this time.

Duane Harris: If the law didn't require us to end over fishing within one year, you'd see that as a more viable alternative out there.

Hank Braner: We need to work on getting that law – and there's an effort going on right now, I understand.

Duane Harris: I know there is. I testified at Congress last week.

Hank Braner: You know, against or for?

Duane Harris: Well, I testified on behalf of the law ending over fishing, but I also told the Congress men and women that were in attendance what a dramatic adverse impact this is gonna have on our fishing community in the south Atlantic. And, you know, my testimony is available on the council website and you can go there and you can read my entire 10 pages if you want to be bored. But, you know, I had five minutes to talk and 10 pages to submit, so my – my written – my verbal testimony was four pages long, double – double spaced. It wasn't nearly as comprehensive as my written testimony. So anyway, I appreciate you being here –

Hank Braner: Thank you for the opportunity.

Duane Harris: We understand your concerns and we share them with you.

Hank Braner: Thank you.

Duane Harris: Thank you.

Scott Farmer 17A: I'm representing myself. But, yeah, my name is Scott Farmer, and I do a good bit of mainly – mainly diving out here is what I do for the most part. A little bit of fishing. And I listened to the presentation on 17 – what is this here? 17A and B. Anyway, yeah, and all I want to say from – from this – this area here, you know, Savannah area, that he was showing these different maps and graphs and whatnot and that – I was just gonna say, you know, from what he was showing, it seemed like these top two ones would still get you with – what is it? You want an 84 percent improvement in stocks?

Duane Harris: 84 to 88.

Scott Farmer: It seemed like these two here would – would still get you into that – is that what you've understood?

Duane Harris: There's some additional analysis that needs to be done and the council will do that immediately following these hearings, and then we'll be presented with that analysis in December, and then starting December 7th. So we don't know yet. We're hoping, you know, we're gonna have the least impactful closure, if a closure is needed, and it looks like it's gonna be needed, that we can – that we can have.

Scott Farmer: I agree. I think you need to do something, but I would just say that these – and you know this too, obviously, but that these two bottom ones, especially for this area, would just be – just, you know, just destructive to everybody, you know? You know, charters and sportspeople like me, who like going out, you know, and diving. And then the other thing I would ask is they mentioned exemptions, and, you know, being that I spear fish, I guess like you were saying, the big problem with all this is – is – what do you call it?

Male: Bycatch and discard mortality.

Scott Farmer: Okay. And then I guess with spear fishing, that – you know, that isn't – doesn't appear to be a problem. I mean, I know when I go out, you know, we just get our bare minimum, if that, and – and especially if the red – red snapper are closed, obviously, you know, they're pretty easy – well, you have a lot too, don't you? So, yeah, that – just speaking for myself, I mean, I think that would be hopefully something you could consider, look into having spear fishing as an exemption. So, but that's the only thing I could – you know, only two things I was wanting to say.

Duane Harris: Okay. Mr. Farmer, thank you for being here. Charlie, do you have any questions?

Charlie Phillips: No.

Duane Harris: I will comment about spear fishing. I have received, oh, maybe 20 e-mails from spear fishermen, asking that we adopt the alternative that allows spear fishing to continue if we have closure, for those species that are not closed, and I've told them all I support that. You know, I don't see any reason – it's a discard mortality problem, which is the reason all bottom fishing has to be closed if it has to be closed, and I think it probably will in some area, but I don't see any reason not to allow black sea bass pots and not to

allow spear fishing, because, you know, you're able to target the fish that are not close.

Scott Farmer: Yeah.

Duane Harris: So that's the way I feel about it.

Scott Farmer: Do black sea bass pots catch, you know, other species?

Duane Harris: No, they're much smaller and they have much smaller openings, and my – the information that I've seen about black sea bass pots is there's very little bycatch. In fact, the black sea bass swim in them so quickly there's hardly any time or room for anything else to get in there.

Scott Farmer: So you rarely see juvenile red snapper –

Duane Harris: No, and, you know, there are escape panels. So for anything that's real small, even black sea bass escape.

Scott Farmer: Yeah.

Duane Harris: So, you know, I think there's a limited bycatch from black sea bass pots, and so that's an alternative as well.

Scott Farmer: Yeah.

Duane Harris: So, you know, that's another one of the exemptions that you were talking about.

Scott Farmer: Well, anyway, yeah. I just hope that you could consider that, so – but thanks for your time.

Duane Harris: Thank you for being here. I appreciate your testimony.

Scott Farmer: Thank you.

Duane Harris: Stay in touch. I do, I have your card. Yeah, I'll check him.

Scott Farmer: All right, thank you.

David Newlin 17A: Captain David Newlin, from Richmond Hill, Georgia. I'm representing myself and the Georgia Hunting and Fishing Federation, which is a 13,000 member group in the state of Georgia here. Reggie Dickey, who is the president, he looked over

what I've got to say tonight and he said to please represent him. He was at a meeting today with Eric Johnson up the country there.

Duane Harris:

Who was that?

David Newlin:

Reggie Dickey, Georgia Hunting and Fishing Federation. That's a reasonably new group, been in existence about eight years now. But I'll say what I wrote down. I spent four and a half hours today, and I'm sorry if this offends some people, but it took me the better part of today, I've been working on this for a couple of weeks, and – and I've titled it We've Got to Stop the Attack Against Recreational Fishermen and Closing the Georgia Coast.

The red snapper population off here, I don't care what you all paperwork says, I've got pictures to show otherwise. The snapper population off St. Catherine's Island, where I fish, is in the best shape it has been I would say in the last 30 years. I may not be experienced enough. I don't have but 4,311 logged offshore fishing trips. And this past Saturday, I caught 38 red snapper off of one drop, anchored in one place, that ranged from six inches to 30 pounds.

But I just don't believe – I cannot believe that I'm here today defending recreational fishing closures again. I thought this thing was dead and gone. I realize that we have seven people on the south Atlantic fisheries council that seem to be hell bent on an anti-recreation fishing agenda, that will end up closing my business, which has allowed thousands of Georgia taxpayers access to saltwater fishing. Just because someone doesn't own a boat doesn't mean he shouldn't be able to fish Georgia. For \$150.00, he's been able to go fish Georgia.

And this – this will not only affect the thousands of charter boat operators – I may be on that number and I think between Key West and South Carolina, we're probably talking 1,000 people in the snapper/grouper fishery, especially off the Florida coast there. It will definitely affect my pocketbook, but this will affect the marinas, the motels. I bring 600 to 1,000 people a year that come to Richmond Hill, Georgia to go fishing with me. These people stay in our motels, they eat at the restaurants, they drink liquor, they spend a lot of money. What I get out of the deal is probably just a drop in the bucket. Six guys, three motel rooms, and I'm sure you all have heard this before, but it just – the simple truth is there is no reason to even be considering a red snapper closure, or in reality, a ban on recreational fishing off the Georgia coast.

Your current objective, which was passed by 7-6 vote, or in scientific terms, around a 7 percent margin, this was in no way a unanimous decision to close snapper fishing off Georgia. And truth be known, this is gonna have to be a total fishing closure. This past summer, along with the summers before, you know how I caught most of my big red snapper? On a live bait with a down rigger trolling for kingfish in 90 feet of water, 98 feet of water, with a triple treble hook rig, and those fish, 100 percent dead.

And don't think these other boys trolling for kingfish have got a deep line. They know where these ledges are. They aren't catching them, cause they are, and these are big female fish. And in order to make this thing work, we need to tell the truth to everybody. This has got to be a total – total fishing ban, and that won't fly.

The fishermen of coastal Georgia have proven again and again and again that the red snapper population is not only surviving, but it's thriving off of our Georgia coast. I am so tired of hearing comments from Mr. Harris and some of the other committee members that we're only talking about a two year class fish. I was talking to Greg a few minutes ago and everybody's finally realizing we do have fish coming up behind these classes.

I've been screaming for years, we've got little fish out there. The other day I caught some six inch fish, 10 inch fish, and this wasn't an uncommon – if you fish in 50 feet of water off Georgia, you'll catch some six, eight, 10 inch snapper, always have. If you fish the public drops, the end shore reefs, you hardly ever catch them, cause they get killed. I mean, these little – these snapper that are on – I've always caught a lot of snapper on the cat buoy in the wintertime, these little small fish with a spot on their side; six, eight, 10 inches long. And – and I just feel like these two year classes of fish are just total – total kaphooey, cause we've got fish coming up.

I just finished reading Mr. Harris's letter to the national fisheries. That was all on the e-mail. And some of your ideas are good, Dwayne, but a lot of it is like reading a bad fairy tale. You state in there, and I'm pretty sure of this, that you've got some support, but almost all of those groups are these – that I could see that you had named, are pretty hard left wing environmental groups that don't want me out there killing the fish, that damn sure don't want me out there deer hunting, and they're looking at – we've got thousands of people out there today that don't me out there killing the fish. And – and I don't know what the alternative to this is,

whether to scream and shout and go to the governor and ask to have some of these people in South Carolina and Georgia and Florida replaced off the council. Well, Florida was unanimous, three people vote, I believe, and if that's what it takes, we're gonna have to – we've got to – this is just absolutely crazy.

And I was also reading in that same – that same e-mail, the letter from – or report from Herbert Moore of the Recreational Fishing Alliance. He seems to be a pretty smart guy, and according to the study he was looking at, the snapper – snapper population is better off now than it was 15, 20 years ago. The SPR is up, the population is up, and if you'll look at those graphs, starting from the actual data collection time, late 70's to now, that data is flat. We haven't shown any big increase, any – the fish – the fishery is sustainable. It's – this data you all have got showing in there from the 60's, 50's, that's comic book. There's no data from then. Charlie's daddy may have a little bit of weight and fish data, but I doubt it. But that stuff is comic book, folks, and you've just got to – and the only way that you're gonna enforce these – these total – this humongous no recreational fishing area is through a total fishing ban of it.

Like I was just saying, you – there's – you can't tell whether I'm out there drifting for kingfish. I'm out there on a calm day in a tournament, I'm gonna have one line out there with about a four ounce sinker on it. It's gonna be darn near bumping the bottom. I caught some big fish this year, some big female kingfish on the bottom with that.

And while I'm looking at this data, I – I just have a hard time with it. And the other things I could not even believe somebody mentioned, let's allow the divers to go out there and shoot all the big female grouper, but not allow me to go out there and fish with a hook and line. Let's allow the boys to come up from North Carolina this spring, like they always do, and trap sea bass all out there in front of **R2 tower** where I like to fish, but I can't go out there with a hook. Our boys are gonna kill some fish.

I fiddled with some fish traps back in the early 80's. I had a lot of fish float off coming out of them sea bass traps. Technically, if you wind it up an inch at a time, they'll probably live, but them boys are gonna get out there in a hurry, pulling up those traps. Them hydraulic pullers will pull, and when those fish come up, there's gonna be little snapper in them traps. And when they get dumped out, guess who's gonna be sitting behind the boat? Mr. Barracuda, Mr. Shark, and those fish are gonna get walloped.

And some of the other failures I'm seeing, trying to decipher some of this paperwork is I keep hearing this every time about this great comeback with the Spanish and king mackerel. Guess what, folks? The two fish species that have flat out disappeared off of here over the last eight years are your kingfish and Spanish. Yeah, these preppy boys that haven't fished for a few years are going out there catching six kingfish, saying, "Boy, we killed them today."

In the late 90's, when I had the article printed in Saltwater Sportsman, with 2,600 kingfish I caught that year, we could go anywhere we wanted to offshore here and catch a limit of fish before noontime. This year, my high day trolling on the kingfish has been 13 fish, and I keep hearing all this data about kingfish. So that's just another – I just feel like we have one group of paper pushers out there that absolutely don't know about what they're doing and they're pushing the paper to this other group.

This group is grabbing the paper and they're reading it and they're pushing it back across to this group. This – this is just – and you're talking about putting my livelihood out. I've got a PhD in the Georgia coast. I don't have but a four year college degree otherwise, but this is wrong, coming up, telling me that I'm out of business. I mean, the fish are not in that much danger.

And you must go back to the drawing board, sit down and let's listen again, folks. You all have lost the most valuable resource you all have in fisheries management. Guess what? Nobody's coming to this meeting tonight. These fishermen with thousands of days of experience; Zack down there, Steve Amick, me, Judy, the stuff we have said at these meetings over the years, we're all convinced it gets thrown out the window before we leave here practically.

And that – that's just – before you all go make the biggest mistake in the history of fisheries management, let's go back and sit down – give me a phone call, darn it. I don't mind a bit coming down, sitting with you. If it isn't going public, I'll sit down with you with a LORAN book. I'll take a map out, I'll go dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, and we have some huge areas in all of these closed areas you've got here that have never held a red snapper. The area from the R2 tower south, about eight miles, I have probably caught two dozen snapper out of there over the years, and I have caught thousands of sea bass and trigger fish and stuff.

If we could just – the charter boat captains, I think Judy and one of the CCA guys brought the map down to you and Susan, I'm not sure, a couple of months ago. But we drew some areas – we were willing to give up the high population snapper areas. I mean, the Grand Banks, common area as we call it, if we would cut those out, you'd have your snapper thing.

But the whole thing here is two fish, recreational limit, it's working. I've seen the increase. I'm not – we're not talking about a guy that spends five days a year out there. I mean, I made probably – this was one of the worst years I've ever had in the fishing business, economical-wise. Nobody wants a thousand dollar trip, and that's what it takes to go snapper fishing, to the way out stuff. But I did 70 trips this year, I caught the limit quicker on almost all of those trips than I ever have before.

And we may need to do some working. The one thing I think we could work on is the size limit. You all talking about a mortality rate. Let's back the size limit off a couple of inches. And the charter fishermen, we're willing to bend, folks. I mean, this is – we're in a matter of survival here. A 35 year – of one year closure, total closure, we're gone. I've got \$1,800.00 a month boat payments. I've got \$450.00 a month boat dockage. The six month closure that we're in right now, nobody wants to go when you tell them, "Well, the only thing we can keep is sea bass. You might be able to catch a snapper or two." Right now – I believe right now we can still keep snapper, can't we?

Duane Harris: Mm hmm.

David Newlin: But we can't keep grouper. It's real hard to sell a trip – and even though we will still have 20 miles of ocean left open, it's over. I mean, I'm gonna lose 30 years of my life. I don't have an alternative job. Thank God my wife – my wife works for the government, so she's got – she's got a fairly stable job. My wife is a PhD scientist with the GB, and – and according to hear reading – she's a lot smarter than me with the books, her on this data stuff is just – your paperwork just didn't make any sense to her.

And just please, go back and sit down before you ruin the lives – and I'm talking ruin the lives of thousands of people. Go back, sit down, and let's – this Magnuson Act has got to bend. I don't believe they're gonna come put any of you all in prison if we missed a day of the deadline by two days, by two weeks. And it just – it's just wrong. This is America, folks. We're supposed to be able to go out there – not with a drag net, not with a long line,

but I'm supposed to be able to go out there with a rod and reel, carry a kid from Atlanta that's never been fishing, carry him out there and let him go fishing.

And just saying – just – and I really strongly feel that the recreational sector you all are so far off on the catch and release data. If you would require everybody to bring a 40 ounce sinker – I've showed my rig before. You put a hook upside down, take the barb off of it, tie your line in the curve of the hook, put your weight down here, require everybody to use it, minimum of 10 ounce circle hook, and that rig, I don't feel like I hardly ever – it's worked.

It takes the extra mile to do it, but I don't feel like you would ever – the other day I caught 38 fish. I do not believe – one of the fish I kept was 22 inches, cause I killed him. He was in the bag limit. I had three people, we kept six fish, and – but I don't believe I killed a fish that went back, cause I'm – with this big circle – with a little circle hook, he'll swallow that. With the big circle hooks, once in a great while we'll hook one in the eyeball. The hook will come through his head and hook him in the eye. But we aren't killing the number of fish that you all are saying.

I mean, commercial guy out there with a hydraulic reel that's burning them up, he may be – he may be bloating them too bad. But – and the only time I see much of that at all is during the middle of summertime, when fish – but I feel like we've got some alternatives here, you all. I mean, these figures, this data just isn't right. And it's just – and I'm sorry if I may be going around a little bit, but this has me furious. And I'm not the only person, but this is gonna affect marinas, everything on the Georgia coast.

And thank you all for your time, and if anybody would like to call me, for God's sake, call me. I'm in the Richmond Hill phone book. My cell phone is on my answering machine. I'll be glad to come meet you somewhere, talk with you. Thanks.

Duane Harris: Thank you, David. Charlie?

Charlie Phillips: I've got a couple of questions for you. Okay, first of all, when you told me you were trolling for kings, is that – that's common, I guess, people deep trolling for kings.

David Newlin: Yeah, with down rigger 10 pound weights.

Charlie Phillips: That's common. And so if they pick up an American – when they're down there, they don't know what's gonna hit, American or – it's just whatever. Okay. And you said you caught 38 fish the other day to catch a – what was it, six fish bag limit?

David Newlin: Yeah, I threw back a bunch of fish that were way over the size limit.

Charlie Phillips: Over the size –

David Newlin: I threw back a bunch. I threw back some eight pound, 10 pound fish.

Charlie Phillips: Under the size limit.

David Newlin: No, I threw back some eight and 10 pound fish that were 28, 30, 32 inches. We were having fun catching –

Charlie Phillips: Oh, so you were just kind of catch and release. Oh, okay. That was –

David Newlin: I was in 70 feet of water.

Charlie Phillips: Okay, okay. That was –

David Newlin: We were trying to catch some big fish.

Charlie Phillips: Okay.

David Newlin: I killed that one – the small – I killed one 22 inch fish. Camera is laying in the truck, there. I got three fish over 30 pounds.

Charlie Phillips: Okay. Well, that's good. And that rig that you use to put fish down, how long does it take for you to – if you've got one you want to put back, how long does it take for you to put it back on the bottom?

David Newlin: A minute. Probably a minute. I keep a rod – when I'm fishing out there, I keep a rod rig laying in the back of the boat with it. It's just a 10 foot long shank hook on a 40 ounce sinker, just upside down. You just lift up the fish and drop it down and when it hits the bottom, pull him back up.

Charlie Phillips: He shakes off.

David Newlin: And even on calm pretty days, I've seen none of those fish come back up. We're venting fish and everything else. I've seen a lot of those fish come back up 20 yards behind the boat.

Duane Harris: Make sure I understood you. The vented fish are the ones that you're seeing come back up sometimes?

David Newlin: That was fish I thought I vented.

Duane Harris: Okay, because that's consistent with what the science is saying now about venting, and, you know, a lot of people want us to require venting. It was required in Amendment 16, but it was disapproved by Roy Crabtree as a result of this scientific paper that was reported that says that venting often does not work, and sometimes it's probably worse for the fish to vent them than it is to not vent them. So I just wanted to make sure I heard you correctly.

David Newlin: You've got to be almost a surgeon to hit that fish right every time.

Duane Harris: Well, I think that's true. I think if you're going to vent them correctly and have survival, you've got to do it very specifically and do it right, or else you're doing them more harm than you are good. And I – you know, that's – I didn't believe that for awhile until that science came out and it was published in American Fisheries Society's paper, and it – you know, it was an eye opener to a lot of us because the council was moving down the road to requiring venting tools in Amendment 16, and it was in there when it was submitted, but it was not approved.

David Newlin: Okay. And it seems like it may just be me, but it seems like in the cooler weather the fish don't seem to be as bloated when they come up to the top. It seems like they survive.

Charlie Phillips: Okay. You said you had areas where there were just basically no Americans.

David Newlin: Right.

Charlie Phillips: Are there anything in those areas that people could fish on? Vermillion, or – or is it just desert?

David Newlin: In the area out there around the R2 tower, there's some huge areas in there that are generally triggerfish and sea bass. Had a lot of big, pretty sea bass, 15, 16 inch fish, and saw very seldom a snapper in there.

Charlie Phillips: Well, you see where I'm coming from. If there's some areas that we can figure out and get some wiggle room, cause the council doesn't want to do this, I promise you. And we can find some wiggle room and we can show, you know, through information from you and others, you know, that there's some holes where they can fish maybe, that works with, you know, law enforcement and stuff, cause they like big boxes and straight lines and stuff. They've told us that a lot. And I'm new to this, so I'm still trying to, you know, see what I can do and – and so I'm a rookie yet.

David Newlin: No, you aren't a rookie. You've been out on a boat. You know how hard it will be to read these lines.

Charlie Phillips: Yeah, but when you get up here, I'm a rookie. So – and – but, yeah, and we're just gonna keep working, and you all have got – and I know it's frustrating for you all. I know how frustrating it is. I'm – you know me, I've got boats too. I've got people down there that's in the same boat as you are. They're, like, what do we do? So – so, yeah, and we keep hammering at it. You know, just don't quit. We'll come up with something.

Duane Harris: Okay, you know the drill. Turn on the mic, state your name, who you represent, and then tell us what you want to tell us.

Sera Drevenak 17A: Okay. My name is Sera Drevenak, and I'm here representing the PEW Environment Group. And this is sort of a technical request for clarification in the document for 17A. There's a section in chapter – or section four about the rebuilding timeline, and it goes into assumptions that the short term economic impacts outweigh the long term economic benefits of that action item. But it doesn't go into any detail about how that – how that conclusion was made or if there is any data to back that up. And it's a – kind of a counterintuitive conclusion, given the vast majority of scientific literature. So I'm just wanting a little bit of clarification in the document.

Duane Harris: Okay.

Sera Drevenak: That's it.

Duane Harris: Was that it?

Sera Drevenak: Yep.

Duane Harris: Wow. Well, I know what you're talking about, and I too found that there wasn't a whole lot of information on which that

conclusion was based. And Rick and I have talked and there is gonna have to be – there's a good bit of that document that has to be beefed up, obviously. So we will work on it. Just hold our feet to the fire on that.

Sera Drevenak: Thanks.

Duane Harris: There's a lot of things for me to try to remember, and if I forget that, I've written it down, but that doesn't mean anything. I've got to go back and re-read it again. So – so thanks, Sera, and I appreciate your testimony and we will check on it.

Sera Drevenak: Okay, thanks.

Duane Harris: Thank you.

Courtland Babcock 17A: Babcock, a recreational fisherman from Hilton Head, South Carolina. I'm not affiliated with any group, just representing myself. I was downstairs and had a nice discussion with a gentleman down there and looked over the proposed alternatives for I believe 17A, the snapper closure. I had some – a few comments to make. Obviously, alternative three looks to be the best, just because of the size guideline.

It does look like the majority of it is outside of the areas that we typically fish in our area. The majority of our snapper – and I don't know I'm shooting myself in the foot here by telling you I come from 85 to 90 feet of water, up to 100 feet in our area that we fish. We typically have dead bottom from 100 to 150 and then it starts again, you know, in the triple ledge area and deli out in the 200 foot ranges. So on that note, that would be the alternative that I like the best.

The grouper Amendment 18, I'd sort of like to overlay with the closure from 17A, and when you look at those together, you realize that you are cutting off fishing for a majority of all species that us recreational fishermen fish for. I understand that the inshore closure or the near shore closure is for red snapper, and the offshore is for Warsaw and specklehind, but without the ability to discern what is going to jump on the hook, you're – you're – and I'm – I mean, it's easy to see. You're closing a majority of the waters that are going to be fishable by recreational fishermen.

I discussed some of the timeframes based on the bell curves, the populations and the snapper with a gentleman downstairs, and

from the sound of things, to get that bell curve into the right population density, if everything in mother nature works its wonders, it's somewhere in the 15 to 20 year range to see the early year class fish move into the upper range of that bell curve in the 30 year timeframe. I'm sure you've considered the economic impact that this is gonna have, you know, but I'm a little concerned, obviously. I'm sure people have complained about the data that's been used.

One of the studies downstairs was 1,200 fish that old lists were taken from. There were only five that were over 22 years of age, out of 1,200 fish. A similar study done in 1997 in your reports also shows that same percentage. That was a group of 6,000 fish studied and there were 27 fish that were over 22 years of age. So from a period of 1997 to a period of 2006, when the second study was made, the percentage of old fish was the exact same.

Your virgin stock data is from 1945. They didn't even have sonar then. I don't know that you guys can put a lot of weight on that sort of stuff, because you sort of backed into the equation that population. I understand that you guys are working within, you know, the laws that have been set in front of you. Not that I'm barking up the wrong tree here, but I think that, you know, Magnuson Stevens might be the root of the thrust of this, and at this point, you might not have too many opportunities left or too many options left, rather, in terms of what your alternatives are.

I just want – you know, hope that you've considered the economic impact, the amount of traffic it's gonna put on to these near shore and inshore waters, and in turn, what it will do to the fishing in that area if you concentrate the population of fishing into a much smaller area. Obviously, those areas are gonna get over fished, you know, quickly as well. I know you can't keep snapper in those areas, but you can still fish for other fish on the bottom, from what I understand, as long as it's not in that closed area.

So, I mean, it's gonna put a real hurting on that. I would like to see some things come along, you know, in terms of expanding artificial reefs in those areas. I've talked to Bob Mortori about those sorts of things and tried to get some grassroots organizations an things started in that nature, and maybe, you know, in conjunction with this, letting the recreational fishermen – you know, working in some sort of reef program into this to at least let us feel like we're working towards something. I mean, it's a 20 year closure, which based on the bell curve is what it's going to have to be. It's a long time.

Obviously, I don't fish for a living. You know, it's not part of my income in any way, but it is – you know, I have three kids, I take a lot of joy in it, getting my kids out on the water. I think you're gonna see increased traffic inshore. I think you're gonna see increased, you know, pressure put on inshore fishing.

The only alternative that I could think of to this, and this will wrap up what I was – what I have to say, was a possible gear restriction in the proposed closed area. And I know that I've traded e-mails with a few of you before, but I was considering or hoping that maybe a light gear restriction, letting people fish with, say, 20 or 25 pound liter material and no heavier in these areas would allow us recreational people to still get on the water, to still spend money with our local economy, still enjoy time on the water with friends and family. And you're never gonna boat – you might catch and release, obviously, some small snapper. You're never gonna catch any quality fish on that sort of tackle, if you fish for red – you know, for snapper. You know that you're not gonna boat a real fish of any quality with line in that class; 15, 20, 25 pound size.

But what it would let you do is it would let us catch some sea bass, bring some food home. It would let us catch some triggerfish. It would let us get on the water, you know, and possibly keep part of – you know, part of the system working, as opposed to none of it. So that's all I have to say.

Duane Harris: Thank you very much. Charlie, any questions?

Charlie Phillips: No.

Duane Harris: Courtland, I appreciate you being here. I appreciate your testimony tonight, and we're still working on it.

Courtland Babcock: I know, I know.

Duane Harris: No decisions have been made, despite what some people say. Were trying to figure out how to avoid these closures, just like you all are. So, anyway, thank you for being here.

Courtland Babcock: All right.

Duane Harris: And come back and see us again.

Courtland Babcock: I will. Thanks.

Duane Harris: Thank you.

Duane Harris: The drill. Turn on the mic, state your name, tell us who you represent, et cetera, et cetera. Okay, you can say hello to Charlie.

Steve Amick 17A: Okay. Hello, name is Steve Amick. I've been on the AP advisor panel for nine years. Been a snapper – been snapper fishing, grouper fishing in the for higher sector for 31 years, and I want to thank Mr. Phillips, Mr. Harris for the opportunity to express my comments on the snapper/grouper amendment 17A.

I'd like to start off with this past season. We worked closely with the Georgia DNR fisheries biologists and we sampled many red snapper, collecting data such as age, length, weight and sex ratio. Such as I – the work that we did I feel gave us a good idea of what we have actually off the coast of Georgia, and through the process became interested in the science and the biology and learned a lot through the course of the summer. I still continue to learn, and I must say that the science is very compelling. But after saying that, I have to say that I have to reconcile what I've learned from the science with what I've experienced fishing for red snapper for 30 plus years. And so I'm making this statement. I don't want to argue with the science, but I want to just state how I interpret the data that was collected from a fisherman's point of view, maybe give a different perspective of what – what the council is looking at.

Let me at this point say that SEDAR 15, the red snapper assessment, the basis for the proposed regulations that the council is now considering only covers data up to 2006. Okay, so sea door 15 is over 1,000 days old, and the status of red snapper and the biomass has changed since then. What we have 2009 is completely different than what we have in 2006. And I feel that the council should wait before implementing, you know, these – these regulatory changes until the 2010 update is reviewed.

I mean, so much has changed, and I'll give you some examples as we go along. As I see it, as a fisherman, sea door 15 stated that in 2006, the majority of the red snapper were two years old, of age. Those are sexually mature fish, 15 – 15 – 15 inches long, and they're spawning and they don't, however, produce as many eggs or size of eggs that older class fish do.

That's a point that I would like to make, and I agree with that. Most of the snapper in 2006 were two year old fish. Okay, but

what we have here in 2009, what it showed was a great number of these four year old class fish, and 56 to 58 percent of the landed red snapper were in that four year old class. Now, you would think that, okay, well, a red snapper reaches the legal size limit of 20 inches and then it's four years old and it's landed and it's taken out of the biomass, but I went back and looked at the – the size and the length and the weight of those four year old class fish and it varied greatly. And I've got some numbers here, cause this is data that I looked at and I don't think – I hope that the – you know, what's being reviewed, 20 – okay, let me just read this.

Duane Harris: Okay.

Steve Amick: I lost my train of thought. I'm just gonna read from – let me go on and just read. Okay, you have this four year old class of fish. Of those four year old class, only 23 percent were in the 20 to 23 inch size. 67 percent of those four year old class were in the 24 to 26 class size.

Now, of those 24 to 26 inch size red snapper, they produce much more eggs than the snapper we're releasing, the 15, 16, 17 year old fish. Okay, and 7 percent of those four year old class were even lower than that, from 20 – 26 to even 30 inches at four years old. And what that showed to me was an incredible growth rate. I'm completely lost on my ideas.

My question to some of the biologists is, okay, if you have – if you have a red snapper that's four years old and weighs 15 pounds and the female, will that snapper produce the same amount of eggs, the same size of eggs as a red snapper that's 15 pound and 10 years old. Okay, and answer was basically yes. Okay, so in this four year old class, and from the larger four year old class, which is 74 percent, we're in that 23 to even 30 inch range, that's a substantial population, part of the population that is, you know, spawning at a great rate, much more so than the smaller fish. You know, there's – can I stop for a second? Yeah, let's stop for a second.

Duane Harris: Turn on the mic and tell us that stuff. You did perfect. I don't know why you're – yeah, yeah, that's all you need to do. You don't – yeah.

Steve Amick: I'm just gonna read – I'm gonna go back and start from this point. I'm gonna read what I write and then Mr. Geiger can enjoy it. I'm gonna start again from the beginning.

Duane Harris: Okay.

Steve Amick:

I'm just gonna read it like I wrote it. Thank you for the opportunity to express my comments and the thoughts on Amendment – snapper/grouper Amendment 17A. This past season, we worked closely with Georgia DNR fisheries biologists and we sampled many red snapper, collecting data such as age, length, weight and sex ratio. This work I feel gave us a much more accurate picture of what the red snapper biomass looks like off the coast of Georgia. Through the process, I became engrossed with the science and the biology. I must say, it has been and continue to be quite a learning experience, as science is very compelling.

That being said, I have to reconcile what I have learned this past season with what I have experienced fishing with – for red snapper the past 30 plus years. I do not want to argue with the science as much as I would like to point out how I, as a fisherman, interpret some of the data collected and presented to the council. Let me point out that the sea door 15 sea door assessment, the basis for the proposed regulatory changes council is now considering only covers data up to the end of 2006. Sea door 15 is over 1,000 days old, and the status of the red snapper biomass has changed considerably since then.

It is imperative that the council reviews the 2010 updated red snapper assessment before implementing drastic regulatory changes. Sea door 15 stated that in 2006, the majority of the red snapper in the south Atlantic were two years old, sexually mature fish that are spawning; however, not producing the amount of eggs that older class fish would. After a concentrated effort to age red snapper off of Georgia and Florida, I feel that the age structure of red snapper is substantially different in 2009 than in 2006. The majority of the red snapper landed in 2009 in the south Atlantic were four year old fish, 56 to 58 percent.

You have to also take into consideration the number of red snapper that were released to get a good idea of the biomass. From my records, I can tell you that in 2009, we released 40 percent of the red snapper caught, and we retained 60 percent of the red snapper caught. That compares to previous years, and I'll start with 2006. In 2006, we were releasing 67.4 undersized red snapper. In '07, we were releasing 86 percent undersized red snapper. And then in 2008, we were releasing 58 percent undersized red snapper. So from a high of 86 percent release rate to a low of 40 percent release rate on the red snapper, a marked improvement of average fish size being caught.

But what is really significant to me about the four year old red snapper that we landed in 2009 was the size and the spawning potential of those fish. I took a closer look at the four year old red snapper that we sampled this season. At first, you would think that a four year old red snapper is 20 inches, and at that point, once he is caught, he is kept and taken out of the biomass. But in reality, only 23 percent of the four year old red snapper were in the 20 to 22 inch range. Come to find out that 67 percent of the four year olds were actually in the 23 to 25 inch range, very mature fish that produce some 200 times more eggs than the 17 to 19 inch two year olds that we release. We did not catch or release red snapper less than 15 inches, and so we have no idea of what the one year old class red snapper looks like off the coast.

What amazed me about the age structure of the red snapper this season was the growth rate. Even though the total average weight of the four year old class was 7.2 percent, 4.7 percent for the three year, which is only about a 20 inch fish, 7 percent of sampled fish were – 7 percent of the four year old red snapper grew to 12 to 15 pounds. We had several four year old fish that were 30 inches long.

Now, two years ago I would have sent you a picture and what I said was those 30 year old fish were 10 years old. Who would have thought that they were just four years old? That to me shows an incredible growth rate.

Then my question to the biologists, if we have a 30 inch, 15 pound female that is four years old, or let's say a 30 inch, 20 pound female that's five years old, will she produce the same amount and size of eggs as a 20 pound female that is 10 years old? And the answer simply put was yes. I understand that the work we did aging the red snapper this seasons basically confirms the stock assessment statement that there are a few older fish. It didn't – it did change some estimates from practically non-existent or 1 percent of the biomass to up to 6 percent of the biomass being 10 years or older. Nevertheless, the spawning potential of the five to nine year old red snapper needs to be studied.

The sampling that was done in 2009 shows that 21 percent of the red snapper sampled were five years old or older, and as I mentioned earlier, these are big, mature fish. Add the 74 percent of the large four year olds that's 23 to 30 inches, and I feel that in 2009, you are looking at a totally different biomass than in 2006. Again, council needs to review the 2010 updated red snapper assessment before implementing drastic regulatory changes.

By 2006, the red snapper biomass had doubled, since implementation of 1992 regulations. I believe that's agreed upon. And without a doubt in my mind, there are more red snapper on the reefs of the larger size in 2009 than in 2006. There was a larger biomass of red snapper since 2009 than in any time during the 90's. With the fishing effort continuing to drop, it is unbelievable to me that we have got to the point that council is considering closing huge areas to all bottom fishing.

I do feel that we are catching too many red snapper now, and that some regulatory changes are needed to ensure sustainability. However, I still oppose the interim rule that would shut down the fishery. I mean, we've had a stable stock since the early 80's. Fishing pressure is down. We keep seeing the strong year classes and the snapper are far from a state of collapse at this stage.

A group of concerned Georgia anglers came together and brought forth some alternatives that would have reduced fishing mortality of red snapper. The ideas voted – these alternatives were brought before the council, and after being reviewed at the last council meeting in Charleston, because they were voted against because they simply did not add up to 87 percent reduction that was needed on the red snapper. If the updated red snapper assessment shows that the red snapper biomass is indeed better shape in 2009 than in 2006, and they lower reduction of fishing mortality is needed, then perhaps some of the alternatives can be revisited. I do believe some of them had merit and would further enhance the recovery of red snapper.

I talked to Gregg Waugh downstairs and he – you have the 10 alternatives, as for the different areas, and council wanted some ideas of which would be the preferred alternatives from our standpoint. And if we're looking at these huge closures and it becomes unavoidable, we – we looked at it and we would prefer alternative three. And the reason we would approve – prefer alternative three is because it leaves us just enough bottom to the inshore that we could target other species. Thank you.

Duane Harris: Thank you, Steve. Charlie, questions?

Charlie Phillips: Well, not so much question, but I guess comment. What I basically heard you say, and I'm gonna just try to put it in a nutshell, is the – the age – the fact that we've got so many small fish and the ages are truncated, I guess is the term, is gonna be offset quite a bit by the growth factor of these fish. I think that's

basically what you're saying, and they need to consider those growth factors more than they have considered them. I think that's what I'm hearing you say.

Steve Amick:

Yep. Okay, for fishermen, the fishermen have tried to break it down to a point where I could understand, and I broke it down to basically 1,000 snapper season, okay? We catch 1,000 red snapper. Out of those 1,000 red snapper, we're gonna release 400 of those red snapper because they're less than 20 inches.

And 390 of those snapper are those four year old – four year old fish, and those four year old fish, the idea is they're not just five pounds, they're actually – they average seven pounds. But if you look at the larger size in those four year old fish, they're up in the 10, 12, up to 15 pound range. And those are the fish that are producing lots of – lots of – you know, has a lot of spawning potential. And I – everywhere I turn around, there's a general consensus that all we have is very small fish, the majority are small fish, and that we're barely keeping these – these – the red snapper stocks up at the level they are, because of the size of small fish. And in reality, I think most of the – the – the spawning is done by this large four – four year old class of fish.

Charlie Phillips:

Yeah, that – and that's kind of what I'm saying. We're getting – what you're saying is we're getting a lot more bang for our buck as far as recruitment, because these four pound fish are growing faster than anybody ever though they were growing. And nobody had – and you and the biologists I'm guessing are really surprised to see they were as big as they were, and that may not be – maybe that's not totally accounted for in the models.

Duane Harris:

Question for you with respect to the numbers or the percentages of fish that you released in '06, '07, '08. Were you fishing essentially the same areas during those – all those years? Because you had, I think, '07, you had a fairly large percentage that were undersized and were released compared to '06 and '08. So I just wondered if you changed your areas, if you stole some of Zack's areas or something.

Steve Amick:

No, no. I think what my records show is what – what the scientists and biologists consider a strong year class. And what happens, we – it seems like we have – I'll go back to 2007. We had an 86 percent release rate of two year old fish, basically. Two years later, we have a strong recruitment of the older fish, cause they reached four years old. And if – since we never release the red

snapper before 1992, and we were releasing at the beginning lots of red snapper and seeing very few legal red snapper.

And as the stocks continue to improve, there seem to be a pattern where you had high release rates and we gradually go down to 60, 50 percent. Then you would have a year like we've had the last two years, where you get down in the 40 percent release rate. And then the following years, when I guess the two year old strong class would grow to legal size. And since 2000, to me, according – we have exactly the same pattern three years in a row. You have 2000 to 2009.

The first year, very high release rate of fish in the 17 to 19 inch range, little bits the following year, and the third year, your recruitment of legal fish goes to – goes very high and your release rate drops. And it hasn't been better than 60/40, and it's been – there's been three years at that level. And then again, the following year, once you've caught, you know, a majority of the four year old fish out there, then you start seeing an increase in release mortality – I mean increase in release percentage. And then it gradually goes back – back down to 40 percent.

Duane Harris:

Thank you. Yeah, I wanted to make sure I understood that. The other question I had is when did you first start seeing large numbers of red snapper in the areas that you fished? What year?

Steve Amick:

I fish – I fished the late 70's, '78, '79, and then, you know, even though you think you know everything at that age, but I fished through – through the 80's, okay, and as the years progress, you learn more every year, expanded areas that you fished. And we've seen the numbers of snapper, I think, were greater, wider spread of red snapper on the – let's say between Charleston and Brunswick, Georgia.

We had no size limit. The average size of the fish that were kept were much smaller than what we're seeing landed now, basically what's out there now, because of regulations in 1992. I mean, we would have days where we had lots of red snapper, but they would be all 16, 17 and 18 – 18 inches, okay? And we fished them. The fishing pressure through the 80's was pretty substantial, and we fished – by the end of '89, '90 and '91, you could not find a red snapper off the coast of Georgia. It was really, really bad. If you would have told me, you know, emergency closure in '90, '91, no problem.

Implemented the – you know, the regulations in '92, and – and, you know, we've seen the increase of size of red snapper on the reefs. I can say that it's not even – evenly across the board on all the reefs. There's some areas that we – that used to hold lots of snapper and they're not there like they were in the early 80's and mid 80's. At the same time, I can say that some reefs that had no red snapper, we're seeing snapper there accumulate.

So the overall spread of the red snapper from – and I hate to say the whole area, but basically areas that I fish, it's not exactly the same as it was in the 80's. There's some reefs that are producing the same number of snapper that they always have. But there's some areas that are – like the king mackerel. Supposedly king mackerel is – there's very high levels and there's more – the biomass is in good shape.

And off the coast of Georgia, there's nowhere the amount of king mackerels that there used to be in the late 70's and 80's. They just do not come to the area like they used to, where they – same thing with the bluefish, and I think same thing – some of that same movement is happening now in the red snapper. They are filtering into the – to some areas that they weren't and they're not rebuilding in some areas that they have been in the past. Why – after learning how they spawn, why the growth that we've seen here is not happening off north of Charleston into North Carolina areas, I don't know, if the hydrated eggs are floating with the tides, why they're not catching in areas further up the coast. I don't know, I don't understand.

Duane Harris: One of the people that testified before you said that he could show us areas where we could leave it open to bottom fishing in the areas that are proposed to be closed now, where he rarely encounters a red snapper. Can you do the same thing?

Steve Amick: There is – there's – in those closed areas that you have, it covers – I'll put it like this. The red snapper drops or fishing drops, you could have 10 identical reefs, and for some reason one of those 10 will produce red snapper and the others won't. So, yes, there's areas in those closed areas that you will never catch a red snapper, and if you look on the fish finder or why it's just the way it is. If you have a reef that produces red snapper one year, it will produce, you know, snapper the other year.

Duane Harris: I'm asking that because I'm looking to see if there's another alternative out there where we can close certain areas where you're likely to catch red snapper and have other areas open where you're

very unlikely to catch red snapper, but they could remain open to bottom fishing. Cause as you know, we're trying to prevent, you know, catch and discard mortality on red snapper. So if there are areas out there in the proposed closures where we could let people fish and be pretty confident that they're not gonna encounter red snapper, it's certainly something that the council should look at. So – and I don't know whether you can draw that on a map for us or whether you're willing – he said he would be willing to sit down with us, but I – I'd rather you show me than him.

Steve Amick:

Well, in general sense, you're not gonna catch anything of depth. You have a depth line of 98 feet to 240 feet, and the majority – the majority of the snapper that we catch day in, day out are past 100 foot water. The better spots are in 125, 130 feet of water. I mean, I think that's given. If you draw a line, and I think one of the alternatives is in 98 feet of water, okay, and the further you go inshore, the less red snapper that you will have. I'm not saying there's no red snapper, but – but you can catch – I've caught red snapper at the KC 40 feet of water. But there's no substantial numbers of snapper in shallower water.

Duane Harris:

No, what I'm talking about – I'm not talking about inside the 98 feet. I'm talking about from 98 to 240 feet. Are there reef areas in that area, cause that's essentially one of the proposed closed areas, are there areas in there where we could still allow bottom fishing but where the likelihood of encountering a red snapper is very, very low?

Steve Amick:

Yes, there's areas, but they're so small. We call them bowls. There's areas that the coast is _____ bottom. You'll get into a bowl there, and there's bowls of sea bass and triggerfish, even scamps and gags, and there's bowls that will never, never produce the red snapper. And there's a substantial number of fish in those bowls, but to manage a bowl that might be, you know, a mile long and a third of a mile wide and say, "Yeah, you can fish that area and you'll never catch a red snapper there," sure, but I don't think you can manage such a small scale to – to take that into consider –

Duane Harris:

Well, I appreciate that comment, and you're right. That would be very, very difficult to do. But if there are areas like that out there, and, you know, there's enough people that can swear that that's the situation there and we could – we could have some relatively small areas, and they might get a lot of pressure and there might not be any fish left on them in about, you know, a few months' time, but, you know, at least it allows some bottom fishing to continue to occur, and at the same time protect those red snapper. So, you

know, I'm looking at – we're looking at all the options that are out there, so if there's something like that that we could do, we'd at least consider it. Thanks, Steve. Anything else?

Steve Amick: No. Thank you.

Duane Harris: I appreciate it very much. Is there anybody else that's come in that has – wants to testify that hasn't testified? We'll stay here until 7:00, but I'm just trying to get through –

Duane Harris: Just turn on the microphone, state your name and if you represent an organization, tell us who you represent. If you can divide your testimony into 17A, 17B and 18, that would be great. Never mind. So go ahead and turn on your mic and tell us who you are.

Bob Black 17A: My name is Bob Black. I am a recreational fisherman from St. Simon's Island, Georgia. My son has six pack license and intends to run charters out of the St. Simon's area once he hopefully is on that six year Georgia Southern plan. But we'll find that out soon enough.

Zack Bowen: I have a boat you can buy.

Bob Black: We have two. I have one you can buy. But I just want to make some comments. I don't have the data that Steve had, but I just find – I have problems, as a lot of people do in the areas that I speak with, understanding and accepting the data as it is. And I know that's what SAFMC is having to do, is the Magnuson reads must make decisions based on your best available data, and available is the key word there. I don't think that the data that's available is accurate, okay?

I haven't read all the – all the statistics and rules and, you know, God, it's like Obama's bailout package. I mean, how do you read all that? But I do know that we have caught more red snapper this year than ever before, okay? I've only been offshore fishing for about six years, three years extremely active fishing, kingfish tournaments and things like that. And we've caught them as close as G Reef, which is 26 miles, okay? That's about what G reef is.

Duane Harris: 23.

Bob Black: 23, okay, and caught plenty. So, you know, what that's saying, I don't know, but I am saying it's just made it for a successful day, okay? There's some understandings that I have, one that the data being compared to now is based on assumptions that occurred in

1950's. Okay, and I don't know that you based closing down a billion dollar industry on assumptions based in the 50's. I don't know that the scientific knowledge was there, the fact finding system was there.

It's just there's so many things that weren't there in the 50's. You were going by fisherman's count instead of scientific studies such as Steve has performed. But it's just hard to believe that we're basing shutting down jobs and shutting down the industries in a time where everybody's begging for jobs based on assumptions from the 50's.

One of the things that I'm referring to is I hosted a meeting on two way fish count that Mr. Harris attended and very few other people attended, such as the turnout now. One of the things that I took away from that meeting was the fish that were – are on artificial reefs were not included in the sea door, that they couldn't count fish on artificial reefs. Well, if that is true and that is the case, what are the artificial reefs for? They're there to attract fish and attract the ecosystem that attracts the little fish that bring the big fish.

So another technique that I understand was used is they would lower a diver down into the waters and if a fish didn't swim within 15 feet of that diver, that fish couldn't be counted. Well, if I'm a fish and I see a big black thing with bubbles dropping down out of the sky, I'm not gonna get within 100 feet of that thing. So how is that study accurate? I mean, how is that – how can we base shutting down the industries on studies like that? And I know it gets a little more detailed than that. That's just superficial things that I took out of the meeting that I hosted.

But it's – I just can't feel – one other comment you made, can you show areas that snapper are not present and we can continue to bottom fish. I don't know that offhand, but I will poll all the guys that I fish with in St. Simon's and see if we can get you some numbers, you know, the offshore numbers, and if that's what it's gonna take to help not closing down all the bottom fishing, we'll certainly do that on our end down in the St. Simon's area. But I'm just asking and basically pleading not to shut this industry down.

I mean, it's just – it's not my livelihood. I'm in the commercial laundry business. Your dirty laundry is my business. So – but it's a hobby, it's my son's livelihood. He's a wildlife management major in school. This is gonna fall in with his – with his schooling and with what he's trying to do, run charters in the summer and

manage food plots and manage people's lands in the winter. And if there is no fish to be caught, he don't have a future. I've got a \$100,000.00 boat sitting in my driveway that I won't be able to sail or fish because there's just – I won't have the opportunity to go out there.

So I just want to make those comments. I don't have the data with me. I've tried to keep abreast of what's going on, but I've been studying this for about six months and I've just now figured out all the acronyms that go along with it. So, you know, it's – yeah, exactly. I've got to keep my cheat sheet beside me when I'm reading, cause I keep having to go back and find out which is confusing to Joe Blow Fisherman. You know, it's confusing to people that don't read this government gobbledygook every day to understand and truly know what is reality, you know?

So based on what the law reads and what Magnuson reads, **Samka** is doing what they are required to do. They have X amount of time. If the best available data shows that it's being over fished, then something has to happen within a year. I just don't believe that it's the best available currently, but I just don't believe that the data is accurate and is true to what is actually happening out there. So thank you for your time, and if you have any questions, I'll be willing to answer them.

Duane Harris: Thank you, Bob. Charlie?

Charlie Phillips: No questions. I do thank you for coming.

Duane Harris: Yeah, I appreciate you being here. I appreciate you coming up from St. Simon's, where I live as well. I don't know what study you talked about. You don't get to go yet. We're not through.

Bob Black: Oh, excuse me. See I always get the boot, so –

Duane Harris: No. This study that you referenced with the divers, I'm not familiar with that study. We did a lot of fish counts in the early 70's when we first started building the artificial reefs, and we certainly didn't do them like that and, you know, they were of questionable validity back then. Fish counting and doing fish counting scientifically is a tough thing to do. There's been some science on it, but there wasn't a lot of science when we were doing it. We were trying to just get an idea of what fish were inhabiting the artificial reefs we were building.

But, yes, the red snapper caught from the artificial reefs are counted. If a recreational fisherman catches a red snapper and he's intercepted at the dock, those fish are counted no matter where they come from. It may not say artificial reef. It may say ocean off St. Simon's. It may not, you know, specifically say –

Duane Harris: Yeah, which is HLHA now. You've got to call it by the right name, because it was named after one of our co-conspirators in fisheries management.

Bob Black: Let me write that acronym down. What is it, HL –

Duane Harris: Yeah, HLHA. Stands for Henry Lighton Herford Ansley.

Bob Black: Oh.

Duane Harris: Yeah, he had two middle names, Lighton Herford. Two family names. But in any event, no, those fish are counted, so that's not – that's not correct. But, I mean, as you heard, we're trying our best to come up with something. You're right about the Magnuson Act, you're right about the way it reads right now, and we were notified in July of '08 that red snapper were over fished and going over fishing, and that was based on the sea door 15 study, which is – it's a very comprehensive analysis of the stocks and includes a data workshop and an assessment workshop and then a review workshop, and the review workshop, we bring in three people from the Center for Independent Experts. These are people that could be from England, New Zealand, Canada, wherever, and they are all stock assessment scientists.

And they review the stock assessment and make sure it's correct, the way it was done was correct and there are no problems with it, and then after that, we give it to our scientific and statistical committee of the council and we say, "Okay, the stock assessment sea door has concluded that, you know, the fishery is over fished and undergoing over fishing. Now, look at that and tell us is it based on the best available scientific information and is it usable – is that information usable for management?" And if they can't tell us that, we can't use it, but that's what they told us. So they did study it, and these are some pretty high ranking scientists too.

So, you know, it's a pretty rigorous process. I know people don't believe the data and that's not unusual. I've been involved in fisheries management now for going on 40 years, and every time something's proposed that people don't like, it's all data. It's always based on, you know, it's not good data, and it's just the

way it always has been and it's probably never gonna change. We would like to think that over time we can get the data to the point where the fishermen actually believe it.

And I was in Washington last week, testifying before a Congressional committee, and the guy that's the science director for the National Marine Fisheries Service, there has been a bump. Congress has given _____ more money to do science, and he said a lot of that money is gonna be spent in the southeast. And he heard my testimony, where I said, "We don't have enough stock assessment scientists. We don't get enough stock assessments. Fishermen don't believe the data. You know, we've got to do better and we've got to get to the point where the fishermen trust the counts, and the trust isn't there anymore, and right now it's at the lowest level it's ever been."

Bob Black: Well –

Duane Harris: We understand that.

Bob Black: It's trusting government period, across the board.

Duane Harris: That is – I know, that is hard.

Bob Black: And that's where I'm coming from, is – you know, and I'm not a scientist by any means, but I just – I know what I've seen come back to the dock this year, whether it's a four year old fish or a 40 year old fish, and I'm looking at data downstairs where you have five fish out of thousands counted that made it to the 50 year mark. Now, like Courtland said downstairs, there's probably five people in China that live to be 125 too, you know? So how can you – can you – you've got five fish out here out of thousands that made it to 50. I hope I live to be 100 and I'll be a minority, you know?

Duane Harris: That's only five over 22 years of age.

Bob Black: Okay, it was over 22, right.

Duane Harris: Five out of 1,200 fish were over 22.

Bob Black: That just seems like five of them got lucky, you know, and lived. I hope we get lucky and live that long. So that just – it seems like – I don't know if – my thinking, we base shutting stuff down on only five fish that we found at that age group and 1,200 at the other age group in the sizes that we can bring back to the dock.

Duane Harris: Well, it was a little bit more complicated than that, and it was also more complicated than back projecting those populations, those biomasses in those early years. You're right, that's back projected based on a model, and people don't believe that. It's typically the way models are done in fisheries management. They do back project when they don't have the data as to what they think the biomass of the population was back then.

But that's a very small part of what goes into this stock assessment, and so, you know, you look at it all together when the stock assessment is completed and determining whether the fishery is over fished and undergoing over fishing. All I think you have to look at in red snapper is that most of the fish that are caught are three and four years old. When you've got a fish that lives to be over 50 years old and you're catching most of those fish at three and four years old, there's something wrong with that.

Bob Black: But you've got to trust that it can live to be 50 years old.

Duane Harris: No, you're right.

Bob Black: There's people that can live to be 120.

Duane Harris: But we know what the structure, the age structure of a population of a healthy fish population should be, and it doesn't look like this, where it drops off to almost nothing, and that's the problem with it. If you saw some kind of a bell shaped curve with a pretty – I mean, you'd see a lot of fish that are 10 and 12 years old, and then as you get down to those older age classes, it drops off pretty dramatically. That's typical in a healthy age population of a fish, whether it's spotted sea trout, red fish or whatever. That's what – that's what we look for as fisheries managers, and we don't see that in red snapper in any way, shape or form. So that's – that – if you don't look at anything else, you look at the age structure of your population, you say there's some problems with this fishery. How do we address it, how much do we have to, you know, cut back on fishing and the total kill is – you know, that's a matter for the model, and that's what it's proposed –

Bob Black: But you also see on that model where up in the 50's we're up in the thousands of fish, but since the 70's, it's leveled off.

Duane Harris: Well, it did. It has leveled off, and I think as I was telling some people earlier, Roy Crabtree I think said it best. He's the, you know, regional administrator for National Marine Fisheries

Service, and they asked him that at one of our meetings that we have at every council meeting, where he and I sit up there and just have, you know, a give and take question and answer session. And what he said is this is a fishery because it's fast growing and because it does mature – the sexual maturity occurs fairly early on. It's rocked it all, at a fairly stable but low level for a long time now.

Bob Black: Low compared to the 50's.

Duane Harris: Low compared – well, low compared to even in the 60's and 70's, even, where you saw a lot more biomass in the population and certainly much better data than, you know, the one back projected to that. Those were actual data. But, you know, there has been a bump up in recent years, and that's because of the good year classes that have been put out by these fish. But yet you also see a contracted population. Used to be a lot of red snapper down south Florida, a lot of them in North Carolina, they don't exist there now.

And so that's what happens in an over fished stock, it contracts. And so most of the red snapper are off Georgia and northeast Florida right now. A few off South Carolina, but most of them are concentrated off our state and off northeast Florida. So, you know, it – when you take all that into account, as fishery managers, we say – I mean, we believe the stock assessment because it's – it's accurate, we believe, with respect to the over fishing and over fished.

What you do about it is an entirely different matter, and that's where you've got to figure out, well, how many fish can you remove from this fishery and end over fishing as the law requires, and that's – that's a little bit trickier than just saying it's over fished and undergoing over fishing.



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Steve Amick

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

P.O. Box 30975 SAV, GA 31410

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Amicks Deep Sea Fishing

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ZACK BOWEN

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

(912) 898-8760

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

32 Bull River Bluff Dr. SAV, GA 31410

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Bob Black

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

409 Whitfield Ave. St. Simons Island GA 31522

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Holly Binns

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

850-322-7845

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2107 Mulberry Blvd, Tallahassee, FL 32303

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Pew Environment Group

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Alan Collins

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912-844-2840

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

7333 Thomas AVE Sav, Ga 31406

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Miss Judy Charters / Right hook charters

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Franklin L. Clatt

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912 748-4854

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

117 N. Rogers St Pooler GA 31322

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

CS Carroll

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

10 Ocean Science Cr., Savannah, GA, 31408

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Grays Reef NMS

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Dawn Franco

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912-266-4156

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

One Conservation Way, Brunswick GA 31520

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Deidra Jeffcoat

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912-897-2478

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

124 Palmetto drive Say. Ga 31410

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Miss Judy Charters

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Kathy Knowlton

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

GADNR

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

F.E. Miles III

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

P.O. Box 1740 Tybee Island GA. 136 Lewis Ave.

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Zero Gravity Dive Center

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Michelle Owen

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941-309-5397

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

1990 Main St Suite 750 Sarasota FL 34236

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Environmental Defense Fund

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO

*Add to mailing list



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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

COURTLAND BARBCKOCK

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

843-301-4408

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

36 BLACK GUM LANE Hilton Head, SC 29926

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE) Pooler, GA	DATE OF MEETING November 5, 2009
---	--

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT) Sera Drevenak	TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE) (910) 685-5705
--	---

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE) 25 Corbett St Bolivia, NC 28422	
---	--

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE) Pew
--

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT? (PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY IF AVAILABLE)	Amendment 17 A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO
	Amendment 17 B	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO
	Amendment 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE) Pooler, GA		DATE OF MEETING November 5, 2009			
YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT) DAVID NEWLIN		TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE) 912-7564573			
MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE) P.O. Box 336 Richmond Hill Ga, 31324					
BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE) Capt. David L. Newlin, Georgia Hunting and Fishing					
DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT? (PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY IF AVAILABLE)	Amendment 17 A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO
	Amendment 17 B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO
	Amendment 18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

J. Scott Farmer

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912 312 2498

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

53 Cranston Dr West Richmond Hill Ga 31324

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

HANK Braner

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

912-764-5718

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

603 Pear Orchard Lane Statesboro GA 30458

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Self and other fishermen

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE) Pooler, GA		DATE OF MEETING November 5, 2009	
YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT) JACKIE SOMMER		TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)	
MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE) 10 Tomochichi Lane SAUANNAT 31411			
BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE) My Self			
DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT? (PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY IF AVAILABLE)	Amendment 17 A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
	Amendment 17 B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
	Amendment 18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE) Pooler, GA		DATE OF MEETING November 5, 2009	
YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT) Capt Jay Helmer		TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE) 912 897-4921	
MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE) P.O. Box 30771 Savannah GA 31410			
BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE) Miss Judy Clute			
DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT? (PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY IF AVAILABLE)	Amendment 17 A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Amendment 17 B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Amendment 18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

PUBLIC COMMENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

Snapper Grouper Amendments 17A, 17B and 18

LOCATION OF MEETING (CITY & STATE)

Pooler, GA

DATE OF MEETING

November 5, 2009

YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

James B. Newman

TELEPHONE NUMBER (& AREA CODE)

(912) 727-2440

MAILING ADDRESS (PLEASE INCLUDE STREET OR BOX NO., CITY, STATE, & ZIP CODE)

76 Demeris CRK. Rd. Richmond Hill, GA 31324

BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION YOU REPRESENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Self

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT?
(PLEASE ATTACH A WRITTEN COPY
IF AVAILABLE)

Amendment 17 A

YES

NO

Amendment 17 B

YES

NO

Amendment 18

YES

NO