

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE**

**Marina Inn at Grande Dunes  
Myrtle Beach, SC**

**September 13-14, 2016**

### **Snapper Grouper Committee:**

Dr. Michelle Duval, Chair  
Anna Beckwith  
Zack Bowen  
Mark Brown  
Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Doug Haymans  
Tim Griner  
Dewey Hemilright

Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair  
Mel Bell  
Chester Brewer  
Chris Conklin  
Ben Hartig  
Charlie Phillips  
Tony DiLernia

### **Council Members:**

Dr. Wilson Laney

LTJG Amy Hockenberry

### **Council Staff:**

Gregg Waugh  
Dr. Brian Cheuvront  
Chip Collier  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Kim Iverson  
Julie O'Dell  
Amber Von Harten

John Carmichael  
Myra Brouwer  
Mike Collins  
John Hadley  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Roger Pugliese  
Julia Byrd

### **Participants/Observers:**

Dr. Katie Siegfried  
Nik Mehta  
Monica Smit-Brunello  
Erika Burgess  
ASAC Jeff Radonski  
Dr. Joey Ballenger  
Sam Rauch

Rick DeVactor  
Dr. Jack McGovern  
Jocelyn D'Ambrosio  
Leann Bosarge  
Dr. Marcel Reichert  
Walter Bubley

Addition Observers Attached

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Mariana Inn at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Tuesday afternoon, September 13, 2016, and was called to order by Chairman Michelle Duval.

DR. DUVAL: We are going to go ahead and call the Snapper Grouper Committee to order. Just to review, the members of the committee are myself, Jessica McCawley, Anna Beckwith, Mel Bell, Tim Griner, Dr. Crabtree, Ben Hartig, Doug Haymans, Charlie Phillips, Chris Conklin, Zack Bowen, Mark Brown, Chester Brewer, Dewey Hemilright with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and Tony DiLernia with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

The first item on our agenda is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any modifications to the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda stands approved. The next item on our agenda is Approval of our June 2016 Committee minutes. Are there any modifications to the minutes? They were quite a pleasure to read. Seeing none, the minutes stand approved. The next item on our agenda is the Status of Commercial Catches Versus Quotas for Species Under Annual Catch Limits, and I'm going to turn that over to Mr. DeVictor.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. As at each meeting SERO will go over the commercial landings and compare them to the ACLs. In the first briefing book, it's under Tab 7, Attachment 1. We put landings in there, and, as we do each time, we revise the landings, and Myra has that up on the screen now, and those are the latest landings, as of last Friday, and so hopefully you can see that pretty well.

I will just go down and highlight some species. Black sea bass, 31 percent of the ACL was met, 244,000 pounds. Blueline tilefish, if you recall, that was reopened on July 13 through Regulatory Amendment 25. Then that closed down on August 30, and 113 percent of the ACL was met. Golden tilefish hook and line, 66 percent of the ACL was met. Golden tilefish longline, that closed on March 15, and that just went 2 percent over, and so 102 percent.

Moving down, gray triggerfish, again, there is two seasons now. The first one closed down on April 2 and then we reopened that on June 13, which carried over into the second season, which starts July 1. The second season, we were at 29 percent. Again, these are as of September 9. Then you can see, on the right-hand side, that you can compare it to when we closed some of these species last year, and you can compare where we are this year. Jacks, that closed on August 9. We had high landings of almaco jacks, I believe, on that, which really drove that closure, and so that closed, again, on August 9, and so 109. Last year, it closed on June 23. Snowy grouper, that closed on June 14, and that's 116 percent.

Moving down to greater amberjack, 88 percent has been met so far. Vermilion snapper, of course, we have the split season. The trip limit was just reduced from 1,000 to 500 pounds gutted weight, and that happened on August 28. We're at 73 percent of vermillion snapper the second season. Finally, yellowtail snapper, Regulatory Amendment 25 changed the start date of the fishing year, and so that changed to August 1, and so that's why we are only at 8 percent, and that concludes my report of commercial landings.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Rick. Are there any questions for Rick about the status of commercial landings? I guess, in terms of greater amberjack, are we a little ahead of where we have been in the past, compared to last year? I might not be looking this the right way. I know we had to close

in January, with the fishing year ending on February 28, and then reopen, and it seems like the fishery is moving a little bit more quickly this year than maybe it has in years past, but I just didn't know.

MR. DEVICTOR: For greater amberjack, we are indeed ahead of last year, because last year, and this is a March start date, and that closed on January 22 for greater amberjack, and now we're at 88 percent of the ACL.

DR. DUVAL: Seeing no other questions for Rick, then our next agenda item is the Status of Amendments Under Formal Review, and we have a few. Rick is going to take us through that as well.

MR. DEVICTOR: I sure will. Thank you. Starting off with Regulatory Amendment 25, that increased the commercial ACL for blueline tilefish to around 87,000, and it also changed the recreational ACL to also around 87,000. It changed the blueline tilefish bag limit to three fish per person per day, and with the May through August season. It increased the black sea bass bag limit to seven fish per person per day, and, again, as I mentioned before, it modified the fishing year for yellowtail snapper to start on August 1.

The regulatory amendment was submitted to NMFS on March 4. The proposed rule published on June 1, and the comment period closed on June 16 for the proposed rule. The blueline tilefish actions were effective July 13, and the rest of the actions were effective on August 12, and so that's Regulatory Amendment 25.

Amendment 36, and, again, this would implement spawning SMZs in the South Atlantic, the amendment was submitted on August 30, and we're working on the proposed rule right now. Finally, Regulatory Amendment 16, which would specify locations where fishing could occur with black sea bass during November 1 through April 30 each year and also enhance the line markings for the black sea bass sector, the regulatory amendment was submitted on March 4 to NMFS. The proposed rule published on August 11, and the comment period closed on September 12, and so that just closed this Monday, and we're going to be working on the final rule. We are working on it right now. You can go on regulations.gov. We received thirteen comments on the proposed rule, and so we are reviewing those comments right now and responding to those in the final rule.

DR. DUVAL: I know that I have had questions from fishermen regarding Regulatory Amendment 16 and whether or not some of those areas that are currently closed to black sea bass pot fishing would be available to be open by November 1, and I have tried to explain to folks that it takes you all some time, depending on the number of comments, to respond to those comments and include them in the final rule, and then the final rule package has to go through Headquarters. Do you all anticipate being able to do that by November 1?

DR. CRABTREE: The good news is I think the bi-op is on track, and that won't be what slows us down. The problem we have now is the comment period ended on September 12. For the rule to be effective on November 1, it would normally have to publish thirty days in advance of that, because there is a thirty-day cooling off period. That means we would have to have a final rule to the Federal Register by October 1, which is going to be extremely difficult to achieve.

Now, we can request waiving of some or all of the cooling-off period, and I expect we will have those conversations. That is typically a decision made in Washington, but we will talk to them about that, but we would need to waive some of that cooling-off period, I think, in order to make the timeline, and so we will do the best we can, but I can't promise you anything.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Roy. That's appreciated. Any questions for Rick regarding Status of Amendments Under Review? Seeing none, we're going to move right into our next agenda item, which is Snapper Grouper Amendment 37. This is hogfish, and this is Attachments 2a through 2c in your briefing book, and I think the first item that we're going to go over is comments on the DEIS, and we have Nik Mehta from Regional Office who is going to take care of that for us.

MR. MEHTA: Good afternoon. The comment period for the DEIS for Amendment 37 ended on August 1, and we received a total of forty comments, thirty-eight from individuals and two federal agencies, including the EPA. There are twelve actions, and so I'm not going to go over every single action, but, basically, a lot of these comments came from the Keys, from fishers in the Keys, and there was general opposition to basically just that there was so many actions in this amendment.

There was also a lot of agreement, consensus, on, yes, hogfish does need protection, and so we did get some comments that said that, yes, this is a good thing and we do need to rebuild the stock. We had comments from the Department of the Interior that also supported the rebuilding plan and also supported the size limit actions and bag limit actions and the partial closure.

Some of the notable comments, for example, were increasing the commercial and recreational minimum size limit for Georgia through North Carolina and the Florida Keys/East Florida stocks of hogfish, and this is Action 8 -- There were a lot of comments that opposed the increase to sixteen inches. A lot of folks preferred to go to fourteen inches, but most of them opposed the sixteen-inch size limit increase.

For the commercial trip limit action, and this is Action 9, many individuals were opposed to the preferred commercial trip of twenty-five pounds. They would have rather seen a hundred-pound trip limit. Then, for the bag limits, again, there was a lot of opposition to decreasing it, especially in the Florida Keys, from five per person to one per person. They said they could live with maybe three per person, but there was opposition to reducing it from five to one.

Then, Action 11 for the recreational fishing season, many individuals were opposed. This one, remember, when the DEIS went out, the council -- We had gone out with the recreational fishing season that was smaller. Since that time, we added another preferred alternative, and so now there is a six-month season that it would be closed, which means that it would be open for six months, and so hopefully that will take care of some of the opposition we had for this action. Madam Chair, that concludes my report. If you have any questions, please let me know.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Nik. Are there any questions for Nik on the comments that were received? Okay. Seeing none, we will move on to an overview of the amendment, and this is Attachment 2b in your briefing book, and we don't have a decision document for this. This is simply the final DEIS or the FEIS, I should say, that Myra is going to walk us through, but I'm assuming you're going to start with Chapter 2, maybe, to walk us through the actions? Just let us know where you're starting in the document.

MS. BROUWER: First, let me give you a little bit of background. I hadn't intended to walk you through each of the actions, because as Nikhil mentioned, there are twelve of them, but let me remind you of the timeline that we're under. This amendment is an environmental impact statement. The final environmental impact statement is what you have in your briefing book.

Because the stock in Florida and the Florida Keys was found to be overfished and undergoing overfishing, there is a statutory deadline that the agency has to meet, and the management measures for that stock need to be in place by February 17 of 2017, and so, in order to meet that timeline, the amendment needs to be submitted to the agency by September 23, and so that's next week, and so that's where we are.

We are putting the finishing touches on the amendment, and what I can do is go action-by-action and basically just read over the action and make sure everybody is familiar with the preferreds, and there are a couple of items that we do need to take care of, and I have included some draft language to facilitate you making the motions that we need the committee to make, and so, if that's okay -- Okay. This is Attachment 2b in your briefing book. I apologize that I don't have the PDF page that corresponds to each of these actions.

DR. DUVAL: It's PDF page 30, if you're on Action 2.1.

MS. BROUWER: The first action in the amendment modifies the fishery management unit to account for the fact that genetic information that was published last year identifies three genetically-distinct stocks of hogfish, one that is under the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council jurisdiction on the West Florida Shelf, and then, on the Atlantic, the Georgia/North Carolina stock, which is from the North Carolina/Virginia border south to the Georgia/Florida border, and then the Florida Keys and East Florida Stock, which is the east coast of Florida and the Florida Keys.

This action sets the boundary between the two different councils at a line just south of Cape Sable and running due west. That is your preferred Sub-Alternative 2c. In the document, we clarify that, as far as stock assessment purposes, the landings are still being tracked the way they have been tracked, using the boundary line between Monroe County and Collier County as the demarcation, in order to track the landings.

The preferred alternative was brought to you through some consultation with the Florida FWC law enforcement. They suggested this would be a good demarcation point, because it also happens to be an existing boundary for another state regulation. I believe it defines the pompano permit management zone or something along those lines, and so are there any questions from the committee on Action 1 and the preferred?

MR. HARTIG: I had some questions from some fishermen, and it's a natural question. If they have a South Atlantic permit and you change the boundary for hogfish, they thought they might be able to fish there, but, obviously, to me, since we have our Gulf and South Atlantic defined by a different line, even if you fished up there, you would be in violation if you did not have the Gulf permit.

MS. BROUWER: I believe that is correct, and I should also point out that the Gulf of Mexico Council has gone forward and made this change to the regulations as well, to match that boundary as well, and I don't know if Leann might want to say something about that.

MS. BOSARGE: Yes, we have that same line as our preferred.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions or comments on this? I appreciate the extra language that's been added with regard to the demarcation of that line and the reason for it and knowing that that boundary at Cape Sable, Point Sable, is inside of the genetic dividing line at the Monroe/Collier County line that was used, and so, thank you, Myra. Moving on.

MS. BROUWER: Moving on to Action 2, this is just the specification of your MSY for each of the two stocks, and recall that the assessment, SEDAR 37, was accepted as best available for the Florida stock. For the Georgia through North Carolina stock, the SSC recommended using the ORCS approach, which is Level 4 of the ABC control rule, and that level is the methodology that is used for arriving at an ABC for stocks that are not assessed, and so it uses landings only. You have the preferred, and I don't know if there's any questions on this particular action from the committee.

Moving on to Action 3, this one specifies the MSST, and your preferred was to set it at 75 percent of SSB MSY for both stocks. Again, your rationale there was that hogfish happens to be one of those species that has a low natural mortality. Recall that in Regulatory Amendment 21 that you decided to change the definition of MSST for species that have a low natural mortality. Any questions on Action 3?

DR. DUVAL: I am not seeing any.

MS. BROUWER: Action 4 establishes the ACL, and this is one of the first actions that I am going to need some clarification from the committee. This action does not only establish the ACL, but it also specifies the level of optimum yield, which is missing from the title of the action, but, fortunately, we captured, in the discussion of this action, the fact that OY needs to also be specified, and so what I'm looking for from the committee is a draft motion to add specification of optimum yield to Action 4 and also Action 6, which is the action that specifies the ACL and OY for Florida.

DR. DUVAL: All right. Is everybody clear on that? We would need a motion from the committee to specify OY for Action 4 and Action 6. We have captured that in the discussion, but it just is not included in the title of the action, and so we just need that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It's also in the actual alternative, but it just could be better described.

DR. DUVAL: There is a draft motion on the screen that Myra is magnifying, for those of us with old eyes, to read. Mel.

**MR. BELL: Madam Chair, I move that we revise the titles of Actions 4 and 6 in Amendment 37 to include specification of optimum yield.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? Seconded by Jessica. The motion reads: Revise the titles of Actions 4 and 6 in Amendment 37 to include specification of optimum yield. Is there

any discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing no opposition, that motion stands approved.**

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I have a question for Myra. Myra, in not just the titles, but would you also like optimum yield added under Alternative 2, the main body of Alternative 2, establish an ACL and OY for the Georgia/North Carolina stock and then the same thing for the -- The same thing would be under Action 6, in the actual Alternative 2.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and I guess this is where I don't know if it's necessary to get a motion, since the sub-alternatives already capture OY. I don't know, and if the committee wants to include that language in the motion, that's fine, unless there is an issue or it's not clear that we also intend to add OY under the main body of Preferred Alternative 2.

DR. DUVAL: Monica, do you think we're okay with adding that, as per possibly the Chair's editorial license?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, I think that would be fine.

DR. DUVAL: Is everyone cool with that? I am not seeing any action around this table whatsoever, and so silence means yes. Okay.

MS. BROUWER: One more thing before we leave Action 4. The other, and I don't want to say issue, but the other item of concern, item of business, that we need to dispense with for this amendment is it is not clear in the motions that the committee has made or in the minutes that the specification of the ABC for the Georgia/North Carolina stock needs to be in pounds, whereas, for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock, it needs to be specified in numbers of fish.

Recall that the reason we solicited input from your SSC actually was because there was concern that, since you're also changing the minimum size limit, that was going to impact your specification of ACL in pounds for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock, and so the SSC reviewed two different methodologies. I am just giving you a little background, to make sure everybody remembers what we did.

The SSC reviewed two methodologies that were proposed to account for this. One was proposed by the Regional Office staff and the other one by council staff, and they differed very slightly, but the SSC recommended using the methodology that was put forth by the council staff, which part of the process is to utilize the projected ABCs from the stock assessment in numbers of fish. This was done in order to preserve the way that you've chosen to allocate between the sectors, commercial and recreational, to make sure that we have preserved those allocations.

For that reason, the ABC for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock needs to inherently be specified in numbers of fish, and so this is sort of a technicality, but something that is important, because the Regional Office needs to draft the codified text, and the codified text needs to specify that total ACL in numbers of fish for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock, but in pounds for the Georgia/North Carolina stock. I hope I didn't confuse everybody with all of that. Are there any questions?

DR. DUVAL: Does everybody understand where we are on this? This is just a piece of technical information that we need to clear up. Myra, do you have a draft motion available, just to make sure we don't have to go all the way around the horn on this?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, I have a draft motion here for you to consider, and it would take care of both stocks. Again, Georgia/North Carolina hogfish, the total ACL is in pounds. The Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish, the total ACL is in numbers of fish.

**MR. PHILLIPS: Madam Chair, I move that we specify the total ACL for the Georgia/North Carolina stock of hogfish in pounds whole weight and specify the ABC and the total ACL for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of hogfish in numbers of fish.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to the motion? It's seconded by Mel. The motion reads: Specify the total ACL for the Georgia/North Carolina stock of hogfish in pounds whole weight. Specify the ABC and total ACL for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of hogfish in numbers of fish. Is there any discussion on this motion? I think Myra has laid out quite accurately why we need to do this. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Thank you for that. Moving on to Action 5, this is the one that establishes the rebuilding for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock. Your preferred is in line with what the SSC recommended, which uses ten years to rebuild, and so you've got projections through 2027, and it does that with a seventy-two-and-a-half percent probability of rebuilding success. You see, under the body of the preferred alternative, that it shows what your SSB at MSY is going to be, and the first year of management being 2017. Any questions there?

DR. DUVAL: I am not seeing any.

MS. BROUWER: Action 6, this one deals with Florida/Florida Keys hogfish ACL and OY, as we discussed previously, and so there is really no action to be taken here. Again, you are just adopting the projections from the stock assessment for that stock, in order to rebuild it in ten years. Are there questions? Action 7 defines the recreational annual catch target for both stocks. Here, your preferred is to set that level at 85 percent of the recreational ACL.

DR. DUVAL: Any questions? No. Let's keep moving.

MS. BROUWER: Action 8 increases the minimum size limit for the Georgia through North Carolina stock and the Florida Keys stock. Your preferred for the northern stock is seventeen inches fork length. Your preferred for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock is sixteen inches fork length. Are there questions?

Action 9 deals with trip limits. The trip limit for Georgia and the Carolinas would be 500 pounds whole weight per trip, and the trip limit for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock would be twenty-five pounds whole weight per trip.

Action 10 deals with the bag limits for Georgia/North Carolina. Your preferred is two fish per person per day. For Florida, it's one fish per person per day. Action 11 establishes that recreational fishing season just for the Florida/Florida Keys hogfish stock. You did discuss possibly doing it for Georgia/North Carolina, and that is reflected in the record. There is a rejected alternative that



is in Appendix A. Currently, you have two preferreds, as Nikhil mentioned earlier. As of the DEIS, you only had May/June as your preferred, and then, in June, you added July through October, and so your recreational season for hogfish on the east coast of Florida would run from May 1 through October 31. Are there questions?

Lastly, Action 12 simply deals with the accountability measures. Since we are splitting the stock into two, we had to include an action to make sure that the AMs were applicable to each of those two stocks, but, other than that, nothing is any different, and that wraps it up for Amendment 37, and so what I would need at this point, after you discuss it, is a motion to submit it to the agency for final review.

DR. DUVAL: If there are no questions or anything for Myra with regard to Amendment 37, then I would need a motion from the committee to approve it for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate and all that other good stuff that we do when we're taking final action on something.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Madam Chair, I move that we approve Snapper Grouper Amendment 37 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document/codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? Second by Charlie. Any discussion? The motion reads: Approve Snapper Grouper Amendment 37 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document/codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text. Any discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.** That completes our work on Amendment 37.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just a note, Myra. The codified text was sent around to everybody. I don't believe it was in the briefing book, but I know it got sent around to all council members, and so you had that before you as well.

DR. DUVAL: It was posted with several other items of codified text as well, and so everybody should have it.

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so just one more thing before we leave this amendment. Another item that you received was a draft council rationale for each of the actions, and this is the first amendment for which we are also including a section in that chapter that talks about how each of the actions addresses specific strategies or actions in the vision blueprint, and so, if you've had a chance to look at that and you have any suggestions for how to improve it or any changes, please let me know.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Myra, and I really appreciate you all going through and doing that. I thought it looked really good. All right. The next item of business on our agenda is Snapper Grouper Amendment 41, mutton snapper, and this is Attachment 3a through 3c in your briefing book. I guess we will start with a Review of Public Hearing Comments.

MS. BROUWER: Amendment 41 addresses mutton snapper. We took this amendment to public hearings in August, and there is an attachment, Attachment 3a, that details the various comments on each of the actions, and so I will just quickly go through that. We had three hearings. In Dania Beach, there were eighteen people who attended, and thirteen folks provided comments. We had a hearing in Duck Key, and we had thirteen folks that came. Six people provided comment at that meeting. Then our Key West meeting was very well attended. We had fifty-six people attend, and nineteen provided comments on this amendment. We also had a webinar that, unfortunately, nobody gave public comment then, but we did hold an informational session and a Q&A online.

For Action 1, and that's the MSY, there were really no comments. There was one person who supported the preferred. Your Action 2, the MSST, the Snapper Grouper AP supported your preferred revision of the ACLs and optimum yield. The AP didn't have any recommendations. There were folks that felt that the ACL should be set below the ABC and that the council should consider discards in setting ACLs.

For Action 4, which deals with the ACT, there were some comments in regards to the proposed ACT is now okay, but the council should consider stepping down from the ABC further, so that there is no need to actually set an ACT. Here again, the Snapper Grouper AP didn't have any specific recommendations.

For the modification of the minimum size limit, there were some folks that were in support of no action, but the majority, twenty-four people, spoke in support of increasing the minimum size limit to the proposed eighteen inches for mutton snapper. That seemed to be okay, and this went across recreational and commercial. Some people expressed concern about a possible increase in discard mortality with an increase in the minimum size limit. There were suggestions of even a larger minimum size, and there were also suggestions for increasing the size limit just for the commercial sector, and the Snapper Grouper AP supported your preferred of increasing the minimum size limit to eighteen inches.

For the designation of the spawning season for regulatory purposes, the Snapper Grouper AP recommended no action there. Your preferred is to designate April through June as the spawning months, and there was some support from commenters for that.

As far as the recreational bag limit, currently it's ten fish per person per day included in the ten-snapper aggregate limit, and some folks supported the three fish per person per day year-round bag limit, which is currently your preferred. There were some commenters, eleven of them, that supported a decrease to five fish per person per day, and I should mention here that this was what the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission approved last week, was was a recreational bag limit of five per person per day year-round for mutton snapper.

There was some support for even smaller bag limits, down to two per person per day. There was some concern about recreational sales being very high under the current bag limit, and we have heard this a good bit. Then there were just people that said that year-round bag limits are better for Florida, because there is lots of vacationers and seasonal limits could affect their plans and have economic repercussions. The Snapper Grouper AP has recommended a three fish per person per day as well.

Commercial trip limit, currently, there is a restriction only during the spawning months, which right now is just May and June. The commercial sector is restricted to ten fish per person per day or per person per day per trip, whichever is more restrictive, and my understanding is that per trip limitation was included originally to discourage multi-day trips, people keeping their trip limit on multi-day trips, but my understanding is that that doesn't really happen very often anyway.

The preferred right now is to establish a commercial trip limit of 300 pounds during the regular season, and so that would be during the months that mutton snapper are not spawning, and the FWC actually selected a 500-pound trip limit. To be consistent with what you have selected for the recreational sector, your preferred for commercial is also to have a three fish per person per day possession limit during the spawning months. Again, the FWC, last week, passed a five per person per day for the commercial sector as well.

There were just two people that were in support of a commercial trip limit of 500 pounds, but it doesn't look like commercial fishermen in the Keys are catching that much per trip anyway. There was actually quite a few comments from the commercial sector on the trip limit. I am not going to go over all of them. The Snapper Grouper AP recommended no action.

There was a lot of opposition, in particular, to reducing the possession limit during the spawning months, and, when we go through the amendment and I show you the trends in landings, it looks like actually most of the commercial landings are coming from the spawning months, even though there is some limitation to the commercial harvest. There are a few other general comments pertaining to the general management of mutton snapper, but nothing specific to the action, and so I would be happy to take any questions or comments from the committee.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions or comments for Myra? I also wanted to give Jessica and the Florida folks a chance to chime in on this, given all the mutton workshops that they did down there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I can certainly answer questions. There were only three workshops done by the South Atlantic and FWC together, but we held three additional workshops. They were in St. Pete, Stuart, and Key Largo. We have the results of those as well. We submitted to you guys a document that looks like this, which was the summary of public comments since our June commission meeting.

Then there was another lengthier packet that had the Florida Institute of Technology logo on the front, and these are all of the letters that we had received from various organizations, and so the council did not receive some of the same letters that we received. We received letters from ASA, West Palm Beach Fishing Club, IGFA, Guy Harvey, Marco Sportfishing Club, Tropical Anglers Club, and so there were a number that we got that maybe you guys didn't, and so we prepared a packet for you guys as well, and I am certainly willing to answer any questions, whether it's now or as we go through the document, about what happened at the workshops, even those additional workshops, or what happened at the commission meeting, and we have a copy of the presentation for the commission meeting that we presented as well.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Jessica. Are there any questions for Myra or Jessica right now, just of a general nature? I think, as we go through the decision document, we can just -- If there are specific questions about decisions, I think Jessica and Myra can answer those as we go through it.

All right. I guess we will be using the decision document, which is Attachment 3b in your briefing book.

MS. BROUWER: The decision document is basically I take Chapter 4 of the amendment and merge it with Chapter 2, so that you can have all the wording of the alternatives and whatever analyses to date are included in the amendment. First of all, I will just make sure that everybody is happy with the purpose and need. The purpose for the amendment is to update the acceptable biological catch, annual catch limit, maximum sustainable yield, minimum stock size threshold, optimum yield, and revise management measures for the mutton snapper component of the snapper grouper fishery, based on the results of the most recent stock assessment.

The need for the amendment is to base mutton snapper management measures on the best scientific information available, in order to achieve and maintain optimum yield and to prevent overfishing, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects. Is there any desire to edit or change anything in the purpose and need at this time?

DR. DUVAL: I am not seeing any hands raised around the table, and so I think we can probably move on.

MS. BROUWER: Action 1 specifies the MSY. The wording here is similar to what you had for hogfish. Your MSY for mutton snapper is up on your screen. It would be 912,500 pounds. There is really no specific action that the committee needs to take at this time, and so, unless there are any questions, I will move on to Action 2.

Action 2 specifies the MSST. Recall that, I believe it was in June of this year, you approved a motion to give staff editorial license to make edits to the no action alternatives, at least for snapper grouper amendments, and so I have noted our proposed edits, but you do not have to approve the edits for the no action alternatives, and so I will just mention that. As we go through the document, I will note where we have made any changes, and so here is an example.

We are trying to figure out an approach to be consistent with the use of acronyms in our amendments, and so, for that reason, we've sort of gone back and forth a little bit, but certainly we don't want to spend a lot of time approving edits to acronyms or spelling things out. Other than that, I believe there is really no action the committee needs to take for Action 2. As I said, just note the edits that we've made and any consideration of public comment.

Action 3 revises the ACLs and the OY for mutton snapper. Again, we have proposed some changes to Alternative 1, which you do not have to approve. However, there are some changes that we are proposing for your Preferred Alternative 2, and it has to do with just clarifying that the jurisdictional allocation between the councils is actually part of the no action alternative, and so that statement was moved to Alternative 1. Your preferred continues to be ACL is equal to OY and is equal to the ABC. For this one, we would need a motion for you to approve those suggested edits.

**MR. HAYMANS: Because the door is open for accepting the suggested edits of the IPT and that motion, I will simply say that we are schizophrenic across the plans and the way we deal with acronyms and whatnot, and so, even within this plan, if we abbreviate ACL in the title, but then we scratch it out in the actions or the alternatives below it, it doesn't make sense to**

**even have these, and so, anyway, with that, said, Madam Chair, I would move that we approve the suggested edits to Alternative 2 under Action 3.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to the motion? It's seconded by Jessica. The motion is to approve the suggested edits to Alternative 2 under Action 3. Is there any further discussion?

DR. MCGOVERN: I was wondering, in the preferred alternative, if we wanted to also specify that this would change the total ACL, because it's mainly focused on the sector ACLs, and I think the AMs are also dependent upon the total ACL, and so have some language in there that specifies that we're changing the total ACL, sector ACLs, and the OY.

DR. DUVAL: Point well taken. I think, Myra, can that -- Jack, Myra actually has a second draft motion for the committee's consideration that would do exactly that, in terms of specifying the ABC and the total ACL for mutton snapper, but it sounds like your suggestion is to make sure that language is actually included in the text of the preferred alternative that references the total ACL, and is that correct? That's a little bit different.

MR. HAYMANS: It says it's in numbers of fish in Alternative 2.

DR. DUVAL: Jack is referring to -- We've got two different lines of conversation going on here. Jack's comments were to the language in Preferred Alternative 2, which doesn't actually reference the total annual catch limit. It is really specifically speaking more to the sector allocations, which are based on the total ACL, and so his suggestion is just to make sure that we're including language in there about the total ACL and preferred Alternative 2.

The next motion that Myra was going to ask the committee to consider was specification of the ABC and total ACL in numbers of fish, and so there is two slightly different things going on here. We do have a motion on the floor to accept the IPT's edits to the preferred alternative, and Myra has added a little bit of language here for us to take a look at. It would read to specify total annual catch limits and optimum yield for the South Atlantic and sector annual catch limits using the existing sector allocations, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It just makes it a little bit more clear.

I don't really know if we actually need to change that motion, because that's still a suggested edit from the committee, and so it seems to me the motion is still valid. Is there any other discussion around the table on this motion? The motion is: Approve suggested edits to Alternative 2 under Action 3. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

One of the things, in preparing for the meeting, when I was going through this document, was the sector allocations -- You will see the language in this preferred alternative says using the existing sector allocations of 17.02 percent commercial and 82.98 percent recreational. If you recall, as we've had several assessments come forward, we have taken our existing sector allocation formula and reapplied that to the time series of landings for a few of our stocks.

I think the first one where we had to do this was snowy grouper. That was mainly done because, in the assessment, recreational landings from Monroe County, which is the Keys, were not able to be post-stratified initially, and so, in the update assessment, recreational landings from Monroe County were included. We had to reapply the same sector allocation formula that was used. What we discovered, after doing that, was that really the majority of the change in the sector allocation,

once reapplied to the time series of landings, occurred because of the MRIP catch estimation methodology, the new catch estimation methodology, that came into play in 2013.

We have done this with a couple of other stocks. Hogfish is one of those other stocks whereby we applied our existing sector allocation formula that had been previously used. Obviously that's a little bit of a different case, because we were going from one stock along the Atlantic coast to two stocks along the Atlantic coast.

When I read this sentence in the preferred alternative, I expressed some concern to staff that, given the changes that may have occurred to the time series of landings information that was being used for this stock, even though nothing else has changed and there's been no changes to the jurisdictional allocation between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, that it might be prudent to, instead of simply applying the sector allocations as calculated from the previous time series of landings, apply the sector allocation formula to the time series of landings that came through the SEDAR process, because some of those were likely to have changed since the previous stock assessment, which occurred before all of the changes to the MRIP catch estimation methodology. Are folks following me a little bit here?

The MRIP catch estimation methodology resulted in some changes to the recreational time series of landings. That's basically what it is, and so my concern was that we were taking an existing allocation that was based on a previous time series of landings that may have been altered by changes to the MRIP estimation methodology, and so I asked staff if they would go back and look at this, and they did, and reapplying that allocation formula has resulted in a few percentage point differences between the commercial and recreational allocation. I want to say it's more like fourteen-point-some percent commercial and eighty-four-ish or 85 percent recreational, when you just apply the allocation formula to the updated time series of landings. My concern is just that we have consistency in how we're doing these things, and so I open it up for any input.

MS. BROUWER: I will just add that we did these calculations earlier this week, I believe yesterday actually was when we finally got the landings that were needed, and so we need a little bit more time to make sure that we did everything correctly, and so folks on the IPT are reviewing the information that was used. For that reason, I don't -- It would have been nice to have had something for you guys to approve and make sure that those sector allocations get changed through a motion at committee, but we can maybe, if you want -- If we have something final for Full Council, we can bring that back at Full Council, and so that's where we are.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Myra, and I just wanted to make everybody aware of it. It doesn't seem like that small of a change would impact the analyses that have already been done in any great way, but I think we would want to see what those numbers look like, but, again, my concern is that we're doing things in a consistent fashion from one amendment to the next when we get a new stock assessment and that we're not just using an allocation that was created by application of a formula to an old time series of landings in one instance and a new time series of landings in another instance.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think you raise a good point, and you could think about changing, under Action 3, Preferred Alternative 2, to just add "formula" after "allocation". That way, you are using the existing sector allocation formula. Then, if the numbers change, the numbers might change, but at least you are consistently applying the formula across the action.

DR. CRABTREE: My memory, when we went through this with snowy grouper, is that we were pretty clear that when we set these allocations that we were setting them based on a period of years in the formula. As the landings are revised or improved over time, then we would make those changes, and so I think that is what we need to do here. Remind me, Myra, that we're on a track of final action in December?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, correct. Also, recall that Regulatory Amendment 13 is an amendment that was put together soon after we went from MRFSS to MRIP, and so that took care of any little changes to allocations resulting from revised recreational landings estimates, but I went back to the document the other day, and there is actually a list of species for which Regulatory Amendment 13 did not make those changes, because it was anticipated that that would be captured during the stock assessment process, and mutton snapper was one of them, and so I'm just making sure that's out there.

DR. DUVAL: I think maybe if -- I know you said the IPT is working on this, and so I think it would be more appropriate to wait until Full Council, if we have additional information then, so that we can see what the numbers look like, and I apologize for throwing a wrench into the process myself, but I feel like it's important to be consistent, and so thanks.

MS. BROUWER: Again, here, I would ask the committee to consider a motion to just make clear that the ABC and total ACL for mutton snapper will be specified in numbers of fish, and this is the same issue that we dealt with for hogfish. The same methodology is being applied there.

DR. DUVAL: I would be looking for a similar motion from the committee.

MR. BELL: **Madam Chair, I move that we specify the ABC and total ACL for mutton snapper in numbers of fish.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? Second by Ben. The motion reads: Specify the ABC and total ACL for mutton snapper in numbers of fish. Is there any discussion on this motion?

DR. MCGOVERN: I just have a question. What does this mean for the sectors ACL? Would recreational be in numbers and commercial in pounds, like it is in the table below?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and that is in line with the way the methodology was applied for hogfish, and the council has explained why they prefer, when possible, to have the recreational ACL specified in numbers of fish, as opposed to pounds, because that's how it's being tracked.

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

MS. BROUWER: Action 4 revises the recreational ACT. Again, we have made some edits to Alternative 1. We would need you to approve the edits that we made there for Preferred Alternative 2. Your preferred is to set the ACT at 85 percent of the recreational ACL. Those are the only two things that we need there.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Again, I'm looking for a motion from the committee to approve the suggested edits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we approve the suggested edits to Alternative 2 under Action 4.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? It's seconded by Ben. Is there further discussion of this motion? The motion reads: Approve the suggested edits to Alternative 2 under Action 4. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Before we get into the next several actions, which actually deals with the meat of some of the changes that we need to make with regard to size limits and bag limits and trip limits, and I was just going to suggest that we take a quick break and we can come back to those. It's three o'clock now, and I would say please be back at 3:15.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. DUVAL: We will reconvene the Snapper Grouper Committee. Before we move back into Amendment 41, there are just a couple of folks that I wanted to recognize who are here, and so the first is Mr. Sam Rauch. Sam is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, and Sam is going to be here tonight for our informal question and answer period, and so I encourage members of the public to stay and ask a few questions of Sam, and I think Sam is Roy's boss, and so we need to just make sure that Roy stays on his best behavior.

The other person I wanted to let folks know was out in the audience is a gentleman by the name of John O'Hern, and so John is actually an observer. He's been working with the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation on the observer discard program that they have had funded through several different grants. He has worked on Kenny Fex's boat, and I think he's been on Chris's boat. I think he's been on several different snapper grouper boats, and Kenny Fex, who is our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Chair, thought it might be helpful for council members to have the opportunity to ask John questions about his experiences as an observer on snapper grouper boats and perhaps the kinds of things he is seeing with regard to discards and at-surface discard mortality and things like that, and so I just wanted to recognize those folks.

MR. CONKLIN: I just want to say that I've got to hand it to John. We've kept them extremely busy this year with on one boat and off of it and onto to another and putting everything aside. He has spent a lot of time on the ocean, and he's doing good things.

DR. DUVAL: We definitely appreciate him being here as well, and so welcome both to Sam and John. Thank you. I am going to turn things back over to Myra. I think, when we left off, we finished Action 4, and we're moving on to Action 5 in Amendment 41.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Action 5 modifies the minimum size limit for mutton snapper. Again, note that we have spelled out total length in Alternative 1 and throughout the various alternatives, and so your preferred currently is to increase the size limit in the South Atlantic region to eighteen inches. The analyses, Table 4.5.1, up on your screen, shows you the estimated landings under the current ten fish per person per day bag limit at the different size limit options, and so eighteen inches is in bold font, and your estimated landings would be, and this is



in numbers of fish, 44,143 fish, which would be a 60 percent reduction from recent landings. Then, comparing that with your ACL alternatives, there would be no projected closure under your preferred, which is to set the ACL at the same level as the ABC.

We have also the economic effects, and here, for comparison, you can see -- This is, again, some economic figures. One of the things that I pointed out during the public hearings is that the action that increases the minimum size limit is the one thing that gets you the most reduction in harvest, and the reason that -- There doesn't need to be a reduction in harvest because there is any concern over the status of mutton snapper.

The assessment results show that the stock is in good health and there is no overfishing going on and it's not overfished. However, the model showed a smaller adult biomass of mutton snapper than the previous stock assessment, and so this is the reason why there needs to be a slight reduction on harvest of mutton snapper and why you're considering these changes to management. Here, I would just need a motion for you to approve our edits to the alternatives under this action and then consider your current preferred.

DR. DUVAL: All right. If I could get a motion from the committee to approve the suggested edits, we can dispense with that.

MR. BELL: **Madam Chair, I move to approve the suggested edits to Alternatives 1 through 5 under Action 5.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? Second by Doug. Is there discussion on that motion? The motion reads: Approve suggested edits to Alternatives 1 through 5 under Action 5. **Is there is no discussion, is there any opposition to that motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Jessica, I just want to confirm that the eighteen inches minimum size was what was approved by the FWC at their meeting last week.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, Madam Chair. That was what was approved. That was what we heard overwhelmingly at all the public workshops, was, yes, please increase the size to eighteen inches. In fact, there were people that came to the workshops that did not want to increase the minimum size, but, after hearing the council and the FWC presentations, then they were in support of increasing that minimum size limit, and that was because it pretty much gets you the necessary reduction that would be needed to ensure that the fishery stays open year-round.

DR. DUVAL: Great. Thank you for that.

MR. HARTIG: I would just add that I saw these people come in, and I talked to a number of them before, and they talked about the size limit didn't need to be increased, but, once the biological impacts were explained to them, they got onboard, and I was pretty surprised that, almost wholesale, everyone got onboard with that, after they saw the reproductive -- Once you have that 50 percent of the females reproduce at eighteen inches, they got onboard with that, and so, although I had reservations about changing the size limit at our last meeting, I have been convinced, for a couple of reasons, thinking back on what we did with red snapper, when we increased it to twenty inches. I think we have moved some fish into the size where they're actually producing more eggs and we got some benefit of that, from increased year class strengths. I think, with the selectivity

with muttons, I think you will actually get that with them as well, and so I think that will work doubly well.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Ben, for that additional rationale. At this point, I would not suggest changing our preferred alternative, which matches what the FWC selected last week. Unless there's any other questions, we can move on to the next action.

MS. BROUWER: The next action is to designate the spawning season during which commercial and recreational management measures would apply. You can see that we have made a revision to the no action alternative, and it simply reads: During May and June each year, the possession of mutton snapper in or from the EEZ onboard a vessel that has a commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper is limited to ten per person per day or ten per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive, and so this is the only current restriction on the harvest of mutton snapper, and it only applies to the commercial sector. There are no restrictions placed on the recreational sector during these spawning months. Currently, your preferred alternative is, for regulatory purposes, designate April through June as the spawning months. The remainder of the year would be the regular season.

DR. DUVAL: Again, this matches with the actions that were taken by the FWC at their meeting last week, to designate April through June as the spawning months. I would not necessarily suggest changing our preferred alternative, but it looks like, Mr. Haymans, that you have a question.

MR. HAYMAN: We went through the exercise, or at least the IPT did, of changing the wording for Alternative 1. My suggestion would be to make the same wording for Alternative 2, such that down the road, when we get ready to change whatever the current preferred is, the wording is already there. In other words, what it's going to read is the spawning season for mutton snapper is designated as April through June. That's what it's going to read, right? It doesn't matter. It's a technicality, and we will catch it later.

MS. BROUWER: Well, but I think it's important to clarify it on the record, and this is where the IPT had gotten a little bit wrapped around, and I think I understand it now. The problem is that there wasn't an actual spawning season that was defined as the spawning season. Nowhere in Amendment 4, maybe, that actually put in these commercial restrictions -- The language doesn't say May through June are the spawning months for mutton snapper. It simply says during these months that these are the restrictions, and so there is actually no mention of it being the official spawning months, and that's why we had to do it this way.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay, and so Alternative 2 will spell out spawning months and that will take care of that? Okay.

DR. DUVAL: Is everybody all good on this one? There is no need for any approval of any edits or anything like that, and so, unless there is any more questions, because the only edits were to Action 1 and we've already given staff the license to do that, and so, unless there is any other questions --

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I might offer just an edit to the actual naming of the action itself, because I will tell you that when I first read this that I thought it was just during the spawning season when any commercial and recreational management measures apply, and I know that's not

what you mean. It's just when certain special management measures apply or something like that, and so I will think about it. Maybe by Full Council I can offer something up that covers that.

DR. DUVAL: I see your point, definitely. Thank you, Monica. Anything else on Action 6? If not, let's move on to Action 7.

MS. BROUWER: Action 7 deals with the bag limit. Again, we have some suggested edits to Alternative 1 that I would like to point out, and it has to do with clarifying that currently mutton snapper are within the ten-snapper aggregate that applies throughout the fishing year, and so making sure that, for the recreational sector, it is clear that throughout the fishing year that they're still part of that aggregate. Then it's spelling out what other species are currently included in that aggregate, and so those are the changes that we've made to the no action.

Then you have several alternatives. Alternative 2 retains mutton snapper in the aggregate, but looks at setting a different bag limit during the spawning months, and so the ones that were defined in the previous action, and your range there is four, five, or ten fish per person per day.

Alternative 3 looks at specifying a bag or a vessel limit during the spawning months. I'm sorry, but I misspoke. The previous one is for the regular season. Alternative 3 pertains to the spawning months, and you're looking at two per person per day, three per person per day, ten per vessel per day, twelve per vessel per day, or no retention. I should point out here that the FWC, as I said earlier, actually went with a five per person per day limit for both the recreational and the commercial sectors during the spawning months, and it just so happens that you don't currently have an alternative for that bag limit, but it is still within the range. I see Erika shaking her head.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Right now, we have a preferred of three fish per person per day, 4b.

MS. BURGESS: If I might interrupt, the option that the committee has selected as their preferred right now is not a spawning season limit for the recreational fishery. It's a year-round limit, and so we've moved down to Alternative 4. Right now, our preferred alternative is Sub-Alternative 4b, and Sub-Alternative 4c under that Alternative 4 is five fish per day.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you for that clarification. I was getting ahead of myself. For the commercial sector, I believe that's the case, but, yes, Alternative 3 looks at vessel or bag limits during the spawning months, and then Alternative 4 looks at year-round limits and this is where you have a range of two to five, and your current preferred is three, whereas the FWC has chosen five per person per day.

Let me show you here some numbers. These are just mutton snapper landings by wave from 2010 through 2014. You can see the averages on the bottom. Overall, 112,000 fish have been landed, on average, during that time period, to sort of give you an idea of where the landings are relative to the ACL. Then you have several figures just looking, again, at the distribution per angler for the two recreational datasets, MRIP and the headboat survey.

Then here is where we get into the projected landings at the various alternatives, and so this one looks at the combination of a bag limit during the spawning season and a bag limit outside of the spawning season, and the estimates that you have there, again, is in numbers of fish, and so you can see how none of these combinations really change the estimates very much, and that's why I

was saying earlier that the increase in the minimum size limit actually has much more effect in the landings than a change to the bag limit.

Then here is for the year-round alternatives. Your preferred is in bold. At the current minimum size limit, which is sixteen inches fork length, we would expect to land 110,840 fish. Then, if you increase the minimum size to eighteen inches, then your landings go down to about 44,000 fish, and so that's a big jump there. Then you have your economic analysis. Here again, note the edits that we have suggested for Alternative 1 and then consider comments and any changes you wish to make to your preferred.

DR. DUVAL: Given the actions taken by the FWC last week, it might behoove us to change our preferred alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Madam Chair, I move that we select Sub-Alternative 4c as the preferred under Action 7 and de-select Sub-Alternative 4b as the preferred.**

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica and seconded by Doug. The motion reads: Select Sub-Alternative 4c as preferred and de-select Sub-Alternative 4b under Action 7. Is there discussion on this motion? I don't see any discussion. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Jessica, maybe you could talk a little bit about some of the input that you all received at the public workshops with regard to mutton in terms of the selection by the FWC for a five fish per person year-round rather than the three fish per person year-round. I know that we received quite a few comments in that regard, in terms of people feeling like that three fish was simply too much of a restriction and that you would still be within the ACL at a five-fish limit, but perhaps you could elaborate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Certainly, Madam Chair. You might remember that the mutton snapper stuff was scoped back in February of this year. When we scoped it, I would say that the reduction in the bag limit was the number one thing that we heard from folks. They felt like having a ten fish bag limit was just too many.

When we started out this process, we were really focusing on the bag limit, until we saw the analysis. As I talked about on the size limit, really, the bang for the buck is coming in the increase in the size limit. It's not really coming in the reduction in the bag limit, and so there is no real discernable difference between a three fish bag limit and a five fish bag limit. When we went to workshop and we showed the stakeholders the analysis, they said, well, if the three fish and the five fish bag limit are virtually the same, dropping from ten to five, they said they could get onboard with that if the increase in the size limit was going to get the reduction that was needed.

Based on that change, and based on what folks saw at the public workshops, which was the analysis done by the South Atlantic Council, then they felt like changing the bag limit to five was fine as long as you increase the size limit to eighteen, and so they felt like those two recommendations kind of went hand-in-hand.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you very much for that. I think that clarifies the rationale for changing our preferred alternative. Thank you very much. Moving on to Action 8.

MS. BROUWER: Action 8 deals with the commercial trip limit. Again, Alternative 1 was changed to be the same as the one for the action on the recreational bag limit, and so it basically just specifies what the restrictions are during May and June for the commercial sector. Here again, we just have some revisions for consistency. Your Preferred Alternative 2 establishes a commercial trip limit during the regular season, and so the non-spawning months, July through March in the South Atlantic, and your ranges there are from 300 to 500 pounds. Your preferred currently is 500 pounds. The FWC went with a 500-pound commercial trip limit during the regular season.

Your additional preferred here looks at a trip limit during the spawning months of April through June, and your sub-alternatives, and this is where I think there's going to need to be an additional sub-alternative included, since the FWC selected five fish per person per day for the commercial sector during the spawning months. While it is within the range that we've analyzed, we don't currently have a specific sub-alternative for that limit.

DR. DUVAL: I think, just to maybe do this in an orderly fashion, my suggestion might be to deal with the trip limit during the, quote, unquote, regular season and modifying our preferred sub-alternative there first. Then we can go to Alternative 3, and I would recommend adding a new alternative, and then we can select that as a preferred and de-select it.

**MS. MCCAWLEY: I move that we select Sub-Alternative 2c as the preferred under Action 8 and de-select Sub-Alternative 2a.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? Seconded by Charlie. The motion reads: Select Sub-Alternative 2c as preferred and de-select Sub-Alternative 2a under Action 8. Is there discussion on this motion? Perhaps, again, a little bit of rationale for why we would be moving from a lower trip limit to a higher trip limit, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: You might remember, at the last council meeting, that there were some substitute motions to try to change the trip limit to 500 pounds from 300. Ultimately, that was defeated and we went with 300. There was also discussion at the previous FWC commission meeting, which was back in June, the draft rule hearing, and that was actually where they chose 500, and so that FWC meeting occurred the week after the South Atlantic Council meeting. Based on comments that they heard, they bumped it up to 500, and so 500 during the regular season would encompass most of the trips. I think there's only about ten trips at this point that are over the 500-pound whole weight limit that we're establishing, and so the commission went with that.

Also, when we're talking about a reduction that's needed to keep the fishery open year-round, the reduction is needed on the recreational side and not really on the commercial side, and so this is really about prohibiting future expansion so that the commercial fishery would remain open year-round. There was some discussion at the public workshops about people possibly switching from hogfish over to mutton, especially spear fishermen that would be doing that, because that hogfish limit that we're talking about, the twenty-five pounds, is so low. There were people that are talking about changing their behavior, and so putting this trip limit in place will hopefully keep this fishery open year-round in the coming years.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Jessica. Any other discussion on this motion?

MR. DILERNIA: Just to help me understand it a little bit, because I hope to be able to take some of this back, as we do things in the Mid. It's primarily a hook-and-line fishery or is it a spearfish fishery?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's both. We're talking about the Atlantic. In the Gulf, there's also a longline component, and we're trying to make regulations consistent across all three jurisdictions, so state waters of the Gulf and the South Atlantic and then federal waters of the South Atlantic and federal waters of the Gulf. We're trying to be consistent across all those jurisdictions.

MR. DILERNIA: In the hook-and-line fishery, do you know what the post-release mortality estimates are, percentage-wise?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would have to look it up to be sure. I believe it's in the stock assessment, but I can tell you that when we were talking to commercial fishermen about this at workshops that commercial fishermen were targeting a fish that was significantly over the eighteen-inch minimum size limit that we were talking about, and so whether they were spear fishermen or hook-and-line fishermen, and especially in the longline fishery in the Gulf, they are targeting fish twenty inches or above, and so they didn't feel like release mortality was going to be an issue on the commercial side.

MR. DILERNIA: The recreational side? Was there any estimate on that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would have to look into the stock assessment to see what that number is.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: We haven't actually voted on this motion, and, before we actually take the vote on this motion, I was going to ask Myra if she could just review the analyses and the tables, before moving forward, and then we'll take the vote.

MS. BROUWER: Sure. I was going to remind the committee or point out that this analysis was preliminary last time we discussed this amendment in June. Since then, there has been some revisions to the analysis. It didn't change things very much, but we've got here your commercial landings by gear, and so you've got the breakdown of vertical line, and this is back from 2004 onwards, through 2014. Here is the distribution of landings. As I mentioned earlier, even though there are restrictions for commercial harvest during May and June, that's where you see the spike in the landings over time, and, again, this is from 2010 through 2014.

This is by year over time, from 2004 onwards, and here is a breakdown of trips, the number of trips during the current May/June spawning season and the rest of the year, and you can see that there is a lot more effort that appears to take place during the spawning months than during the rest of the year.

Here is where we get into the estimated reductions in harvest, and so these are percent decreases in pounds for commercial trips under the preferreds. For the 300 pounds, we're looking at an average of a 6 percent decrease. For a 500-pound trip limit, obviously it would go down. It looks to be closer to 4 percent. This is for the regular months. Here you have a breakdown of the

numbers harvested per person per day, and so you can see that there is just a little bit that is going above the current limit. I believe it's about 6 percent of the trips that took place during May and June from 2012 through 2014 that exceeded that ten per person per day restriction.

Here is per vessel per day, and so these are figures that you hadn't seen previously, and so I wanted to make sure I pointed those out. Here is the percent reduction in commercial landings under the alternatives for the restrictions during the spawning months, and so, if you go with the five per person per day, as the FWC has done, you're looking at a percent reduction in harvest somewhere between 19 and 5 percent. It would be somewhere between these two over here. Are there any questions?

DR. DUVAL: Are there questions for Myra on the analyses and the reductions? Let's go back up to the motion that we have on the floor, which is to select Sub-Alternative 2c as preferred and de-select Sub-Alternative 2a under Action 8. Are there any other comments or questions or discussion? This would bring our preferred in line with the action taken by the FWC. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

This is where we would need a motion to add a new sub-alternative under Alternative 3. Then we would need to select that as a preferred and de-select our existing preferred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Madam Chair, I move that we add a sub-alternative under Alternative 3 of five fish per person per day and select that as a preferred and de-select Sub-Alternative 3b as a preferred.**

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica. Is there a second? Second by Ben. The motion reads: Add a sub-alternative under Alternative 3 of five fish per person per day and select as preferred and de-select Sub-Alternative 3b under Action 8. Is there discussion on this motion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me try to explain why the commission chose this alternative as well, and this is not something that we had talked about. Right now, during the spawning season, the recreational and the commercial bag limit are equal. It's ten fish, and so what the commission was trying to do, and what we talked about with stakeholders at the workshop, was to try to maintain that consistency between the recreational bag limit and the commercial bag limit during those spawning months, and so what would be happening is, during the spawning months of April, May, and June, the bag limit for commercial would drop to five per person per day, which is the preferred that's chosen on the recreational side.

DR. DUVAL: Again, we're aiming for consistency between both sectors during those spawning months. Any other comments?

DR. MCGOVERN: I just had a question for Jessica. The 500-pound trip limit and the five fish per person bag limit, the FWC adopted that or proposed that for the Gulf as well as the South Atlantic? Is that correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and so the Gulf, the FWC did not choose a bag limit. They only changed the size limit in the Gulf, and so they didn't make those modifications to the Gulf, and so it would not apply to the longline fishery.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for that clarification. Any other comments or questions on this motion? Again, the motion reads: Add a sub-alternative under Alternative 3 of five fish per person per day and select as preferred and de-select Sub-Alternative 3b under Action 8. **Seeing no more discussion, is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Those are the actions in Amendment 41. I just wanted to remind you of the timing. We are reviewing public comments and making any necessary modifications. The IPT will go back and make the changes you've instructed us to make and finalize all the analyses. We will come back at full council and hopefully resolve this issue of the sector allocations and get that taken care of. Then, in December, you will get the amendment back and approve it for formal review.

DR. DUVAL: Great. Thank you, Myra. This takes us to our next agenda item, which is Snapper Grouper Amendment 43, and so this is dealing with red snapper management, and that's Attachment 4 in your briefing book. If you recall, one of the things that we had requested at our June council meeting was a presentation from the Science Center regarding the changes in productivity of the stock, basically those MSY estimates, from one stock assessment to another. We have Dr. Kate Siegfried from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, the Beaufort Lab, who I believe is on the webinar and is going to through this presentation.

DR. SIEGFRIED: This presentation is short. It's in response to the council's request. I put in the wording of the council's request for Part 1, but I highlighted what I thought was most important or most requested, to explain how MSY levels have declined with each subsequent assessment, from 2.3 million pounds in SEDAR 15 to 1.8 million pounds in SEDAR 24 and to 763,000 pounds in SEDAR 41.

Where do the changes come from? First, we wanted to state that the rebuilding of the red snapper stock is based on the fishing and spawning stock biomass benchmarks. The management quantities on the relative scale, using the benchmarks of F 30 in the rebuilding plan, and so those management quantities on those relative scales have changed little between assessments, but the quantities on the absolute scale, or the numerator, have changed, as you listed in your request, and those changes have been due to modifications in some of the data.

The first one I will go over is the magnitude of the catch data that was input to the model. The second one is the selectivity patterns that result from changes in regulations. The third is a suite of things, the new scientific information on life history characteristics, such as natural mortality and the reproductive capacity.

First was the catch. SEDAR 41 used the APAIS adjustment to MRIP estimates of recreational catch and discards, rather than those from MRFSS, which was in SEDAR 24. There was an ad hoc working group that looked at catch and discards for the mini-season. The second point that I wanted to make was that the historical catch was reconstructed using a new method, this FHWAR, this census method. That was done at the recommendation of the data workshop panel, and that happened to provide a much lower estimate of historical catch. I do have figures of these things as well. The third point to make is the lower historical landings, when those are decreased, they provide a very different picture of stock productivity through time.



On the X-axis here, I have years. On the Y-axis, I have it in numbers. The blue is from SEDAR 24, which used a different method that was a ratio of historic commercial catch to recreational catch. That is SEDAR 24, and then SEDAR 41 is the red line that uses this FHWAR method. As you can see, just the general magnitude and the variability of historical catch has been reduced.

As the council has changed regulations based on the results of the assessments, the selectivity on the stock has also changed, and so we needed to take that into account when conducting this last benchmark assessment. A moratorium was put in place, as you're all very familiar with, in 2010 and 2011. Then there were three years of mini-seasons.

The weighted selectivities to calculate benchmarks used the most recent time period, which is the last three years, and that demonstrates the increase in the selectivity of older age classes in both the landings and discards due to this new regulation, and so, during the moratorium, all fish are discarded, and there is an incentive to retain the largest fish during the mini-season, due to bag limits, and so the selectivity changes from SEDAR 24 to 41 illustrate that that management regulation affected selectivity and there is an incentive to select the larger fish, and that has affected the benchmark calculations and the dependent projections on those benchmarks.

In the left column, we have SEDAR 24. In the right column, we have SEDAR 41. The top panel is the average selectivity of the landings. The middle panel is the average selectivity applied to discard mortality, and then the bottom panel is, and this is for SEDAR 24, is the total average selectivity. On the right, it follows, except for the right-hand top is the middle on the left-hand column, and so we have upper left, in the SEDAR 41 column, is discards and weighted landings is in the upper right, and the bottom is the total average selectivity.

If you look at the difference, at the total average selectivity, on the bottom-left panel, that's much more domed than the bottom panel on the right column, and so there was less selectivity for older individuals reflected in SEDAR 24, because it was prior to the moratorium and mini-seasons that changed the selectivity towards older individuals in recent years.

The causes of this change, I mentioned one of them was the regulations. We also have the life history changes. There is a new function in your equations published in 2014 that was used to estimate the vector of natural mortality at age, and the result is an almost doubling at age one and a 50 percent increase for other ages of natural mortality. That's the bottom-left figure. SEDAR 24 is the dashed line and SEDAR 41 is the solid line. In all of these figures, the X-axis is age and then it's depending on the figure what the Y-axis represents, but it should be written there. The reproduction isn't written there, but I will explain that in a moment.

The equilibrium recruitment estimated by this latest benchmark model is about 23 percent less than what was estimated for SEDAR 24, and the natural mortality is double for age-one fish. The MSY is calculated using the most recent selectivities, as I described in the last slide, which, in this case, selects older fish for both fishery landings and discards. The top two panels illustrate that difference in selectivity. We have an increased selectivity for older age classes in both. We term them as fleet, but these are just components of the same fleet. Then there is changes in the scientific knowledge about reproduction. However, when you combine the changes and plot them together, they really didn't affect the model overall. The things that changed here most are the selectivity and the natural mortality, along with the historical catch.

The change in natural mortality and the consequential decrease in equilibrium recruitment, combined with differences in selectivity and a sharp decrease in historical removals all explain, in concert, the difference in MSY proxy estimated by the models used in SEDAR 24 versus SEDAR 41. I think that's my last slide, but I will take any questions about that. It's kind of a lot in a short amount of slides.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for that, Kate. Are there questions for Dr. Siegfried?

MR. HARTIG: I am trying to figure out -- Do you recall how many days the fishery was open during those short openings we had? I don't know, right off the top of my head. Does anyone know that here, how many days we actually had an open fishery in those couple of years?

DR. DUVAL: Zack Bowen could tell you. He's got his hand raised.

MR. BOWEN: It was eight the last year we had it. It was eight, I think.

DR. DUVAL: I think Ben is talking about the collective, like the total over the three mini-seasons that we had. Kate, do you know?

MR. BOWEN: It was six, six, and eight.

DR. SIEGFRIED: I don't have it off the top of my head, but I can find it if somebody there doesn't know.

MR. BOWEN: It was twenty days total in the three seasons.

MR. HARTIG: Say it was twenty days. The whole selectivity for the fishery changes in twenty days of fishing? That just kind of -- I don't quite get that. You only have twenty days that you're able to actually fish out of three years, and that changes the selectivity, because you said during those twenty days that there were people that were targeting bigger fish, because that's what they did. I just don't know how the selectivity can be impacted that much with that short of an opening, for twenty days in three years.

DR. SIEGFRIED: I think the way that it was is because the majority of our sampling, our age samples, came from the Florida effort during mini-seasons, and so the majority of data we had to inform the selectivity curves occurs in those twenty days, and so, because of the way that we calculate these benchmarks, using the most recent years, what was reflected for the stock was the most recent time period for selectivity, which was 2010 to 2014, and the majority of our ages came from the mini-season, when this behavior would have changed, because there was no size limit, which is different from the rest of the time period for the red snapper stock.

DR. CRABTREE: Kate, I have seen the statement that the incentive to retain the largest fish increased because of the change in the bag limit. I have seen that in several places, but we were a two-fish bag limit for many, many years, and then we went to a one-fish bag limit. Is there any science with regard to fishermen's behaviors and incentives that compare a two-fish versus a one-fish bag limit, or is that just a statement?

DR. SIEGFRIED: That's a statement. It's not meant to be an economic incentive or any sort of sociological statement or experiment that I've done. It could be word choice. We've been trying to avoid other terms where we state that the composition shows that larger fish were selected disproportionate to smaller fish, and so I certainly don't mean that there's any economic incentive or anything, but if you have a one-fish bag limit, and this is what a number of fishermen have come up to tell me during this whole process, is that you're going to try to maximize your take, and so that's all I'm saying. I am not saying I've done a sociological or economic experiment on incentives.

DR. CRABTREE: So we really don't know if there was any more high-grading then than there was prior to the moratorium?

DR. SIEGFRIED: We know, based on the age compositions that we have, and they're much more comprehensive in the mini-seasons, in particular, than we had before. The data that Florida provided was so much more than we had in prior years, and it showed a distinct shift to the right, or to older ages, of the private fishery, in particular, than before the mini-season.

DR. CRABTREE: I get that, but we don't really have any evidence -- We saw more old fish, but we really don't have any hard evidence that that was a result of high-grading or that any more high-grading occurred, other than just some anecdotal things some fishermen said. We just know we saw more old fish, and so this could be a reason for that, but we don't have any evidence to say that's what happened. Is that correct?

DR. SIEGFRIED: I'm not sure what kind of evidence you would need besides the age composition data shifting to the right. I don't have anything besides that, but all of the panel members and the reviewers felt that that was sufficient.

DR. DUVAL: Are there other questions for Kate on this presentation?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: When you make the statement about the sharp decrease in the historical removals, does that refer to perhaps a recalculation of what historical harvest was or does that mean that we really haven't, but for twenty days or whatever Zack said, we really haven't allowed any harvest since 2010, or does it mean something else?

DR. SIEGFRIED: What I meant to say by that, if I wasn't clear, was the sharp decrease in the estimates of historical catch, and so before 1981. This new census method provided an overall decrease in the historical landings. On the screen here, the red line is much lower than the blue line. It's also less variable, but that was less of my point. It was just a sharp decrease to the model that I was running.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you.

DR. CRABTREE: Kate, a big factor in this is the selectivity of the discards, and I see a big change in that. Where are we getting the information on the ages of the discarded fish?

DR. SIEGFRIED: The ages of the discarded fish in the most recent time period, the majority of those come from -- I would have to go back and look at the sample sizes, but most of the composition data that we have in the recent time period comes from Florida. We have to assume

certain things about discarding, because we don't necessarily have age comps of discards in all of the time periods.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I mean, we don't have even lengths of the discarded fish in the MRIP survey, and so did this come from observers on research vessels or something like that?

DR. SIEGFRIED: Let me go ahead and flip through my assessment document here and get those exact numbers for you, so I don't misspeak. As I am flipping through, one of the things that I wanted to mention about that was we did sensitivities on the selectivities during the review process, to determine whether this dome shape versus more logistic selectivity in that terminal period for MRIP was appropriate, because it does tend to go logistic for MRIP.

MR. HARTIG: Roy, I may be wrong, but I thought they used the headboat sizes to fill in for the recreational discards. I thought they did, because they have some information on the headboat. I thought I remember reading that, but I may be wrong.

DR. DUVAL: That was kind of what we were sort of side-barring about up here, because there are observers that are put on the headboats, and so there has been information on at least the sizes of discards from the headboat fleet, but I can't quite remember.

DR. SIEGFRIED: I just want to make sure I'm saying what was in the report instead of just trying to recall, because we did use headboat to inform MRIP, and I'm just trying to make sure.

DR. DUVAL: While Kate is looking that up, Zack, did you have a question or a comment?

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think Dr. Crabtree is on to something. His point is age, and we all know that we can't tell the age of the discards just by observers. Is that what you're saying, Dr. Crabtree?

DR. CRABTREE: No, I'm just trying to get at where the selectivity for the discards comes from, because MRIP doesn't get sizes of the discarded fish in the general survey, and so some observer or someone rode some boats and saw what size fish were being discarded, and the question is how confident are we that that was then representative of the overall recreational fishery as a whole, because it doesn't seem, to me, that the moratorium or any of these things would have changed the selectivities of the discarded fish.

That just reflects what is out there and what people caught, but we see a big change in it, and so either we poorly estimated the selectivity of the discards before now and now we're doing a better job of it or the data is wandering around and we don't know very well, and I don't know which of those is the case, but it's not -- If you have the lengths, then you can convert the lengths into ages. That's pretty standard, and so it's more of where did the lengths come from to begin with for the discarded fish.

MR. BOWEN: I think we probably should look deeper than that, because of the way that the headboats target the species versus the other recreational and private charter modes. They fish for them differently, and so we would have a different selectivity with a different headboat versus charter boat versus private angler.

DR. SIEGFRIED: The selectivities of the discards were estimated by headboat fleet discard lengths, and the general recreational fleet was chosen to mirror the headboat fleet discards, as Ben had said. The hand-line discards for commercial and the headboat discards both had sufficient length data for length compositions to estimate selectivity. We also went through a lot of literature to decide, as Zack was getting at, the depth of fishing, the modes of fishing, the hook sizes that were being employed, and found that private fishing and headboat fishing were more similar than charter boat, necessarily, but we did have to borrow, because we didn't have age comp, for the discards in particular.

To Roy's point, in Slide 8 in the presentation, in the upper-right panel, the dotted line is SEDAR 24. That was before the mini-season, when the thing that informed that selectivity was the twenty-inch size limit. That curve there bottoms out a point where there's probably not a lot of twenty-inch fish, past age four-and-a-half or so. However, the solid line from SEDAR 41 should be above that, because, during a moratorium, or everything outside of a mini-season, you're discarding everything, all sizes, and that's the data we get from the headboat length composition that has the observers onboard as well as their reported discards. Does that answer that question?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, it does, but I'm just kind of surprised that it looks like the discards aren't fully recruited until they're five years old. That's where the selectivity peaks, and that is surprising to me, that it's that old of a fish. That's all, but I get what you're saying.

DR. SIEGFRIED: One of the things that I can comment on there is that we did see a shift to the left of headboat landings. Not discards, but headboat landings of the ages, and so a younger age, on average, during mini-seasons from the headboat fishery. We mirrored headboat and MRIP during discarding, but headboat did shift to younger ages, while MRIP data shifted to the right, or older ages.

MR. HARTIG: The dichotomy I see is that you use -- In the mini-season, you use the selectivity and you have the largest fish caught. Then, when you model the private boat, you use the headboat, which are the smallest fish caught. I mean, that is a little bit hard to fathom, but I understand why you did it, and I understand the problems you had with the data, and you've done the best you could with the data available, but it's still -- I think Roy's question is valid about whether that selectivity for that largest fish is real or not. I mean, it could be just there's lots more larger fish than the assessment said, which is probably, based on everything that I've heard from everybody that I have talked to, the case, but that's not the way it came out in the assessment, and so hopefully we will get there someday.

MR. GRINER: Was this same selectivity applied to commercial landings during these mini-seasons?

DR. SIEGFRIED: This is a total weighted selectivity that's on your screen, and so it's all of the pieces of the puzzle together. If you go back a slide, the top left is the discards. That is weighted discards across all the fleets, and the upper right is weighted landings across all fleets. I don't have commercial-specific selectivity in this presentation, but it is in the stock assessment report.

MR. GRINER: As a follow-up, during the mini-season for commercial landings, were you all thinking there was grading, or were you all using the actual pounds? Commercial landings were done in pounds, if I'm not mistaken.

DR. SIEGFRIED: Yes, and we didn't see any grading. We didn't see the same effect of the shifting ages in the commercial. There wasn't any of that that we changed the selectivity for, and I don't have the selectivity for the commercial fleet in this presentation, but there is a commercial discards and commercial landings for 2010 to 2014 that's a time-specific selectivity for commercial, and you can take a look at that, but we didn't see the same shift that we saw in the recreational sector.

DR. DUVAL: Those commercial landings were likely more well sampled than the recreational landings, because, at least I know in North Carolina, we were making every effort to get all of our samplers out to the fish houses when those fish were coming in, and so there's more information coming from each trip, or as much information coming from each trip as possible. Any other questions for Kate on this issue of changing productivity between assessments?

MR. HARTIG: Kate, going from here forward, are you going to use that new methodology to compute the historic catch in other assessments?

DR. SIEGFRIED: Yes, it's been chosen by the recreational working group for SEDAR 28. It wasn't available in SEDAR 24. In looking at their report, the recreational group thought that it was superior, because it actually provides estimates of U.S. saltwater anglers as well as fishing days, rather than relating ratios of catches. Then they were also able to do a bias correction for recall bias, and so it was seen by the recreational group to be superior to the method used in SEDAR 24.

MR. HARTIG: So that would be a yes. In other species, where we've reconstructed the historical landings time series, we're going to go back and look at -- In a benchmark assessment, we're going to go back and look at another way to calculate that?

DR. SIEGFRIED: I hesitate to say yes, because I am not the lead of the recreational working group, but, based on their report, I would think that the answer was yes, but I can't dictate that.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Anybody else? I am not seeing any hands. Thank you very much, Kate, for being available and for providing us this presentation. I know we've had a lot of questions about these changing estimates of productivity, and so I appreciate your time here today.

DR. SIEGFRIED: Yes, of course. You're welcome.

DR. DUVAL: All right. We're going to let Chip get set up here, but the next item of business here is going through the options paper for Snapper Grouper Amendment 43, and I believe this is Attachment 4 in your briefing book.

MR. COLLIER: On page 2 of the document, we're going to start with the purpose and need for this action. The purpose of Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 is to revise annual catch limits, management reference points, and management measures for red snapper and revise reporting requirements for snapper grouper species for the recreational sector.

As we think about this, I will probably go back to the purpose and need after we go through all of the actions, just to make sure that, if we develop this purpose and need in the beginning, it still matches with what we're thinking at the end as well, because we do have a lot of actions to go through. There are going to be twelve of them.

Given this is your first time seeing Amendment 43, this is what the IPT came up with for the purpose. Do you guys have any edits or suggestions? You will see it one more time before it goes out to scoping. You will see it again in December.

DR. DUVAL: I am not seeing any hands raised, and so I think we can probably move forward.

MR. COLLIER: All right. The need for the amendment is to end overfishing and rebuild the red snapper stock using the best scientific information available, improve data collection for snapper grouper species, and reduce bycatch of red snapper and other snapper grouper species, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects. One thing to remember with red snapper, based on SEDAR 41, is the stock is overfished. The stock is still experiencing overfishing, although the SSC was unclear on how much overfishing was occurring, and it's still under a rebuilding plan, with the goal of rebuilding by 2044.

DR. DUVAL: I am not seeing anybody wanting to raise any modifications to the need, and so we can move on.

MR. COLLIER: Table 1 has the recommendations from SEDAR 41. There, you can see the overfished evaluation of 0.16 and the overfishing evaluation, which is greater than one, meaning overfishing is occurring. Once again, the SSC wasn't positive on the extent of overfishing, but they just felt that it was occurring. Then you can see the related values for that. The MSST and MSY are given as well.

Continuing on from there, we have our ABC and OFL projections that start if management were to start in 2016 and also if were to start in 2017. Those are below. These values might change if you guys select a different MSY value, but we generally have these in the beginning of the document, and so I kept them there, just as relative measures to other amendments.

DR. DUVAL: Chip, I had a question about this. When I'm looking at these tables, and when I look at the OFL recommendations, sort of the top table with management beginning in 2016, and then I look at the ABC recommendations immediately below, the landed pounds, under the ABC recommendations, are lower than the landed pounds under the OFL.

That's the way things should be, but the dead discards are actually higher under the ABC recommendations than under the OFL for each of those years, but, if you look down with management for the recommendations with management beginning in 2017, it's actually the opposite. Both the landed pounds and the dead discards are both lower than the landed pounds and dead discards under the OFL, and so I'm just wondering if there was some kind of flip-flop there or if there's just something I am not understanding. In any event, I was just going to suggest a double-check of those.

MR. COLLIER: I will double-check. Those are copied and pasted in from the assessment, and so I will check to make sure that those values are correct.

MR. BREWER: This is not a question, and it's a statement. As I look at this, and I hope the council realizes, looking at these numbers, this fishery will not reopen at all until 2019, and your season for 2019 will be 3,000 pounds.

MR. HAYMANS: Because they are cut and pasted from SEDAR 41, that means the dead discard mortality rate is the SEDAR 41 rate of thirty-whatever it was, rather than the 28 that we talked about at the last meeting?

MR. COLLIER: The recreational is 28.5 and the commercial, I believe, was thirty-eight-point-something.

MR. HAYMANS: Right, if you remember, in SEDAR 41, we had that discussion. SEDAR 41 used a higher mortality rate. If you're cutting and pasting --

MR. COLLIER: SEDAR 41 has a lower discard mortality rate than SEDAR 24 did. That's based on different improvements to the fishery to reduce impacts to discards, whether it was circle hooks or de-hooking devices being on the vessels or just different behavior by the fishermen.

DR. DUVAL: Doug, I think you might be thinking of our conversation about the discard mortality rates applied to the total removals from 2015, which were from SEDAR 24, and we had a lot of discussion there about if we had these circle hook regulations that went into place in 2009, and, in this assessment, we are applying a different discard mortality rate as a result of those regulatory changes, why are we not back-applying them to the numbers in 2015, and the endpoint that we got to in that conversation was Dr. Crabtree bringing up the point that the entire SEDAR 24 assessment was -- The ABC values coming out of that assessment were constructed with those particular discard mortalities as applied, and so I'm just wondering if maybe that's what you were thinking of.

MR. HAYMANS: That's exactly what I was thinking of, but I guess I have a slightly different recollection, but if Chip is telling me that these discard mortality rates are based on twenty-eight-and-some change, that's fine. I take that for what he says.

MR. COLLIER: Yes, and so these are going to be based on that. It's going to get a little confusing in this, because we do have some old values that use MRFSS and the old discard mortality estimates, and so I try to specify that those values come from SEDAR 24. Then the new values from SEDAR 41 are going to be the reduced discard mortality estimates that were derived during that stock assessment.

MR. BREWER: Dr. Crabtree just corrected me and said that I was overly optimistic. If the discards on paper or in reality don't come down significantly, this fishery never reopens, even when it's rebuilt.

MR. GRINER: Where did the 38 percent mortality rate for the commercial side come from then?

MR. COLLIER: That came from a literature search as well as meeting with fishermen on determining the best discard mortality rate for the commercial and recreational sectors. There is two components to the discard values. There is the number of intercepts of a discard as well as



the discard mortality rate. The commercial sector has a very low number of discards compared to the recreational sector. We tend to have a little bit better estimate of discard mortality for the recreational sector, and that's based on studies that FWC has done, and they continue to do work looking at the relative risk for discards. Given that, it was about 28.5 percent from that.

Then there's been some commercial work that was done by Burns years ago, and then it was updated with new information in SEDAR 41, and that came out to be 38.5 percent, but the number of commercial discards is probably less than 10,000 fish per year, and so it's going to have very little impact on the overall stock assessment, when you're comparing to over 400,000 discards in the recreational sector.

MR. GRINER: So you're saying the commercial mortality rate has gone up? You said it was at 28 percent and now it's at 38 percent?

MR. COLLIER: The recreational is 28.5. The commercial went down from 49.5 down to 38.5.

MR. HARTIG: To that point, essentially, in SEDAR 15, the first one we did, they used the Gulf numbers of discard mortality, and it was 90 percent or something like that. After that assessment, we went to the data workshop and got it down to whatever we got it down to in the next assessment, and then it's come down from there, and so it has been a gradual reduction, based on the use of circle hooks, as Chip said, and not descending devices yet, but venting and things of that nature, and so it has come down significantly from a couple of assessments ago.

DR. DUVAL: Again, we have an observer in the audience who has been working on many of the commercial boats, and so I would encourage you to chat with him and get his perspective on what he has seen on the boats that he's been on. Okay. Moving on.

MR. COLLIER: There is a section in there that's just for background on how the season is currently calculated, and it uses the ABC, and it includes landings and discards. Red snapper are a little bit different than most of the fish we manage, where we are considering dead discards in the overall ABC. Most fish that we manage here, it's only landings that we consider when we're dealing with accountability measures and ACLs.

Looking at Table 3, you can see the ACL as far as landings. That exceeded the ACL slightly, when you're talking landings of fish, and so the ACL in 2012 was 13,000 fish. In 2013, it was 13,300. In 2014, it was 31,000. Then the landings for that year was 16,000 fish, 11,000 fish, and 42,000. Then, when you combine the discards, you get over to 80,000 fish, which was below the overall ABC of 86,000. Then, in 2013, we had 72,000 or 97,000, depending on which method. The method that was selected was not to use MRIP. It was to use FWC landings, and so the estimate was 72,000 fish for 2013, with a total ABC of 96,000, and so a season was able to be opened.

Then, in 2014, we had a significant increase in the number of discards, and that was 205,000 fish was the total landings that year, including landings and discards, and the ABC for that year was 106,000 fish, and so we had exceeded it by almost 100,000 fish. Then, in 2015, once again, we exceeded the ABC. We had 276,000 fish, and that included landings and dead discards, with a recommended ABC of 114,000. Once again, we greatly exceeded the ABC in that year, and so the season was not opened, again.

MR. BOWEN: Chip, that's a pretty good presentation, but I have a question though. It's kind of a two-fold question. As we're calculating the ABC, we use discards to help calculate the ABC. I don't know of any other species in the South Atlantic that we use discards to calculate an ABC. If there is not another species in the South Atlantic, because I don't know of one, why are we using red snapper discards to calculate the ABC, when we're not using it in any other species? If somebody could answer that for me, that would be great.

DR. DUVAL: My understanding is that when we get projections from an assessment that we get a total ABC, and that includes projected landings plus projected dead discards. If you look at those projections, there are multiple columns for total ABC, landed ABC, dead discards. I see our SSC Chair, Dr. Reichert, back over there nodding his head yes. What's different here is that, in this method that we set up in Amendment 28 to determine whether or not there would be a red snapper season, we have used the total ABC of landings plus dead discards in that calculation, and so, yes, in that regard, it is a little bit different, but, when we are setting our ACLs, we are using that portion of the ABC that's based on landed fish.

MR. BOWEN: Yes, ma'am, and I understand that, but I guess why is red snapper the only one that we do that with, if it is the only one? I'm assuming it is. It's the only one that I can recall.

DR. DUVAL: This is the only fish for which we actually use this formula.

MR. BOWEN: So, again, why? I was not on the council when Amendment 28 went into place, but I was on the advisory panel, and I am just curious of why this species is calculated like that when no other species that we manage is.

DR. DUVAL: First of all, we have no other species for which we use any kind of formula like this, because we're not faced with this type of situation, and so that's one thing. The other thing just flew out of my brain.

MR. WAUGH: Zack, when we first started dealing with red snapper, we had the total fishery closed. That happened for a year or two, and then, in looking at the rebuilding trajectory, we saw that there was the opportunity to allow some landings and still keep on that rebuilding trajectory. When we developed that formula, at that time, to help ensure that we kept the stock on the rebuilding trajectory, we used both landings and discards.

We were coming from a position of having a total closure and figuring out how we allow some level of landings, but then ensure that we did not exceed the level of mortality that would prevent the stock from continuing to overfish, and so I think that's, in part, how we ended up here. We're approaching it from no fishery versus limiting the fishery, and so, in allowing some fishing, we wanted to make sure we were very conservative and not allow the total mortality to exceed the landings plus discards in the rebuilding projections.

DR. CRABTREE: I think almost all of the ABCs that we have are contingent upon some amount of dead discards coming out of the fishery, and so the overall fishing mortality gets partitioned into the dead discards and the ABC. What's different about red snapper is, in this case, the vast majority of the removals are dead discards, and now the fishery is closed, and so all of the fishing mortality is dead discards.

In most of our fisheries, the majority of the fishing mortality is landed catch, and dead discards are some fraction of that. In this case, it's reversed, and the dead discards alone, in this case, exceed the ABC, effectively, at least in a couple of these more recent years. I mean it seems unique, but it's unique because of the magnitude of the removals and the amount of discards occurring.

MR. DILERNIA: I would like to build on a little bit of what Dr. Crabtree just said. Again, I would like to maybe take something away to apply to black sea bass in the Mid. The landings, the 2014 and 2015 landings and dead discards, is 205,276. I guess my question to staff is, is that a reflection really of abundance? In other words, is the abundance of the stock increasing, and thus the discards are -- As the stock rebuilds and grows and management succeeds in rebuilding the stock, the fishery is closed. You're closing it because you have too many fish.

DR. DUVAL: It's sort of an odd situation to be in. You missed our last meeting, Tony, where we had lengthy discussions about the assessment and about the fact that by not allowing any harvest that we're actually killing more fish than we are supposed to, according to the assessment. That is the quandary that we are in, and we're trying to find a way forward that would turn some of those dead discards into landed fish that could provide the information that we so desperately need for this stock, and so that's the point of this paper.

MR. DILERNIA: When you find it, please share it with us, because we have the same problem.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any other questions on this table? We can let Chip move forward.

MR. COLLIER: Starting off with possible actions, Action 1 is going to be revise the maximum sustainable yield. At the last meeting, you guys gave us three different options of MSY equals SPR 20. You also had Fmax. You requested that, and then there was also the F 30 percent. You wanted that. There were two others that were added, F 26 percent, which is what is being used in the Gulf of Mexico right now, and also F 40 percent, which was done back in Amendment 28. That was considered as a potential value in that, and so I just wanted to give you guys a complete range of alternatives. Not all of these are going to be presented to the SSC in October. The three that you requested, the 30 percent, the 20 percent, and Fmax, are going to be presented to the SSC for review in October. With these alternatives, you are more than welcome to take some out or add additional ones, if you would like. To help out staff, we would definitely like fewer alternatives than more.

DR. DUVAL: Given that the outputs from SEDAR 41 that we've seen currently are based on F 30 percent SPR, it seems like F 40 percent SPR might be a little over the top, but that's just my opinion. Again, just to remind everybody, this is an options paper. The SSC is going to see this, and we're going to see this again. I think the timeline, the plan, is for us to approve this for scoping at our December council meeting, and so I would encourage us to not try to get so far in the weeds that we can't dig ourselves out, but are there any alternatives in here right now that the committee would like to do away with?

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Alternative 6 at 40 percent SPR.**

MR. HARTIG: Second.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica and second by Ben. The motion is to remove Alternative 6, 40 percent SPR. Is there discussion?

DR. CRABTREE: I think we need a little better rationale than it might be over the top, and so the real question is, for a species like red snapper and what we know about the biology of it, is it unreasonable to think that 40 percent SPR might be a proxy for MSY? I know, at least some years ago, there were people on our SSC who thought it was a more reasonable reference point than F 30 percent.

Now, we've learned a lot about it, and more of the evidence seems, to me, to be going the other way, but I would suggest to you, before you take this out, let the SSC take a look at this and let's get them to weigh in on it. They will look at these projections, and then we'll have Marcel speak to us at the next council meeting about the projections, and we would be able to quiz the SSC about their views about F 40 percent. Clearly, if we change the reference point here, it's going to get a lot of scrutiny, and we want to make sure we analyze a reasonable range of alternatives, and we need to have a pretty solid basis to start thinning that out, and I don't think we really gain a lot by doing that at this meeting, as opposed to the next one, and I think we'll have more information at that point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess I was curious when staff is going to work on the analysis. Is the analysis going to be completed after the December council meeting or --

DR. DUVAL: If you recall, we requested additional projections from the Science Center that the SSC is not going to review until their October meeting, and so I think, until the SSC reviews those projections, it's going to be difficult for staff to do any analysis, and that's why we'll see it again in December. Dr. Crabtree has given us some sage advice. The motion is already the property of the committee, and so is there -- I would look to the committee. Is there a desire on the part of the committee to withdraw this motion at this time and wait? **I think, by consent, the motion is withdrawn.**

MR. COLLIER: We are going to keep all of those alternatives in there for Action 1. This is going to be populated as we get more information, and some of it will be provided to you in December. Then we will continue working on it, if it's recommended to keep all of those options in for future documents.

Action 2 is specifying the minimum stock size threshold for red snapper. Currently, the method is 75 percent SSB MSY. The alternatives are 50 percent SSB MSY and then the last value is SSB at 10 percent SPR. Are those a good range of alternatives to include in this?

DR. DUVAL: Is there any desire on the part of the committee to add additional alternatives? I know we've used 85 percent of SSB MSY. I think that's what we've used for hogfish, and is that correct? Would it be reasonable to add something like that in there? I am planning to let us go for exactly thirty more minutes before I let you go before a bathroom break before Q&A, and so some input would be appreciated as to whether or not you would like to add anything else. If not, we can move on.

DR. CRABTREE: The only thing that strikes me, Chip, is Alternative 3 is in essentially different units than the other ones, and it's not clear to me if 10 percent SPR is more or less than 50 percent

of BMSY. Of course, to relate the two would depend on what the proxy for MSY is chosen to be, and so it's pretty fluid, and it's hard for me to judge. I think the guidelines specify that MSST can't be any lower than 50 percent BMSY, and it's not clear to me whether 10 percent would meet that test or not at this point.

MR. COLLIER: If you go to the table that's just below the alternatives, it has the value in there, or an approximate value, and it's about 12.4 trillion eggs, which is slightly below the 50 percent at 16.4.

DR. DUVAL: Then it doesn't seem reasonable to include this if it doesn't meet the guidelines. I guess I'm just wondering where this came from.

MR. COLLIER: That came from the options paper that was presented in March, I guess, by Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, it came from the options paper and static SPR, I believe. I would like to keep an option in there that is something of an SPR, a static SPR, that would allow us to do that, and if twelve is just a little below 50, something above ten that would get us there, I would like to see that analyzed. Chip, do you have something close? Do you know, offhand, what that number would be?

MR. COLLIER: I could look at a range of values and try to get us close.

MR. HARTIG: Okay.

DR. CRABTREE: With Ben's comments, does that mean staff is going to go back and kind of relook at Alternative 3? I am partly inclined to move to take it out, because I don't think it complies with the guidelines, but we're so early in this that I think if staff wants to tweak this some more that --

DR. DUVAL: That's what I was taking that as, is direction to staff to go back and look at that and come back with a different value for that approach.

MR. COLLIER: Did you want to include the 85 percent SSB MSY as an alternative?

DR. DUVAL: I think in the direction to staff to develop a different static SPR value, we could also provide you direction for additional proportions of SSB MSY.

MR. COLLIER: Action 3, this is revising the annual catch limits for red snapper. Currently, we have a method that was accepted in Amendment 28 which looks at the total removals, including landings and dead discards. If the total removals exceeds the ABC in one year, the following year, the season will not open. If they do not exceed the ABC, then there's the equation looking at the ACL, and that deals with the ABC for year two, and it essentially looks at the ABC for two years and averages it out and then reduces the ABC for the following year based on that. The equation is up there, and I believe I have a little bit of a typo in some of this, where it should be the ABC, as opposed to the ACL, and Monica is going to address that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thanks, Chip. If you look at the first full paragraph underneath the formula that says, in the document, if the ACL in the prior fishing year is exceeded, then the ACL

in the following year would be set equal to zero. That's actually a typo to use ACL for the first time. It should be if the ABC in the prior fishing year is exceeded, then the ACL in the following year would be set equal to zero. I know you've given staff latitude to revise the no-action alternative, but, on this one, I just wanted to bring it to your attention.

After the council took final action on this in December of 2012, I believe, and this is the Amendment 28 -- I'm sorry. This formula, this alternative, comes out of Amendment 28. When staff was going through the document, we realized that that error, "if the ACL in the prior fishing year", that was a typographical error, and it should have said "if the ABC in the prior fishing year", and so we went back through and looked at the minutes and looked at the discussion underneath the action, and it was all clear that the council understood that total removals are measured against the ABC in order to determine the ACL, and not against an ACL to determine the ACL.

At any rate, that was updated and revised, and I have a letter in front of me from Chairman Cupka, who looked at this all with Executive Director Mahood, and then ended up kind of doing an errata sheet, if you will, and so there was a revised amendment. That's what went through rulemaking and that's what was approved by the Secretary, and so I will give that information to Chip and make sure we have the exact language that was sent forward. I think we even discussed this at a subsequent council meeting, but just to bring it to your attention, and so this isn't Chip's fault at all that that's in there, but I just happened to catch it, and so we'll have it corrected the next time you see it.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for that, Monica.

MR. COLLIER: Then, under that, we have three different alternatives for new ACL values. We have the ACL equals the ABC in landings and discards. We have the ACL equals 95 percent of the ABC and 90 percent. I do want to point out in this that the ABC is being specified in landings and discards. The SSC is going to give some recommendation in October on using both landings and discards in setting the ABC.

DR. DUVAL: Hopefully, Zack, that will answer some of your questions about why landings and discards. I think we've outlined that it's a unique situation, and hopefully we can get some guidance from the SSC on whether or not to continue to maintain this unique formula or not.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

DR. MCGOVERN: For 2a, 2b, and 2c, you mean landings and dead discards here, right, and not landings and discards?

DR. DUVAL: Good catch, Jack. Yes, landings and dead discards.

MR. COLLIER: The next question for the council is do you want the landings to be specified in numbers of fish or weight of fish? We might as well get that out of the way early.

MR. BOWEN: I prefer numbers.

DR. DUVAL: Anybody else? I am seeing a few heads nod around the table for numbers. So dead discards are reported in numbers of fish, and, given that that's the largest component of our data stream right now, perhaps that would be wise.

MR. BOWEN: But we will also do landings in numbers of fish as well, correct? I mean, that's what I was looking for, landings and discards in numbers of fish.

DR. DUVAL: I think that's the question being posed, yes.

MR. BOWEN: Yes, I prefer numbers of fish.

DR. DUVAL: There are some tables in here that you see that show, with the existing catch level advice we have received from the SSC, what each of those different alternatives would look like, but, again, we're going to get some more input from them in October.

MR. COLLIER: Right. The current table that is projected up on the screen right now is if Action 1, Alternative 1, which is the F 30 percent MSY value, is used. If that changes, these values are all going to change. We're going to likely have to tier off of which value you guys choose as your preferred for the MSY.

Generally, what I have in here is, if it's a blue table, that's going to be a result of some actions that you guys took, and those are going to be the values in there. Then, if you follow it down, there's a gray table. That's just background information that can be used in your decision, and so I try to make it nice and clear that we're trying to keep SEDAR 24 values and Amendment 28 values separate than what's going to be used in the current amendment.

DR. DUVAL: Has everybody got that? Okay. Let's keep moving on.

MR. COLLIER: The next action is to establish a recreational ACT for the red snapper in the South Atlantic. Currently, there is not an ACT for red snapper. It hasn't been specified, and so there is a range of alternatives. We have the typical alternatives of 85 percent, 75 percent, and 65 percent, as well as using a range based on PSEs from the recreational fishery.

Then there is an additional one, looking at the difference between the ACL and the landings over the past few years. The information for that is using data from 2012 to 2014, when there was a red snapper fishery. In each one of those years, the recreational exceeded the ACL, and so there would be a buffer between the new value for the ACL, which would be coming from the projections. Then you would reduce that to the ACT, based on the formula that's given there in Alternative 6. It's nice and confusing.

DR. DUVAL: No, I understand what you're doing. It's the average proportion of the overage for each year.

MR. HAYMANS: But that occurs within that short window or period or wave, and the difficulty in hitting the ACT is going to be as difficult as hitting the ACL, and, to me, it's an extra step that I don't know why we would take it at the moment, with a pulse fishery like this.

DR. DUVAL: I guess my recommendation would be if -- I mean, there's going to be large uncertainty around those estimates anyway, but let's let the SSC look at it and see what they say about this as a potential method. I am not disagreeing with you at all.

MR. COLLIER: One thing I do want to point out from that is that the exceeding the ACL was about 41 percent. It is going to change, depending on how the season changes and different things like that, but, right now, your reduction from the ABC, your maximum reduction is 10 percent. If you were to set the ACL and ACT equal to each other, which is just 10 percent below the ABC, you would be exceeding the ABC, and so that is one thing to consider with this.

DR. DUVAL: So the numbers in this table are the percentage by which the ACL was exceeded? Okay. I just wanted to make sure I was understanding it. Okay. Any questions or anything for Chip?

MR. COLLIER: One further note on this is we do not have a commercial ACT set, and that could be considered for the commercial fishery as well, if you guys choose to set a commercial ACT. I know that's typically not the South Atlantic Council -- They typically do not do that, and so this is an option to at least get on the record that we don't want it or reasons why we don't want it.

DR. DUVAL: Are there thoughts from the committee with regard to a commercial ACT? I am seeing heads shaking no, and so I guess we can move on with that one.

MR. BREWER: As long as we're clear that we're only talking about a commercial ACT, as opposed to a recreational, for the sake of consistency in some other things that may come up.

DR. DUVAL: Duly noted. I think it's clear.

MR. COLLIER: Action 5 is to revise the optimum yield for red snapper in the South Atlantic region, and we have four different alternatives here. The first alternative is currently what it's set at. It's yield at 98 percent FMSY, and, currently, that is at SPR 30 percent. Alternative 2, optimum yield is set to the commercial ACL and the recreational ACT. Alternative 3, optimum yield is set at 75 percent MSY, and then Alternative 4 is basically the definition of optimum yield.

The IPT wanted to note that it would be very difficult to apply Alternative 4 as it's written right now, because that is in MSA, and so each one of these OYs would be using that definition, and so, if you don't choose Alternative 4, does that mean you're going against MSA? Then the other one is it's already included in all the other alternatives, because it is the definition, and so it gets a little circular and difficult. If there is different ways you would like to see optimum yield specified, please let us know.

DR. DUVAL: We have had some discussions about optimum yield and how it's defined and how it may be different for different sectors. I think the range of Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 is certainly descriptive. I guess I would look to Monica for any comments on Alternative 4, given that that alternative is simply the definition that's in the Act. Help us out.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think you could take it out, because it's already part and parcel of -- You're right. It's in the Act. It's already part and parcel, or should be, of all of these alternatives, and so I think just restating what the Act says doesn't get you anywhere.



DR. DUVAL: Chip, I don't know. Maybe we just have some direction to staff that it's just not necessary to include that. I guess maybe it's just redundant.

MS. BECKWITH: I haven't thought about this too much, but, under the conversations that we've had with optimum yield, some of the attachments, there was an additional definition for OY that the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council omnibus ACL amendment uses, and I didn't know if that would be an option that we would want to consider, and that is OY would be the long-term average catch, which is not designed to exceed the ACL and will fall between the ACL and the ACT.

DR. DUVAL: Tony, do you want to speak to that?

MR. DILERNIA: Yes, and that was the process that we used to address the condition that I described a little bit earlier, half jokingly and half seriously, saying we had too many fish and we were faced with closing the fishery because there was too many fish, and so, once we realized that that really wasn't our goal and we didn't want to do that, we came up with that process, and it has helped alleviate -- The black sea bass stock continues to grow, and we are being faced with additional restrictions, and we're not sure how we're going to deal with it yet, but that is what we did. We did this omnibus amendment to take the average, and it helped us out. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Tony. That's something also that maybe the IPT could consider in your conversations, pulling in some definitions from other councils.

MR. COLLIER: Action 6 is to establish closed areas to reduce red snapper bycatch and mortality. With this, what we are looking for direction from the council is on the ways to actually develop these closed areas for consideration, whether it be based on depth, catch per unit effort, or based on either fisheries or fishery-independent data or the number of discards. Any guidance would be greatly appreciated for that.

MR. HARTIG: I would like to see the depth investigated, and I would like to see it based on discard mortality of red snapper with depth, so we'll know what the mortality is at different depths, at probably ten-foot intervals, from 150 in, maybe. Once you get past 150, you're not getting much survival, that I remember. I may be wrong. You're the expert on that. You would know.

MR. COLLIER: I believe, for the recreational side, it's probably around 45 percent at 150 feet.

MR. HAYMANS: Purely for looking at this, I would go back to 17A. We looked at a ninety-eight to 240-foot closure. I would look at that with some sort of monthly closure. In my opinion, it would be after the shallow-water grouper season reopened, and so I'm thinking May/June or June/July, something like that, a two or three-month closure, ninety-eight to 240 feet. I would assume a lot of that information is in 17A now, some of that analysis.

DR. DUVAL: So you're saying looking at a depth-based closure, but after the --

MR. HAYMANS: Shallow-water reopens, shallow-water grouper.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, and so depth beyond 240 feet is what you were --

MR. HAYMANS: No, between ninety-eight and 240.

DR. DUVAL: Between ninety-eight and 240. That was the number I missed. Thank you.

MR. HAYMANS: That was what 17A was, I think, was ninety-eight to 240.

MR. BOWEN: Doug, just for some clarification, that's from 31 degrees South, right, just what's in this options paper, where the 97 percent of the historical landings and discards of red snapper are located?

MR. HAYMANS: It would be taking the recommended closure from 17A, which is 31 degrees, yes, and applying it on a time basis. Beyond that, I don't see why we couldn't take it -- Well, that's where the red snapper landings occur, and so, yes.

MR. BOWEN: And discards. Chip, if you could give me a little clarification on the difference between abundance and, as far as areas, as far as abundance versus discards? Wouldn't that be the same area?

MR. COLLIER: They don't necessarily have to line up. If there's not a great deal of effort in the highest abundance areas, then you're not going to have many discards in there. If the number of people don't match up with the number of fish, then you're not going to get those discards, and so it's focusing either on the fish or the fishery, and it sounds like we're going depth and potential interactions with red snapper. Do you understand what I'm saying?

MR. BOWEN: No, and I'm trying, but I haven't caught on yet.

MR. COLLIER: If a majority of the fish were here and the fishery was over here, you wouldn't have any discards, and so, if you just base it on abundance, it might not get you that great of a discount.

MR. BOWEN: That kind of goes to what I was mentioning to Doug about. I think, historically, the discards, the fish and the fisher, are overlapped in this case, and so there may not be a difference in the center of abundance versus the center of effort.

DR. DUVAL: I think Chip is just asking for a clarification and making sure that the committee understands that you may have a situation where -- There may potentially be a situation where the bulk of your effort is not overlapping with the area where the bulk of your fish are, and that's all.

MR. BOWEN: Okay. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Is there any other input on Action 6 and the alternatives? We have a couple of suggestions, one from Ben, who would like to see areas based on depth at ten-foot intervals.

MR. COLLIER: Can I get a clarifying -- What minimum depth would you want for that?

MR. HARTIG: The minimum depth where really red snapper occur in any number. Do we have that information? Do we know that? I think it's like sixty feet, if I remember correctly, or right

around the sixty-foot level is where the interactions start in earnest. While I've got the mic, the other thing I was thinking is that, for discard mortality, there's a number of different interactions that occur. You've got small fish that survive better than big fish in a given depth. You have that to take into consideration as well, and so I don't know if we can do it.

MR. COLLIER: It's difficult.

MR. HARTIG: I understand.

MR. COLLIER: In a lot of this stuff, there is confounding factors, where the smaller fish are less likely to be in deeper depths. However, the larger fish are to be over all range of depths, and so there is a depth effect, but there is always a depth and size interaction within that, and so trying to tease those out is very difficult.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Doug, I don't know if this makes any difference, but you referenced Amendment 17A and some depth closures. There were some closures, I think, proposed in 17A, but 17B for speckled and warsaw, you all put a prohibition on fishing for about eight species, including speckled and warsaw, beyond 240 feet, and so I don't know if that affects what you were talking about earlier regarding different depths.

MR. HAYMANS: I came onto the council at that vote of 17A, and I thought that that was -- At the time, that was the solution to ending overfishing on red snapper, was to shut down bottom fishing from ninety-eight to 240 feet. It was a whole different suite of species when we went beyond 240. Then we came behind it and repealed it at the very next meeting and whatnot, and so, my way of thinking, a lot of the analysis for ninety-eight to 240 has already been done. Now all we should have to do is look at what the right timing for that closure should be, and so that's what I'm asking for.

MR. CONKLIN: If we're going to look at some options for that, then I would like to see something from ninety-eight feet, I guess because the line is already drawn would be the rationale on that, inward, back to the coast, and see what we could get out of that.

DR. DUVAL: So looking at a time/area closure in shallower waters.

MR. CONKLIN: That's right, and I'm just thinking that if, for some reason, we had to close the ninety-eight to 240 in the heart of snapper country, it's just going to shift a ton of effort other places, and, if we could let the guys fish where they need to be fishing and still save some -- Close the inshore bottom and still be able to conduct a fishery, then that would be a better option.

DR. CRABTREE: Remember when we did 17A that we had very little spatially-explicit data on where snapper are. We've got a lot more information now from the expanded surveys that have been done, and so I think we can do a lot better job of identifying hot spots where snapper are.

The discards are more difficult, because we don't have very good spatially-explicit data there, but, rather than just talking about depths and contours and all that, I think what we need to do is pull together all the spatial data we have and look at where are the fish, and are there hot spots that have a lot of fish on it? Then, to the extent we can overlay where are the discards over that, then we can start looking at can we do something, I hope, a little more refined than what we did in 17A,

and hopefully it doesn't result in such a huge area, but there is a lot of information now that we just didn't have back then.

MR. HAYMANS: To Chris's point about shifting effort, maximum effort is shifted now, when the season is closed, and so I just don't see a whole lot of shifting effort to those shallow-water species more so than it already is right now.

MR. BOWEN: To Dr. Crabtree's point, I don't know if it was the last meeting or the meeting before, but Chip actually gave a presentation that broke it down, according to MRIP, by county, of where the landings of red snapper were, and maybe we can have that back in our briefing book the next meeting, so we could have a freshening up for our memories, but it was in a briefing book a meeting or two ago, and I thought it was very detailed and very accurate.

DR. DUVAL: I'm pretty sure that was the March briefing book, and so you could probably go online and pull it up. Is there additional direction to staff on this particular action looking at area closures based on depth, abundance, discards, overlaying all the spatial information, as Roy has suggested, to try to get at those hot spots? My intent is to wrap up any discussion on this action and give folks a few minutes to take a quick break before we move into the Q&A. That doesn't mean we can't add any additional thoughts tomorrow morning, but I would like to sort of close out on this action.

MR. CONKLIN: The ninety-eight-foot inshore was also with a season and depth as well.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for that clarification. Any other thoughts on this particular action at this time? Chip, do you feel like you have some clarity and direction, and not that it's necessarily going to be easy for you to do this, but --

MR. COLLIER: Luckily, we have Nick Farmer, and he's ready to go.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I am not seeing anybody else around the table with a burning desire to throw anything else out with regard to Action 6 and this options paper, and so my suggestion is that we recess for the evening, and we will start back up again at 8:30, and we can let staff get set up for the informal Q&A, and so don't go too far away. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on September 13, 2016.)

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SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Mariana Inn at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Wednesday morning, September 14, 2016, and was called to order by Chairman Michelle Duval.

DR. DUVAL: We will move back into our regular agenda. We were on Snapper Grouper Amendment 43, dealing with red snapper. We had made our way through Action 6 at the end of the day yesterday, and so the next action up for consideration is Action 7, and I'm going to turn things over to Chip to take us through that.

MR. COLLIER: Back in June, there was an options paper that was presented by Ben in regards to red snapper management, and everything previously was done -- That's typically what we do in fisheries management. This next part is the request you guys came up with, with kind of an adaptive approach, trying to end overfishing while still allowing the fishery, and so this next group, even though it is broken up into components, it's going to be the necessary parts in order to get a fishery that has a season, a commercial and recreational fishery, and potentially some ways to reduce dead discards, and so keep that in mind as we go through these next six actions.

The first one focuses on the commercial fishery, and here is the option for it. It's management measures for the commercial sector to allow for a restricted harvest while ending overfishing of the red snapper in the South Atlantic region. We need to recognize that, even if we do have a harvest, it is going to be very small. I think it's going to be like 5,000 fish for the commercial fishery, and so we are going to have to play within the guidelines of the ACL and ABCs. Within this, I do have a note up top that, if specified, ACT for the commercial fishery, we would use that to specify the seasons, bag limits or trip limits, and size limits. Since you guys did not want that, that note is going to be taken out.

Then the next thought is establish a commercial season. If you guys have any recommendations on a commercial season, that would be great. We also have the other necessary parts of that, with a size limit and a trip limit. Within the trip limit, we have the question asked of do you want that specified as a poundage weight, and we have an example up there of seventy-five pounds, or would you prefer that to be a number of fish? So that is some guidance you guys can give us as we begin to develop these.

Then, as we get into Actions 6 and 7, actually, I came up with a different way to consider this. If you guys would prefer to have a season, we can then calculate the necessary size limit and trip limits that would be associated with that in order to get a set season or a predicted season. If you guys say we want a two-month commercial season, what size limit and trip limit would get us those? It's a different way to think about it. If you think season is more important than the beginning size limit and trip limit -- The trip limits are going to be small. I mean, we're not going to get to a hundred pounds. Don't expect that. It's going to be a bycatch fishery, at best.

MR. HAYMANS: That sounds like we're starting with the end in mind, which is good, rather than stepping through one piece at a time. You're saying if we wanted the season to be June, July, and August, something like that, and we knew that we didn't want a minimum size, then you could tell us a bag limit or something of that nature?

MR. COLLIER: For the commercial, yes. We could come up with a trip limit that would be associated with that.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm sorry. I thought I heard you go back to Action 6 and say through all of those actions. It's just Action 7?

DR. DUVAL: I think that was a misspeak.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess though the problem with doing any analysis on this is coming up with a scenario where there are any fish available to be harvested. Until you know how many fish could be harvested, it's kind of hard to decide what you're going to do, and so I think this is fine, if we can figure out how to get to there, but I think we've got a lot of work on our hands to figure out how to get to that point, but I'm not sure how far they can really go analyzing a lot of this until we come up with some scenario that addresses the problems we have.

MR. COLLIER: But I think we do need guidance on is a season more important than a size limit or a trip limit, and I think that would help us begin to analyze the data.

DR. DUVAL: Part of this is, obviously, contingent on the feedback that we get from the SSC at their October meeting, but, again, I think some thoughts from the committee regarding the way Chip has laid this out, understanding that we can't really fill in the blanks at this point, but if you were to -- Knowing that anything we do get, if we get something, is going to be very, very small, is it more important, trying to think along the lines of data collection, to allow for some data points from a small bycatch fishery for a two-month period of time that would allow those other blanks of size limit or number of fish to be filled in, or is it more important that there be some limit for the commercial fishery, in terms of a size or number of fish or number of pounds that then a season, and I say season sort of very lightly, could be constructed around?

I think that's just what Chip is trying to get at here. If folks are looking at Alternatives 6, 7, and 8 as an example of it's more important for us to potentially allow for some very, very, very limited harvest over a defined period of time, then it's likely the rest of those alternatives may not be that viable, and that doesn't mean that maybe they necessarily go away from this options paper, but at least the IPT has a sense of potentially where to focus once the SSC comes back. I had Zack and then Charlie.

MR. BOWEN: To Roy's point, I think figuring out how to get there is probably step one, and I guess I'm asking. Is it in our purview to -- I brought it up yesterday, but is it in our purview to manage to catch and not manage to catch and discards? That may be a way to get there a little bit, if we set our ABCs to landings instead of landings and discards, like we do with all the other species.

DR. CRABTREE: You're right that generally when we get ABCs from the SSC that it's landed fish, but it takes into account the expected discards that will occur, and so, while you could tell the SSC that you want them to give you an ABC that's just landed catch, they're going to have to account for all of these discards and coming up with it, and that's really the problem right now, because, with what I've seen, you can't account for the discards, because they're too high. Now, that may all change with the SSC, and who knows, but I think you could do that, but you still have to deal with the discard issues somehow or other.

MR. PHILLIPS: I had a fisherman yesterday tell me, just kind of thinking about what might happen with red snapper, he said I really don't want to give up a bunch of bottom for closed areas just to go catch fifty pounds of red snapper for a little while. We might want to try to figure out a rough idea, because they may decide it's better just to not keep catching any and be open for their

other things, vermilion or pinkies or whatever else they're catching. I know that discussion will come up, but we might want to try to lay that out early, so we don't do a lot of work for nothing.

MR. WAUGH: I think it's important to remember where we are. We're talking about outlining a new approach that Ben raised at the last meeting, and we're talking about honing this a little bit to approve, perhaps in December, to go out to scoping, and so we don't have to get too far down into the weeds.

We don't want to go out to scoping with something that's a finished product. Plus, we've got a lot of work that's coming back from the SSC that you will have at your December meeting, and so the guidance we're looking for here is are the range of options that we've got in here to go out to scoping to get the public's input, are they sufficient? Can you give us any sort of refinement on what's in here?

If you step back, the three sort of choices that are out there, and Charlie just mentioned that some people would like to stay with no retention. Well, we can't do that, because that allows continued overfishing. Then we close big areas of the bottom or we come up with some new adaptive management approach, and that's what Ben's paper outlined at the last meeting.

I think it's helpful to keep that sort of broad perspective in mind as we're looking at some of these options, and we're just looking for any additions or removals or any priorities on the different specifics that are in here, and let's not worry about doing the analysis until the appropriate time. When we go out to scoping, you don't want it all laid out. You want to sort of outline the big picture and let the public come in, and then the real work begins at the March meeting, when we start presenting you with some analyses.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Gregg.

MR. HARTIG: I don't see anything here about -- Although I am thinking out loud here. Seventy-five pounds is not very many fish. I guess it depends on where you are, but I am just thinking that we just need a few fish on each trip to cover the bycatch that the commercial fishery has, so we can cover that discard mortality in those trips, and I don't know how much of that there is.

I am sure we could go into the discard mortality logbooks and get some idea of how many fish are discarded on a given trip, but, to me, I think we should couch anything commercially in as long as possible with some small number of fish, so we can cover at least some of the discard mortality for a long period of time. I think that would help, at least for the discard mortality estimates in the commercial side.

DR. DUVAL: Ben, I just want to make sure -- Are you talking about number of fish or pounds of fish? This is just one of the pieces of input that staff was looking for, numbers or pounds. The seventy-five pounds that you see under Alternative 3 right now, that's what is contained in Amendment 28. That's what we operated under for a couple of years. The first year we allowed for a limited harvest, it was fifty pounds, if you recall, and so I think, going back to what Gregg said, some general guidance on pounds or numbers. I think you've made your point that you're looking for some time that the commercial industry would be able to just simply cover the discards that they might encounter that they can't absolutely avoid and do that for as long as possible. I think that point is well taken in development of these alternatives.

MR. HARTIG: The only thing that I would add to that is just don't -- Whenever we start that, try and make it end before the spawning season starts. At least we could keep fishermen from keeping fish during the spawning season. I have heard, numerous times from fishermen, why are you opening a short season during the spawning season?

MR. GRINER: I think it definitely needs to be in pounds. Number of fish will just encourage more grading, and it doesn't change your discard problem at all, and so it definitely needs to be in pounds, something in pounds. The commercial sector works in pounds. Everything is done in pounds, and so definitely something in pounds.

MR. BOWEN: I was going to say completely the opposite, but I am not a commercial fisherman or a commercial permit holder, and so I will leave that up to them, but, to Gregg and Ben's points, with the depths that these commercial guys are fishing, no minimum size limit seems to be practical, because of the discard mortality, and I think the average weight now of a snapper, from what I remember, and this is directly from memory from SEDAR 41, but I think it's like 7.2 pounds or something, and so that would be roughly ten fish on a seventy-five-pound trip limit. You mentioned the spawn. These fish are spawning from April through October. I don't know how we get around not fishing during the spawn when there are spawns from that long of a period.

MR. CONKLIN: Alternative 4 and 5 will enable us to set sort of a slot, to where we could keep certain fish, and so I was thinking in numbers of fish, personally, since everything else we've done has been in numbers of fish with this amendment, and so I disagree with the poundage limit. I think numbers of fish is where we need to be. 4 and 5, if we keep them, will eliminate the ability to high-grade, for the most part.

DR. DUVAL: It seems like perhaps we're looking towards keeping multiple of these alternatives out there for consideration, as well as whether or not things should be done in pounds or number of fish, and get public input on that.

MR. BELL: Just a thought. The purpose of this, if I understand it, is to allow some commercial retention, but not in a directed sense, and so do we need to specify this is for hook and line, as opposed to spear or bang stick, and I realize there can be misidentification, let's say, even for a diver, but that would be more of a directed -- If you allow retention there, that would probably be more directed. It wouldn't be bycatch. I would say it's more intentional.

DR. DUVAL: Let me just make sure that I'm clear on what you're saying. You would want to make clear that these measures would be for incidental retention for only the hook-and-line fishery and that spearing of red snapper would not be allowed, and is that where you're going?

MR. BELL: Yes, and I'm just bringing that up. With conventional hook and line, you don't know what you're going to get. The fish comes up, and you've got barotrauma, and you've got to deal with it. If you're a diver, you're down there and you're picking and choosing which fish you're going to take, but if it's just you're allowed seventy-five pounds or whatever it ends up being, if I am down there and I see some snapper and I can have seventy-five pounds, I will probably take my seventy-five pounds, and so that would be more of a directed, intentional harvest. We don't seem to kind of factor that in here, and I'm just asking.



MR. COLLIER: A lot of the dive trips, it's multiple gear. They fish hook and line when they're not diving, and so there could be some incidental bycatch on the hook-and-line side while they still have dive gear on the boat, and so it's going to be very difficult to address that, but we can definitely bring it up.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Any other thoughts on the alternatives or options contained in this particular action? Do we feel like we have covered them all?

MR. HARTIG: I don't like the maximum size limit. The biggest fish have a hard time with the - Chip qualified that somewhat yesterday, but the maximum size limit is going to be problematic. If you used descending devices, I guess it would help. I will leave it alone.

DR. DUVAL: I think that's further down in the list of actions, descending devices. Anything else on this particular action before we let Chip move on? Okay.

MR. COLLIER: Now we're going to move into the recreational sector. Just a note for this. We're going to be using the ACT when we're setting the size limits and bag limits in the calculations, to prevent overages of the ACL for the landed portion of it. We're concentrating on the landings portion here, because, in the stock assessment, it does give you a landings portion and it does give you a discard portion, and so we're focusing on the landed side here. Then, later on in the alternatives, there is one for a closed area, which would be focusing more on the discard part and reducing dead discards. Keep that mind when you're thinking of these alternatives.

Alternative 2 basically looks at the private recreational fishery, and we have a variety of seasons, with a total length limit. You could put a slot limit in there. Once again, this is just a range of options that you guys could consider, or do you want to separate it out, similar to how the commercial fishery was, where it had a size limit separate from bag limits? In this one, I tend to be a little bit of a lumper, as opposed to a splitter, and so I like everything at once. You guys are -- It's very laid out for everyone that this is what we're trying to do. We want a season, and these are the size limits and bag limits that could potentially get us a season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Why in Action 8 is it split out for private fishermen, federally-permitted charter boats, and federally-permitted headboat? Is this presuming something about a stamp or something else? I am just kind of confused, or are we presuming that there will be different types of discard mortality or what?

MR. COLLIER: The thought process was -- Actually, it's the headboat is going to be very different. If a headboat has fifty people on the vessel, do we want fifty snapper coming in? That could add up very quickly, and that was just -- If you guys want something different, if you want these different sectors treated differently, we give you the option in the beginning. Then it's easier to have everything split out in the beginning and lump them back together as we're re-aggregating the data, as opposed to splitting it and then have to reanalyze and get a new dataset.

DR. CRABTREE: The problem I see is if we don't make some changes to how we're dealing with this, if you had a private season and it closed and then you had a charter season that was open when the private was closed, all the private guys could just get charter permits and put them on their boats and go fish in the other season, and the charter boats could -- There would be a lot of potential for gaming the system.

Now, if we go to electronic reporting requirements or if we do limited entry or something like that, that would change all of that, but it would be hard to know how to base what the seasons could be without establishing some sort of separate quotas for the charter boats and headboats and private boats, which is what the Gulf has done with red snapper, but I'm not sure how you would be able to determine what their seasons are and did they stay within their allotted amount without establishing allocations that way.

MR. DILERNIA: I raised my hand for another reason, but I would like to add to what the Regional Administrator just discussed and share our experiences in the Mid-Atlantic. In the Mid-Atlantic, we had -- We have eliminated it, but we did have what was called a research set-aside, from which for-hire boats could purchase black sea bass quota and fish it before the regular recreational season opened. There was a number of the private recreational fishermen who were not happy with that situation, because black sea bass, and I suspect red snapper also, are structure-dependent, and so the fish would move inshore, and those for-hire vessels that had their research set-aside permits would target the fish on the inshore structure before the recreational fishermen had an opportunity to fish on them.

By the time the recreational fishery had opened, those few vessels that had those special permits had taken away a lot of the fish that normally would have been able to the regular or private recreational fishermen, and so that was a problem that developed with the Mid and one of the reasons why we eliminated the research set-aside. That's just to share that experience with you.

I raised my hand, because I was going to ask the question of -- I'm looking at these alternatives, and I see alternatives that are listing a ten snapper per person limit, and I don't understand that, because, if I remember, during the commercial discussion a little earlier, we were talking about maybe a seventy-five-pound bycatch or whatever, at a seven-and-a-half-pound fish. That would be the most on the vessel, would be seventy-five pounds. Could someone help me understand why these alternatives all list a ten snapper per person limit?

DR. DUVAL: We actually have a ten-snapper aggregate bag limit, and so the way these alternatives are listed is that the retention limit would be a number of fish per person per day as part of that ten-snapper limit, and so maybe you get one red snapper per person per day within your ten-snapper aggregate, and then you could have ten yellowtail or whatever else to fill out that aggregate bag limit.

MR. DILERNIA: I understand, but there is a potential for ten red snapper.

DR. DUVAL: I would say no, just given the science that we have in front of us. It's just that it would be incorporated within that aggregate limit.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you.

MR. BOWEN: Just to go over some -- For the commercial side, I feel like no minimum size limit, because of the depths fished. For the private recreational angler, or the headboat, because of the depths fished there, which are considerably shallower, and me, with the experience of watching what happened when we implemented the twenty-inch size limit in 1993 and those fish growing and being able to survive, I think a minimum size limit in this sector is probably very necessary. I

am of the opinion that we need to look at some alternatives with sixteen, eighteen, twenty inches, twenty-two inches, or whatever it may be, but I did see what the twenty-inch minimum size limit did, and it seemed to work well in the 1990s and 2000s.

MR. BREWER: With the language that's in there about differing standards for headboats and CHF and private boats, just to know that an overreaching sentiment of mine is that all recreational fishermen should be treated the same, and you don't need to differentiate what platform they're fishing from. Every one of them should be treated exactly the same, and so we don't have separate quotas right now for charter boats and we don't have separate quotas for the charter for-hire folks, and you're putting some stuff in here, I guess perhaps anticipating that that may happen in the future, but it's complicating things, and you're going to get some people that, if they read this, they're going to get upset over that, if they can understand what's being discussed. I just think that, overarching, all recreational fishermen should be treated the same.

MS. BECKWITH: Chester, to Chip's original point, if you want to treat all the recreational fishermen the same, then we would potentially allow a headboat that's carrying seventy people off of North Carolina to bring in seventy red snapper. I don't agree that that would be a good idea. While I understand your sentiments, the charter industry is not the same, and there is room for discussion that we are a business and we have different needs than a regular recreational fisherman, and so to have an overarching statement that we should all be treated exactly the same, there is room for disagreement on that statement.

DR. DUVAL: The sense that I'm getting is that this might be something that could be included in scoping, is should there be different limits for different sectors, and put it out that way.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What Chip explained, when I asked the question, was that if we wanted to have say a vessel limit for headboats, it doesn't look like -- Unless I am not looking in the right spot, it doesn't look like there is a vessel limit option in here, but there are vessel limit options for charter boats, but not for headboats, and so it looks like that needs to be added.

Then I guess my next question is going to come up under the Action 9. If we've got options in here for how to treat the charter boat, the headboat, the private recreational person differently, then shouldn't there be some different options on how to parse that out, if we're going to talk about a stamp or a tag or something like that? It doesn't look like that is carried through the document, is I guess what my question and concern is.

DR. DUVAL: I don't believe there is a vessel limit on any of the headboat options. There is under charter boat, but there is not under headboat, and there is under private, and so that was what Jessica was getting at. Just to make sure I understand your comment on carrying items through the document, are you saying that there should be mention in here of other actions that I think we're going to get to regarding like a recreational stamp or --

MS. MCCAWLEY: I can explain that more when we get to the next action, but it just seems like, if we're going to get down in the weeds on a discussion about treating recreational anglers differently, then we need to think about how a future stamp or a tag is going to apply, and I didn't really see that covered in the next action, and so I'm wondering if there needs to be more discussion about that, but I can hold all of that until the next action.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, and maybe it's in how the document is structured, like which action comes first. That might be part of it.

MR. BOWEN: First and foremost, I really appreciate you coming back to me multiple times. I have been involved in SEDAR 41 and the whole process from start to finish, and I probably have harvested more snapper than most people in this room, or maybe anybody in this room, and so I appreciate you coming back to me and letting me work this out. To Chester's point about being - I agree with Anna. We're separate, and we need to be treated as separate.

MR. HAYMANS: I raised my hand on the vessel limit, but Jessica has already covered that, and so I will just say that you said something that I wish were able to be expressed in the document more clearly, and that is you said something to the effect of should we separate these sectors in different management. The way it's structured, the public automatically thinks that's what we're doing, or at least attempting to do, and I would just ask staff if perhaps, in the presentations, that it's more of the question of should we be doing this versus it looks like this is what we're doing. I would just throw that out.

DR. DUVAL: That was going to be just my advice, is that I think, as this document gets prepared for scoping, I think that's exactly the type of question you ask during a scoping process, is should there be different considerations for the different components of the recreational fishery, and I think you can probably list some of the options or concerns that have been expressed around the table.

MR. COLLIER: One thing that we could do is actually add an alternative in there that would include just everybody lumped together. That way, it is very clear that you guys would either select that or you would select one of the other alternatives. As far as the vessel limit for the headboats, we talked about that at the IPT level, and we thought it would be very difficult for a headboat fishery to have a vessel limit. How do you select the individuals that all paid the same amount of money to be able to harvest one of ten red snapper or five red snapper, whatever the vessel limit would be for a headboat? That is going to be a lot more difficult, because that tends to be an individual that is on a headboat, whereas a charter is a group of individuals that go together, and they could potentially split the fish.

DR. DUVAL: I think this might be getting into some of the discussion that we will probably have on the next action, and what Jessica was alluding to was if we go down the road of implementing a snapper grouper stamp, then I think one of the questions that would go out for scoping is who must have a stamp in order to possess a red snapper? Would you be required to have a stamp on a headboat and a charter boat as well? In other words, it wouldn't matter what platform you're fishing on, but that's the next action, and so we will get there.

MR. BROWN: I was just going to ask our Gulf liaison how they do the headboats over in the Gulf? How does that work with the harvest of the red snapper on the headboats?

MS. BOSARGE: Well, we just had the conclusion of an exempted fishing permit program in the Gulf for the headboats, and Dr. Crabtree would have to speak to exactly how many were in that program, but I think it was about a little less than twenty boats. Essentially, that program gave them a different management regime for their red snapper, and I think they did some grouper too, but in how they could utilize those.

A couple of the things that came out of it, one that I guess seems pertinent to your conversation, because your conversation has to do with discards. That's what you're looking at, is a discard fishery, and, under their system, which we have a very different system over there in the Gulf in regards to red snapper than you do, both commercially and recreationally, but, still, when they were allowed to set their system up a little bit differently and manage it under a different regime, we did see their discard mortality decrease dramatically, if I remember correctly in the presentation that we were given, just the way that they chose to implement the management of their fishery under that EFP. It's something to think about.

DR. DUVAL: I want to see if we can kind of wrap up the discussion on this action, because we only have until noon today to complete our business, and we still have several other items on our agenda, and we have several other actions to go through here, and so what I thought I was hearing from the committee is inclusion of some language, in anticipation of a scoping document, that would lay out or ask the question of should there be separate measures, separate management measures, for the different sectors and include an alternative that would simply look at season and bag limits collectively for all three sectors together. I heard comments with regard to the need for a particular minimum size limit for this sector.

MR. COLLIER: I think we do need to talk about Alternatives 5 and 6, which would be a closed area for the recreational fishery as well as a recreational fishing season outside of the allowable fishing area. I think that really needs to be discussed, because that's going to be a way we get to a recreational fishing season.

DR. DUVAL: I just want to make sure we kind of wrapped up on the first four alternatives. In terms of Alternatives 5 and 6, a fishing season and fishing areas.

MR. BOWEN: Just to Chip's point, Alternative 5, when I was reading this last week -- If you want to go out to scoping or whatever, I feel like we probably should include another sub-alternative, 5e or however you want to label it, but seventy-five feet, maybe, if that's okay.

DR. DUVAL: Other comments or thoughts on Alternatives 5 and 6, with regard to fishing areas by depth or fishing seasons outside of any allowable snapper grouper area?

MR. HAYMANS: I am just trying to put it together with Action 6, and what is really the difference? If we close an area seasonally, that means there is an area opened at some point, and I am just trying to determine the difference between Action 6 and Action 8, Alternative 5.

MR. COLLIER: Action 8, Alternative 5, focuses just on the recreational fishery, whereas Action 6 would be doing both the recreational and commercial fishery at one time. That's the major difference.

MR. HAYMANS: Again, for clarity, to me, we wouldn't need the Alternative 5, because I don't see us separating them, but, if they're going to take it out to public comment, I would, in some way, make sure that the public understands that. I would almost move Alternative 5 over to Action 6 and make that an area/seasonal closure and separate it recreational/commercial there, rather than having two separate areas and two separate actions.

MR. COLLIER: To be honest with you, I would like to keep it in the recreational side of things. That way, it focuses on the recreational discards and the allowance of a fishing season. I think those two need to be put together and packaged together. If you separate them, then you begin to think of them separately and not necessarily as you need this one action in order to have the fishing season.

MR. CONKLIN: I was a little confused on that as well, just like Doug, but if we're going to have options -- I think we should have the same options that we have in Action 6 as we do in this one, and so the same suggestions that were made for the commercial and recreational fisheries need to be made for just the recreational in this alternative.

MR. BELL: I was just kind of trying to separate the recreational and commercial. I think, if I'm understanding this, the commercial fishery would not necessarily be a directed fishery. It would be a means of accommodating bycatch and allowing some retention. The recreational fishery is intended to be a directed fishery, and so they're different, in terms of their nature of how you're kind of prosecuting or what your intentions are when you're out there. I was appreciating what Doug was trying to kind of put this together, but they're kind of distinctive in nature and intent, and so I think, organizationally, if we kind of think of them separately or keep them separate, that makes some sense in the document.

DR. DUVAL: Are there other thoughts on these two alternatives for establishing an allowable snapper grouper fishing area year-round and establishing a snapper grouper fishing season for areas outside the allowable area?

MR. BOWEN: Chip, correct me if I'm wrong, but we are talking two different things here. We're talking about a closed area, where the center of abundance or discards may or may not be. Then, in this action, we're speaking of outside of the closed area, where we can fish for snapper grouper species inside or outside of a certain depth and inside a certain snapper grouper fishing season. I mean that's what we're looking at, correct?

DR. DUVAL: Alternative 5, you're setting up an allowable area for snapper grouper fisheries inshore of some depth range that would be open year-round. Alternative 6 looks at setting up a season for the areas outside of that allowable area. Does that make sense?

MR. BOWEN: Yes, ma'am, it does. If that's the case, then Alternative 6, and if you want some input from the members of the council as far as going out to scoping, the snapper grouper fishing season outside of that closed area, for us, would be May through October. That would be one thought, from May 1 through October 31. That might replace the X's in Sub-Alternative 6a or 6b for Alternative 6.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Anything else? The next action is recreational stamp or tag program.

MR. COLLIER: We have three options in this one, establishing a recreational stamp or tag, and one is obviously no action. That's currently how we are. The second one is require a federal stamp for either red snapper, red snapper species associated with habitat where red snapper is, or all species within the fishery management unit. Then the third alternative is a tag program. You guys have talked about that in the past. There's been some difficulty with a tag program, but that's there as an alternative, if you would like to select that. That's going to require, as all of these are, or at

least Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, it's going to require some fleshing out, but we want some direction on what you guys are thinking or what direction you would like to take.

MR. BREWER: First of all, we've had some discussions about differences with regard to headboats and charter for-hire. With regard to the stamp, I don't know that it's necessary that they have a stamp. The whole idea behind the stamp is to define the universe, to actually be able to sample directly those people that are fishing in federal waters for the deepwater species.

We are already working on an amendment that would speak to electronic reporting for the charter boats, and we do have reporting from the headboats. They're going to be in that universe already. The idea of a stamp for the folks that are on private recreational boats I think is -- While it may take some work, it's something that's a necessity.

Then my other observation is we're making reference here to a tag. There are no real specifics that are here. We have talked about tag programs and the potential for doing those in the past and the workload that would be necessary to try to put that in place and administer it would be astronomical, and so I -- You can leave it in as an option, but it's something that when recreational folks hear the words "fish tag", the antennas go right up and the red flags go off, and you're liable to spend all of your time talking about how they hate the idea of fish tags as opposed to getting useful information from them on the other scoping items.

DR. DUVAL: The way this is set up right now is that, in the discussion, it notes that a recreational stamp would not be required on charter boats or headboats, for precisely the reasons that you outlined. We did have information that was actually presented by the Regional Office, and I think it was actually Jessica Stephen a few years ago, about if the council had wanted to walk down the road of looking at harvest tags for fish that here are possible ways that this could work, and so it might be that the IPT could bring back some of that information. I think it was from December of 2014 or something like that.

MR. DILERNIA: I am curious, when you discuss the tag issue, and, again, to learn things to bring back home, but what would be the cost of administering something like that, a tag issue for -- It seems to me that the cost of administering something like that would be excessive, and that's question one. Then question two is I heard you mention that -- You suggested that the for-hire vessels not be required to have the tag, but I was just wondering if the opposite was being considered, and that is the for-hire vessel purchasing or obtaining a permit to cover all of the passengers onboard its vessel during a trip, and so those are my two questions.

DR. DUVAL: I am going to let Dr. Crabtree speak to the cost of a harvest tag, but, Tony, I think you might be confusing two different things. In terms of the stamp, the way this is set up is that only private anglers would require a stamp in order to harvest these fish. In other words, it's like, when you get your fishing license, you would check off a box for an additional endorsement, or it would be basically a recreational fishing permit that could be specific to red snapper or to all snapper grouper species in the habitat, but it would not be required for charter boats, because we already have an electronic reporting amendment that's moving forward, and it wouldn't be required for passengers on headboats, because those headboats are already reporting electronically.

The harvest tag is a little bit of a different beast, and we've had discussions before about tags available by lottery for everybody versus potentially saving some tags for the different sectors of

the recreational fishery. Dr. Crabtree, if you wouldn't mind answering the question about the costs.

DR. CRABTREE: It's hard to say what the costs would be, because it would depend on how many tags we're talking about. If you're issuing a hundred tags, I would say the cost is fairly minimal. If you're issuing 500,000 tags, then that's a whole different beast, and a lot of it would come down to how you distribute the tags and how you allocate them and how you decide who gets them.

It seems to me what's missing in this action really is it's not clear to me what we're trying to do with it, and I would suggest, number one, that instead of calling it a stamp that we call it a permit, because that's really what it is. Then are we going to use this permit to limit access somehow or is this permit intended as data collecting somehow, because just issuing a permit, in and of itself, isn't going to tell you anything about the catch, and so you're going to have to pull in the MRIP folks. You can identify the universe of people, but then you're going to have to have a survey set up to then determine the effort estimate based on that universe of people, and are you talking about issuing a limited number of stamps or are you going to make the stamps unlimited? It seems like it's not clear to me whether the purpose of this action is data collection or effort limitations, and so I think that's probably the first thing you need to figure out.

I hear all the time that it's essential that we have a permit of some sort and identify the universe of fishermen, but identifying the universe of fishermen is not really that helpful unless you have then a specific effort survey in place for that universe of people to get a fishing effort estimate that you can then use to generate catch estimates.

MR. BROWN: I thought that's what Alternative 3 under this action was going to identify. It was going to identify creating a way to build a program for reporting, so we would understand what was going on, and I see this as being two different things, too. It's not just as a recreational permit, but the tag program, I think, is two different things. If we were going to use this as a tool to not only identify the people that are using this in the private recreational sector, but then we need to go ahead and, rather than just use it as a directive to identify how any red snapper are being harvested, but it seems to me like you need to go ahead and identify all of these species, because we've got so many things that are tied to ORCS and all that that we don't know -- There is no sense in just identifying one species with this action. I think that Sub-Alternative 2c would be the best route, and, like I said, then move on to the Alternative 3 and start defining the program.

MR. BOWEN: As a for-hire owner/operator with very limited numbers of harvest for red snapper predicted, a tag program is not the way that we would like to see it, we meaning the people around my area that have the charter and headboats. If you put twenty people on a boat and one person has a tag and nineteen don't, it's going to be a disaster, and so tag is not what we would like to see in our area. As far as a stamp, I like how Roy put it as far as a permit, but I like "recreational permit" to describe it, instead of just "permit". Tag is not the way we want to go. Stamp, I understand what Roy is saying, and I agree with him. Thank you.

MR. BREWER: I agree with Zack from the standpoint of tags. It's unworkable, and it's a disaster. From the standpoint of a stamp though, and as someone who has been a proponent of this for quite a while, a recreational fisherman already has a license. They have a permit. We went through the whole rigmarole with regard to the federal government having, quote, registries and whatnot if the



states didn't implement fishing license requirements that met certain criteria that were promulgated by NMFS. We went through that years ago.

The people that are out there fishing, they've already got a, quote, permit or a license. The stamp concept is something that would be in addition to that permit or license. If you will, think about you can have your hunting license in the State of Florida, but you've also got to have a waterfowl stamp, and that waterfowl stamp helps to identify those people that are out there shooting ducks or geese, and that's really the whole thought process or the reason behind this stamp idea, is to identify that universe.

It is to aid in data collection, to aid in research. It's not intended as some sort of an effort control. A tag would be effort control, but a stamp, no. You go in and you go to Walmart and you get your fishing license. Then you're asked if you're going to be going fishing way offshore or you're going to be fishing offshore. If you say yes, then you might want to get this stamp that costs ten-dollars or three-dollars or five-dollars or whatever it is. It's not free. There has to be some cost involved, and then you have a method by which you can identify, I think, a much smaller universe of people that are going offshore to fish deep.

There are not that many people that do it, at least not in my area, but identify those people and see what's happening with them, with regard to what they're catching. It's sort of like what are your discards and do you think that these fish lived when you released them, and all of those kinds of pieces of data that we really, really, really need, and that's why I think that, at least in my opinion, I think the stamp is imperative and the tag is -- That's a road we don't want to go down.

MR. BELL: Chester covered some of it, but tag and stamp are two different tools with two different purposes. Tags are used when you want to tightly control the number of animals that you're going to take in whatever you're managing, bears or alligators or red snapper. Tags would certainly be a mechanism, but I don't really see tags working very well in this case, because, like for the state, when we control something like that turkey tags or gator tags or bear tags or whatever it is, it's fairly easy for us to do, but we're talking four states here, and who gets tags and how do you do all of that?

I think tags probably aren't the best thing here. The best thing we could get out of this would be some means, whether you want to call it a stamp or an endorsement or a permit, but some means of identifying the universe of folks that are fishing in this particular fishery, but then, like Roy said yesterday, so now you've got that universe, but then you have to have a survey effort, and the survey effort would have to be customized and paid for to basically pull data out of that universe.

Where perhaps this could be a state/federal partnership is it's fairly easy, at the choke point where the state issues a fishing license, they can ask do you intend to fish for these species or whatever. At that point, you could either charge them for a stamp or you could just put them in a database. There is different ways of doing this, but the state could be the point at which you identify these folks, and they have some sort of endorsement or permit or stamp. They go into the universe, and then perhaps the federal piece of this is the taking care of the survey part, so it's a state/federal partnership that way, but I am not so worried about the for-hire sector.

As we've said, we've got mechanisms, or hopefully we'll have mechanisms, to get data from the for-hire sector. It's really all about the private boat sector. That's the big universe that is kind of

hairly in terms of trying to get our hands around accurate numbers, and so I think the stamp or permit or endorsement, whatever you want to call it, the equivalent of sort of like the duck stamp, that's probably the -- That would be useful, and I think it could be done with the state and federal partnership in a way that it's probably reasonable to achieve.

On one level, you could even just simply make it a do you intend to and then check the box and click the button and, boom, you're now in that universe. Then it gets into, well, if you encounter an individual on the water and they don't have a stamp or something, are they going to get in trouble, but that can be worked out, but I think that's where the value is, in the stamp piece and not the tag.

MR. CONKLIN: I think we've talked about it before, about how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does this, and I think it's time that we either request a presentation or get some state and U.S. Fish and Wildlife -- The fisheries people and not the migratory bird people, because there is already a really good program set up. We could mirror it, and maybe even steal some staff, hire some people across the agencies, and get the ball rolling on this thing, and it's not that hard. I just think we need to get it going and that it can be done pretty easily. Do you think, and sorry to put you on the spot, Wilson, that that could be done?

DR. LANEY: It's already done, Chris. I already put Gregg in touch with our duck stamp office in Headquarters, and I believe that they responded back and provided a contact name for him, and so all we have to do is ask and I think they will come and give us a presentation.

MR. CONKLIN: Well, I'm asking, and so hopefully we can do that.

DR. DUVAL: Duly noted.

MS. BOSARGE: Sometimes, as liaisons, we only have like a 30,000-foot view of what you're dealing with, and we throw out ideas and really they probably aren't workable, when you get into the weeds, but I thought I would throw it out there anyway. I was just listening to the overall conversation, and it seems your problem is with dead discards, and that's what you're trying to deal with, are your red snapper dead discards and allowing somebody to actually keep that fish and utilize it, whether it be your recreational anglers to take it home and eat it, rather than watch it float off, or your commercial guys, to take it back to the dock and send it out to the rest of the public in the U.S., and, on the recreational side, I was just trying to think about especially your private anglers.

I was listening to I think it was Mel's comments about if you open a season that it becomes a directed fishery, almost, essentially at that point, when what I think what you really want to do is let them keep those red snapper that they may be out there and they happen to catch one when they're fishing for something else, and it's going to die if they put it back, and so they want to keep it.

Have you thought about keeping a closed season for your private angler side, and I know you don't have sector separation, but I am speaking to the private angler side, and allowing them to give some sort of notification? In other words, if they're out there fishing and they do have red snapper bycatch that's not going to be able to be released successfully, and they want to keep it, there

would be a few hoops they would have to jump through, but you have this whole citizen science effort that's ongoing, and this may be a way to tie that in.

As long as they will pick up the phone and call whoever it is, NMFS or however you want to set it up, and give them a notification that, hey, we've got red snapper bycatch onboard that we want to land, they will get a confirmation number. They would have to give a little information in that notification, say we've got one red snapper and we're going to land at such-and-such location at such-and-such approximate time. They would have to give the landing notification an hour or two in advance, but then that notification could come through to the states, because you're the ones that do the intercepts.

To me, it would solve two problems. They would get to keep a fish that was going to die anyway and, with the landing notification part, you can get some information on this fishery that's closed. You're not getting the data that you need for your stock assessments anymore, and you get that heads-up that this fish is coming your way, and you can do whatever sampling or intercepts that you want at the dock and collect that information.

It's not a directed fishery, because you still have a closed season, but if it is a fisherman that wants to keep that fish, if he will give these notifications, maybe he could keep that fish and we could get the data to boot, but maybe that's overly optimistic and it won't work, given your situation. I just don't know enough about it, but I thought I would throw it out there.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for that, Leann. I think that probably plays into the next action, which has to do with like modifying reporting requirements for recreational fishermen when we have some data collection efforts, and so I think that's a great idea that we could ask the IPT to look at and flesh out a little bit more. I had Anna on my list and then, since Dewey hasn't had a chance to talk yet, I will let him go, and then we're moving on from this action. We've got a lot left to do on our agenda.

MS. BECKWITH: Thanks. We have talked, in other conversations, about having a deepwater stamp. It seems like red snapper wouldn't necessarily be included in the deepwater stamp, and so are we potentially talking about having multiple stamps for depending on what fishermen are going to be directing on?

DR. DUVAL: I think if the committee would like to see things set up that way -- We're going to be walking through a visioning amendment, which is the next item on our agenda, a recreational visioning amendment, and this is one of those items that came up from visioning, should we have a snapper grouper stamp that covers all species or should we have one that covers just deepwater species, and so I think both of these documents are intertwined a little bit. I think the committee can express its intent to make sure that at least if one component of this doesn't move forward in Amendment 43 that it would move forward in the recreational visioning amendment.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Sitting here and listening to the discussion, I don't know how you're going to reduce the dead discards by a tagging program or a stamp program. The only way that you're going to reduce dead discards probably in the recreational industry is to stop fishing, because, even if you have tags or stamps, that person is going to keep the fish, but everybody else is going to be discarding that is still out there fishing.

I was trying to think about kind of like a lottery, similar to a swan permit in North Carolina, which I don't ever do, but you fill out something and you go into a lottery system and you get a tag. You're only going to give out so many tags. If you give out -- I don't know how many fish your ACL would be for recreational, but if you were to give out 3,000 tags, what happens to the other 100,000 fishermen?

You're going down an end-road game based on the stock assessment and, right now, the best available science is there is too many people fishing. The discards and dead discards, probably, unless you're in a certain depth of water, what happens to be around 100 foot or something like that -- If you're inside 100 foot, maybe the fish have got a better chance of living. When you're outside your universe of outside that depth, more than likely they're going to be dead.

That fishing effort or discards is still going to outweigh what you're allowed to catch or keep, based on your ACL, and so it's almost like you're juggling apples and oranges here to figure out how to save a little bit, when you've got a big problem with the whole apple cart or orange cart, and so it appears -- I know you've got to go out to the public with something, with options, and you've got to explain your options, but you almost need to leave everything out there and show the picture, because this is one where you've got too many people fishing, and they're going to be discarding fish. You're still discarding fish.

You can almost look at this analysis as like the dusky shark and overfishing and what the stock assessment shows. In our instance, in the dusky shark, there was a lawsuit filed because of the trends of abundance. They thought that the management should have done something different, but it's almost like here you've just got too many fish you're discarding, and I don't see how you're going to stop it, unless you quit putting hooks in the water. There ain't no other way to dance around this. You've got a mess.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for busting the bubble, Dewey.

DR. CRABTREE: I do think Dewey makes a good point, and I do feel like we're sort of dancing around the elephant in the room. What we need to be scoping to the public, given the science that we have, is we need to find a way to reduce recreational effort, and there is not that many things in here that really get at that, but I think, ultimately, to reduce the discards, at least to the extent we need to, there is some truth to the notion that you have to have fewer boats on the water and less effort. Maybe the science changes or something comes up, but, at least what we've got at the moment, that's kind of the problem we have, and I think, at least if we're going to go out scoping, we ought to keep that in front of people and have a discussion about how we might go about doing that.

DR. DUVAL: I think this is great direction to staff for making sure that the problem that we have is clearly stated in the scoping document, as it's put together. Mike, last word, because we've beat this about to death, and we really need to move on.

DR. ERRIGO: I just wanted to -- I don't think everyone understands what the benefit of the stamp program does, because I don't think everyone understands how the MRIP program works and how it develops its estimates. What happens is, when they conduct the effort survey, they get all the effort of how many trips did you make. They don't ask them how many offshore trips did you

make, how many federal trips did you make, how many inshore trips, how many freshwater trips. They just ask them how many fishing trips did you make.

They take all that effort that they get in a particular area, let's say a county, and then they multiply that by the intercepts, the intercepted trips. If you encounter a trip that went offshore, a snapper grouper trip, they multiply it by all the effort. The idea is, hopefully, that there will be less federal trips intercepted. When they multiply it by the expansion factor, you get a smaller number, and so it would balance out. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. It depends on how well the intercepts happen. On average, from 2010 to 2015, approximately 9 percent of the over eleven-million trips happened in federal waters, waters outside of three miles from shore in the South Atlantic.

What the stamp might be able to do for us is they might be able to come up with an effort estimate of just the trips targeting snapper grouper species and then use that effort estimate to expand the snapper grouper species landings estimates, landings and discards, and hopefully get a better handle on what's being landed and what's being discarded for snapper grouper species, and so that's the benefit of the stamp. It doesn't reduce discards. It doesn't reduce landings. It doesn't constrain effort, but it gives us a better understanding of what the actual effort is and hopefully it will reduce our PSEs and give us better -- Some of the PSEs are pretty awful, especially for the landings, but even the discards, especially the discards, and so hopefully we'll get a better handle on those estimates, and so that's the benefit of the stamp program.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mike, and I think perhaps a little bit of that explanation, as this document is fleshed out, in terms of what the benefit of a stamp would be under this particular action, and so, like I said, we've beat this action to death. I would really like to be able to move through the next several actions, so that we can get on to the rest of the items in our agenda. The next one deals with modifying reporting requirements for private recreational fishermen.

MR. COLLIER: Currently, there is an approved amendment, and it was in Amendment 15A, where there are requirements that could be adopted if the Science and Research Director deems that it needs to be done, and those include maintaining fishing records for a portion of such trips as specified by the Science and Research Director on forms provided by the Science and Research Director no later than seven days after the end of the month. They could also participate in NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook or video monitoring, if directed by the Research Director. Although that regulation is on the books, it hasn't been approved by the Office of Management and Budget, and I will let Monica discuss that a little bit more.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It's actually not effective, because, to go through the Paperwork Reduction Act, we needed to get a certain amount of burden hours and all kinds of other things that would be required to be presented to the Office of Management and Budget, so that they could look at all of that and decide whether it met the Paperwork Reduction Act Requirements, and that information, as I understand it, and this is a little bit second-hand, we have never been able to be specific enough on the burden hours, and I think it's because of the numbers of recreational fishermen and all those sorts of things. At this point, that regulation is not effective. That's the most I can say. We have it as no action, but, essentially, it is not effective, although I believe it is in the regulations, but it will say in the regulations that this is not yet effective.

DR. DUVAL: Monica, what does that mean for the different alternatives that are listed under this action? Could we still include these for scoping?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I would, and then, if you get more definitive on something you want to choose, then we can work with the folks to get the PRA requirements and see how viable, how feasible, if we can get a more -- Just more specificity in how many people would this be and how much of a burden would this be required on the individual to report this information, and then we could start to get into the weeds a little bit more on that.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Chip, if you can run us through the alternatives in here.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 2 would basically require an electronic reporting for all trips catching or targeting snapper grouper species. That would be including catching and discarding. It could be a subset of the private recreational anglers, ranging from 20 to 50 percent, as an example of lists of that we have, or it could be all recreational anglers. The species that would be included would be -- Basically, you would select those in Action 9, and those would be applied in Action 10.

MR. BREWER: I think it would just be the folks that had the stamp, quite frankly, that you would even consider putting into this universe. Otherwise, you're talking -- If you say, okay, let's do 20 percent, then how many people are you talking about? You're talking about maybe a couple hundred thousand, if not more.

MR. COLLIER: It would only be 20 percent of the people with the stamp.

MR. BREWER: I'm sorry. I misunderstood you. That's good. You would only want it with the folks with the stamp. If you try to implement something that across the board for all the recreational fishermen, all I can do is laugh.

MS. BECKWITH: The first thing that pops into my head is we're giving recreational fishermen a lot of credit that they would be able to identify all the different species. Something to consider, in the long run, if we were to move forward with this, is, instead of a species-level identification, almost saying how many grouper did you catch or how many snapper did you catch or how many other -- I don't know, but I think there is plenty of recreational fishermen out there that would have trouble identifying the different species.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Let's go through Alternatives 3 and 4.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 3 is basically specifying the time period for reporting. It could be monthly, it could be weekly, or it could be before you get off the boat. Is that a good range of alternatives for a reporting requirement?

DR. DUVAL: I think it mirrors what we have in existing electronic reporting documents.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 4 is basically -- It's not requiring electronic reporting, but it's just basically requiring reporting, and so Alternative 2 is requiring electronic reporting and Alternative 4 is they could have a logbook or they could be doing electronic reporting. We're just trying to be complete in our options that we're giving the public.

DR. DUVAL: Any other thoughts or comments on the alternatives in here? Okay.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 5 is just a reminder for me, more or less, to get you guys to discuss this, but stamp renewal is contingent on reporting the previous year, and so that's similar to how a duck stamp is done. You have to report the previous year in order to get your stamp the following year, and so this is an option to do that, but how you guys truly want to do it, I think that needs to be discussed. That could be brought out in scoping, but I think having an alternative to really focus attention on it, I think it helps.

DR. DUVAL: I think I would just want to see a little bit more explanation of that within the language of the alternative, just that, if the council was moving forward with a stamp, that renewal would be contingent on reporting the previous year and options for scoping.

MR. BOWEN: To that point, I would like to see in there that it wouldn't be a permanent revocation of a stamp. A stamp would be contingent the following year on reporting, but, two years down the road, they would be eligible for a stamp again. I think permanent revocation, or the idea of permanent revocation, is probably not the way we want to go, but they would have a, quote, unquote, penalty for a year if they didn't -- If a stamp was implemented and they didn't report, for a year they would not be able to have another stamp, but, after that year, I think they would be eligible for the stamp again.

DR. DUVAL: I think we just need to be careful about this one, because it could be construed as limiting entry, I think, and so we just need to be careful about that.

MR. BREWER: In the current briefing book, in the minutes of the Law Enforcement AP, there is a real good discussion about this, having to do with the idea of an electronic reporting for charter boats, I think was the topic there, and what kind of requirements might work, et cetera.

There is also a study that I'm going to bring up later that came out of the Gulf States Commission that is a report. It's a joint report that's peer reviewed, and it speaks to different types of enforcement and the suggestions that they had for enforcement for the electronic logbook, and it deals with the amendment that is currently pending in the Gulf with regard to electronic reporting for charter for-hire. There are some real good discussions in there about effective methods of enforcement that not like horribly penalizing, like what Zack is talking about, but, at the same time, providing a stick that would be easy to administer to go forward with enforcement.

DR. DUVAL: If I'm thinking of the same report, it was a pretty critical piece of our technical workgroup that was formed jointly between Gulf Council staff, South Atlantic Council staff, and Gulf States Commission staff. That report on the electronic reporting pilot in the Gulf was pretty integral to their discussions and their recommendations for moving forward with actually doing something on charter vessels.

MS. BECKWITH: I was going to bring up something similar to Chester, which is, currently, under the penalty schedules for violations, lack of reporting or late reporting, permit revocation is not listed for commercial and/or charter reporting, and so I doubt that we would be able to slip a revocation into a type of stamp, and so that's probably not realistic.

If it's based on reporting for the previous year, I can see that we would find ourselves in a similar situation to what we have now, which is, when you go to renew, your application would be considered incomplete until you provided your information, at which point the recreational fishermen could provide whatever they felt they wanted to. Then they would be able to renew, but I think that would be about the extent of what we would be able to accomplish.

Another point to the duck stamp, and it may be different in different locations. There is other people nodding, and so they could probably clarify this, but you get your duck stamp and you don't automatically have to report. You have to report if you catch certain species, but there's not like an I-didn't-kill-a-duck thing that you send back. It's only if you -- There is a different conservation ethic, and so I think people generally do it on their own recognizance.

DR. LANEY: To that point, it occurs to me though that there are a lot of people, including me, who buy duck stamps just purely for conservation purposes, because of where those funds go, and there wouldn't be any reason that, if the council elects to go down this pathway, that even folks who don't fish may want to purchase the stamp for conservation purposes. Roy is probably going to tell me where the money actually goes, but it would have to be -- I guess it would take an act of Congress to designate it to go for dedicated fishery management, but I would think that could include some sort of provision for those funds to be used for enforcement or monitoring of closed areas or something like that, maybe.

DR. DUVAL: I am not sure that that would be allowed. I am going to let Roy speak to that quickly, and then I had Chris and then Doug.

DR. CRABTREE: The way the statute is set up now, the stamp would be a permit, and so we would charge the administrative fees for it, which I think is in the neighborhood of thirty-bucks that we charge for something like this. The money all goes to the General Treasury. We can only charge administrative fees, and so, for anything like you're talking about, it would take an act of Congress.

The stamp renewal contingent on reporting, there are a whole host of problems with that, because, if someone doesn't report anything, it could be they could just say that I didn't go fishing, and we would have no way of knowing if they went fishing or didn't go fishing unless they reported. I guess we can have them report no fishing activity, like we do in some, but there is just a host of issues with trying to make this actually work. Then, if you find someone at the dock and they have fish, but don't have a stamp or something, then we're going to need the states to also require you have a stamp to fish in state waters, or we're going to have a big loophole, and so there are all sorts of things that are involved here to have any hope of making this work.

MR. CONKLIN: I was thinking not about a stamp, and I don't like the term "stamp". I don't think it's our intention to have something that you go to the post office and buy. I think it would be more like the migratory waterfowl or migratory bird permit that's on our state license, and one of the first questions -- I just got mine last week, before duck season, but the first question they ask you is did you hunt migratory birds last year? That could be our first question, is did you fish for snapper grouper or whatever.

Then I said no, because I didn't get to go, but, if you do, then it opens up to the survey, the rest of it, and I think that's what my intentions are and not to have a stamp, where someone can go and



buy them all up or something like that, but just purely for the information and to not limit the universe, but define the universe of recreational anglers targeting the offshore species.

DR. DUVAL: I have talked to some fishermen in North Carolina about that as well, that when you go to renew the state license that there is a survey that you check off whether or not you fished for shellfish in the past year or whether you intend to fish for certain species during the upcoming year, and so I understand exactly what you're talking about. Doug, and then I would like to wrap this up.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I apologize for just daydreaming this next thing, but I try to come prepared with options. I am sitting here thinking about burning trash in my yard, burning yard debris, and that sort of brings in the thing that we've talked about in the past with hail-in and hail-out and whether it would work or not.

Before I burn a pile of hand-cut, hand-piled debris in my yard, I have to get a burn permit. It's a totally automated system. I dial in on my phone and I hit my zip code, and it logs that as I have a burn that day, and it logs my cell phone as my permission. If the fire truck rolls up, I give him my cell phone number, and he enters into that system and says, yes, you've got a burn permit and everything is okay.

Now, I understand on a state level, because it's the Georgia Forestry Commission that maintains that, that's a few hundred calls, maybe, a day, and we're talking about exponentially more, but, aside from the technological hurdle of multiple calls, why couldn't it be an automated system, and I would like to see this as an alternative, of a hail-out, and I don't care whether you go or not, but you hail-out that you're going fishing that day.

Your cell phone or whatever number you called in on is your permit number. If you're on the water and you are checked by law enforcement, you give them the number that you called from, and he can come back at a later time and see if you have had permission to be there, but what it then does is allow MRIP to come back and only call those numbers that went out that day, to find out some information on catch. The more I think about it, it's no cost. It's the cost to set it up, but, beyond that, there is no cost to the fishermen every day. You get an idea of what the actual effort is, and you've got a universe to call about catch, and so I would like to see a hail-out provision put into this document.

DR. DUVAL: Chip, I think you've got your input for another alternative for an automated hail-out type of system.

MR. HARTIG: The Gulf States, all of the Gulf States, are doing some kind of different way of reporting red snapper, and they're not all the same. Can we get some kind of information on each one of them, to see how they're being done? I think that would help us tremendously moving forward.

DR. DUVAL: I do too.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip can pull the information together, but I can give a presentation about what we're doing in the Gulf, if that's something that you're looking for.

DR. DUVAL: I think that would be great. I appreciate that offer. Okay. I feel like we've had plenty of discussion on this action. I would like to get through the next two.

MR. COLLIER: This comes to accountability measures. Alternative 1 lists the current accountability measures for red snapper, including the method in order to calculate the accountability measures. Alternative 2 focus on accountability measures for the commercial fishery, and it's set up to similar accountability measures for every other stock that we manage, with the exception of the two sub-alternatives. Red snapper is currently done using dead discards and landings, and that's at the total ABC level, but Sub-Alternative 2 focuses on the total ACL, and that would be landings only. If we were to set up accountability measures for red snapper, would you want it at the total ABC, because discards is a significant problem, or do you want it on the total ACL?

DR. DUVAL: I think it's fine to keep it the way it is. I think, if we're looking at scoping, I would look for any input from the committee on that.

MR. BOWEN: Like Roy said earlier, wouldn't that be contingent on what the SSC tells us after their October meeting, whether or not we could carry this out for scoping?

DR. DUVAL: It would inform any decisions we would make in December with regard to scoping.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 3 focuses on the recreational, as well as Alternative 4. It's very similar to current accountability measures for other species in the snapper grouper complex. Alternative 4 does have some different alternatives. If the recreational ACL is exceeded, it specifies either the season would be reduced the following year, if it's the total ABC and total ACL.

One note that came up at the IPT level is the ABCs aren't actually listed in the codified text, and so it does become a little cumbersome when you're looking at applying this to the total ABC, but I think, as the IPT, we can work through that and keep these alternatives in there for the scoping document.

DR. DUVAL: Alternative 3 look at an in-season closure based on either the ACL or the ACT?

MR. COLLIER: Correct.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Are there any questions on the range of alternatives that are in here under accountability measures? I think at this point -- Well, I guess we haven't talked about Alternative 6.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 5 is a little bit different than we've dealt with in the past. If the total ABC is exceeded, the stock is overfished, and one sector exceeds X percent of the discards, adjust the management measures for that sector with the highest discards, and so it's trying to account for some of the issues that we're having in the red snapper fishery with discards. The majority of the discards are coming from the private recreational fishery.

DR. DUVAL: That looks like it's -- It's either season length or reduce the allowable fishing area. I am just wondering how --

MR. COLLIER: How to calculate it?

DR. DUVAL: How to calculate it for 5b, if you're looking at it on a sector basis. It seems like that would be very difficult to do. Maybe it's something for the IPT to chew on, in terms of that being implementable.

MR. COLLIER: Alternative 6 is actually -- That's where it's adjustable management. If the total ABC is not exceeded, and so that would be looking at landings and discards, the ACL is not, and that's looking at only landings, and the sector landings for a certain sector is X percent below the ACL, modify management measures to increase harvest, and so you could either decrease the minimum size limit or you could increase the bag or trip limit, depending on which sector it's in. That is one way to give back to the fishery if the current management measures that we're looking at are actually too restrictive.

Alternative 7 is a rumble-strip approach that the SSC has been discussing. It's not fleshed out well, but they are going to be discussing it up at their upcoming meeting, and so that option is in there, but we really don't have any details on it, and so I might need to remove that one.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Any other thoughts or input on the accountability measures, the range of accountability measures, as Chip has laid out? Again, I think the feasibility of some of these will become more clear after the October SSC meeting, and so it doesn't look like we've missed anything. I think you guys have done a great job of fleshing things out. Okay. Last action.

MR. COLLIER: The final one. We have been discussing that dead discards are an issue in the fishery, and so one way to minimize those is best fishing practices. There are several different ways to do it. We have some best fishing practices listed up here. Alternative 2 looks at either using descending devices or venting as a requirement. Currently, we can have it as a recommendation and develop tools on education on that, but should we require it? We have venting being required in the allowable fishing area and just overall venting for snapper grouper or just red snapper, and we have both of those options listed. You can look at Alternative 2 for that.

Continuing down, once again, in the private recreational fishery, and that is the majority of the dead discards, and looking at the requirement of a single hook in the private recreational fishery or in the recreational fishery overall. There are several species that we have a single individual as the bag limit for the recreational fishery, and so if you're fishing in an area where, let's say snowy grouper, where it's one per vessel, it doesn't make sense to have four hooks in that area and potentially come up with four snowy grouper, and it's likely that it's going to be a one fish, either per person or per vessel, for red snapper.

MR. HAYMANS: I would just say that I would prefer not to see the use of the words "require" and "venting" in the same sentence. Certainly venting is a practice that is usable, but I don't want to require venting. I would rather require descending devices.

MR. COLLIER: So require the tool, as opposed to the --

MR. HAYMANS: Well, right. You want to encourage proper handling of the fish. I think there's enough evidence out there now that shows that venting is not it and that descending devices are better than venting, and I don't want to require venting. That's just my preference.

DR. CRABTREE: I have the same concerns, and we did go down the path of requiring venting in the Gulf, and we pulled back on it and stopped requiring it. The trouble was, if you require it, they have to vent every fish, and a lot of fish don't need to be vented. I think the same is true of descending devices.

If these allowable fishing areas are in seventy feet of water or less, I don't think you need to use a descending device, and you're probably doing more harm than good if you do that. I think you could require people have these things onboard the vessel, but the decision to use or not use them -- At the end of the day, the angler is going to have to make a judgment call as to whether their use is warranted or not, and so I just don't think you can require much more than that there be one onboard the vessel.

MR. PHILLIPS: Were we going to talk about depth of areas where the descending device might be needed or not needed? Were we going to take out options for depth or some of that kind of stuff, and were you going to split out -- If you want descending devices, were you going to ask if you would need it for commercial or recreational or both? Were you going to ask those questions at scoping?

DR. DUVAL: What is the committee's pleasure? Do you want to parse it out like that, whether or not having descending devices would be required by sector or all sectors together?

MR. BREWER: Roy is right. I hate to say that, but Roy is right.

DR. CRABTREE: Could you write that down for me?

MR. BREWER: If you're fishing in shallower water and you bring up a fish that's short, you're going to do better to just reach down and take the hook out of his mouth, or maybe you can cut the leader, sometimes, and let the fish go, as opposed to bringing the fish up out of the water and attaching it to a descending device and sending him back down.

It's almost an ethics kind of thing. You want to inspire folks to do the right thing and to utilize best handling practices, and so it would seem that, whatever depth you're fishing in, you need to have that device onboard, so that it can be utilized if it looks like it's necessary, but requiring, quote, the use, I don't think that's a road that you want to go down.

Also, with regard to venting, I know I have seen videos of Zack venting fish, and he knows what he's doing. You've got a whole lot of folks out there that have no idea how to properly vent a fish, and so you might well be doing more harm than good, again, by talking about requiring venting. Those are just my thoughts.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, and so what I think I'm hearing is that descending devices, that people are not in favor of requiring either that fish be descended or vented. They would prefer to see something that just requires having a descending device onboard. You could include a venting tool onboard, no matter what depth you may or may not be fishing at. It seems like that would be

less complicated, but I think the question is whether or not we would want to take out to scoping should that be required for any vessel in the snapper grouper fishery or just for the commercial sector or just for the recreational sector. I have Mel and then Ben and then Tony, and then we're stopping.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say, originally, from an enforceability standpoint, that the requirement of a piece of gear onboard is simple to check, and so that's sort of enforceable. Then I think what Chris was just asking is then we would have to define what that is or what is acceptable or something.

Requiring something to be there, particularly the descending device, that is fairly straightforward. The venting tool, I am a little -- For all the reasons, we talked about, it's -- I mean, is an icepick a venting tool? In some people's minds, it is, and that has been done, and so I would be more comfortable with the requirement of a descending device and then, through education and outreach, we really explain all of that.

MR. HARTIG: All sectors.

DR. DUVAL: What?

MR. HARTIG: I am trying to speed you up. You asked if it should be all sectors or just particular sectors, and I said all sectors should be required to have those onboard.

MR. DILERNIA: For the past twenty-something years, I've been a guide, and so I have only carried four or five people at a time on my for-hire, but, for the first twenty years, I ran a headboat, and I'm thinking about thirty people or forty people on the deck of this headboat and I'm trying to use descending devices and these fish are coming up left and right.

I know, when I was running a headboat, if I had a lot of fish that I couldn't keep, folks would get mad at me real fast, and so the best way to do it was just to move the boat, because they don't want to catch fish and throw them back and catch fish and throw them back. They want to catch fish and keep them, and so, if I was catching a lot of fish that I wasn't allowed to keep, I would say, well, it's time to go, and we would go to the next spot, because thirty-five people or forty people on a headboat, and the fish are coming up real fast and I'm hooking them to these little descending devices and trying to send them back down, and with a hard-running tide, things could be a mess. Just move the boat.

DR. CRABTREE: I think, Chip, the way you would write -- If we want to require that you have to have a descending device or a venting tool onboard the vessel, I think it would be if you possess snapper grouper that you have to have them onboard. That way, it's enforceable.

MR. HARTIG: There is a whole host of descending devices, Tony. For your example, on a headboat, they actually put the fish in a bucket, and they have a basket. All the fish go in the basket, and then they go over all at once, and so it can be done. Like I said, I don't know that we have to require one type of descending device. There is a whole host of descending devices that could be used to get fish back down to depth, and in numbers as well as single.

DR. DUVAL: There has been some Sea Grant research on that. Let's move on to Alternative 4, which we haven't really talked about, which is modifying the requirement for circle hooks.

MR. COLLIER: Currently, the Gulf of Mexico has a non-offset clause in their circle hook requirement, whereas the South Atlantic does not. Offset hooks tend to have a higher rate of gut-hooking than non-offset hooks, and so that is some consideration for this, as well as the area. In the South Atlantic, it's below 28 degrees, in order to prevent the use of circle hooks in the yellowtail snapper fishery. There's other ways to think about how to avoid impacting that fishery with circle hooks, because circle hooks could be used for deeper fisheries that are impacting red snapper. There is a list of options up there for you guys to consider, and, if you guys have any others, please let us know.

DR. DUVAL: This has come up a lot during visioning, with regard to use of circle hooks and how effective they are versus how effective they may not be.

MR. BOWEN: You probably know what I'm fixing to say, but I'm going to say it again anyway. As primarily a snapper grouper fisherman and primarily a red snapper fisherman, circle hooks suck, and I know that's not what the studies show, but, from my on-the-water experience, the circle hook requirement is doing more harm to red snapper than good. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Duly noted. I think that it seems like you guys have covered the range of alternatives, in terms of non-offset and non-stainless hooks and north of 28 and only using greater than certain depths in the South Atlantic EEZ, et cetera. I don't know if there's anything else that could be added to those. I am not seeing anybody jump up with anything. Is there anything else under this action, in terms of best fishing practices, that the committee would like to see? I think probably outreach goes without saying, that that would be needed.

MR. COLLIER: Yes, and always remember, if you don't want to catch a red snapper, don't go fishing in the area where you might catch a red snapper.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I think this is the end of this options paper, and so I'm going to ask that we just take a quick, ten-minute break. Then we're going to move into the Vision Blueprint Recreational Amendment. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. DUVAL: All right, everybody. Let's gather back around the table. The next item on our agenda is a Vision Blueprint Recreational Amendment. If you recall, back in June, staff came to us with some ideas for how we could best move forward, in terms of parsing out the different actions that had come out of the vision blueprint.

Given some of the discussions that we had in June about red snapper, we all agreed that we wanted to focus things into a recreational visioning amendment and a commercial visioning amendment, and we felt like, given some of the conversations with had with regard to red snapper, that it might be prudent to move forward with a recreational amendment, and so Myra is going to walk us through the options paper that staff has put together for the items that we discussed at the last meeting.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Michelle. First of all, the actions that are included in this options paper are all actions that fit under the current framework procedure. If you just keep what's in here now and not add other types of actions, then this could potentially be a regulatory amendment, which, as you know, would move a little faster than a regular plan amendment.

What we did was get your guidance. From the previous meeting, you had five items that you had requested to be included in the options paper and fleshed out a little bit for you to discuss at this meeting. It so happens that three of those items have already been discussed in Amendment 43, and so, rather than including those same items in this amendment and have that discussion twice, they were left out, with the understanding that if you want to bring them back into this amendment that you could. For example, the recreational stamp is something that maybe you would want to not leave in Amendment 43. I'm not sure, but that's an example of an action that would then bump this up into a full plan amendment, as opposed to a regulatory amendment, and so just making sure that everybody is understanding how that works.

The actions that remain in the options paper are a reevaluation of the aggregate bag limits. I included just a little bit of background for where the current aggregate bag limits came from, when they were implemented, the species that are included, the council's rationale for setting it up the way they are currently set up.

We have an aggregate snapper bag limit, which includes ten per person per day, with the exception of red snapper, and then you have the species that are included in that aggregate listed in there. There are some restrictions for cubera snapper. Then we have the aggregate grouper limit. Currently, it's just three groupers per person per day, and then there's all kinds of various restrictions for gag, black, snowy, and golden tile. You have some that have recreational seasons and some that are per vessel limits. Then we have the aggregate for species that don't have a bag limit, and that is twenty fish per person per day, and you have those species listed in there as well.

The other thing that you asked us to look into was this reevaluation of the shallow-water grouper closure. This was implemented originally under Amendment 16, back in 2009, and it established an annual closure on the possession of shallow-water groupers from January through April, and that is for both the commercial and recreational sectors, and it was in response to needing to end overfishing of gag and protect spawning fish.

I included in here, for your information, the rationale that was included in Amendment 16 that talks about the various biological reasons for this being a good thing to do, and so I'm not going to go over all of that stuff, but I know the AP had discussions as well.

Then, in April of 2015, after we had gone through the visioning process, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel again took up some of these items under their discussions, and they did make some motions, and so I included those for your information as well, and the minutes of that discussion are included in this attachment as an appendix, so that you can take the time to see where the AP was coming from, as far as their rationale for the motions that were approved.

The AP recommended no action on removing the spawning season closure for shallow-water groupers. The AP recommended that the council move forward with identifying spawning areas for shallow-water groupers that may be appropriate, at some point, to designate as spawning SMZs, and they reiterated that their intent was to eventually remove the spawning season closure once

those spawning areas were identified, and so they recognized the importance of having some sort of protection and not just removing the spawning season closure without having something else to take care of spawning fish.

What we did is then put together some possible actions and alternatives, and, again, this is for you to discuss how you want to take this out for scoping. Scoping would be done early next year, and so you still have the December meeting to give us more guidance on how you want the scoping document structured and what you want included.

To evaluate and modify the composition of the aggregate bag limits, you've got your no action. That includes everything that's in place. This is for the ten-snapper aggregate. One of the things that you mentioned in your discussions was the consideration of an aggregate bag limit for deepwater species, and so that's Alternative 2.

That aggregate would include snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, queen snapper, black snapper, blackfin snapper, silk snapper, golden tile, blueline tile, and sand tile. There was some talk about maybe including wreckfish as well, but I think the minutes show that that might not be appropriate, or maybe it is. I don't know if you want to include it. The sub-alternatives under this alternative, and, of course, I need a little bit more guidance to develop them, but they would be based on a range of bag limits that you wish to consider. Again, do you want to include wreckfish in here or not?

Then there is an alternative to establish an aggregate for shallow-water groupers, and you've got those species listed in there. Again, we would develop a range of bag limits based on what you feel you want to consider, or perhaps this is something that you just want to take out to scoping before you have a range, to get some idea from the public. Also, your Snapper Grouper AP is going to be meeting at the end of October, and this is one of the items they would be discussing, and so we can always get the AP to weigh in, so that you can have a possible range of alternatives to discuss.

Then we have an alternative to reduce the twenty-fish aggregate for species that don't have a bag limit, and I just put blank to whatever per person per day, and then excluding -- I put these out as sub-alternatives, in case you want to maybe have a separate bag limit for gray triggerfish, which is one of the species that's included in that twenty-fish aggregate right now. Also, I have heard some interest in the jacks complex. This is something that you talked about when we had discussions on Regulatory Amendment 24, I believe it was. There was some interest in making some specific regulations for the jacks complex, and so I put that there as well for your consideration and then any others that you may want to include.

Alternative 5 would modify the ten-snapper aggregate. Again, it would be based on whatever range of bag limits you want to consider. At this point, I think it would be good to have a discussion of whether you want to include this action and the kinds of alternatives, a very broad range of alternatives, you want to look at. Also, I included here some language -- Looking back at the vision blueprint, we have an item that talks about reevaluating the grouper aggregate and manage that based on area, and so I didn't know if you wanted to address that specifically, and maybe add another alternative that would look at different areas.



The other thing the vision blueprint states is looking at staggered spawning season closures to address latitudinal differences in spawning activity, and so does the committee want to consider a recreational season for harvested deepwater species by region?

MS. BECKWITH: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. DUVAL: Myra is just walking us through the document at this point.

MS. BROUWER: Right. We're still on the same action. It still needs a lot more fleshing out.

DR. DUVAL: I think the question is that the committee doesn't have this in the briefing materials that were provided to us, and so the document that we have doesn't have what you just walked through, just the bullets that came out of the vision blueprint. I think that's what people are asking about.

MS. BROUWER: I apologize for that. I thought this was exactly what you were looking at. That's my fault.

DR. DUVAL: Not a big deal. I think we can roll back up towards the top and talk about the different alternatives that are in here that Myra has laid out. Again, this is going to be on the Snapper Grouper AP's agenda. We would see this again in December, I think, and approve for scoping, and so I guess I would advise us to be broad and not try to walk down into too many weeds at this point.

MR. HARTIG: I was just wondering, Myra, when you went through the history -- I remember the original closure for gag was February and March. Then it was increased to January, February, March, and April, and I can't remember exactly if that was in an attempt to lengthen the spawning season or it was an attempt to limit effort, due to a reduction in harvest that needed to be done at that time, and I don't remember that. I don't know if Gregg remembers.

DR. DUVAL: I am wondering if it might not have been linked to a need to reduce harvest as well, because I thought, originally, the spawning closure, like you said, was focused on a two-month closure specifically for gag. That was expanded, I thought, to four months, as a result of a stock assessment back in 2009, and we -- It was modified to include all the shallow-water grouper species, so that we wouldn't have unintended discards, I think.

DR. CRABTREE: That was part of it, and the discussion originally was about gag, but we eventually went to the four months, because that encompassed most of the spawning season of the shallow-water grouper complex, and because the council's belief at that time was that we shouldn't be fishing on grouper species which aggregate to spawn. That was ultimately what we came down on it, is to give the fish a chance to spawn, because they aggregate. We had a lot of evidence of lost aggregations in various places in South Florida where there used to be known aggregate sites.

MS. BECKWITH: Some of the feedback during visioning that we received was the desire to have the most simple combination of bag limits for recreational, and so I understand the need for a deepwater and a shallow-water grouper limit. Then I'm sort of thinking it would be interesting to look at how we could combine Alternative 4 and 5. If we potentially reduce the twenty-fish aggregate for all those that don't have a bag limit and just had an overall ten-fish bag limit that

included the snappers and pretty much everything else -- I guess my personal goal here is trying to find a way to have an aggregate bag limit that includes the most fish with the least exceptions, so they don't really have to think that much about it and we fall under the keep-it-simple scenario.

That's just a suggestion, and so I don't know if there's an additional alternative maybe that combines the twenty-fish aggregate and the ten snapper per person. Then I guess I'm curious why we would have the exception for the gray triggerfish and the amberjacks, but I don't really fish for jacks.

MR. BOWEN: I like what Anna is kind of coming up with there. Most of these aggregate species are maybe, if not all, are unassessed, and so I like what she is thinking. Back to the grouper four-month closure. I am real reluctant right now to engage in modifying or shortening the spawning season closure, because of the testimony we've had over the past several years about the status and catchability of the gag grouper. We have heard multiple comments from the commercial sector and the recreational guys, and, truthfully, from what I'm seeing on the water, there is something going on with the gags. I am just real reluctant right now to shorten that spawning season closure, personally. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Zack. I think we'll get into that discussion a little bit more in the next action, which would be to modify that annual prohibition, and so I think we were trying to focus mostly just on bag limits here.

MR. BROWN: We had an interesting situation happen this year in August, and the jacks complex closed on the same day for recreational as it did commercial. From what I was told, it was based on Waves 1 and 2 from this year with back-filling using Waves 3 and 4 from last year. That projected when the closure would occur.

The jacks complex is important commercially, but, recreationally, I don't know if it's that big of a target. Maybe the for-hire guys are going to do some of this for their customers and stuff, but private recreational, I tend to see a lot of the people just throwing them back and not bringing them back, and so I struggle with the fact that MRIP projected that amount of fish to be caught and closed that fishery so early.

My question though is just can we modify the twenty-fish aggregate in such a way to where we can separate the almaco and the banded rudderfish out and have a separate amount that can be kept that are within that twenty-fish, but say maybe five of each one of those or something, rather than them being included in the entire twenty-fish complex?

DR. DUVAL: I think that's one way to go about doing it. I think what Anna was suggesting was simply having one -- Instead of having a twenty-fish aggregate and then a separate ten-snapper aggregate, was having an alternative that would simply have one ten-fish aggregate for all remaining species that don't have a bag limit. The almaco and gray triggerfish would be included in that, to make things simpler, so that there is not so many different individual limits. I mean, that was one of the big things we heard from visioning, was that, well, yes, you have a three-grouper aggregate, but you've got this exception and that exception and this exception and that exception.

MR. BROWN: I hear you, but one of the questions that I had for why this took place is I was told that one of the big drivers was the almaco jacks that helped close this fishery, and that's why I was

thinking of trying to separate them out from the banded rudderfish, because, yes, we do see a lot of almaco, but I know that a lot of them are thrown back, recreationally, and so, if we had it where those two species were separated apart, we might be able to hold that season open a little bit longer for those two different species.

MS. BECKWITH: Just to Mark's point, that was the first year that we've had a closure in the recreational, I think, for the jacks, and I guess I am weighing the simplicity of the regulation versus overregulating for an exception to the rule. If we had closures that occurred for a couple of different years, then I might be more inclined to complicate the regulations to deal with the problem, but I am a little sensitive to the original intent, which was to sort of overall simplify the regulations for the fishermen.

MR. HARTIG: I like Anna's proposal, but I am just trying to figure out a way to have more than ten fish in it without impacting the snappers. It makes it complicated, but it just seems like if we go out with one ten-fish bag limit, it doesn't seem to be enough. It seems like you have to have more options than just the ten fish.

MR. HAYMANS: I would agree, because that, to me, the way I look at it, a ten-fish total limit is potentially a 66 percent reduction. Maybe, rather than the ten, it's twenty fish. There's an overall reduction, but it's not as great. I realize most everybody doesn't catch the full bag limit.

MR. BROWN: I would be against the ten fish. The twenty fish would be reasonable, considering how many other species that we encounter that don't have bag limits.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I think the intent is that we would see this again in December, and then we would take it out to some scoping hearings in January, and so we can afford to be broad here, and perhaps we could include Anna's alternative to just look at a ten-fish limit or eliminating the ten-fish snapper limit and just having an aggregate twenty-fish limit. That's another option, just elimination of a ten-fish snapper limit.

Currently, we have a black sea bass recreational limit, we have a vermilion snapper recreational limit, we have all of our exemptions within the grouper aggregate, and I am wondering -- The one thing I was wondering, Myra, is if it might be possible to include an alternative that -- We have in here a possible aggregate bag limit for deepwater species, and I'm also wondering if that might need to be combined or add an alternative that would pull in other deepwater species into the deepwater season that we already have for snowy grouper and blueline tilefish. I don't know if we would want to pull golden tilefish into that and try to establish that as part of that group of fish. Are there other thoughts or input around the table on the range of alternatives in here?

Under some of these alternatives, what we could do is -- I think if we wanted to have an alternative that would simply eliminate the ten snapper per person per day aggregate, although recall ancillary impacts of something like that, and asking for input on whether or not there should be individual species limits on any other species.

We could ask folks that, if people feel like there needs to be an individual limit on almaco or an individual limit on gray triggerfish. The intent was to try to simplify things. That was what we were going for, and so let me just ask. Are folks cool with an alternative that would simply have a twenty-fish aggregate? I am seeing nods around the table.

MR. HARTIG: In that twenty-fish aggregate, you would be able to have twenty snappers?

DR. DUVAL: So the next thing I was going to say was perhaps, within the twenty-fish aggregate, you say you have ten snappers. Could you include that as a sub-alternative?

MR. BROWN: All the catch limits are still going to be the same, right? We're not changing the catch limits. It's still going to all be incorporated into that twenty-fish aggregate as five vermilion or one red snapper or whatever. I mean, it's all -- We're not changing the snapper limits, and is that correct?

DR. DUVAL: I think that's a question for the committee, and I guess I'm a little bit confused by what you're asking. Are you making the assumption that we would establish a twenty-fish limit and then, within that twenty-fish limit, you would have five black sea bass and five vermilion snapper, and you could have up to ten other snappers, and is that what you're asking?

MR. BROWN: No, and I was trying to understand what we were discussing. I thought that's what you were discussing.

DR. DUVAL: My suggestion was that the committee might want to consider a twenty-fish aggregate. Within that twenty-fish aggregate, you could have up to ten snappers. We are looking at an amendment that is setting a five fish per person limit on mutton snapper right now. What something like that would do would reduce the total number of fish that an angler would be able to have at this point, because, right now, you could have twenty fish of anything that doesn't already have a limit, plus ten snappers, plus five black sea bass, plus five vermilion snapper.

MR. BROWN: I'm sorry, but I guess I'm confused. I thought we were talking on the same level. I thought we were talking about the same thing, because you mentioned having a twenty-fish aggregate limit and then still retaining ten snapper. If it's ten vermilion, or whether it's eight vermilion and two red snapper or whatever, but only being a twenty-fish per person aggregate, and is that correct?

DR. DUVAL: That's what I was asking you. Is that what you were referring to? What I am talking about is modifying our existing aggregate limits. We have a twenty-fish aggregate that includes a whole bunch of species, anything that doesn't have a bag limit on it, and then we have a separate ten-snapper limit, and there's a few exemptions within there.

I think what I was talking about was combining those into having an overall twenty-fish aggregate. Within that aggregate, you could only have ten snapper, and so if you get twenty fish, ten of those would be snappers. I wasn't talking about messing around with the seven black sea bass and five vermilion. I was just talking about those aggregate limits. Does that make sense?

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. CONKLIN: Just for the record, the Snapper Grouper AP recommended a one fish per person bag limit for almaco jack at their last meeting. Maybe that's not the right number, but I certainly don't think twenty is the right number either.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Let's just kind of go through this. Are folks okay with the alternative of taking out to scoping establishing an aggregate bag limit for deepwater species? Let's see what folks say about that. Do you want to include consideration of including those fish in the existing four-month season that we have for snowy grouper and blueline tilefish, or are there any species that you would want to include in that? Is that a question we should ask the public?

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: I am hearing, yes, include that as an option to incorporate those into the May through August season that we have for blueline and snowy. Okay. In terms of Alternative 3, the aggregate bag limit for shallow-water groupers, we have that right now. Having a separate aggregate limit for shallow-water groupers removes all those deepwater species from there. I don't know if there's anything else that folks would want to add to that right now, in terms of any sub-alternatives. I think we can probably get some AP input on this, whether or not to maintain the existing one gag or one black within that aggregate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would like for staff, for this document, to go back to that South Florida amendment, because there were a lot of actions for black grouper. Then there were actions for the shallow-water grouper, and I don't see all of those in here, and so I would like for staff to look at that South Florida document and look back to this. Part of it was even editing the species that were in there, because we were trying to look at even matching up the Gulf and the Atlantic. There were other actions in there that I feel like we could look at adding in here, but I would say that's just direction to staff.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Then, in terms of Alternatives 4 and 5, what we just almost wrapped ourselves around the axle on was looking at basically eliminating the separate ten-snapper limit and subsuming that within a twenty-fish aggregate, within which ten could be snappers, and assuming that we would likely keep some of those additional exceptions, such as what we just talked about yesterday for mutton. Is that clear, Myra? Okay. Is there anything else that folks would want to consider? We'll take another look at this in December. If not, I am going to push us on through to the next action.

MS. BROUWER: This one is modification of the prohibition on possession of shallow-water groupers, which we've already touched on. Alternative 2 would be to just remove it, just for consideration, if you want that to be included for scoping. Alternative 3 would be to retain it from January through April, but exclude certain species, if that's something that you would like to entertain. My understanding was, during the visioning process, there was some issue with the periodicity of spawning for red grouper not quite matching up with the established closure, and so there were some folks that were interested in moving that to better align with when red grouper are spawning, particularly off the Carolinas.

Then there is an option in here to extend the prohibition on harvest, and, again, depending on what the committee would like to consider. Then this idea of this rolling closure, and obviously this would require a lot more gathering of information, and, of course, there is issues that would need to be addressed, and so I simply included these sub-alternatives here sort of as an example for discussion purposes.

DR. DUVAL: I think, in looking back at the advisory panel recommendations and the discussion that they had, there was concern about -- Well, I will back up a little bit. During visioning, we received a lot of input with regard to what folks thought of as a misalignment of the existing shallow-water grouper closure and that, off of Florida, the fact that it extends into March and April for certain species. Those fish are actually out of Florida waters at that point, and so it didn't really make sense to have it go beyond say January and February, and so the input we had received was to look at sort of staggered spawning season closures that more closely matched when those fish were spawning in different geographic areas.

When the advisory panel discussed this in April of last year, that was right before we went out to public comment on the draft vision blueprint, and their input was to basically not mess with the shallow-water grouper closure. They felt like if you went to a staggered type of approach that you would encourage fishermen from other areas to shift their effort to places where fishing was open at different times. There was also, I think, concern, and this is bringing in concerns about red grouper, which we have heard from fishermen off the Carolinas that the spawning season closure is misaligned and that those fish really have roe in April and May, and, if you extended a spawning closure into May just for red grouper, then you would be incurring more dead discards of red grouper as you're fishing for some of those other shallow-water species.

I've heard the same concerns about scamp, in terms of having a spawning closure for scamp in April and May, and so I will throw that out there as background for the committee to consider, in terms of looking at some of these alternatives. I am guessing that folks would not really want to just have a total removal of the spawning season closure, and so I'm not sure that Alternative 2 is really appropriate, but I am looking for input.

MR. BOWEN: Given the scamp have been not assessed, and the comments referring to gag, you hit the nail on the head, in my opinion. I think Alternative 2 should be deleted from this document.

DR. CRABTREE: I think my preference is just to leave the spawning season closure as it is and take the whole action out.

DR. DUVAL: Then how do we deal with public concerns about having scamp and red grouper being misaligned and having roe in May? That's been the major concern, and those two species have been a source of concern for fishermen.

DR. CRABTREE: You're never going to get it all. When they spawn varies from year to year and all kinds of things. I think what we did approximately grabs the bulk of the season, on average, in most places, and I think it's been one of the better things we've done.

MR. BOWEN: I second Roy's opinion.

MR. HARTIG: The problem arises, Roy, with South Florida, who is totally out of the gag picture with this closure. We don't have access to gag any longer, because of the four-month closure. We don't have red groupers, because, when they get big enough to move, they move out of our area, and it says right in the document on red grouper that the fish, at about the size that we're catching them in shallow water, move to deeper waters, and they actually move out of our area.

In certain areas, we don't have access to a lot of those groupers, and I think, just as a fairness and equity to both commercial and recreational, we would like to see some kind of at least a portion of one of the months or one of the months given back to Florida, so we could have access to that stock. I can't -- If the spawning occurs later to the north, we are not going to have the same kind of regional differences. Where we are, it's over by March. I fished for gag for many, many years and watched them spawn and come every year. By March, they were done. In order for at least Florida to have some access to that stock again, we're going to need some consideration.

DR. DUVAL: Perhaps I can suggest that -- I think it's pretty clear that Alternative 2 be removed. I think the other alternatives cover a range of what we've discussed and the input we've gotten from visioning. I think letting the advisory panel look at this again, perhaps, and provide some additional input, given that conversation, and I think the other thing that we probably need to keep in mind, and this is where Amendment 43 and this amendment are kind of tied together a little bit, is if there are fishable areas that are being established under Amendment 43, this kind of impacts what we might do under this action here.

Doug and I were having a little bit of conversation about that earlier, and so I don't know if perhaps a little blurb about what is being considered under Amendment 43 would be appropriate in there. Do folks feel like this covers the range? I understand, Zack, you and Roy both feel that we should just leave it well enough alone. Are folks okay with this going to the AP during their November meeting for discussion? Okay. If that's the case, then this would go to the advisory panel, we would see this again in December, and we could make any decisions about what to take out to scoping in January. Any last comments on this?

MR. PHILLIPS: Obviously, since gag are closing, if we open it up to Florida, that just means it's going to close earlier, because they're going to catch fish they haven't been catching, and that will come out in the AP. Then we can bring it all to scoping, and then we can look and see how it happens.

DR. DUVAL: Good point. Okay. If there is nothing else on this, I think we can move forward with the next agenda item, which was some golden tilefish items. You have some attachments in your briefing book. If you recall, one of the things that the committee had asked for, and these are Attachments 6a, 6b, and 6c. At the last meeting, when we were discussing the golden tilefish assessment update, there were questions from the committee with regard to what type of assessment approach is used in the Mid-Atlantic for golden tilefish. John is going to walk us through that, and then Myra will take us through the remaining items.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You have a couple of attachments, the data updates they're called, from the Northeast Center addressing their tilefish assessments, which are quite interesting. If you looked at those, and I hope you did, they provide a really good overview of the fishery and of the data in a scant five pages of text or so. They have the assessment history and they have information on changes in the fishery over time and sampling. It really is a very concise, but thorough, document and reference for what has gone on in the fishery. It would seem that they probably do these each year, and I expect each year it's just a matter of kind of changing the most recent stuff, but retaining a lot of that history.

It was very helpful having those. I looked back at the assessment for some of the materials, just to look at benchmark references and comparisons to what we have now, but, in general, the

assessment effort that they've done, most recently done, on the Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England tilefish was SARC 58, which was in 2014, and it used data through 2012.

They're using a production model approach, which is different from an age-structured model. Production models look at total landings and some measure of abundance of the population. Ideally, it would be a fishery-independent survey, but, in some cases, you have to rely on fishery-dependent surveys.

Their earliest assessments use ASPIC, which is a pretty basic production model. In SARC 58, they updated it to a program called ASAP, which is an age-structured production model, and that brought in their length and age data, and so it brought in more of that data for them, the Age-Structured Assessment Program. The updates show the data, the catch in longline, and CPUE, through 2014.

The uncertainties that they have are kind of similar to the ones that we have. They have the issue with they don't have a fishery-independent index. They have difficulty tracking cohorts. They have uncertainty in incoming recruitment, all very similar, as we'll see, moving into the next one. On the South Atlantic, remember we had a catch-at-age model, the BAM, the Beaufort Assessment Model, that's been used, and catch-at-age is generally considered to be more advanced than production models. They can account for more data and more flexibility and consider changes in the fishery.

The data is fairly similar to what they have. You have commercial and recreational catch data, some indices. We're using a longline CPUE from the fishery and also a MARMAP fishery-independent data, and so we do have some fishery-independent data, unlike the situation up in the Northeast, and we have length and age compositions by fleets in our time series, but the uncertainties here for the South Atlantic are fairly similar. We also have difficulty estimating recruitment. There are some questions about how adequate our survey coverage is, how well they represent changes in the fishery.

We estimate MSY in BAM, but one of the challenges is that steepness is fixed, and so there's always that question of when you're unable to estimate that measure of the stock's productivity, then you're estimates of MSY are all going to be tied to whatever you fixed that steepness at, and, in the most recent assessment, there was a change in the fitting approach, and we noted that that seemed to affect the productivity estimates, and the fitting is considered to be a better method that's being done now, but, in the case of the tilefish stock, it did affect the productivity estimates.

MR. HARTIG: That sentence you just said, what changed the assessment?

MR. CARMICHAEL: There was a different fitting approach used. It's a different way of calculating the error within the model and how the model solves and finds its solution. It's a better way of calculating the error across all the different components that are modeled, and it was an improvement in the model, but, in the case of tilefish, it actually had a big impact on the productivity estimates.

The last thing I had here is a comparison of the productivity between the two stocks. This is reflecting the benchmark assessment conditions. By that, I mean, for the northern stock, we're looking at what came out of that SARC 58 assessment and not the latest data updates, in terms of



what the stock productivity is across the board and expected at equilibrium. As you can see here, both stocks are at a pretty similar SPR level, in terms of for their FMSY or MFMT that they would be. It's 0.25 SPR in the north and 0.24 in the south.

Now, the northern stock, that's coming in at an FMSY of 0.37 and an FMSY for us of 0.24. Really, when you get differences between those, it's just a matter of different selectivity patterns in the fishery and different growth and different maturity. Things like that are all going to affect that relation between what you realize at FMSY and what SPR that gives you, but, really, those differences are not huge, in terms of the FMSY.

Where you really start to notice the difference is when you look at the measures of stock productivity, and so I gave the values for their MSY and then compared with the north over the south. The northern stock's MSY is 2.2 million pounds. Ours is about 560,000 pounds, and so our productivity is about a quarter of what their productivity is, in terms of what we can take from the stock.

The first question, of course, is why is that? Well, one answer, obviously, is in the estimates of recruitment that are expected at age one, and so we expect to get about 327,000 fish at age one. Their average, over their assessment period, was 1.2 million, and so they're getting about four times the recruitment. As a result, their MSY is about four times what our MSY is, and so that's just a pretty basic indicator that the tilefish are much more abundant in that area than what they are in the South Atlantic, and that's probably the biggest reason for the huge difference in MSYs that was one of the reasons we wanted to look at this, was the comparison of what the MSY levels were.

DR. CRABTREE: John, is there a way to look at the amount of habitat in the two areas? Do they have more recruits and more fish because they've got more bottom and more habitat?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I don't know that there's a good way to look at that quantitatively. I know, just sort of informally, that it seems like there may be areas of our bottom where the habitat, the mud area, is narrower than it is up there. Someone like Dewey, with his experience out there, may have a better handle on just how that compares, but the first instinct would be to assume that there is probably quite a difference in habitat, plus we also know that, just ecologically, in general, as you move to northern latitudes on the Earth, you tend to have fewer species, but a lot more abundance of all of those species, and that's probably somewhat in play as well.

Interestingly, when you compare the north and the south, the relative landings level, we're actually taking a higher proportion than they are. Well, that fits. Our landings in 2014 were 706,000, which is above MSY, and so our stock is overfishing. As a result, a comparison of them, where they are not taking over MSY and they are not overfishing, and so the difference there is 39 percent. We're taking a higher proportion of what we can, and we have a little bit lower stock.

I think the real story in the comparison is in these. Dewey, now that you're back, we were just wondering if you have any sense of how the preferred habitat for golden tilefish may compare between the North Atlantic and the South Atlantic and whether one of the reasons for the increased productivity up there that we see, both in MSY and number of recruits, is maybe somewhat related to habitat, the amount of habitat.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I have never fished for golden tilefish, nor have I caught one. I would suspect that the habitat is probably a little bit the same, but also, in the functionality in the South Atlantic, you have to deal with the tides, and you don't have the tides nowhere near like that in the North Atlantic. I don't really know that structure or content, but there is a big difference in the current and the non-current in the Northeast.

MR. HARTIG: I think what fascinated me about this, the assessment report, was the market grade, the emphasis on the market grades, and I tried to get this done in our last assessment, and they said they couldn't do it. They used market grades actually to track fish going through the fishery. You can actually see the fish going through the different market categories, and they actually tracked that, which is pretty cool. They also get an early warning, so to say, about recruitment coming in, because they have so many small fish in their market grades, and they look at that.

That's what our focus was really in the last assessment, was to look at the new grade that was made for peewees. Of course, it's different than what they call them, but we had a new grade, because we had such a large recruitment event in 2012, I think it was. I can't remember which year it was, but I think it was 2012. We had a large recruitment event, and there were so many of those that they had to have a new grade, because we got less money for those smaller fish.

I think I would ask again that we go back and find a way to use the market grades in the assessment. I am very impressed with the way -- There is information coming out of this, John. There is information that can guide your management and guide your information about your stock assessment. I would treat it more like the ASPIC. It's another way to look at the assessment.

In this, you get fishermen input as well, through this process. They have that whole fishery performance evaluation system, which they can use to help fill in some of these gaps when they have questions about market grades and recruitment and things of that nature. They can go back and ask their fishermen. We haven't done that yet, but that's something I think -- To be fair, our AP didn't see much value in it, but I certainly see value in it, and I wish there was a way we could do it in the future, but I really like this market grade thing.

As far as the productivity of the tilefish in our area, it varies. You can't match my area. As you go north, with the expansion of the continental shelf, we have a little ribbon of area that we can actually target golden tilefish in. As you move north, that expands, but the other thing is they have a very narrow temperature tolerance. It's only a few degrees between where they want to be, where they're going to be, and they move. We see them all the time move out of areas based on temperature changes, especially cold-water events where we are, but I like the market grades.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I do believe that the market grade has a great ability to dictate kind of what's happening, and there is no reason why there shouldn't be in the South Atlantic. The fish are sold by their size. That's readily available, whether it's from a dealer weigh-out slip that comes from the fishermen or the dealer itself, and so that should be just another avenue of tracking something or to give you some better information about the size of the fish that you're catching, but it's valuable information, I believe.

MR. PHILLIPS: John, if I read the report correctly, when they were using the production model, the ASPIC, when they changed over and were able to add in the ages and the sizes, it really didn't change what they were getting. It didn't change the output of the models, whereas, it seems like

when we have ASPIC and then we do BAM or whatever we're doing, then you've got two huge, different numbers. That concerns me.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Their FMSY in the early production model runs was a bit lower, down around where ours is. Then their FMSY went up some under the ASPIC runs in SARC 58, but I think the overall productivity stayed fairly similar, which says they've probably got a pretty good handle on the level of productivity that they have. Certainly the average recruits must be a pretty robust number, and I think, in our case, it's hard to say. Ours changed more recently, probably, than we expected.

MR. HARTIG: Are we going to have that presentation, that slide?

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's in your additional materials. It should be on the website by now. I think Amber posted it earlier this morning. One of the things I thought, in the discussion at SEDAR, and Erik mentioned getting, somewhere down the road, to annual assessments for the things that we manage. If you look at those two reports from the Northeast addressing this, one for 2014 and one for 2015, my expectation is they do this, and I expect that my friends to the left here may know more, but I expect they do that for most all of their stocks, and are pretty doing that pretty regularly now, as they have tried to go into having more annual information come out in the Northeast.

It certainly seems to me that these were not actual assessments. This was just an update on the status of data and what the trends are, and something like that for at least the fifteen or so species that form 90 percent of our fishery, if we could get this kind of information on an annual basis, I think that would be invaluable to the council, just hands-down. Annual updates of assessments are one thing, but just getting this for the things that are really important, that we talk about meeting in and meeting out, would be really valuable, and something maybe the council could consider asking of the Science Center.

DR. DUVAL: Dewey and then Ben, and then I think we should kind of wrap this up and see if we want to make any recommendations to the SSC.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Something else you have to consider with the north and the south and some of these comparisons is, in the north, it's an IFQ. Fifty-three individuals own 57 percent of this quota here that you see on the north, and so you could have some differences in fishing behavior and the way the fishery is prosecuted there. 95 percent of the quota goes to eleven individuals, and 5 percent goes to the incidental quota. That's somewhere around 100,000 pounds, and so also look at this, what you're seeing, and the data is also fishermen's behavior and how they fish and the seasons. Presently, they are not filling out the -- The 95 percent is not catching all their quota, for one reason or another, whether it be spiny dogfish or weather or something like that. They're leaving somewhere on the table a little north of 200 metric tons for the last five years.

MR. HARTIG: I agree with you, John. I think this would be invaluable for us, since we have so long between a number of our assessments. We could catch some things early and take some early action to nip some of that in the bud, so we don't get crushed when we finally get the assessment. The other thing I see here is it takes a lot of work to do this initially, but, when I looked at both of them, there's not much difference. You're only plugging in some new values into the next year, and so it's not near the work that it takes the first time.

DR. DUVAL: So, we had asked for this information, because we thought it might be informative, in terms of the questions that we've asked of the SSC. We had a pretty extensive task list for them with regard to the golden tile update. Is there something we would want to ask the SSC to examine, in light of looking at this information and the way the stock is assessed in the Northeast?

Ben, you mentioned the use of market grade. That sort of brings to mind a rumble-strip-type of approach, or using market information to try to track cohorts and give us an indicator as to whether or not there is something we should be concerned about. I don't know if we would want to get SSC input on the potential utility of ASAP as an alternative model. I mean, wasn't that examined in the last benchmark?

MR. CARMICHAEL: They used a production model. One thing that we do know is different model packages fed the same data, with similar uncertainties, perform very similar. I don't think there's a lot of value, in most cases, to pursuing just different model packages, and there has been a lot of evaluations with simulated datasets. Some do better with some uncertainties than others, but, across the board, given similar data, they give you similar outputs.

In other words, the models work as they're supposed to. The issues are really within the uncertainties and how you handle the uncertainties, and the challenge with tilefish really is not having recruitment until like age six. There is a lot going on in those populations. There is a lot of dynamics happening between recruitment and when these fish -- Recruitment meaning birth and recruitment to the gears in the fisheries, and that seems to trip us up, I suppose.

We just don't know really what's coming in, in terms of productivity and good year classes versus bad year classes, and I think Ben has a good point there about looking at some of the other stuff, maybe the smaller market categories, as some early warning of what's lying ahead. Maybe we ought to try to develop some sort of rumble-strip approach, per se, and a report like those Northeast reports would certainly give you the information, I think, to evaluate rumble strips, which sort of is where we fall short.

If we want to do some type of rumble strip, you're measuring something, and that means you've got to look at that every year, and so it's got to be something that you're able to get that information and get it in a timely basis, and that's where we've fallen short in the past, on that, but I think, as far as the SSC, it does have an extensive list, and we will certainly provide this information to them. Maybe we want to ask if they would consider some rumble-strip ideas for this stock and maybe work with the Center to see how we could actually do it. That would be worthwhile.

DR. DUVAL: I think that would probably be an appropriate question, is, looking at how the assessment is done here in the Northeast and seeing how these market grades are sort of utilized as a check on things, and would it be possible to do something? What would be the utility or would it be possible to do something like that, given the information that we have? It seems like a pretty simple add-on to the task list that's already been provided.

MR. CONKLIN: In South Carolina, our dealer tickets do have a breakdown on the grade of the fish. Could we request that that data be pulled from all the states and sent back to be put into the model, or are we just going to see if the SSC thinks that's a good idea? Is that something we can do right now and have it run again?

DR. DUVAL: My recollection of looking at the update was that they tried to incorporate market grades into that analysis and that they were unable to do so, I think based on discrepancy between grades or something along those lines. Now, certainly, I think, if we get some SSC input, we could -- There could certainly be a data request made to all the states to get those market grades and see if we can match them up and use them for something like that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think they could. It's important to determine if -- Maybe market grades, it turns out, aren't used consistently across areas or maybe consistently over years. We're looking at market grades as being useful here, but I can remember assessments in the past, and I think summer flounder had some issues years ago, where market grades weren't always viewed so favorably. If the size of fish and stuff is changing over time and you're not accounting for that, then they can lead you astray.

You've got to have the sampling, and I think the thought in the assessment of tilefish was just using the length samples as they are, as opposed to breaking them up into market categories. We're using the lengths, and we're using the ages, those random samples of ages, as opposed to doing length keys, and all of those things can sort of factor into how you view data, like the market categories.

If we found out there was some consistent things coming on, like small fish popping up, if there was some consistency in that, then I think that's where it may serve as a rumble strip, which, again, becomes a way of saying how we use the data to monitor and evaluate fisheries in real time doesn't have to dictate how we use data in the assessment. It may be fine not to use market categories in the assessment, but maybe we can find some use for them as sort of a real-time monitoring tool, and I think it's always important to maintain that distinction, whether it's in dealing with the MRIP data or dealing with something like this.

DR. DUVAL: I think that might be a directive or a question that will come up during the SSC's discussion of the golden tilefish task list, I guess, is approaches or data that could be used for a rumble-strip type of approach, looking to what's been done in the Northeast. Could market grades be used or could our existing length information be used in that type of way? I think, if that's a specific enough question, it seems like folks around the table are supportive of that.

MR. CONKLIN: With bumping the golden tile assessment up on the SEDAR list the other day, I mean, I think we need to get all of this stuff straightened out before we go into the SEDAR process and have it -- Make sure we pay attention to what we're talking about now and not forget about it.

MR. HARTIG: I don't think -- The market grade isn't really used in the assessment, that I realized. It's more of like running the ASPIC. It informs your assessment results, but it does give you some additional information about year-class strength and also about cohorts moving through the fishery. I don't know how you would use that in the assessment, if I'm not correct, but it is valuable, Chris, absolutely, I think.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I think we've got some direction for the SSC that's specific enough. Thank you, John, for going through that with us. We really appreciate it. The next item on the golden tilefish list of things was a discussion of linking landings to the endorsements and the rationale for the council's decision to maintain landings with the permit as opposed to the endorsement. That

was a discussion that we actually didn't have the opportunity to have back in June of last year, when we were having our joint meeting with the Gulf. We simply ran out of time, and so Myra was going to quickly walk us through that, and then we also had an additional item of a golden tilefish hook-and-line fishing year.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: A while ago, when I talked about the unharvested quota of the ITQ fishery in the Mid-Atlantic, it was north of 200,000 pounds left on the table and not 200 metric tons. I just wanted to clarify that.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Your Attachment 6c in your briefing book is one that you received back in June, I believe, of 2015. There was some interest back then in discussing or reevaluating, I guess, the rationale for why the council chose not to have the catch history be attached to an endorsement, and, when you initially had this discussion, it was when you were considering the black sea bass pot endorsement.

The minutes that are included as part of this attachment are those discussions, and recall that that amendment, Amendment 18A, and Amendment 18B, which established the endorsement for golden tile, were sort of running on parallel tracks, and so you didn't really have a lot more discussion, in particular, for the golden tilefish endorsement, but I think the rationale is the same.

What I have here, in addition to, like I said, the verbatim minutes from those discussions, is just a summary of some of the things that were discussed then and why it was prudent to retain the catch history associated with the snapper grouper permit, as opposed to the endorsement. The way that both programs are set up right now is the endorsements simply allow the user to use that particular gear to fish for that species and nothing else, and then there is, of course, all the transferability guidance for each of those two endorsement programs.

You discussed that the transfer of catch history from the permit to the endorsement could be considered either before establishment of the endorsement program or do it somehow after creation of the endorsement program, and so those are the two options. Then you discussed various pros and cons.

If the endorsement was associated with the catch history prior to the creation of the endorsement program, there could be issues when endorsements are transferred, because then one endorsement could accumulate a lot of catch histories from different snapper grouper permits, and so then you get into the issues then of what would happen with the two-for-one. Then folks would be tempted to start sort of, quote, unquote, collecting endorsements, in anticipation of perhaps some type of limited access program coming down the pike in the future.

You also discussed that if you associated the endorsement with a catch history after creation of the endorsement program, there would be prior landings that you would then have to figure out how to attach to the endorsement and how to do that. You discussed a little bit about how, logistically, that would happen, and it would be a little complicated.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, when they talked about this, they had recommended keeping the catch history associated with the permit. They felt that that was a cleaner way to do

it. As I said, there would be issues with the two-for-one, and so, if both permits have endorsements associated with them, how does that work? We also had the NMFS Permits Office weigh in a little bit on this discussion back when you had these talks, and, also, they recommended keeping things, quote, unquote, cleaner, and that would be to keep the catch history associated with the permit.

Anyway, this whole thing came up and we were doing, I believe, public hearings for Amendment 35, a couple of years ago, and this is when this issue surfaced again, during public comment, and stakeholders were asking how come the council did it this way and can it be considered this other way, and that was my recollection for how this all came back up, and your request had been to bring this to you, so you could have those discussions on the record.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Myra at this point about where we got to where we are, in terms of the history of the discussion? Those minutes are pretty squirrely to read, in terms of we went, I think, all the way around the horn, at least one-and-a-half times, on this particular issue.

At this point, I am not really sure what the committee would like to consider. I know concerns have been brought forward by fishermen when we clarified the regulations for endorsement holders being able to fish on the hook-and-line portion of the golden tilefish ACL. That was kind of when this came up. Is there any action the committee wants to take or any further direction the committee wants to take? I guess, when I think about potentially changing course in midstream, in terms of how these landings are tracked, it seems like it creates a huge mess, and that's why we had such protracted discussions at the beginning of this.

MR. HARTIG: I still see value in following up with the AP's recommendation, and there are reasons for it, of when that should occur.

DR. DUVAL: I'm not following you.

MR. HARTIG: You asked whether or not we should be going forward with this. Is that what your question was? You asked for direction on what we should do with the tilefish change in the fishing year?

DR. DUVAL: No, I was asking about the catch history being associated with the endorsements and -- When I look around this table and I look at your faces, I don't really see any burning desire to actually change how these landings are associated with the permit at this point. Would I be correct?

MR. PHILLIPS: Considering the issues that have come up, especially with a handful of fishermen, and maybe being able to look at it from a different light, maybe it might not be a bad idea just to ask the advisory panel, do they still feel the same way? If they feel differently, then maybe we might want to look at it. Maybe that's the best road to take, is just let the advisory panel take a look at it again and make sure they're still in the same position and they still understand the issues, or they're still the same, and approach it that way. That's just a thought.

MR. BROWN: I tend to agree with Charlie. I don't fish for golden tile, but I do put a lot of credence in what the Snapper Grouper AP says, and so I would go back to them and let them have some discussion on this and then bring it back.

DR. DUVAL: Okay.

MR. HARTIG: I agree as well. There are a number of things that have changed that aren't the same anymore. Some of these things don't -- These problems that we saw, that we thought would happen, they're not viable any longer, because now the endorsement is worth more than the permit, and so I think a review of some of this is appropriate by the AP.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would have originally said that we need to put it back with the endorsement, but I would like to hear what the AP has to say about this. I feel like things have changed since we originally talked about this. Just like Ben said, some of the things that we thought were going to happen didn't necessarily materialize, and I would just like to hear a little bit more information before we completely put this to bed.

MR. GRINER: The golden tile endorsement, it's only a longline endorsement, and is that not the only endorsement there is? Okay.

DR. DUVAL: We will send this, I think probably this document, to the advisory panel and walk them through that discussion in November. I think that would be appropriate, and we can just get their input on should this remain as is, given where we started with the discussion of associating the landings with the endorsement versus the permit. Okay. Now, Ben, the last item was the discussion of the golden tilefish -- The start date of the hook-and-line season versus the longline season. I think Myra can walk us through that a little bit, but my recollection was there had been some advisory panel motions to look at a different start date for the hook-and-line component of the golden tile fishing year, so that it wouldn't overlap with the longline component.

There were concerns about getting a good price at the market, and so this is something that I think was included in either one of the purgatory amendments, I think Reg 23 or Reg 24, and so one suggestion I was going to make is that I think, maybe given some of the things that we're considering in the commercial visioning amendment, that that might be an appropriate place for it.

I had asked Myra if she could bring a similar options paper back to us at the December council meeting with commercial visioning amendment items, and, given that the input from our previous committee meeting was to look at things like different commercial split seasons, it seems like start dates fit in well with that type of approach, and so I throw that out there, and just a little bit of input from the committee would be appreciated.

MR. PHILLIPS: With the new golden tile assessment, I don't think there is any burning desire to change the start date, because there's not much to gain from it, like there was before, and so that would be a low priority, considering all the other stuff we have to do, but we can still keep it on track and put it in that and look at it, but I don't think it has nearly the priority that it had before.

DR. DUVAL: Maybe a similar approach as well. We could go back to the advisory panel and ask them, in light of the assessment, if they still feel like this is something they want to consider. If so, we could let them know that we would plan to put it in the commercial visioning amendment options paper. Does that sound okay? All right. Notice how I am driving you.



The next item was modifications to black sea bass pots. Attachment 7 in your briefing book was the presentation that we saw from Paul Rudershausen in March, and so that same presentation was given to the advisory panel in April, and we did not discuss the motion from the AP that came forward to the committee, which was to recommend that all black sea bass pots, I think, go to a two-and-a-quarter-inch mesh. I think that was for the entire pot. Myra, I think you all had some thoughts on that, staff.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and, like Michelle said, the attachment that you have there is the same presentation you've seen. The SSC is scheduled to review this presentation at their October meeting, and so that's an important thing to consider before you consider taking action. The other thing to remind you is there is only thirty-two vessels that have endorsements. I think that is currently the number for black sea bass pots, and there had also been discussions among AP members, and just informally, about maybe this is something that the endorsement holders themselves would want to take charge and simply make this change to their gear, because evidently this optimizes the catch for black sea bass.

It sounds like it's a very positive thing that they would just want to simply do on their own, as opposed to having the council take action and make it somehow a requirement, and so I'm just mentioning that because that's sort of stuff that I've heard sort of informally from folks, saying, well, that would be just easy enough, and, if necessary, staff could easily contact those thirty-two endorsement holders and provide whatever information they may need to make that decision.

DR. DUVAL: Are folks okay with that approach? We will let the SSC receive this presentation and see what they have to say. Then we could probably consider some of those less-regulatory options that Myra has outlined. I am seeing heads nodding around the table on that one.

The last item on our agenda is a Red Grouper SAFE Report. That's Attachment 8 in your briefing book, and I think Mike is supposed to give us a review of the data in there, and I guess I would like to get a little bit of input from the committee. Do you want to do this now and try and knock this out and go to lunch late or do you want to come back and do this or do you want to try to take this up at Full Council?

My concern is that we have a Dolphin Wahoo/Mackerel/Snapper Grouper massive joint committee meeting, where we're going to be discussing multiple items. We've got the yellowtail and snapper grouper allocation sharing amendment, and we have a discussion of a potential for-hire options paper, and we have two hours set aside on the agenda for that. I'm a little bit concerned that we are going to use up that full two hours and then we move into the Mackerel Committee, and we have a pretty full agenda there, and so I was going to suggest that we possibly break for lunch and then maybe take up the snapper grouper SAFE report at Full Council, but I see Gregg has come to sit down.

MR. WAUGH: Good.

DR. DUVAL: That was your suggestion?

MR. WAUGH: That's what I was going to suggest.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Awesome. Let's break for lunch, and then we'll come back here at 1:30 and move into the mega-committee meeting. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 14, 2016.)

Transcribed By:  
Amanda Thomas  
October 2016

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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9/13/2016 11:19:53	Rusty Hudson	DSF2009@aol.com	On file	Fisheries Consultant
9/13/2016 11:45:12	Lora Clarke	lclarke@pewtrusts.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
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9/13/2016 11:47:16	Dean Foster	dean@pewtrusts.com	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
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9/13/2016 13:03:33	Tim Sartwell	tim.sartwell@noaa.gov	on file	NMFS
9/13/2016 13:06:44	Leda Dummire	ldummire@pewtrusts.org	205 Taylor Lane Morehead City, NC 28557	Non-Governmental Organization
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9/13/2016 13:15:30	gary zum	gzurn@bigrocksports.com	on file	Seafood Dealer/Wholesaler/Retailer
9/13/2016 13:18:35	Gary Jennings	gjennings@asafishing.org	6514 Sawyer Shores Lane, Windermere, FL 34786	Private Recreational Angler
9/13/2016 13:20:48	John O'Hern	johncohern1@gmail.com	2731 Euston Road Winter Park, FL 32789	Fishery Observer
9/13/2016 13:32:53	David Bush	davidbush@ncfish.org	on file	NCFA
9/13/2016 14:03:04	Robert Lorenz	rllorenz@ec.rr.com	On file	Private Recreational Angler
9/13/2016 14:11:44	Scott Whitaker	swhitaker@ccasouthcarolina.com	on file	Private Recreational Angler, Non-Governmental Organization
9/13/2016 14:24:01	Bill Kelly	fkcfat1@hotmail.com	On file	Commerical fishing representative
9/13/2016 14:53:23	Trip Aukeman	taukeman@ccafflorida.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
9/13/2016 15:22:24	Holly Binns	hbinns@pewtrusts.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
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Tuesday 9/13/16

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vara	mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov

Timestamp	Full Name	Email	Mailing Address (If your address is already on file, just type "on file")	How do you participate in fisheries in the South Atlantic? (Check all that apply)
9/14/2016 8:08:05	Walter Buble	bublew@dnr.sc.gov	217 Fort Johnson Rd, Charleston, SC	Government
9/14/2016 8:08:49	Joey Ballenger	ballengerj@dnr.sc.gov	on file	SCDNR
9/14/2016 8:10:24	Gary Jennings	gjennings@asafishing.org	514 Sawyer Shores Lane, Windermere, FL 34786	Private Recreational Angler, Non-Governmental Organization
9/14/2016 8:13:02	Leda Dunnire	ldunnire@pewtrusts.org	205 Taylor Lane, Morehead City, NC 28557	Non-Governmental Organization
9/14/2016 8:14:49	dean foster	dfoster@pewtrusts.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
9/14/2016 8:20:49	Robert Lorenz	rlorenz@ec.rr.com	On file	Private Recreational Angler
9/14/2016 8:23:13	Lora Clarke	lclarke@pewtrusts.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
9/14/2016 8:30:52	jim freeman	cfreeman23@bellsouth.net	122 springwood dr daytona beach fl 32119	Commercial Fisherman
9/14/2016 8:39:52	Gary Zurn	gzurn@bigrocksports.com	on file	Seafood Dealer/Wholesaler/Retailer
9/14/2016 8:42:11	Russell Dunn	Russell.Dunn@noaa.gov	on file	NOAA Fisheries
9/14/2016 8:42:55	David Bush	davidbush@ncfish.org	on file	NCFA
9/14/2016 9:20:19	Rusty Hudson	DSF2009@aol.com	On file	Fisheries Consultant
9/14/2016 9:30:22	Celeste Leroux	celeste.leroux@noaa.gov	on file	NOAA Fisheries employee
9/14/2016 10:22:35	Mary Conley	mconley@tnc.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization
9/14/2016 10:26:23	rick hawkins	rick.hawkins@uscg.mil	file	uscg
9/14/2016 10:27:47	david la	david.la@uscg.mil	721 medical center drive wilmington, nc 28401	Private Recreational Angler, Charter/Headboat/Forthire, Commercial Fisherman
9/14/2016 10:38:56	trip aukeman	taukeman@cccaflorida.org	on file	Non-Governmental Organization

Timestamp	Full Name	Email	Mailing Address (If your address is already on file, just type "on file")	How do you participate in fisheries in the South Atlantic? (Check all that apply)
9/14/2016 11:53:56	wayne mershon	kenyonseafood@sc.rr.com	on file	Commercial Fisherman, Seafood Dealer/Wholesaler/Retailer
9/14/2016 13:09:20	William Gorham	getbowedup40@gmail.com	ON FILE	Private Recreational Angler, Charter/Headboat/For-hire, LURE MANU
9/14/2016 13:29:03	John O'Hern	johncohern1@gmail.com	2731 Euston Road Winter Park FL 32789	Fishery Observer
9/14/2016 14:00:00	Steve Shelley	ssmsmollied54@gmail.com	on file	Commercial Fisherman
9/14/2016 14:28:21	Tony Constant	awconstant@gmail.com	on file	Private Recreational Angler
9/14/2016 15:04:33	Robert Boyles	boylesr@dnr.sc.gov	on file	Government
9/14/2016 15:47:18	davis turner	tideridefishin@hotmail.com	1231 ladys island dr. port royal sc	Charter/Headboat/For-hire
9/14/2016 15:58:15	Captain Eric Heiden	e.heiden@aol.com	1041 Blue Stem Drive, 37A, Pawleys Island, SC 29585	Charter/Headboat/For-hire

WEDNESDAY 9/14/16

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