

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE**

**Doubletree Grand Key Resort  
Key West, FL**

**June 10, 2015**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Snapper Grouper Committee**

Dr. Michelle Duval, Chair  
Mel Bell  
Charlie Phillips  
Anna Beckwith  
Chester Brewer  
Chris Conklin  
Dr. Jack McGovern

Jessica McCawley, Vice-Chair  
Ben Hartig  
Doug Haymans  
Zack Bowen  
Mark Brown  
Jack Cox

#### **Council Members:**

Dr. Wilson Laney

#### **Council Staff:**

Bob Mahood  
Mike Collins  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Kim Iverson  
Julie O'Dell  
Roger Pugliese  
Dr. Brian Chevront

Gregg Waugh  
John Carmichael  
Chip Collier  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Myra Brouwer  
Amber Von Harten

#### **Observers/Participants:**

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Dr. Nick Farmer  
Sp. Agt. Jeff Radonski  
Erika Burgess  
Karen Antrim Raine  
Lt. Charlotte Delorey  
Col. Chisolm Frampton  
Jim Attack  
Rusty Hudson

Capt. Rob Beaton  
Adam Bailey  
Rick DeVictor  
Dr. Luiz Barbieri  
Dr. Marcel Reichart  
Dr. George Sedberry  
Dr. Mike Larkin  
Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Dr. David VanVorhees  
Capt. Mark Gordon

Additional Observers Attached

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Tortuga Ballroom of the Doubletree Grand Key Resort, Key West, Florida, June 10, 2015, and was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Michelle Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Welcome to the Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting. The first order of business is approval of the agenda. Obviously, the agenda is going to change significantly today. I know of one item under other business. Does anybody else have any other items under other business that they would like to add at this time?

I'm asking the committee to give me some pretty extreme latitude in shifting things around in order to meet people's schedules and at least get the business done that we have to get done for today. Seeing no other modifications to the agenda, the agenda will stand approved as I've shifted around. Are there any modifications to our March 2015 meeting minutes? Seeing none; those minutes stand approved.

What we're going to do now is we're actually going to shift our agenda and we're going to take up Regulatory 16. This is the black sea bass pot closure. Brian has a schedule that he cannot change today; so we are going to be done with this by 10:00 o'clock. I have one item under other business that Bonnie has requested to discuss briefly, which we will do as soon as we finish our business on Regulatory Amendment 16.

Bonnie is obviously flipping back and forth between here and the Gulf Council meeting, but there was something she wanted to update us on. Then after that, Mr. Chairman, I would recommend that go back into Executive Finance at 10:00 so that we can cover the rest of the Joint South Florida Amendment that we unfortunately were unable to get to yesterday.

If we can wrap that up before lunch, then can move back into snapper grouper, and we will pick up with our regular agenda, going through the status of commercial and recreational catches and amendments under formal review and receive the usual presentations and reports that we have. Is everybody somewhat clear on how we're modifying things? I'm going to turn things over to Brian right now to take us through the decision document for Regulatory Amendment 16. The decision document is Attachment 6A in your briefing book.

DR. CHEUVRONT: We're going to try to give everything an amount of time for discussion, but there are main things that we need to talk about today I think with this committee; the first being the purpose and need. Then we're going to look at Action 1 and then Action 2. If you look on Page 6 of the decision document, it seems to be like it wouldn't be a council meeting the last few meetings without discussing the purpose and need for this amendment.

You came up with the purpose and need that you see here at the last meeting. However, the IPT and folks have discussed this since that meeting, and you'll see at the bottom of that page some revisions or suggested revisions that you might want to consider. Right now your purpose and need is to restore the black sea bass commercial sector, the pot fishery, balanced with other gears. The way we've restructured it is to look at the purpose of Regulatory Amendment 16 is to reduce the scope of the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot

gear and enhance buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots required by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. That's the purpose.

The need is the need for the amendment is to reduce the adverse socioeconomic impacts to black sea bass pot endorsement holders created by the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear and to increase the flexibility of black sea bass pot endorsement holders to fish with this gear while continuing to afford protection to ESA-listed whales in the South Atlantic region. In addition, the need is to reduce the adverse effects on whales if entangled and to help identify black sea bass pot lines used in the South Atlantic.

You basically have some choices of things that you need to think about. You can keep your purpose and need the way that you left it. You can accept the IPT's language. You can modify any language however you want or basically anything you'd like to do. Now would be a good time to discuss purpose and need.

DR. DUVAL: Thoughts from the committee on the proposed changes to the purpose and need from the IPT. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: It sounded quite reasonable to me when you're ready for a motion.

DR. DUVAL: Let me go to our chairman first and then back to you. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Well, let's go to Doug and then we'll have discussion; how is that?

**MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair, I make a motion that we accept the IPT's recommended wording for purpose and need.**

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Doug; second by Mel. Discussion? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: For the record I would say that if we stay with our old purpose and need, if your main goal is to restore the balance between the pot and other gear components, there are a number of ways you could address that other than what we're trying to do with the seasonal opening. This is a much better way to go.

MR. BELL: Yes; I think that wording is much more concise and I like it.

DR. DUVAL: I would agree. Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: At the last meeting, though, there is a lot of discussion in the record by several council members pointing out that what we're attempting to do is to kind of restore the fishery to the pre-Amendment 19 actions that we took. There is talk about shift away from the pot holders to the hook-and-line fishery. I think we need some pretty good explanation as to why that is no longer what we're about here.

MR. COX: Roy, what we're trying to do here is get these pots back in the water so we can fish in the winter and protect the whales. That's the gist of it, and I think there is going to be some time

coming up pretty soon where we're going to set aside 25 percent and so forth. I think we know that day is coming for the hook-and-line sector just like we did with the golden tile longline fishermen.

These pot fishermen need to get back in the water during the time when these fish are the most valuable and the size is right. Even though you see the ACL almost getting met that one particular year, it is not the size and the color of the fish that the fishermen are looking for in the time of year they want to go to work. When you do this in the summertime, the fish are light brown; the water is hot. It takes three or four times as long to catch our fish than it does in the wintertime. Am I getting to the point that you're looking for?

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I'm not quite sure. I can give you my sense of it, but I'm not sure you'll agree with it. It seems to me that when we put in place Regulatory Amendment 19, we had a fishery that was in a huge derby fishery, both the recreational and the commercial fishery. They were closing very quickly. The stock was rebuilt. We had a substantial increase in TAC.

There were a lot of economic reasons why we wanted to move quickly on that; and so we put in place this closure. In retrospect, now that we've seen the closure in place and we've got much more detailed analysis, it seems like the closure we put in place was overly broad and unnecessarily broad. It seems to me what we're trying to do here is look at if there is not a way to reduce the scope of that closure, still maintaining the right whale protection, but allowing, as you point out, Jack, some opportunity for pot fishermen to fish.

I think if you come at it from that perspective; that makes some sense; but I think where that leads you then is you need to try and find an alternative here that allows the pot fishermen back in the water but maintains a relatively low or negligible risk to right whales, so we're not getting into all of these allocation issues and all those kinds of things. We're trying to achieve the same level of protection for right whales, but we think we can do that with a much smaller closure than what is currently in place. That's my take on kind what makes sense to do here, but I don't know if that's consistent with what everybody else thinks or not.

DR. DUVAL: When we were in the position of moving forward with Regulatory Amendment 19 to allow for the increase in the ACL as a result of the update to the stock assessment and were in a position of having to put this closure in place, we were clear that we intended to readdress the closure in that it was very broad at that time and that it was inconsistent with existing biological opinion that we had. We certainly had some discussion in that regard. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: And, Roy, I think you're right; I think we agree there. I think the question is where is the compromise of where do we allow pots to be fished that works for fishermen and still works for the whales? That is basically the question; but I agree what we have now is too much. Bringing it in to where – if you don't bring it in enough where the fishermen can actually benefit, then it is really not going to do anything.

It looks like the sliver probably between 25 and 30 meters is going to be pretty narrow, and that's basically kind of on the gray edges of where most of the whales are. I looked at I think 4A and it said that covered 96/97 percent of the whale sightings. I could not see further down on, say, some

of the other ones like 8A what the percentage was. I didn't see it in the document. I'm sure it is somewhere; I just didn't find it. We're on the fringe areas, but we need to – if we don't open up enough bottom where it actually helps the fishermen, then we really haven't done much.

MR. COX: Right now we're talking about the purpose and need; and I think with the IPT's suggestions it looks to me that it pretty much is covering what we're trying to do here. I will tell you, however, we are prepared to put forth another preferred alternative to what we have from the last meeting.

DR. DUVAL: Well, let's just focus on the purpose and need and the motion that we have on the board right now. Are there any other comments on the proposed changes to the purpose and need? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

DR, CHEUVRONT: Okay, moving right along, the first action is that one about the closure itself and changes to it temporally as well as spatially, but I've got an easy thing for you to discuss first. On Page 15 of the document there was one type that we missed in the wording; and it is just above that Table 2.1.3. It is a real simple one.

When these alternatives were originally written, it was written so that the closures would be in effect from the coastline out to the end of the EEZ. Well, obviously, the South Atlantic Council doesn't have jurisdiction over state waters; so we went through and modified all of the alternatives except for this one somehow got through. We just need to change the word "coastline" to the "start of the EEZ, but that is the only language that we have made from the last time you saw these alternatives. I just wanted to point this out to you that this change needs to be made to be consistent with all the other alternatives.

DR. DUVAL: Brian, do you need a motion from the committee to accept that or no?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I would just like to make sure you're all aware of it and just direction would be fine. I just want to make sure that none of the wording is without your knowing about it.

DR. DUVAL: We very much appreciate that. Heads are nodding around the table that everyone is aware of this language change simply to be consistent with the wording of the other alternatives.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's correct. Okay, right now your current preferred alternative for this action is Alternative 9, Subalternative 9A. The black sea bass pot closure applies to waters inshore of points 1 to 28 listed below in Table 2.1.7; approximately Daytona Beach, Florida, to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. That can be seen in Figure 2.1.8. Preferred Subalternative 9A is the black sea bass pot closure applies to the area annually from November 1 through April 15. That is your current preferred. Now would be a good time to discuss it if you want to make any changes or modifications or to say this is okay; let's go on.

MR. COX: I think 9A is still good, but I have heard from the other side of the table that there are some other things here that they think that would accomplish what we're trying to do with different alternatives. I have taken a look at some of that stuff such as I've heard that Alternative 4 may be a better alternative.

However, at this point I would like to offer another preferred, Alternative 8, which be Subalternative 8A. What that does different than we've already chosen; it takes the depth from November 1 through April – well, 8A says April 15<sup>th</sup> – we're willing to extend it even another 15 days and go to April 30<sup>th</sup>, being sensitive to that time when those calves are coming through. The most important thing it does is it gives you another buffer. It sends us out another five fathoms.

In the preferred alternative where we are now, we're going to go from 20 fathoms out to 25 fathoms. I can tell you that – meters, I'm sorry, meters. I'm always thinking in terms of fathoms. Yes, that would deep. Yes, to correct myself, from 20 meters to 25 meters. What that does is it puts us pretty close to the blue water.

When you're sea bass pot fishing, you need that green water. You want that water that's about 65 degrees. When you start getting a little bit warmer than that, the fish start scattering and it is just not a very productive fishery outside of 25 fathoms. When you get to some of these alternatives, it puts you out to 30 fathoms and you get into that hot water where the current runs pretty good.

It pulls your buoys down and it is quite a distance from 20 meters out to 30, because you just have so much more time spent. You don't have the structure to fish on like you do back in 20 or 25 meters. I would like to make a motion that we change our preferred alternative to Alternative 8, Subalternative 8A.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Jack to change the preferred alternative for Action 1; second by Anna. Discussion? Mel.

MR. BELL: If he also wanted to change to April 30<sup>th</sup>, would that need to be included in the motion?

MR. COX: Yes, and to change from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. Right now it reads April 15<sup>th</sup>.

DR. DUVAL: Let's give Brian a chance to get that in there. Jack.

MR. COX: And I did have one other very important thing to talk about. When we were looking at the last preferred back in March, Brian brought out the point that if we had stuck with our other preferred alternative in 9; that the season would have closed sometime in October. With this new alternative, we're going to get that added benefit of an extended season, so it looks like we'll almost make it into the early part of December with the new preferred.

DR. DUVAL: I think if folks want to look on Page 51 of the decision document you can see different projected closure dates based on different catch rate scenarios. I think probably Scenarios 1 and 4 make the most sense to look because those are actually based on winter catch rates as opposed to Scenarios 2 and 3, which are summer catch rates, I believe.

DR. CHEUVRONT: And if I can point out something else that you might to look at in terms of evaluating these different alternatives is on Page 56, Table 4.1.2.9. That gives you the expected

economic value of each of the different alternatives/subalternatives just for the pot fishery. Table 10 does the same thing for non-pot gear.

Now, remember that if your goal is to move more of the fishery into the pot sector, which is fine if that is your goal, the pie is not getting any bigger. It is the same pie so as the pot fishery becomes more valuable, the other gear fishery becomes less valuable in the terms of how much that gear adds to the economic effects.

**DR. DUVAL: We have a motion to change the preferred alternative for Action 1 to Alternative 8, Subalternative 8A, and change the closure period to November 1 through April 30. Roy.**

DR. CRABTREE: If you start on Page 36; that is where I think it lists the relative amount of protection for right whales. Brian, I don't think anywhere in here we have an analysis of what the impact of changing the closure period like this would do?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's correct; we don't know what that's going to do. My guess is going to be it might add a couple of days to the season, the expected closure date.

DR. CRABTREE: And it adds a little bit more protection to right whales, but we don't if it would affect the rankings. I look at it and Alternative 1 has no risk, obviously. Alternative 6 and 4 have low risks or no additional risk, but low across the board. All right, so you go down then and look at 8A – and I think 8A is an improvement on where we were, and I appreciate people's willingness to try and find a solution here.

When you get to 8A, you have low to moderate increase in risk off North Carolina and low to high increase in risk off of Florida. Then you go down to Page 51 and you see that with – this is the closure dates and with 8A, I guess depending on the scenario you have you potentially have October closures. Some scenarios you have December closures.

Alternative 4, though, it is December closures across the board. Then go down to Page 56, and this is the dockside value to the pot fishery. If you look at Alternative 4 versus Alternative 8A, I think Alternative 4 is a little bit higher economic value to the pot fishery in general than 8A; but they're so close it is hard to know.

I assume what is happening here is the gains of the fishery open longer are kind of weighted against the gains of having more bottom; but it still looks to me that the analysis we have supports Alternative 4; and the risk analysis we have supports Alternative 4. That's my concern with it. If we're going to do something that adds some risk to right whales, you've got to have a real compelling argument for it. It still seems to me that the analysis we have supports the choice of Alternative 4 rather than 8A. I'm not sure how to – I think we're going to have to have some real discussion about why we wouldn't follow that analysis.

MS. BECKWITH: Well, this is for question for Jack. With Alternative 4 going out to 30 meters, what is the distance? Certainly off of North Carolina it is less, but off of Florida the distance is quite a bit to get out from 25 to 30; so even though the economic value seems a little higher for

the value of the fishery, the costs associated with having to push out to 30 meters would be quite a bit higher and the potential difficulty of finding those fish you mentioned at 30 meters. Can you just speak to that for a moment?

MR. COX: Yes; these black sea bass, they like green water. They like water that's not that deep blue water where that Gulf Stream comes in there. That Gulf Stream a lot of times in the winter rolls in there in that 30 meter area. It will cost us – mostly what we do is a day trip. We leave in the morning, we set our gear, we work our gear; and when the sun is going down, we're coming home.

When you have to go that much further offshore, now you're talking about having to spend the night; not only the distance that you had to go out there to get the stuff, but you take a chance on losing your gear because out there in 30 meters is where that current runs and it will pull your buoys down. So now we're taking a pretty big risk of losing equipment.

I'm telling you, I know this fishery, and 8A fits in there perfect for what we're trying to do. I've done this for a long time. Thirty meters is just so far out there; and I'm telling you, Roy, we are not risk to whales where we're doing our stuff. We have done so much in Amendment 16 to make sure that we have that added protection in there for these whales; that going to 30 meters is just – it just doesn't work; it doesn't work in the fishery.

It's hot water; your buoys are being pulled under; you don't have the bottom that you normally fish. Sometimes we're able to get out there when that warm water is not pushed in there and catch fish. I have gone out there and done pretty well; but for the majority of the time you need to be in that 20 to 25 meter area.

DR. DUVAL: I would argue that we did a lot in Amendment 18A to reduce risk to right whales whether or not that was the intent. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Jack pretty much covered it. As far as the value, dockside value doesn't tell you everything. If you're going to be running further, you've got fuel cost. If you're going to be fishing in areas where you've got the potential of losing more gear, then you've got another cost there. Theoretically I could easily see where the total value would be less with 4 over 8.

DR. ERRIGO: Just quickly in terms of closing out to 25 meters; according to the sightings' data, part of the rationale for closing to 30 meters was the encompassing sighting. Closing out to 25 meters, according to the empirical data that I got from the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium, from 1992 to 2013 would encompass approximately 97 percent of the right whale sightings during that time period.

MR. BOWEN: To Jack Cox again, Jack, can you tell us, estimated, what the mileage is between 20 and 25 meters and then again from 25 to 30 meters off of North Carolina?

MR. COX: Well, off of Morehead City to 20 meters is going to be about 15 to 18 miles. When you go to 25 meters, you're going to have to increase by another 5 miles; and you go out to 30



meters is another 5 miles; so you're about 34 or 35 miles offshore by the time you get out to 30 meters in some areas.

Another thing I wanted to add is the sea bass pot fishery is a very clean fishery. We catch hardly any other species in it. We can modify those trap panels to the size of the fish that we want to catch. When you start getting out in that deeper water, you start catching a few B-liners, you start catching a few more triggers, so you have a few more discards out there in that warmer water.

MR. BELL: Yes; and that runs even farther for us for South Carolina. You're out there 20 or 30 miles. It pushes you out even further. I will say just from my own personal observations on the bottom out there, sea bass just sort of have a sweet spot where in that 60, 70, 80 – and once you start getting out 90 and 100 feet, they start diminishing and you start picking up more grouper and all. That's another reason of just where the fish are and the distance you have to run. If you have to run out to 30 meters, they're not as easy to catch, like Jack has described. That's just the way it is set up.

MR. COX: I think if you were to have all sea bass pot fishermen in here together and you said what is your preferred depth range, where do you do most of your fishing, I think they're going to say somewhere between 70 and 80 feet. A lot of them will fish a little bit shallower than that, but that's kind of that sweet spot is about 70 feet, 75 feet.

In Morehead, I'm going to tell when we see those whales coming through in the wintertime, those whales hug those shoals and they're feeding on those menhaden. They're in about 35 feet of water or 40 feet of water is where we see those whales most of the time.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I think it is a good discussion. I hear the points you're making and I understand what you're saying. Somehow, though, we need an analysis that takes that into account and shows here is why it leads us to the preferred we've gone to. Right now the analysis in your document just don't support this preferred alternative.

It is very difficult to have all the quantitative analysis going one way and then we've got these kinds of qualitative discussions, but somehow we need to pull this together into some sort of analysis that supports your decision. We just don't have yet, and I'm not quite sure how to get to that. I think that's the difficulty.

It seems that a lot of these gains in terms of getting bottom where you can fish traps economically get offset by the fact that if you get the extra bottom and fish more, you close earlier. I'm not sure how to take into account how much further offshore you go and a lot of these qualitative things. I still look through the document and I just can't find an analysis that supports these other alternatives.

DR. DUVAL: Well, it is all based on probabilities, right, so you have probabilities of pots being set in a certain way and in a certain area overlaying with the probability that a right whale might be moving through that area. It is all very probabilistic, so we're not going to have a point estimate for any of these.

When I look at this and I see all the changes that we have made to this fishery through Amendment 18A, the action that we were pretty much forced to take in Regulatory Amendment 19 in order to give back to the fishery the gains that have been achieved and stock rebuilding; and I see that we've had no documented serious injury or mortality attributed to this fishery when it used to operate with no restrictions whatsoever during the entire right whale migration period.

Then I look at some of these activities that are happening up in the northeast such as the new vertical line rule that was announced in June of last year and was implemented in a piecemeal fashion whereby the new vertical line restrictions went into place sooner here and were delayed by a year up in the northeast, which seems a little convenient when I see state proposals coming in to modify the requirements of that rule that would have removed lines from the water, which sort of conveniently changes the baseline such as there is no change; so now we have a vertical line that was supposed to reduce lines in the northeast and it is not doing any of that.

And when I look further through our decision document and I read on Page 33 in the decision document about the reevaluation of the American lobster fishery and the re-examination of the biological opinion, I see the conclusion, which was in 2014, so end of last year, prior to these state proposals being accepted by the Large Whale Take Reduction Team and being implemented this year, this month, I read, "However, it is important to consider that the continued authorization of the fishery being considered in this American Lobster Opinion is not new; it is ongoing; and the right whale population has been increasing while lobster fishing in U.S. federal, state and Canadian waters has continued to occur and continued to interact with right whales."

"Continued to interact with right whales"; so when I read those types of conclusions, I become very concerned about the inconsistency with which the agency is treating a single population throughout its range and the management measures that are really being forced upon 32 pot fishermen in one area of the range when according to the agency's own 2015 list of fisheries, these are 32 vessels out of 3,300 and some. And when you compare that against no documented serious injury or mortality, I feel like we're splitting hairs a little bit here when we talk about not able to support this particular preferred alternative. Mark.

MR. BROWN: I know we're having discussion on this, but can we vote on this motion?

DR. DUVAL: Absolutely. Any other comments on the motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Brian, could I ask you question? Is it possible in your continued analysis of this look at the increased costs of the difference in Table 4.1.2.7, which is the closure table, between 4 and 6, which gets you into maybe mid-December; can you look at the difference in cost to the fishery from early December to mid-December if you kept – do you follow me – their fuel cost and everything else.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes; you're asking for a level of detail that we really can't do very well because estimating trip costs at this fine a level, we just don't have the data to do that. The difference between Alternatives 4 and you said 6?

MR. HAYMANS: Yes; 4 and 6 versus –

DR. CHEUVRONT: I don't think you really want to consider Alternative 6, to be honest with you, because that's a huge, huge closure. That's the gillnet area off of Florida, that closure area, and that in essence would basically shut down the fishery off of Florida. I don't think you're –

MR. HAYMANS: What I'm looking at is that both of those scenarios gave a potential closure date of December 19<sup>th</sup>, and 8A, which is what we're interested in, is December 5<sup>th</sup>. What those other two scenarios are saying is you've got to fish longer to get to the ACL if that's the closure. There is obviously an increased cost, which is what Charlie was talking about; but if it's too difficult to get there, that's fine.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, it is kind of difficult to get there. You have to remember that when you look at the economic analysis, fish caught in November and December are worth more economically. If you're able to fish right on up through the summer into September/October and you shut down that fishery in October, you're losing some of the most economically profitable months in the pot fishery.

Anything that you can do to push that fishery into December is going to bring more ex-vessel value. The problem is that there are some tradeoffs with potential increased trip costs, and those will probably mostly be in terms of fuel costs as well as time. I don't really have the data at the level of detail to help me get at that nuanced analysis, but we know that those are probably the things that would increase and there could be some others as well.

Okay, Action 2, in March we spent a lot of time working on Action 1; and Action 2 we had talked about some, but we didn't spend a lot of time working on the alternatives and things. We kind of ended up – this is the action that looks at buoy line strength, weak link strengths as well as line markings.

The alternatives that we ended up with, it was like we kept adding alternatives and things that would modify this to encompass what you were looking for. Part of the problem with this turned out to be that you ended up with an Alternative 2 and an Alternative 4, both that dealt with buoy line strengths and things, so the IPT looked at a way to simplify these alternatives.

Now, there is also another thing. You changed this to “enhance” in the title – I want to catch this part first – and there was some concern about whether enhance is the right term to use. It really is more a revision because you're adding at least – enhance, you're adding a qualitative statement here; and until it goes in place, we don't really know whether it enhances or not. It is really more revising.

MR. HAYMANS: I had the same thought when looking at the IPT's suggested wording for the need's statement or the purpose statement, but you've got “enhance” in that, so that is what we went with. How can you change now when we just approved it in the beginning?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, that's why we have these discussions, isn't it?

MR. HAYMANS: Why did the IPT here suggest revise or supplement and not suggest it in the purpose?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Point taken. Okay, there has been some suggested revisions to the wording that you have now, because this has gone through the IPT review and individuals have offered some suggestions, but then there was also just a complete relook at how these alternatives are laid out. The logic behind it is – of course, Alternative 1 is what is currently in place.

Alternative 2 now becomes the buoy line requirements. Alternative 3 becomes changes in the weak line requirements, and Alternative 4 is the gear-marking requirements. There have been no new alternatives added in terms of the breaking line strength or the weak link strength. It is all taken from what you had before. It is just repackaged and it we think it is a little bit clearer by separating it by each individual topic. Theoretically, what you could do is if you want to change from your Alternative 1, no action, you could choose preferreds from amongst Alternative 2, 3 and 4. You could have as many preferred alternatives under there as you would like, so it is not one that you have to choose from.

Alternative 2 would be to modify the current Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan buoy line requirements; and Subalternative 2A is from November 1 through April 30 the breaking line strength must not exceed 2,200 pounds in federal waters. Subalternative 2B is from November 1 through April 30 the breaking line strength must not exceed 1,200 pounds in federal waters in the South Atlantic.

Now, you had asked in the March meeting; you wanted your SSC and other folks to comment on whether this requirement should be all year long or just for this season. The SEP discussed this amendment quite extensively at their meeting in April; and they said, really, this is a business decision. If you choose a weaker buoy line strength, it should be up to the individual fisherman to decide whether they want to switch that out or not because there are costs associated with switching out that gear.

They just basically said choose the weakest line that you want and tell them when they have to use it and then tell them when they have to use it and then let the fishermen decide. That was their advice to you. This wording here on the note is that the fishermen could decide whether they would want to use the same buoy line from May 1 through October 30 or not; but that's their choice.

Alternative 3 is to modify the current Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan weak link requirements. From November 1 through April 30, the breaking strength of the weak links must not exceed 400 pounds for black sea bass pots in the South Atlantic EEZ. Currently it is 600 pounds. Again, the fishermen could decide whether they want to switch those out or not from May 1 through October 31. It says October 30<sup>th</sup>; it should be 31<sup>st</sup>. I'll fix that.

Alternative 4 is modify the current Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan gear-marking requirements. In addition to the plan's rope-marking requirement include a feature specifically distinguishing the commercial South Atlantic black sea bass pot component of the snapper grouper fishery in addition to the currently required three 12-inch color marks at the top, midway and

bottom sections of the buoy line specified for the individual management area in which the gear is deployed as required by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, an additional 12-inch wide colored band must be added at the end of each required 12-inch colored mark. Each of the three marks would be a total of 24 inches in length.

The additional gear-marking requirements of this action are required in federal waters from November 15 through April 15 in the Southeast Restricted Area North, September 1 through May 31 on the Offshore Trap/Pot Area, and September 1 through May 31, Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters Area.

Now, there are some things that you would also have to make decisions about if you decide to go with this gear marking; things like what colors and above or below the current color, which side does it have to be on, that sort of thing. I'll just let you know there has been some concerns. Since these gear requirements are in the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, there was some concern about whether this should be in 50 CFR 622 or not.

I talked with some folks involved with the Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, and they said they have encountered this sort of issue before, particularly with the lobster fishery and changes in gear marking. They said what we should do is they recommended that this council go ahead and put in the recommendations that they wanted for the black sea bass pot fishery in South Atlantic waters; and that when it goes to rulemaking, it can go into that – 50 CFR 229 I think is where the whale stuff is; and it would just get automatically added there at the same time.

That is the way it had happened in the past. There are ways to do this. It doesn't require a plan amendment from them to do this since it only affects this one fishery, and we are the only ones who are managing this part. They said it is really not that difficult to make it happen. The recommendation from Kate Swails up in the northeast was this council should go ahead and do what they want and it would get coopted into the rest of the CFR. I talked to Barb Zoodsma about it as well, so she is aware of this is probably how it would work.

MR. HAYMANS: For Jack, if I could, Jack, what is the line length on those pots, a hundred feet or so?

MR. COX: Yes; we usually – mine are set up right up right now with 120 feet on them.

MR. HAYMANS: So you get what, two or three years out of a line?

MR. COX: That is about right, yes.

MR. HAYMANS: So do you need any sort of time built in to change out? I figured a hundred feet, but 120 feet is roughly 4,000 feet of line per fisherman, which is, I don't know, what, a thousand bucks for the rope?

MR. COX: No, rope is not quite that expensive. I don't think most of the guys are going to take time to changing out. Once you've got your gear set up, you're going to pretty much leave it that

way. I would unless I just got into where I started having problems. We fished 1,200 pound breaking strength back in the early days year round and we didn't have any problems.

MR. HAYMANS: I guess the question was I hate to waste perfectly good line. If you've got a couple of more years, can we phase in the change?

MR. COX: Yes.

MR. HAYMANS: Should we phase in the change?

MR. COX: I don't think we'll be wasting line.

DR. DUVAL: Doug, you're just talking about phasing in like the breaking strength requirements of the line?

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: What is your pleasure, folks? Brian has presented some pretty significant reworking of the alternatives under this action. Personally I think it is less confusing the way it is worded now than how we sort of had things mixed up a little bit in Alternative 2 where we had buoy line and weak lines all mixed up into the same alternative. I guess we would be looking for a motion from the committee to accept the revised language under Action 2; is that correct, Brian?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's correct and also we would like some clarification in terms of colors. If you decide to accept Alternative 4, which is line marking, there has been some discussion amongst the fishermen about preferred colors. What some of the fishermen do is they don't actually paint the line. They get surveyors tape and weave it into the line itself.

It makes it actually easier for them because they can carry that tape them on the vessel. And somehow it gets damaged when they're pulling up through the pot puller, they can stop and they can reweave it right back in there and get it back out in the water immediately. We don't want to specify some color that is going to be difficult for them to get.

I think right now – Chip, what color is it now; do you remember? Okay, I think it is yellow or orange right now; I forget right offhand what it is. Purple was recommended by one fisherman, but there are some other colors like – there was orange or yellow, I believe, and I don't have that on here. Yellow or orange is what the fishermen would prefer to add.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we accept the IPT's wording changes to Action 2.**

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; second by Charlie to accept the proposed wording changes. Is there any discussion on this motion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Is there a desire on the part of the committee to make some recommendations with regard to color of line marking for Alternative 4? Jack.

MR. COX: I would certainly suggest orange because it is easiest accessible survey tape to get your hands on.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Right; and that was the discussion because they can just go like to Home Depot or Lowes and just go in and buy the surveyor tape right there. It comes in a big roll; it is fairly inexpensive; and they would be able just to go ahead and add that.

MR. CONKLIN: I thought we had some discussion at the last meeting that the line markings were going to have to come from NMFS because there are so many different markings.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I had talked about this with Kate Swails, who I guess is the staff member who helps manage this Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, and she said we could choose what color we wanted as long as it wasn't being used by something else, that there is going to be confusion in the markings.

In talking with Tom Burgess about the colors, because he is one of the ones who actually weaves the stuff in, and he had suggested that really going with yellow or orange – he had suggested purple earlier, but apparently getting that color surveyor's tape is not always available, so he had suggested yellow or orange as your choice.

DR. DUVAL: And don't forget that they have slightly different marking requirements throughout our region right now, so North Carolina is a little bit different. I think our guys have to use just orange tape right now because they're part of the southern nearshore trap waters. It is different for South Carolina, and you've got that overlay of the southeast restricted area north state waters, et cetera. Jessica.

MS. McCRAWLEY: I have the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan in front of me and orange is already used. Orange is used in combination with other colors to dictate a certain area; so orange by itself is already used, and orange and blue and orange and green together is another one. I would suggest either yellow or pink. I think surveyor's tape comes in those colors. I'm just trying to make a suggestion for something that's not already in the plan for another area.

DR. CHEUVRONT: So it sounds like maybe yellow might be a good choice because that's one that is always available.

MR. HAYMANS: That's the color of the shark gillnet.

MR. CONKLIN: I just googled purple surveyor's tape and it popped right up for 17 bucks a roll. They'll mail it straight to your doorstep. I'm sure maybe like Gordon's Networks up in Shallotte or something, we'd probably buy about 40 rolls of it so the guys can get it. Let's go with purple especially in the spirit of Tom Burgess.

DR. DUVAL: Tom is probably out descending some gray triggerfish right now. Jack.

MR. COX: We're definitely not surveyors and we don't want the easiest tape to get is. I'm willing to go with whatever we think we can get our hands on. If we want to choose purple, I'm fine with that.

DR. CHEUVRONT: And remember some of these guys are going to probably paint their lines as well. Any color, when you're painting, doesn't matter, but it is just really the color of the surveyor's tape that is available.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm sure purple is different from everybody else; but I'm thinking if you've got an airplane that is flying over and trying to look at what kind of line is on a whale, I'm wondering how easy it is going to be to pick purple off of a black line versus something like yellow.

MR. HAYMANS: Charlie, I'll just say – and I haven't looked at a ton of this; but the lines that I've seen from the air, at least the photos from the air, you can't pick out color or a 12-inch mark that far away.

MS. BECKWITH: Of any color.

MR. HAYMANS: Of any color, yes. Since I've got the mike, I was going to suggest black and green sort of in reference to the black sea bass and its color phases. It is not a combination; it is already there. All the colors are there if you didn't go with purple.

DR. DUVAL: I think the concern is we wanted to try to – so, Doug, since you've already said that it is difficult to see even a 12-inch mark no matter what the color is from the air, correct, and we're trying to use a color that would at least be totally unique to this fishery, it seems like purple might be best. I think we can make a recommendation in that regard.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes; and I would think that if the National Marine Fisheries Service has a problem, if you say we're to go with purple, they'd let you know and something else could be worked out. I think if you go ahead and choose purple now and then if you'd choose some preferred alternatives for this action, it would be really helpful, because the one last thing that we're going to want to do with this amendment is to send it out for public hearings if you think it is ready.

We would do that in August; and it is always good to have preferred alternatives when you go to public hearing just so the public knows you kind of have an idea of what you're thinking about what you want to do. That is really helpful to the public in terms of forming their comments, if you feel comfortable doing that at this time.

DR. DUVAL: Right; so perhaps we should settle the color-marking question and then also which end of the existing color it needs to go on. Again, we have slightly different color combinations for different areas in our range right now. I'm guessing it would be great if we could get a motion from the committee recommending purple as the unique color for this fishery. I'm not sure we can actually make a recommendation with regard to which end of the existing color marking that it can go on.



DR. CHEUVRONT: I'm not really sure that the regulations, as they exist now, tell you when they have two colors which one goes in which place. They just have to be adjacent to each other is what I'm thinking. Do any of you guys know that? I don't recall seeing something that said specifically whether it had to go above or below – which color had to above and which color had to be below. If you trust us, we'll research this and we'll do it the way it has to be, and we'll make the word – if that matters, we'll add that wording and you'll be able to see it in September, anyway.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say we could just say that our unique color will go below whatever the required color is.

DR. CHEUVRONT: You can say that, too.

MR. BELL: Keep it simple.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, could I get a motion from the committee with regard to this color since we've done a little research on it? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I would move that we use purple as the color to be used for black sea bass trap line-marking distinction. Is that what you will need?

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Ben to use purple as the color for black sea bass pot marking –

DR. CHEUVRONT: Probably in addition to what is already required?

DR. DUVAL: – in addition to that required under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. Second by Jessica. Any discussion on this motion? Jack.

MR. COX: If I remember right, we use this color scheme with three different parts of the rope, near the top of the line with this, we're going to be midway and near the bottom where the trap is?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's correct.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion on this motion?

MR. BELL: It is missing a word.

DR. CHEUVRONT: What word?

MR. BELL: That which is already or that –

**DR. DUVAL: Okay, the motion is use purple as the color for black sea bass pot marking in addition to that already required under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. Any other discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** It would be great, as Brian suggested, if the committee could select a few preferred alternatives under this action. Jack.

MR. COX: Under Action 2, Alternative 2, I would like to suggest 2B; that our lines will not exceed 2,200 pound breaking strength. I make that motion.

DR. DUVAL: So you're saying select Alternative 2, Subalternative –

MR. COX: 2B.

DR. DUVAL: 2B, well, that is 1,200 pounds.

MR. COX: Okay, that's 2A.

DR. DUVAL: So your motion is to select Subalternative 2A?

MR. COX: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: **So select Alternative 2, Subalternative 2A as a preferred alternative under Action 2; second by Ben.** Discussion? We had a bit of discussion about this at the last meeting regarding safe operating loads as well as breaking strength. From what I recall, a line with a 2,200 pound breaking strength will offer you a certain safe working load that is a percentage of that breaking strength, correct?

MR. COX: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: **Well, if there is no discussion; is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Jack.

MR. COX: I'd like to make a motion under Action 2, Alternative 3, that we modify the weak link requirement from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> the breaking strength of the weak links must not exceed 400 pounds for the black sea bass pot in the South Atlantic EEZ.

DR. DUVAL: Basically, you're selected Alternative 3 as another preferred under this action?

MR. COX: Yes.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Do you want Alternative 4 as well; you can just throw them all in there?

MR. COX: Yes, let's do Alternative 4 as well. I would like to make the motion that we select Alternative 4 under Action 2.

DR. CHEUVRONT: **Motion by Jack to select Alternatives 3 and 4 under Action 2 as preferreds; second by Ben.** Discussion? I think the intent is clear; we want to make sure that this fishery is operating in a responsible fashion that the way the gear is configured and set up will allow for identification of the gear with regard to any potential entanglements that might occur; that we want to make sure that the configuration of the gear is conservative with regard to potential whale interactions. Jack.

MR. COX: While we're on this topic here, just so folks know, right now the current breaking strength is 600 pounds so we're reducing it by another 200 pounds. Also, we are allowed to use clamping on the rope. If we don't use one of these manufactured breaking weak links; so we can use a hog ring, like four of them, that are supposed to slide if it gets under a certain amount of pressure.

I'm concerned that we really don't know when those hog rings are attached to that rope how much pressure we put on the pliers to clamp it down; what range of pressure would it take to have that rope slide through it. I think that we would really be better getting something from the manufacturer that we know that is exactly to that specification of 400 pounds that will break.

It is just something I want to put out there, because it doesn't seem that there has ever been any test done on the alternative to the weak links that you can buy from the manufacturer. As an added benefit to that weak line, I would say that we go with one that is built by the manufacturer. They're not very expensive. I think they're about a dollar apiece, so they're about the equivalent of the same cost as the stainless steel hog rings.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes; it depends. If you use hog rings, though, they're like a nickel a piece. When I did the economic estimates of it, you could go up to as much as \$1.85 for a weak link, but some of them were certainly in that dollar range.

MR. PHILLIPS: I've not dealt with the weak links, but I'm just thinking when you're on deck and you're working and the whale take reduction team is happy with hog rings, I'm sure that they have looked at it very extensively. I don't necessarily want to reinvent the wheel if they're happy with something. The fishermen can all go to these manufactured break lines and that's fine, but I think that might be better off if it is a fisherman's choice.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, any other discussion on this motion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

DR. CHEUVRONT: Madam Chair, before we move on, I do want to say one thing about this Action 2. There has been a lot of edits and suggested changes in the writing to this by the IPT. When you're going to see the write-up of this – because we've changed the layout of actions, alternatives and everything, in September when you see this document and when you see the public hearing version that goes out, you're going to see probably – the content will be basically the same, but you're going to see a substantial rewrite of how it is laid out in everything now that we kind of have this new revision as well as we're going to have to go back and rewrite the effect sections and all this, so don't be surprised when you see the next version of this document and the Action 2 write-up looks much different from what it does now.

There are some PR comments that need to get in there as well as the changes to just the basic effect section. I don't just want anybody to be alarmed when you look at it again later and see that it has changed quite a bit from what you're looking at right now.

MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair, I'd move that we approve Modified Regulatory Amendment 16 for public hearings.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Doug; second by Mel.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Can I make a suggestion here that you recommend to council to do this, because you guys right here in committee can't vote to send it out to public hearing. It has to be done by the council.

DR. DUVAL: I thought that's what he did.

DR. CHEUVRONT: No; he said let's vote to send it out, and so I want to make sure that we were clear about that.

MR. HAYMANS: I will remind the IPT that I read directly from the IPT's recommended wording in the document; so I would modify my motion that we recommend to council the approval of Modified Regulatory Amendment 16 for public hearings.

DR. DUVAL: So clarified.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That was meant for council to be read there.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion on that? **The motion is recommend to council to send Regulatory Amendment 16 out for public hearing. Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Thank you for your work. Wilson has a question and then I'm going to go to Bonnie for her item of other business.

DR. LANEY: The question I guess is to Brian. Since it said in the document that other than if Alternative 1 is chosen, a new BO is appropriate. Do we have any idea when that process would start by PRD?

DR. DUVAL: Dr. Crabtree, the biological opinion schedule.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, we would probably formally start working on a biological opinion when we had a draft environmental impact statement that my staff and NOAA Office of General Counsel are advising me is legally sufficient to send to the EPA. Now, my understanding and I think what we've talked about is the council wants to see the draft opinion. I don't believe a draft opinion can be completed in time for the September meeting; so my guess is you would see a draft opinion in December.

DR. DUVAL: All right, Dr. Ponwith.

DR. PONWITH: Thank you, Madam Chair, and also for accommodating this in the middle instead of the end of the meeting. I have managed to acquire some resources that is going to enable me to bring on via a contract an additional stock assessment scientist. That is going to enable the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to generate one more update stock assessment within this year.

The timing of this is we'll bring the person on in September. They'll be on for six months. The timing requires us to constrain ourselves to an update assessment. The second thing is it creates a

very short menu of eligible candidate stocks, because it basically means we need the data in our hand, we need the biological samples to have already been processed and in our hand to be able to make that timing work.

The menu is a choice between greater amberjack and golden tilefish. Background information on those stocks; greater amberjacks last assessment was conducted on data through 2006. Golden tilefish was last assessed using data through 2010. Either of these are viable candidates from the standpoint of having the data available; and what I'd like to do is turn it to this committee to make a recommendation on which of these two you think would be the one that wins because we can only do one; and then discuss it again in full council.

If we can lock down that decision, it would enable the science center to start bringing up the data. Again just for your information, the data deadline for that update assessment would be this September we'd have those data in hand. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: That is exceedingly good news. We really haven't much of that here. Zack.

MR. BOWEN: Last year at our June meeting, if my memory serves me correctly, we set about five different species in order that we would prefer them to be assessed. My question is – and that is great news, but my question is why is it just limited to amberjack and golden tilefish?

DR. PONWITH: If we were having this discussion and those resources and that contract person were available two or three years from now, we could pick any species we want. Right now the menu is driven by what biological data do we have caught up to the fullest extent that enables to be candidates for one that begins in September.

And then again just to follow through on that, the timing of this is that the data deadline would be in September of 2015, we would target having the product completed and undergo internal review within the science center in February of '16; submit the product to the SSC for their review in April of '16 and have it be available for the council's consideration in June.

DR. DUVAL: Displayed on the screen we have here the SEDAR Schedule, and you will note that tilefish already has an asterisk next to it, and it is already up there above greater amberjack. It seems like there is not much of decision to be made just with regard to our existing priorities. Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Just a quick question; wasn't the commercial industry for golden tilefish looking at doing one sort of outside of our SEDAR process and have they started and is that viable, so could we potentially have them do the golden tilefish and us do amberjack and get sort of two?

DR. DUVAL: My understanding is that industry effort is no longer being pursued. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: And vermilion simply doesn't have enough biologics to do that right now?

DR. PONWITH: We have an accumulation for – vermilion was considered and they took a look at how many unprocessed biological samples they had versus processed; and quite frankly there is just no way we could get them completed in time for a September stock start.

MR. BELL: So I'd go with tilefish and I'd thank Bonnie for however you pulled that off. We've talked about this and talked about it, so it is increasing capacity and that's super.

MR. HAYMANS: Is Mel's a motion? If not, I'll make the motion or you don't need a motion?

DR. DUVAL: We don't need a motion. I think it is already on the schedule as the next one.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, just for clarification, when will we do greater amberjack?

DR. DUVAL: Right now it is on the schedule for some time in 2017. We had both tilefish and vermilion as potential candidates if we got some extra assistance. Tilefish is further up in that queue, so we will get that assessment. From my perspective, greater amberjack remains on that 2017 schedule.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, if we're going to move the tilefish, what is going to take the tilefish slot further down?

DR. PONWITH: Just a reminder again about 2017; you know, '16 and '17 have been in flux in our discussions in our planning because of the delay we had in the decision on how we were timing the MRIP calibration. That decision has been made now; so the year that we're going to be devoting a significant amount of assessment horsepower to conducting those MRIP calibration updates is going to be 2017; so that is going to influence the through-put on others. We may be able to do one assessment that is a traditional assessment in addition to those updates; but I just want to keep that in the back of everybody's mind so when '17 comes, we're not surprised by that.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, everybody cool with this? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: So in 2017 we'll have a whole new process where we're going to look at how we're going to rank the species to be assessed; is that pretty much what we're going to be doing? Okay, John is shaking his head yes; that's all I need.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes; I think we need to do that at our September meeting; and at that point this group needs to come up with its firm recommendations for 2017 so that in October or so when the steering meets they can start laying out their priorities and balancing the workload for '17 and dealing with this MRIP issue that we expect to grapple with.

MR. HARTIG: Is everybody familiar with the MRIP calibration and what the potential outcomes are? I see heads nodding.

DR. CRABTREE: Michelle, I know you went through timing; so we're going to go into Executive Finance next? My question is do I have time to run to the Shrimp Committee Meeting at the Gulf and then get back here – are we going to go back to snapper grouper after lunch, you think?

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I know you want to be here for the rest of the items that we go through, status of amendments – and the Shrimp Committee is meeting right now over at the Gulf?

DR. CRABTREE: It's 9:30; I could probably be back here by 11:30; 11:00, 11:30.

DR. DUVAL: Jessica, are you guys prepared to go through the South Florida stuff and go back into Executive Committee?

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes; we're prepared to do that right now; and can I make a suggestion that after we do the South Florida stuff or within the South Florida stuff that we talk about the hogfish stuff real quick, too. The hogfish is part of the Snapper Committee; it is just towards the end of the day and I just wanted to make sure we got to that before we get into the joint meeting tomorrow.

DR. DUVAL: We're definitely going to get to it today; there is no way we're not going to get to it today. I would like to go back and get through the other presentations and sort of more pro forma stuff that we have. We're not going to not cover hogfish today. Mr. Chairman, I yield the floor back to you for Executive Finance.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 9:25 o'clock a.m. and reconvened at 11:30 o'clock a.m.)

DR. DUVAL: All right, we will come back to our Snapper Grouper Committee Agenda. Dr. McGovern is going to take us through the status of commercial catches versus ACLs.

DR. McGOVERN: Mike sent around an updated landings. We get landings from the science center every Friday now, and so what Mike sent around is updated through Friday of last week, through June 3<sup>rd</sup>. What I show here is the landings through June 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year and compare it to June 4<sup>th</sup> of last year from a report the science center provided last year.

I've also added a column here called "proposed ACL; and so this shows some new ACLs that we're going to get from Amendment 29, Regulatory Amendment 22, Regulatory Amendment 20 and the Generic AM Amendment. I'll go over that as I go through the species. You see for Atlantic spadefish and barjack on July 1<sup>st</sup> new ACLs of 150,000 for Atlantic spadefish and 13,000 about for barjack will be put into place. They will be effective.

Last year about 54 percent of the spadefish quota was met and for barjack 59 percent. Black grouper, we're at about 37 percent of the ACL so far this year. We met 87 percent last year. Black sea bass remember that we changed the fishing year through Regulatory Amendment 14 for January through December. Last year the fishing year started on June 1<sup>st</sup>; so the last time we had a full fishing year for black sea bass, 99 percent of the quota was met; and that was June 2013 through May 2014.

For blueline tilefish, on March 30<sup>th</sup> Amendment 32 became effective, and that reduced the ACL from about 112,000 to 18,000 about. For the old ACL from the emergency rule, we met 71 percent of that ACL. The rule was put into place on March 30<sup>th</sup> and then we immediately closed the commercial sector; and so they closed April 7<sup>th</sup>. Because the ACL was reduced by so much, we're way over the new ACL.

For dolphin, even though is snapper grouper I'll mention dolphin, the Generic AM Amendment, which is under review, would increase the ACL from about 1.1 million pounds to about 1.5 million pounds. We're about 71 percent of the old ACL right now. For gag, we have Regulatory Amendment 22, which is under review. Actually the proposed rule – and Rick will talk about this – the proposed rule is out for comment, and that is going to reduce the quota from about 327,000 to 295,000 pounds. We're at 25 percent of the 326,000 ACL.

Golden tilefish longline; we closed that on February 19<sup>th</sup>, and we closed at the beginning of March last year. We've met 96 percent of the ACL. The golden tilefish hook-and-line sector; we're at 65 percent of that ACL; and we closed that in August of last year. For gray triggerfish; Amendment 29 increases the ACL to 312,000 pounds. It also establishes two quotas.

That is going to be effective July 1<sup>st</sup>; but because we're partway through the season, the quota for the second season this year is going to be the difference between the new ACL of 312,000 and the landings taken thus far in the fishing year; so the quota for the second fishing season this year is going to be 64,000 pounds. Gray triggerfish commercial is closed right now. It closed on May 8<sup>th</sup> and that will open back up on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

The grunts' ACL is going to change slightly by about a thousand pounds from Amendment 29. We're about 14 percent of that. Moving down to scamp, the scamp ACL is going to decrease through Amendment 29 to 219,000. We're about 10 percent of the scamp ACL. We met 53 percent of the old ACL last year.

Shallow-water grouper is going to increase a little bit. Snappers will increase; the ACL is going to be increasing; and we're at 15 percent of that. Then snowy grouper, Regulatory Amendment 20 is going to increase the snowy grouper ACL to 115,000 pounds; and we're at 82 percent of the old ACL right now. It closed in July of last year.

Moving down to greater amberjack; the fishing year changed for greater amberjack through Regulatory Amendment 14. It is March through February now. It used to be May through April. We're at 38 percent of the current ACL.

The last full fishing year we were at 90 percent of it. Vermilion snapper, the first fishing season for vermilion snapper closed in April and we were 2 percent over that; and that will open up on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Also wreckfish; Regulatory Amendment 22 is going to increase the ACL – if implemented will increase the ACL to 433,000 pounds. That's the report, Madam Chair.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Jack about the commercial landings? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Jack, on the snowy, aren't there several species – is wreckfish included in that as well in that timing; I can't remember?

DR. McGOVERN: Wreckfish is in Regulatory Amendment 22 with gag; and that proposed rule is open right now. Snowy is Regulatory Amendment 20, and that is the only species in that regulatory amendment.



MR. HARTIG: Where is that in the process? Are we looking at doing that this season, reopening the snowy?

DR. McGOVERN: We're at the final rule stage for Regulatory Amendment 20. It is open right now. If we wind up meeting the ACL and closing it, we would reopen it.

MR. HARTIG: That's what my fishermen need to know.

DR. DUVAL: Mine, too. Any other questions for Dr. McGovern? Okay, we will turn things over to Dr. Farmer to take us through the recreational catches. I believe this is Attachment 1B in the briefing book.

DR. FARMER: First off, I just want to thank Dr. Mike Larkin, who is in the room, who helped to assemble this presentation, as well as the Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff, especially Dr. Vivian Maddox. We've gone through similar presentations a few times now, so just a quick note on this data.

This won't always match what you find on various websites because we used MRFSS data when the ACLs are in MRFFS units. We post-stratify to include Monroe County landings when the stock assessment would recommend that and when the management unit is consistent with that. These landings' estimates are updated and they're through Wave 1 2015.

They're going to include MRFSS, MRIP and also headboat landings. Here are your 2014 landings and ACLs for some of your snapper grouper species. A few things do jump out at you looking at this slide here. Atlantic spadefish, we were substantially over the ACL with 702,000 pounds of landings relative to 154,000 pound ACL.

This was an unusual kind of a sampling artifact potentially of MRFSS or MRIP. It is hard to say, but there were very high landings in Wave 5 of 2014 with a higher than usual average weight. The accountability measure for spadefish is to monitor the landings in season the year after an overage. Thus far in 2015 we have six pounds of spadefish through Wave 1. We'll continue to monitor that. Obviously, this is one of those species where we're just going to have to keep an eye on it and see what happens.

Gray triggerfish is another that jumps out at 22 percent overage. We had a closure on November 26<sup>th</sup> of 2014. Then another one that we'll mention is the golden tilefish. It closed on June 7<sup>th</sup> of 2014, but was only at 45 percent of the ACL. Basically that's one where the accountability measure again is to monitor in the following season.

What happened in 2013 is tilefish was closed midyear and we had a lot of landings after the closure was implemented, and that resulted in a 37 percent overage last season. Accounting for those landings that occurred after the overage again and projecting this year, we found that actually didn't happen. We didn't have the same level of landings after the closure was implemented.

Another point that I'd like to make is the only stocks that we have in-season monitoring without accountability measures being implemented currently are black sea bass, red grouper and golden

tilefish. However, that's going to change once the Generic Accountability Measures Amendment is implemented, and then we'll have in-season recreational monitoring for all the species in the snapper grouper complex.

That will put a bit more burden on the regional office, but hopefully it will result in less overages and better optimization of our fishing pressure out there. In 2014 another thing to note on here is 93 percent of the snowy grouper landings, which is on this slide here, were from the Florida/Georgia area.

We did have quite an overage there despite a closure on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June. That's one of those things where the ACL is only 523 fish, so it is really hard to narrow in on the appropriate closure date based on a few years' data. There is a lot of noise within that stock. Porgies, we also had a 20 percent overage and those were closed on September the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Moving into the 2015 landings and ACLs, the thing that jumps out at you here – and you just saw the Fishery Bulletin come out – is blueline tilefish. The closure of that stock was delayed so we had an 84 percentage overage on the ACL. We received the Wave 1 2015 landings at the regional office in mid-May. Usually we get those 45 days after the conclusion of the wave, so that was a bit of a delay and that resulted in an overage, but we're hoping that things will get streamlined there and that won't happen again.

Here are the preliminary landings for the rest of the snapper grouper stock for 2015. These are for greater amberjack and black sea bass from the 2013/2014 seasons; no overages there; and then from the 2014/2015 season, you can see that greater amberjack is coming close. You've seen these tables for mackerel previously, but this is the same kind of setup.

What we here is the single species, in this case black sea bass. It is a table with fishing year as the first column there and then the various columns are the different modes of fishing; so charter, headboat, private, shore and then total landings. There is a few notes at the bottom about the idiosyncrasies of the various fishing seasons and what areas constitute the management boundary for the South Atlantic Council; when MRFSS data versus MRIP data were used; and a note that the 2014 and 2015 data are preliminary.

Here is that same information presented in graphic form. Basically what you're looking at here is on the left-hand side you've got the landings, and that is in pounds whole weight. This is a stacked bar graph similar to what I showed you yesterday where the different modes are stacked on top of each other so that the total of the stack is the total landings, and you can see the breakout by mode within the stacks.

For black sea bass here you can see that it is predominantly landed by the private sector with some headboat and charterboat also contributing and very little shore landings. Another thing to note are the black dots. Those black dots are the ACLs; and so you can see those kicking in with the 2009 season.

Then the line graphs there are the MRFSS angler trips data and the headboat angler trips data. The MRFSS angler trips data is the red line and then the headboat angler trips data is the orange line.

So a similar table for gag grouper; and then here is the graphic presentation for gag, so you can see again this is predominantly private landed and then a little bit of headboat and a bit of charterboat. You can see the landings have not approached the ACLs.

Here is greater amberjack, and then you can see that we did have an ACL overage in the 2012/2013 season; and you can see those landings here are predominantly charterboat with some private and then very little headboat. Then here is a table for mutton snapper. Again note that the 2015 landings are preliminary; and here is the information for mutton snapper in graphic forms so you can see no ACL overages.

You can see a bit more shore-based landings than some of the stocks you've seen previously, predominantly private mode landings. Here is yellowtail snapper; no ACL overages; pretty even split between private and charterboat. Here is red porgy. Please stop me if you want to spend more time focusing on a particular slide, but I recognize that many of you guys have looked at these many times. Zack.

MR BOWEN: Back to gag grouper, of course, we are aware that the season just opened May 1<sup>st</sup>. It has been open five and a half weeks, so I can understand why we have zero landings for charter and headboat, but we have 7,488 pounds in private mode in five weeks from today. It just seems out of place to me and maybe you can clarify.

DR. FARMER: This will be provided by the MRIP Survey; so these will be actually MRFSS-based landings because the stock assessment was in MRFSS units. They'll take the MRIP landings and back-convert them, but that is from the survey from Wave 1 of 2015 is all we have in terms of data in there.

MR. BOWEN: But grouper is not open in Wave 1.

DR. FARMER: Yes. Well, we'll have to take a look at that and let me get back to you on that. Here is the graphic for red porgy and you can see it is predominantly headboat with some private and charterboat information. Then moving into vermilion snapper; we had almost an overage in 2014 and came real close to the ACL, and this is a pretty even split between headboat and private. Here is snowy grouper. Mark.

MR. BROWN: Why do they present everything in pounds? I understand that we've got a low ACL on snowies, but in recreational why isn't it in numbers across the board?

DR. FARMER: For snowy it is in numbers, and that's based on how the council defined the ACL; so those will be in numbers. The rest, the council thus far has specified the ACLs in pounds for these species. Now if the council wanted to specify the ACL in numbers, we certainly could do so. There are some advantages to doing that.

The measurements of the landings in numbers are a bit more precise than the estimates in pounds because it is one level of estimation and then another level of estimation thrown on top of that because you've got an estimated number, and then you have an estimated mean weight with some uncertainty around that applied, so you're kind of compounding uncertainty there. One thing doing

these ACLs in landings and pounds does for you, though, is it does a little bit better job of accounting for the size structure of the stock that is being landed.

So if you get an increase in average weight, that tends to indicate that you're landing more of the older age classes of the stock; so it is a bit more sensitive to selectivity and changes in the overall size structure of the stock underlying the fishing pressure. That to me might be a desirable feature because you're going to want to protect those older age classes that are a bit more productive.

If you specify landings in numbers and then you have a big change in selectivity and suddenly people are high-grading, they're after the bigger older age classes so they can catch a lot more of those and do more damage, per se, to the stock of its rebuilding than if the ACL was specified in pounds. There are advantages and disadvantages as with everything.

MR. HARTIG: A gee whiz question, Nick; do you have any sense of why the MRIP numbers continue to decline, the effort numbers? Is that wrapped up in the way the telephone survey is not effective any longer? Is it a whole bunch of things put together?

DR. FARMER: I would defer that question to Dr. Van Voorhees later today. I think he would probably do a much better job addressing that than I would. I suspect that there may be some survey issues, in terms of survey changes there, but it could also be representative of effort. I have seen in the more recent information there was a spike in effort in 2013 followed by a decline in 2014. I'm not sure if that's representative of some overall recreational effort trend or weather conditions or survey returns. It could be a whole bunch of things rolled into there, but the PSEs on the effort overall tend to be relatively low until you start breaking them out into really fine strata.

Here is golden tilefish, and this is another one where ACL is specified in numbers. You can see that the ACL is extremely low relative to some of historical landings; and so we've have had some overages in 2011, 2012 and 2013; and the landings are predominantly private mode; and the ACL is again pretty low.

Then here is dolphin and the entire Atlantic coast; and you can see the landings are nowhere near the ACLs, and this is predominantly private and charterboat. Here is wahoo and we had an overage in 2012. That concludes my presentation on the recreational landings relative to the ACLs. Zack, I will get back with you in a minute.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Dr. Farmer; did you intentionally put that gag grouper for the questions on the screen?

DR. FARMER: This is a black grouper that I took a picture of down in this area actually, which is why he is stuck here. Although he looks fierce, he was actually not feeling very well, which is why I was able to get such a good picture of them. He was sitting there looking overrun with parasites that you can't really see in the photo.

DR. LARKIN: Zack, real quick, I just wanted to address your question. I'm glad you pointed that out. I was sitting here looking at those Wave 1 landings of gag; but experiencing other fisheries,

even though it is closed, there still could be some small percentage of landings. You hope that it is zero, but it is never – I don't think I've ever seen where it has been actually zero, so whether it is illegal catch or maybe somebody on the water, I don't know. I can't speak exactly to what happened, mistaken identity or whatever, but usually there is – you'll see the landings raw, but it is never zero. There is always some little bit of landings. I'm guessing mistakes or illegal catch or something like that.

MR. BOWEN: And I totally agree with you, but 7,488 pounds seems to be quite excessive especially in one wave.

DR. LARKIN: Well, I'll look into that and certainly try resolve that.

DR. FARMER: Yes, Zack, one thing that you could see is you might have just a few intercepts that are driving that, because that's a pretty low sampling season and probably not a very highly encountered species. It could be that somebody declared it as a B-1 and then it gets expanded from there, so it is a self-identified gag where it might have been a black grouper or it could be that somebody brought one in illegally, which is not unheard of, and then that gets expanded out based on the catch rates that are observed.

MR. BOWEN: It is just a shame that the fishermen recreationally and the for-hire and the charterboat and the headboats have to suffer when these ACLs get exceeded because of the expansion numbers that are not accurate. It hurts my heart for that to be going on and we as the council can't do anything that can correct that right now for some reason.

DR. PONWITH: Precisely to that point; I absolutely agree with you. We're actually going to get a presentation on rare-event expansions later on today, and that's going to be an issue. The only solution is double, tripling and quadrupling your sample size so you're actually profoundly oversampling the more common species to be able to do a better job of doing the uncommon.

A cheaper solution is not bringing in fish during a closed season because if the sampling program encounters an illegal fish, it has to be accommodated because it is part of the sampling program. I think that there are two ways of doing that and those are the ones. If there are more resources available for increasing the sampling rates so the expansion factors are tighter, that is one way. The other way is to work really closely with the recreational fleets and ensure that we follow those regulations as tightly as possible.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Dr. Ponwith, but I would respectfully disagree that is not the only way. I'm speaking for the for-hire sector. Electronic reporting, mandatory reporting and to get the for-hire sector separated from MRFSS and separated from MRIP so we can have more reliable catch information and discard information; that's another way, a step in the right direction in my opinion.

MR. CONKLIN: It was going through my head that if you had one intercept or something like that, a real rare event but it is a closed season, it seemed like what Dr. Ponwith was saying you could tighten down those expansion numbers because if the season is closed it is not going to be expanded that much.

MR. COX: Look how good we've gotten with the commercial sector; they can learn something from that as we talk about this.

DR. FARMER: I just wanted to say to Zack's point, the MRIP Survey is different for private and the charter sectors in terms of how it picks up on effort and that sort of thing. I don't know that you necessarily would want to be, quote-unquote, separate from MRIP but certainly take advantage of the differences in the survey methodology and try to improve upon it. It could still be within that survey methodology, but there are certainly ways with the electronic sampling to accelerate the timetable of delivery of sampling and certainly ways that you could leverage the fact that these are professional fishermen going out with a business model in mind and try to take advantage of that and give them opportunities to do a better job of kind of tracking their own catches as well. I could see it would work out for both sides.

MR. BOWEN: I agree; it is just frustrating. I think it is not only frustrating to me but it is frustrating to everybody probably in this room and at this table to have the information not as reliable and not as accurate as we want it to base decisions that affect millions of people's lives. We just need some accountability.

DR. DUVAL: Any other question for Nick before we move on? Mel.

MR. BELL: Real quick, and you might have said this on accountability measures for spadefish, the 455 percent for 2014; what are the implications for '15; none?

DR. FARMER: The accountability measure is that we're going to monitor landings in season in 2015 and we may close early in order to prevent an overage from happening again. Last season, even though we may have seen the overage coming, which we didn't because it was in Wave 5, but they were really high, we wouldn't potentially have closed in season. The accountability measure is to close in the following season to prevent a subsequent overage. We'll keep an eye on it. At six pounds so far, as of right now we're no worried. However, that was one wave that really took care of the whole deal last year so we'll see what happens.

DR. DUVAL: Any other questions for Nick before we move on? I know that it is 11:59 a.m., but I have docked my time and so I'm going to dock you guys a little bit of time for lunch; and I would like to ask our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Chair to come up, Mr. Jim Atack, and present the AP Report and then we can recess for lunch.

MR. ATACK: I know we're running late on time so I'm going to try not to go over things we've already gone over and just hit some of the highlights. One of the motions that came through was when we talked about black sea bass pots one of the motions was to increase the minimum size to get it up to 12 or 13 inches on the commercial side, and then there will be less discards on the black sea bass pots. With an ACL and hitting the annual catch limits, that should be a good thing for the fishery. That was one of the motions,

There was a lot of concern about mutton snapper, about the ten bag limit during the spawning season – the motion that was there; you see that in the report – and the concern about being able

to sell the commercial bag limit during the spawning season didn't quite make sense to people, but maybe that will get addressed.

One of the motions that was made under other business was to ask the council to look at ways to look at recreational gear specifics for reduced discards deeper than 350 feet. I guess the common recreational practice is to have more than two hooks. Maybe we could set it up to where there is just one hook or one line to reduce the amount of discards when you're fishing for the deeper snowy grouper and stuff. There was one motion from the previous meeting we had back in the fall about putting restrictions on the for-hire entry. With that, I'll conclude my report.

DR. DUVAL: Jim, do you mind talking a little bit about the AP's input on Amendment 36, which is the spawning SMZs? I think you had some motions in there with regard the advisory panel's thoughts broadly on the use of spawning special management zones.

MR. ATACK: Yes; the AP was in favor of the SMZs. They went through the different states and in the report is the recommended areas that they were looking at for the SMZs. The panel felt that the SMZs would be a good thing. It would help with the spawning and these areas should be protected where these special spawning areas are. There has been a lot of input as to where these areas are and there has been a lot of research and data. We recommended all the different areas in the report that's listed.

DR. DUVAL: And I think one of the things that you all discussed when you looked at the Joint South Florida Amendment, which we just finished going through, one of those things was in regards to the different spawning season – no, maybe I'm actually thinking about Amendment 37 when you were talking about hog snapper.

I think there is an action in there with regard to jacks and then there is also an action there with regard to spawning season closures, which kind of overlapped with some of the discussion that I think you had in the use of the spawning special management zones. There were some comments in there and a motion with regard to identifying spawning areas for shallow-water groupers versus any modification of the spawning season closure for shallow-water groupers, and I was hoping you could sort of enlighten us on that.

MR. ATACK: The panel wasn't really interested in modifying the spawning season closure. They felt like it is a good thing to have the shallow-water grouper closure from January through April like it is. The SMZs would protect the aggregate areas where they spawn; and maybe down the road if the SMZs are in place and we see that working very well, then maybe we could look at adjusting the season closures for the spawning. That's pretty much the gist of that.

DR. DUVAL: And I think you had also recommended an increase in the recreation bag limit of black sea bass to seven fish per person. You had some discussion about sort of having a year-round season versus increasing the bag limit. It sounded like there were a few geographic differences.

MR. ATACK: Yes, that's true. The concern is the fishery is in pretty good shape right now. The five fish per person has helped with that. It extended the season. Pretty much the season is year

round now. Is it too early to really increase the bag limit by a lot? I think we compromised and said that, well, maybe seven might be a good number.

We'd hate to go from five to ten or something and then have to go back and have a season closure. The year-round season is much more important than getting five fish versus seven fish or seven fish versus nine fish. On the jacks I guess they're hoping that if you split those out, I think the thing there was that then you wouldn't have the season closed for everything on the almacos.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; and there were some recommendations there with regard to establishment or consideration of different levels of commercial trip limits and a recreational bag limit, I think, as well as minimum size limit were some of the motions that were made.

MR. ATACK: Yes; that's true, I think they were looking at one jack per person on the almacos as a bag limit and establishing a minimum size would be a good thing. Also, with the trip limit, look at different poundages to see how that might extend the season and maybe in the 300 to 500 pound range for the almaco jacks.

DR. DUVAL: And you did have a workshop on the spawning SMZs at that meeting, and I think that was actually a pretty workshop. I think there was good participation by members of the public as well as by members of the advisory panel.

MR. ATACK: Yes; it was very good. Then with hogfish we talked about Amendment 37 – you will be talking about that again tomorrow, I guess – but pretty much across the board it would be good to have minimum sizes changed. If we do the South Florida thing and the North Carolina/Georgia thing, it would be good to have minimum sizes increased in both of those zones and looking at trip limits and probably bag limit changes. I think you will be coming back with recommended options and all that; that will be good.

DR. DUVAL: Are there questions for Jim on some of the specifics of the Advisory Panel Report. It is Attachment 2 in the briefing book and I apologize for not mentioning that earlier.

MR. ATACK: And then as Michelle said I think earlier, most of these motions are in the different amendments as we go through them, so we can talk about each one if you need to if you're asking for more input when we get to those.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; Jim is going to be around here for I think the rest of the week; so if there are specific questions with regard to any interpretation of the advisory panel's input, we've got him here. Thank you. All right, Mr. Chairman, it would be my suggestion that we go ahead and recess for lunch and maybe come back at 1:30.

It is 1:37 p.m., let's get going. Welcome back to the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting. Once again, we're shifting things around a little bit because of obligations over at the Gulf Council meeting. The first thing we're going to do is I'm going to ask Rick DeVictor if he would take us through the status of amendments under formal review, but we're going to hold off on the Amendment 32 Emergency Rule request. Dr. Ponwith would like to be around for that as well as for red snapper. Once Rick takes us through that status update, then we're going to invite Dr. Dave



Van Voorhees up here to give us a presentation on how to improve catch estimates of rare-event species.

MR. DEVICTOR: I will go through five amendments that are under secretarial review beginning with Amendment 29, which would modify the ABC Control Rule to use the ORCS Approach and calculate the ABCs and ACLs and recreational ACTs as per the modified control rule. This amendment would also change the gray triggerfish ACLs. Jack spoke about on how we plan to work the split season this year and when it begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. That final rule published on June 1<sup>st</sup> and the regulations will be effective July 1, 2015.

Regulatory Amendment 20; this would increase the ACLs for snowy grouper, adjust the rebuilding strategy, increase the trip limit and modify the recreational bag limits. The proposed rule for Regulatory Amendment 20 published in the Federal Register on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and the comment period ended on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are reviewing the final rule package right now.

Moving on to Regulatory Amendment 22; this would revise the ACLs for gag and wreckfish based on the results of recent stock assessments. The council approved that at December 2014 when they met, and it was submitted to NMFS for formal review on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The proposed rule published on June 4<sup>th</sup> and the comment period will end on July 6<sup>th</sup>. That is the amendment to revise the catch limits for gag and wreckfish.

Amendment 33; this is included with dolphin and wahoo; and this is the fillet amendment. That allows them to be brought back from The Bahamas and specifies how many fillets can be brought back into the U.S. The council approved it at December and it was submitted us on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We are now looking at the proposed rule package.

The final one is Amendment 34; and this is the one that is included with the Generic AM. This was approved December 2014. It was sent to us February 27<sup>th</sup> and we are now looking at the proposed rule package. That concludes my report.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Rick on any of those items? If not, we'll go ahead and get Dr. Van Voorhees up here and his presentation. Mike Collins e-mailed folks a revised version of that presentation a little bit earlier today, and it is entitled "Methods for Improving Precision of Deep-Water Catch Statistics". Welcome, Dr. Van Voorhees. We're very excited to have you here. This is a topic about which we have wrapped ourselves around multiple axles, so we're hoping that you can provide us a path forwards.

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Thank you very much for the invitation to present to the committee. I want to point out that my co-author here, John Foster, is my lead statistician, and he had a lot to do with the content of this presentation and some examples I'll be referring to. This basically, as I understood it, was a request to come and present some ideas about how we can improve the precision of catch statistics for some deep-water species that don't show up very commonly in the recreational survey data.

Some examples that were provided to us were blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, golden tilefish. I'm sure you could probably add to that list. Basically this is the outline for what I'm going to talk

about, some ideas that we have to share with you and hopefully it will stimulate some discussion. Basically, just the basic concept of being able to improve precision requires increasing your effective sample sizes for the activity of interest; in this case catch of particular species.

I'll talk about ways to optimize sampling allocations among strata within surveys. I'll also talk about ways to adjust sample weighting and potentially do some further stratification of your surveys. I'll talk about designing a specialized survey if that ends up being the approach taken. Then I'll also talk a bit about how to potentially use data from more than one year, either by producing multiyear estimates or using what we call small domain estimation methods.

Increasing sample sizes; I think it is just straightforward. If you want to increase precision, it is going to be inversely proportional to the square root of the sample size. The variance estimates which go into determining your precision will be the key thing to reduce. The current surveys that we do for fishing effort; we do a coastal household telephone survey for estimating private, rental boat and angler trips. We do a for-hire telephone survey. It is a weekly survey that estimates charterboat angler trips.

You could increase sample sizes on the effort surveys if you want to actually improve the precision of the effort estimates. In this case I don't think that's the main thing to focus on. I think when we're looking at catch of particular species the emphasis would be more on what we can do with the angler intercept survey.

We have this on-site survey that estimates the catch rates for different species for private rental boat angler trips and also for charterboat angler trips independently. Given that increasing sample sizes on the intercept survey can be an expensive proposition, most likely that's not the best way to go here. Just increasing sampling overall for that on-site survey, your rare events are still going to be relatively rare, and it is going to be very expensive.

It is better to look at ways to work with the existing sampling levels and potentially shift the sampling to be more directed towards sites and time intervals where the species that you're interested in are more likely to be common rather than rare. For example, we can shift sampling from a shore stratum to the boat strata if the focus is on fish that are caught from boats.

You can shift sampling between the boat strata to focus more on private boat fishing or charterboat fishing, depending on where you think the species of interest is going to be caught more frequently. You can also shift your sampling to time periods; two-month waves of the year or even within a two-month wave to a particular month or week where you think this particular species is more likely to be caught.

We also have six-hour time intervals now in our new intercept survey design; so if you know that the catch is more likely to be at different times of day for certain species, you could focus the sampling more on those times of day. The objective here is just to try to minimize the variance of the estimator of the mean catch for the species of interest.

There is a couple of different ways you can go to sort of direct the sampling on the intercept survey more. One way you can do that is just adjust the weighting of the sample units; in this case the

sites that we sample and the time intervals that we sample so that some sites and time intervals have a greater probability of being selected when we draw the sample.

That's okay to do that because we take those weights into account when we do the estimates. If we give a particular site or time interval a much higher probability of being selected, we will then down-weight the data that is collected for that assignment relative to data from other sites and time intervals in the estimation process.

That can be worthwhile if you actually get more data to work with for the species of interest. Another way to go rather than adjusting the weighting of the sampling is to actually have more control and create a new stratum, a new sampling stratum. We can look at the sites that we currently sample and determine if there are some sites that are much more likely to have catch of this particular species and define those sites as a sampling stratum that we would then be able to allocate a certain level of sampling to.

It could be, if you have resources, that the way to spend the money would not be to increase sampling overall for the survey but just increase sampling for this new specialized stratum. In the case of tilefish, which was one of the ones I've connected with here, blueline tilefish, it is a deep-water species so we would be looking at trying to create a new deep-water sampling stratum, if you will, sites where we've able to identify that there are catch of blueline tilefish or perhaps a couple of other species that are caught in conjunction with blueline tilefish.

The starting point would be to identify those sites and then create the stratum. One example of something we've done like this, John Foster actually worked with other members of our staff to identify sites that had catch of red snapper in the Gulf, in particular in Florida, and we were able to define an offshore site stratum for the intercept survey in Florida where we were able to focus higher levels of sampling to try to get better estimates of red snapper catch during the short season that occurred last year.

We think that helped improve precision of the estimates, which would normally be difficult to do, but it was able to not only create that offshore stratum but then also give the days when the season was open a higher probability of being selected for sampling; so we were able to focus more collection of data for that time interval.

The way we go about creating a new stratum is you would start off by just trying to define a number of sites where the rare event would be more common and create that as a stratum, shift some of your sampling there if you want to sample at a proportionally higher level, and then evaluate based on data you collect and see if maybe you can actually reduce the size of that stratum the next time around by identifying the sites that have higher likelihood of catch of these particular species that you're interested in.

The idea is it is a step-by-step process where you start with a larger stratum and gradually try to reduce the size of that stratum so it is more focused on the event that you're trying to get better estimates for. As you do that, the rare event gradually becomes more common within this newly created stratum; and that's what you're trying to achieve.

There is a couple of slides here that are an example that John worked up that enables me to illustrate how this would actually work where you can see what the result in percent standard errors would be as we fine tune the definition of a new stratum for a rare event. Starting with the top line there, we start with a situation where we don't have stratification.

We just assume that we're doing intercept survey sampling. There is no defined strata. The 10,000 under the big N column just represents the total number of trips that are actually occurring in the fishery, and the small n would be the actual sample size of trips that we're getting through the intercept survey.

We're saying that we're starting off with a rare event that represents 5 percent of the trips. Okay, 5 percent of the 10,000 trips actually have catch of a particular species; so with no stratification, we're estimating on the average 5 percent. That would be our p-hat; and the percent standard error would be 61.6 percent.

Now, if we go to step two, we define two strata. Let's say they're equal-size strata. Each of them has 5,000 trips. Our sample we're going to allocate proportionally among those two strata so we have 25 trips sampled in each stratum. Well, the one stratum is actually going to have the rare event, but it is now more common; so we estimate 10 percent of the trips actually have catch of that species; and the other stratum, the catch does not occur, you estimate zero. Your total estimate will still 5 percent and the PSE comes down to 60 percent.

So as you go down the table, what we're doing is we're reducing the size of the new stratum; so in the next level we reduce that stratum to where it is basically representing 2,500 trips and we're still proportionally allocating the sample, so it is 37 to 13 between the two strata. Even though they're only sampling 13 in the event where the event occurs, we're now able to estimate as 20 percent and we have a better precision on the total estimate.

As you gradually go further down you will see we're reducing the size of the new stratum because we're making the rare event more common within that stratum; and it does improve the precision even with a proportional sampling allocation among the strata. The next table basically says, well, what if we decide to not just proportionally allocate the sampling but we decide that this new stratum we've created we want to oversample that a little bit.

If you just take five additional trips and shift them into the new stratum in each of the cases I've provided on the previous slide, you can see that percent standard errors decrease more as you go from one step to the next. It is summarized in this graph. You can see that the blue line at the top is with the proportional allocation, the first example I showed, and the red line indicates what you get with some slight oversampling of the new stratum.

I think you can obviously go further than just adding five more sampled trips to the new stratum. You can see you can actually improve precision pretty quickly just through this type of approach; and that depends on how rare the rare event is at the starting point. Another alternative to consider is actually developed in a specialized survey design.

We don't try to work within the general survey that we're doing that is covering all the species but we decide, okay, we really can't do the job that way; we have to go off and do a specialized survey design. Well, the negative about this right up front is it is going to be expensive. You'll still be paying for the general surveys, but you're going to add a new survey on top of it that is specialized.

We have one good example we can point to, the Large Pelagic Survey we do in the northeast from Virginia through Maine. It has a specialized list-frame telephone survey. It samples from a list of HMS permit holders. That list stratified by two different permit types, the angling permit and the charter/headboat permit.

We do phone calls, weekly for the charter/headboat category and biweekly for the angling category, and get the number of trips they took in the prior time period and produce estimates of trips that are directed at large pelagic species. You get estimates in the number of boat trips and then that effort estimate gets matched up with a catch rate estimate that comes from a specialized access point survey.

It is a subset of the sites that are actually covered in the general intercept survey that I've described earlier. Basically these are the sites that we determine have fishing for large pelagic species and you estimate a mean catch per large pelagics' boat trip. Then you can combine the two numbers to get an estimate of total catch for different large pelagic species.

This has been effective. It was designed originally for bluefin tuna. It was used at one time for weekly quota monitoring of bluefin tuna. We don't want to go there again, but it also gets good information on a number of other species, including yellowfin, a number of other relatively commonly caught species, but it is expensive.

As you can see from the price tag, about 700K per year goes into that specialized survey. Another approach with a specialized survey design that wouldn't be quite as expensive, you could go with a list-frame approach for an effort survey. It could be a mail survey, a phone survey. I think we're looking now at mail surveys being better in terms of response rates than a telephone survey.

You could develop a list of permit holders. You'd have to issue a permit for people who fish for deep-water species, if that's your focus, and then sample from that list to get a directed effort essentially, effort that's directed at deep-water species. You could then combine that with the catch rate that you get from the general intercept survey through the definition of a deep-water stratum as I described earlier, and you might get a relatively precise estimate of the catch per trip that way, without having to pay for a specialized intercept survey, as we've done for the large pelagics.

I want to jump to another idea here. Another way to go is to ask the question, well, do we really need to have an ACL for a single year; do we need to be comparing our catch estimates to a one-year ACL; or do we have the ability – and I'm not an expert on this. There are folks here in this room that more expert on this than me.

It is perhaps possible to create an ACL that is a multiyear ACL. If that's doable, if the regulations are not likely to change that much from year to year, the season lengths are going to be similar for

the species, you might want to consider increasing your sample size by doing it across years. You get more data for, say, a three-year period for a single-year period; so you're going to be able to build a cumulative estimate of catch that is more precise by the end of three years than you would get at the end of any one year.

This just illustrates that. If we were looking at estimates for blueline tilefish coming out of the MRIP surveys for the South Atlantic sub-region from 2010 to 2012, the blue bars indicate the cumulative estimate that build you for each year; so you can see for 2010, 2011 and 2012 we're building a cumulative estimate; whereas, the red bars indicate building a cumulative estimate over a three-year period.

Now, this isn't the most interesting graph to show because this just shows you the total catch estimate. The next slide tells you how the percent standard error on those cumulative estimates changes in a one-year approach versus a three-year approach. You can see that 2011, 2012 – actually, 2011 has the highest percent standard error for an annual cumulative estimate out of the three years; but if you're doing a multiyear approach, building a cumulative estimate over three years, you can get a percent standard error that is down around 20 percent for the cumulative catch by the end of the three-year period.

One final idea that I wanted to present is an idea we're going to be investigating with the help of consultants moving forward. After we've implemented a lot of these improvements in our survey designs, NRC actually told us back in 2006 that we ought to be looking at using state-of-the-art estimation methods; and small-domain estimation is one of these suggested approaches.

It is basically a way to deal with small sample size situations where you have a small sample for a particular domain that you're trying to produce an estimate for. The approach is basically you're using new data that you've collected. You have to have that as a starting point; but then you can borrow data from adjacent time periods or from adjacent geographic areas in the case of our surveys; and the borrowed data could be differentially weighted.

As long you're doing the borrowing in a smart way, this could be very helpful. You're basically bringing in prior information that you're adding your new data to to produce an estimate. You end up with a composite or modeled estimator that uses both the new data and the borrowed data. You're essentially cheating to increase your sample size by borrowing additional data; and it will give you a benefit in terms of precision.

There is going to be a tradeoff there between bias and precision because if you're not borrowing the right data to bring in to help with your estimate, you could be introducing some bias, but you're going to get the benefit of increased precision; so it is just a matter of making sure that you're being smart about where you borrow from.

To illustrate the benefit there, John worked up a different way to produce an estimate for snowy grouper for South Atlantic Sub-Region North Carolina. This is in particular for the charterboat mode. The blue line there indicates the actual estimate that's just based on the data collected during a given year.

You've got estimates going from 2004 to 2014 and you can see there is a bit of bouncing around of those estimates. You've got some pretty extreme numbers like for 2005 and then for 2010. But if you're borrowing data from the previous two years, basically doing a multiyear estimate in what would be a small-domain approach, you're able to decrease the variance on the estimates quite a bit; and you see that there is more stability in the trend information over time. The red dotted line represents the multiyear estimate.

In summary I would say probably a combination of these approaches would be the best way to go. You'd have to look at the particular species in question, how rare it is in the general fishery, to what extent will you be able to focus sampling on specific sites where that event is more common.

It could be that a given state, almost all the sites you go to have a combination of nearshore fishing, offshore fishing, a real mix; but if you do have some sites that are more clearly defined as having a lot of boats that fish offshore, then there might be more benefit to creating a specialized stratum. But there is definitely a number of different ideas here that could be considered. With that, I'll take any questions.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you very much for that presentation. I think it was definitely informative, and I think it is going to help try to find a way forward. There are definitely some ideas in there that we've tossed out and that our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel has discussed, such as a special permit for fishing – they were talking more for snapper grouper species in particular in order to improve estimates of catch; but taking it one step further for a deep-water permit is within that realm. Questions of Dr. Van Voorhees? Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Can we estimate based on what our current ACLs are how many more intercepts and how many more household surveys would have to be created in order to get to some level of precision that we want? Can we come up with that number and an associated cost with that number?

DR. VAN VOOREES: Yes; it is pretty straightforward. If you know what the estimate was for a given year, let's say 2014, you can predict how the precision would improve on the estimate if you increased the sample size by a certain amount. Yes, it is a straightforward calculation. Now, you can't predict necessarily what the precision is going to be next year because that will depend on variability in the fishery itself the following year, but you can always predict what the difference in sampling level will give you in terms of improvement in precision.

MR. BROWN: I wanted to ask you question. I have a charter/headboat and I fish out of Charleston. I do logbook reports for the state of South Carolina, paper logbooks, and then I do electronic reporting, but I also get hit a couple times a month by Quantech. I kind of did some research on that and I called and talked to a couple of the upper managers and stuff.

I know that they're all kind of pointed back to you. I was just wondering are they contractors and also what is the necessity of collecting data that is already reported? There is really only a couple of things that we don't report on the logbooks that I'm doing currently for the state and the electronic for the feds. What is the necessity of duplicating all that?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Well, we're well aware of the charterboat program that has been going on in South Carolina for a number of years, a very well-run program. I know we're working currently with Mel and his staff as well as staff from North Carolina, with help from consultants we've brought in with MRIP resources, to help design how to move a logbook program like that forward to go electronic and actually to include some dockside sampling for validation purposes.

We're very encouraged and very optimistic that is going to lead to a design that MRIP will ultimately certify as a viable approach to use in states that want to do that as an alternative to the general survey approach that we're using right now. The main reason why we're still using the standard intercept survey and effort surveys for the MRIP approach in all states on the Atlantic coast is because we need to have a standard for comparison across states.

There could be differences in the results of the two surveys. You can have two very well-designed surveys that you think will be unbiased, but they may still get consistently different answers, and you need to be concerned about that. There may be biases that are hard to measure for both surveys that would cause those differences.

The main reason that ACCSP decided to develop the survey approach that we're using currently as the standard for the Atlantic coast states was because the same survey approach is being used all the way from Florida to Maine; so those estimates we know are comparable across state boundaries. That does not mean that the logbook program South Carolina is running is not doing a good job; so I think it is important that we be looking at both approaches moving forward. As I said, I'm optimistic that MRIP will ultimately certify a logbook reporting approach that has dockside sampling or may at-sea sampling for validation purposes as a viable alternative.

MR. BROWN: And I know we used to have an MRIP dockside agent or something that used to come by and he would like look for recreational boaters and interview them. I guess it was turned over now to – I guess the state took this –

MR. BELL: No; we're doing it for them.

MR. BROWN: Yes; he just said that they're doing it for you. I know they come by and they validate my – if I'm offshore or if I'm at the dock, occasionally I'll run into them.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say I think the take home from that is that – and because South Carolina does have a separate program, so Mark has to deal with that as well as the other guys and then he deals with the – because he is technically a headboat, he deals with the headboat reporting and then he deals with the phone calls from Quantech.

What we're striving towards is a system that is less cumbersome in terms of duplication of reporting and stuff; so that's the goal in mind to eventually simplify that. But right now that's sort of the world that he and others are in; and so what they wonder so I'm telling these folks one thing, I'm telling these folks something, I'm telling these folks something; how does all that actually come into play in terms of management. It is a legitimate question, but we hear that, though. You can imagine we do because we've got our own additional state survey logbook that we're doing, so it just adds an additional one in South Carolina.



DR. VAN VOORHEES: I totally agree with now what we need to be doing and MRIP moving forward is making this less complicated and making sure that we're using data from all the sources that we're getting data from, and I think that's going to be important in terms of developing alternative approaches for the charterboats and headboats.

I do want to comment, though, that we are now moving forward with a cooperative agreement this year where the state agencies for the Atlantic states are all going to be actually doing the data collection for our on-site intercept survey. We're not going to be using a contractor starting in 2016. It is going to be all state agency folks. A number of state agencies have already been doing that as sub-contractors to our contractor. I think most of you know that, but we'll be moving into 2016 with all the data collection done by the states.

MR. HARTIG: So how do we get this going; how do we move forward if we make a decision that we think we ought to do some of this or all of it? How do we do that?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: I think the starting point is deciding what species or group of species you want to be the focus. Then we can start looking at it is possible to define a stratum of sites where catch of those species is relatively more common than across the board. We could evaluate, okay, is it going to be possible to actually make this rare event more common for a subset of the sample frame.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess, Dave, what I'd like to know is which things can we do without money or more money? It seems to me the multiyear averaging is something that we can do because it is just a different way of calculating things. If we told you we want to have estimates with a PSE of no more than 30 percent, you could go in on a list of species we gave you and tell us how many years' worth you would have to do to average to produce something like that, right?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Well, John reminded me before I came down here make sure, Dave, you tell them it can't be a long list.

DR. CRABTREE: How long is a long list?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: If it is a relatively short list of species, then the potential for doing an improvement averaged across, et cetera.

DR. CRABTREE: So five or six species to start with and we could do that. Now, for some of these deep-water things, it seems to me that most of the catch is coming from the Outer Banks and from South Florida. You could stratify things in that way, but it is not clear to me whether that's something that's going to take a commitment of funds to do it or it could be done within the existing resources that you have.

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Well, the two examples I walked through, one of them was a proportional allocation where we're just saying we're working with the same amount of samples total, but we're just going to get some benefit out of creating a specialized stratum where the rare event is more common. That could be done without any additional funding to increase total sampling.

Now, there is always going to be a little bit of a tradeoff to balance there because as you focused your sampling more on this newly defined stratum, your precision for estimates for species within that stratum is going to be better, but you're going to lose some precision on your estimates for other species that may not be in that stratum. There is a little bit of a balancing act there for a multipurpose survey like we have.

I think, Roy, in answer to your question about what can you do without spending money, that would be one way to go, evaluate how much benefit you'd get out of that. But then also I would say look at potentially going to multiyear estimates if you don't really need to track things on an annual basis; because as you could see from the example there with blueline tilefish, you can improve the precision on a cumulative estimate for three years quite bit over what you would get for just one year.

DR. CRABTREE: And I can tell you because we closed the blueline recreational fishery – it is closing today.

DR. McGOVERN: We closed today.

DR. CRABTREE: Closed today. One reason we didn't close as quickly as we might have is we asked to see where are the fish coming from; and a lot of that came down to two intercepts in Key West that expanded to I think 30,000 pounds, which is more than the ACL. I think it would be worth having maybe Jack and John Carmichael and Dave have a call and we put together some of our highest-need species and let them take a look at the multiyear averaging and how much averaging would it take and what are the possibilities of that.

I'm certainly interested in looking at the stratification issue, but that's more complicated and harder for me to just off the top of my head to understand what the tradeoffs and all are; but does seem the multiyear averaging approach is something we ought to take a look at.

DR. DUVAL: I like that approach of asking Dave and John and some other folks to get together. I think the top four priorities from my perspective are snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, golden tilefish and then we also have wreckfish which are not being captured. We have many anecdotal reports of wreckfish being caught along the Outer Banks. We have complaints from charter captains wanting to know why they only get fish for two months out of the year. We also have anecdotal reports of all of these species being caught and landed in the Mid-Atlantic as well. I'm sure you're aware of some of the issues surrounding blueline tilefish in the Mid-Atlantic Region. I don't know if you have considered this is probably not just a South Atlantic issue but is certainly spreading into the Mid-Atlantic as well.

I also like the idea of a deep-water permit or at least some registration on a state fishing license that would identify those folks – it could be free. It is just that if you have this particular checkbox on your license, then you can't possess those species, so it would at least provide a sampling framework; I don't know.

MR. HAYMANS: Just to make sure I understand the different stratum, if we added stratum, right now I think it asked if you inside of three miles or beyond three miles; is that right?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: When I'm talking about a stratum, the term in survey statistics technically refers to a way you divide up your sample frame. In our case for the intercept survey, we sample sites and time periods. If you think of all the sites listed this way and all the time periods going across here, you have basically a matrix of possible sites and time intervals that you can select for an assignment.

You can divide that up if you know that certain sites have a different type of fishing than the rest of the sites and you might actually create that list of sites as being a separate stratum and you could sample that stratum more heavily than you do the rest.

MR. HAYMANS: Right, I understand that and I guess I asked the question wrong. One of the questions on the intercept is distance from shore, right, and I guess I think that even those rare events are multiplied across all intercepts, not necessary whether they are zero to three or three beyond.

For Georgia you're 50 or 60 miles before you're into any kind of deep water; so is there any value in adding depth rather distance from shore? Is there any value to adding depth even in large increments and then you only expand by those deep-water intercepts?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Well, the difficulty for us in terms of doing the expansion differently, we would have to be able to identify differences among trips in the surveys we do to estimate number of fishing trips. That's difficult because the recall usually is not immediate. We're calling people on the phone or in the case of the new mail survey we're actually getting them to respond to a mail questionnaire to tell us how many trips they took over a certain period.

We don't feel comfortable asking for a lot of details about those trips because we don't think the recall is going to be very good in some cases. You could potentially do that if you could distinguish between different types of trips in terms of location they fished. Then you could actually produce estimates of trips for different domains of location and then use that as a way to expand your catch data that you get from an on-site survey.

It is very difficult for us to do that on the effort surveys because the recall is currently 60 days. They're trying to tell us about trips they took in the last 60 days. They might be able to recall accurately what they did yesterday; but the trips further back, they would have more difficulty identifying where they actually fished.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, are there any other questions for Dave? If not, I think it would require some direction to staff to take what has been presented here, work with Dave, get someone from the regional office probably; and I don't know, maybe the science center. I think we just need a core group of folks who can take what has been presented here and give the council some options in terms of what is maybe the least expensive way forward at this point.

We can also discuss things that are within our purview such as a permit in order to narrow the sampling frame and how we might try to do something like that. Does that sound acceptable to folks? Do you want that in the form of motion, Myra, or is direction to staff okay? You've got that; all right. Well, thank you very much for being here. We really appreciate it.

This was very informative, and I'm very happy and excited to see that you at MRIP have been thinking about this a lot. Okay, moving back to our agenda that we're jumping around on, now that Dr. Ponwith is back, we are going to back to – and I'm going to apologize to Dr. Farmer because I didn't give him a heads-up about this, but, Nick, would you be prepared to go through the red snapper season analysis and presentation. That would be great, and then after that we'll go back to the blueline tilefish emergency rule request and implementation and then go into Dr. Barbieri's SSC report, which addresses that very issue.

DR. FARMER: Okay, let's talk real quick about the South Atlantic red snapper 2015 season. Just a bit of background and I think most of you are already familiar with, but SEDAR 24 in 2010 determined the stock was overfished and undergoing overfishing. The council came in made some recommendations as to which headboat weighting term to use and some other things, which allowed for some projections that would permit some limited amount of harvest in upcoming years.

What happened there is that Amendment 17A in 2010 closed the fishery in 2011; and then in 2012 you established some rules in Amendment 28. That basically created a process where we determine if a red snapper fishing season would be allowable. It would specify ACLs for each sector and season lengths for each sector.

There was a series of equations build into Amendment 28 for determining whether the season would happen and then what the ACLs would be; and then also it established some management measures if fishing were allowed. These are the formulas that were specified in Amendment 28. Basically the first one is very simple. If the total removals in the previous year are greater than the ABC in that previous year, then the ACL for the current year is equal to zero.

Then the second equation if you get past that first one determines what the ACL for the current year would be. To give you some background on the data sources we've been using to monitor red snapper landings in the South Atlantic, we get commercial landings from the four states. Commercial discards are estimated from a Delta-lognormal model that the science center also uses in the stock assessments, and that allows for expansion from the self-reported discards from the commercial logbook. That is an important thing note that those are self-reported discards.

Given that the regulations build in removals, there is maybe some small incentive for underreporting of discards. However, these are expanded discards from that. Then there is headboat landings and discards. Again, the discards there are self-reported. There is some auditing in the headboat from biological samplers and at-sea observers. Then the recreational charter and private boat landings; also the discards are self-reported.

Those are used by back-converting the incoming MRIP data to MRFSS units. Then also because the MRIP sampling can be somewhat limited during these small time openings, there are several special state-specific surveys for South Atlantic red snapper. Those are done by the various Departments of Marine Fisheries and DNRs.

To get to the meat of the data, this is Table 1 from the science center's report on the removals for the 2014 season that was provided in your briefing book. What we have here is a summary of the

landings on the left and then the discards on the right by charter and private sectors. The highlighting basically denotes whether the MRFSS estimate or the state survey estimate was used as the final estimate.

Basically how that went down is there was an ad hoc working group put together; and that working group held a webinar. They went through the various MRFSS estimates and state-specific estimates; and they made, based on the decision tree, choices as to whether the state survey or the MRFSS-generated estimated would be used.

Basically that decision tree was pretty simple. The first rule was that if no MRIP number was available, the state number would be used. If no state number was available, the MRIP number would be used. In the instance where both surveys generated an estimate, the estimate that was deemed more reliable, taking into account sample sizes, CVs and/or biases associated with the survey, was used. You can see in the highlighting which of the various estimates was used.

Then basically from there the release mortality rates for the various sectors that were used in SEDAR 24 in 2010 were applied to the discards in order to convert those to dead discards. Those were added to the landings and they were used to generate an estimate of total removals. The 2014 ABC was 106,000 fish and the removals estimated in 2014 were 205,859 fish.

Unfortunately, the total removals in 2014 were greater than the ABC in 2014 by a substantial amount. The 2015 ACL based on the Amendment 28 framework is zero fish, so that means there will not be unfortunately a South Atlantic red snapper fishing season in 2015. Then the question is what next?

Well, there is the SEDAR 41 stock assessment for red snapper that is underway. The results of that assessment are anticipated in April of 2016. Presumably that will result in a new recommendation for ABC. The National Marine Fisheries Service will monitor the 2015 removals; and at that time that those removals come in, we will apply the Amendment 28 formula and determine what the ACL will be by sector for 2016. If you guys have any questions, I'm here.

MR. COX: I've just got to say I've been fishing for red snappers out of Morehead City since the eighties; and we have seen this year the same level of red snapper fishing that we saw back when I started fishing in the eighties. We go out there and we'll catch 15 or 20 big red snappers. I'm not talking about little ones; I'm talking about 15 to 20 pound fish.

The size is so far removed from what we're seeing on the water that it is so frustrating. I appreciate your presentation, but it is not what we're seeing on the water. The guys in Hatteras are saying the same thing. I just don't think without having a red snapper season this year and completely stopping the fishery; we're losing that data stream that we need to keep science moving forward. We're just discarding a lot of fish.

We'll go out there and fish for gags; and to catch a hundred pounds, we'll discard two or three hundred pounds of red snapper. The frustration is not just with me but with the fishermen. The recreational folks and the commercial fishermen don't understand what we're seeing and hearing

here but what we're seeing on the water is so different. The science is so far from where we are on the water.

DR. FARMER: One of the things that's happening here I think is that SEDAR 24 was done in 2010. It is 2015 now; it has been quite a long time since that stock assessment was completed. Recruitment obviously is a huge factor in the productivity of a stock and the ability to exploit it, and that is one of the things that's hardest to estimate in a projection.

You typically are going to take a mean estimate of recruitment; and some years you're going to be right, some years you're going to be under, and some years you're going to be over. If you get some good recruitment classes in there, which it is possible – a discard level observed in 2014 may be because there is a good recruitment class pushing through – hopefully the new stock assessment would capture that and you'll get a more favorable outcome for fishermen.

One thing that I wanted to note is that a lot of time when you're basing management on an estimate of discards, the concern is that the PSE on those discards is probably pretty high. I took a look at that and the highest discard estimate in here – and I'll head back to that table here – was for the private mode in Wave 4 off of Florida; but the PSE for that was only 36.6 percent, which for a discard estimate is not too, too terrible.

It seems that, yes, there might have been some pretty high discards in that wave, but I guess the hope would be is that's representative of a good year class – maybe more than one good year class pushing through the fishery. The hope would be that a new stock assessment would capture that. Obviously, I'm not on the stock assessment and I don't know if that's exactly what it is showing. It is too soon to tell, but April 2016 we'll hopefully hear something interesting there.

MR. CONKLIN: Dr. Farmer, there has been some concern expressed from some fishermen, and I've heard that the mortality rate in the red snapper was around 40 percent. If that number was lower, even just say 20 percent, would we have a season this year?

DR. FARMER: From SEDAR 24 you've got commercial at 48 percent, charter/headboat at 41 percent, and private at 39 percent. Those recreational release mortality rates are a little bit higher than the Gulf of Mexico release mortality rate estimates; but the release mortality rate estimates are tied to the depth that the fish are caught from.

There are obviously differences between the bathymetry in the Gulf of Mexico and here that may speak a little bit to that. Looking at this table, I think even if you applied a lower estimate to the total discards there, you're over double the removals that were allowed. If you cut the release mortality rate by more than half, maybe you'd get closer.

MR. CONKLIN: To Jack's point, if this is showing that the discards are really high, that is what we're seeing on the water. We're seeing a lot more fish.

MR. BELL: This should sound sort of familiar. It is kind of like with sea bass, as the stock rebuilt and there were more and more fish, we were hearing that, we were seeing that in both the fishery-independent and the fishery-dependent data. To try to put a slightly silver lining on this, it is a

good thing that the fish are there. It shows that we're making positive results here; but at the same time it is frustrating for everybody.

I think if we can get the stock assessment under our belt, we'll see how that goes. The trouble with red snapper as compared to sea bass, a much shorter-lived fish, is that the recovery time and the number of year classes you have is different. It is literally apples and oranges; but the same process is going on.

We're actually having success and it is just the way the success manifests itself is very frustrating for people. We certainly get that. I did run just for fun the, say, 20 percent assumption of discard mortality, and we still would have been – the way I figure it, we were still over even at 20 percent, but that's just something we're going to have to deal with in managing success. I understand the frustration, and we've kind of been through this a little bit with sea bass before. The way sea bass turned out eventually was very positive, so I'm hoping for that with red snapper.

MR. BOWEN: I tried to calm down a little before I spoke; but you have to forgive me for the bad taste I have in my mouth right now when we just prior to lunch went over the landings for recreational and the inflated numbers that were actually proven through lunch to be one fish that was expanded out to be 7,488 pounds. Forgive me for having a bad taste in my mouth right at this moment. When I look at Georgia, Wave 3, private sector 11,367 fish that were discarded; that is what MRFSS says?

DR. FARMER: Yes, that is a MRFSS estimate.

MR. BOWEN: That's the farthest from accurate as there has ever been. When we have 166 releases from the charterboat, there has to be some common sense here.

DR. PONWITH: You're exactly right; the rarer the event, the higher the expansion factors. Your supposition that the same thing that was at play in this case and the one before lunch is the same; and that is troubling for a rare-event species. It is troubling to be closed when a stock is rebuilding. We are not saying that red snapper are in the exact state that they were in 2009 when the last assessment was done and the fishery closed.

The expectation is that closure and that dramatic reduction of fishing mortality rate was going to yield a healthier stock; and when you see fish on the water, when you have trouble getting through red snapper to catch something else, that is a manifestation of that plan actually working. Dr. Farmer is right, the stock assessment is going to be run this year and the results of that stock assessment will determine what the future guidance for fisheries' management regulations will be.

What we have right now isn't a fishery. This isn't a fishery. What we have right now is a closure. We have projections run on rebuilding and those projections were based on an assumption about what discards were going to be. If we were below those discard removals, it created the opportunity for these very small openings within this big closure to allow some fishing.

That isn't going to be happening this year, but the situation that we're in right now is this kind of do-loop of seeing whether the discards will allow a small weekend or two opening is hopefully

coming to a close because our opportunity to reassess the status of the red snapper, look at the gains we've had based on the plan we carefully devised together, and provide new management advice based on that result. We don't know what the result is yet quantitatively, but qualitatively we hear things are looking better than they were in 2009.

As we get that advice, it could be the end of a one weekend opening based on having caught fewer or released fewer discards; and so the conversation is germane. People are frustrated right now; but I think that if we have a positive outcome on that stock assessment, it could be sort of the end of this. Instead of there being rare cases of red snapper because red snapper was closed, in theory we would be seeing more red snapper, and then we don't run into those problems that Dr. Van Voorhees raised about the rare-event species.

MR. BOWEN: And, Dr. Ponwith, I'm not sitting here saying that I want a season or I don't want a season or I'm for the mini-season or I'm not. I'm not arguing that point. I understand that's reality; but what I'm sitting here and really frustrated about are the expansions of these numbers. If we don't get a handle on this and figure out some way to get these numbers a lot more accurate, then we're going to have to deal with this not only in red snapper for the future but other species. That's the complaint and what is more troubling to me than whether or not we have a two-day weekend on red snapper this year. That's the point I'm trying to make.

MR. COX: And the point I'm trying to make is when you completely shut down a fishery like you do blueline tilefish and red snapper; that you're shutting down a data stream that's important to the science center without any sampling whatsoever of those species. That is my frustration.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm concerned that you call red snapper a rare species. Grouper in closed season, that can be called rare; but red snapper, really?

DR. DUVAL: Well, that is just the way it is right now, Charlie. It is effectively a rare species as far as the survey goes. I defer to Bonnie to correct that, but I would argue that the way it is playing out right now it is effectively a rarely intercepted species; not a rare-event species but a rarely intercepted species. Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: I wouldn't call the discards rare and the CVs are pretty good on them. I just looked at them and it was 20-something percent, but the landings is a rare event because it is closed except for a handful of days. That's why we had to put a specialized survey and things in place. You're right, Jack, it is frustrating that when we close a fishery down we lose our data, and that makes it hard for us to know what to do.

It frustrates all of us, but that's the bind we're in with the way the statute is set up at this point. I'm not sure what to do about it. Some of what you're seeing with those big fish, remember I think in the last assessment the two big year classes we had were 2007 and 2008. Those fish are eight and nine years old now, so they'd be big. You're seeing some of those year classes still there.

We just are where we are right now; and I think the expectation is that we get the new assessment to our SSC next spring; and if we need to have an extra meeting or a webinar or something like that to make the adjustment, then that is what we ought to plan to do. Basically right now the



prospects for a season for next year will all hinge on what comes out of the assessment. That's just what we're stuck with at the moment.

MR. HAYMANS: Bonnie, if SEDAR 41 had been on schedule and had not been delayed and we had gotten the results of it by now; would there have been a potential to affect this current season had it been on time?

DR. PONWITH: Yes.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay; and I guess to Roy, we've asked for emergency rules for crazier things; is there an opportunity for an emergency rule to allow for a short season this year? It looks to me if we're on the same track next year with discards, it is still going to be more than the ACL next year. I'm just curious as to whether we can get a data stream through an emergency rule.

DR. CRABTREE: I can't envision how we would be able to do something like that. We've set up a process that laid out what we're going to do. Hey, we've got three years of seasons out of this, at least some limited season, and this year it is not working out, but I'm not quite sure how we would turn that into an unforeseen emergency.

MR. HAYMANS: Well, I just look at the discards; and if we're at the same level next year, we're still not going to have a season next year based on the discards that we have.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, we won't use that same formula next year because we'll have new ABCs out of the stock assessment; and that will then determine what the season is. We may not have a season, I don't know, and maybe we'll have a good season, but it is going to hinge on the stock assessment which is going to include data through '13, '14, I don't remember; but I don't think the discards right now will play into that so much.

DR. DUVAL: I have Mark, Monica, Jack, and Gregg; and we could all go around this table ad nauseam with our dissatisfaction on this, but there are other things that we're probably going to need to discuss.

MR. BROWN: I'll be brief. Nick, I just wanted to ask you a question on the MRFSS table. It shows the charter and private; and it shows the landings are all in numbers there, right? All the estimates and everything are in numbers; and then you go to the next graph for the ABCs and it shows numbers; was that a conversion? Did you convert that from pounds to fish or how was done there, because that's what is kind of leading into what we were talking about earlier?

DR. FARMER: Right; so the recreational data is all dealt with in numbers throughout the process and then the commercial landings obviously are reported in pounds; and so an average weight is taken from the assessment and applied to those to convert them to numbers. I think that was laid out in Amendment 28 as well.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So just in terms of timing – and maybe Gregg is going to speak to this; but if you get the assessment next year, depending on when that information comes to you, right now you have a process set up through Amendment 28 in which you look at landings and discards

from the previous year and you compare that to the ABC; and so that's what you have that you've all agreed on and that's what is set up in your FMP.

If you want to do something different because of information you may receive out of a stock assessment, then you're going to need to in some fashion do some sort of amendment, whether it is an abbreviated framework or a full plan amendment or however we can fit into the process in terms of what the council wants to do; but until Amendment 28 is changed, until you change the FMP, that is what you have set up now for you to follow.

MR. COX: I was just going to say, Doug, I think you're right. I think if you can have an emergency closure, we ought to have an emergency opening in the name of science. I think you ought to put it in the form of a motion and let's vote on it.

DR. DUVAL: I think Monica is going to remind us of the requirements for emergency action, which is a good thing.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I will because you'd need to build a record for your emergency action. So far I haven't heard a record being built. Remember, an emergency action may not be based on administration action to solve a long-recognized problem, which is theoretically some of what you have before you.

Anyway, emergency criteria results from recent unforeseen events or recently discovered circumstances and presents a serious conservation and management problem in the fishery and can be addressed through emergency regulations for which the immediate benefits outweigh the value of advanced notice, public comment and the deliberative consideration of the impacts on participants to the same extent as would be expected under normal rule-making process. If you want to talk about what the reasons are for an emergency action, if you really want to go down that road, then I urge you to start talking about why and what the justification is for an emergency rule.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for that reminder, Monica. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Our staff has been kicking this around, because our big concern is the discards of red snapper. We hear all the time there is more and more fish. It seems like we're going to be in this constant hole with discards and we're never going to get out of it. We've kicked around an alternative approach. This has been e-mailed to everybody right now; Mike sent it around.

What we would like to do is just outline this briefly here. We understand we don't have a lot of time but just outline this; and if this is something you want us to explore, then you could just give us direction to work on this with the region and NOAA GC. This does break new ground. We're not even a hundred percent sure we can do it, but we think it is worth a shot.

This would involve working with the public. The public has given us lots of suggestions. They certainly don't like what we're doing now, so this is a way to get them to work with us to help reduce the release mortality and limiting the mortality from retained catch. The first thing is to set a fixed opening for 2016 with a one fish per person per trip bag limit. We'd have to figure when we're going to open that.

Do you open it for May/June, which would be a wave, or July/August, which would be a wave, it could be September/October, too – it is to you – or one month, and then we would conduct analyses with the region and the center to determine which time period approximates the ACL. We will certainly still do the quantitative analysis; but as you see, what was done for this year we harvested twice what was anticipated to be harvested last year. We have to be careful.

Yes, we can do quantitative analyses, but it is not keeping up with the data in terms of the fish out there and certainly wouldn't be able to take into the change in fishermen's behavior that we would hope this approach would take. This would reduce the derby mentality so everybody doesn't feel like they've got one weekend to go out and catch all the red snapper they can.

We would have the opportunity – if you did it over a wave, then the MRIP Program, the way it normally operates could sample and get our estimates. If you did one month, then we'd need to look at some other way similar to what has been done in the past or logbooks or some catch card. It would also request fishermen to limit discards by voluntary staying away from red snapper as much as they can.

We could recommend areas based on our knowledge of where discards have been concentrated in the past, to ask them to stay away, ask them to voluntary avoid high grading; so this would be you fish for red snapper, you catch the first red snapper, that's the one you keep and you put your rod down. This is done in west coast fisheries in salmon.

It would certainly be different here, but that would limit the catch. That is the incentives for the fishermen. If they work with us and cooperate, then this may be a way for there to be a set season. Now, how do you put in some protection on the biological side, because this is potentially risky? The actual mortality from 2016 would be compared with the 2016 ABC, the ABC from the new stock assessment, and then we would determine what sort of ABC or what sort of opening there may or may not be in 2017. That is how you would minimize the risk.

If fishermen don't cooperate, we can't reduce discards, then you'd be over the catch similar to what we did last year, and then there wouldn't be a harvest in 2017. However, if the fishermen do cooperate, they increase the chances that they have another and future openings under a one-fish bag limit.

MR. COX: I like that idea, Gregg; that sounds good. What about for the commercial, what would you do, a small trip limit or something for the commercial fishery during that time?

MR. WAUGH: That would up to you; it could be one fish. I think what we have to look at here is we are deep, deep in a discard mortality hole; and to allow some retention, it may have to be as stringent as one per person per day for recreational and commercial. We operated – and I think Bob is going to talk about this – we operated under a two-fish bag limit and 20-inch size limit for many years, both recreational and commercial.

MR. MAHOOD: I've been very frustrated with red snapper and I think all of us have, not just myself. To get a better understanding, I had Mike work me up some numbers. Total removals,

both harvest and discards, from 1992 through – he did it through 2009, but the last two years were real high; so I'm looking at what was a normal fishery before we had those two good year classes.

If you look at those 16 years between 1992 and 2007, the average removals was 1,338,625 pounds. Okay, what was removed last year with an eight-day season and dead discards, 1,322,547 pounds. Something is wrong; how can you have the same amount that was the average for 16 years with an open fishery with a two-fish bag limit and a 20-inch minimum size? The staff has been trying to think outside the box; how do we get out of this? We've got ourselves in a mess that I'm not sure a stock assessment is going to do it because something is not right.

MR. BELL: Just kind of adding to the mix since we're considering asking people to do things voluntarily, so it is behavioral changes, I don't know to what degree you could calculate this in, but you could ask them voluntarily to use descending devices or something to try to improve the survivability particularly in deeper water since we're asking for voluntary compliance with stuff. Those are used on the west coast in certain fisheries and things. It sure couldn't hurt if you've asking people to voluntarily do things.

MR. HARTIG: Michelle, I suggest we don't act on this now. Let us sleep on this, address it in full council and see if we want to do it or not. I think we need to talk out some more. I think that's a prudent measure for that.

DR. DUVAL: All right, I agree with that approach. Any other comments on red snapper? Let's go ahead and take a quick ten-minute break and then we'll come back and tackle blueline tilefish, the SSC Report and Amendment 37.

The next thing we're going to cover is the emergency rule on blueline tilefish. Just to refresh everybody's memory, at our last council meeting we passed a motion that directed the SSC to go back and look at the geographic range to which the SEDAR 32 stock assessment for blueline tilefish applied; and if appropriate, send an emergency request to extend the Amendment 32 management measures to the areas north of the South Atlantic Council's jurisdiction, into the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions.

We had a couple of members from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council who are members of the Snapper Grouper Committee at that meeting as well as Chairman Robins. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council had submitted an emergency request on March 11<sup>th</sup> I believe. There was an emergency rule request from the Mid-Atlantic prior to an emergency rule request going in from the South Atlantic, which happened on May 6<sup>th</sup>. I'm going to turn things over to Rick to go ahead and take us through the Amendment 32 emergency rule status.

MR. DEVICTOR: You summed it up pretty well where we got two requests come in for the emergency rule for blueline tilefish. The first one came in March 10<sup>th</sup>, I believe it was. The Mid-Atlantic Region requested a commercial trip limit of 300 pounds, recreational bag limit of seven blueline tilefish per person per trip.

Then the South Atlantic Council followed up two months later on May 6<sup>th</sup> sent in their request to have the regulations match those that were put into place through Amendment 32. That is a

commercial trip of a hundred pound, a recreational bag limit of one per vessel per day May through August and AMs affiliated with that.

Effective June 4<sup>th</sup> a rule was put out where NMFS published the Mid's regulations and comments are being accepted through July 6<sup>th</sup> on that; and that is effective until December 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. The reason behind that was mainly timing is we got the Mid's first. The purpose there was to get that in place as soon as possible to curb the fishing that was going to occur May and June. Then we talked about it and we're going to look at more scientific information to see if more restrictions are going to be required in the future.

DR. DUVAL: Just to let know folks know, in your briefing book the copy of the South Atlantic Council's blueline tilefish emergency rule request letter is actually Attachment 8B in your briefing book. Again, this letter was sent as a result of the SSC's determination at their April 28<sup>th</sup> through 28<sup>th</sup> meeting that SEDAR 32 still represented the best scientific information available and did apply coastwide.

Now, we do have a couple of members of our SSC who sit on the Mid-Atlantic SSC, Dr. John Boreman and Dr. Doug Vaughan, who were there. I was there, Chairman Hartig was here. We clarified at the end of the meeting that it was indeed the SSC's opinion that biologically speaking this was a single coast-wide population and therefore SEDAR 32 was still considered to be best available scientific information available.

I certainly appreciate that measures are in place to control harvest in the areas north of North Carolina. I have to say that when I read the Federal Register Notice I was a bit disappointed because the Register Notice says that on May 11<sup>th</sup> the Mid-Atlantic Council commented on the South Atlantic Council's emergency action request in a letter to the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator stating that they disagreed with the South Atlantic Council's interpretation of the results of SEDAR 32 – well, it is not the council's interpretation of the results. It is the SSC's interpretation of the results – and, quote, “identifies relevant data that were not included in SEDAR 32.”

I think that's the phrase I really take issue with; because when I read the letter from the Mid-Atlantic Council on May 11<sup>th</sup> to Mr. Bullard, the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator, this letter states that “SEDAR 32 included limited data inputs within our jurisdiction and did not index CPUE north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. MRIP estimates in SEDAR 32 from Virginia north were predominantly zeros, underscoring the rare nature of encounters within the survey in our region.

“The fact that there were some low level of catch from statistical areas in the Mid-Atlantic that was considered marginally in SEDAR 32 does not transform SEDAR 32 into an adequate basis for setting annual catch limits or technical measures in the Mid-Atlantic, especially given the catches we have seen since SEDAR 32.”

I think limited data inputs, there was limited data north of North Carolina. The only data available was catch information. It was Kevin Craig, who was the lead analyst for that assessment – and I say this regardless of how happy you are with the impacts of the assessment on fishing

communities in the region; and I'm probably one of the most unhappy people sitting around the table, but all data that were available were included.

It was all catch information and that's pretty much it. Additionally, a study done by Schmidtke, a student in Dr. Cynthia Jones Lab who is also a Mid-Atlantic Council SSC member, all the data from that study that were available at that time were considered within SEDAR 32. The final report from that study was sent around to us at the March meeting.

The authors themselves state that they were heavily involved in SEDAR 32; so I don't see where new information was being brought forward; and furthermore the notation that there was no indexing of CPUE north of Cape Hatteras, this is not something new. We noted our concerns about the lack of ability of MRIP to adequately survey the species as well as the lack of ability to develop an index of CPUE both north of Hatteras and south of Cape Canaveral in the letter to Dr. Merrick that we sent in October of last year and for which we received a response only in March. I would argue that there is not new data that has been submitted. Further in that letter, one of the comments is that Amendment 32 did not establish any catch limits, spatial allocations or other regulations for blueline tilefish within the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's jurisdiction. Well, we don't have the authority to that because the management unit does not extend up into the Mid-Atlantic Region.

At the time we took final action on SEDAR 32, which was in September of last year, we did not have 2014 landings' information available. We very deliberately and very clearly on the record set our ACL at 98 percent of the ABC to account for catches outside of our region. Now, that was based on average proportion of harvest from the past five years outside of the South Atlantic's region. I appreciate that there are some harvest controls in place.

That is certainly important, but I disagree with the fact or with the statement in the Federal Register Notice that there are relevant data that were included that were not identified in SEDAR 32 that were identified in the Mid-Atlantic Council's letter. I guess the story goes on. Roy, it sounds like from what Rick has said that the South Atlantic Council's request is still somewhat under consideration?

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I sent you guys a letter on June 4<sup>th</sup>, which I assume is in the briefing book but I don't really know, that essentially said that the Mid's rule was put in place, but that we would continue to work with both councils to determine whether additional restrictions are placed. It then made reference to our SSC's webinar, which in fact took place on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. We're going to see I think a presentation by Dr. Barbieri in a few minutes, and we have a report from that SSC meeting. They have requested additional projections.

They concluded in their report that the projections that our current catch limits are based on may not accurately reflect the population fisheries as they now exist and therefore cannot be considered best scientific information available. There is clearly issues here; and I think what we need to do now is see the SSC's report.

We're going to need to figure out what the timing of these projections are; and then I suspect where we're going to wind up is we're going to respecify the catch levels based on what comes out of

our SSC again. There is clearly a great many questions about what is the best scientific information now and what the basis for these catch levels ought to be.

On top of that we've got the issue that at least as I understand it the Mid-Atlantic Council wants to set up their own management of blueline tilefish. Somewhere along the way we're going to have to figure out what the appropriate catch levels are in the Mid and what they are in the South Atlantic. In this case it is not clear to me what the best science is and what the appropriate catch levels are nor how to split those up.

There is a lot of pieces here that need to come together, and I think it starts with the SSC's report and then we'll from there. It may well be that additional restrictions are going to be necessary in the Mid. I don't know if anything more will be done through an emergency rule or what we need to do. We're going to have to see how the science progresses and what comes out of the SSC when they meet again and when they review whatever projections it is that are being requested.

DR. DUVAL: Just a couple more comments before I call Luiz up to give the SSC report. It just seems that the de facto effect of the agency's determination with regard to this emergency rule request is that SEDAR 32 doesn't represent best available science. It is almost a de facto determination that the stock assessment is being set aside.

We sat here a year ago and had a lot of discussion about the projections for blueline tilefish and the increased catches that we were seeing here in our region, which included order of magnitude increases in commercial harvest off South Carolina. We had that aggressive spike in recreational MRIP landings off of Florida.

My understanding is that is what has happened again this year. I would hope that as the SSC moves forward that the whole geographic picture is being considered and not just a single year of very high catches in one statistical area off DelMarVa. Dr. Barbieri, would you please come forward and give us your presentation. Jack.

MR. COX: I think we should take our fishermen in Dare County – if a lot of the information is missing, then I think we should have some level of fishing on recreational and commercial right now for the new assessment that we're working on.

DR. BARBIERI: Before I get started, I just want to clarify one thing is you have one of the attachments – I don't remember what the attachment number is – for the actual April meeting report. It is the narrative of the report, which includes a lot more issues, a lot more topics than this one. Given the amount of stuff that you guys have to go over, I just decided to summarize this presentation to focus just on the most important items that are decisional in nature, require action or that might inform your decisions over the next several days.

DR. DUVAL: And that is Attachment A-3 in the Snapper Grouper Tab.

DR. BARBIERI: As Dr. Duval mentioned earlier, the SSC was asked to reconsider the range that was covered by the SEDAR 32 blueline tilefish assessment. You can see the explicit motion on the board that the council directs that the SSC determine at its April 2015 meeting the geographic

range covered by the SEDAR 32 assessment. If warranted, request emergency action to extend regulations proposed in Amendment 32, once the amendment is approved, to the areas that the SSC considers are represented by the stock assessment.

This motion was made at your March meeting. We evaluated this at our April SSC meeting. After a lot of discussion, a lot of review of the available information, we had Dr. Kevin Craig from the science center come and give a presentation with a lot of detailed evaluation of data inputs. We had some other input from Dr. Cynthia Jones and Dr. Michael Schmidtke as well presenting their information relative to the additional research that they did off of Virginia.

Looking at all of that information, the SSC actually concluded the SEDAR 32 assessment of blueline tilefish was still applicable to the entire geographic range of the stock as reflected by the data available at the time. As you know, there is a reason why we assessed the same species multiple times, every few years or so, and that we update our assessments is because we need to refresh and update our data inputs into the assessment to reflect any additional changes that have happened in the population dynamics, in the biology of the species, in the landings' level, abundance levels, et cetera.

In this case it is kind of like a 20/20 hindsight kind of situation. If you look at the assessment and see that the data ended in 2011 as the terminal year for that assessment, up to that point the assessment captured the dynamics of the stock that could be captured at that time given the available data. Things have changed some since then and that is going to be capture by the next assessment, hopefully.

This is to clarify that back in April when we met to discuss this issue and address your direction to review the geographic extent of the assessment that we were talking about and reviewing just the assessment, not the projections. All that discussion about the assessment and discussion of some of the changes in the fisheries that seemed to have caused shifts in landings and some perceived changes in abundance over time prompted more detailed discussion of the projections.

The SSC then decided to schedule a follow-up after our April meeting, a follow-up webinar meeting that was held last Wednesday, that we wanted to conduct before this meeting to come and bring some additional inputs regarding the blueline tilefish projections, which we wanted to review in more detail given all the additional information that was put before us.

Recommendations were that the projections were put together using scientifically sound methodology; the methods used, the assumptions made for those projections, the uncertainties associated with individual data inputs were properly accounted for. The science that was used to conduct the projections was correct, but that there were shifts in the fishery and potential changes in the productivity of the stock that had not been really anticipated when the projections were put together; that were really envisioned originally as part of the assumptions that go into the projections.

The way that you conduct projections is you have to look at the recent past and say, okay, I'm going to assume that the future is going to be like the recent past, because, of course, the future we



don't know how that is going turn out. You have to make some assumptions about selectivities, the geographic scope, the magnitude of landings, abundance trends and all of that.

Although the methodology, the science that was used to construct the projections was best scientific information, the projections themselves given changes in the fishery were not considered to be the best scientific information available.

The SSC basically feels that these projections do not capture the dynamics of the stock to reflect the current situation that is out there, and we are requesting a new set of projections that updates the landings' information through 2014 and then provide us with us with a new set of yield streams for OFL and ABC based on a P-star of 50 percent for OFL, like we usually do; and in this case of this assessment given the application of our control rule, an ABC yield stream based on a P-star of 30 percent.

One thing is let's update the landings and provide new projections. Another thing is one of the issues that happened with the projections is that there were changes in abundance patterns, potential productivity changes in the population and potential changes in recruitment that we believe were not properly captured by the current set of projections; so we requested that the center put together a new set of projections as well that further explores different recruitment scenarios. In that case, during our discussion, we brought up the fact that this would be done like it was done for you for king mackerel.

You may remember when you looked – I think it was the March meeting, right, when you were presented with stock status and projections for king mackerel that came out of the center; that there were some uncertainties associated with recruitment scenarios going into the future.

The center had put together different outcomes of projections giving different assumptions about recruitment, and that would give us a way to better gauge how much of that recruitment factor is impacting the outcome of these projections and to how much of that is being captured by the projections. Since we just completed blueline tilefish and I know there might be specific questions this topic, Madam Chair, I'm going to pause there and open up for questions.

DR. DUVAL: Questions for Luiz regarding the SSC's discussions? Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Luiz, when I was listening to the discussions, I got the impression that sort of the running understanding of at least a few members is once the new landings' stream would be inputted into the projections; that one could potentially expect that the new ABC would actually be lower than what the current levels are; so we would actually be in a worse position than we are not. Is there any scenario that would not necessarily be the case?

DR. BARBIERI: Potentially, yes, but this is why we are asking for the different scenarios to be considered in these new projections so we can evaluate all of those. The idea is not to have a predetermined outcome. We are actually looking for plausible scenarios giving what we consider states of nature that reflect potential changes in conditions that a tied to your assumptions.

We have to make some assumptions about recruitment, for example. It could have been high, it could have been lower, it could have been average. If we can see different sets of projection results that integrate all that variability, it will give an idea of what might be likely to happen.

DR. PONWITH: Dr. Barbieri, I appreciate the explanation that you gave on the instruction for the follow-up projections. One thing that I'd like to ask is was there complete clarity given in terms of how to parameterize those alternative scenarios; because I think at this stage we don't want to – I think there needs to be guidance from the SSC as to how to bin those categories so that the projections don't spin out of control.

DR. BARBIERI: Absolutely; and we don't have those prepared yet. We actually are working with staff in developing a number of recruitment scenarios that are in draft format at this point. We're going to circulate those amongst the SSC and request a little more guidance from the committee on what those scenarios should be in terms of those projections. Then we're going to try to be as explicit as possible in putting together a memo to the center that specify all those parameters that need to be included.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, that was my question. I was going to ask if they had figured out exactly what the request was.

MR. BREWER: You mentioned that in making the projections that certain assumptions have to be made. Who makes those assumptions?

DR. BARBIERI: Well, it usually a team of analysts. Depending on the assessment, it could have one person or more than one. Those assumptions are usually standard-type assumptions that you make and you assign different values or known distributions for some of the parameters like, for example, selectivity patterns of the fishery, distribution of the fishery, catchability, availability of the stock, how is recruitment going to be into the future. We make those assumptions. Then when the SSC or any other review body actually reviews the projections, it looks into those assumptions and looks into all those scenarios to see if those are reasonable and acceptable or not.

MR. BREWER: Just a quick follow-up; in the first instance is it the SSC that makes the assumptions or some outside expert or who is making the initial assumptions?

DR. BARBIERI: Well, usually the analytical team, meaning the stock assessment analysts, are usually from the science center for stock assessments that are prepared by the center. There are some stock assessments – we're going to see I guess a couple today that were prepared by the Florida FWC. In that case our staff actually makes those assumptions. Then the projections are developed and are presented to the SSC for review. The committee reviews and provides some input.

MR. BREWER: So from what you're telling me that sort of like final sort of review or decision with regard to the validity of the assumptions is with the SSC?

DR. BARBIERI: Yes.

MS. BECKWITH: I guess the parts that I'm struggling most with is if the understanding is that a likely outcome of these new projections can mostly likely end in a lower ABC, indicating that the stock is even worse than where we think it is because of these additional harvests, then I sort of look at the emergency rule we put versus the emergency rule that the Mid-Atlantic put, and it feels like certainly this decision to implement the Mid-Atlantic's rule was more political than science-based.

I understand that we're sort of acknowledging that this is not best science and we're sort of setting aside to a certain extent that – or it seems like we're setting aside that assessment. But when we have our guys in Hatteras that are shut down and 75 miles north they're allowed to catch seven fish recreationally, then we're in this sort conundrum of if the choices right now are that this is not best science and sort by proxy we've almost set aside that assessment, then where can we in the short term relieve some of the issues that we're having at least north of Hatteras where it is not reasonable or rational to have our guys shut down in an area that 75 miles north they're allowed to catch 300 pounds or seven fish?

It has been very difficult for us to be able to explain to our fishermen that this is sort of where we are and we're waiting on these projections and there is an acknowledgment that this is no longer really considered best science and yet we're sort of stuck with these regulation; and I can't really see a path forward that helps us solve that problem except for waiting for some new projections that will likely say that our ABC should actually be lower.

DR. DUVAL: Bonnie, did you want to speak to that?

DR. PONWITH: This is a point on a point. When I see in the presentation from the SSC the best available scientific information, the thing that we need to remember is that word "available". My understanding is we're not setting aside the stock assessment. The stock assessment is the stock assessment. We use the stock assessment as the foundation for some projections. Some things have changed in the way the fishery is being carried out that have influenced our understanding of the status of that stock based on those projections.

Some exploratory projections are being requested. My view is that the stock assessment remains the best available scientific information, and that isn't saying that it is this glowing thing that is an exact mimic of the truth. There isn't another stock assessment and that is the thing that's putting us in a jam.

What I'm hearing from the SSC is not necessarily that the projections are not best available scientific information; but that they're concerned about the use of those for management purposes, they're asking for some additional projections to be able to fully evaluate and potentially be using the results from that next set of projections to further inform management.

The real question is, is it suitable for management given some of these changes in the fishery? It sounds like a nuance distinction, but it is an important one. I am empathetic to what you're saying because you're right; if we decide that these projections that were reviewed in this most recent are of concern and the exploratory or happening, what do we use for management.

I think we're going to get into that conversation because the real trick that I think the off-the-cuff answer is, well, let's do another stock assessment. But real issue is without additional data above and beyond what we have in our pocket right now, the reasonable expectation is the stock assessment would come out identical to the way it came out last time unless you update the terminal years of data like we were going to do in those projections. I'll talk about this. I don't want to go into too much detail, but I'll talk about some of the things that we're doing for the future to get us out of this box. But for now I think that's the better way to cast what we're doing.

DR. DUVAL: I think Anna is really referring to – with regard to the decision on this emergency rule request – the lack of parity between the regions. We have a coast-wide ABC and we're shut down here. We're constrained because we do have an ACL. The delay in implementation or the effective date of implementation of Amendment 32 meant that we were betwixt and between our emergency ACL which was considerably higher than the ACL that we have right now as a result of the projections that were developed in April; yet overfishing is being allowed to continue in another region according to that assessment.

It is the lack of parity and it is the continued overfishing in another region that is really causing us to get – yes, it is hard to swallow. I've got angry e-mails and angry phone calls and people that understand that. Again I think it gets back to, Mr. Chairman, when the SSC considers the revised provisions, I hope that they take into account the complete geographic picture. That's all I'm going to say. Jack.

MR. COX: And the thing that frustrates me is Bonnie says the stock assessment is going to come out the same way because we don't have any added data, so why aren't we collecting added data at this point? That's what concerns me.

MR. HARTIG: I think I've got a Monica question. It is really bothersome to me that the legal part of this doesn't seem to be getting implemented. I know we're kind of in a hiatus now because we have some projections that are being rerun; but once those projections come back and we have a determination from the SSC that it is a coast-wide assessment, which we've already had done, and even though management doesn't extend into their jurisdiction, it seems to me that the catch level recommendations from the assessment absolutely do extend into the Mid-Atlantic. Once we get the projections back, however they come out – if it looks like we're still going to have a closed fishery, so to speak, how does the Mid-Atlantic weasel out of that?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Is that a question for me?

MR. HARTIG: Yes; absolutely it is a question for you; how by law can the Mid-Atlantic exceed an assessment – catch level recommendation from an assessment?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, you're asking me to assume things that aren't place, right? You're asking me to decide or to tell you what is going to happen in the future after the science center does a projection, sends it back to the SSC and all that; and I'm going to tell you that the law is going to be followed.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, that's all I need to know.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, okay, I'll stop.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, but what –

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: No; there is no but; the law is going to be followed, but there is a big record here, right? You've got the Mid-Atlantic's SSC, you're got your SSC, we've got the stock assessment, we've got emergency rules. We've got all kinds of things in play; so we're going to look at the whole record and figure out what is the next best thing to do according to the law; but I will tell you that the law will be followed.

DR. DUVAL: And the law requires that overfishing be ended immediately; and when we received the results of SEDAR 32, we took immediate action to request an emergency rule that would cut the ACL by over 66 percent or 65 percent. We requested emergency action. We haven't disobeyed the SSC's catch level recommendations in any way, shape or form. Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, okay, and I understand there is some venting, but your emergency rule didn't end overfishing. You didn't reduce it all the way down. You reduced it down some point to 224,000 pounds or something, which reduced but did not end overfishing. Now, the Mid-Atlantic came in and in difficult circumstances they asked for an emergency rule which in their view reduced but did not end overfishing either.

That was the only emergency rule request that we had at that time and it was implemented by the Greater Atlantic Region. Now we've got a lot of uncertainty. There seems to be a lot of guessing that the projections or whatever that are done are going to come out worse. I'm not prepared to assume that at all. I don't know how they're going to come out, but there clearly are a lot of issues here with the respect to the science that we need to do the best we can to deal with them.

But, look, both councils, this council and the Mid-Atlantic asked for emergency rules that reduced but did not end overfishing and both councils' emergency rules were put in place. Now, I understand we're in a difficult position, but I think what we need to focus on now is getting these projections, getting the SSC back together and trying to bring some resolution to this. Also, we've got a Council Coordinating Committee meeting in two weeks; and I urge you, Ben and Michelle, to sit down with Rick, and we can bring John Bullard and myself into this, but we need to figure out where we're going with this and how we're going to handle it. I don't really see that we're getting very far here by pointing fingers and all these things. We are where we are and we need to figure out where to go from here now.

DR. DUVAL: I won't say anything else. Any other questions on blueline tilefish? I'll say it later. Okay, if not, Luiz, why don't you take us through the rest of your report?

DR. BARBIERI: On a much lighter note, I'm going to present you with a summary of the outcome of the mutton snapper update assessment. The stock was found to be not overfished and not undergoing overfishing. The stock biomass level is actually not really well above MSST, but it was still a hair above and therefore was not considered overfished.

The SSC had applied its ABC Control Rule and that came out to be a P-star of 30 percent; so the SSC recommended the development of five-year projections at a 50 percent P-star for OFL and a 30 percent P-star for ABC. I actually did not copy and paste that table of projections that is in your report for you to look at because they are very plain vanilla.

This is actually something – not to overextend the discussion here, Madam Chair, but this is something that I think brings perspective. We do projections all the time at the end of all the assessments that we do, and some assumptions – I mean all the usual assumptions are usually capped without any problem and we end up with scenarios that are really non-controversial at all.

What happens is when the fishery changes substantially or you have some additional data that suggests changes in productivity or abundance of the stock in the period posterior to the terminal year of data for the assessment is when you end up getting in trouble. There wasn't anything really wrong with the methodology used for projections simply because the assumption going forward is that the conditions are not going to change and, of course, they did.

In this case of mutton snapper, fortunately they did and; and without going into too much detail, if you scroll through your SSC report attachment, you see a table there that provides you with yield streams for OFL and ABC for mutton snapper. I'll pause again in case there are any questions, Madam Chair.

DR. DUVAL: Any questions on mutton snapper? It is nice to have some cheery news once in a while. Seeing none; moving on.

DR. BARBIERI: Moving on, you may remember that the FWC also conducted a benchmark assessment of hogfish and that assessment actually had to be broken up into three components. There is a component of the stock that's off the Carolinas. It is a small component of the population or a small sub-stock up there.

There is an East Florida/Florida Keys component, a separate biological stock, and there is a west central Florida/Gulf of Mexico stock. This discussion here is specific to the East Florida/Florida Keys stock which is, of course, under your management jurisdiction. Unfortunately, that assessment showed that the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing and therefore we requested that FWI prepare a number projection scenarios for your consideration. I just listed there a summary of the F levels that are considered for those different projection scenarios.

These are again the standard types of projections that we usually have prepared for your review so you can see what happens when F equals zero, when you set F at that level or you continue fishing at a current level of fishing mortality or if you fish at 75 percent of F that produces the MSY, if you fish at MSY and then at different F-rebuilds.

Just to give you quick summary, the four initial levels, from F equal to zero to F equal Fmsy, fishing at those fishing mortality levels does not really rebuild the stock. Of course, F at equals zero it would, but we would have to have a completely closed fishery. We also provided four levels of rebuilding scenarios.

You can rebuild the stock in ten years with a 50 percent probability of rebuilding; and then using different levels of F-rebuild that rebuilds ten years with a 72.5 percent probability of rebuilding and then at seven years with a 50 percent probability of rebuilding and seven years with a 72.5 percent probability of rebuilding. That way you have in front of you a number of rebuilding options like a menu that you can see which one of those rebuilding strategies you would prefer to use for a hogfish rebuilding plan. That concludes my presentation, Madam Chair, and I will be glad to address any questions.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Luiz. Are there any questions for Luiz on the hogfish projections? Amendment 37 is going to be our next agenda item. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, hogfish projections, Luiz, I don't remember that the fishery had to be closed, but do you have an idea for how long based on the projections? We don't have the projections, is that my –

DR. BARBIERI: No, we have all of those projections.

MR. HARTIG: All right, this is what I haven't seen yet?

DR. BARBIERI: Right; and this doesn't mean that the fishery has to be closed. All of those scenarios are put together so you can see what happens when you use different levels of fishing mortality or if you were to close the fishery completely. This would be just if you had the directed fishery landings, harvest.

DR. DUVAL: And so those projections are in the back of the SSC Report, Ben, and we'll be going through those as we go through Amendment 37, which is sort of nice little segue from here. If there are no other questions for Dr. Barbieri, we'll let him get back to doing something productive and we will jump into Amendment 37, which is hogfish. This is Attachment 10 I believe in your briefing book.

MS. BROUWER: You will notice that the date on the attachment that you have in your briefing book is different than the one than I'm projecting. That's because there are a couple of items that had to be changed, and I will point those out when I come to them. They're minor and that's why you were not sent a different version of this decision document to avoid any confusion.

First, let me go back and explain when you looked at this amendment in March it contained many more actions than just hogfish. Then we scheduled a call with the IPT and it was the IPT's recommendation that the hogfish actions should remain in a plan amendment because you would be establishing a rebuilding plan for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock of hogfish, which is undergoing overfishing and is overfished; and so that needs to be done through a plan amendment.

The remainder of the actions that you saw in March that were originally contained in Amendment 37 were moved to a regulatory amendment, which is now Regulatory Amendment 24. We're going to put off discussion on that for now, but that's why Amendment 37 now is just the hogfish actions.

On PDF Page 3 of your document you will see the draft purpose and need that the IPT is proposing for this amendment. The purpose of this amendment is to modify the management unit for hogfish. Based on what Luiz explained to you, there is some genetic evidence that supports different stocks for hogfish.

There is a Georgia/North Carolina stock and a Florida Keys/East Florida stock, and we would also need to modify or establish management measures for those. For the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of hogfish partially delegate management to the state of Florida and establish a rebuilding plan to increase hogfish biomass to sustainable levels within a specified time period based on results of the stock assessment that was done with data through 2012.

That's our suggestion for the purpose of this amendment. Our suggestion for the need is to align the management boundaries for hogfish with the best available science (i.e., genetic information), allow for the determination of the best solutions for fisheries management issues that are unique to south Florida, and end overfishing and rebuild the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of hogfish while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects. The first order of business for the committee would be either approve this purpose and need or modify it as you see fit.

DR. DUVAL: I'm going to suggest that maybe we circle back to the purpose and need because I think as we go through some of these actions, you'll notice that one of the things in the purpose statement was to partially delegate management to the state of Florida, so there is an option to do that. There is an action in this amendment that would do that, but there is also an action that would allow for the Gulf Council to give us the little piece of the Florida Keys/East Florida stock that is in their jurisdiction for us to manage.

It is my understanding that they've basically in their meeting take an action to do so; so it seems like we might want to not consider delegation of hogfish to the state of Florida, in which case this purpose and need statement would need to be modified. I think it would be best to just kind of circle around back to the end if we just remind ourselves to do that.

MS. BROUWER: Sounds good. The next thing that you need to consider; there is language that the council has adopted to specify how overfishing would be defined based on guidance in National Standard 1. This language has been adopted just for a couple of your assessed species. We adopted it for red grouper in Amendment 24. You recently adopted it for blueline tilefish in Amendment 32. We would propose to include this language in this amendment; but because it has not yet been adopted for some of your assessed species,

I believe there is a chance that you could do that in this amendment, so you have the choice of adopting this language just for hogfish or making it applicable to the remainder of the snapper grouper species for which it has not yet been adopted. I had asked that Monica give us any guidance. I believe that is something that the council could do. I don't know if you want to speak to that, Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, you and I have discussed this briefly before, and, yes, I think it is fine to include that in here if you want or in any other amendment.



DR. DUVAL: So we would need a motion from the committee to – and I guess my question is if the committee adopts Example 2, then this just applies to hogfish, correct, or is it applying this to any of the other unassessed species that meet this definition?

MS. BROUWER: Your Option 1 that we have here for your consideration would only adopt this language for hogfish. Option 2 says that you would apply that the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock, obviously, because that's the one where you're putting in a rebuilding plan and all assessed snapper grouper species for which this language has not yet been adopted. If you would like to do that, then you would make a motion to apply the language under Option 2.

DR. DUVAL: And just to remind folks, we did this for – so it would just make this change to a handful of species.

MS. BROUWER: This language, just to make sure everybody is on the same page, basically responds to guidance in National Standard 1 that says that the council have to explain how they're going to define overfishing. There are two ways to do it. You can use the MFMT method and the OFL method.

The MFMT method requires the calculation of fishing rates, which you can do when a stock has a stock assessments, on years during which there is a stock assessment. The OFL method would be used during years when there is no stock assessment. What this language does is it uses a combination of those two methods to define overfishing for assessed stocks.

DR. DUVAL: So if we adopted Option 2, we would be adopting this combined method whereby in the year that an assessment is conducted, we're using that maximum fishing mortality threshold; and then for the out-years of the projections, we would be using the OFL method. Does everybody understand what we're doing? I'm still seeing some confusion. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: Just another question; can you give me some examples of other snapper grouper species that this would apply to?

MS. BROUWER: You did not adopt it for vermilion snapper, and that is one for which there was a recent assessment. It wasn't done for that. It was done I believe for black sea bass in Regulatory Amendment 19.

The way that we have it laid out here is it just provides more information. It provides examples of how you would define overfishing in those two different scenarios. I believe it would still need to be adopted for black grouper. I don't think it has been adopted for that, so there is a handful that are still out there that haven't been adopted yet.

DR. McGOVERN: We've done it for like red grouper, but there are a handful of species that we didn't do it for, some of them like vermilion snapper and red porgy and red snapper, other species like that. We might not want to do it for red snapper, but I would support this and make a motion to do this and make it consistent for the species that we have assessments for.

MS. McCRAWLEY: And I'd second that motion.

DR. DUVAL: So a motion by Jack.

DR. ERRIGO: These species that are assessed under SEDAR or just have assessments; what is an assessment? Would Warsaw grouper and speckled hind be considered assessed species? They have overfishing definitions. They've been assessed an analytical analysis.

DR. McGOVERN: Assessed through SEDAR.

DR. DUVAL: Keep us on the straight and narrow, Mike. **Okay, so a motion by Jack; seconded by Jessica to approve inclusion of overfishing definition language in Amendment 37 with appropriate modifications to apply to the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock and all assessed snapper grouper species for which this language has not yet been adopted. By assessed we mean assessed through the SEDAR process. Any discussion on this motion? Any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Here is where we start getting into the various actions. Action Number 1 is on PDF Page 6 of your document. This action is the one that would specify how the different stocks of hogfish are delineated. I believe Gregg is going to help us with that one.

MR. WAUGH: What the Gulf Reef Fish Committee did was they approved removing hogfish from their fishery management unit and adding the West Florida Shelf hogfish stock to their fishery management unit. They also approved a motion stating that it is their intent to allow the South Atlantic Council to manage the East Florida/Florida Keys stock. They didn't specify whether the boundary would be the Monroe/Collier Line or the Shark Point on the Florida southwest coast. They had some discussion.

One committee member mentioned using Monroe/Collier, but they would specify that tomorrow during the joint session. I think if we were just to be prepared for tomorrow and not make a motion now and let them take the lead on this, but they have already indicated they're willing to let us manage that East Florida/Florida Keys stock. We'll go through the rest of the document and figure out how we're going to do that, and then tomorrow they would make their motion first during the joint session and then we would make our motion.

DR. DUVAL: So would we need a motion to approve this suggested modified language by the IPT or no?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, I think we could do that, but just let's not pick a preferred on what the boundary is until tomorrow.

DR. DUVAL: Can I get a motion from someone? Jessica.

MS. McCRAWLEY: I move that we approve the IPT wording changes to Action 1.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; seconded by Charlie. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, what you have here that you see on your screen, there are three alternatives. This is how this action was set up when you saw back in March. The yellow highlight is proposed changes to the wording. However, one IPT member also suggested another change, and that is to have simply two alternatives.

Alternative 1 includes the language that is in the CFRs that delineates the council boundaries. That is your no action; and then Alternative 2 includes just subalternatives for the boundary that would define the Florida Keys/East Florida stock. It is up to you whether you want to leave it the way it is here, using three alternatives, or whether you prefer this alternative set up that has been suggested by an IPT member.

DR. DUVAL: So it is just combining Alternatives 2 and 3. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I would prefer the one that has just the Alternative 1, no action, and Alternative 2 with the subalternatives.

DR. DUVAL: So perhaps the motion would be to approve the modified two-alternative approach for Action 1.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes; I'll wait until we get a motion up there to look at.

**DR. DUVAL: So the motion reads approve the modified language and structure alternatives under Action 1. That was made by Jessica with Charlie as the second. Discussion.**

MS. McCAWLEY: Is this where we would say two-alternative structure under Action 1?

DR. DUVAL: This is basically what you're doing is approving this structure with two alternatives. It is just that the page is split and you're only seeing Alternative 2. Alternative 1 is on the previous page. Any other discussion? **Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** We'll wait on a preferred until we get to the joint session tomorrow.

MS. BROUWER: Action 2 is this partial delegation of commercial or recreational management of the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock to the state of Florida in federal waters adjacent to the state of Florida. That's on PDF Page 9 of your document. Again, what you see on your screen is the structure of the alternatives that saw in March.

The IPT has suggested some rewording that you see in there basically just clarify that delegation of management would be for specific measures and to clarify that it would be federal waters adjacent to the state of Florida. It wasn't clear prior to that. That would be our suggestion and keep in mind how consistent this is with what is currently in the South Florida Amendment, which is where the original wording came from.

MS. McCAWLEY: So like Gregg was saying; don't we want to not do this anymore. Do we remove it now; do we want until the meeting tomorrow; what is the best course of action here? Do we leave it in there and tomorrow we choose no action?

DR. DUVAL: Gregg, do you have advice to offer in this regard. If the Gulf's Reef Fish Committee has already indicated that they would cede that little chunk of the Florida Keys/East Florida stock that is within their jurisdiction over to us to manage, it doesn't really seem to make sense for us to even keep this action in here.

MR. WAUGH: I would agree. The only item we're going to be talking about on hogfish tomorrow has to do with the boundary and not getting into this level of detail.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we move Action 2 to the considered but rejected appendix.**

**DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; seconded by Charlie. Any further discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: The next action would specify MSY for hogfish, and it is labeled "new" because some of these actions were not included in the version of Amendment 37 that you saw in March. Because there is the rebuilding plan that needs to be put in place, there needs to be some other parameters that need to be specified, and MSY is one of them.

This is on PDF Page 14 of your document, and it is modeled the same way that we did it in Amendment 24 for red grouper. You have two alternatives. Alternative 2 basically sets up the equation, and it sets it up so that MSY would be recommended by the most recent SEDAR/SSC so that you don't have to keep setting the MSY every time there is a new assessment.

Then it specifies that for the Georgia/North Carolina stock the Fmsy would be the proxy, which is F of 30 percent SPR. There is a value for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock there. Then you have the yield, the MSY that is obviously only specified for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock. Here we'd need a motion to either approve the alternatives as we have them, modify them or whatever.

DR. McGOVERN: A couple of things. One, we're specifying the maximum sustainable yield for two stocks of hogfish here, so I think we might want to state that in the title. Then under Alternative 2 you're specifying two MSYs. One is unknown but still you might want to have that as subalternatives under this since they're two different things.

DR. DUVAL: Perhaps we could approve the range and structure of alternatives but just provide guidance to the IPT modify the title of the action and the alternatives to capture the fact that we have two stocks of hogfish within our jurisdiction. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I make a motion that we add Action 3 to the amendment. Is that the kind of motion you're looking for?

DR. DUVAL: I think it is really to just approve the range of alternatives in this action.

**MS. McCAWLEY: Okay, then I take that back and my motion is to approve the range of alternatives in Action 3.**

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; seconded by Chris. Discussion. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: And it would become Action 2 in the document, yes?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, we would have to do a little renumbering because we've moved Action 2 to the considered but rejected. **Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Action 4 again is a new one and it would specify the MSST for hogfish. It is on PDF Page 15 of your document. Here we have three alternatives; the no action, which uses the natural mortality in the equation to specify the MSST. Alternative 2 sets it at 50 percent of SSBmsy; and then Alternative 3 puts it at 75 percent of SSBmsy.

Recall that you recently approved or we recently implemented Regulatory Amendment 21, which changed the definition of MSST for species that have low natural mortality. The natural mortality for hogfish is within the range that was included in Regulatory Amendment 21. Right here you've got the natural mortality and the values that would be unknown for Georgia/North Carolina, and then the MSST for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock under Alternative 3.

DR. McGOVERN: Again for the title here, I think we need to indicate that this is for two stocks that we're doing this for. Then under Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 we'd probably want to have subalternatives for each stock.

DR. DUVAL: Perhaps we can also offer that as guidance to the IPT to modify the title of the action as well as the alternatives to reflect that there are two stocks of hogfish. We would again be looking for a motion from the committee to approve the range of alternatives for detailed analysis. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we approve the range of alternatives for analysis.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; seconded by Ben. Discussion. Mark.

MR. BROWN: I'm a little bit confused when it says the unknown. Does that mean that hogfish would never close for the northern area?

DR. DUVAL: No; the SSC used the ORCS Approach to determine basically their recommended ABC level for hogfish. It is just that we don't have – just like for any of the other stocks for which we've applied the ORCS Approach, we don't have a biomass-based estimate that allows us to determine what the minimum stock size threshold is.

We just have something that is a catch-based – that is a landings-based catch level recommendation. We just don't have the ability to define what the minimum stock size threshold is so we wouldn't have an overfishing or overfished determination. Mel.

MR. BELL: So up our way we're living by ORCS for that species?

DR. DUVAL: Yes; so for Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina we would be living by ORCS. The next action deals with establishment of ACLs for these two stocks; and so it would simply be when the ACL is met or projected to be met, the fishery would be closed. We just don't have an overfishing or overfished determination. Any other discussion on this particular action? **The motion reads approve the range of alternatives under Action 4 for detailed analysis. Any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motions stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Action 5 on PDF Page 17 establishes the ACLs for the Georgia/North Carolina stock of hogfish. Here, as I was telling you, the text that's highlighted in green is what you don't have in the attachment that was in your briefing book. It simply just makes it consistent. The no action alternative specifies that it would apply to the stock of hogfish throughout the South Atlantic Council's jurisdiction. Then it specifies for the entire stock. I had left out OY from there.

Those are the edits that needed to be added. Alternative 2 establishes the ACL for the Georgia/North Carolina stock. It uses the commercial and recreational ACLs that had to be recalculated based on this modified structure for the two stocks. The formula that was utilized to arrive at the sector allocations is still the same; but because the stock is now being split, the numbers just needed to be recalculated. That changed the allocations a little bit.

As you can see under the no action, the commercial sector allocation is 37 percent and the recreational allocation is 63 percent. If you split the stock, then the sector allocations would change to 81.9 percent commercial and 18 percent recreational. Then the subalternatives are structured similar to what you've considered for other stocks where you have the ACL equal to OY equal to the ABC.

You have the value there, which is 28,161 pounds whole weight, which is what was recommended by the ORCS Approach, Level 4 of the control rule. Then you have other subalternatives that would set that ACL below the ABC; and then what the values would be for the commercial and the recreational sectors using these recalculated allocations.

I've also included one IPT member had an opinion about how these should be structured; so I just wanted to bring that to your attention. Here the table that's up on your screen has the recommendations from the SSC for that Georgia/North Carolina stock. This was in the October 2014 SSC Report.

They went through the risk of overexploitation and applied the ORCS methodology to arrive at that proposed ABC that I mentioned earlier, 28,000 pounds. Then we explain in here how the allocations between the sectors were recalculated and the years that were used for those calculations.

Another thing that you might want to discuss at this point is potentially specifying the recreational ACL in numbers of fish. That was already brought up this morning, and we've included some rationale in here for you to consider as to why this would be appropriate. Here we've put out some options for you.

You can approve the modified wording of this action and Alternative 2 and the range of alternatives under this action for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACL in pounds, the way you've been doing it thus far; or you can consider modifying the wording of the action and the alternatives, whichever way you see fit, taking into consideration what the one IPT member brought up; and you can decide to give us guidance to specify that recreational ACL in numbers of fish.

**MS. McCRAWLEY: I move that we approve the modified wording of Action 5 and Alternative 2 and the range of alternatives under Action 5 for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACL in numbers of fish.**

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Jessica; second by Mark. This would specify the recreational ACL in numbers of fish, which the maximum that would be is 5,000 pounds. It is certainly consistent with how we've done that for other low-poundage ACL species. Any other discussion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Here is where we get into the rebuilding plan for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock. Action 6 would establish the ABC and the rebuilding plan that's on PDF Page 20. The alternatives were structured the same way that we did for red grouper where you have a table that shows you the Fs for the various years of the projections, the ABC in pounds, the ABC in number, the OFL in pounds, the OFL in number; and then the projected spawning stock biomass so that you can see when the stock is rebuilt.

These tables correspond to the projections that Luiz already talked about. That is going to be included as an appendix to this amendment, and so you can look at the projection tables as well. Your no action, of course, is to not establish a rebuilding plan and the ABC for the entire stock would remain at 137,824 pounds.

Alternative 2 sets the ABC equal to the yield at 75 percent of Fmsy; and that would rebuild the stock in 11 years. The overfishing limit is the yield at Fmsy, and the SSBmsy is 2,300,391 pounds whole weight and Year One would 2016. You can see here what the ABCs in pounds would be. Alternative 3 rebuilds in ten years with a 50 percent probability of rebuilding success.

Alternative 4 is the one that would rebuilding in ten years with a 72.5 percent probability of rebuilding success; and that's what the ABC values would look like. Actually if you count the number of years to the level that the spawning stock biomass reaches the SSBmsy, it actually rebuilds in nine years.

Alternative 5 rebuilds in seven years with a 50 percent probability of rebuilding success. Alternative 6 is the last of the projections and it uses that 72.5 percent probability of rebuilding success in seven years. Here is basically a summary of the alternatives. You've got your F-rate strategy, what that F rate is, the Year One ABC and then how long it takes to rebuild and the probability of rebuilding success.

DR. DUVAL: We would be looking for a motion from the committee to approve this range of alternatives for detailed analysis.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we approve the range of alternatives under Action 6 for detailed analysis.**

**DR. DUVAL: Second by Charlie. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Action 7 would establish the ACL for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of hogfish. That's on PDF Page 24.

DR. DUVAL: And really we can't fill any of this in until we select an alternative under the previous action for the rebuilding plan. The subalternatives here reflect sort of the standard range of alternatives that we put in there; so again we would be looking for a motion from the committee to go ahead and approve the range of alternatives. Jessica.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we approve the range of alternatives under Action 7 for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACL in numbers of fish.**

**DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; second by Charlie. Is there discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** One thing Myra has reminded me of is that again because of this shift in the stock structure, the commercial and recreational allocations have changed again.

We're simply using the same formula to recalculate those sector allocations. The landings that are used in shown in Table 3 and the actual allocations under – so recalculated sector alternatives are shown up under Alternative 2 – excuse me, not sector alternatives, what the final sector allocations would be.

MS. BROUWER: Action 8 modifies the recreational ACT for hogfish. The no action, of course, has it for the entire stock, and we'll fill in this table for the PSE values that were used. Alternative 2 and its subalternatives have options for either using the PSE in the formula or using the ACT, the percentage of the recreational ACL. Again, based on what is chosen for the ACL; we would fill these tables out. Here are some of the PSE values.

We didn't have the one for 2014 yet. Alternative 2 corresponded to the Georgia/North Carolina stock. Alternative 3 corresponds to the East Florida/Florida Keys stock, the same sort of thing. Then these are the PSE values for that stock for the five years. Again, here are the ACTs. I guess for consistency you might want to specify it in numbers of fish.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that approve the range of alternatives under Action 8 for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACT in numbers of fish.**

**DR. DUVAL: Seconded by Mark. Discussion? Any objection? The motion stands approved.**

DR. McGOVERN: And just for the IPT to fix, I think for all the rest of the titles for the remaining actions, we need to specify that those actions are for both stocks of hogfish and not just for hogfish.



DR. DUVAL: We'll just include that as guidance to the IPT so we don't forget to do that.

MS. BROUWER: On PDF Page 29 I have included what the Snapper Grouper AP has recommended in previous years as far as management measures. There has been several recommendations beginning in April of 2012 for size limit changes for hogfish. Again in November of 2013 the AP recommended that you look at 14 to 18 inches for a minimum size limit for hogfish. Also, there was a recommendation at their latest meeting to consider minimum size limits and bag limits for the North Carolina/Georgia stock and trip limits for the commercial sector. Here are the North Carolina state regulations for hogfish. I guess the AP's intent was that for the Georgia/North Carolina stock you adopt similar management measures as North Carolina currently has, which is –

DR. DUVAL: Do you want me to explain it? We put a proclamation in place when Brian was still the proxy for the director, so it must have been back in like 2009 or something like that. We put in a five-fish bag limit, which matches what Florida has right now, I believe, in federal waters off the Atlantic coast, and a 150 gutted weight trip limit for a single day trip regardless of how many people you have on board; but for trips of more than one day you can have a hundred pounds extra per day up to a maximum of seven days.

The maximum trip is actually 750 pounds gutted weight. We have it in proclamation right now. We require that folks call into the marine patrol before they leave the dock and when they're coming in. Most of this effort is really off the southern part of the coast around the Cape Fear area. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I had a question in the way the alternatives are worded. Why under Alternative 2 is there not a subalternative like there is in 3G that would increase the minimum size incrementally?

MS. BROUWER: I don't know; I think maybe we just forgot to put it in there, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: In the Georgia through North Carolina stock, those fish are larger; and so the feeling was that you could increase the size limit without having a tremendous reduction in what could be retained. However, in the Florida Keys/East Florida stock that is overfished and undergoing overfishing, the fish are so small that if you were to jump up to a 15- or 16-inch size limit, there may be no harvest at all.

Given the much smaller size of fish in that stock, the feeling was you might want to step that increase up similar to what we did years ago with black sea bass. Once you get the table showing – I don't know if we have any – we don't have any percent reduction based on size limit tables now; do we?

Okay, if they are in there, you can see with Florida Keys what level of reduction you would have. But that's why; it was just to give the ability to moderate some of those social and economic impacts in that East Florida/Florida Keys stock and it wouldn't like you had the same level of impact in the northern zone.

MS. McCAWLEY: One more question; in those tables that Gregg was just talking about; in the options for the size limit the maximum increase in the subalternatives is 18 inches, but the tables go to 20 inches? Okay.

DR. DUVAL: The tables could always be modified to just reflect the maximum range of alternatives that are in there; is that what you're suggesting?

MS. McCAWLEY: No; I just was wondering if we meant in the subalternatives to have ranges all the way up to 20 since the tables were at 20; the opposite of what you just said.

DR. DUVAL: What is your pleasure? We need to approve the range of alternatives under this action. Do you want to modify any of those that are in there? Would you want to add under each of those two alternatives another subalternative that goes up to 20 inches? Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we add subalternatives that increases it up to 20 inches for both Alternative 2 and 3.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Jessica; second by Chester to add subalternatives under Alternative 2 and 3 to increase size limits to 20 inches. **The motion reads approve the range of alternatives under Action 9 for detailed analysis and add subalternatives under Alternatives 2 and 3 to include size limits up to 20 inches.** Discussion? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: How much does a 20-inch hogfish weigh; how many pounds; does anybody know that?

DR. DUVAL: Jim Atack; do you know?

MR. ATACK: About seven pounds, I think.

DR. DUVAL: Seven pounds. It is a big fish. Any other discussion on this motion? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Can you clarify why we want to go to a fish this size possibly?

MS. McCAWLEY: I was just looking at the table and I figured that it was something that would increase our range of alternatives.

DR. DUVAL: Do we have a sense of what is the L-50 on those fish? Luiz, do you know?

DR. BARBIERI: No, I don't. I could check on that and get back with you.

DR. DUVAL: Jim Atack has an answer for us.

MR. ATACK: The research I remember reading into the earlier SEDAR at 20 inches the females want to switch to males unless they're in a stressed environment where there are no males and they have to switch over. That is where we were coming with 20 inches years ago.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion on this motion? Jim.

MR. ATACK: And the other thing, if you look at the age versus size, they do grow fairly quickly so it is not a long time to move from up to your 20-inch range if they're not shot.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, any other discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** The next motion we would need would be to approve the modified range of alternatives in this action. Jessica.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we approve the modified range of alternatives under Action 9 for detailed analysis.**

**DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; seconded by Charlie. Any other discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BECKWITH: I didn't get in quite fast enough, but I was going to suggest that we also mirrored that Subalternative 3G. We certainly don't have to that we moved past these, but I'm looking at the tables. When I look at the 14 difference and what the projected reductions are like 14 and 16 inches between Key West and North Carolina. There is enough of a potential reduction that it might be worth looking at sort of scattering the increases in size limits.

DR. DUVAL: You can always make another motion to add that. Now will be the time to do it.

MS. BECKWITH: Okay, so then I would move that we would mirror that 3G option to increase the minimum size limit from 12 on up over a three-year period into Alternative 2.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Anna; second by Chris. Discussion? Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: I'm assuming these tables are in percentages of reductions?

**DR. DUVAL: The motion reads add an alternative similar to Subalternative 3G to Alternative 2. Is there any other discussion on this motion? Any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: The next action is on PDF Page 33 and it would establish a commercial trip limit. Alternative 2 deals with Georgia/North Carolina stock and Alternative 3 would be applicable to the Florida Keys/East Florida stock. We don't have any trip limits suggested there for you. We do have, however, some analysis that the region did.

This graph here shows the pounds per trip for hogfish, and this is for the entire South Atlantic. It goes from 2012 to 2014. Then you have another graph that splits it into the two regions again by pounds per trip. Then you have a table here that looks at the percent decrease in landings for various commercial trip limits, looking at a trip limit if 25 pounds, 50, 75 and 200.

Then again you have a percentage decrease in landings for the entire region and then broken out for the two different stocks. You can disregard this that says to clarify whether these options would

apply whether or not obviously partial management is delegated. Here we would need a little bit of guidance as to what range of trip alternatives you would want us to analyze.

DR. DUVAL: What is your pleasure? Chris, you look like you were about to raise your hand, so I'm just going to call on you.

MR. CONKLIN: I would like to make a motion that we offer up a range of alternatives started at 1,000 pounds down to 300 pounds on the range of alternatives for a trip limit for hogfish.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Chris; second by Zack to develop a range of alternatives of 300 pounds to 1,000 pounds. Would that be like in hundred pound increments or 200 pound increments?

MR. CONKLIN: 100 pound increments.

DR. DUVAL: Is that for both stocks, Chris? Would that be for both the Georgia through North Carolina and the Florida –

MR. CONKLIN: I was speaking on the Georgia through North Carolina fish. Zack was bringing up that it might be too much work for staff if we do it in hundred pound increments, so maybe we could do like a 250 or maybe I should amend it to do a 200, 500, 750 and 1,000 pound trip limit.

DR. DUVAL: It is your motion, yes. Is that okay with the seconder?

MR. BOWEN: That's great.

MR. HARTIG: Do you see trips around a thousand pounds or excess of a thousand pounds of hogfish in South Carolina?

MR. CONKLIN: It has been a while. Usually 4 to 600 pounds is more like it, but I've learned my lesson on how you ask for stuff here.

DR. DUVAL: I want to be clear that this is just for the Georgia through North Carolina stock; so if there is consideration for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock, we would need another motion. Let's go ahead and see if there is any other discussion on this motion and we'll dispense with this.

**The motion reads analyze trip limit alternatives of 250, 500, 750 and 1,000 pounds for the Georgia through North Carolina stock. Any objection to this motion? The motion passes with one objection.** Is there a desire on the part of the committee to analyze a range of trip limit alternatives for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock?

MR. BREWER: 50, 100, 150, 200.

**DR. DUVAL: A motion by Chester to analyze trip limit alternatives for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of 50, 100, 150 and 200 pounds; seconded by Ben.** Discussion? Zack.

MR. BOWEN: I'm going to kind of ask the same question. Does anybody know what kind of history the trip weights have been coming in Florida?

MR. BREWER: No idea. We're just talking about analyzing different alternatives, and I picked lower numbers because it looks like the fishery is more trouble in the Keys than it is in Georgia.

MS. McCAWLEY: There is a figure in the document, Figure 2.

MR. BOWEN: I haven't gotten there yet; I'm getting there.

MR. HARTIG: I was just going to reference the tables in the document that gives a pretty realistic base within the stock parameters we have right now.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, is there any other discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** We would then need a motion to approve the alternatives for detailed analysis, I believe. You're cool with that? Okay, never mind.

MS. BROUWER: The next action looks at bag limits for hogfish; PDF Page 37 in your document. Alternative 2 and its subalternatives would put in a bag limit for the Georgia/North Carolina stock; and we have a range of one through four fish per person per day; and the same thing for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock. Here again we have some data to help you look at those ranges.

Here is the distribution of hogfish harvested per angler from the two recreational datasets from 2012 to 2014. Here is a table that breaks it out by mode; also including headboat again for all of the South Atlantic; only North Carolina and then South Florida/Florida Keys for those one to five bag limit options.

MS. McCAWLEY: I had a question. Those previous two or three motions we made; should they have been in pounds or numbers?

DR. DUVAL: For commercial trips? I think pounds. Mark.

MR. BROWN: Under this action, how come the subalternatives don't have one fish per person per day?

DR. DUVAL: I don't know; that is rather odd.

MS. BROUWER: I don't know either. We didn't have any guidance from either the AP or the committee as to what alternatives you wanted to look at so we just sort of threw these together. That's why we're asking you for guidance for the range that you'd like to see further analysis; so if that's one that you want to add, then let's do it.

MR. BROWN: Well, can I make a motion to add that?

DR. DUVAL: So a motion by Mark to add subalternatives under Alternatives 2 and 3 for a one fish per person per day bag limit.

MR. BROWN: Yes; that's correct.

DR. DUVAL: Second by Chester.

MR. BROWN: And that's Alternative 2 and 3.

**DR. DUVAL: Okay, the motion reads include subalternatives under Alternatives 2 and 3 to examine a bag limit of one fish per person per day. Any other discussion on this motion? Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved. Doug.**

MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair, I apologize, but could we go back to the commercial trip limits for just a moment? If 50 percent or more of the commercial trips are bringing in 50 to 70 pounds and it scatters out from there, why are we even looking at 500, 750 or 1,000 trips? It would seem that the analysis really needs to be less than 250, really less than a hundred. I don't know why we're making that jump on the Georgia to North Carolina stock.

DR. DUVAL: Chris, would you like to speak to that since you're the maker of the motion?

MR. CONKLIN: I would. There is a small group of fishermen. They primarily spearfish. That's their thing and they bring a lot of that stuff to the marketplace. We're going from no trip limit at all to putting a trip limit on it. I don't know why we would restrict them at 200 pounds. We've already got the guys' tied behind their back certainly enough, especially this time of the year where they need to bring in those 300, 400 pounds, whatever, 5 if they get them. We're bringing the ORCS Approach to this. They didn't even get assessed and now we're going to put size limits and trip limits on it. Like you guys always tell me, it is worth looking at, we're just picking numbers.

MR. HAYMANS: Well, that's like seven trips, maybe fourteen trips when in reality we're talking about the bulk of the trips are less than a hundred pounds and yet we don't have an analysis of those bins.

MR. CONKLIN: Well, maybe it has to do with the gear type. Certainly the spears are a lot more efficient. My hook-and-line guys that I see rarely have more than four or five at the most. It depends on the area they fish. Meanwhile the spear fishermen are able to bring in several hundred pounds at a time. There is not very many spear fishermen from the Georgia to North Carolina Line, commercial.

DR. DUVAL: Well, the reason that North Carolina put in the kind of trip limits that we did was because there were – there was a group of spear fishermen from Florida who were coming up and pretty much hammering the stock because there were no limits in place. That's why we put that in there like that. Chip actually did some analysis on that and he has come to table, so I'm assuming that you were going to speak to that.

MR. COLLIER: Well, just when you're considering trip limits and you think of the distribution of the catch, it is not uncommon for a very low percentage of the trips to have a high percentage of the landings because some people really specialize. That's probably what is occurring in this. Hogfish can be bycatch in a little bit of the commercial trips, hook and line. It is not very common,

but they can be caught every once in a while. The dive trips probably specialize in it, and that's why you're probably seeing this discrepancy in the number of trips. Did that make sense?

MS. BECKWITH: I would like to add an alternative that mirrors the North Carolina regulations for hogfish, please, for North Carolina/Georgia.

MR. BOWEN: Did you mean Florida?

MS. BECKWITH: North Carolina/Georgia. We already have some regulations in place in North Carolina, and I would like those to be mirrored as an alternative for discussion later.

MR. CONKLIN: What is the trip limit in North Carolina?

DR. DUVAL: It is 150 pounds for the first day and an additional hundred pounds for every day after that up to seven days. Just a point of order, Anna; I was wondering if we could maybe just a motion from the committee to approve this range of alternatives under the bag limit stuff and then we can go back to that action and add an alternative that mirrors North Carolina's regulations. Is that okay?

MS. BECKWITH: But, of course, fearless leader.

DR. DUVAL: Can I just get a **motion from the committee under Action 11 to approve the range of alternatives for detailed analysis?** Ben, thank you. Seconded by Chester.

MR. BREWER: I wanted to make a modification for the motion that I had made earlier, which passed; but looking at the chart and recognizing that for the South Florida stock that it is overfished and undergoing overfishing, I was thinking about making perhaps smaller numbers with a closer range because there is probably going to need to be some fairly significant restrictions with regard to take on hogfish in that area.

Since there is probably going to need to be that, I was maybe getting the numbers a little closer together like 25, 50, 100 and 150 for a trip limit just for the analysis, but to have smaller increments there so that your analysis might better fit what needs to be done.

DR. DUVAL: Let's finish with this motion first because we're just approving the range of alternatives under Action 11, which is just bag limit changes, and then we'll come back to the commercial trip limits, because Anna also wanted to add an alternative, and we can make changes there. **Is there discussion under this motion to approve the range of alternatives under Action 11 for detailed analysis?** This is the bag limit changes; so four, three, two fish.

We added alternatives for one fish per person per day and then there are alternatives for one fish per vessel per day. Charles is seconding the motion because Chester had a question. Okay, any other discussion? **Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** We will track on back to action – do you have a question, Doug?

MR. HAYMANS: Could we ask staff to add one piece of information to this and that's landings by gear, spearfishing versus hook and line? Can we at least get that included?

DR. DUVAL: So can we provide direction to staff to include gear-specific landings. Okay, now going back to Action 10, I believe, which is the commercial trip limits. Anna, you had wanted to add an alternative for the Georgia through North Carolina stock; is that correct?

MS. BECKWITH: Sure, the one that mirrored what we have in North Carolina for the commercial trip limits.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Anna to add an alternative to Action 10 that mirrors North Carolina's existing commercial trip limits or subalternatives to Alternative 2, how about that? That way it fits up in there. Is there a second; second by Jack. Discussion? Mel.

MR. BELL: Could you explain we're talking about just the limits or are we talking about the whole process you're following or –

DR. DUVAL: Ask the maker of the motion.

MS. BECKWITH: The whole process in terms of 150 for the first day and then 100 per additional day up to 750 pounds.

MR. BELL: And the state of North Carolina manages that? I mean, there is somebody they're communicating with.

DR. DUVAL: Right, the marine patrol is notified of when people are leaving the dock and when they're coming back into the dock. Now, that's just what we've done for ourselves, so I think that might be the piece of the process, Anna, that is causing some question as to whether folks would have to hail-out and hail-in.

MR. BELL: Right, that is very important to figure out.

MR. COX: Should we put in that motion exactly what it is, so 150 pounds per day and not to exceed 750 pounds per trip; is that what it is?

DR. DUVAL: Myra can do a copy-and paste. It is 150 pounds for a first day, regardless of how many people are on board the vessel, and 100 pounds for each day thereafter up to seven days for a maximum of 750 pounds per trip. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I guess my question is for Doug. Can Georgia do this; are we going to have it where people can call in?

MR. HAYMANS: Hogfish are so incidental to Georgia, I doubt we'll do any state regulations on this.



MR. BELL: Well, that's our issue, too. We have no authority nor capability to manage that. We've had issues before with kind of getting crosswise between federal and state; and we've gotten sued and lost. We're not going down that road. A trip limit is a trip limit; if it is a 750 pound trip limit, fine. We could deal with a trip limit but we can't deal with managing that system like you guys are doing.

MS. BECKWITH: To that point, the intent was for North Carolina and Georgia, so it wouldn't apply to South Carolina. If the committee doesn't want to consider it, then vote it down.

DR. DUVAL: The way this alternative is structured is for the Georgia through North Carolina stock, so it would include South Carolina. If that's not your intent to apply it to South Carolina, then you might want to modify that motion. Is there any discussion on this motion?

**The motion reads add a subalternative to Alternative 2 to examine a similar commercial trip limit option to that currently in place in North Carolina, 150 pounds for first day and 100 pounds each day thereafter up to a max of 750 pounds per trip. Those in favor of the motion; those opposed. The motion fails.** Chester wanted to modify what he had previously put forward for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock.

MR. BREWER: If you could put up that slide again that shows the South Florida commercial trips. It is showing that 85 percent of the trips right now are – no, the one that is the existing sort of catch history showing the number of – with regard to the trips the number of pounds. When I made my motion originally, it was really more off the top of my head without having reviewed carefully that table.

It seems like you've got a very small percentage of trips that are certainly above 75 pounds. I would like to modify my motion to read that the alternatives to be examined or analyzed would 50, 75, 100, 125 – excuse me, 25, 50, 75 and 100.

DR. DUVAL: If we have a motion to reconsider, it just requires the concurrence of the committee?

MR. BREWER: It requires a second.

DR. DUVAL: So perhaps a motion to reconsider, Chester.

MR. BREWER: Okay, I'd like to make a motion to reconsider the motion that I made earlier that was passed, and I've already said what motion I'm going to make if allowed to reconsider.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Chester; second by Jessica. Is there any other discussion of this motion?

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, whether I make it now or later, it doesn't matter. This is all going out to public hearing, and we can split the difference on any of these numbers when we come back because it will fall inside the range of the alternatives. If we drop it all the way down to 100 pounds and that is our highest number, then we can't go back above it. We need a number at least high enough that we know we're probably not going over. Then we can always back it down; but if we've got the number too low, then we can't go up.

MR. BREWER: In explanation of why I'm making the motion, we know that they're overfished and undergoing overfishing. There is probably going to need to be some fairly drastic reductions in take both on the recreational and commercial. In looking at the table, it looks like about 50 percent of the current trips are 25 pounds or thereabouts for commercial trips. We can go as high as you want to, but I just wanted to be able to sort of fine tune between what we're actually seeing now, and it looked like almost all the trips or 85 percent or more are less than 75 pounds.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'll supply for re-substitution as long as we have a number higher than, say, 200; because if we go up on size limits, we're going to have smaller trips, anyway. That is going to another way of helping the stocks out. I'm just saying a hundred is too little. I think you need to probably get up to 200 or something. Anyway, I'll let it go.

MR. BREWER: I have no objection to that, but let's vote on the reconsideration first.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to Charlie's point, Charlie, you can always add another alternative that wasn't within the range. Where you get into a little bit of difficulty is when you're ready to take final action and you want to back down from the higher – when you're ready to take final action and you've analyzed a range of alternatives and then you want to add an alternative that wasn't within the range, then it gets difficult; but at this stage you've got a lot of flexibility on what you want to do.

DR. DUVAL: And don't forget this is being considered for scoping. That's the stage that we're at so we still have – we have two shots at public hearing. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Well, until you mentioned scoping, I had to remember where we are in the process, but I would just echo what Chip came up here and said. He said that even though you may have only a few of those trips that are large, they may make up a substantial portion of the catch. We don't have that information in front of us to make that determination to. I was comfortable with your initial motion, Chester, which gave a broad enough trip limit numbers even with the problem we're having the stock.

You've got some low numbers in there as well as some that are a little bit higher. We don't how the fishery is prosecuted, where it is prosecuted. We don't know how far these fishermen are traveling on these trips to make them. If we make the trip limit too low, they may not even be able to make a trip to go. We'll get all that information I hope through the scoping process.

MR. BREWER: In looking at the chart – we can leave it like we've done right now, but could we add 25 pounds at the bottom?

DR. DUVAL: Right now we have a motion on the table reconsider. I'm just going to remind folks that we have public comment in about ten minutes, so I think we need to dispense with this motion. Jessica, did you have one more comment?

MS. McCRAWLEY: Call the question.

**DR. DUVAL:** All right, the question has been called. The motion reads reconsider motion to analyze trip limit alternatives of 50, 100, 150 and 200 pounds for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock. The question has been called so no more debate. All those in favor of the motion to reconsider please raise your hand. Okay, the motion passes. We are now reconsidering the motion, and, Chester, you would like to add I think 25 pounds at the bottom.

MS. McCAWLEY: Second.

**DR. DUVAL:** Motion by Chester; second by Jessica, to analyze trip limit alternatives of 25, 50, 100, 150 and 200 pounds for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock. Any other discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none; this motion stands approved. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Two things. When I was looking at the regulations, I realized that the current accountability measure for hogfish just deals with hogfish as one single unit throughout the South Atlantic. We're going to need some accountability measure alternatives in here, and I suggest that you take the alternatives you recently did for the Generic Accountability Measure Amendment and put them in.

Then my second thing is back on Action 5, I'm not sure why we struck "establishing acceptable catch" from that action. Right now I think it reads "establish annual catch limits for the Georgia/North Carolina stock of hogfish," but the SSC did give you an ABC through the ABC Control Rule using the ORCS Approach. It seems like you would want ABC also to be considered in Action 5 and not just ACLs. Sorry I didn't catch that earlier.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I'm a little confused because usually we just get the ABC; we don't establish the ABC, right?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: The ABC is recommended to you, and you could always establish a lower ABC. I don't know that there is a process set up – and maybe I'm just tired and it is the end of the day, but I don't know that the FMP has a process set up where the ABC is whatever the SSC says without some further action by the council to make it part of the FMP.

The SSC recommends a fishing level recommendation to the council. That is usually ABC. The council cannot exceed that fish level recommendation. You could always back down from it and choose a lower fishing level recommendation, I guess. I can work this out with Myra, because I know it is late, and we can talk about it. It is just something to think about.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; because I guess I've been under the impression that we receive ABCs from the SSC and then we have the latitude to establish ACLs that are equal to or lower than that. Perhaps you can discuss it; and when we come back at full council, we can deal with that and then maybe we can give direction to staff to add actions to establish accountability measures in Amendment 37 that mirror those that are in the Generic Accountability Measures Amendment. Is that okay?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes; that sounds great.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, we have direction to staff to add actions to establish accountability measures for each stock that mirror those established in the Generic AMs Amendment. The one thing that we need to circle back to is the purpose and need, because we removed the action that would delegate authority to the state of Florida.

If we could quickly circle back to the purpose and need and at least eliminate that verbiage; that would be great. We would need to strike the wording that Myra has highlighted in yellow in the purpose, which is “partially delegate management to the state of Florida”; and then under the need, “allow for the determination of the best of the solutions for fisheries management issues that are unique to South Florida.” We would need to strike language in both those places. I would now be looking for a motion from the committee to approve the purpose and need as modified.

**MS. McCAWLEY: I move that we approve the purpose and need as modified.**

**DR. DUVAL: Second by Ben. Discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** I know Myra quickly would like to review the timing, which is on the very last page of the document and then we can get ready for public comment.

MS. BROUWER: The timing is currently to approve this document for scoping; and if you’d like to do that, we would hold scoping meetings via webinar sometime August/September. We would need a motion for us to proceed that way if that’s what you’d like us to do.

DR. DUVAL: I’m thinking that we may need to hold off on this until we go through the joint meeting tomorrow, because we still have the one outstanding action with regard to the boundary. I think once we settle that, then we can approve this for scoping at full council on Friday, if that’s okay with everyone. We will have committee work to do.

During full council, we need to get to Amendment 36, which is spawning SMZs. I would just ask everyone to take that into consideration. We’re also scheduled to take final action on Amendment 35, which was removal of species and golden tilefish endorsements. It would be my intent to tackle those two items during full council on Friday.

The remaining items that are on our agenda, which include Amendment 38, which considered future management of blueline tilefish; and then Regulatory Amendments 23 and 24, we are simply going to have to wait on those until September. At full council I’ll make a suggestion for how to proceed with Amendments 23 and 24. Mr. Chairman, I yield the floor back to you.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Madam Chair, you’re right on time.

Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 o’clock p.m., June 10, 2015.)

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 12, 2015

The next item on our agenda, which we actually didn’t get to was Amendment 36; and, Gregg, are you ready to take us through that? Once we finish that, I’ll say a few things about Amendment 38 and then we will go through Amendment 35 and finish with our motions on Amendment 37. We will pick up our other items in September. We are on Committee of the Whole now.

MR. WAUGH: We will be working with Attachment 7A that has the complete package of comments; Attachment 7B, which will be the decision document. We'll go through that. That has the motions. Attachment 7C has detailed background information that you may want to look at and we may refer to. Attachment 7D has the Draft System Management Plan.

What I'd like to do is just briefly run through the public hearing comments and then talk about the System Management Plan very briefly. Obviously, we don't have a lot of time so we won't get into that in a lot of detail. Then we would go through the Amendment 36 Decision Document. Mike sent around a summary of the overview of the public hearing comments.

It was a spreadsheet, Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 Overview of Public Hearing Comments. There are several tabs along the bottom of that spreadsheet. I'm not going to go through all of this. I'm going to hit some of the highlights. The NEPA scoping comment period was also done during this time period, and we got two letters in; one from the U.S. Department of the Interior, that their comments were positive; and one from SFA, the East Coast Fisheries Subsection.

They pointed out that we don't have the information to support the Daytona Steeples. Their comment was also included in the written comments as well. In terms of public hearings, we've used the webinar for this. I thought that worked out very well. We've got the comment package for the minutes from the public hearings.

I've got the PDF page reference so you can look through those particular minutes. We did two sites concurrently. The Charleston and Little River are combined in one set of minutes; and the Richmond Hill/Brunswick, Georgia, hearings are combined in one. We've got the number of attendees, the number of speakers. In terms of just overall support, in Morehead City we had three individuals basically not in support, one supporting an alternative site.

This should here in Little River there were ten speakers and they were against moving forward. There was some talk about that alternative site. Richmond Hill we had one speaker and talked about expanding the South Carolina Artificial Reef MPA, expanding it rather than moving it so we keep protection on the deep side.

Then Brunswick, Georgia, one no to the Snapper Banks Alternative. Then Daytona, one in support of the process if we have the data and then three noes. Again, in terms of major reasons for supporting the spawning SMZs, there was support for the area north of the 780 Bottom, variably called the Pile Wreck in 63 to 67 fathoms, as an alternative to the 780 Bottom.

We heard at the Little River hearing there is a lot of bottom longlining done in that area. Will Heyman is on a trip now that would hopefully give us some information in that area north of the 780 Bottom. There is agreement with the use of artificial reefs as SMZs when they're established for that purpose.

Major reasons for not supporting spawning SMZs; make use of existing area closures and supplement them with artificial reef habitat; two-thirds majority of the permit holders should be required before you decide which areas are to close; and to talk about the size of the areas. The 780 Closure impacts would be severe and put a lot of individuals out of business.

They would like to see proof that the fish are spawning in the 780 Bottom and Malchase Wreck, are recruiting to this area and not being lost northwards. HAPC expansion will give you the protection you're looking for. You don't have the data for the Daytona Steeples. You need science before moving forward with sites like Daytona Steeples. We've got some other comments there that are helpful as we move forward.

If you look at the page with the public comment summary; again, we had 118 letters or petitions received. I have broken those out. You've got the PDF pages. We had 30 petitions coming in supporting. Overall the vast majority of the written comments supported moving forward. There is one correction I need to point out.

The Southeastern Fisheries Association, the East Coast Group, there was support for Preferred Alternative 2 in Actions 1 and 2, but then they don't support the actual sites. For Actions 3 through 6 they couldn't support. I'm not going to go through each of these comments. They're there. There is always a danger when you summarize these comments, people will feel that you don't adequately characterize their comments, so that is why you have the PDF page.

You can go to that individual page and see those comments. The first group is organizations and clubs, and we heard from 20 different organizations and clubs. We had comments from two advisory panel members; Bill Cole in support of this moving forward. Captain Jimmy Hull again indicating that he supports the idea and the implementation of small closed areas, but doesn't feel we have the information and don't have the funding and the sampling and the data in place; and we need to have that first.

Then in terms of the individual letters and e-mails, we had comments from 62 individuals. Some of them commented multiple times and that is indicated there, but there were 56 in favor and 6 not in favor. Again, you can see this is broken out by where the comment came from when we were provided that information, a brief statement of their support why or not, and then again the PDF page so that you can see where those comments are to read the full comment package. That is a quick overview of the public hearing comments and I'd be glad to answer any questions that you might have.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Gregg on any of the public hearing comments?

MR. WAUGH: The System Management Plan is Attachment 7D in your briefing book. The IPT has been working on this. We've pulled information together. Michelle Tessler has worked on contractual basis. There is a lot of information here and it is compiled. If you use the bookmark feature of these PDF documents, it will help you navigate through this. I'll be glad to show you how to do that one on one.

I'm not going to walk through this document now; but it is an organized. We've got an executive summary and outline and overview, the goals and objectives. The research priorities have been worked on by the subgroup, and I would call your attention to that information on Pages 50 through 56 – sorry, the resource protection, the enforcement is 50 through 56; research and monitoring, 57 through 68.

The one that's farthest along, that Amber leads that work and she has worked with Kim and the others – the outreach part is 69 through 77. That sort of outlines in greater detail what we hope to have for each of these sections. It will lay out for each of our – and remember this is for our Amendment 14 MPAs; so it will lay out for each MPA, have the specific projects that are required for enforcement, for research and monitoring in that area and outreach for that area and have the specific projects with a timeline and a cost estimate.

The outreach one, if you want to see what the overall other sections are going to look like, look at that outreach part. They are much farther along. Then we've got site characterization, Page 93 on. The idea here is to take this out as a draft document when we go out to hearings. The bottom of the first page has the timing.

We anticipate having a complete Draft System Management Plan available for you at the September meeting. In addition, a draft SMP chapter will be included with the Amendment 36 for the second round of public hearings. We will have that outlined; but since we won't know the final choice on spawning SMZs sites, we won't have all the site-specific information.

We'll wait until after – right now the timing is to deal with that in September; develop the specifics for each spawning SMZ site just like we will have for each of the MPAs. We've already done some reaching out to our state partners. Luiz has offered to work with his staff to pursue sanctuary funding. I don't know if he has had a chance to talk with Jessica anymore about this, but he mentioned that they do this for other existing sites now.

Indeed, you've seen results of their work in Riley's Hump, some of that tracking work on mutton snapper. They're willing to contribute to the ongoing research and monitoring for sites off of Florida. Of course, Marcel and the MARMAP Program have continued to work with us. As we have cooperative research moving forward, the work that Dr. Will Heyman is doing, those individuals that are collected, the MARMAP Program works those up now.

Obviously, at this expands MARMAP may need some more resources to deal with this on an ongoing basis. We are already getting the support in place to do some of this research and monitoring, expand what is being done on the existing MPAs and also have a commitment to work with us to do the same thing for the spawning SMZs.

The SSC looked at a preliminary version of this System Management Plan at their last meeting; and we got some great comments from them and those are being incorporated as well. I know we're short on time here so we just wanted to entertain any questions you might have before we move into the decision document.

DR. DUVAL: Are there any questions for Gregg? Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Gregg, I know this is being designed for the existing MPAs, but they will obviously have application in the SMZs, right?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, the intent is to develop – you have asked us to prepare an appendix to go along with Amendment 36 that will do this same thing for the sites that are chosen for spawning

SMZs. When we go out to public hearings, we'll have an outline for that appendix, but we don't want to go in and do all the detailed work on all the sites until we know which ones you are going to finally end up choosing. But, yes, Doug, you're correct; the exact same thing will be done on a scale matching each individual site that you ultimately select for a spawning SMZ.

MR. CONKLIN: When we do pick these SMZ sites, will there be an order of priorities in the plan; so if we wanted to look at the sites, monitor those first as opposed to some of the MPAs; could we do that?

MR. WAUGH: Yes; that would be up to you. It is going to be your System Management Plan. Ultimately we're developing a System Management Plan for the MPA sites now and then doing this smaller version for the spawning SMZs. Ultimately the idea is to have one System Management Plan that will have chapters that deal with each sort of managed area. It would be up to you to indicate your priority that you want this work done, yes.

MR. BREWER: Gregg, I'm thinking back how we sort of selected these SMZs, and it was done almost anecdotally. I remember our meeting for Florida and we were like, well, yes, I've heard that might be a pretty good spot to put one of these things. There was no scientific, quote, basis. There was no real hard data that we were acting on.

It seems like at least to me before we can say, okay, yes, this is definitely a spot that we would want to put in an SMZ. At least for me we need some more information as to the effectiveness of those spots that we picked. One was the Steeples, which I had never heard of before, but we don't really know.

We really don't know whether that is something that the council is going to want to put in. It seems like to me some sort of base study or minimal study needs to be made of these things before we can pick out which ones that we're going to want to go with. I hate to put more work on staff and whoever is going to be doing this research, but it is almost like we've got the cart before the horse here.

MR. WAUGH: Chester, you're getting into what we will be discussing in a few minutes in the decision document. We do have a range of sites, some of which are based on lots of information. For instance, the Georgetown Hole/Devil's Hole, that one has a lot of current information. You've heard presentations from Dr. Will Heyman. You've heard public comments the night before last.

We've got a range in those sites based on lots of different data, going from ones that have a lot of current data to ones where we have anecdotal information from fishermen from years past that they are important for spawning, like the Warsaw Hole. There is like the Daytona Steeples where we have had information that we would expect spawning to be there. We'll get into that discussion in a few minutes.

DR. PONWITH: On that point, we would be happy, if it would be beneficial to the council in this decision-making process from that standpoint, to help you with an evaluation of using social science tools of evaluating data that range from empirical data that were collected on cruises or



with ROVs, ranging all the way from that to – you characterize it as anecdotal, but another approach is a very common process to use expert opinion.

There are social science constructs to enable you to use expert opinion in addition to empirical data. If the science center can help you in categorizing those data and characterizing the uncertainty associated with those types of data and then making decisions across a range of those types of data, we stand ready to help you with that.

Secondarily, it was to the question on the monitoring. I like the idea of having a monitoring plan. Again, what I'd like to offer from the science center is there will be questions that come up from the council in terms of meeting the desired outcomes for these MPAs and for the spawning aggregation sites. The science center can help you formulate those questions as testable hypotheses and we will be able to help you draft a feel for what type of sampling would have to take place to be able to answer those questions with any amount of precision.

I think it will be really important to make sure that the sample designs that you have for doing that monitoring are adequate to answer the question; and if we don't have enough sampling, to use that as a queue that we either need to modify the question or maybe use a notion of voucher sampling where you pick like MPAs or like spawning sites and use them as a proxy and then really intensively sample in one. Again, the science center stands ready to help you in refining the monitoring plan to make sure that you've got the statistical power to answer those questions.

MR. WAUGH: Thanks for that offer, Bonnie. That will certainly build on the work that Stacey, Todd and Andy have done. That is the subgroup that has written this resource monitoring component. Yes, that would be very, very helpful.

Remember, the approach here is to give us the sites that you want analyzed in detail, because there is still a lot of analyses to be done before we go out to public hearing and before you see this document again in September where the intent is for you to then say these are the sites we want to go forward. That type of analysis that the center is offering would be very helpful.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for that, Bonnie. We definitely appreciate it and I know those guys have put a lot of work with the resources that they have into this. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, one quick comment I guess to Gregg's point about it being a system and to Chester's points as well, and that is down the road, in addition to looking at – monitoring these sites and looking at their effectiveness as spawning sites, we also need to look at the linkages between where those larvae are produced, where they wind up in those inshore nursery areas in the case of those species like gag and some of the others that do use inshore nursery areas. Hopefully, that's something we can maybe take a look at within the context of the SMZ Management Plan itself but also certainly in the FEP document as we move forward with that.

MR. WAUGH: That's an excellent point, Wilson. Roger has been pursuing with other groups projects that will do this. One that has just been funded and I believe will start next year – and Roger may want to add a couple of comments about this; but it is to characterize the oceanography in these areas. I'll let Roger just tell you what is going on with that.

MR. PUGLIESE: Just real quick; as part of our coordination with the Ocean Observing Group, SECOORA and oceanographers, in this year's funding budget for SECOORA, we were successful in getting one of the letter's intents advance to full proposals that includes a component, working with North Carolina State University, actually, and some of the modeling efforts on characterizing the oceanographic features associated with marine protected areas and other managed areas; in addition, to look at how some of the model information may be able to provide exactly what we're talking about as linkages; so trying to begin to really bring together both the oceanography information we have with the fisheries' information to better support the marine protected area work.

I think it even may specifically be connected into how we highlight needs under the System Management Plan and beyond. I think the other aspect also is the desire that was highlighted in moving forward with the ecosystem model effort is to begin to integrate the oceanographic information in the ecosystem models so then you really get into trying to connect resources with the characterized areas, connect the resources with the oceanography and look at things such as connectivity between all the different systems.

MR. BREWER: Gregg and Bonnie, as we go through this process – first let me say that I think from the standpoint of the recreational community, you've got a lot of buy-in and a lot of support for these SMZs. They're focusing on what we have always thought needs to be protected in these spawning aggregations.

In the course of this process and perhaps to get even greater buy-in from maybe both the commercial and the recreational sectors, in doing the analysis I would hope that areas that are in existing MPAs that are not necessarily accomplishing the goals of what was set forth could be identified.

You'll get a lot better I think tremendous buy-in, quite frankly, if you can say, okay, we're going to close this area over here for a really good reason and that is to protect spawning aggregations; but we've got this area over here that apparently doesn't protect the coral the way it was supposed to or protect spawning aggregations, whatever you were trying to protect with the MPA. Then you say, okay, well, you know what, we'll open up this other area that is not being effective in sort of a tradeoff for these areas that we're going to close. I would hope that as the analysis is being done; that thought would be in your head.

MR. WAUGH: And that is certainly the intent; and I think we have to keep in mind the timing here. Some of these sites, it is going to take a little longer for the benefits to start to show up. You heard from Mark Marhefka during the public hearing comment that he is starting to see benefits from these existing MPAs.

Some of the ongoing research, as we get more years, that will start to document which areas are working and which aren't. You're absolutely correct; that's an inherent part of this system management plan is you evaluate these areas; and areas that aren't working, then the council will come back and look at how they want to open those or modify those regulations in those areas.

DR. DUVAL: I had Jack and then Mark; and remember we're talking about the System Management Plan here, and we still have to go through the Amendment 36 Decision Document. I just want to make sure that the conversation is relevant to the topic at hand. If the comments are about particular sites, then let's kind of finish with the System Management Plan and then move forward.

MR. COX: I just want to thank Chester for making those comments because he is coming from what he is hearing from recreational guys and the commercial guys are telling me the same thing. I think of an MPA we have off of North Carolina that we think is way too big, but it is doing really a good job protecting snowy groupers. As we do this, we are going to get buy-in from the fishing community as we give them back something that doesn't need to be stretched out as big as it is.

DR. DUVAL: Mark, did you have a comment on the System Management Plan?

MR. BROWN: Well, mine is similar, but I'll wait until you get through to the end because I just want to offer up an idea. I'll wait until you get through, but it is similar to what Chester said.

MR. PUGLIESE: Specific to Chester's comments, one of the things I've also raised with the group is the opportunity to engage commercial and recreational fishermen in the collection of environmental information to fine-tune these area sites. I think the other aspect that affects as we move forward with this system is the ability to use technologies.

The better we can use some of that technology in either monitoring the area or understanding the capabilities of that, you can refine and do exactly what you're talking about and kind of really hone in on the areas, to enforce the areas, select those, connect the ones that are appropriate and go forward. I think engaging fits very well in the discussions we're having on citizen science and bringing into a whole new realm; because information even on environmental monitoring can fine-tune a lot of these models that are being used to do exactly what we would like to see.

DR. DUVAL: Absolutely; couldn't agree more. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: I was searching for an answer to a question that I couldn't find; but in doing that, I have another question. The plan that is on the screen says the System Management Plan for the Amendment 14 MPAs; but yet in the SMZ document that we're about to get into, number seven says the council has directed the staff to develop a system management plan for the spawning SMZs. Do we need to put that in the – my question previously; that probably should go there as well.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; this document is the System Management Plan for the Amendment 14 MPAs. What we are also working on is an appendix that will go along with Amendment 36 that will do the same thing for the specific SMZ sites that you ultimately approve. Then in the future we will modify this document so it becomes the System Management Plan, period, for managed areas or something like that. It will have chapters dealing with each of the MPAs and each of the spawning SMZs.

DR. DUVAL: So remember where we started from was that we didn't have a system management plan for our existing MPAs, so that was the genesis of this; and as we walk down the road of SMZs, we knew that we were going to need to have something similar for that. It may not look like it, but there is a plan. Anything else on the System Management Plan before we get into the decision document? Mark, did you have something you wanted to offer right before we get into the decision document?

MR. BROWN: Well, I was just looking at our existing MPAs and what Chester was saying. I thought about it a long time. Some of the areas that developed the MPAs with, they were broadcast over a large portion of bottom, similar to what Jack was saying, and some of it doesn't even have hard bottom. It is just soft areas.

When I look at our area off of Charleston with that Edisto MPA, half of it doesn't even have hard bottom. Half of it extends off shore; and it was supposed to be I think originally designed to protect golden tile. One of my thoughts is that if we were going to add an SMZ in another area is to reduce the size of some of the existing MPAs that don't actually benefit what they were originally designed to benefit – they extend out way past any area of hard bottom – and to alter the size of those if we're going to implement any other area. That way it is a give and take.

DR. DUVAL: I just remind folks that the existing MPAs that we have were designed to be deep-water MPAs, so they were focused on those deep-water species. It was sort of designed to be a phased approach; but certainly we want to make sure that they're doing what we set out to do and that they're having a benefit to deep-water species as we continue to move forward with this. Wilson and Mel and then we're moving on. We don't have all day; I don't have all day.

DR. LANEY: Just a reminder to everybody that when you're trying to protect functionality of an ecosystem, you want to include a buffer around the thing as well. I think we need to factor that into our thinking when we're talking about sizing these things. They need to have an appropriate buffer them as well.

Also, we've made the point multiple times before when it comes to our deep-water shrimp areas; that some of these areas that we are being asked to consider opening up do have some important functionality in terms of providing foraging habitat for juveniles of some of the species that use the coral areas themselves. Again, the buffer concept just needs to be factored into our thinking here.

MR. BELL: And we were trying to provide softer bottom habitats for tilefish and things, too, so it is not just hard bottom.

MR. HAYMANS: And to Mark's point, as we move into the SMZ document, Page 4 of the box that you'll see, the last bullet point says the spawning SMZ approach will not make any changes to existing MPAs. I know we heard it in public comment; but if we want to go that route, as we get into the SMZs, we might need to take that statement out.

DR. DUVAL: All right, moving on.

MR. WAUGH: Okay, the decision document, the IPT has worked on this some and in addition to what you say basically at the last council meeting, we have added some information on Chapter 3 for the habitat and for the economic and social environment. We have done a first cut at some of the social and economic impacts. Those need to be expanded.

The biological impacts, we have not done that yet. We are waiting until after this meeting where you say these are the sites we want you to analyze in detail and to go out to public hearing. There is a lot of work that the IPT is ready to do after this meeting in order to get this document ready for public hearings.

In terms of an estimate of impacts on catches, we have Nick's model that was used before. The AP has pointed out some issues with that; but in terms of the available data that we have and the quantitative impacts we can assess, that is one approach that will be in there. We have some other ideas we will explore to look at how you might measure the impacts; but then that is one of the things we want to get from the public is some quantifiable information from them on what level of catch on their part comes from each of these areas.

We've got a lot of detailed analysis to do between this meeting and before we go out to public hearings; but you do have a start to that information. What we're going to do is work through this document. I'm not going over where we already have preferreds. We can come back to that if anybody is interested. If you go to Page 10, this is where we deal with Action 3 with the North Carolina sites. Yes.

MR. HAYMANS: Before we move into sites, can I make sure – I have a clarifying question and that is we're selecting sites to be analyzed. That analysis is going to take – I guess the basic question is when do we think that the sites that we have selected will actually get closed?

MR. WAUGH: Well, that is up to you. At the back we have timing laid out. The current timing now has you choosing sites for detailed analysis and to go out to the second round of public hearings. We do that in August. This is on Page 77 of that decision document. Then you look at the public hearing input, and you will have the revised amendment at that stage.

Then you select the sites you want to go forward. Now, this is an environmental impact statement, also, so what we hope to do is the DEIS will be combined with the amendment document. We hope to have that ready – and Rick and I are working together to keep this moving along – we hope to have that ready to be filed with the version that goes out to public hearing. That will have all the detailed analysis.

Then there is a comment period on the DEIS. That comment period will not end before our September meeting. When we get to this decision about timing, we're asking you to give us some guidance on a slight change in timing where at the September meeting you will still review all the detailed information, the public comments, and you will make your decisions on which sites you want to go forward.

Then the document will be revised and at December you will review any additional DEIS comment periods and approve for secretarial review. Then it takes generally approximately six months for

it to be reviewed and implemented. If we meet that time period, you're looking at some time mid-2016 for this to go into effect.

MR. HAYMANS: So just to be clear, the detailed analysis will not include any additional dive, ROV, direct observations of the site that we're selecting. Of the sites that we're selecting, it is going to be based on the MARMAP data, the data that we've already got there with those few points that are in some of the squares?

MR. WAUGH: Well, for some sites that is true; but as you see when we get into the specific sites here, we have results of work done last night in the Warsaw Hole on a Nancy Foster cruise. We have that information coming in. We also have the work that Dr. Will Heyman is doing. That is continuing; and in fact right now they are up in North Carolina trying to do a cruise that got blown out a month ago on that area north of the 780 Bottom. That work is ongoing; so as we accumulate additional data and information, that will be presented to you in September.

MR. HAYMANS: So the last question along that line, if I could. Would it be reasonable to take the sites that we have the most information on, specifically those that Dr. Heyman has already done some work on, look at those first as SMZs in this document; and as these other things come on line and we start doing more work and we've got the SMZ process in place with the passage of 36, then we add additional areas over time rather than trying to add four or five or six new areas here now?

MR. WAUGH: Well, that is the decisions that you are going to start making right now.

MR. HARTIG: Doug has hit on something that has been real sensitive to the fishermen from our area and it is something that actually for me has been going through the whole process of MPAs. There is a gradient of information available for a number of these sites. The great thing about Devil's Hole is that we have some information we can bite our teeth into.

We have some spawning fish that have been collected from that area. That information has convinced me so far that Devil's Hole is probably a great place to do this. Our fishermen – I mean, you're talking about the Steeples. You've got 27 square miles, 12 square miles and 6 square miles. What if the steeple we want is within the 27 mile area?

To me as a fisherman you know there are special sites in the ocean, and there aren't that many of these special places. If you picked the six square miles and the pinnacle you want is in the 27-mile area, you haven't done a darned thing. This whole citizen science and this whole cooperative research program is to me you design a program where you work with the fishermen on their platforms and you let them do the research with their information that they know where the areas are productive.

You've already cut off your scientific search for an area within this big box; so you've narrowed it down with the fishermen you're working with. You're using their boats to go there, and then you do the research, document it, and then you close the area based on the information you get from them and that research. To me, that is a much better way to go about this. You get buy-in from the fishermen because they own the data that they did for selecting these sites.

They've worked on it; they own that data; so you get buy-in. I know the MPA process, we closed these areas and we had these big grandiose ideas on how they were going to be monitored and look at what we've gotten from oculina. I'll go back to Gregg on how we got to where we are now. We were going to go and close some more MPAs; and based on the information we had, I think the council made a conscious decision to not go ahead with MPAs and to do this, because this is something we can get buy-in from the fishermen and buy-in from the public to do knowing that we would get crushed based on the information we had for our MPAs to date that showed that we hadn't done any research in them.

Given that we hadn't done a good job there, to me I think we back-track here, do the research, get the buy-in from the fishermen, use their platforms to do the information. This hasn't taken a whole lot of time to convince me within a one- or two-year timeframe I think we can get the information we need to work on these. Chester has made the suggestion, Doug has made the suggestion, and I think it is an excellent way to move forward in the process.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for those comments, Ben and Doug. I think as we move through the decision document we're going to be talking about the bottom off each state specifically and the information that is currently available or is not available. I think now as we go through this document is when the committee can make some of these decisions if you choose to do so. My suggestion would be that we move forward with running through this decision document. It is ten o'clock right now. We still have other business to conduct; so I would like to let Gregg move through this, keeping those comments in mind.

MR. HARTIG: Nothing I said precludes us from moving through the decision document at this time. The sites are great, but to me I think where the rubber hits the road is when do you close them? That's the key. That's my only difference. I think the amendment is good as we are.

DR DUVAL: I think my only response to that is just that I think that's a great conversation to have – once we've moved through the document, we can see everything that's there and make decisions about timing; is that okay? All right.

MR. WAUGH: Okay, what we've done here is this is looking at the North Carolina sites. Again, this is on Page 10 of your decision document. We've added in the input from the spawning SMZ workshop and public hearings. Where there was input at the SMZ Workshop, public hearings, public comments, we've added those in this potential list indicating their new alternative.

What you had in here before for North Carolina was the Malchase Wreck at 2.47 square miles; 2B is the Malchase Wreck at 1 square mile; 3A, the 780 Bottom, 12 square miles; 3B, 780 Bottom, 4 square miles; 3C, 780 Bottom, 3 square miles. Then we had the suggestion for a new area north of the 780 Bottom; and then we had a suggestion to pull in the Cape Lookout Site that was included in the Expert Workgroup Report; and we have got that. That's in the folder detailed information.

In terms of a quick overview, the 780 Bottom has examples in terms of species found at that location, speckled hind and Warsaw grouper; the Malchase Wreck, speckled hind; and then south of Cape Lookout, examples of species that spawn, vermilion snapper; species found in that site, blueline tile, gag, greater amberjack, red grouper, red porgy, scamp and speckled hind. What we

are looking for here is guidance on which sites you want to go forward for detailed analysis to go out for a second round of public hearings.

We expect to have some more results from this area north of the 780 Bottom. The Cape Lookout Site, again, was suggested by the MPA Expert Workgroup and public comment. That has information from MARMAP and other sources. The Malchase Wreck was offered up as well, and that is input from the fishermen.

The idea is to basically look at this list; and what I would offer as a suggestion is start removing ones that you don't want and then we can have a motion to take these sites forward; or if you know which ones you want, a motion to take which sites you want. Again, this is to go for a detailed analysis, additional public input and then at the September meeting you would decide which ones you want to approve.

DR. DUVAL: Gregg, where is that table that you had up on the screen, what document is that in?

MR. WAUGH: The additional detailed information is Attachment 7C, and it is entitled "Input and Table from Pew with Amendment 36 Comments". What they have done is they've looked at the scientific literature and pulled this information together. We've got additional publications in that folder. Nick Farmer has a manuscript that he is working on. That has the MPA Expert Workgroup Report and the minority report in there.

DR. DUVAL: I don't think that table is actually in there and that's just why I was asking.

MR. WAUGH: I'll look for it.

MR. COX: Okay, is this the time to make a motion on a new alternative if you want to add a site in to be analyzed?

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. COX: Okay, with that said, for North Carolina I really don't think with the work going on right now up to the north that we can take anything out; but I would add a new Alternative 5, the south Cape Lookout Site as a place to be analyzed. It is a place that I've been talking with Will and George about.

It is a place that has documentation of the species of interest that we're looking at. Then after spending some time with Nick this week and looking at the map, it actually goes inshore enough in 23 fathoms to give us some protection of the red grouper that the commercial fishermen in North Carolina are asking for added protection for that spawning fish that is having problems.

It looks to me like it would be a really good place to go into and look at. However, I think on the map it is showing 72 square miles. That is way off the table and we would have to do something more like a 3 to 5 square miles area for the South Cape Lookout Site. I would say between 3 to 5 miles I think it would have to be to get the buy-in from the fishermen to even think about it.



DR. DUVAL: Jack, you see all the highlighted stuff right there is all the different sizes that are off of North Carolina. It includes the area north of the 780 Bottom that the guys are out looking at this week as well as the South Cape Lookout. I just want to know the intent is to keep all of those on the table for detailed analysis; is that correct?

MR. COX: Yes; for the analysis I think it is fine. Subalternative 3A with the 12 square mile area off the 780, I would like to see that taken off.

DR. DUVAL: Then this is the time to do that. I think if there is any of these out of that list that are acceptable, let's take them out right now because the more we can narrow things down for the analysis the better off we're going to be. That is one you would like to see removed?

MR. COX: Yes; that Subalternative 3A. I want to make a motion that we remove Subalternative 3A, the 12 square miles off the 780 Bottom.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, there is a motion by Jack; second by Anna to remove Subalternative 3A, which is the 12 square miles off 780 Bottom. All other alternatives remain in there for a detailed analysis. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Do we want to carry forward the one square mile on the Malchase Wreck?

MR. COX: I would leave it in there.

DR. DUVAL: **Okay, there is a motion by Jack and second by Anna to remove Subalternative 3A from Action 3. Is there any other discussion on this motion? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Before we go on, Gregg, within the document do we have a place that really documents what fully analyzed means, saying what that particular thing means? I think the fully analyzed, if you have that as, I don't know, actually an option, in way it may be something to get at what I was talking at before. I'm just asking from a viewpoint of do we have something that we know what fully analyzed really means.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; I mean we don't define that, but it is just – you just dealt with Amendment 16, so you fully analyzed those areas. We would go through and look at all the scientific information that we have for any of these areas, input for any of these areas. We would go in detail for each area and describe the biological information that supports or does not support this area, the social and the economic, just like we do in each amendment for each action that we consider.

MR. HARTIG: The only reason I mention it is because for a spot like Devil's Hole we have additional information from Will Heyman that I would consider under fully analyzed that we need to move forward, but that is just me.

MR. WAUGH: Well, in that respect, then fully analyzed with information that we have. That's all we can do.

DR. DUVAL: All right, North Carolina, we're done; moving on. If we want new Alternatives 4 and 5, which 4 was the area north of the 780 Bottom. This came out of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Workshop. It came from North Carolina fishermen. Jack just spoke to the south of Cape Lookout Site. If you want to offer up another motion, Jack, that would be good to add those.

MR. COX: I will make a motion that we select the new Alternative 4, the area of the 780 Bottom that was talked about during the AP. The coordinates are published somewhere in the AP document. That is where they're doing work now. That is an area that fishermen said would probably be a better location than the Malchase; so I think that's what we need to keep in the document here.

DR. DUVAL: Do you want to also add new Alternative 5, the South Cape Lookout Site that you mentioned.

MR. COX: Yes; I thought I just did. Okay, I'll make a motion that we add new Alternative 5, the South Cape Lookout Site.

**DR. DUVAL: How about one motion to add new Alternatives 4 and 5 to Action 3? (Alternative 4; area north of 780 bottom; Alternative 5; South Cape Lookout Site (3-5 miles)).**

**MR. COX: Yes.**

**DR. DUVAL: Seconded by Anna. Any other discussion? Any objections? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MR. WAUGH: And the table I was referencing is in the public comments' tab. It is in public comment that we received. Next is Action 4, the spawning SMZs off of South Carolina. The alternatives that were in there before were Devil's Hole or Georgetown Hole. 2A is 13.5 square miles; 2B is 4 square miles; 2C is 1 square mile.

We have added these new subalternatives. 2D is Devil's Hole at 3.1. That's the motion that was supported by the AP. Subalternative 2E, Devil's Hole at 15.2 square miles. That is the area that was suggested in public comment by Mark Marhefka, and you heard him speak to that at public comment on Wednesday.

New Alternative 2F, the area south and offshore of the northern South Carolina MPA as an alternative to the Georgetown Hole. That was suggested during the workshop and during public comment and discussed at the AP. Then we've got the existing Areas 51 and 53. It seems Devil's Hole/Georgetown Hole, that area is where we have the most information. We had these three alternatives ranging from 1 to 13.5 square miles.

You may want to consider removing those and going forward with these two new alternatives that basically encompass the range from the AP's approved 3.1 square mile area and the area suggested at 15.2 square miles, which is a little bit bigger than the area that you had before; but this is the

area that we have lots of detailed current information that has been collected during the cooperative research. That would give you a range of sizes.

MR. CONKLIN: I had a question about Alternative 2F, the northern South Carolina extension that was brought up at the AP meeting. It looks to me like that is essentially doubling the size of the northern South Carolina MPA. Is there a way we can make that a little smaller or can we speak to how we got to that?

MR. WAUGH: Yes; I'm glad you mentioned that, and I apologize. I should have pointed that out. What we had was a suggestion to expand that south and offshore and no guidance on size. What we put together here was just basically taking the existing site and expanding it equal to the size before. It is on Page 21 of the document, Figure 2C.

If you want this to go forward as an alternative, then give us some guidance on what size. That was just done as an example. You can see in Figure 2C where we have information on fish occurrence and fish spawning is in this area; the lower right-hand quadrant of that area. There has been some mapping in this area. That is what is shown in the blue.

If you want to know, Roger can explain to you what that shows. We did get some input at the Little River hearing that there is a lot of bottom longlining that has gone on in this area in the past. It has got bottom that is conducive to blueline tile harvest. We got some preliminary input on how that would impact fishing.

But, yes, if you want that to go forward as an alternative, give us some guidance on what sort of size you want to look at and whether you're interested in trying to capture this offshore area here that would pull in where we have some observations. The option exists to expand it and go a little farther south and pull in more of these observed sites; but we would just need some guidance on that. Thanks for pointing that out, Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: It doesn't actually have to extend off of the MPA and touch it; like there is an area on offshore there with all the point observations. We could designate that area as an area to move forward with as opposed to doubling the size of the MPA?

MR. WAUGH: What you would be suggesting – I guess this is a latitude and longitude line running across here; but basically a box that would pull in these observed sites that are down on this right-hand corner.

MR. CONKLIN: I think I'm prepared to make a motion to do that. Do I need to make a motion to remove new Alternative 2F or should I just fix it?

DR. DUVAL: That has actually not been added. It is just a suggestion so it has not actually been added.

MR. CONKLIN: So I will be making a new – okay, I'll make a motion an area with the point observations Page 21 of the document. I really don't have a scale at what size those are; but I will direct it to staff, I guess.

DR. DUVAL: So basically direction to staff to construct a box based on the point observations you see on Page 21 in the lower right-hand corner of that red box; is that what you're looking at, Chris?

MR. CONKLIN: Yes.

DR, DUVAL: Are you seconding the motion, Mel?

MR. BELL: Well, I'll do that, too.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, discussion.

MR. BELL: I remember when this came up and the individual was drawing our attention to this area down here and suggesting it might work. That is great; so the trick is direction to staff to draw – it is kind of hard to describe – to draw a smaller box more focused on the area I think as it was originally explained to us, perhaps. I can't give you dimensions and I can't give you a specific spot, but I know that was the one area that did come up. You can see there is some existing data there.

MR. CONKLIN: And just to have some more discussion on it; I remember in the AP meeting the fishermen that were out there working that area a long time ago couldn't quite recall the exact spot. I understand that is why the box is big; but I think he is kind of leaving it up to us to find a sweet spot.

MR. PUGLIESE: When looking back at the area, we didn't really have other guidance other than that; so that focus that once we actually looked at the data and looked at the – essentially that is all snowy grouper spawning area. If you compress down the box, an area probably approximately 4 by 2 or 3 by 2 captures essentially that entire break or that edge that it constitutes.

DR. DUVAL: Is there any other discussion on this motion? **The motion reads add a new subalternative to Action 4 for an area south of the northern South Carolina MPA of sufficient size to encompass the point observations for observations/spawning (4 miles by 2 miles or 3 by 2)** Any other discussion? Question from Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: And the intent would be when Roger refines that, if it is 4 by 2, that's fine; if it is 3 by 2, that's fine; and not to take out two? Okay.

DR. DUVAL: **Okay, any objection to the motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Is there a desire to modify or remove any of the other alternatives that were already included? We've had a suggestion for a 15.2 square mile area around Georgetown Hole rather than the 13.5 square mile area that is already in there under Subalternative 2A. Mel.

MR. BELL: So for moving forward with further analysis of sites, I'm fine with the full suite, including the 15.2, but that would have to be added?

DR. DUVAL: Yes; so wherever you see highlighted in yellow new subalternative whatever, that would need to be added. It is on Page 17 of your decision document. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: I simply have a question on 51 and 53. Do we actually have locations on those?

DR. DUVAL: They're secret.

MR. HAYMANS: Right.

MR. BELL: Yes; we have the locations. What we were trying to do was just not fully disclose those until we had to.

DR. DUVAL: I think Doug's point is that it probably makes it difficult for the public to evaluate if those locations aren't being disclosed. If we're going out to get public comment and the public can't see exactly what you're looking at, then that makes it a little bit difficult. To that point, Mel.

MR. BELL: And we described them in detail. They were flat, featureless sand bottom, no existing hard bottom, no interest to anyone whatsoever, other than us after we established these sites for experimental purposes. Now what we're trying to do is actually provide some level of actual protection for the sites other than their secrecy; but at some point they're obviously going to have to go on the chart.

In terms of what they are or the public's understanding of what they are, they're sand bottom in 70-ish and 100-ish feet of water and that's all they are. They happen to have some artificial reef structures on there that have been out there for quite a while; but at some point we're obviously going to have to put them on the chart and have the coordinates. We were just trying to not do that; because once that is done, the public can go out there and have a heyday.

MR. BROWN: I'd like to see that new Subalternative 2E removed. I don't think it is necessary to have it that big.

DR. DUVAL: Is that in the form of a motion? Well, it hasn't been added so you don't need to worry about that. Zack.

MR. BOWEN: In regards to Area 51 and 53, two points I'd like to bring up that probably everybody is aware of, anyway; but like Mel said, they're in 70 or 100 feet of water. When this amendment came out or designed or whatever, I think it had intentions of protecting deep-water species. No? Well, anyway, my second point I'd like to make is if they're secret, they're not being fished on anyway, so it is something to consider.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, based on this, the alternatives that would move forward would be Subalternative 2A, that 13.5 square mile Devil's Hole option; 2B, the 4 square mile Devil's Hole option; 2C, the 1 square mile Devil's Hole option; and then Areas 51 and 53 as well as the new subalternative that was just approved, sort of encompassing the collection of spawning points.

MR. BELL: I have no problem with 2E being on there. 2E offers a slightly different option with some additional habitat in it that seems to be of interest. Maybe that's an issue we have internally here, but I'm fine with the full suite.

DR. DUVAL: If you want it, you need to make a motion to add it. Subalternatives 2A, 2B and 2C are ones that have already been approved previously as well as Alternative 3 and 4. Wherever it says "new subalternative", if you want that to be included for analysis, that is what you need to make a motion to add.

MR. BELL: Okay, I'll do that right now. I move to include new Alternative 2E.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Mel to add new Subalternative 2E. That is Devil's Hole, 15.2 square miles. Is there a second to that motion? The motion dies for lack of a second. Anything else with regard to South Carolina. Those other alternatives are in there so we don't need to add them again. At this point I'm going to suggest we take a quick break, and then we will come back and run through what we have for Georgia and Florida.

I've had a request. I know Dr. McGovern had a question about South Carolina. I think Mel's previous motion, which died for lack of a second, was to add a Subalternative 2E for a 15.2 square mile option for Devil's Hole. I know Jack had a question about that. Jack.

DR. McGOVERN: I did have a question about that. I thought Mel said 2D. I don't hear that well sometimes, but I know Mark Marhefka came all the way down here from South Carolina. This might be the site that he proposed. He has done some work out there and he is wanting to have this alternative considered.

I know he has done a lot of work out there and he think this is important, which I think is part of this whole SMZ process. I think he has had his own boat sampling out there and stuff like that. I don't know if I can second it at this point or if it is too late, but I'd like to support Mel's alternative, if I could.

DR. DUVAL: Mark, I was wondering if you wouldn't mind coming up to the microphone and just clarifying which alternative you were supporting through your public comment. I thought it was the 15.2 square mile alternative.

MR. MARHEFKA: If I'm understanding correctly, it is the three mile by the three mile; is that the square that we're talking about on that alternative?

DR. DUVAL: I think that's what we have a question about was exactly the alternative that you had recommended.

MR. MARHEFKA: And one of the things is when we've been doing the research in this area, the currents sometimes get pretty stiff in there. The expansion part of that is you can be on the edge; and if you just had one by one, your lines can drift right back into that area and you're still going to be fishing into it.

The larger of the box goes and protects that particular site where we were actually pinpointing and grabbing the Warsaw from. With that being said, there is Warsaw all on the outer edge of that hump, even in the deeper parts. That eastern wall break there is where we were trying to go and want to kind of protect also.

That was the main reason why I decided to go and sort of get back out there again, go the points, check the points off in a little bit better accurate place to go and protect the Hole itself and then just the existing outer edges of that; that also do hold the Warsaws, too, because they're moving in and out. They're not just staying right there. They're moving around with the bait and everything within that spot.

DR. DUVAL: Was that the 3.1 square mile area or was that a 15.2 square mile area. I think Gregg is trying to scroll around on the screen here to bring that up. You might be able to see it on this screen.

MR. MARHEFKA: Okay, the black box was also the one that grabbed that northern pinnacle up there where we interacted with the blueline line and also interacted with some spawning yellowedge. That depth of that pinnacle also would have possibly gone and held the Warsaws, also. We did not really interact with the Warsaw on that one, but it very well could.

Like I say, you're just sort of kind of – if for enforcement reasons they wanted to go and draw square boxes; so it may look a lot bigger than what it really is; but we could have taken that northern pinnacle there and sort of kind of chopped it down to the southern corner of the box; but for enforcement reasons it was just easier for us just to go out there and do the box area there.

MR. BROWN: Mark, wasn't that the northern – that pinnacle or that corner right there; isn't that part of that 2E F that we were talking about earlier where what Wayne was talking about where it was going to drop down from the existing northern MPA; isn't part of the same –

MR. MARHEFKA: No; the northern MPA is a lot farther up. From that northern pinnacle there, you're looking at about ten miles to the north to get to that MPA.

MR. BROWN: I was misunderstanding. Also, I thought that your preferred originally was that three square mile area, the red box. I remember when you went up and did the presentation or discussion on it, I thought that was your original preferred.

MR. MARHEFKA: The three square mile box was my original preferred. Enlarging it to that larger black box; once again it sort of kind of grabs that northern pinnacle that we were sort of looking at for the yellowedge. Also, up on that northwestern corner in there is also where we've interacted is a 40 fathom sheer wall there that we had picked into a lot of speckled hind in that area, also. I just think if we leave it on the table to be analyzed and let it go from there.

Let's not go and remove it but let's look at it a little bit. I understand Dr. Will Heyman's presentation about how the spatial area that the fish actually sort of move around in and it is really sort of kind of important to give them that room to go and do what they need to do. To be honest

with you, I think if you go and you run an economic analysis on that area for the commercial industry, I don't really think you're going to go and see a huge impact.

Maybe years past, possibly, but now I just don't think so because the sharks that are in the area, the predators that are there. We did the video monitoring down there and I mean the sharks are from the top to the bottom. As soon as you go and you hook up a fish, he is getting nailed.

If any fisherman is going in that spot right there and trying to go and catch fish and just going and letting the sharks eat them up, he is not really a fisherman. He is just somebody who just sort of taking away that shouldn't be even doing it. It is just sad. I mean sometimes you can get in there and you can go and catch without the sharks interacting; but for the most part they've gotten really bad out there. It just my observations.

MR. BELL: My point original point was to keep the suite of options there. We've got everything down to one square mile and then up to as large as the 15.2. It's options to further analyze. Whether it is the economic analysis or fishing analysis; that was what I was trying to achieve. I don't know procedurally – since I already made a motion, I don't know if we can do it again or not. I would move to add 2E to that particular subalternative, right?

**DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Mel and a second by Jack McGovern to add new Subalternative 2E. That would be the 15.2 square mile Devil's Hole alternative. The motion reads add new Subalternative 2E to Action 4. Is there further discussion on this? Opposition? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Now I think we might be moving on from the great state of South Carolina into the great state of Georgia.

MR. WAUGH: Here on the draft list you've got Subalternatives 2A, 2B, 2C for the Georgia MPA, reconfiguration ranging from 71.5 square miles to 18; Subalternatives 3A, 3B, 3C for St. Simons Area 2, from 23.5 down to 9.4. As Doug pointed out, I had missed pulling in a recommendation from the AP; and this shown on Page 24 of the document where the Snapper Grouper AP approved a motion that the council consider all Alternatives 3A through C as well as 3D smaller; so I have added that as new Subalternative 3D.

MR. HARTIG: Which one is that, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: It is Subalternative 3D, which is St. Simons 2 area; and the AP just recommended that we look at something smaller. We would need some guidance from you if you want that to go forward, whether you want all these other alternatives to go forward and what size you think that should be.

MR. HAYMANS: Gregg, with regard to that, all of our other SMZs – not all – most of our other SMZs are 2 by 2 square miles; those being our artificial reef sites. I would think if we made that a 2 by 2 area; that would be at least acceptable in the public's eyes when viewing it in relation to our other SMZs.

While I have got the mike, if it is okay, I'll go ahead and discuss the other ones. I think if you notice, the Georgia MPA, reconfigure MPA up there is quite large. I went back and looked at the



Regulation 17 point observations and in none of the reconfigurations up there do I see any spawning indications of two of the target species of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.

I'm considering removal – and I'll make this in the form of a motion in moment – removal of the Subalternative 2s. I also think in Subalternative 3, 23.5 square miles is pretty large when we're looking at trying to minimize these areas to specific spawning areas. I'm thinking I will ask to remove 3A as well.

Then, finally, the new subalternative 25 to 35 miles; I don't even think I want to include that as part of a – recommending it because quite honestly that's due east of Brunswick and St. Simons. It is less than a hundred feet of water. I simply think I'm not willing to take a bloody nose over that one. With that said, I will make a motion to remove Subalternatives 2A through 2C and Subalternative 3A and add new Subalternative 3D, which will become 3C when they're all reordered. I will leave that there.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Doug to remove Subalternatives 2A through 2C and 3A and add new Subalternative –

MR. HAYMANS: Gregg has got “and removing subalternative”, but that is new so it hasn't been approved yet. I wouldn't even include it here. We don't need to remove it because it hasn't been accepted yet.

DR. DUVAL: So it would just be to add new Subalternative 3C?

MR. HAYMANS: 3D.

DR. DUVAL: 3D?

MR. HAYMANS: Correct, which is not in the document you're looking at. It is on the screen because it got inadvertently –

DR. DUVAL: The 2 by 2 mile area.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, motion by Doug; second by Charlie. Discussion? Zack.

MR. BOWEN: Doug, you mentioned – and it may be because it is new, it is not in the new document or hasn't been approved yet; but you also said, which I'm in favor for, of removing the area between 25 and 35 miles east of St. Simons.

MR. HAYMANS: Right, but because it is a recommendation of the AP but hasn't been considered by the council yet, if we don't want it we don't need to consider it. We would only need to remove it; it wouldn't be part of it.

MR. BOWEN: Because it is really not there to begin with?

MR. HAYMANS: Right.

MR. BROWN: Doug, I thought you said that you couldn't remove – you saw something in the document where you couldn't remove any mileage from an existing MPA; and I see under Option 2, that's what it says.

MR. HAYMANS: Right, but Option 2 is again a recommendation from the AP; and if we don't consider it, then it wouldn't be part of the document either. Is that right; that's not part of the document? At this point, it is a recommendation of the AP.

DR. DUVAL: Right, it is just a recommendation so it hasn't been added. It is not part of the alternatives for analysis.

MR. HAYMANS: It is there but it is not.

DR. DUVAL: Very, very tricky we are around here. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I had one of my fishermen give me a chart that I could put on my computer. I overlaid their fishing spots over some of the Georgia reconfiguration, and it just blacked them out. There would be no support from the commercial fishermen, anyway; and a lot of the recreational fishermen also fish out there. It is on the fishing chart and it is a long ways. We might get some support for St. Simons, which is still on the ledge.

MR. HAYMANS: And one final point about the St. Simons extension; based at least on Regulation 17 here, there is a single point observation a spawning speckled hind in that box. At least there has been some documented spawning down there.

DR. McGOVERN: My question was along with Doug to say I was wondering what we know about spawning in these different alternatives here. Maybe Gregg has a table of that.

DR. DUVAL: Gregg is pulling up his table, and you can see the St. Simons Area 2; red snapper, scamp, vermilion snapper that is spawning.

MR. HAYMANS: Gregg, at least looking back at 17, it does – and maybe because the box shifted just a bit, I don't know, but I do see a spawning speckled hind down there. It may be that the box changed just enough between the two documents that it didn't get picked up. I don't know that this is going to show you.

MR. WAUGH: I don't think this would show it here as to what it was. We could pull up, if you're interested, the MPA Expert Workgroup Report. I think that has a chart in there that would show the speckled hind and Warsaw.

DR. DUVAL: All right, we have a motion on the floor. I'm probably going to have to go back and read that. It was a little convoluted. **The motion is remove Subalternatives 2A through 2C and 3A and add new Subalternative 3D to Action 5, which would be a 2 by 2 area of that St. Simons 2. Any other discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MR. WAUGH: Next we move to Florida; and we've got alternatives in there for the Warsaw Hole, 2A, 2B, 2 and 1 square miles; Daytona Steeples, 3A through 3C, 27 down to 6; and a new alternative that was suggested during public hearings for the Push Button Hill Site that is 9.4 square miles.

We received some input – Lora Clarke forwarded some information from Beth Dieveney. This is exciting because this is information that was collected last night. We've got this plot, and what Roger has done is overlaid the boxes on this. Roger, do you want to come up and sort of explain what we're looking at here.

MR. PUGLIESE: This was perfect timing because what you see is the multibeam mapping that really do show you the characteristic of the hole and then the associated bathymetries, the real steep bathymetries to the west and to the south of the hole itself. You do see that the alternatives that you have, the two alternatives, capture the core footprint of the Warsaw Hole as well as the larger one even gets into some of the other complex ledge forms. I think the alternatives are right on the money in terms of getting just how large of an area you would like to be able to look at.

MR. WAUGH: And Mike sent an e-mail for you to download Nick Farmer's revised presentation. He and a number of other authors – we had that originally included in that folder with all the background information, so he incorporated this. Also this Nancy Foster cruise planned to drop cameras in there and also collect some fish sonar data.

This is exciting that in terms of fully analyzing sites, we will now have information to show the bottom topography in this area, what information they collect from the cameras to show what is down there, as well as information on fish sonar results in that area. Thank you to Beth and the folks that are out on the cruise and all the folks that participated. Some of our AP members have been instrumental in helping them find locations out there and so forth.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Gregg, and thanks for that new information. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes; that is great. I hope that can be included in the document. Based on what we saw, I wasn't sure if we needed to take the green box out on the left a little bit. It looks like we're pretty good, but I can't tell if we're missing something over there on the far left.

MR. WAUGH: In terms of looking at your alternatives, we've got two square miles. You could give us direction to come up with another alternative that might extend this a little longer down here. I think this is, Roger, a 2 by 1 now or 3 by 1, so maybe a 4 by 1 if you want to add.

MS. McCAWLEY: I think that we could keep that same size box and just move the whole box to the left a little bit.

MR. WAUGH: Okay, when you make the motion, just give us – or give us some direction to basically take that box and slide to the left to pick up what is going on over here.

DR. McGOVERN: I would support a bigger box because just two alternatives with two square miles and one square mile; that is awfully small. I think that is kind of a difficult thing to enforce, and Jeff might want to talk about that. I would support something like what Gregg suggested with another alternative that has a bigger area.

MS. McCAWLEY: Do you want to make a motion about that bigger area, make a suggestion for that?

DR. McGOVERN: Yes; I would make a motion that there is a bigger area according to what did you suggest, Gregg, four square miles or four by one or something like that? I would make that motion.

DR. DUVAL: A motion by Jack to add a new Subalternative 2C, which would be something bigger than two square miles around Warsaw Hole; so four square miles is what we have here. Is there a second to that; second by Jessica. Discussion? Mel.

MR. BELL: Jack, hit it on the head in terms of enforceability. Obviously, bigger is better, but if there is also sort of a sweet spot that you're trying to protect, if that is in the center, that is even better. It just gets you away from the edges is always easier.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion? Chester.

MR. BREWER: I just had a question for Gregg. Do we have any idea, and may well not, but which direction the prevailing current is in that area?

DR. DUVAL: I'm not sure Gregg would have that, but –

MR. WAUGH: I don't know; but we will certainly add that information into the document.

MR. BREWER: That might go into – you know, it is fairly deep and so it might be that the side where the current is or the direction it is coming from, you might want to have maybe a little bit more buffer on that side; that is what I was thinking.

DR. DUVAL: Good thoughts. **The motion reads add new Subalternative 2C to Action 6, Warsaw Hole, four square miles.** Is there any other discussion? Mark.

MR. BROWN: Yes; can we ask to remove any of the subalternatives?

DR. DUVAL: Why don't we dispense with this motion and then we'll get into any removal of subalternatives. Any other discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none; this motion stands approved.** Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I would like to talk about that item where it says a new alternative, the Push Button Hill Site. I know that was brought up in some of the public comments that we received. We had a lengthy discussion about this particular site at a previous council meeting. I believe we were in Charleston.

We talked about the oceanography and kind of where the currents are going, and some of the characteristics of that area are no longer in place in that particular area anymore. I would not want to add this particular site because I don't believe it exists in the area that the fishermen remember as Push Button Hill. I don't believe that area exists anymore; and that is what we had a lengthy discussion about at that particular meeting.

DR. DUVAL: Any other comments? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: We talked about these spawning SMZs as small targeted areas, and then all of a sudden we're going to four square miles based on whether you can enforce it or not. When we talked about how these things were going to get public buy-in, they're going to really be enforced by fishermen that are in that particular area.

To me I think you go back to the citizen science thing I went through before where that MPA watch in California is that fishermen in those particular areas that could ride through and document the kinds of interactions that are occurring in those areas; not as an enforcement tool but just as something that can be done.

From my experience with Warsaws, in any particular area that I fished, if you closed a one square mile area on all the areas that I've caught them – and I've caught hundreds of them – you will protect 90-plus percent of the animals on that particular spot. It is a little bit disconcerting to go to four square miles, but for the analysis I'm not going to vote against it. But what I would ask is that since we have – we got that great new information last night.

Let's move that red box so Warsaw Hole itself is in the middle of that red box if that is what I'm interpreting as Warsaw Hole is. Let's move it to the middle of the box so you could at least get the maximum protection if you went with the smallest area.

DR. DUVAL: Gregg is getting a draft motion up there for you, Ben.

MR. HARTIG: And that is to move the two square mile area of the Warsaw Hole in the middle of that box.

DR. DUVAL: Second by Chester. Discussion?

MR. HAYMANS: Ben said the red box and I thought the red box was the one square mile and the green was the two square mile.

MR. WAUGH: Do you want the one square mile area, Ben?

MR. HARTIG: I'd really like to see both of them, that it encompass that the best way we can give a buffer around that area, so rephrase my motion. What do I need to do? Okay, for the one and two square mile areas for Warsaw Hole – yes, place Warsaw Hole in the middle of those boxes.

DR. DUVAL: Chester, are you okay with that as the seconder?

MR. BREWER: Absolutely.

DR. DUVAL: **The motion reads move the one and two square mile areas to have the Warsaw Hole in the middle of those boxes. Is there further discussion on this motion? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Is there a desire to consider all of these alternatives under Action 6 for analysis? Are there any you would like removed? Mark.

MR. BROWN: I'd like to ask that Subalternative 3A be removed.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Mark to remove Subalternative 3A, which is the 27 square mile Daytona Steeples. Jessica, are you seconding that or do you want discussion?

MS. McCRAWLEY: I'll second it.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, discussion? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: It gets back to a little bit of what I said before. I know it is uncomfortable to the public to have 27 square miles in there; but to get the analysis and get maybe an appropriate area within that area, I have no intent – I'm going to put that on the record right now – no intent of closing 27 square miles for Daytona Steeples. I'll put that on the record right now; but my intent would be to find the very best spot within that area to protect.

In this particular instance that happens to fall within the 27 square mile area and we go to a smaller area, it wouldn't be in the best interest of moving forward. Now, Gregg, with the 27 miles, how much is the analysis different going to be given that we really don't have that much information other than anecdotal. What kind of information – I will ask you that – what kind of information do we have within that area now?

MR. WAUGH: It is the anecdotal information. Rusty has provided lots of historical information for that area. We've got some occurrence data of greater amberjack, snowy grouper, speckled hind and vermilion. We would have the detailed bottom topography to identify where the pinnacles are within that area.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, the occurrence data; where does that come from?

MR. WAUGH: The MPA Expert Workgroup Report and the NMFS 2013 distribution of speckled hind and Warsaw Grouper in the U.S. South Atlantic, SERO, LAP 2012-08; those two publications.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, if I recall being involved in that workgroup, that is anecdotal information. In some of these, when we're just dealing with anecdotal information – and this gets back to what I said earlier in the meeting – we have a gradation of information about these different places. When we get to a place in particular that only has anecdotal information, really we need to do more of the research to be able to really get to what we really need to be doing.

We don't need to be going in there and closing an area larger than we need, and we need this pinpoint pinnacle areas that are the best areas that we can protect in that area. To me this is where we get in particular to the research needs where you don't have anything to really – other than anecdotal information to sink your teeth into.

I think in this particular we need to do the research first, before we figure out what we really want to be closing to the fishermen. Basically, you want to really be able to get to what you need; so the 27 square miles, if we close that, that's a big impact on the fishermen; but however the pinnacle you close may be within that area. We're kind of in a quandary here.

You don't want to have that impact on the fishermen, but you want to close the best spot; so what is the best way to move forward to do that is all I'm trying to get at. It seems to me that in these particular instances, as you go through Florida, where we don't have the information; that you're probably going to want to – and especially for the Steeples is you want to have some information gathered first.

DR. DUVAL: Ben, would you like to hear a little bit from Rusty about some of this anecdotal information before I go to Wilson and Jack?

MR. BREWER: Gregg, in the analysis – and let's say you've got a 27 square mile area and you're able to pinpoint a particular portion of that area that really would be an area of concern or a good area, and you're able to pinpoint within there that, okay, this is where the spawning is taking place and it is taking place from June through July; just because it has been analyzed as a 27 mile area, that does not preclude us in any way, I don't think, from coming back and saying, oh, this is the spot, let's plot this out, that is the good spot. Is my understanding of that correct?

MR. WAUGH: You are correct. If you take that 27 square mile area out as an alternative, you would be able to choose a smaller area within that 27 square mile area. If you wanted to choose something larger, we would have to go out and get additional public input; but anything smaller, you would be able to choose any area within that 27 square mile area; you're correct.

MR. HARTIG: And if I may, Madam Chairman, to the question you posed before about Rusty – all right, I think specifically, Rusty, if you came up to the table, the question I have is do the smaller boxes incorporate the area that we talked about through the MPA Workgroup, from your experiences in the past?

MR. HUDSON: That has not been validated. The C-Loran numbers have been in the possession of various entities to be examined several years ago, and it hasn't been touched yet. Now, the problem is that those are male speckled hinds on that one particular steeple. That steeple is not that large. Probably the base of it is like this room.

When you find it in the soon-to-be-implemented Coral Amendment 8, inside of that HAPC, which is 50 percent is effective as an MPA – and that is going to be 800-something square miles with bunches of pinnacles – I believe that we really should take in mind that those males are probably moving back inshore and mixing with these smaller females.

That way they're getting out of the current in order to do the spawning probably in that period May to June when speckled hinds tend to have their peak spawning period. I have been asking for several years now for the validation of that particular spot, as well as the Daytona Ledge. Both are found on the western side of the soon-to-be-implemented HAPC; not all the way out there to 340 feet out to the eastern side.

There is nothing out there except rock shrimp ground that they're actually going outside the soon-to-be-implemented HAPC. I have a lot of issues with that; and I brought it up, as you remember, at the public hearing in Daytona that you and Erika attended. Thank you very much for the comment opportunity.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, I was just going to agree with Ben. To me what makes good logic is you analyze a larger area, you get your specific information, you include the buffer around the spawning area that you have defined as best you can. To me that is just a very logical process. If you start small, as Rusty just pointed out, I think you can miss it; so start with something larger. Remember it is just for analytical purposes. This is not saying, as Ben pointed out also, you're not going to necessarily close 27 square miles.

MR. COX: I was just going to say that new area that I proposed off of North Carolina, I'm looking forward to getting with fishermen and discussing what we're going to do in that area and shift that box around that encompasses exactly where those fish are we're trying to protect, which would be the red grouper spawning and those bigger fish in the deeper water. That is how I see that area coming together.

DR. DUVAL: **We have a motion on the floor that is still under discussion. It is to remove Subalternative 3A from Action 6.** Is there any other discussion on this motion? We've had a lot of good discussion here. I think about the value of analyzing a larger area and that has the council has the opportunity to select a smaller area should the information that we receive inform a much more specific and smaller place.

Are people prepared to vote? **Can I see a show of hands of those in favor of the motion to remove Subalternative 3A from Action 6; can I see a show of hands of those opposed. The motion fails in a tie, four to four.** Ben.

MR. HARTIG: And even though we've had a lot of discuss at the table today saying that we're going to make it a smaller area; I think within that alternative, somehow we need to put some wording in there that we're going to analyze the 27 square mile area with the intent of narrowing it down to a specific set of pinnacles that are appropriate for the SMZ process. Does that make sense?

DR. DUVAL: Perhaps that can be direction to staff to add some language to indicate that the intent is that we're analyzing a larger area during the public input process to find a good spot within there.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, exactly.



MR. WAUGH: And we'll add that discussion and make sure that is clearly reflected in there. I would assume the intent would be this – well, if you analyze the whole 27 square miles, you're analyzing all the area within the 12 and the 6 mile box, too.

DR. DUVAL: That's it for Action 6. Action 7 was the movement of the Charleston Deep Reef Artificial MPAs and we already have selected Alternative 2 as our preferred to move that. The advisory panel has recommended that. I don't think we have any desire to change that as a preferred. I think moving on to Action 8, then, which would be the transit and anchoring provisions. I think there is some language in there that we might have to approve.

MR. WAUGH: Yes; you asked us to look at revising the wording here. The IPT has provided the revised language on Page 41. Rick DeVictor was the one who spearheaded putting this together. It clearly states what the no action alternative is. Again, this is on Page 41. Alternative 2 would be in the proposed spawning SMZs allow transit with snapper grouper species aboard a vessel when fishing gear is appropriately stowed.

Alternative 3 is prohibit anchoring in the proposed spawning SMZs. In the box we've got the definitions that go along with this. It defines transit. It defines what fishing gear appropriately stowed means. The Snapper Grouper AP supports the transit provision and the anchoring prohibition.

DR. DUVAL: We would be looking for a motion from the committee to accept those recommended changes. Jessica.

**MS. McCRAWLEY: I move that we accept the recommended changes by the IPT for Action 8.**

**DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Jessica; second by Jack Cox. Any other discussion on this motion? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.**

MR. WAUGH: The next item is timing on Page 77. Originally the intent was to give final approval at September, and we're just clarifying that we're targeting the DEIS going out when the public hearing document goes out. The closure of that DEIS comment period will occur after our September meeting. The DEIS comments that we get prior to and up to our September meeting we will look at in September.

You will review all the public hearing comments and approve all the actions; so that will be the final list of sites. Then we will finalize the document. It will come back to you in December. You will review any additional DEIS comments, make any additional changes that are necessary to address those, and then approve for secretarial review. We've got options there for you to give us guidance on how we proceed from here.

DR. DUVAL: Earlier we had considerable discussion about the timing of this. I just want to make clear that under the schedule that Gregg has laid out we would be selecting final sites in September and then approving the document for formal review in December. Ben expressed concerns with regard to a process for how best to move forward with designation of these areas.

I just want to make sure we have some discussion with that. I also know that Chris has drafted up a motion, which would be appropriate prior to this motion to approve for timing that would add a provision to this action. I guess I would like a little bit of committee discussion on what everyone would like in terms of timing, and then also I'd like Chris to bring forward his motion, which has to do with sunset provisions. Well, you all were very vocal at the beginning.

MR. HARTIG: I thought you were going to take Chris' motion first.

DR. DUVAL: I don't have to.

MR. HARTIG: Well, that's what you said you were going to do.

DR. DUVAL: No, I said that I wanted more discussion and that I also wanted to take up Chris' motion. There was no order to that. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I would like to hear Chris' motion first before we talk about the timing.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, Chris, go ahead, the draft motion is up there.

MR. CONKLIN: This is just some ideas that we've been bouncing around and I have got a lot of public feedback from it. We can maybe come up with some other variation if this isn't going to work. Okay, the motion is to add a new Action 9 to put a sunset clause on any new natural bottom designated as an SMZ. Sites must be monitored and evaluated through ongoing work outlined in the SAFMC SMP. SMZ designation would be removed if no proof of spawning snapper grouper species is found within two years, three years or four years.

DR. DUVAL: That is in the form of a motion and you're making that motion right now?

MR. CONKLIN: That's correct.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, seconded by Mark. Discussion? Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Chris, what would you consider constitutes proof of spawning?

MR. CONKLIN: Well, that's where I was going to look for some discussion. The SSC report on this amendment says there is not too many samples taken or not enough. Well, it doesn't say it is not enough, but it says there are very few. For us to make decisions on something like this, we need more information. If we're on the timeline that we are and we're designating spots as SMZs, I think we owe it back to ourselves to call ourselves accountable and make sure that the places we're picking actually are spawning areas.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, I would just suggest that proof of spawning could be eggs, it could be larvae, it could be gravid adults, maybe.

MR. CONKLIN: To that point, Mel and I were speaking about the resources in South Carolina and the process that has been done by Dr. Heyman of actually harvesting the fish and taking the eggs out and sending them off to the lab and the gonads, I guess, but that is what my intent was.

MR. COX: I support this, Chris. I think it is a good idea. I think we have quite a few sites to check out; and I'm not quite sure how much time we'll be able to spend in each one of them. I would just say that maybe we add one more year and maybe go to five years out on it.

MR. BELL: I like the discussion of the concept. I think this has some merit towards allowing us to move forward eventually with this. I'm not particularly fond of all the wording. Let's say we were to vote this down; could we bring it back up or spend some time finessing proper wording for such an action and then bring it back up and add it in September.

I'm fully willing to have something that is sort of provides some accountability for us and decision points; and then we'd have to, of course, figure out criteria for how we determine success. I like the idea and I think it would help us to gain some public trust and move forward in a way that we can actually this new potential tool and put it in use; but I'm not particularly fond of the wording as it is right now.

MR. BOWEN: I'm leaning to support this. Chris, if you could kind of clarify the phrase or the term "any new natural bottom"; if you could clarify that for me. Then to Mel's point, I think that if the public is aware that if we're trying to – if something is not being found, then we would open it back up. If the public is aware of that, I think it would restore some faith. But, Chris, if you could clarify those words, please.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes; I sure can. In the decision document for Amendment 36, I believe it is in the purpose – well, no, it is in Chapter 1, introduction. Anyways, that language came from the document. It is under the purpose, I think, to protect or identify new natural bottom sites as the purpose of this; so that's where I got the wording.

MR. BOWEN: My question is once we designate an SMZ, then it wouldn't really be considered new natural bottom anymore, right?

DR. DUVAL: I'm not quite sure what you're getting at.

MR. BOWEN: Well, if he is wanting a sunset clause to – I think once we designate a special spawning management zone, then it wouldn't be new bottom anymore. It would already be designated or am I reading too much into that? Do you see what I'm saying; it would be new anymore. We would already have it locked down, quote-unquote.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I think that might be just semantics. Yes; obviously once you designate an area, it is designated, but it could be removed in the future should this action go through. I think you might be trying to dig down too far into the weeds on this one.

MR. BOWEN: Okay, that's fine; thank you.

MR. HAYMANS: My point was specifically to the timing. I'm in favor of the sunset. Two years is way too short. I was going to suggest three, five and ten, realizing that ship time and all that kind of good stuff may not come around every other year; but I am in favor of a sunset.

MS. BECKWITH: I was going to echo some of Mel's and Doug's points. I also thought that two and three years was likely a bit short, but three, five and ten would be more appropriate. In terms of an automatic removal, maybe we can sort of finesse this into a review of information at three years for consideration, something like that, but not necessarily an automatic removal.

I think we will need to finesse the language as well. But, also, some of these areas are being chosen because they already have some record of having spawned-condition fish in them; so we would have to sort of go through and specify criteria that says – you know, proof of spawning fish; we have proof that there has been spawned-ready fish in some of these areas.

MS. McCAWLEY: I just wanted to echo some of the other things that I heard. I agree with three, five and ten. I think two is too short because of, like what Doug said, ship time and other projects, people getting funding; but I would support this motion. I would be in favor of putting something out there and then letting the IPT bring us something back that is cleaned up a little bit more with some suggestions for the next meeting.

MR. CONKLIN: That was my original intent was to give it to staff and see what they could do with it and let's just give them some direction.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, I agree, two years is too short; ten years may be too long; but maybe some wording in there instead of an automatic sunset. It sets a review for possible removal because there may be other reasons we want to keep it.

DR. DUVAL: All right, Mel, and then I think everybody has had a chance to talk, and I'm going to make a suggestion.

MR. BELL: I was just going to suggest that having looked at other areas and watched things; three, five and seven would be fine with me. You will see what you're going to see. The hardest challenge will be the assets to get out and do what you need to do probably from a scheduling standpoint. In terms of getting results, I don't think you need to go over seven.

In talking to Gregg, if we can put something in here and take it forward and have staff kind of tweak it a little bit, I think then that will take it into the public realm. They'll know what we're looking at, and I think that would be a good thing. I think this would really help us to sell the concept and gain some trust.

MR. HARTIG: Can I get a clarification from Gregg? When we started down this path, it is spawning SMZs – and I'm losing this now – was there an overarching particular way in which we were going to try and protect Warsaw and speckled hind or not or was it always particular to spawning? That is what I'm losing a little bit in this.

MR. WAUGH: The intent was that we were using these spawning SMZs to focus on providing additional protection for snapper grouper species, including speckled hind and Warsaw grouper. We can take this and move forward and put something in the document for public hearings. What we will need is clarification on the timing and then some clarification – we have done this before.

We did this with the Oculina Experimental Closed Area. In that case the council had to take action to continue the oculina; so just some clarification. We can flesh this out, but we need to clearly get your guidance on the years; and then if you want it to pattern after what we've done before where the council would need to take action to continue the spawning SMZs or do you just want to trigger a review in three, five and seven. That would give us what we need.

DR. DUVAL: The first thing I'm going to suggest is a little tweaking of the motion that perhaps direction to staff to add a new Action 9 and modify accordingly, but we need to address both the timing – I've heard three, five and seven; three, five and ten; and then also several people have spoken to whether or not that should be a trigger for a review – if insufficient evidence of spawning does come forward, whether this would trigger a review or it would come back to the council to determine whether or not the SMZ would continue. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, if we used it to trigger a review, we could use a shorter timeframe, say, three years, and just say we've looked at it – and they've looked at it and they didn't find anything so we'll just stop now or we haven't had a chance to look at it fully, so we're going to keep going forward. That kind of keeps our finger on the pulse of it; so I'm inclined to go for a shorter timeframe and then go to a review.

MR. BELL: I think you need to have the consequences in there. Let's say we do review and there is nothing that says they're going to go away. I think to gain the public trust and the public buy-in we're going to need to hold our feet to the fire. That's why I think it needs to be sunsetted at some particular date, but we will hold our feet to the fire.

If we cannot demonstrate in that appropriate period of time that it has done what we say it can do or decide it is just not what we thought it was going to be, then it goes away. I guess the way you work around the sunset, we would have to redesignate them or something at that particular time. I think we need to hold ourselves accountable.

MR. HARTIG: I hate to draw this out and I could probably do it later, but if you look at spawning fish throughout the area – I mean if you look at red porgy in particular, everywhere there is a red porgy spot there is a spawning spot, just about. They spawn through the entire jurisdiction. If you have a spawning SMZ that has red porgy spawning, what does that really mean?

It is not a spawning aggregation of red porgies because they spawn – and each species has particular behavioral differences for spawning. I think you almost need a decision-tree approach to look at this, and maybe staff could work on something like that.

MR. BELL: And that's why I was – I like the approach, but I wasn't satisfied with the wording because what are the success criteria. Those success criteria and how you measure them isn't something we can figure out right now; and that's why I didn't want to get bogged down in that.

I think we need to do this in order to help us get the buy-in; but you're absolutely right, there are all kinds of ways to demonstrate spawning, a little spawning, a lot of spawning. That just takes a little bit of finessing.

MR. HAYMANS: Multispecies spawning.

MR. BELL: Multispecies spawning; that is a good point, but we don't have the time right now to flesh all that out. There does need to be – perhaps direction to staff could be to help establish some clear success criteria that we're looking for in order to say, yes, that is a good spot for these three reasons or whatever.

MR. WAUGH: We can take this guidance. Perhaps the easiest thing would be to pattern it after what we did with the oculina. We had a three-year review and a ten-year sunset. If you're going to have a hard sunset, we need to have a little longer period of time, because then we need to build in that ten-year sunset time to develop an amendment, get it reviewed and approved. We did this before and we can pattern it after what we did for the oculina. It was a three-year review with a ten-year sunset. You'll have a good idea of what is going on in three years and it automatically would sunset in ten.

DR. DUVAL: I just have a question; but the process we have set up in here is a regulatory-type amendment process, so it wouldn't have to be a full plan amendment. It would be an abbreviated process. Okay, thank you. In terms of this motion, Gregg, would it be more helpful to – do we need to include direction to staff in the motion?

MR. WAUGH: Given how controversial this will be, I think it would be clearer – tell us what years and then if you want it to sunset. It would be a three-year review, ten-year sunset, and that would make it very clear to us what you want.

DR. DUVAL: Chris, you were the maker of the motion and, Mark, you were the seconder; so I think we want to be specific here. Would it be a three-year review and a ten-year sunset? Does that capture the intent?

MR. CONKLIN: I was just thinking – you know, I'm not inclined to say we're going to model it after what we did with oculina because I'm not familiar with that document. I would want to read it first. I'm looking to direct staff to come up with some alternatives. Maybe we could pick our hard numbers like you're saying – just tell me what you want me to do.

DR. DUVAL: So with a three-year review, any spawning SMZs that we put into place through this process, they would all come back before us for a three-year review of information and evaluation of their effectiveness. They would all sunset at ten years unless we took action to ensure that they continue. That is how the oculina worked. There would be an automatic sunset provision. If we direct staff to develop something similar for this process; that is kind of what it would look like. Mel and then Mark and then Charlie, and we're not going to be continuing this much longer.

MR. BELL: So the oculina was one area that you could focus assets into, so we're talking all kinds of multiple areas. I'm just a little concerned about the three-year review. Trying to cover

all the work that might need to be done in three years; I'm wondering if it should be like a five-year review and a ten-year sunset, just given the scope of all the sites we've got and all and the limited available to work in those depths of water.

DR. DUVAL: Might I make a suggestion that perhaps you include alternatives for a three- or five-year review and a ten-year sunset? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay, so no matter what the review said or at whatever years, it is going to sunset at ten, if that is what the motion is, and that is that. I just wanted to sure that was clear.

DR. DUVAL: Yes, it would require action by the council to continue spawning SMZs. Gregg, do you guys have what you need so you can –

MR. WAUGH: Yes, if we replace what is here, two, three, four, five, with these two bullets here.

DR. DUVAL: And then if we can add at the beginning of the motion "direct staff to add new Action 9"; we want to give you all the license to tweak this as necessary to sort of model it after what was done for oculina.

MR. WAUGH: If that is the motion, we've got it.

**DR. DUVAL: The motion reads direct staff to add new Action 9 to put a sunset clause on any new natural bottom designated as an SMZ. Sites must be monitored and evaluated through ongoing work outlined in the SAFMC System Management plan. SMZ designation would be removed if no proof of spawning (eggs, larvae, gravid females, et cetera) snapper grouper species is found within three- and/or five-year review; ten-year sunset unless council takes action to continue.**

MR. WAUGH: Keep in mind when you say ten years, at the end of ten years it is gone. We have to take action beginning at the absolute latest at the start of nine years; and that would be cutting it close.

MR. CONKLIN: What happens at the three- and the five-year review? If we don't have any information, we just keep trying to get it for another five years?

DR. DUVAL: That would be a decision that the council would have to make. If you have a three-year review and you decide by whatever criteria there are that is insufficient information to demonstrate spawning, then we could develop a regulatory amendment to remove that particular area.

MR. CONKLIN: I'll be brief. One more thing to Ben's point about the red porgy spawning all over the place; would I need to change the wording from snapper grouper species to multiple – like I heard maybe Doug said – or just come up with the details later?

DR. DUVAL: I think we can establish a priority species for which spawning activity is we're focusing this spawning protection, so perhaps not just every red porgy. Mel.

MR. BELL: And I think the concern is that one spawning red porgy does not make a spawning aggregation, so there needs to be some clear sense of what success looks like, and that is what he is concerned about. It can't just be, oh, yes, we found one fish or two fish. Yes, it does take two, doesn't it?

DR. LANEY: Unless they're hermaphroditic.

DR. DUVAL: **Okay, if there is no other discussion; is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Now we would have to approve the proposed change to the timing and approve for a second round of public hearings. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: I would make that motion, Madam Chair.

DR. DUVAL: **Motion by Doug; second by Charlie. Any discussion? The motion reads approve the proposed change to timing and approve Amendment 36 for a second round of public hearings. Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** That concludes our business on Amendment 36.

We are also going to continue to operate as the Committee of the Whole for Amendment 35, which is removal of species. Mr. Chairman, I would like to at least get through the Snapper Grouper Committee Report. Amendment 35 would be our last item of business as a Committee of the Whole. Then we'll move back into the committee report, picking up with the hogfish motions from Amendment 37, and then we'll just discuss how to move forward with the items we didn't get to at this meeting for September.

CAPTAIN GORDON: Madam Chair, could I just maybe one minute. My name is Captain Mark Gordon. Thank you for the moment. I know you're in a hurry. I just wanted to introduce myself for the record. I'm Chief of Enforcement up at District 7. I represent Admiral Buschman. I think the council met Admiral Korn. There was a change of command on the May 1.

Our hope is to bring Admiral Buschman down. He does have fish experience. While our focus most of the time at District 7 is drugs and migrants and port security, it is a priority for us. We're limited in resources. I thank Morgan Fowler for keeping us at times focused and back to the fish business so that we can pay good attention to it that it deserves.

Also, as you may know, this will probably be Morgan's last council meeting. She will be in the office at least for another year, so you may see her. I want to introduce Tara Pray. Lieutenant Pray will be taking over Morgan's spot. She is a former boarding officer, fisheries experience. I think you will be in good hands. That was all I had and any questions I'll take offline. Obviously, you can get to me through Lieutenant Pray or still Lieutenant Fowler. I appreciate all you do at the council and thanks.

DR. DUVAL: And we appreciate all you do and thank you very much for being here. It is always great to have our enforcement here to hear the sausage being made. We are on Amendment 35. We are slated to approve this for formal secretarial review. Myra.



MS. BROUWER: You walked through this amendment in March. I wasn't planning on walking you through it again. You approved both actions. The only changes that were made to the document from the version you saw in March is we added the chapter with the council conclusions. We captured some of the concerns that you heard about earlier this week from the Habitat AP regarding removal of schoolmaster from the FMU. That recommendation has been added to Chapter 5 of that amendment. What we would need is just a motion to approve it for secretarial review and editorial license to make any minor tweaks that still need to be made to the document.

DR. DUVAL: Just to remind folks, the first action in this amendment is to remove species from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan; specifically, black snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper and schoolmaster. Our preferred alternatives are to remove each one of those from the fishery management plan.

The intent is that the state of Florida would I believe extend regulations for those species into federal waters. I'll remind you that the Gulf Council has already removed this from their Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan. The second action dealt with golden tilefish longline endorsements.

Our preferred alternative was to revise the golden tilefish longline endorsement regulation to indicate that vessels with a valid or renewable golden tilefish longline endorsement at any time during the golden tilefish fishing year are not eligible to fish for golden tilefish using hook-and-line gear under the 500 pound gutted weight golden tilefish hook-and-line trip limit.

The codified text is I believe Attachment 9B. Again, what we would need is a motion from the committee to approve Amendment 35 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Jessica.

MS. McCAWLEY: I would make that motion, Madam Chairman.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Jessica; second by Mr. Haymans. Discussion? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: You might remember that Joshua McCoy had testified against this amendment before, specifically to Action 2, because it would affect him in his ability to fish with another vessel permit I think he purchased in the snapper grouper fishery. Anyway, he forgot to mention it at public hearing that he was opposed to this amendment; and I told him that I would tell you when you were considering it for final approval that he was still opposed to this amendment, and I would bring that up. I'm sure you're not surprised that he is opposed to this amendment, but anyway I wanted to put that on the record.

DR. DUVAL: We appreciate that, and Josh has definitely spoken to everyone about that. **The motion reads approve Amendment 35 for secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make necessary changes to the document.** Because this is final action and we are operating in full council as a committee of the whole, this is a roll call vote.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: No.

MR. MAHOOD: Dr. McGovern.

DR. McGOVERN: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Ms. McCawley.

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes

MR. MAHOOD: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chairman Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. MAHOOD: Chairman Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

**MR. MAHOOD: The motion passes with one negative vote.**

MS. McCAWLEY: I just wanted to clarify for the record why I voted yes. I was against our preferred that was chosen in Action 2; but since the state of Florida initiated the other actions through the council process, I voted yes on that amendment.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – CONTINUED – JUNE 12, 2015

DR. DUVAL: At this point we're going back into the Committee of the Whole for the remainder of our items, which include Snapper Grouper Amendment 38, which is blueline tilefish; Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendments 23 and 24.

For Snapper Grouper Amendment 38, this is blueline tilefish. This included options and alternatives that you saw at the last meeting in March when we were discussing this issue previously; that the council had considered back in 2010 to potentially extend the fishery management unit northward into the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas of jurisdiction.

It also includes I think a draft action to look at different means of splitting up the ABC. I think my suggestions, just based on the fact that the SSC just had a webinar last week, that they're in the process of requesting updated projections from the science center that consider other recruitment alternatives; that we perhaps hold off on considering this amendment right now.

What we would have done is approve this for scoping. I will just let folks know that the Mid-Atlantic Council has approved items for scoping. They've held a few scoping meetings for development of a fishery management plan to manage deep-water species in their area of jurisdiction. There is one being held in North Carolina Tuesday night. That is my suggestion. Dr. Ponwith, you look like you wanted to say something.

DR. PONWITH: I have been in communication with our staff about those requests for the projections. Certainly, we are going to do everything we can to bring the best information we can to light on these difficult decisions. We're eager to see the additional guidance that Dr. Barbieri referenced that they're developing on those exploratory projections.

Exploratory can also become one giant fishing trip, so we want those refined. We do remain concerned about with the information we have just how much more we can squeeze out of those projections. We're concerned about it and we're looking forward to interacting with the SSC on their idea but are just being cautious about how enlightening those additional analyses are going to end up being.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks for that, Bonnie. I think we all have some concerns about that, and we're all looking for the best path forward. All right, with the committee's concurrence, is everyone okay with proceeding forward in that fashion? All right, thank you. The next two items that we're simply going to have to cover during our September meeting will be Regulatory Amendments 23 and 24.

If you recall, Regulatory Amendment 23 is one that contains a couple of actions dealing with management of the golden tilefish fishery. There is one action in there to modify the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line component. There is another action that considers alternatives to lengthen the fishing season for the longline component of the commercial golden tilefish fishery.

Regulatory Amendment 24 contains some actions related to revision of the composition of the jacks complex, potentially splitting that out; removal of size limits for deep-water species; modifications to the spawning season closure for shallow-water grouper; modification to the size limit for red grouper; and modification of the bag limit for black sea bass.

I think given recent developments, one of which is we'll be getting an update assessment for the golden tilefish stock – one of the reasons we were looking at modifications to the spawning season closure for shallow-water grouper was the result of the South Florida Issues and wanting to kind of consider any modification to spawning season closures in total.

Obviously, based on the work we did yesterday, that process is not moving forward as quickly as we thought. The other thing we have is mutton snapper. In the options paper for mutton snapper, there are a whole bunch of actions that deal with revisions to the minimum stock size threshold, revisions to maximum sustainable yield, revisions to the ACLs and ACTs. We also received some recommendations from the advisory panel with regard to mutton snapper management.

I think it is my recommendation and I think that Myra has a potential draft motion to direct staff to initiate a regulatory amendment to revise the biological benchmarks, fishing levels and management measures for mutton snapper. We'd take those mutton snapper actions and put them in their own regulatory amendment.

With regard to all the other things that are Regulatory Amendments 23 and 24 and just stepping back and taking a look at the big picture of all the work that we've done as a council, I'm a little bit concerned that we're sort of getting off track again with ad hoc management. The visioning process was about trying to step back, look at the big picture, have a plan that would inform our management going forward.

I think there are several actions between those two documents that – and I'm just as guilty as anybody else where sort of bleeding into kitchen sink type of management. Thinking specifically with regard to lengthening the fishing season for the longline component of the golden tilefish fishery, the advisory panel recommended no action on that; and especially I think given that we're going to be receiving an updated stock assessment, let's hold off on that.

Similarly, splitting out the jacks and revision to the jacks complex; I see that as something that is probably more appropriately addressed when we're taking a look at the complex as a whole. We've received a lot of input with regard to management of the fishery. I would rather see some of those actions as well as things like looking at a split season for red porgy; I would rather see some of those grouped in more management-related actions.

Like these are actions the council is going to be taking to do things to reduce discards, such as removal of size limits for those deep-water species. Similarly, we've heard lots of input from the

public on aligning our seasons to do such things as providing increased access as well as reduce discards.

I see those red porgy things as being a part of vision-related management actions that we would want to take. When I step back and look at the big picture, we have had so many amendments come through lately. The time period between when we submit an amendment for formal review and between when it is noticed for public availability or a proposed rule or a final rule has stretched out. That is because we've shoved a lot of things through the pipe, and the pipe is only big.

It is a lot of work for the regional office staff, it is a lot of work for our staff, and I would just recommend that you allow staff to remove those mutton actions to another amendment. We obviously have to deal with those; but it might be my recommendation to just deal with a couple of the actions that are pretty immediate and have been sitting out there for a while, such as the modification to the black sea bass bag limit.

That is an action that has been out there since before the quota was increased; and that's something that we can do I think sort of short and sweet. We've heard a lot about the modifications to the start date for the golden tilefish hook-and-line fishing year. I think that's something that could be done in short order.

In terms of the jacks complex, I think splitting that up and reorganizing that is something I'd prefer to tackle as a part of visioning, but there certainly is a need to kind of slow down the burn rate of that ACL; so maybe just considering a commercial trip limit for the entire complex and dealing with the splits later. Those would be my three recommended actions that the council look at moving forward with. Those are my recommendations for moving forward, and I'd just like a little bit of input on that before moving forward with, say, a draft motion on mutton snapper.

MR. BELL: I think you just made a lot of sense. I would concur.

MR. COX: I think that would be perfect to do something with a trip limit, to go ahead and take care of that, and we could it out later makes a lot of sense to me.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: And to the extent when you deal with mutton snapper and changing some of the status determination criteria; I've looked at the framework and I think you have to do that in a plan amendment, not a regulatory amendment.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you for that. Sometimes you need to bring us back to reality and that is probably a good place to be. I appreciate that.

DR. DUVAL: I think Myra has a draft motion up here to direct staff to initiate a plan amendment to revise biological benchmarks, fishing levels and management measures for mutton snapper. I think if I could get a motion from the committee; that would be helpful. Mark.

**MR. BROWN: I make a motion to direct staff to initiate a plan amendment to revise biological benchmarks, fishing levels and management measures for mutton snapper.**

**DR. DUVAL: Motion by Mark; second by Charlie. Discussion? Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** Now we have a timing and task motion. What Myra has up here is staff from the Science Center, the Regional Office, and the Council will examine how suggested approaches to monitor recreational landings of rarely encountered species would work for deep-water species in the South Atlantic; specifically, blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, snowy grouper, and wreckfish. Also provide information on cost of implementing new approaches. Send a letter to the Science Center requesting new projections for blueline tilefish. Prepare Amendment 37 for scoping. Conduct public hearings for Regulatory Amendment 16. Conduct public hearings for Amendment 36.

Finalize Amendment 35 and submit for formal review. Retain actions to revise bag limit for black sea bass, implement a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex, and change the fishing year for the hook-and-line component of the golden tilefish fishery in a regulatory amendment. Initiate amendment for mutton snapper.

MR. CONKLIN: Do we put anything in there about the red porgy?

DR. DUVAL: That was one of the things I was recommending that we, yes, sort of put it in the visioning parking lot or the visioning marina. I think it is fairly well developed. We wouldn't be rejecting any of these actions. This is just my personal opinion; I see it as part of a bigger picture of potentially doing similar things for other species. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: And just the expanded shrimp area and for the golden crab expanded fishing area; that is not part of visioning, so we're just going to do this, get into visioning and then fit that in as we can?

DR. DUVAL: I'm confused about why golden crab access area and shrimp access areas are coming into here.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, it is hard for me to see all of that, so I just wanted to make sure. I just kind of want to know where that was going to flow in the total.

DR. DUVAL: This is the Snapper Grouper Timing and Task, so maybe in those other committees.

MR. WAUGH: As far as mutton snapper is concerned, that is a new plan amendment now. We've tagged Amendment 42 to update the Wreckfish ITQ for next year; so I'd suggest we use that number. We would need to add that to go out to scoping along with Amendment 37.

DR. DUVAL: I'm a little bit lost, so you're suggesting Amendment 42 for mutton snapper?

MR. WAUGH: Correct. Previously you approved a motion directing us to begin a new amendment for dealing with mutton snapper; so that would be Number 42. The first step would be to take it to scoping, to scope what we're looking at in mutton snapper; or is your intent to deal with that on a slower pace?

DR. DUVAL: We would approve that for scoping in September; correct?

MR. WAUGH: Okay.

DR. DUVAL: We haven't looked at any of the mutton snapper actions unless you want us to go through and do that right now. All right, so initiate an amendment for mutton snapper has been added to timing and task. **I would entertain a motion to approve the task and timing items as indicated. Ben.**

**MR. HARTIG: I make that motion, Madam Chairman.**

**DR. DUVAL: Motion by Ben; second by Mel. Any other discussion? Any objection? Seeing none; that motion stands approved.** I know of one item under other business and this concerns snowy grouper. It is something I have received a lot of comments on, Jack has received a lot of comments on, so I'm just going to turn things over to Jack to outline this; and then, Mr. Chairman, we will be done with snapper grouper.

MR. COX: When we went through that Amendment 20, we suggested that we would take a 200 pound trip limit on snowies starting in January. Well, that looked real good. Years ago we had good weather in January and February. After this past year with the weather in North Carolina, it restricted a lot of access to fishermen for snowy groupers, especially in the north end part of our state. The guys to the southern end part of the state had a little more fishing. I was just going to say going into visioning, we're just going to really have to take a serious look at the state management on snowy grouper especially for North Carolina. It just makes a lot of sense for us.

DR. DUVAL: Any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee. If not, the committee is adjourned.

(The Committee of the Whole was adjourned at 12:35 o'clock p.m., June 12, 2015.)

## **INDEX OF MOTIONS**

Page 3: Motion to accept the IPT's recommended wording for purpose and need. Motion approved Page 5.

Page 7: Motion to change the preferred alternative for Action 1 to Alternative 8, Subalternative 8A, and change the closure period to November 1 through April 30. Motion approved on Page 10.

Page 14: Motion to accept the IPT's wording changes to Action 2. Motion approved Page 14.

Page 17: Motion to use purple as the color for black sea bass pot marking in addition to that already required under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. Motion approved Page 17.

Page 18: Motion to select Alternative 2, Subalternative 2A as a preferred alternative under Action 2. Motion approved Page 18.

Page 18: Motion to select Alternatives 3 and 4 under Action 2 as preferreds. Motion approved Page 18.

Page 20: Motion to recommend to council to send Regulatory Amendment 16 out for public hearing. Motion approved Page 20.

Page 66: Motion to approve inclusion of overfishing definition language in Amendment 37 with appropriate modifications to apply to the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock and all assessed snapper grouper species for which this language has not yet been adopted. By assessed we mean assessed through the SEDAR process. Motion approved Page 66.

Page 67: Motion to approve the modified language and structure alternatives under Action 1. Motion approved Page 67.

Page 68: Motion to move Action 2 to the considered but rejected appendix. Motion approved Page 68.

Page 68: Motion to approve the range of alternatives in Action 3. Motion approved Page 69.

Page 70: Motion to approve the range of alternatives under Action 4 for detailed analysis. Motion approved Page 70.

Page 71: Motion to approve the modified wording of Action 5 and Alternative 2 and the range of alternatives under Action 5 for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACL in numbers of fish. Motion approved Page 71.

Page 72: Motion to approve the range of alternatives under Action 6 for detailed analysis. Motion approved Page 72.



Page 72: Motion to approve the range of alternatives under Action 7 for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACL in numbers of fish. Motion approved Page 72.

Page 72: approve the range of alternatives under Action 8 for detailed analysis and specify the recreational ACT in numbers of fish. Motion approved Page 72.

Page 74: Motion to approve the range of alternatives under Action 9 for detailed analysis and add subalternatives under Alternatives 2 and 3 to include size limits up to 20 inches. Motion approved Page 75.

Page 75: Motion to approve the modified range of alternatives under Action 9 for detailed analysis. Motion approved Page 75.

Page 75: Motion to add an alternative similar to Subalternative 3G to Alternative 2. Motion approved Page 75.

Page 76: Motion to analyze trip limit alternatives of 250, 500, 750 and 1,000 pounds for the Georgia through North Carolina stock. Motion approved Page 76.

Page 76: Motion to analyze trip limit alternatives for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock of 50, 100, 150 and 200 pounds. Motion approved Page 77.

Page 78: Motion to include subalternatives under Alternatives 2 and 3 to examine a bag limit of one fish per person per day. Motion approved Page 78.

Page 79: Motion under Action 11 to approve the range of alternatives for detailed analysis. Motion approved Page 79.

Page 81: Motion to add a subalternative to Alternative 2 to examine a similar commercial trip limit option to that currently in place in North Carolina, 150 pounds for first day and 100 pounds each day thereafter up to a max of 750 pounds per trip. Motion failed Page 81.

Page 83: Motion to reconsider motion to analyze trip limit alternatives of 50, 100, 150 and 200 pounds for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock. Motion approved Page 83.

Page 83: Motion to analyze trip limit alternatives of 25, 50, 100, 150 and 200 pounds for the East Florida/Florida Keys stock. Motion approved Page 83.

Page 84: Motion to approve the purpose and need as modified. Motion approved Page 84.

Page 97: Motion to remove Subalternative 3A from Action 3. Motion approved Page 97.

Page 98: Motion to add new Alternatives 4 and 5 to Action 3? (Alternative 4; area north of 780 bottom; Alternative 5; South Cape Lookout Site (3-5 miles). Motion approved Page 98.

Page 100: Motion to add a new subalternative to Action 4 for an area south of the northern South Carolina MPA of sufficient size to encompass the point observations for observations/spawning (4 miles by 2 miles or 3 by 2). Motion approved Page 100.

Page 104: Motion to add new Subalternative 2E. That would be the 15.2 square mile Devil's Hole alternative. The motion reads add new Subalternative 2E to Action 4. Motion approved Page 104.

Page 106: motion is remove Subalternatives 2A through 2C and 3A and add new Subalternative 3D to Action 5, which would be a 2 by 2 area of that St. Simons 2. Motin approved Page 106.

Page 108: Motion to add new Subalternative 2C to Action 6, Warsaw Hole, four square miles. Motion approved Page 108.

Page 110: Motion to move the one and two square mile areas to have the Warsaw Hole in the middle of those boxes. Motion approved Page 110.

Page 112: Motion to remove Subalternative 3A from Action 6. Motion failed Page 112.

Page 113: Motion to accept the recommended changes by the IPT for Action 8. Motion approved Page 113.

Page 119: Motion to direct staff to add new Action 9 to put a sunset clause on any new natural bottom designated as an SMZ. Sites must be monitored and evaluated through ongoing work outlined in the SAFMC System Management plan. SMZ designation would be removed if no proof of spawning (eggs, larvae, gravid females, et cetera) snapper grouper species is found within three- and/or five-year review; ten-year sunset unless council takes action to continue. Motion approved Page 120.

Page 120: Motion to approve the proposed change to timing and approve Amendment 36 for a second round of public hearings. Motion approved Page 120.

Page 121: Motion to approve Amendment 35 for secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make necessary changes to the document. Motion approved Page 123.

Page 125: Motion to direct staff to initiate a plan amendment to revise biological benchmarks, fishing levels and management measures for mutton snapper. Motion approved Page 126.

Page 127: Motion to approve the task and timing items as indicated. Motion approved Page 127.

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
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- Ben Hartig, Vice-Chair
- Chester Brewer
- Jack Cox
- Roy Crabtree
- Staff contact: Kari MacLauchlin

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
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ERICKA BURGESS  
BONNIE POWWETH  
GEORGE SEDBERRY  
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JEFF RADONSKI  
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MIKE LARKIN  
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COL. CHESSUM FRAMPTON  
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**Financial Secretary**

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**Admin. Secretary /Travel Coordinator**

Cindy Chaya  
[cindy.chaya@safmc.net](mailto:cindy.chaya@safmc.net)

**Purchasing & Grants**

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**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council -  
June 2015 Council Meeting  
Key West, FL**

**Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2015      Committee: Snapper Grouper**

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

*In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.*

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(Check box if information is on file)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Rusty Hudson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other <u>consult</u> <i>Describe</i>
Lora Clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Kean J	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Luca Durmon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Trip Arleman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Richard Gomez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suit 201  
Charleston, SC 29405**



**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council -  
June 2015 Council Meeting  
Key West, FL**

**Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2015      Committee: Snapper Grouper**

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

*In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.*

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(Check box if information is on file)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Chris Horton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Joe Klobsterman gnu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
VAN HUBBARD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File CAPT VAN HUBBARD @GMAIL.COM PO BOX 146 PLACIDA, FL. 33946	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
CHARLIE GARCIA	<input type="checkbox"/> On File CHARLIE @ FL MARINE CONSTRUCTION.COM	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Bill Kelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Joshua McCoy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>





**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council -  
June 2015 Council Meeting  
Key West, FL**

**Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2015      Committee: Snapper Grouper**

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

*In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.*

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(Check box if information is on file)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
DICK BRAME	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
George Seibesty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Justin Gribick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Kelli O'Donnell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Adam Bailey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
FRANK HELLES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suit 201  
Charleston, SC 29405**



**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council -  
June 2015 Council Meeting  
Key West, FL**

**Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2015      Committee: Snapper Grouper**

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

*In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.*

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(Check box if information is on file)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Marin Hawk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <u>MSC</u> <i>Describe</i>
Ken Jr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suit 201  
Charleston, SC 29405**

# Registration Report

# GoToWebinar

Generated

Jun 17, 2015 9:43 AM EDT

## General Information

Webinar Name  
SAFMC Council Meeting - Day 3 of 5 (Wednesday)  
Scheduled Start Date  
Jun 10, 2015  
Scheduled Start Time  
8:30 AM EDT  
Scheduled Duration (minutes)

Webinar ID  
132-833-403  
Registered

Opened Invitation

42

32

Clicked Registration Link

630

75

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