

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE

**Bahia Mar Doubletree by Hilton
Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

June 12-13, 2018

SUMMARY MINUTES

Snapper Grouper Committee Members

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Anna Beckwith
Chester Brewer
Chris Conklin
Dr. Michelle Duval
Ben Hartig
Charlie Phillips
Dewey Hemilright

Mel Bell, Vice-Chair
Zack Bowen
Mark Brown
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Tim Griner
Doug Haymans
Tony DiLernia

Council Staff

Gregg Waugh
Dr. Brian Cheuvront
Kimberly Cole
Mike Collins
John Hadley
Roger Pugliese
Amber Von Harten

John Carmichael
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Chip Collier
Dr. Mike Errigo
Kim Iverson
Cameron Rhodes
Christina Wiegand

Observers and Participants

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dewey Hemilright
Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. George Sedberry
Frank Heils
Dr. Clay Porch
Shep Grimes
Dr. Jessica Stephen
Dr. Marcel Reichert
Karen Raine
Stacey Weinstock
Brendan Runde

Dale Diaz
Erika Burgess
Dr. Erik Williams
Karla Gore
Mary Vera
David Moss
Nik Mehta
Steve Murphey
Dr. Luiz Barbieri
Tracey Dunn
Lt. Warren Fair
Rick DeVictor

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Bahia Mar Doubletree by Hilton, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Tuesday morning, June 12, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me start by reading the members of the committee. It's myself, Mel Bell, Anna Beckwith, Zack Bowen, Chester Brewer, Mark Brown, Chris Conklin, Roy Crabtree, Tim Griner, Ben Hartig, Doug Haymans, our Coast Guard rep, Charlie Phillips, and Mid-Atlantic liaison Tony DiLernia, and we have Dewey as well, I believe, down there.

DR. DUVAL: A point of order, Madam Chairman. I am also a member of the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, thank you. You weren't on the list. It was somehow left off the agenda, but, yes, and, thanks, Michelle. All right, and so the first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any additions or modifications to the agenda? Any objections to approval of the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda stands approved. The next order of business is Approval of the March Minutes. Any changes or modifications for the March minutes? Any objection to approval of the March minutes? Seeing none, the minutes stand approved.

The next order of business is the Status of the Commercial and Recreational Catches Versus Quotas for Species Under ACLs, and I'm not sure who exactly is giving us that. Is it Rick? Okay. Thanks.

MR. DEVICTOR: Good morning, Madam Chair. Yes, I will go through the commercial landings, as I normally do, for snapper grouper species, and then Dr. Stephen will come up here and give a presentation on recreational landings. This is Tab 8, Attachment 1a in your briefing materials for the Snapper Grouper Committee, and what was in your briefing material were commercial landings through May 14, and what is shown on your screen there are more updated landings, and these are through June 4.

I will go through some of the species, and you can also see, on the right-hand side, the right-hand column, you can see where the 2017 final landings are, and you can also compare to where we were to the same time last year, June 5, 2017.

Starting off with black sea bass, we are at 25 percent of the current ACL. Around the same time last year, we were at 30 percent. Blueline tilefish, we are currently about halfway to the ACL, or we're over halfway to the ACL, 54 percent. Around the same time last year, it was 75 percent, and we closed down on July 18 of last year for blueline tilefish.

Golden tilefish, we show the hook-and-line component and the longline component and the interim rule values, of course, that are in place now, and you will be talking about Regulatory Amendment 28 to put in the ACLs after the interim rule expires. For the hook-and-line component, we are at 77 percent of the interim rule quota, and, for the longline component, we closed down on March 25.

Moving down to gray triggerfish, that's a split season, and we are closing down tomorrow, June 13, and we sent out a Fishery Bulletin for that, announcing that commercial closure. Last year, it did not close in the first season. It ended up at 88 percent. Jacks are at 50 percent. Last year, 57

percent was where we were at. Red grouper, you sent us Abbreviated Framework 1, and that lowered the ACL for red grouper to 61,160 for that.

Red snapper, you can see the proposed ACL that you put through in Amendment 43 that you sent us, and we'll talk about that in a moment. Then you can see where we ended up with red snapper, on the right-hand side there, at 71 percent. Of course, that was around a two-month closure that we had at the end of last year. Snowy grouper is at 82 percent. Last year, around the same time, we were at 88 percent, and it closed down on June 22.

Moving on to the second page, greater amberjack, and this is a start date of March 1, and we were at 32 percent for that, and, last year, we were at 49 percent. Vermilion snapper, that's a split season, and the trip limit was reduced, and we were at 86 percent as of June 4, and so there's a good chance that that could make it through June. Yellowtail snapper is the final species I will go over, and that's an August 1 start date, and that did close on June 5, because the ACL was reached, and that concludes my report. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and so who is going to give us the recreational catches?

DR. STEPHEN: All right, and so I'm going to give the recreational landings for the snapper grouper. Just some notes on the landings before we get into the actual values. The landings are summarized using the MRIP and MRFSS data, depending on how the ACL was calculated for each stock. Our landings estimates were updated to be consistent with ACL monitoring, and they include data through Wave 6 of 2017.

The stocks that were monitored with the MRFSS data only have preliminary landings for 2017. We didn't receive the MRFSS file until late last night, and so we didn't have a chance to update and look at that, although we are updated for the MRIP landings. They are considered final through 2017. All of our landings include both MRFSS and MRIP as well as headboat landings.

Let's start with 2016 landings, and I want to just point out the stocks that did go over the ACL. We have blueline tilefish at 197 percent, and we closed it on 9/1/2016. Golden tilefish, and that's in numbers, was at 431 percent, and that closed on 8/27, and hogfish was at 140 percent, and that closed on 11/30. Continuing on with the 2016 landings, the porgies exceeded the ACL at 131 percent, and we closed those down on 9/3. Snowy grouper exceeded the landings at 217 percent, and that closed down on 9/1.

Moving on to the 2017 landings, again we had a couple of stocks that exceeded the ACL. Blueline tilefish was at 289 percent, and gray triggerfish was at 111 percent, and the hogfish in the Florida Keys and east Florida region were at 198 percent. Here's the rest of the 2017, and none of these stocks exceeded the ACL. Then, for those with the split season fishing years, we had greater amberjack that was at 103 percent for the 2015/2016 season, and, for the 2016/2017 fishing years, greater amberjack was at 107 percent. In the 2017/2018, we had greater amberjack at 104 percent, and we closed on 10/31.

Now we're going to go into those slides that show the individual species, and I'm just going to let you guys take a look at it here as I go through it. This is black sea bass landings through the 2016/2017 fishing year, and this is the graphic of the different types of landings based on the charter, headboat, and private angler proportions. The dashed line represents the ACL. This is

gag grouper recreational landings through 2017, and, again, the proportions by the different sectors.

This is greater amberjack landings through 2017/2018. You can see here that the greater amberjack landings slightly exceeded the ACL for the last three years. This is mutton snapper landings through 2017. This is yellowtail snapper landings. Red porgy landings through 2017. Vermilion snapper landings through 2017. This is snowy grouper landings up through 2017. Here, it is the dots instead of the dashes that represent the ACLs. This is golden tilefish in numbers through 2017. This is scamp landings, and, at this point, I will take any questions, and I can go back to any slide that anyone has interest in seeing again.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Or if anybody has any questions for Rick on the commercial landings. We will take questions on both of those.

DR. DUVAL: My question is for Jessica on the recreational landings. We exceeded the blueline tilefish recreational ACL by a pretty significant percentage, and, when I look on the monitoring website on the Regional Office homepage, it indicates that, in Wave 2, there were over 150,000 pounds of blueline tilefish landed, and do you know where those landings were coming from?

DR. STEPHEN: That was the 2017 landings you were looking at? Blueline tilefish, we had a spike in Wave 2 that generated it. There was actually only one intercept, but it caught a significant number of blueline tilefish, and so the expansion factor blew that up quite a bit.

DR. DUVAL: Do you know where that intercept occurred?

DR. STEPHEN: It occurred in Pompano Beach.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there more questions?

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Jessica. I am noticing, on like the headboat effort slides, all of the efforts seem to be the same say for -- If you go back to like golden tile, or that gag works too, I think, but they're up, and then they're down, and, if you go to golden tile, you've got that same, and mutton was there and red porgy. There's a lot of them that are almost the same. I wouldn't think you would have the same effort drop for golden tile that you would say for porgies or -- It doesn't look right. How is that calibrated? Is that by species or just by the group of whatever they say they may go catch, or how are they doing that?

DR. STEPHEN: I believe it's actually calculated not by species and just headboat effort as a whole.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

MR. BOWEN: Good morning. It's not necessarily a question, but just something to bring to people's attention, because it caught mine, but if you could go back to the slide for scamp landings, please. It's just hard for me to sit here and not say anything about the zero landings for the private sector in 2017. Does that catch anybody else's eye?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions or comments? All right. Thank you, Rick, and thank you, Jessica. Who is giving us the status of amendments? Is that back to Rick? All right.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you. Yes, I have two amendments to report on, Amendment 43 and then Abbreviated Framework 1. Amendment 43 would specify annual catch limits for red snapper beginning in 2018. The notice of availability published in the Federal Register on April 16, and comments on the amendment are due on June 15, and that was a sixty-day comment period. Then the proposed rule published in the Federal Register on May 17, and comments are due by June 18, and that is a thirty-day comment period, and so we have two comment periods that are ongoing for Amendment 43 that are set to end pretty soon, and we'll talk more about Amendment 43 and red snapper in a bit.

Then Abbreviated Framework 1 is a framework amendment to reduce the annual catch limits for red grouper, in response to a stock assessment, and so the proposed rule published in the Federal Register on April 3, and comments were due on May 3, and so we're working on that final rule package right now. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions on the amendments under review? All right. Then I'm going to turn it over to Myra, and you're going to tell us about the extension of the interim rule for golden tilefish.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jessica. Yes, and, so, in your overview, there is just a little blurb that sort of explains how we got to where we are. Back in June of last year, the council requested that the agency issue an interim rule to end overfishing of golden tilefish, and so that interim rule is set to expire on July 1, and the council obviously has the option to extend the interim rule, and the idea is to allow enough time for completion of Regulatory Amendment 28, which is going to implement the long-term management measures for golden tilefish, and so I just wanted to make sure that everybody was aware of that and that the council can go ahead and request that the agency extend the interim rule for another 186 days.

MR. HARTIG: Do you want to do that now, or do you want to wait?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. HARTIG: **I move that we extend the interim rule for tilefish for an additional 180 days.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Charlie. **Is it actually, Myra, for 186 days?** Then let's get that motion on the board, and so stand by. All right. We have a motion under discussion. Is there any discussion on this golden tilefish interim rule extension? **Is there any objection to approval of the extension for the golden tilefish interim rule? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** We are going to move into a discussion of the 2018 red snapper season.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you. We talked a little bit about Amendment 43 and where we were at with the comment periods, but I thought it would be good if I went over two things, one the regulations on red snapper and what they would be if the amendment is approved and then also on the timing of the amendment, and I know there is a lot of interest. Our office has been getting calls on when we might expect the red snapper fishing season to begin if the amendment is approved.

Just a little bit on the regulations, just to remind the council. The recreational bag limit would be one red snapper per person per day, and this applies to private and charter/headboat vessels, and the captain and crew on the for-hire vessels may retain the recreational bag limit. The commercial trip limit would be seventy-five pounds gutted weight, and there would be no minimum size limit for the recreational or the commercial sectors.

Just a couple more notes on this. If the projected commercial or recreational fishing season is determined by NMFS to be three days or less, then the commercial or recreational fishing season will not open for that fishing year, and also, if the Regional Administrator determines that tropical storm or hurricane conditions exist or are projected to exist in the South Atlantic during the fishing season, the RA may modify the dates that the season opens or closes, the fishing season.

What was in Amendment 43, and what we've been doing when we had these limited seasons, is the start dates were in July, and so the commercial sector would open the second Monday in July, and the recreational sector would open the second Friday in July, but that is unlikely to occur in July if this amendment is approved, and so I'll talk a little bit about the timing and when we might think that the season would start.

As I said before, the comment period ends on the proposed rule on June 18, and so the next step of the process, if the amendment is approved, is for NMFS to draft a final rule. In that final rule, of course, we'll respond to the comments, and we've gotten over 2,000 comments on Amendment 43, and then what we were thinking in-house, when we were talking about this, is that we would publish a final rule, and we would announce the start dates in that final rule.

The timing of when the season might begin would depend on a couple of factors. One is on the cooling-off period, if we could shorten that or wave that cooling-off period. Something I would take to the council now, and I think it would be good for you to talk about, is how much notice would you like to see, by the time we publish the final rule and announce that 43 has been approved and is moving forward, and then we put out a Fishery Bulletin stating the start dates, and so is it one week or two weeks or three weeks? What do you think is enough notice is appropriate for fishermen to get ready for the red snapper season?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there discussion on that?

MR. HARTIG: Rick, thank you for that explanation, and, number one, I think it would really help to wave the thirty-day cooling-off period, because we're getting into the heart of hurricane season the later and later we wait, and so that would definitely help. As far as the timing, the commercial guys only need a week, and I'm not sure about the recreational fishery. I mean, we'll have some people in the audience here later today, and we'll get some comments, hopefully, during the comment period, but I would think that a week would be good for the for-hire as well, but we have a charter fisherman with his hand up.

MR. BOWEN: To Ben's point, I don't feel like a week is enough time for the for-hire sector. What tends to happen is we book these trips, and I am speaking from my perspective, but I book my trips, in some instances, months in advance, and then my repeat customers, through the years, have asked me about red snapper, red snapper, red snapper and will we get a season on them, and we get a week or two notice. Then they call me, and they're like, the snapper is open, and I want

to go, and, sorry, I have a first-time group with a deposit already booked every day, and so none of my repeats really get to take advantage of harvesting their snapper, and we end up just -- They keep throwing them back and throwing them back and throwing them back. From a for-hire perspective, as much notice as possible would be great.

MS. BECKWITH: I would agree with Zack. I mean, if the options are two or three weeks, certainly I think three weeks would be ideal. If it had to be two, then I think the recreational community could probably get ready in two weeks, but I think, for the charter guys, the longer the better.

MR. BROWN: Rick, how long would it be to what point before you would give notice? In other words, before we gave notice to the public of when it was going to open? I mean, what would be the timeframe that we got to, because I talked to Roy about this yesterday, and I told him that I would like the same thing as what Anna and Zack are saying, but then he told me that it would just actually push the season further back and make it a longer timeframe before it opened, and so I'm just trying to think where will we be at that point, or where we would be giving the notice to the public.

MR. DEVICTOR: Right, and this all depends, again, on whether we can wave the cooling-off period. Certainly that's a big factor in this, because we sometimes have a thirty-day cooling-off period and stuff, but, yes, we're looking at the August time period here, and so there is a concern of pushing this back and getting further back, and so I think it's good to give more time to fishermen, but we certainly should be aware that there is concerns that we would be going into late August and September.

MR. BROWN: So it would be in August, and then we would be giving the notice saying either it's going to open in two weeks or three weeks or whatever, and so it would push it even further back, and is that what you're saying?

MR. DEVICTOR: Yes, that could occur.

MR. PHILLIPS: Back to Ben's point, the commercial guys only need a week or -- They don't need much time to be ready, and because they didn't catch their quota last year, and the charter guys especially, like Zack, they need -- They need more time to get their ducks in a row, and so can we -- Once you get past our cooling-off period or whatever, can you go ahead and open up the commercial, so they can start working on their quota while you set up exactly -- Because the recreational are going to work two or three weekends, and they're going to catch their quota, and that's whether you open it up in late August or in September. Are we going to be able to open up the commercial quota before the recreational quota, so those guys can start having a shot at catching their TAC, or ACL?

DR. CRABTREE: This really comes down to waving the cooling-off period. If we don't wave the cooling-off period, then the final rule will publish and, thirty days later, it will be effective, and everybody will open up and we'll have the season. If we do wave the cooling-off, then we could, in theory, open the commercial fishery immediately and open the recreational fishery up two weeks later, or maybe even thirty days later.

The charter part of it and the private part, because you don't have sector separation, will open up at the same time. That is what we're looking at. If we don't wave the cooling-off period though, we would have a final rule publish probably in late July. Then, thirty days after whatever date it publishes, the fishery would open up and start, and we have to give good cause and reasons for waving the cooling-off period and ask that it be waved.

MR. BOWEN: To that point, Dr. Crabtree, and to what Rick and Mark were saying, I am of the opinion not to wave the cooling-off period, and the benefit of that would be to try to get the harvest of these snapper past the peak of their spawning period, and so later in the year would be better, not only for notice for the for-hire sector, but also for the stocks.

MS. BECKWITH: I was actually going to bring up a similar point, and not necessarily waving the cooling-off period, because I recognize, for the commercial guys, that they would like to have access to the fishery, but, in general, if we push the open date back into late August, I think it would be not an issue. The recreational and the charter would still be able to utilize the resource, and it would make it past their peak spawn, and so I would be okay with that.

MR. BROWN: I just don't want to see it go so far back into the fall that we start falling into that bad weather and everything. You know how it's been the last couple of years, and that would be not good if we got there and then we couldn't open it because of that. As far as the spawning time, I mean, I'm sure there is going to be samples taken too, and so that will be a good thing too for the fecundity studies and stuff like that. I would just like to see it open as quickly as possible, and I don't know what the best avenue for that is.

MR. BELL: Sort of two competing desires. I mean, one is certainly to allow access as soon as possible, but then the other is to provide, particularly for the for-hire sector, sufficient notification, or even for the commercial sector, and so it sounds like we're leaning towards the simple solution might be waving the cooling-off period, and it gives you the -- You've got the period of notification for everybody, but I don't see how you can make both camps happy. I know, as Ben said, I'm sure we'll hear a lot more from the public, and particularly the private sector. We're hearing from the charter boat side, but it's just sort of two competing desires, and I don't see a simple solution.

DR. DUVAL: I mean, the big unknown is really the length of time it's going to take the Fisheries Service to kind of plow through all the comments, because that is really what you guys have to address, and, the more comments there are, the longer it's going to take, and so I think that's really what is holding up any decision. If we had a sense of exactly how long is it going to take to prepare the final rule package once the comment period closes, we would have more certainty as to when the opening date might be if the cooling-off period is maintained versus if it's waved.

I think, based on the comments around the table, I would probably be more inclined to keep the cooling-off period to allow for some of the concerns with regard to spawning as well as trip planning for the for-hire sector. I know the commercial guys want to get out there and be able to bring in those fish that they're interacting with, but that might be the sweet spot, is not waving it at this point, and, Rick, I don't know if you can give us a better sense of how long it's going to take you guys to do what you need to do to get the final rule package ready.

MR. DEVICTOR: I am hesitant to give you dates or timelines, because there is so many different factors. I can tell you this is a high priority, and it's not like we wait for the comment period to

end to begin working on it. We are working on it now, and so we're at over 2,000 comments, and a lot of those were form letters that were received and comments we have heard a lot through it, and there was support for this, of course, but a lot of people are saying it's not long enough, and so I think we can respond to those in the final rule, which we have before, but, again, it's a high priority, and we will move this forward, but, again, there is uncertainty when it goes to Headquarters also and how long it takes to get through that review process, and that's really out of our hands, largely.

DR. CRABTREE: Just to sort of wind this up, what I have taken away from this is that you would prefer not to see the fishery get pushed much into September, if we can avoid that, and the for-hire guys need, at minimum -- The recreational guys need, at minimum, two weeks' notice, and a little more would be better, and the commercial guys need very little notice and would like to get busy fishing as quick as they can, and so what we'll do is, when we have a good idea as to how quickly things are moving and when it's going to open and what the possibilities are, we will make a decision on all of this, taking into account those kind of guiding principles.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to remind you all that the public comment period is still open on the rule, like Rick said, and Rick mentioned several times that this is all supposing that the Secretary approves the amendment, but the Secretary has not done anything with the amendment yet, and the Secretary has until July 18, I believe, to let you know whether he has approved, disapproved, or partially approved the amendment, and so this discussion is good, and it will be helpful, I think -- We will use it to figure out what's going on, but remember that no decision has been made whether there will be a red snapper season at all, because the Secretary hasn't made his decision yet.

MR. BOWEN: Again, just a friendly reminder that, when we put this amendment in place, the commercial -- We put the trip limit in for the commercial guys as strictly a bycatch fishery, and so it seems like we may have forgotten that in our discussion.

MR. PHILLIPS: Zack, I hate to tell you, but there is no such thing as a bycatch fishery, and seventy-five pounds is \$400 or \$500 worth of fish, and it is important.

MR. BOWEN: To that point, there is -- I was not diminishing the importance of the commercial sector catching their fish, but I just wanted to remind everybody that it's bycatch. We designed it for a bycatch fishery.

MR. CONKLIN: Just for the public listening at home, the projected July dates that we had kind of given them months ago, there is really no -- It's definitely not going to open in July, correct?

DR. CRABTREE: No, I don't see how this could open in July. It's going to be August, at the earliest.

MR. GRINER: I think waving the thirty-day period is important, because, as Zack said, it's supposed to be a bycatch. Well, we're bycatching them right now, and so the quicker the better, for us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I have heard two different things on the cooling-off period. I have heard wave it, and I have heard don't wave it. Roy, do you need some kind of motion?

DR. CRABTREE: No, I've heard plenty. I think we could move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. That's all I need to know. Roy, you don't need anything else from the committee on the 2018 season? All right. I guess we'll wait to hear from you guys. Then now we're going to move into the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel report, and we'll bring up David Moss to give us that report.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good morning, everyone. I will run through this as briefly and as succinctly as possible. If there's any questions, of course, please throw them out. We met back in April in Charleston, and one of the first things we went over were some amendments that were recently submitted, and that was basically just an informative session for the AP from the council, and so I won't go too much in-depth with that, because most of that was the council giving information to us.

The few things that we did make motions on, we recommended that the council consider a bycatch commercial trip limit for red grouper, which was approved unanimously by the AP. Then, for Regulatory Amendment 28, golden tilefish, which was addressing the long-term management of golden tilefish, the AP said that there was no support for reducing the hook-and-line trip limit below the current 500 pounds, and they also commented that blackbelly rosefish are caught incidentally to blueline tile and not goldens, which I guess was previously thought.

Then we had a motion to recommend the fishing year start date of March 1 for the hook-and-line component for golden tile, and that was approved by the AP with two in opposition. The thought was that the March 1 start date for the hook-and-line component would be close to when the longline component closes, and so it would try to keep the fishery open consistently, to keep fish coming to the table. Then we had another motion to recommend that the council consider an action to split the hook-and-line component into two seasons with a March 1 and September 1 start date, splitting the ACL 50/50, and that was approved unanimously. Again, this is still in relation to golden tilefish.

Then we discussed the wreckfish transferable quota program, and the AP mentioned that there is concern that the recreational allocation for wreckfish is too high, as there was -- When we went through the listing of the catch for recreational, it was zero, or close to zero, reported catches for wreckfish. Again, that's reported, and so we do know that there is a few being caught, but they felt that the quota was a little high, and they thought that a lower allocation might be appropriate.

Then there was also mentioned that there are charter operations out of Hatteras that target the wreckfish, and, again, there was concern over discards if there is no recreational allocation, and so we didn't want to completely eliminate the recreational allocation, but we did want to look at possibly lowering it and having more of the focus be on that commercial fishery, and that was approved by the AP with ten for and seven opposed.

We spoke about some citizen science research needs, and some of the comments from the AP were to add commercial volunteers, in particular in relation to SMZ sites, and we also discussed how biological sampling would be relatively easy to accomplish and perhaps soliciting input from the Information and Education Advisory Panel. We emphasized how the information that's collected will be used in order to increase participation among volunteers, and we were happy to use some

Snapper Grouper AP members to recruit volunteers, and I know that I brought a couple of people to the table, and then we also recommended establishing partnerships with the various academic institutions up and down the coast that focus on this sort of research.

The next section that we spoke of was the socioeconomic profile of the commercial fishery. After a nice presentation, we spoke about that the council needs to define what constitutes an active commercial permit, and we were hoping that they would provide the number of vessels that are catching a certain percentage of landings to inform discussion of what it means for a permit to be active, and so, again, that goes back to the definition of what is an active permit, the number of vessels landing 50,000 pounds of snapper grouper species per year, broken down by area, and we were hoping to get more information on the leases of the SG 2 permits, and I guess that's an ongoing issue.

Vessels with charter permits need to be defined, and so I guess dually-permitted boats, if you will, and percentage of landings from SG 1 versus SG 2 permits. There was concern that the two-for-one will lead to less and participation over the long term, and I will discuss a little bit more of that later. The council still needs to define the optimum number of vessels in the fishery in relation to continuing the two-for-one SG 1 provision and how healthy is the fishery and what can it sustain, and, again, I will talk about that next.

The next motion, in relation to that, was made for the council to stop the two-for-one permit requirement for SG 1 commercial permits, and that was approved twelve in favor and three opposed. Again, that was -- I think more information on that, with the number of SG 1 permits being dwindled down, and what is a sustainable amount, and that was kind of the question that was posed, and there's a lot of feeling that we're there now.

Some of the other things that we spoke about is we went over some fishery performance reports for both greater amberjack and red porgy, and the AP requested, when possible, that recreational landings broken down by component of headboat, charter, and private, to better assess which component may be causing fluctuations in the landings, because we did see some peaks and valleys, and, if possible, provide economic value of directed trips for the for-hire component of those two species.

We got an update on the MyFishCount app, and we suggested adding audio and video, to ensure that users know how to change the settings of the Fish Rules app to show state or federal regulations, given where you're fishing. That's of particular interest, obviously, in certainly the region that we're in, south Florida, where you can fish both waters very easily.

We had a SEDAR update, where AP members expressed concern about the red grouper assessment being held in 2021. North Carolina fishermen, in particular, claim they are not seeing the red grouper catches any more, as they have, but Florida, particularly, after the storms of last year, reported seeing good numbers of red grouper.

We got another update from the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and that was where they spoke about a workgroup being tasked with reviewing data and methodologies for setting an ABC for red snapper in the South Atlantic, which I know that there is probably going to be some discussion about, and then we had to dive into regulations recommended for removal.

As we may or may not know, the President issued an Executive Order to lower the regulatory burdens on the American people, and so we kind of dove into that some. Some of the recommendations that were put forth from the AP was modifying the sea turtle release gear requirements, particularly on charter vessels, so that they aren't so burdensome, especially to smaller vessels. I know that there is quite a few things that the federally-permitted charter boats need to carry, and so there was talk of removing that.

Again, removing the two-for-one permit requirement for the commercial fishery and modifying the specifications for buoy gear. That currently requires a lead of longer than thirty feet, but not increase the number of allowable hooks, and so the discussion there was to not have -- I guess you can call it a moratorium, and so you're allowed to have ten hooks up to thirty feet from where your lead is when fishing buoy gear, and the recommendation was to not have that limitation, to be able to put the ten hooks to any depth that you would like, and one of the reasons is just for an enforcement issue. This was explained to me that there are times where your gear is kind of dragging on the bottom, and, if you're clipping the hooks on, they can slip and slide, and his concern was that he not be caught out of regulation for something that was not his fault, essentially, that just happened while the gear was down there.

We then discussed -- It was presented to us some of the law enforcement priorities, and some of the comments from the AP were that the penalties for a lot of violations aren't severe enough. There was concern of penalties directed at vessel owners versus operators, and, again, that was more on the commercial side, and so operators who commit violations aren't being held accountable, and it's the vessel owners who typically have to shoulder that burden.

There was suggestion to help improve the Coast Guard officers' knowledge of species identification, and perhaps, again, through the mobile app. There is a perception that enforcement effort is focused primarily on the commercial sector. There was a suggestion for the Coast Guard to provide regular updates to APs, similar to how it's done for HMS meetings, and there are issues in Florida with gear tampering, commercial gear being removed or tampered with by recreational anglers, and that was just brought to the table, and there wasn't necessarily anything that anybody could do, but it was just kind of a note of fact.

Moving on to Other Business, some of the issues that the AP has noticed is that free diving is becoming more and more popular, particularly for spearfishing, and there is some concern of the toll that that's going to take on the resource. There is some frustration from commercial hook-and-line fishermen over the efficiency of spearfishing activity. On the other hand, it was also noted that spearfishing doesn't result in discards, typically. It's a 100 percent mortality fishery, and so, typically, whatever you shoot you're going to catch, and so you don't have to worry about dead discards, but there was some discussion of a need to determine the spear fishermen user group. Again, that goes into the next motion that was made, which was that the council request - - Consider a way to identify recreational use of spearfishing gear, either via some sort of stamp or some other identification.

Then there was another motion to create a gear endorsement for the commercial sector for spearfishing, and then there was some discussion on the status of red grouper and the concern there. The AP also wanted to I guess present the concern about balanced representation on the council, and there was some frustration voiced over the permit renewal process for the commercial

sector, and the AP requested an update on permit requirements and renewal at their upcoming meeting.

Then the last few motions, and I will kind of run through those quick, if anybody has any questions, but the AP requests that the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel have an advisory vote for prospective candidates appointed to represent them at the council table. The intent is to have fair and balanced representation for each state. That was approved by the AP with eleven in favor and one opposed and one abstention.

Motion 9 was to request that the SSC revisit the wreckfish ABC to determine whether an increase in the ACL is feasible, and that was approved. Recommend that the council work to address recreational sector accountability via a snapper grouper stamp or permit, and that was approved unanimously. The AP requests that the council continue to consider limited entry for the for-hire sector in the snapper grouper fishery, and that was approved unanimously.

Finally, the recommendation that the council reach out to NMFS to request that the snapper grouper commercial permit be issued on a multiyear basis, and the recommendation was for three years, and that was approved unanimously. That concludes my report, if there is no questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, David. Are there questions?

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, David, for a great report. You skipped over 26, when you guys had your conversation on Amendment 26, the recreational members.

MR. MOSS: I apologize.

MR. HARTIG: I am not going to make you read through it. I will read through it. Complexity of proposed changes to aggregates and bag limit is of concern. Concern over proposed recreational season for deepwater species and possible increase in dead discards. Need to define what constitutes deep water versus shallow water. For instance, off of North Carolina, red grouper are considered to be a shallow-water grouper and can be caught in 300 to 400 feet of water. The proposed twenty-fish cap would be a significant reduction from what fishermen are allowed to retain currently, and impacts for for-hire businesses are concerned, especially in areas where productive fishing grounds are far offshore. The council should begin looking into management of barrelfish and the acknowledgement that single-hook rigs is better than status quo. However, the snowy grouper limit remains at one per vessel and blueline tilefish at three per person. There is still the potential for an increase in snowy discards in areas where the two species co-occur. On 26, would it be fair to say that the AP had some real concerns with the way that we were moving in 26, based on your recollections from the meeting?

MR. MOSS: Yes, and there was a lot of discussion back and forth from both sides of that, but, in a few of these areas, and, again, it gets back to the complexity. A lot of the concern was the complexity on particularly the recreational side and being able to know what our actual bag limit is. It's difficult enough to know and keep up with all the regulations and the changes and things like that. Then to put in -- When we had the twenty-fish bag limit and what's included in the bag limit and so on and so forth and the way that was moving, and there was definitely some concern there.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there more questions?

DR. DUVAL: It's not really a question, but I just want to commend David for his chairmanship skills. I mean, I listened to the entire webinar, and he did a fantastic job of keeping people on task and getting the required input, and so I really give a shout-out to you, David, for your skillful management of the agenda and keeping the AP moving forward and making sure that everybody had the opportunity to speak and provide their opinion, and so thank you.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much. I had a great few people to learn from along the way, and so I definitely appreciate that.

MR. BOWEN: Great report, David. Just for my benefit, and my selfishness, maybe, can you read Motion 11 one more time?

MR. MOSS: The AP requests that the council continue to consider limited entry for the for-hire sector in the snapper grouper fishery, and that was approved unanimously.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? All right. Thank you, David. Great report. I am going to turn it back over to Myra. I think we have a guest to give us a presentation on black sea bass bag limits and trip satisfaction for the for-hire sector.

MS. BROUWER: While Stacey is getting herself some water, I will introduce her. Her name is Stacey Weinstock, and she is a recent graduate of the Master in Environmental Science Program at the College of Charleston. During her first year, she contacted the council about a potential thesis project, and Kari MacLauchlin and John Carmichael were on her committee, and so she conducted a project designed to explore the effects of black sea bass bag limits on the recreational and for-hire industry in the State of South Carolina.

She conducted interviews with for-hire and crew in Myrtle Beach and Charleston and Hilton Head, and she also went on several charter and headboat fishing trips, and she conducted a survey, and so she's going to be summarizing the results of all her work, and so I'm going to pass it over to Stacey.

MS. WEINSTOCK: Thank you, Myra, for that lovely introduction. Good morning to all, and, since she already introduced me, but I just graduated from the Master of Environmental Studies Program, and so my thesis research was concerning trip satisfaction in the South Carolina for-hire industry, with a focus on black sea bass.

Why trip satisfaction in the marine for-hire industry? There is a lot of literature on the freshwater industry and for-hire industry, but not so much literature on marine for-hire, and I wanted to attribute some data to that, and, in South Carolina, the for-hire industry is part of a \$15 billion tourism industry in coastal South Carolina, and so understanding what people want when they are fishing, better understanding what makes them happy, informs regulation as well as informs management, and so, the more you know, the better you can help both the fishery and the resource

as well, and the fishermen as well. I focused on private charters and headboats. They target black sea bass offshore, which is a popular recreational fish, as you all know.

Now I'm going to go over my methods a little bit. I targeted -- The study population was the customers of the for-hire industry as well as the captains and crew, and I focused my research in Myrtle Beach, Charleston, and Hilton Head, like Myra said, because those are high tourism destinations in South Carolina, and there is also a high number of snapper grouper permits and for-hire boats, and so that's where I really targeted my research.

Now, for my methods, social science and trip satisfaction, it's hard to get quantitative data for that, and so I used a multi-method approach, where I observed fishing trips on private charters and headboats as well as interviewed captains and crew, and I created a questionnaire survey for customers, which was generated out online as well as in-person.

Now, I want to give you a little bit of the meat of that survey. From the literature, most trip satisfaction derives from catch-dependent factors, and so specifically catching fish, fighting with fish, taking home fish, and trophy fish, and so that was kind of the meat of my survey that I gave to the customers, as well as questions about black sea bass bag limits.

Now, for my results, a little overview of my results, a little background. I went on six fishing trips, three charter and three headboats. I interviewed fourteen captains and crew, and I surveyed 287 customers, with half of those being online and half of them being in-person, with me at the dock, and now here's a nice graphic of the distribution of where these customers are coming from, the survey takers. As you can see, it's a pretty wide distribution. People from all over the continental U.S. are coming to South Carolina for tourism and then they go fishing, or they come specifically for fishing.

Now, this is just the continental U.S., because that's all I could get in the GIS map before it went crazy, and so there is also people coming from out of the country as well, and other areas too, but, as you can see, there is a high concentration in the Southeast region of people coming as well as localized.

Here is some description of the data. The age of the survey respondents was twenty-five to fifty-four, and that was the majority of the age, which goes along with the literature. The education of the survey respondents, and so distribution of education, there is a lot of people with four-year degrees.

The income distribution, as you can see, a lot more people who have a higher level of income are going out fishing, and most of my in-person surveys were private charters, and so I was at Shem Creek, because I live in Charleston, and so I could go after work and survey there, and so that is more or less reflected in the data, and, in order to go on those private charters, you do have to have a higher level of income.

Now, for my first hypothesis, from the literature -- All the literature for freshwater for-hire fishing, as well as any trip satisfaction, leads to a high catch rate is high trip satisfaction, and I found this to be very supported from my observations, as well as my interviews, and from my survey data, and the literature supported my results that if the catch rate is high, the people catching the fish are having a great time on the boat. This is from my questionnaire survey. As you can see, 121

strongly agree that a fishing trip is not a success unless I catch a fish, which was definitely reiterated through my observations, and so, overall, 78 percent agree that catching a fish is important, and so that's really good to know.

For my second hypothesis, I wanted to know if, the more fish you take home, the higher the satisfaction, and so, the more consumable fish you can keep, the higher the trip satisfaction would be for customers. I found this was not supported through my interviews and my observations as well, and a lot of people, as I said before, are vacationers. They are out-of-towners, and so they're coming on these boats, especially the half-day and three-quarter-day trips, and they are not wanting to take a lot of fish home. They are wanting to take some fish home, and so some tended to be three. That's the number that I commonly heard, was about three, and that was from the captains and crew who were saying that as well.

Actually, the literature supported this, too. There was a study by Peering et al. on black crappie that they wanted a few sizable fish to keep. They don't want a lot of little fish, but they want a few sizeable fish that they can eat and take home for dinner that night, but they are not trying to fill their coolers.

This is also reiterated in my survey data, that people wanted to take fish home and that it wasn't important for driving trip satisfaction for a successful trip, but, as you can see, there is about 16 percent that are neutral, not really sure, and it doesn't also give you the extent, the number of what number would be the best fish number taken home.

For my third hypothesis, and my last hypothesis, I wanted to see if a lower bag limit would lead to a decrease in satisfaction, and I found this is not supported and that lowering the bag limit would not decrease satisfaction. Most customers, as I'm sure most of you know, they are not aware of the bag limits when they're out on the boat, and so they really don't know, and they are really referring back to the captain and crew to let them know what they can and cannot take home.

Now, the results of this too might also be specific to black sea bass, since this was a black sea bass case study, and, when you're out there, a lot of them are not filling the bag limits, due to size limits, and so that was really what might be also restricting for black sea bass, and so size limits were really a common thing that were discussed and mentioned to me through my interviews, that the size limits are restricting the bag limit being filled, and, therefore, there is a lot of discarding going on, and you could see it when you were on the boats, when I was observing customers. You hit a school on a headboat, and they keep getting bites and bites, and they keep pulling up these little guys, and so they're coming up again and again.

That was something really that was reiterated to me quite frequently, and I have a quote from one of the headboat captains that the bag limit doesn't really affect us, because the size limit is more of the problem. You can't get enough big ones to reach the bag limit, and so the size is restricting it anyway, and the bag limit doesn't really matter. I heard a lot about that, as well as reducing the bag limit and the size limit. Those were a lot of the suggestions that I heard, too.

Now here is some questions from the questionnaire survey regarding my questions about black sea bass. As you can see, over half the people think there should be a bag limit for black sea bass. Now, for the next question, are customers aware -- The question in the survey was are you aware of the bag limit, and, as you can see, about half of them are not aware of the bag limit. Then I

asked if an increase in the bag limit would increase satisfaction, and they said no, and I ran some statistical analysis on this, and I found this was statistically supported as well, that an increase in the bag limit would not increase satisfaction.

Then, lastly, do you think the bag limit of black sea bass is too high, too low, or just right, and, as you can see, the majority of them -- Most of them were neutral, and so -- Not the majority, but most of them were neutral, and it was sort of a null question, about 54 percent, and that might be just relating back to the knowledge of the bag limits. Overall, this is coming back to that graph that I showed you of the catch-dependent factors, and so catching a fish is really important for a successful fishing trip, as well as a fight with a fish. With trophy fish, it's really falling behind, because black sea bass is not a trophy fishery, which makes sense.

Along with all my hypotheses, I found some additional factors as well. One that was really very noticeable was fight with sharks, particularly, and non-catch-dependent factors and customer service were also driving trip satisfaction. The length of trip dictated attitude, and so it really dictated who would be onboard your boat and the type of fishermen and changing attitudes, which is something I heard from a lot of captains and crew, that people who are on these boats are changing.

Sharks were a really popular target fish for a fight, to kind of bring the excitement onboard when they maybe weren't catching much and the customers were sort of feeling low, and so that was something to really bring some excitement onboard and as well as non-catch-dependent factors, and so you can't control the weather, obviously, and so if someone is seasick and not having the best time as well as heat. In South Carolina, summer in South Carolina can just be brutal, and so that could also affect it, and customer service was a really big one. You could tell the difference between on a boat that cared about their customers versus a boat that you were kind of just another dollar, and it really did affect sort of the mood of the boat and the trip satisfaction as well.

I have a little video of a fish, and I don't know if you can hear it, and they caught this little octopus, and he literally went around the entire boat of like a hundred people to show them this octopus that they pulled up, and so they really cared.

Length of trip, as I said, dictates attitude, and so, if you're on these half-day or three-quarter-day trips, it's mostly families, tourists, out-of-towners, and they're not the most experienced fishermen or serious fishermen, and that really is what is dictating who is out there and what they want out of the trip, versus, if you go on these full-day trips, as you can see to the right, and that's a picture from a full-day charter trip, they are more serious, and they're trying to fill those bag limits. They're really trying to take more fish home, and so, if I were to do this research again and try to evaluate bag limit effects on trip satisfaction, I would focus solely on those ten to twelve-hour trips, because that's the kind of fishermen who were out there where bag limits will affect their trip satisfaction.

Then the changing attitudes overall, from the captains and crew who were telling me that people now who are coming -- Some of them don't even want to keep fish. They don't want to touch the fish, and that was seen a lot, and it was just more or less being on the water and sort of this changing demographic of people not coming and wanting to fill coolers as much as they used to.

In summary, for my hypotheses, high catch rate increases satisfaction, and more consumable fish, the more fish you can keep, does not increase satisfaction. Low bag limits of black sea bass would not affect trip satisfaction, and so, overall, I just wanted to acknowledge my thesis committee of John Carmichael, who is here, as well as my advisors of Annette Watson and Kari MacLauchlin and my committee member of Matt Nowlin. Really, really, a special thanks to the fishing captains and crews in South Carolina. Thank you so much, and particularly Mark Brown, for helping me, and his mate, Jerry. They helped me a lot.

They would text me when they were coming in and let me harass their customers, which was great, and then Chris Conklin as well, for putting me in contact with other captains. Zack Bowen gave me some advice on the black sea bass fishery and everything as well too, and thank you to the council for funding the travel and funding me to do this project, because otherwise, without it, I don't think that I could have busted up and down the South Carolina coast. Thank you so much for listening, and if you have any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you so much for that presentation. Lots of hands.

MR. BELL: Stacey, nice job. I want to congratulate you on a graduate thesis project that involved going fishing, and so that shows some intelligence right there. Good job. When you were doing your work, what was the bag limit for sea bass?

MS. WEINSTOCK: The bag limit was seven. It had just increased from five to seven right before I started.

MR. BELL: Okay. Thanks.

MR. HARTIG: Great work, Stacey. I hope you're going to stay involved in marine research in your career, because we could certainly use this throughout the entire South Atlantic, and so I have a project in mind for your doctorate degree that would be great. I see things in here that we can use already, and it's really fascinating.

The question I had though is, I mean, on the headboats in particular -- When I used to work on a headboat, there were the regulars. There were the people who came to catch their fish for dinner, and did you see a difference in their perceptions between a regular on a headboat versus someone who just came from out-of-state and wanted to just go on a trip fishing?

MS. WEINSTOCK: Yes, they came with coolers, and that was -- I didn't see as many regulars as I thought I would, except for the one area of Murrells Inlet. That was really the area that I saw that sort of was a throwback to what I feel like maybe the fishing for-hire community was before, and you could see it there. That's where people were really more regulars and more full-day serious fishermen, versus Hilton Head and Myrtle Beach and Charleston were a lot more vacationers and out-of-towners.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you very much. The coming with coolers reminds me of when I ran a headboat. When I was a young fellow running a headboat, the joke in New York at that point was if -- The farmers would come from Pennsylvania. If they came with a horse trough, you knew you were in trouble, because they expected to fill the horse trough with fish.

I have some questions regarding what I may perceive to be a bit of a bias in your study, and it's regarding interview sites and the income survey and the correlation with the interview sites and the income survey and the satisfaction with the catch rates and take home. The interview sites, and, forgive me, and I don't know that much about the State of South Carolina, but it appears to me that the three interview sites are primarily vacation or tourist destinations, tourist locations, and I see you nodding yes.

MS. WEINSTOCK: Yes.

MR. DILERNIA: I think that's what accounts for, and you mentioned it, for the distribution of anglers across the continental U.S. that you have there, and so that seems to correlate, but it also -
- The income levels that you surveyed, there seemed to be a higher than what I believe is the average income level for an average individual, and the reason I put those three together is because you then go to the satisfaction regarding taking home fish, and I can understand that, because, if the folks are from out of town, they don't expect to take a lot of fish home.

I am wondering how your results would change if you were to select sites that were populated predominantly by local residents. If you came to say the Mid-Atlantic region, if you came to New York City, if you went to Philadelphia, where basically the headboats are populated with individuals, many from the inner-city, which means that their location distribution would change. Also, if they are coming from the inner-city, their income levels would change, and, with those two factors changing, I wonder how much the satisfaction regarding taking home a fish would also change.

While I congratulate you on the study and I think it's a good study and it's a great first step, I would encourage you, if you're going to build on it, to extend your study to different locations that are populated primarily by local residents, and I believe that your results may change differently, and I would like to see the comparison between the results of the responses from local residents versus those from out of town, and so that would be my only suggestion to you. Thank you.

MR. BROWN: Good presentation, Stacey. You know, we've had a lot of people come to our boat and ask about going out and doing different studies and participating with different things, and a lot of times I kind of roll my eyes, that type of situation, thinking, oh God, here we go again, but, actually, Stacey came down there and did a really good job, and she got on the boat and went with us and participated in de-hooking the fish and baiting the hooks, and she was really involved with the people, and so I thought that was pretty cool, and I had no problem taking her out.

One of the things that I did want to say about the survey though, and I'm sure that she probably knows this, is there was a lot of our trips that are shorter trips, like half-days or something, and the people don't really know what the fish are. They get on the boat, and you ask them about black sea bass, and they don't know the difference between that and an amberjack, and so trying to ask them something specific about a specific fish, they don't have really a good mindset on what it is.

Then, plus, in the Charleston area, it's voted number-one and best in the nation for weddings, and over 40 percent of my business is bachelor parties. It actually works out really well though. They usually keep it in. I mean, there's no cake and anybody jumping out of it, but they're usually really pretty cool, and we have a good time, but the longer trips that we have seem to have the people on

it that know what's going on and that have been out before and they can identify what we're catching and everything.

The mindset has changed over the years, to where people are starting to be more familiar with the bag limits and size limits and knowing that red snapper is closed and other things, but the survey I think was good for the longer trips and people understanding, but I think on the shorter trips it was kind of -- They just didn't really know, but thank you anyway, and that was a good presentation.

MS. WEINSTOCK: Thank you, and thank you so much, Mark, and I agree. The survey did miss that part of saying what kind of trip they were taking, so that I could tease that information out of the survey for the future, and so that is one thing that I would love to fix in the future, is add a question of what type of charter trip. Was it a half-day, three-quarter-day, full-day, to kind of really be able to better understand attitudes and sort of tease that information out, because that was missing overall in my research, which was unfortunate, but I could tease out locations and then get at what kind of trip they were taking sometimes, but, in the future, if I were to do this again, I would definitely focus on what type of trip and have a question for that, overall.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say, to Tony's point earlier, I fully understand what he was getting at, related to the nature of the customer, so to speak, but something to keep in mind for South Carolina is, if you go back thirty or thirty-five years, the headboat community, and coastal South Carolina in general, is not the same headboat community or population of coastal South Carolina now. It's just been a lot of change, and I'm not sure what the total number of headboats were that we had licensed when you started this, but it's nothing like it used to be, and the community dynamics of -- There's a lot of people that are from off, let's say, that are now part of our coastal community, and so it has just kind of changed, but I see exactly what you're getting at, in terms of customer preferences and kind of where you're from, background-wise.

DR. DUVAL: I am going to pick up on where Mel left off and just a question for Stacey. I don't know if you had enough data points to be able to do this, but when you were -- You know, you have this great map of the distribution of where people were coming from, and I was wondering if you were at all able to link that to the responses with regard to your questions about trip satisfaction.

In other words, did you see -- One, did you look at it, and, two, if you did look at it, did you see a relationship between where folks were from, in other words if they were from outside of South Carolina, with say a response of strongly agreeing that a fishing trip is not a success unless I catch a fish or -- Did you see a relationship between the answers that people were providing to the survey questions and where they were coming from, or were you able even to look at that?

MS. WEINSTOCK: No, I didn't actually look into that, and so that would be interesting to go back to. I believe I have the ability to tease that out, if I wanted to, and go back and look at my data, but, no, I did not look into that to see if that relationship --

DR. DUVAL: That might be sort of a bass-ackwards way to kind of get at Tony's question, and it might not be -- You might not be able to do anything statistically with it, just based on the number of samples that you have, but it might provide some interesting follow-up to that question.

MS. WEINSTOCK: I did look into -- With John, actually, and we teased it out together, the locations of where the survey was taken, but not where the people were from, and so that was one way to do it, but we were kind of sort of starting to go down that path, but I was trying to finish.

MR. DILERNIA: I understand the responses to my question, and I appreciate them very much, but I asked the questions though because I have a concern, because the study specifically addressed black sea bass, and black sea bass is becoming, or has become, an issue in the Mid-Atlantic region, and I'm a little afraid that perhaps some of the results will be applied to the black sea bass fishery in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Some of our states in the Mid-Atlantic region, or most of the states in the Mid-Atlantic region, have possession limits of fifteen black sea bass, and when we begin to discuss lowering even that possession limit -- Now, let me also point out that the stock is at two-and-a-half-times the target level, but, when we talk about lowering the possession limit from fifteen down a lower number, there is immediately quite a negative reaction on the part of the angling public, and let me give you another example.

Say, in the way of scup or porgy, silver porgy or scup, we have possession limits in the thirty to forty fish possession limit range, and, again, that stock is about two-times its target level, and, when we talk about dropping the possession limit from forty fish down to thirty fish, people get very upset, and, if you look at who they are, they are basically the folks from the inner-city, from Newark, New Jersey and Philadelphia and New York City, and their income levels, quite frankly, are very low, and they are expecting an exchange of fish for the dollars that they spend.

Now, whether or not -- That was predominantly the way that folks went recreational fishing in the Mid-Atlantic region, and that changed. Yes, it has changed significantly, but still those that still populate the headboats in the Mid-Atlantic region -- Most of them are from that -- If you look at the income brackets, they are much lower than what you listed there, and so, while I think your study is good, I am a little hesitant about applying some of those results to the Mid-Atlantic region, because I believe the demographics of the respondents are different.

MS. WEINSTOCK: To respond to that, I can tease out the headboat versus private charter boats from the data, and so that would actually probably give you a different look at the income levels, for sure, and pulling that out, and so there is that bias towards private, since I did a lot of surveying on Shem Creek, which is private charters, and so that sort of is heavy towards that area, but, yes, I agree, but I could tease that out, if need be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions for Stacey? All right. Thank you so much. That was a great presentation, and congratulations.

MS. WEINSTOCK: Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let's take a five-minute break. When we come back, we're going to get into the SSC report, and we'll have George up here.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: We are now going to get into the SSC report, and so we do not have a copy of this presentation, George?

DR. SEDBERRY: It was not in the briefing materials, but I'm sure it can be distributed if you want it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That sounds great. Thank you.

DR. SEDBERRY: Okay, and so Mike can do that. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, everybody. I am going to give the SSC report for Snapper Grouper, and the SSC met the first few days in May in Charleston, and we reviewed several stock assessments and other items. The first one on the agenda is black sea bass, SEDAR 56, and the SSC reviewed the SEDAR and felt that it satisfactorily addressed the terms of reference and represented the best scientific information available and was usable for management and provided an adequate basis for determining stock status and fishing level recommendations.

We reviewed the uncertainties associated with the stock assessment, and some of those boiled down to uncertainties regarding recruitment, and, at the meeting, we requested -- The committee requested additional projections using recruitment patterns from 1991 to the terminal year and the recruitment pattern for the last four years of the assessment, which were through 2016. The first scenario would be used for the ABC recommendation, and the second one would be used to investigate the effect of low near-term recruitment levels on stock biomass and stock status.

There was increased concern regarding the trend in estimated recruitment and recruitment using the projections, because the spawning stock biomass in the terminal year of the assessment was only slightly above the known stock size threshold, and so low R could be caused by emigration, such as movement to the north, and we've seen evidence of that, and we talked about that just a little while ago, or species interactions, such as increased predation by lionfish or red snapper or other species.

The most recent year, and still talking about uncertainties, the most recent year, the fishing mortality of all fleets had a selectivity pattern that differed from all other years, with significantly lower age at apical F than in other years in the time series, and these different F metrics other than apical F may give a very different picture of what's happening in this fishery. The stock is apparently responding strongly to recruitment trends observed in the last ten to fifteen years, and the selectivity of the chevron trap versus the video index may differ, especially under situations of high recruitment, where there might be a lot of very small black sea bass that wouldn't be retained by the trap, but would show up in the video camera attached to the trap.

Our fishing level recommendations, we applied the ABC control rule, which resulted in a P^* of 37.5, and the SSC recommended that the projections should be run for three years, and, although black sea bass is not under rebuilding, the Monte Carlo bootstrap phase plot showed that about 25 percent of the runs indicated that the stock is overfished, and so that was of concern. The overall negative trend in recruitment should be considered, and biomass has been trending downward in recent years, and these factors should be taken into account when the council considers risk tolerance.

The committee provided some monitoring advice, indicators of metrics that the council should use to monitor the ACL and the SSC could use to evaluate the stock until the next assessment, and these included recruitment, looking at recruitment via the age and length comps, looking at the CVID index as an indicator of recruitment, spikes in discards, undersized fish that could possibly also indicate a recruitment pulse, and then it would be a concern if the catches remained below the ACL. If they consistently remain below the ACL, why are we not catching the ACL? Is it because of abundance or some other reason?

The committee also had some research recommendations for black sea bass, including investigating the age and size-dependent reproductive parameters. There is a protogynous species, and so that's of concern. Study the feasibility of an empirical recruitment index and evaluate potential shifts in sex ratio. Our guidance for the next assessment was that a benchmark should be done in three years and that fishing level recommendations should be in place for no more than three years, or until the next assessment. That is the SSC's report on SEDAR 56.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there questions?

DR. DUVAL: George, this might be a little bit more of a Science Center question, but I wanted to go back to the comment that the SSC made with regard to the use of apical F, which it's my understanding is the maximum F at age, and so is there -- Do you know, or I guess I would perhaps move this question to Dr. Porch or Dr. Williams, but is there guidance on which F metric to use for status determination if -- Is apical F used across different Science Center regions, and are there different metrics of F that are used? Does the Fisheries Service have one standard metric of F that is used universally, or are there different F metrics that are used in different regions, I guess?

DR. SEDBERRY: I agree that's an excellent question for Dr. Williams.

DR. PORCH: As Erik is coming up, I will say that that has not been standardized across the agency. Apical F is -- It typically came up during the days when we ran VPAs and you had sort of annual fishing mortality rates representing the combined mortality of all the fisheries, and the main issue is that you need to be consistent. In many cases now, we're moving towards, rather than an instantaneous fishing mortality rate, we're going towards the fraction of the stock that is removed by fishing, simply because it's more intuitive. With that, I will let Erik answer.

DR. WILLIAMS: It's been an evolving part of our assessments throughout the history of SEDAR, and we started with just fully-selected F, which in some cases is equal to apical F, depending on the selectivities that are used, and then we even went to exploitation rate at some point, similar to what Clay just described, and, recently, I would say in the last ten SEDARs at least, we have been consistently using apical F, just because that's been the consistent measure that we sort of have settled on for now, but we could change that metric. Like Clay said, if there's a more intuitive measure, like the fraction of the stock that's removed, then we could move to that.

DR. DUVAL: Just a follow-up. Just for my understanding, because apical F is the maximum F at age, is sort of my understanding, summed across the population, would it be fair to say that that is sort of -- That is indeed the maximum fishing mortality in comparison to other metrics of F that you might expect?

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, and, in particular, when we have any dome-shaped selectivity functions in the process, then apical F is going to be the highest F that you would see compared to other metrics, yes.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you.

DR. PORCH: I would just add that the problem with an apical F is if you have changing selectivity through time. Then the apical F is the highest fishing mortality -- The fishing mortality rate on the most selected age class, but, when you have selectivity changing, that means that the F that it corresponds to, the age class that it corresponds to, is changing through time, and it becomes particularly problematic where you have a high discard mortality.

We encounter that a lot in the Gulf of Mexico, where you have the shrimp fishery, and that may be the single highest fishing mortality rate, and so you're talking about apical Fs on age-zero or age-one, which isn't really relevant to the fishery, and that's why we started talking about using a metric that is more geared towards representing the fishing-induced mortality rate on the age classes that are exposed to the fishery.

MR. PHILLIPS: George, the recommendation was for a benchmark in three years, and I'm guessing that's the new research track benchmark, and I am not sure where we are in our priority schedule or our SEDAR schedule for black sea bass again, and I don't think it's in three years though.

DR. SEDBERRY: I don't know right off the top of my head, and I can't remember from yesterday when we talked about it, but I just don't know right now. There might be someone in the room that has that information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike is coming to the table, I think.

DR. ERRIGO: When they made the benchmark recommendation, it wasn't specifically for a research track. That was before the research track was settled, and the three years is because of the projections. The uncertainty past three years gets too great for the projections to go any further than that, which is why the recommendation was that the projections only need to go three years and then to have an assessment after that.

For a benchmark, I think it was because of the new MRIP numbers. We're just getting one of the MRIP updates for black sea bass, but we're not running it through a full assessment where we're looking at a data workshop and what those MRIP numbers are doing and this and that, but I believe that was the reasoning for the benchmark status.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Right now, we have a request for a 2021 for the next assessment of sea bass in SEDAR, and we will get the revisions, and so what you see here essentially will change after the SSC reviews the revised assessment with the revised MRIP numbers in October.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Thanks.

MR. HARTIG: It seems to me that this movement issue is pretty critical for the black sea bass stock assessment, and we have two different stocks, right, Michelle? Where is the stock line? Is it at Hatteras?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, Cape Hatteras.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, and so, between those two stocks, was there a way to genetically determine differences in those two stocks?

DR. DUVAL: I would actually refer to Dr. Collier, who might be able to come up to the table, because I think it was in SEDAR 25, Chip, that there was one of the working papers that looked at the genetics of black sea bass north and south of that break. I mean, fishermen in North Carolina, for years, have indicated that they're sort of northern fish that, in the winter months, come down around the Cape. They are darker, and they are bigger, and they are lumpy headed more, and there are some physical differences in the fish, but Chip can provide you more information.

DR. COLLIER: There was a research paper provided during that SEDAR by Dr. McCartney and Dr. Burton, where they indicated that there was a definite genetic difference between black sea bass north and south of Cape Hatteras, and they specifically went to that area and looked at it, and they said it's very unusual to have this kind of genetic break in a marine population, but they found it, and they also -- There is a tagging study that was done as well, and I believe that Dr. Williams was part of this, or I remember him talking about it at one point, but they were trying to tag black sea bass, and there was very little mixing around that area as well.

Dr. Rudershausen, as part of some of his research, has tagged several thousand fish in Onslow Bay, and he has recaptured all of those fish in Onslow Bay, and so it's apparent that there is a border around Cape Hatteras that the fish just haven't broke through yet, but, at some point, they might, and, as temperatures are changing, yes, things are likely to change.

MR. DILERNIA: Let me try to add to the confusion or perhaps help it. In our most recent assessment of black sea bass in the Mid-Atlantic, there has been a decision made or recommendations regarding looking at two populations of black sea bass, with the split occurring at approximately around the Hudson Canyon, and, if you look at the catch rates and the availability of black sea bass, the catch rates in the northern states, say New York and north, New York and Connecticut and Rhode Island and Massachusetts, are significantly higher than the catch rates from New Jersey south.

As a matter of a fact, the states of Virginia and Maryland are concerned about what appears to be a disappearing stock of black sea bass, and we have been just attributing that to a northern movement of the fish, but we're getting advice now that there may be two different groups or populations, and I don't know how much genetic difference there is, but our management scenarios are now starting to develop around the two different groups of black sea bass in the Mid-Atlantic. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Are there more questions? All right. I'm going to turn it back over to George.

DR. SEDBERRY: Thank you, Chair. The SSC also, at their May meeting, reviewed SEDAR 55, the stock assessment for vermilion snapper, and the SSC agreed that it satisfactorily met the terms of reference, represented the best scientific information available, and was usable for management, and it provides an adequate basis for determining stock status and fishing level recommendations.

There were uncertainties in the stock assessment. There was an issue fitting the CVID, the trap video index, especially at the end of the time series. This was likely due to differing signals in the age comps versus the index, and, as such, there was no upweighting of the CVID index to ensure that recruitment signals captured by age comps remained in the model, and so, if there was any small fish showing up that might indicate recruitment, that would show up. The SSC agreed that this was an appropriate approach. The headboat index dropped in 1992, as management changed, and so the SSC felt that this likely does not track abundance as well as it did previously, and the methods of addressing uncertainty were consistent with SSC expectations and the available information.

Fishing level recommendations, the ABC control rule application resulted in a P^* of 40 percent, and the SSC felt that the projections should run for five years, to 2023, and the SSC reviewed the productivity and susceptibility analysis score and found that the previously used values were still appropriate.

In terms of monitoring advice, indicators and metrics that the council should monitor and the SSC could use to evaluate stock status until the next assessment include monitoring age-length comps in the landings and the fishery-independent surveys, monitoring discards, and specifically to monitor discards of undersized fish as an indicator of recruitment, and monitoring the relationship between landings and the ACL.

Suggested trigger levels for those metrics would include, if the ACL is consistently not met and landings are far below the ACL, there may be a problem with population abundance or recruitment, and the age and length comps do not show evidence of -- If the age and length comps do not show evidence of recruitment.

Research recommendations include development of an acoustic survey index. Vermilion snapper is a schooling species that often schools above the reef, and it may not be available to the traps, or the trap cameras, at certain times of the day or under certain conditions, and an acoustic survey might be able to pick up those fish that are up in the water column or elsewhere and eventually develop an index that might be useful to acoustically determine the abundance of vermilion snapper.

Another one would be to analyze the video versus trap data to examine catchability. There might be environmental variabilities that are influencing catchability, and the fish might show up on the video but not be being caught in the traps. The SSC also suggested considering dropping of the headboat index, or truncating it at 1992, when the index changed suddenly in response to management changes.

The SSC felt that research could include investigation of apparent disconnect between the CVID index and the chevron trap age comps and also investigate the feasibility of development of a juvenile index that could be used to measure recruitment. Additional research recommendations included examining reasons for the large disconnect between the signal coming from the age

comps versus the length comps, examining whether size at age variability is a population phenomenon, and there is a high level of among individual variation in growth, or is being driven by spatial differences in size and age throughout the region.

In terms of guidance for the next assessment, the assessment will depend on the nature of the available new data, the type of assessment, and then fishing level recommendations that the SSC recommended should be in place for no more than five years, until that next assessment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Are there questions on vermilion?

DR. DUVAL: In terms of the feasibility of a juvenile index, what are the options for something like that? I mean, I know we don't have juvenile indices for most of our managed species, and I think the only thing we have is for king and Spanish, maybe, and don't we use SEAMAP in those assessments, but I don't know -- I think we're supposed to get a presentation from Dr. Reichert on update of the SERFS survey, and is there any possibility of using the SERFS survey for a juvenile index? I am just wondering. I support it, but what are our options?

DR. SEDBERRY: I'm not sure what all the options would be, but I think that perhaps in the video analysis that there might be an opportunity to look for abundance of small fish. These fish school by size, and the schools of small fish are very seasonal, and they show up shortly after spawning, and it might be that we could develop -- Marcel and his group or somebody could develop an index from the video showing when these schools of small vermilion show up and actually maybe quantifying the size within the school and the size of the schools. It also might be possible to develop that acoustically as well. You know, we can measure fish with the acoustics, and that might be an indicator of -- That might be a good pre-recruit index eventually that could be developed from the acoustic survey.

MR. HARTIG: George, I saw in the black sea bass presentation that there was a lot of caveats about black sea bass and the population being close to -- I can't remember if it was the overfished or the overfishing level, but, in vermilion, you didn't have any of that. I mean, do you have a general sense of how vermilion is doing based on the assessment, based on all the parameters that you looked at? Is it plodding along okay based on the catches we're having now? I mean, do you have a sense of that?

DR. SEDBERRY: I am not sure that the SSC discussed that in kind of a general sense of what is happening. I don't recall that being in the discussion, but I can check back in the minutes, or maybe Mike has something to say there.

DR. ERRIGO: What we can say is that it wasn't in close proximity to the benchmarks, like black sea bass was. As for status, that is determined by the Center, but it wasn't like black sea bass, where that was in close proximity to the benchmarks.

MR. HARTIG: To follow up on that, George, just as something general like that, when you indicate those probabilities for black sea bass, it would be interesting to see the same thing for vermilion snapper from the SSC, so we can know that, in your report. Thank you.

DR. SEDBERRY: Thank you for that suggestion.

MR. BROWN: George, I don't know how you're going to develop that for the juveniles, but I will tell you that, in the past, I have seen certain instances where large amounts of black sea bass would move into specific areas, and they were all fat with juvenile vermilions, and I called Marcel actually about it one time and brought in some, and then he came and got them and took them back to the lab, and they were full of little vermilions.

DR. SEDBERRY: Well, that is certainly something that could be looked at. I know that Marcel's lab is doing trophic studies on a lot of different species, and there might be something in that that indicates when juvenile vermilion snappers show up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

MR. HARTIG: For a number of our species, like vermilion, the adults are usually a little bit deeper and the juveniles are shallower, pretty much. I mean, do the trap video sets capture that dynamic in the vermilion snapper fishery? I can also ask Marcel when he gives his presentation, and it's probably more appropriate for him.

DR. SEDBERRY: Yes, he would certainly know more about that than I do.

MR. HARTIG: Sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's move on.

DR. SEDBERRY: Moving on to blueline tilefish, if you recall, there was a workgroup formed. The SSC formed a workgroup to work with the Mid-Atlantic Council, and so members of the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Council SSCs worked together to determine data upon which an ABC split between the council jurisdictions for the area north of Hatteras could be based and to confirm or refine the ABC recommendation from the South Atlantic SSC.

The SSC, at their May meeting, considered the workgroup recommendations of using the output from a data-limited method tool analysis to be the best scientific information available and useable for management, and the SSC agreed with the Mid-Atlantic SSC that the output of the DLM Tool analysis is an estimate of OFL and not ABC. The estimate of OFL from the tool analysis is 236,329 pounds.

The SSC also agrees with the research recommendations proposed by the blueline tilefish workgroup, the Mid-Atlantic SSC, and SEDAR, and these included addressing the ageing problems that we've had with blueline tilefish and determining an operational basis for a unit stock north and south of Hatteras, by looking at things like larval transport and adult movement. There are uncertainties associated with the proposed approach. The life history parameters for blueline tilefish were taken from a meta-analysis of similar species, and the landings trends are unreliable, due to changes in management in the fishery over time.

The SSC considers the workgroup recommendations of using the fishery-independent longline survey that was done as best scientific information available and useable for management. Uncertainties with that proposed approach include very limited data used to allocate the ABC. There was one longline survey, and it was run for a single year, but it can be revisited as additional data are gathered for additional years, and the SSC recommends that, when that survey continues,

that it should be coordinated with the South Atlantic survey to increase the utility of that longline survey for management throughout the region, for stock assessments throughout the region.

Given all the uncertainties, the SSC accepts the 56 percent to 44 percent Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic split that was calculated using the method based on that longline survey and that the method should be used for three years and then reevaluated. The SSC recommends splitting the overfishing level from the DLM Tool analysis using the allocation from the fishery-independent longline survey and then applying the South Atlantic SSC ABC control rule to derive an ABC for the portion from Cape Hatteras to the North Carolina/Virginia border.

The SSC recommends that this ABC remain in place for three years and be reevaluated at that time, and so the ABC control rule application resulted in a P^* of 12.5 percent and an ABC of 56,968 pounds. The South Atlantic SSC was unable to determine the status of the portion of the blueline tilefish stock north of Cape Hatteras, due to lack of data and the means to estimate the benchmarks. Are there questions?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there questions?

DR. DUVAL: George, I noticed that there was also another bullet stating that status determinations are relevant for complete stocks and not portions of stocks, and so this is just a portion of a stock that encompasses the South Atlantic. Well, it's a portion of the entire coastwide stock, and so the SSC made a determination that, for the portion of the stock that was assessed from Hatteras south, that it was not overfished and overfishing wasn't occurring, and it was really because of these data limitations and the behavior of the fishery that resulted in having to assess the stock in two different geographic portions, and so would not that status determination apply coastwide?

I mean, this is probably a little bit of a philosophical thing, and I don't want us to go down a rabbit hole, because we've got way too much to do today, but I was just sort of curious when I saw that bullet that status determinations are relevant for complete stocks and not portions of stocks, because I have another question/comment after that.

DR. SEDBERRY: Right, and so our stock assessment process for any species is for the stock, and then we -- Then what was done was looking at the portion -- I am starting to get wrapped around my own head here. We determined the status of the stock and OFL for the portion of the stock north of Cape Hatteras. Then we applied the split based on -- I am sorry.

DR. ERRIGO: The portion of the stock south of Cape Hatteras, the SSC did not really determine status. They were able to determine where it was in relation to the benchmarks that were estimated. It's the Science Center that determines status. There were no benchmarks or anything estimated for the portion of the stock between Hatteras and the North Carolina/Virginia border, and so there was nothing to base any of that on.

DR. DUVAL: I get that, but --

DR. ERRIGO: I think Dr. Williams may have more to say about that.

DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. I think some things to remember about blueline tilefish from the assessment was that we looked at that area from Hatteras to the North Carolina/Virginia line, and an important thing to remember about this fishery is sort of there has been an overall shift over time of where the fish are being caught, primarily, and that there had been, in the landings history, more of a focus in the northern areas for those fish, and so one of the calculations we did, and this is a very rough and back-of-the-envelope sort of thing, was looking at catch per unit amount of habitat, and so we did rough calculations on how much habitat there might be.

There was just a note of caution in the assessment that said it looks like that area from Hatteras to the Virginia line had a really high amount of catch coming out of it, or it appeared to be for such a small amount of habitat, and so I just would add that, that there is that cautionary note, and the other note of caution to add is that these deepwater species sort of have this -- If you look at the history of snowy grouper too, it shows that there is this ability to sort of serially target areas for these deepwater fish, for whatever reason, and there is sort of like a -- They can keep their catch rates a little higher sometimes because they are able to find new pockets of fish, and so that was one of the concerns, was what was happening in this northern area, whether that phenomena was occurring, that they had found or were just recently exploiting what may have been new fish moving into that area or had already been there, but the catch rates there seemed a little high, and so there's just that cautionary note that was in the stock assessment.

DR. DUVAL: But I think what I am -- All I'm getting at is that the results of the -- I think it was the ASPIC model that was used for the portion of the population south of Hatteras that, according to the results of that, if you were -- There was no overfished or overfishing status determination. In other words, your overfished evaluation, your B over B_{MSY} , was greater than one, and your F over F_{MSY} was less than one for that area.

It's really just a point that I wanted to call out, because this has been such an unusual experience, looking at this, and it's one population coastwide, but we've had to split it geographically, in order to try to assess it, just based on the limitations of the data, and so it was -- It caught my eye when the SSC made that comment that status determinations are not for a portion of the stock, and I recognize that it's the Fisheries Service that makes that final status determination, but it was a comment.

I think I am just going into this because my next comment is going to be that, because this is all one population, my assumption and my hope, and Dr. Crabtree or Dr. McGovern may want to weigh-in on this, is that we would take the recommendations that we have received from the SSC on the portion that is south of Hatteras, combined with this recommendation for the portion that is between Hatteras and the North Carolina/Virginia border -- It's all one population biologically, and so presumably, when the council gets ready to make an ACL determination, those numbers would be added together.

We're not going to split up management between -- Have an ACL for just the area between Hatteras and the North Carolina/Virginia border and then a separate ACL for the area south of Hatteras, and that doesn't make sense, because it's all one population. We've simply been forced to get our ABC recommendations separately, due to the limitations of the data, and this was something that I asked Roy about prior to the meeting.

DR. WILLIAMS: Just to follow-up on that, I don't disagree with anything you're saying, I mean, that that's sort of the way to interpret our stock status determination. I think though that something to keep in mind is the cautionary note from the stock assessment that, in recent years, those landings that have been coming out of the north may be high. In other words, you wouldn't want to take a coastwide ACL and then have it all executed in one area, because then you do have a concern of localized depletion, and particularly for some of these deepwater fishes. That is just the cautionary note that comes from the assessment and looking at where those landings are coming from.

DR. DUVAL: I understand that, and I think the difference here is that the environments are different north of Hatteras versus south of Hatteras as well and the species assemblages are also different, and so I certainly appreciate the cautionary note. I just want to make sure that we don't walk down the road of trying to overly complicate something from the management perspective that has already been complicated enough from a scientific perspective in order to receive that advice.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: On your presentation about landings trends, can you go back to that one chart? While we're going back to the one chart, just to remind some folks about the area north of Cape Hatteras and south of the Virginia line, you have half the permits there used to be. There was eleven in that area, and now there is five, or maybe six, and, before, it was catch all you want, and now there is a catch limit, and so it's a total change from the presentation there, but I was curious about the landing trends, if you could go back to that on your chart, on your thing that you were talking about the SSC and the landings, the very bottom bullet about the SSC couldn't determine something based on landing trends.

What I was asking about this does that mean where the fish are landed at or not caught at, because I'm just asking the question, because I think the landing trends are where the fish are landed at, and it's pretty doggone accurate, and where they came from is pretty accurate, because there was not going across state lines except for only one time in the month of June, when 17B was in place, and so I'm just trying to see about the landings trends, and I think that is where fish were landed at, coming into a port at, and not where they were caught at. Can you maybe explain that a little bit, where it says it's unreliable due to changes in management over time? Am I making sense with the question I'm asking?

DR. SEDBERRY: I am looking back in the report to see if I can come up with an answer to that.

DR. ERRIGO: I was there for the analysis. Maybe I can help. When we were doing the DLM Tool analysis, the reason why it says due to changes in management is because there were ACLs put into place that weren't there before, and so there are certain years during the time series that all of a sudden the landings were capped, and so you see a trend where you have very high landings and then they suddenly drop precipitously, and that's not due to changes in abundance, or it's due to management going into place and closing the fishery down, and that's what that means. Management was put into place that changed the way the fishery operated, and the analysis makes certain assumptions, and we had to be very careful about what we put into the analysis and what assumptions were made.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I understand that now. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: I think also, Dewey, those bullet points -- I think it also references the approach that was used and reviewed by the joint SSC workgroup in terms of how to divide that unit stock recommendation, because a lot of times we use historical landings to make an allocation decision, and, in this case, because of all the changes in management that Mike E. outlined, it made it unreliable to use just an average of historical landings for divvying up an ABC recommendation.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is there a report from the two SSCs that met, the working group? Is there a report that's going to be presented here today about the outcome of their discussions on blueline tilefish and the management of it?

DR. SEDBERRY: There is a report that's available, and I'm pretty sure it's in the briefing materials, but there is not going to be a presentation on that today. I think that was done at a previous meeting, maybe in March, or before that.

DR. ERRIGO: Just the report from our last SSC meeting is in the council briefing book, but the briefing book from the May SSC meeting has all the materials that you are looking for, and that's on the website still, and you can get that, or I can just send it to you if you want, and that's fine, but all of those reports are in the SSC briefing book from the last SSC meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

MR. HARTIG: I had a question for Dewey. Dewey, when you target those bluelines from Hatteras north, the habitat you fish on, is that hard bottom or is it like shell hash or something, something different, a muddy-type bottom?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, it would be shell hash and mud, and now it's going to -- There is no more longline fishing for it, because of the low trip limits, and so your bandit fishing -- It's low-relief, because you're using mono gear, and so that's what it is, is mud and some shell hash or something like that. It's not hard bottom.

MR. HARTIG: There are some places in the area that we fish that are like that as well. Most of our fish are tied to hardbottom habitat, but there are areas when you get into south Florida, between the Keys and where I fish in Jupiter, where the fish -- There are a lot of fish not on hard bottom, and obviously that occurs in your area as well, and so I don't know, Erik, when you were making your habitat determinations, back-of-the-envelope, if you're using hard bottom or not, but, basically, there are areas in the South Atlantic where those fish are not tied to hard bottom, and so that's one thing to keep in mind when you think about that, and so thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: George, I think they're through with blueline questions, and I would kind of like to go back to vermilion, because I thought the assessment had vermilion looking pretty good, but I don't -- I was expecting new catch levels, so we could figure out if we wanted to change anything with our ACLs and stuff, but did I miss that somewhere? Do we have new catch levels, or are they the same, or up? I just don't know where they are.

DR. SEDBERRY: I didn't include it in the slide, but there is a table in the report that has the ABC projections.

MR. PHILLIPS: So where were they relative to where they are now? Are they higher?

DR. ERRIGO: The reason why we didn't put them in there is because vermilion snapper and black sea bass are two species that are getting the MRIP revision assessments, which the SSC -- I think the SSC may see those in October and then come back to the council in December with completely different numbers. If you were to start an amendment to change the ACL, I think we would get the new numbers before that one was completed, and so you could just wait.

MR. HARTIG: So what you're saying is just go status quo with the numbers we have now and we'll be okay?

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm not sure that works. We're going to get these numbers, and we're assuming there's not going to be any questions about them and it's going to be cut-and-dried, and I would like to know what the new numbers are and let the council decide if we want to go ahead and change our ACLs now and then, when the MRIP numbers come out, then adjust it accordingly. I would like to know those numbers now, so we can have those options.

DR. DUVAL: Charlie, if you open the SSC revised report, the ABC recommendations are on PDF page 22, and so, for 2019, the ABC recommendation is roughly, for 2019, like 300,000 pounds higher than what our current ACL is, and I'm pretty sure that for vermilion that we set the ACL equal to the ABC previously, and I guess, in terms of this being one of the MRIP revision assessments that is coming up, and those are coming out in October, and so, even if we did I think the abbreviated sort of closed framework, and I always get mixed up between the closed and open framework, and maybe Monica can help me with this, but it seems like even if we took action to do something here today that it probably wouldn't be in place by October, or would have just gone into place in October, and then we would be turning around right again and changing things again.

MR. PHILLIPS: No, I would like to see a new catch ACL in January, and then, if we've got some MRIP adjustments, then, whatever they are, they just affect those new numbers that we're using, but, no, I think if the fish are there, rather than wait until later in the fall, and you're basically taking -- Not allowing the fishermen to catch fish that should be available, and, if we need to change the MRIP numbers, then that's fine, but I would do that when you get those numbers, but, right now, my inclination would be to go ahead and do an abbreviated framework and just change the catch levels and nothing else.

DR. SEDBERRY: The ABC recommendations are there, and they are being projected right now, but I just didn't include it in my presentation, but here's what they are, and, again, they can be adjusted after the new MRIP numbers come in.

DR. DUVAL: I guess my question is really to the Fisheries Service, in terms of timing, if we were to initiate an abbreviated framework to simply update the ACL for vermilion snapper and the length of time that that would take, because we're in the middle of an exercise like that right now for red grouper, I believe, and we approved that in September, didn't we?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra says it was December.

DR. DUVAL: December. Okay, and so we started it in September and approved it in December, and we're waiting on it, and so it takes a couple of council meetings to do something like that. Okay.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I guess it depends how you want to do this. I think, Michelle, what you're getting at is this work could be kind of doubled up for staff, and you would be preparing an abbreviated framework, and then your question is would you be putting another abbreviated framework on top of that once you get the MRIP -- The change in the numbers from MRIP, the recalibration and all that, and so I think that's a great point. It's kind of what do you want to do.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think we should go ahead and do the abbreviated framework and get the fish to the fishermen. Then, as we work through -- I am just not so sure that MRIP changes are going to be as clean as we think they might be or as quick, and I would like to go ahead and get these new fishing levels in place in January, if at all possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can I get a motion?

MR. PHILLIPS: **I will make that in the form of a motion, to do an abbreviated framework on vermilion snapper.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We're getting it on the board now. Charlie made the motion, and it's seconded by Mark.

MR. HARTIG: Michelle, I'm not as nimble in navigating through my information as you are, and so I'm going to ask this question of you. Are we above BMSY on vermilion or are we at it?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, we are.

MR. HARTIG: Okay. By approximately how much, I mean ballpark?

DR. DUVAL: It's like 15 percent. The ratio is 1.13.

MR. HARTIG: All right. I'm just going to say something here and carry on with this. To me, when we've made these changes on some of these species over time, and black sea bass jumps out, when we were over BMSY, and we said, well, let's go ahead and take that amount of catch, and then it didn't work out so great, and so, basically, what I am seeing over time in management is that we'll get an assessment, and we see this extra amount of fish that we can take, and we take it, and then something bad happens, oftentimes.

I am just looking -- I know what Charlie wants to do, and I'm looking at vermilion as one of the most important species that we manage. It's bouncing around, and we're able to target these animals, and we seem like we're in a pretty good place right now. I mean, there are some fish available from the assessment that we could take over for biomass at MSY. For me, I would leave it status quo. That's how I would approach this. I would leave a healthy fishery healthy and allow it to continue, since it's our most important species in the South Atlantic.

Now, this is just based on looking at what we've done for a number of years on a number of different species, and I am sure there are going to be some thoughts about why we may not do that and we want to take every fish we can, but, when we've done that in the past in some instances, we've gotten into problems, and, when we have a fishery that's healthy and we know the catch

limits that we have now are sustainable, and it seems to be at the recruitment levels we have now, I'm at a good place with that fishery. Having said that, that's just my --

MR. GRINER: I understand what you're saying, Ben, and I do think we're healthy. Here we are into mid-June and we haven't closed vermilion yet, when it used to be March and then April and then May, and now here we are in June, but I think Charlie makes a great point. I am not so sure that I have a whole lot of confidence in October being the timeframe that we get some definition out of what these new MRIP numbers are going to be, and so I really would be supportive of moving forward with this motion.

DR. CRABTREE: If we go down this path, we would come in in August, or September, and vote this up and then potentially come back in December and get new numbers and do it all over again, and that seems to me to be the way it would go with this one and sea bass, and I'm just not sure that it's worth it to go in and change the catch levels now, because we know these numbers aren't the final numbers, and I am kind of viewing these assessments as they're really not complete now and they're going to have to be updated, and we know they're all going to change, and I am reluctant to go through the process of changing the catch levels and then turn right around and do it all over again, which is what I think we're setting up to do here.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I was just looking at the framework process for snapper grouper, and you certainly couldn't do an abbreviated framework at this meeting. You haven't given the public notice that you are considering potential changes to your ABC and ACL and all that, and so it would be -- I guess you would direct staff to develop it for the next meeting, like Roy just said, for September. Then my question is what about the other species, and not just vermilion, that the SSC gave you recommendations for, and I think Roy touched on that, too. Do you intend then to put them all in one abbreviated framework? As has been mentioned, and not to beat a dead horse, but you are going to get different numbers for these species soon thereafter.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't see us necessarily doing double work. Right now, we're saying we want to go to the new catch levels from the assessment. Then, if we are going to change something with the new MRIP numbers, to me that's a different thing, and vermilion have been -- From the fishermen's point of view, they've been looking pretty stable and pretty good for a long time. They don't seem to have this issue that black sea bass have had, that they had really good recruitment and they were way up here and now they're down.

Vermilion have been pretty stable, and these fishermen really need these fish. Like Ben said, it's their bread and butter and, for the most part, they do not get to fish a majority of the year, and they need these fish. We need a professional fishery, and, if we can add these fish to their catch levels, it is one little step on getting our fishermen where they can survive and we can have that professional fishery that we've been wanting for so very long.

MR. BROWN: I will reiterate what Charlie said. The vermilion snapper fishery in the South Atlantic is, in my opinion, the most robust fishery that there is, and, as long as the weather is good, these guys are going out and catching their share of the ACL, commercial-wise, in a short period of time, really. It's not really taking that long for them to do that, and it's a split season. To give them a little bit more fish, to where they can fish a little bit longer and try to overcome some of these closures and everything too, it would really support the fishery, and I think a lot of the commercial guys are looking at this too and thinking that this assessment was going to be positive

and that they would see something come back to them and that they would be able to count on that, and I just hate to see it go down the wrong road.

MR. BOWEN: This is a question for Charlie, or you even, Madam Chair, and would this abbreviated framework include actions and alternatives for raising the bag limit for the recreational sector? Is that your intent as well with this motion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's just the ACL. Yes, that's what Myra says.

MR. BOWEN: To that point, I would -- If we're going to go down this road, I would like to see some actions and alternatives in this abbreviated framework to increase the bag limit for this robust fishery for the recreational and for-hire guys, if we're going to go down this road at all. I mean, why just do the ACL with not -- Because, if we do that and the recreational and for-hire guys get no benefit, if our bag limits still stay the same, and it's not a fishery that closes any time during the year for that sector.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's a good point. I don't think that those options can be in an abbreviated framework, and just a regular framework, and so, if we're going to do an abbreviated framework that is going to move faster, I don't think those items can be in there.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you for the clarification.

MS. MCCAWLEY: But we could, following the MRIP revisions, add that in there, because that would be a regular framework action.

MS. BECKWITH: To me, this assessment is positive. It's showing that the fishery is stable and healthy and doing well, but, as I look at the projections, at the end of the five-year projections, we're really not that far off in our ABC from what we currently have, and so we often have debates around the table about stability in the fisheries, and we've asked the SSC to come back and talk about having one ABC across multiple years, in order to keep that fishery stable.

What you guys are suggesting right now is to take those extra fish now, which, quite frankly, I agree with Ben. I think for a fishery that is doing well and is stable that allowing those extra fish to maintain in the population is a little bit of a safety net, especially when we're looking at projections that are decreasing annually almost back to where our current level will be. My personal opinion is I am not going to support this motion. I am willing to reconsider how we move forward with this fishery when those MRIP revisions come back, but, at this time, I'm not willing to sort of move forward and change the current ABC.

MR. CONKLIN: If we did the abbreviated framework and went through with this, would it at least give us the first half of the season next year to be able to fish on the new numbers, and then it would take a little time to change them after we got the new numbers?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see shrugs, and I'm looking over to Roy, in that direction. Can you repeat the question, Chris?

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and so, if we went through with this abbreviated framework, the catch levels that are here, with the current assessment, would we be able to fish on those for at least half

of the year next year before we were able to see the new MRIP numbers? Would the fishermen be able to fish at least half the season on what we would be doing here?

DR. CRABTREE: I don't know. I mean, what we would have to do, if you go down this path, is we will have to take the FES, the new recreational catch estimates we're going to get, and convert them back into the old MRIP currency, and that's what we would then use to monitor the fishery, and so, when we get the new numbers, and I assume we will see them in December, we're going to have -- All these numbers will be different for vermilion and sea bass, and the allocations are going to change, because they're based on the historical catch levels, and we'll have to recalculate those based on the calculated time series.

How long it will take us to get all that done exactly next year probably depends on how they come out, and the other thing about this that I'm not clear on is why are we doing this for vermilion and not for black sea bass? We have a new number there, and so shouldn't we be doing both of these if we're going to do this at all?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm sorry, but Myra was answering a question over here for me. Did you ask me a question?

DR. CRABTREE: It goes to Charlie, but I mean we heard new numbers on sea bass too, and why are we doing an abbreviated framework now for one and not the other?

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, vermilion seemed to be much more stable and much more robust, and I think there is -- Ben and Michelle and some of them are worried about we may be at a high level and then we're going to go down to a low level and then we'll be overfishing or something like that. I don't think that's a problem for vermilion.

Black sea bass are at a low point right now, and I don't know that there is the confidence in black sea bass that we seem to have in vermilion, but, if they wanted to do black sea bass, I don't have a problem with that, but I am trying to keep fishermen on the water and put fishermen on the water, and that's my goal, and I just don't know how clean the MRIP revisions are going to be or how fast, and it may -- This may only matter for half of next year, or it may matter for all of next year, but I would like to see us move forward, like we've been doing for a long time, and get these new numbers in place and get these fishermen where they can work.

Then if we need to change something, if allocation changes or whatever, but I'm afraid if we -- I don't want to tangle up MRIP plus this. I want to do this, and then, if we do something for MRIP, then they do something for MRIP, but I want to keep them separated. I think it's cleaner, and the fishermen understand what's going on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra just reminded me that we have changes to the commercial trip limit in the visioning amendment for vermilion.

MR. CONKLIN: Since I've been on the council, one of the things that I have really wanted to see through was this assessment. We've been waiting on it, a lot of the fishermen have, and we all know that the fishery -- We're getting the results that we expected, positive, and a little bit of a bump in the ACL, and I feel like -- I'm going to side with Charlie on this, and I think that it's the norm for us to adjust catch levels and ACLs when we get recommendations from the SSC, and I

would like to stick with it until we're told otherwise, when we're forced to do it a different way, and, at this time, we're not, and so I think we owe it to the fishermen and to the public that consume the fish to deliver it to the market. Thank you.

MR. HARTIG: To answer Roy's question, if we do vermilion, we should do black sea bass. I mean, we should do that, but then, Roy, you added in -- You talked about the MRIP numbers that have come down, and we're going to have to do allocations before we implement those. Those decisions are going to take a while, and they're not going to happen right away.

The other thing I wanted to say is that I know that Erik has expressed, in the past, some concern with the MRIP numbers way back when. Now, maybe some of that concern has been allayed over time, but I know that the Science Center wanted to take a look at those numbers and do they pass the smell test, and I don't know, Clay, if you guys have had discussions about that or we just accept these numbers as they come, or I don't know what the conversation has been at the Science Center about the new MRIP information.

Basically, there is going to be some consternation from the public about these numbers, and I don't know how that's going to enter into the management process on how long it takes to get them approved and moved forward, but there is a lot of outstanding parts to this, and I would, if we're going to do this, go ahead with both black sea bass and vermilion and put these in place through an abbreviated framework and do not mess with the bag limits right now and then -- I am willing, based on the conversation I've heard, and I understand what parts of the conversation are -- It's not a lot of fish, and I would go forward with approving what the council thinks we ought to approve, and so, basically, move forward with both of them in an abbreviated framework and see where the chips lie. I do not think that we're going to get everything done in the timeline that the numbers come out and those are the numbers and we move forward. I don't know that that's going to really happen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think Charlie is going to ask if you want the motion changed on black sea bass, though I thought that the ABC was lower than the current ABC, but it's not the case for vermilion, and do we really want to go with black sea bass, even though vermilion seems to be in better shape, but I don't know.

MR. PHILLIPS: **Ben, if it gives you a level of comfort, I can add black sea bass to this. If it does, and if it's okay with the seconder, then we will add black sea bass.**

MR. HARTIG: I don't have a problem with the just because black sea bass is lower. I mean, let's do them both, and it's cleanest. Regardless of how the assessment comes out, both of them need to be updated.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Myra has added black sea bass to this motion. The seconder, I believe, was okay with that.

DR. DUVAL: Just to clarify, Charlie, it was Anna who was concerned about the decreasing ACLs. My concern was just a workload issue and the mechanics of doing one action and then having to come back, potentially, and do another action. I agree with Roy and with Ben that if you're going to use the abbreviated framework to change the ACLs for vermilion that it only makes sense to include black sea bass in there, and I would just point us back to the actions that we took in

December to use this abbreviated framework to adjust the red grouper ACL, which is also significantly lower than where it has been.

I recognize that the landings for black sea bass have not been nearly at the level of the ACL, and it's been anywhere from, I guess, like 30 to 50 percent of what the ACLs are, and so, while there may be some -- There may certainly be some impact to adjusting the ACL for black sea bass, should this move forward, it seems to me that that's exactly the action you would want to take. We have seen some concern with the black sea bass stock.

I am sensitive to the fact that vermilion is the base of our fishery here in the South Atlantic and that the fishermen -- That this assessment reflects what the fishermen have seen on the water. Given that we are above BMSY, you would absolutely expect your catch levels to decrease over the next five years. I mean, you're just fishing down your surplus. I guess I would just say, if we do move forward with this -- I understand everybody's concerns about whether or not the MRIP revisions are actually going to come through in October. I think there has been -- That seems to have been a fluctuating timeline.

If we move forward with this and direct staff to prepare an abbreviated framework that we would see in September, I guess I might just ask everybody to reconsider whether or not you want to go ahead and take final action on that in September if we have assurance that those MRIP numbers are coming through, and Roy referenced the fact that, because of the allocation formula that we use for our commercial and recreational allocations is based on our formula of historic landings and recent timeframe of landings, that is going to automatically be recalculated, and remember this happened with snowy grouper as well, and that led to a change in allocation, and so I guess I would just -- I would just ask folks to consider that in September when you see this, if we have more certain information on the timeframe with which those MRIP revisions are going to be completed. Thanks.

MR. BROWN: This really burns me. It really makes me upset, because a lot of the commercial fishermen were depending on this stock assessment to see a better -- To get more ACL, and here we are and now we're going to wait around for MRIP to impact the commercial sector because -- Here they do all their reporting and everything, and they're very up-to-date on that, and we know what they do, and we're going to wait for the recreational side of reporting to impact them, and -- I know, Michelle, but what I'm saying is these guys are really depending on this, and I just hate the fact that this recalibration could end up being a spear and just cut the whole thing down and then not even be able to increase the ACL.

DR. DUVAL: I just want to respond to that. Mark, I am not saying that I am going to vote against this, but I am just asking that you all consider whatever updated information there might be in September. Trust me that I am well aware of the importance of the vermilion fishery to the commercial fishermen. I am very well aware of that, and I agree with you that we want to be able to provide some positive impact, when we can, to the folks who depend on this fishery. All I'm asking is that you consider the mechanics of it if we have updated information in September, that's all.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so there have been some good points, and I saw a couple more hands in the air, and then I think we're going to go ahead and vote on this. One of the points that Michelle brought up to me about the timing or the other things that are on the table -- I think, when

we get to Executive Finance, we can address what are our priorities, if this motion passes. Then does that now become one of the main priorities? I think that that can be addressed in another committee.

DR. CRABTREE: I understand all of the concerns, Mark, that you're raising. My worry with this is not as much staff time to do it all over again, but my worry is. I mean, if there's one thing we need in these fisheries, it's some stability. We have had things change around too much, and I just worry that we take an action here and give them more fish and then we come in at the December meeting and start working on an action that's going to take fish away.

The status of these may change. I don't know what's going to happen when we go through these MRIP numbers again, but it worries me the signal we're sending to the public when we change catch levels and we say the status is this, but then we may turn around in six months and have to change the catch levels again, and maybe they will go up more and maybe they will go down more, and I have no idea what they will do, but that just kind of changing things so frequently I think makes life more difficult on everyone, and I think it sends a bad signal. I think, to the extent we can bring stability to these things and make changes less often rather than more often, we would be better off.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that, Roy, but, on the allocation issue, I know I came in late when I came back on the council for the ACL amendment, and the decisions pretty much had already been made about how the allocation tool was going to be used, but I went back and did a lot of work on reviewing how those allocations impacted the split between the commercial and recreational, and there are some areas -- I remember that red grouper sticks out in my mind, and it's been a while since I've looked at it, but it had a big spike in that last three years, and, if you guys don't go back and review the allocation formula before you start allocation -- That is critical, in my estimation.

You need to go back and review that formula and make sure that these things aren't happening that disadvantage this one group or the other in your allocation, when you set your allocation, and so, to me, I think you need to readjust the allocation formula moving forward, before you get into these MRIP allocation adjustments, and so that's at least what I would like to see you do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I also agree with some things that you had been saying about the timing, and the time that it's going to take to do that could be more significant than what we're anticipating.

MR. DILERNIA: You just read my mind. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's take a vote on this. I think we've had a lot of good discussion. **I would like to see hands for those in favor of this; those opposed, six opposed; any abstentions. The motion passes with seven in favor and six opposed.**

All right. Let's take a five-minute bathroom break, and we'll continue rolling through the SSC items.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, George. I am going to turn it back over to you.

DR. SEDBERRY: Thank you, Chair. The next item that the SSC reviewed was the results of the Red Snapper ABC Workgroup, which was formed back in October of last year to review data and methods for setting an ABC for red snapper. The workgroup had several recommendations, and they conducted several analyses, five different analyses, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center interim analysis was preferred of the five reviewed.

It's a projection analysis using updated landings, age comp data from the chevron traps, and an independent survey index of abundance. It used flat-top selectivity for the CVID index, and it used age and length comps from the chevron trap, and it still uses the MRIP data, with the high degree of uncertainty associated with that.

At the May SSC meeting, where we discussed the findings of the workgroup, new information became available that was unavailable to the workgroup or to the SSC prior to that May meeting from an FWRI study that indicated that the chevron trap selectivity may not be flat-topped or equal to the video, and I think we're going to have some additional discussion of that later on in this meeting.

The SSC considered the interim analysis as the best scientific information available and useable for management. The ABC should be in place for three years, from 2019 to 2021, and the SSC recommended reviewing that FWRI study that we're going to hear about later regarding the implications for this interim analysis and for upcoming assessments of red snapper, and the SSC recommends waiting until the new MRIP data have been incorporated into a revised assessment before running any additional analyses, including an updated interim analysis.

None of the ABC approaches recommended by the workgroup addressed uncertainty in MRIP and impacts on the ability to track the ACL, but, regardless of that, the data are still considered BSIA, and the council should consider using a large buffer to account for the uncertainty in tracking the red snapper ACL. Here are the ABC recommendations using that interim analysis, and this is what the SSC recommends at this point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Just so I understand, the FWRI analysis is not included in this information?

DR. SEDBERRY: That is correct.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The reason it's not included is because it came late, after the workgroup, and is that the main reason?

DR. SEDBERRY: It was not available to the workgroup, and so the first that the SSC heard of this was at the SSC meeting, when the workgroup reported out on their findings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can you help me understand why they did not change these? Seeing this additional data, why they didn't make a recommendation to change what they had already worked on?

DR. SEDBERRY: The workgroup and the SSC felt like they had had no chance to review this, and it had not been reviewed at all, as far as we knew, and it had just been presented by Luiz, and

we had no opportunity to study it or to review it, and we didn't know what peer review had been done on it, and it was the first we had seen it.

MS. MCCAULEY: I guess I have some concerns with you all suggesting that, without that information, that you all were using the best scientific information available, knowing that there was this additional information and not wanting to dig into that further, since it was clearly going to change the outcome.

DR. SEDBERRY: It was not available.

MS. MCCAULEY: Well, since it's available now, I mean, can't the council make a recommendation that this information be used and you all go back and readdress this?

DR. SEDBERRY: Yes, the council can do whatever it wants with that information, but it just wasn't available to the SSC.

MS. BECKWITH: I think there's a couple of issues that I wanted to chat about. Certainly that was one of them, and I am not -- After listening to the SSC discussion on red snapper twice, I sort of understand how they came to that particular decision, because they had worked through, and it hadn't been peer reviewed, and there was a lot of discussion on at what point do we keep waiting for new information, and so, if we stop -- Do we put this forward now and then review the information and then reconsider it, but these are our suggestions to move forward, and we'll peer review that information, and then we'll sort of take everything into reconsideration. I think the SSC -- I got the impression that they were certainly willing to do that, but I got the impression that the SSC simply didn't want to sort of kick the can down the road and not provide us with some advice.

I think an issue that I struggled with, listening to the discussions and the process, was -- To me, the sort of ABC wasn't always so much the issue, but it was more of a monitoring issue for us, and so I think someone -- I forget who said it, but someone sort of put it nicely when they asked if the SSC had been given the wrong task, because what we ended up with was an ABC, which we had before, but, of course, our ABC, for various reasons, and Erik did a good job of explaining it during the meeting, but, for various reasons, we were not able to properly monitor that ABC, and so it put us in sort of current position over the last few months.

I am still kind of at a loss of how we're going to take this ABC and move it forward and be able to monitor a fishery that is primarily discards and all the other issues with the red snapper fishery that we have all discussed around this table over and over again, and so, yes, I would like to see Luiz's study be peer reviewed and reconsidered into the SSC, into sort of another version of an interim analysis, if that is deemed appropriate, but, also, I just am kind of looking over to NOAA and SERO and asking, really, what are we going to do with this ABC? How are we going to monitor this?

MR. HARTIG: I had some concerns, and I voiced them at the SSC meeting, but the information was available to the SSC in a public comment, and it did not come through the traditional channels, and we do have a process for information to be given to the SSC by the council, and, in a normal circumstance, that information would have been provided to the SSC in the briefing book and with

the intent, possibly, for the SSC to peer review that information as to its applicability to be used in the index in the future.

Hopefully we'll do that, and I'm looking at John, at the next SSC meeting, and that will come before the SSC and you can review it in your normal channels and make a determination on how that information can be used, and so hopefully that can be done and we'll get that information straightened out and we'll move in a direction based on what the SSC determines. Yes, there was heartburn, and this information was provided in a public document, but not in the way we normally do it, and so there are reasons why the SSC couldn't review it at this meeting, and I just want to add a little bit more to that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I appreciate that clarification. Maybe after we see Luiz's presentation and have more discussion on that, I think maybe we have a motion that gives them direction, so that they're clear that we want them to review this, since we're working on 2019 and beyond.

Regarding Anna's question about how are we going to monitor, I can tell you the heart of the fishery for red snapper has really been off of Florida, and we have had massive sampling efforts, and Luiz can talk about it when he comes up here to give his report, but we have gone above and beyond on our sampling efforts, everything from people at the dock and boat counts, and we've been basically mobilizing all the samplers that we can, and, in addition, people from our division that don't typically sample, over to the Atlantic coast to do everything that we can to make sure that these short-term events are adequately sampled, and so also carcass drop-offs and other things, and so Luiz can talk about it when he comes and gives his presentation, and so I feel like we've recognized the deficiencies, at least for Florida, in sampling what would be considered a rare event, since we're only going to fish a couple of weekends, and we've done everything that we can to try to get those fish sampled in those quick timeframes. Are there more questions on this? Remember that we're going to get another presentation on the specific new data. I don't see any more hands.

DR. SEDBERRY: Our next item is the golden tilefish ABC evaluation, and, if you recall, the council provided a rationale for setting the ABC for golden tilefish at 362,000 pounds for 2019 and 2020, and the SSC reviewed that and agreed that the council's rationale is sound. The SSC felt there is a risk of setting precedent for sending ABC recommendations back to the SSC. However, the council did not know the economic impact of the ABC recommendations until it was made by the SSC, and the council should consider addressing circumstances for remanding ABC recommendations through the ABC control rule amendment, which I guess we'll talk about on Thursday.

The SSC considers the council's request to set the ABC using projections at F equals 75 percent of FMSY as based on best scientific information available and useable for management, and so the ABC is set at 362,000 pounds whole weight for 2019 and 2020.

Given the uncertainty in the update, there may be significant risk with accepting higher risk tolerance, and there is uncertainty in the update relative to data inputs, including hyperstability issues and localized changes that can mask population changes. The SSC recognizes, however, that this is primarily a commercial fishery, and there is a good record of controlling harvest and not exceeding the ACL over the past several years, and the SSC recommends evaluating the width of distributions around parameters using the MCB analysis, and the bounds on the parameters in the golden tilefish assessment may be wider compared to the bounds in other assessments,

contributing to the large buffer between the ABC and the OFL that we've seen for golden tilefish. Any questions on that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No questions, and we're going to keep moving.

DR. SEDBERRY: Okay. The other item that we discussed via webinar was the analysis methods used in Snapper Grouper Amendment 27, and this is the SARIMA method, and there is a report on this, and we did this discussion via webinar, and I'm not sure if the report -- It's in your briefing book, and I think it's maybe in the late materials, and I'm not sure, but I don't think it's in the snapper grouper folder.

Anyway, the SSC agreed with the use of both the last three years model and the SARIMA model, as recommended by analysts, depending on the retrospective performance analysis done for each action in Regulatory Amendment 27, and so, for Regulatory Amendment 27, the analysts recommended using the model for each species that most closely predicted the actual closure dates in 2017, and so, in some instances, the last three years model most closely predicted what happened in 2017, and, in some instances, the SARIMA model did, and so whatever seems to best predict what actually happened might be the best way to go forward using these analysis methods.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there questions?

MR. HARTIG: I know Nick was going to work on some of that, and I don't know what has happened since then. Does anybody know what Nick has been able to accomplish with hindcasting that information, Roy?

DR. CRABTREE: I will defer to Jack, but Nick Farmer has taken a different position in Protected Resources, and so I don't know if there is more to add to this, Jack, or not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Does that conclude your report, or do you have more?

DR. SEDBERRY: That's it for snapper grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions on the SSC report for snapper grouper items?

MR. HARTIG: You know, I think the council should outline their concerns about the interim analysis, the way it's been done and the inputs used, and lay out another way of moving forward with that. I mean, we're at a crossroads now where we're in a do-loop between discard mortality and catch and can't open the fishery, and that's ridiculous. I mean, we're at a point now where our indices are going off the chart, yet we can't have a fishery, and so, basically, when we get into a situation like that, you're just going to have to forget about the discards, like we have done, and the SSC needs to make this determination for a period of time at some catch level and see what happens, see how the stock reacts. I mean, otherwise, we'll never get out of this situation that we're in with the discards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree.

MR. DILERNIA: We had a very interesting presentation at the last Mid-Atlantic Council meeting regarding discard mortality and depth at capture, and it was specific to black sea bass, and I will

look to Dewey to help me out on this, but I think anything over twenty fathoms or so, Dewey, it seemed like we had almost like a 50 percent discard mortality rate on the discards, and so we're discarding them, but they're not making it. They're dying, and so we may reconsider our discard policy. Dewey, was it twenty fathoms or something like that?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, it was, and, also, for that, to the council staff and Mark and a few others, and it was a great presentation, and so maybe you can forward that to all the council members for their reading and looking over. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, you guys.

DR. DUVAL: Just in response to Ben's comments about the interim analysis, I just want to be careful here, because it seemed to me that the discussion that the SSC -- It got a little bit confounded between the use of the interim analysis as a tool for in between our assessments versus the use of it as a tool to set an ABC for red snapper, and so I just want to be clear that if you're -- If the council is going to express some concerns that it's about the results of the interim analysis for the development of an ABC for red snapper and that we would like to see a review of the FWRI report that Luiz is going to give us a presentation on, because I think that the interim analysis -- This is the future of getting updated, potentially updated, ABC advice and how to improve our assessment throughput, and I just want to be clear about that.

I had some concerns when the SSC was discussing this, because I felt like they were going down one of the Charlie's rabbit holes with regard to utility of the tool for what we've heard it described for and how Dr. Williams has described it for us in the past to help improve assessment throughput versus this sort of very special application of it for red snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Those are good points. Maybe we can address that again, and, if we're going to have a motion, you can help us get the right items in there, after we see the presentation. Anything else for Dr. Sedberry?

MR. HARTIG: The one thing I needed to add in that was, when I forget about the discards, that is not what we're doing. We have Amendment -- Is it 43 or what's the amendment where we deal with the best fishing practices and the release discard?

MS. MCCAWLEY: 29.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, and so we have that amendment that is going forward, and we are addressing discards in a different format, and it's not that we're forgetting about them, and so I just want to make that clear.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Ben. All right. Thank you so much, George. We really appreciate it.

DR. SEDBERRY: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Next up, we have Luiz, who is going to give us a presentation about the size selectivity of hook-and-line gear, chevron traps, and underwater cameras for red snapper and other reef fish in the South Atlantic. Welcome, Dr. Barbieri.

DR. BARBIERI: Thank you, Madam Chair and council members. It's good to be back here. I have missed you. After serving for several years as the SSC Chair, I got used to coming over and addressing this council, and so it's good to be back. Anyway, to move things along, here I just want to give a very brief overview of the results of a research project that we conducted, and this was an FWC-FWRI led project funded from NOAA Fisheries Cooperative Research Program, and we want to thank them for providing us with the financial support as well as the cooperation of partners in the Science Center who worked with us, and, of course, all the industry members that helped us by taking us out there to conduct the actual field component of this research, and that was much appreciated.

The Cooperative Research Program is a program designed to bring fishermen and scientists together and integrate this mutual learning process between the two sectors in trying to bring data that is well informed, in terms of achieving research results.

In terms of introduction, we talked about this, I think it was last year, and it may have been the June meeting of last year, when I came over and I presented an overview of a number of studies that we have conducted over the years, funded by MARFIN, CRP, and our Sportfish Restoration Program, since 2011. Since the heart of that red snapper population and fishery is centered off of northeast Florida, we wanted to conduct some additional studies to have an idea of abundance trends and demographics and collect some life history information for red snapper there.

We conducted a number of studies, and the previous presentation that I gave was an overview of all these projects combined, and this one is going to be focused really on a study that was conducted in 2016 and funded by CRP specifically, and the methodological approach used for this study is a little more structured, basically, in terms of the sampling design and how the field component of the project was executed, and so we had more of an experimental control over the parameters of the field component.

Here, just to refresh your minds, last time I presented summaries of all these different studies, spanning from 2011 through last year, and here is the selectivity study that was conducted in 2016, and that uses standardized hook-and-line, chevron trap, and camera methods, and it also used, combined in the same set, sampling set, it used also fishers there choosing to use their own methods, so we would have then a comparison between what was being observed and caught in the chevron trap, what was being observed in the cameras, and also how our fishery-independent sampling there, which is completely standardized, what that was collecting versus what the industry itself sees as representative of the population, and so you could have a comparison of all those components. We don't need to get into this detail, but this is just to basically show you all the different sampling gears over the years that were used, and I already summarized what was used for this selectivity study.

Here is an overview of the sampling sites, and I just recycled a slide that I had presented before, and so you have the 2017 Sportfish study here, but, of course, we are focusing on the 2016 selectivity study, which sampled primarily between that northeast area around Daytona Beach all the way into the border with Georgia, and we had about ninety to ninety-five sampling stations that were selected, and you can see here the depth ranges, and this follows a random stratified sampling design, to make sure that we had good structure, statistically, to evaluate the components

of results, and you can see the chevron trap, which was equipped with these stereo cameras that allow us to take more precise fish measurements.

The timed-drop and the captain's choice, which was when the fishers were sampling, you can see that they are either right on top of each other or very close, and so each one of those sets, using different gears, was done simultaneously at these stations to guarantee that the results are fully comparable.

Here is a summary of the results, and we don't need to get into the detailed stats here, but we use a process called a kernel density estimate process, which estimates probability density functions, and those are these curves that you see here, for what are the expected size compositions that are outlined here by this gray zone around these graphs, and those are the expected known model predictions of what the size compositions for these different gears would be versus -- I don't know how well you can see that there is a dotted line and there is a continuous line, a solid line, indicating the stereo camera data and the capture gear data.

This methodology, the analytical process that was used here, looks at two different sets of criteria. It's the shape and the location of these distributions that will give you an idea of whether different sizes are comparable to each other, comparable between gears and comparable to that known model that is the predicted or expected model and the shape of the curves, which also give you an idea of how much -- Where the mode or the distribution of the lengths that are covered in the results, and those are here for you to see. The left was using the status quo location and shape, and the right is doing the same for shape, but using normalized data, so we could have a comparison between the two, where you can actually normalize and make sure that your variability between these gears is comparable.

In terms of results, basically, there was a significant difference of location and shape for the chevron trap samples, and the study basically came to the conclusion that the chevron trap sampling method under samples -- It has a tendency to under sample the large individuals, especially individuals above 600 millimeters total length, fork length, and the repetitive timed-drop in the captain's choice had a significant difference of location, where it was tending to under sample the smaller individuals, and this is not really unexpected when we think about the morphology of how a trap, a fishing trap, operates and the fact that the different hook sizes that are used in the fishery and in our sampling is going to be also selecting for different size classes. Basically, when you see results that we present here for stock assessments, you see that we use a combined number of data sources, so we can actually cover the entire size range of fish that we are trying to address.

Here, just in a more raw data type of presentation for you, you can see the size ranges in the distribution of the different frequencies of sizes for the stereo camera in fork length and then for the repetitive timed-drop hook gear, the captain's choice, which was really how industry fishes, as it compares to the chevron trap. You can see that industry is not really, in the repetitive timed-drop, is not really being able to pick up the signal in those smaller size classes, and those are under sampled by us, while that is picked up very well by the chevron traps, and then the opposite takes place in the larger size classes.

Now, keep in mind that there is a number of experimental issues that still need to be taken into account. There are assumptions here that we make that whatever is being observed in the stereo

camera is fully representative of everything that is there, and that can be variable, depending on the species and depending on the type of habitat and depending on the location and visibility, et cetera, but, by and large, our experience in working in projects similar to this in the Gulf of Mexico is that we actually have a pretty good representation of the size composition as we make those observations through the stereo cameras.

This is just to show -- This is from the previous presentation that I gave last year, which actually gives you a more complete distribution of the different gears that were used over all of the years and then the ages for the fish that were sampled and were aged afterwards that will give us an idea of the age composition, and it seems to confirm the results for the size composition as we observed from the results of the selectivity study that we have over here. Madam Chair, that completes my presentation, and I want to keep it short and sweet, but I will be glad to address any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there questions?

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Dr. Barbieri, and it's great to see you again. I just want to make sure that I am understanding this. On your last slide here, there is not -- I mean, clearly it looks like the -- I am looking at the bottom panel, which is the 2017 repetitive timed-drop. Despite the broader distribution of lengths, you are really -- Most of those fish are younger fish, and there doesn't seem to be a whole lot of difference in ages of the fish amongst any of the methods that were used.

DR. BARBIERI: Correct. Now, keep in mind, and you may remember this from some of the stock assessment presentations that we see here, that year class strength, the recruitment pulses that come through the fishery, will have an influence on what we see in terms of the age composition as we look over time, and so you can see cohorts that are strong cohorts that are picked up by the gears and then they eventually work themselves out of the selectivity of that gear, and, in other years, you see patterns that are somewhat different, but, yes, 2017, in this case, was different than the pattern that had been observed before. There were some larger, older fish captured, but most of them, in 2017, were relatively younger.

MR. HARTIG: Luiz, are you familiar with the stereo camera used in the Gulf over time? Do you have a familiarity with how that's been developed?

DR. BARBIERI: Well, to some extent. That is a little bit outside of my main wheelhouse, but, back in 2006 or 2007 was when we started trying to expand our more shelf-based sampling programs in the Gulf and South Atlantic, and primarily in the Gulf what we did is tried to test the use of a number of gears, and that was 2006 or 2007. Then, of course, after 2010 and the oil spill, then there were dedicated funding sources that were identified, and we largely expanded, and I am talking about a tenfold expansion in the program, in the use of multiple gears and multiple platforms, including a more comprehensive use of those stereo cameras.

By the way, over there, we work very closely with the Panama City folks, the NMFS/NOAA Fisheries Panama City Lab, and we have actually since the very beginning, in 2006, been coordinating with them very closely on areas of the West Florida Shelf that are sampled by FWRI and that are sampled by them, and we coordinate methodologies to make sure that they are comparable, and we develop jointly those types of sampling approaches.

MR. HARTIG: In the Gulf, you guys experiment with a number of gears, and you have these stereo cameras, and I guess the decision was made that stereo cameras are a really good way to go in trying to get the sizes of fish that are viewed by the camera, and you nodded your head yes.

DR. BARBIERI: Yes, and I'm sorry.

MR. HARTIG: I am just going in this direction because when the decision on the South Atlantic was made to put cameras on the traps, and we were told that cameras were going to go in the traps, my expectation was that those cameras were going to be stereo cameras, and they were not. They're GoPro cameras that can't give you the size of the fish, and I would follow that up by, given the importance and the difference in the stereo camera information that came out of the FWRI study, are we going to start putting stereo cameras on traps in the South Atlantic?

DR. BARBIERI: I don't want to speak for the SEFIS and MARMAP program, and Marcel's presentation actually follows mine, and he can expand on that, but, Ben, remember that science moves progressively, right, and so we learn and we try to reiterate that knowledge that integrate that, with time, on improving our processes, and this is no different.

MARMAP and SEFIS area also looking at the long time series of data that exists now, and so until they can conduct -- Marcel maybe can expand on that, but, until they can conduct a solid calibration process that can allow them to look at this retrospective series of data, starting with something new -- Look at what we are going through with MRIP, and sometimes those are growing pains that we have to go through, but it's something that needs to be considered very carefully, because, otherwise, you end up in a situation where you lose that perspective over time that you had.

In this case, actually, just to expand a little bit, we tried to work with SEFIS and MARMAP and to actually conduct -- They were going to come in as co-PIs in this study, and we were going to conduct this sampling, this study, over a broad area, but they just couldn't do it, because they did not want to disrupt their regular sampling, which has very strict methodologies, and so it would be very difficult for them to, at that last minute, change something to address this and lose that historic perspective.

DR. PORCH: I don't know if Marcel is going to address this, but one of the problems we have in the South Atlantic is that currents tend to be a bit stronger than in the Gulf, and so you get situations where they jam the traps up under ledges and things and they lose gear, and stereoscopic cameras are expensive, and so that's part of the reason that they haven't been widely used.

Now, we do have a research project in place where we're trying to use different types of stereoscopic cameras that are cheaper, and hopefully that would prove to be a more economical alternative to the kind of system that we're using in the Gulf of Mexico, and so, yes, we would like to use stereoscopic cameras or some way to get the size of the fish, and certainly, looking at Dr. Barbieri's presentation, you can see there is fairly strong truncation in the chevron traps, and so we would like to explore the potential of a different selectivity for the chevron traps versus the video survey.

This gets into why it's not as simple as somebody makes a presentation at the SSC or elsewhere and then we just plug-and-play in the assessment, because you will notice that, when we talk about that chevron trap index, it's a combined index with the video survey, and the implication here is

maybe the video survey and the chevron trap index have different selectivities and maybe they shouldn't be combined, and so these are the sorts of things that we would need to look at very carefully.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Luiz, the fact that this information wasn't included, then the selectivity in the interim analysis would be different if this data was included, and is that right?

DR. BARBIERI: Well, the short answer is yes. I think the selectivity -- If this analysis is correct and peer reviewed and everything passes muster, even considering all the assumptions that were made, my interpretation, personally, is that, yes, this would guide -- I mean, this is one of those things that this is why the CRP Program funds these types of studies, and I was explaining to Ben that science works like this, and we learn something every day, and we try to keep it going forward as we improve our processes. Yes, the selectivity functions, I think, would be -- The information is compelling enough for them to be adjusted, now informed by data.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So it somewhat indicates that that interim analysis might be a little bit more pessimistic than what would be actually occurring if this is peer reviewed and added.

DR. BARBIERI: To that point, I don't know how much we need to get into these details. Dr. Porch, Dr. Crabtree, and I have talked about steps forward since the SSC meeting, and the idea is to look at this information, after the results are reviewed and everything is copasetic, and for this to be integrated into a future interim analysis that would have corrected selectivity functions.

MR. BROWN: Does your study incorporate anything with like the recruitment waves that might be moving through, and how much movement do you estimate that there could be? I mean, we kind of know that they don't move a whole lot, but maybe at times, maybe at spawning times, maybe there is a lot of movement, and was there anything incorporated in there as far as identifying maybe something different with the fishery at a certain time, as far as your changes in your analysis?

DR. BARBIERI: No, and, I mean, this study was specifically designed and implemented to address this selectivity issue, and it was just a one-year study. We actually got additional funding to continue, and hopefully expand the study into the future, but this is why I showed the other slides that actually had other components of the program, including this Sportfish study here, which has been specifically looking at spawning activity, and we had a study that was published in a peer-reviewed journal a few years back that also looked at spawning aggregations and size composition of spawners and other issues in terms of reproductive biology of red snapper, but this study here was really just focused on the selectivity. Does that answer your question, Mark?

MR. BROWN: Well, I was just trying to figure out, when you were talking about the ages and the difference, and then it showed the high and the low points, and if there was any relationship to the movement of the fish in regard to that change in that and just not seeing the same recruitment stock that you're sampling.

DR. BARBIERI: Well, also keep in mind, and this came up in discussion in a question from Ben at the SSC meeting, and keep in mind that this is a narrow window, right, of the distributional range of South Atlantic red snapper, and, granted, this is the core, the heart, of where the population of the fishery operates, but it doesn't really encompass the entire distributional range of the stock,

and so this is really more process oriented and trying to identify some of these parameters and things like this that are more specific to that area than trying to extrapolate in terms of the demographics of the population overall. There might be recruitment in other areas that this study wouldn't pick up, and the MARMAP program, that has that broader distribution, would be able to.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, the SSC did have extensive discussions about possibly how this could be incorporated into an interim analysis, even though they didn't have the survey to really delve into, and I think Erik came forward, and I think Amy also, and stated that probably this information is going to have to go into an assessment before it could be used in an interim analysis, and so that's the critical thing to come out, because you just can't plug it into an interim analysis if you're using what your previous assessment was, and so that's going to be key to moving forward.

DR. DUVAL: Luiz, I noticed also -- I mean, this study wasn't -- Clearly red snapper was the primary focus, but you guys also focused on black sea bass and vermilion snapper and also saw significant differences there as well, in terms of the selectivity, and so, I mean, based on those results, it does seem to me that it would be -- Madam Chair, I don't know if you are -- We talked about a motion to try to move this topic forward, and I don't know if you are looking for a motion to direct the SSC to review this final CRP report at their next meeting and make some recommendations with regard to utility of these selectivities in the interim analysis, understanding the comments that were made that Ben just raised about this information having to go through an assessment process prior to being used, but it does seem to me like it would be good to have the SSC have the opportunity to look at it and to discuss it and to provide some recommendations about how to take this information and expand upon it or more forward with it in an assessment, and I am just -- **I am not quite sure how to frame it, other than to simply make a motion to direct the SSC to review the FWRI cooperative research final report and provide recommendations with regard to use of the results in future assessments as well as the interim analysis.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that's exactly what I was thinking. Let's get the motion on the board. While it's going up, do we have a second on that? Second by Anna. While Myra is typing the motion, I am going to go to Chris, who had his hand up.

MR. CONKLIN: Thanks. Michelle captured a lot of what I was going to ask, but I just wanted to see if this was something that we would want to -- Once it becomes peer reviewed, since it's a -- If we want to make sure that this kind of information and this program, if it does get peer reviewed and approved, to make it sort of like a -- It would go hand-in-hand with the rest of the data that go into the assessments and make sure that it's weighted and recognized, because I know that there was several attempts to try and make sure that this kind of stuff was recognized throughout SEDAR 41, and it wasn't.

It was, but it wasn't, and it wasn't, like Ben said, officially published, and so to make sure that this keeps on going and, Luiz, you guys keep getting funding for your program, however you need it. That way, we can use it to make sure that we're getting the full range of samples, because this information is critical to many more stocks than just red snapper, and, if we can get it hammered out, I think it needs to be included in all future assessments.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's a good point, Chris, and I don't know -- I am looking around to the committee if we want to add anything to the motion about the utility of this type of data collection moving forward or if that's implicit in what we've already asked them to look at, and I'm looking around to the committee.

DR. DUVAL: I'm not sure if we want to complicate the motion, but perhaps just some parenthetical language just indicating that we would want to, exactly as you said, evaluate or consider the utility of these types of studies, and is that how you put it, something like that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, consider the utility of these types of studies moving forward for red snapper data collection.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I would just, while Myra is getting that in there, this study was conducted in 2016, and so this was after the data workshop for SEDAR 41, and so this was coming out of that, and so there's no way that this could have been incorporated into that process anyhow.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see hands going up.

MR. BELL: When you say these types of studies, you're talking about selectivity studies, or you're talking about CRP studies, or what did you mean by that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I will look at Chris, but I think that we mean the selectivity.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and I didn't mean just for red snapper either, and I didn't realize that I was going to be writing the end of this motion, but, if I did, I would have drafted it.

DR. BARBIERI: Madam Chair, I apologize, because I am completely out of order here, and I'm here as an FWC fisheries scientist and I'm not a member of the council in any way, but just a suggestion. I mean, I think that the southeast U.S., especially the South Atlantic, there is a paucity of fishery-independent and other studies that I think that any focus on increasing the number of research projects and testing gears and looking at survey development and implementation would be positive.

What I am saying is that I would not limit this to selectivity studies. I mean, basically, I can see the council providing guidance to its SSC to think about our research recommendations to the Center and working with partners in trying to increase the amount of research and monitoring funding in the South Atlantic so that we can have better data. I can tell you, a few years back, unfortunately, we had to deal with an oil spill, but our extension of our Florida Shelf fishery-independent survey was \$25 million. That's a lot of money, and it allowed us to test a whole number of different things, and that is capacity that we didn't have before, and so any focus, I think, in directing additional funding and resources to better science and monitoring in the South Atlantic I think would be positive.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I go to Chester, first of all, I think that maybe we do two separate motions. I feel like we're complicating the one that we already have, and so I would recommend taking out "and similar selectivity studies for red snapper data collection", taking that piece out and going back to the original motion, and then we'll deal with that and maybe expand it to cover

what Luiz is saying, and maybe that's in a separate motion. I am looking to the motion maker. Yes, okay.

MR. BREWER: That is exactly what I was going to suggest. I do want to see a separate motion though that deals with other studies done by, I guess, not necessarily the state agencies, but other studies. I think that that would be a good thing.

DR. DUVAL: I guess my only question or concern about that -- I mean, I think the motion that we have on the board is nice and specific and it gives the SSC a very discreet task, but I think, when we start talking about similar studies, what specific studies, that seems to be sort of an open-ended ask. I think we've established the utility, and I don't think there is a person sitting around this table who doesn't support the Cooperative Research Program and the benefits of that for gear testing and all the other things that Luiz mentioned. I don't know if there is a motion that is going to capture something or provide some tasking to the SSC that is needed, and I support everything that was said, and I just am not sure that we need a motion to actually do anything.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I somewhat agree with that. Then the motion on the board -- We edited it back, and so it's the original motion. Is there more discussion? We've had a lot of discussion on this motion.

MR. BELL: Just a quick question. The assumption is at the point of peer review or post-peer review or not or just as is, or what are we saying?

DR. DUVAL: I don't know if Dr. Barbieri and his staff have already submitted this report as a peer-reviewed publication anywhere, and I think my intent was that -- I think what we heard from the SSC was that it hasn't been peer reviewed and they would like it to be peer reviewed. They are our peer review body, and so I'm thinking the final CRP report that was provided, and I think it's dated February 27, that that would be what the SSC would review.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree. Any more discussion on this motion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, this motion stands approved.**

I am going to look over to Michelle, and so I think I agree that maybe we don't need a separate motion about the data collection, but I am going to look at Chris, because he's the one that brought it up. Are you good with the discussion that we have and we don't need a separate motion about data collection?

MR. CONKLIN: I am, but what I am concerned about is once they peer review it and do they do say it's okay and everything is good, and are they going to stop right there, or do we need to direct them to go further and use it and weight it heavily in future assessments and not just put it back in the toolbox?

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, the conversation kind of morphed into these other studies and its utility in stock assessments and its utility to the SSC to evaluate things, and it leads me into thinking about the wreckfish guys and them having somebody do a report or a study and sending it into the SSC or the Science Center or something, and so there is a much larger picture than just red snapper, and we're not going to fix it right now, but I think we do need to think about it.

DR. DUVAL: I think, just to specifically answer -- I agree with Charlie, but, to specifically answer Chris's question, I think we want to see what the SSC comes back with after their review, and, if we feel like there is a subsequent tasking, we can go ahead and do that. I think, regardless, the review that the SSC would provide, just like any other reference document that is included as part of the SEDAR data workshop process, that this would become one of those reference documents that would help inform the development of future working papers, and that would be where I see this going.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Myra, remind me again. The SSC meets in October, and then we could get a report back in December, and is that right?

MS. BROUWER: Correct.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Any more discussion on this? Otherwise, I'm going to go to Marcel's presentation, so we can make sure we get to that before lunch, and are we good to move on? Okay. Thank you, Dr. Barbieri, and Marcel is coming forward.

DR. REICHERT: Thank you, Madam Chair and council. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to, once again, give you an update on the Southeast Reef Fish Survey results, and this includes the 2017 samples, and I have to acknowledge Dr. Bubley and Dr. Smart, who were instrumental in doing the analysis and helping me in getting this presentation together.

This presentation is slightly different than the one in your briefing book. The data is no different, but I just rearranged the slides a little bit, and I will quickly go over the first couple of slides, because I have mentioned this before, but I just wanted to remind the council that the Southeast Reef Fish Survey, or SERFS, is a collaborative effort between MARMAP, SEAMAP, and SEFIS, and we are using three research vessels in the region, the R/V Savannah, the NOAA Ship Pisces, and the South-Carolina-owned R/V Palmetto.

This overview mostly deals with chevron trap data, and the little video on the left-hand side is the deployment of the video trap, and we target low to medium relief live-bottom habitat, and we deploy the traps to about 110 meters of depth, and we have used this consistently since the 1990s, and we deploy the trap for about ninety minutes, and we bait it with clupeids, or mostly menhaden, and, as you know, there is three cameras on the trap, two on the outside, and the right-hand picture shows the direction the camera faces, and, in some of the trap deployments, we have a camera inside the trap, and, as you can see on the left-hand side, every now and then we put a video camera above the trap, just to see how the traps behave.

We also deploy short bottom longline. As I have mentioned in the past, we have limited the deployment of the short bottom longline due to funding, but we target high-relief area, because that's difficult to deploy traps, and we generally deploy them in depths of over ninety meters, and we generally catch snowy grouper, jacks, tilefish, and speckled hind on the short bottom longline. The soak time is the same as the traps, ninety minutes, and we bait the short bottom longline with whole squid.

As I have mentioned in the past, we have about 4,000 sampling stations throughout the region, here indicated in the map in blue, and we select between 1,500 and 2,000 randomly each year, and we sample, in recent years, around 1,500 each year. In the short bottom longline, we have 300

sampling stations, here indicated in the yellowish-brownish Xs, and we sample about -- We select about 100 to 150 randomly, and, as I said, in recent years, the deployment of the short bottom longline has been mostly opportunistic, because of funding.

In terms of processing of the data, MARMAP and SEAMAP process all the life history data, and we analyze those data, and we, by and large, develop the trap and longline indices, but sometimes others have assisted us with that, and SEFIS, at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Beaufort, is responsible for the video analysis and processing, mostly, and we've assisted them. MARMAP and SEAMAP have assisted them with that in the past, and we maintain one combined dataset that is used for stock assessments and management and analyses.

In terms of the summary for 2017, we deployed over 1,500 traps and over fifty short bottom longlines. We deployed CTDs to collect oceanographic information associated with those deployments, and we collected over 40,000 fish, representing sixty-five species, and we kept a little over 10,000 of those for life history, mostly age information and reproduction, but also diet studies and DNA information.

This is to remind you that, in particular, the later part of the sampling season last year was heavily affected by a series of hurricanes, and this is an interesting satellite picture of three of them in our region, and so that affected the later part of our sampling. We, nevertheless, were able to deploy an average number of chevron traps last year, and that is indicated on the right-hand-side on the map. The blue dots are the chevron trap deployments in 2017, and the yellowish-brownish are short bottom longline deployments.

This is an overview of sixteen most encountered species, and in black are the managed species and in blue are the species that we generally don't collect life history information from. As you can see, red snapper is currently our eighth-most abundant species in our chevron traps across the region. We catch a good number of lionfish, relatively speaking, and it's our number-thirty-five-most abundant species. Just as an aside, we caught about ten in the last year, and so they're not - They are still not very abundant in our traps, but we see them a lot on the videos.

In terms of the CPUE overview, in the next slides, these are chevron traps from 1990 to 2017, and the short bottom longline overview is from 1996 to 2017. We use the new standardization method, and it's called the zero inflated negative binomial model. As you may remember, we used to apply a delta GLM model. Recently, the ZINB model is used in stock assessments, and it's more appropriate, we feel, and it can deal with zero catches a lot better, and it is more appropriate for the error distribution. In general, the trends are similar, but it reduces uncertainty, and so that's why we have started using this model.

Also, I want to remind you that we produce an annual trends report that has a summary of our methodology and our deployments as well as all the information that I am presenting in the next slides, but it has a lot more species in it, and so, if you're interested, let us know, and we can certainly get you a copy of that report.

This is my usual slide about the trends overview caveats. This is a summary overview, and it's not an update of a stock status. An update, obviously, needs a lot more information, including age comps, landings, et cetera, and, also, the constraints and stratification units and models that we use for CPUE may be different than those that are used in stock assessments. For instance, the

overview I am giving you is only the trap index, and so it doesn't include any video information, and, also, not all species that I am showing you have been assessed through the SEDAR process, and the trends have not been discussed.

In the slides, I show you two figures. One is the graph, and they are the same for all species, and so let me explain briefly what you're looking at. The black line is the standardized index, and it's normalized to the long-term average, which is one, and the gray area is the 95 percent confidence interval around the standardized index, and, for reference, we added the red dots, and those are the nominal values. Those are the values that are not standardized.

Last year, the council asked for some distribution maps, and so we added those this year, and all the maps have a similar setup. It's nominal CPUE, and so it's not a standardized CPUE that I am showing in the maps. They are divided up in quartiles, and the bottom line is -- The redder the color, the higher the catch is, and blue means that they were absent, and this is only for the period of 2013 to 2017, and so red is 75 percent to 100 percent of the maximum CPUE for that species, and orange is 50 to 75 percent, and yellow is 25 to 50 percent, and then green is 1 to 25, and so all the following slides will have that same setup.

The next slides are the trends, including the 2017 data, and this is gray triggerfish. You can see that the distribution -- They are widely distributed through our sampling area from Cape Hatteras to south of Cape Canaveral, and we have seen a general increase in abundance since around 2010. This is tomtate, and the color blue in the slides means that we do not collect life history information from these species. Tomtate, again, is widely distributed, but mostly in the shallower areas, in the inner sampling area, and we have seen a slight uptick in the tomtate catches. Tomtate is, with black sea bass, our most abundant species in our trap catches.

This is white grunt. One of the things that is obvious immediately is the disjunct distribution that we know of, and white grunt occurs off of North Carolina, and we barely catch them in the southern part of our distribution, but, of course, they, once again, occur off of the Florida Keys, where they generally are found in somewhat shallower waters, and also, as a reference, North Carolina is close to the northern edge of the white grunt distribution, and we have seen a slight uptick in our abundances in the trap catches over the last couple of years, since around 2010.

Red snapper, and this is the same picture that I showed you in an update that I presented in December, and so the abundance trend is the same, and, as you can see, the distribution shows that the center of the distribution in our trap catches is off of Florida and southern South Carolina and then also again off of North Carolina.

MR. HARTIG: In red snapper, it would be really interesting to go back and look at when the closure occurred, that date, and your sampling by distribution, and I'm not looking at every year now here, but I am just looking at what happened initially when we closed the fishery and what was the distribution, and then maybe every three years down the line show how it changed in your trap catches.

DR. REICHERT: We can certainly do that, but I do want to remind you that since 2010, because of the expansion of our sampling, that kind of confounds that, but we can certainly do that, look at the catches for red snapper and see how that distribution has changed, and, also, please let us know if there is anything else that the council would like to see in updates that we can add to our

presentation, like the maps that we added this time around, but I can certainly do that, and so we'll talk a little bit offline to see what time periods would be most appropriate, and then what I will do is add our sampling distribution in that, so that people can take that into account, because, in those earlier years, because we are covering the entire sampling region, the blue, the non-catches, may have to do with the fact that we did not sample those geographical areas.

Vermilion snapper, it's widely distributed both in the shallower areas as well as the shelf edge, and we have seen a slight increase since about 2012 or 2013, and Dr. Smart just emailed me some distributions as a reply to some of the questions about the juvenile vermillion snapper, and we do sample in areas where we catch the vermillion snapper under twenty-five centimeters, and we catch both those smaller fish as well as those larger fish in our traps, but, in general, as we see with a lot of these species, once we go to deeper areas, we generally catch some of the larger fish in those deeper areas, but we do catch both the juveniles and the adults. As a reminder, these fish mature really early. They mature between one and three years old, and the juveniles we consider -- They mature between fifteen and about twenty or twenty-five centimeters, and so we do catch those.

Black sea bass, as I mentioned earlier, this is, with tomtate, one of our most abundant species, and you can see on the distribution map that they are mostly occurring in the shallower areas of the shelf area, and this is the data that was used in the stock assessment, although, as a reminder, this is not the CVID index. This is the trap index only, and so this distribution trend is different than what you will see in the stock assessment, obviously, but, as I noted before, there is a sharp decline since 2011.

What is very interesting, as you can see on this slide, is this bank sea bass, and one thing that we noticed is that we have seen a similar decline in bank sea bass since that same year, 2011, and, here, you can also see that bank sea bass is also distributed widely through our sampling area. It's mostly found on kind of the center of the shelf.

This is gag grouper, and one thing is worth noting, and that is that it looks like gag is not widely distributed on the shelf edge and the gag numbers in our traps are generally not very high, and so the blue in the map -- I would not interpret that as gag is absent in those areas, but it's just a reflection of the fact that we generally don't catch a lot of gag in our traps, but the numbers are sufficiently high that the index was used in the gag stock assessment.

Red grouper, this is a pattern that should be familiar from the red grouper assessment. Again, this is the chevron trap only, but it reflects the low abundance of red grouper in recent years, and what is interesting also is the fact that red grouper is one of those species that has a somewhat disjunct distribution. We see them off of Florida and again off of North Carolina, with very low numbers encountered off of South Carolina and Georgia, and North Carolina is towards the northern edge of the red grouper distribution.

This is scamp. Scamp is found mid-shelf to the shelf edge, and the abundance has remained relatively low since 2006/2007. It's a species that we catch regularly, and we see them a lot in the video index also, and so the video information is a very valuable addition to our data, in particular for scamp.

Snowy grouper, as expected, snowy grouper is distributed on the shelf edge. It's a deepwater species, and I want to remind you that this distribution list includes both the chevron trap and the

short bottom longline catches, and the abundance of snowy grouper has stayed relatively flat in the chevron trap, and this is the -- You can see the same distribution, but this is the snowy grouper short bottom longline, and it's the only species that I show an abundance index on the short bottom longline, because of number of fish caught, which is, again, a reflection of the fact that we have not deployed our short bottom longline in very large numbers in recent years.

This is knobbed porgy, and knobbed porgy, again, is a species that has that disjunct distribution. We see them a lot off of northern South Carolina and North Carolina. As you can see in the map, it's mostly in the deeper areas towards the shelf edge, and the abundance in the trap catches has remained relatively low in recent years.

Red porgy, the chevron trap catches, red porgy is a species, once again, that is found in the deeper areas of the shelf and along the shelf edge. We catch them, on occasion, on our short bottom longline, and the trap catches are shown here on the graph, and we've seen a decline in our relative abundance in the traps over the last couple of years. It's interesting to realize that red porgy has a distribution that includes the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Those are the updates of the species that I can show you, and most other species are in the trends report, and I did not include the number of species that we caught in our short bottom longline, because of low catches.

A quick update on our sampling for this year, and our sampling season is, as usual, mid to late April to early to mid-October, and we plan about 100 to 110 days at sea, and we completed about thirty, and I believe the Savannah is currently sampling, and the Palmetto came back yesterday and is going out again next week, and we hope for a little bit quieter second half of our sampling season, with less storms, and then hopefully we can complete the 100 to 110 days, and, with this, I would like to acknowledge, obviously, MARMAP and SEAMAP and SEFIS staff and students of the research vessel cruise, not only currently working on these projects, but those who have worked on those projects in the past. I want to close with a little video that explains why we were missing trap labels on our traps when we pulled them up, and I am more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

MR. PHILLIPS: Marcel, back to those slides on the bank sea bass and the black sea bass, and you showed that it looked like they both dropped off about the same time, and, to my knowledge, bank sea bass aren't targeted like black sea bass, and can you infer anything from that? My gut feeling is, if they both dropped off at the same time and one is targeted for fishing, much more so than bank sea bass, which is probably an incidental catch, I am thinking it's just recruitment that is causing the drop, but can you infer anything from that?

DR. REICHERT: The black sea bass stock assessment, when we discussed that, we were certainly talking about recruitment patterns, and that's why the SSC was requesting another set of projections. We started looking at diet studies on predators, to see if both black sea bass and bank sea bass are a significant portion of the diet in other species, and another potential explanation may be changes in the environment, changes in temperature, but, to be honest, we haven't looked at the distribution or the trends in these two species in-depth enough to tell you what exactly is behind those patterns, but we noticed the striking difference between the abundance of both of those species, and, although bank sea bass are not targeted, they are occurring in the same general environment, and so they are caught.

DR. DUVAL: Just really quick, I love the maps. Those are awesome, and I really, really like the maps. Then I guess I would just note that bank sea bass is an ecosystem component species, and so we don't have any annual catch limits for bank sea bass, and then I was just going to ask Tony if they encounter bank sea bass up north.

MR. DILERNIA: Could you repeat the question, Michelle?

DR. DUVAL: Do you guys have bank sea bass up north?

MR. DILERNIA: Bank sea bass? I don't think I know a bank sea bass.

DR. DUVAL: They are also known as turd bass by the fishermen.

MR. DILERNIA: Could somebody translate for me here?

DR. REICHERT: I was just looking it up, and I think the distribution is North Carolina to Cape Canaveral, and so that may be why people further up north may not encounter them that much, because that is their general distribution.

MR. DILERNIA: No.

MR. BOWEN: I know that everybody is getting hungry, probably as much as I am, and so I will keep it short, but, Marcel, one thing that stuck out with me as you were going through this presentation, and I reiterate Michelle's sentiments about the maps. I thought they were cool, but the white grunt -- In my catch records that I have been keeping for my vessel forever, it seems like, and I was looking back at it, my white grunt CPUE over the last four or five years has drastically increased, but, off of my area on that map, they were like absent from your traps, and I found that a little weird, I guess, for lack of a better term.

Then, also, to reiterate what Ben said, maybe not as much red snapper, because we know they don't migrate as much, but I would like to see your first year of the trap index with the species of scamp, to see if that distribution has changed or modified northward, maybe. Maybe we can do that offline, but just the white grunt was a concern of mine, and I would like to see the distribution map for scamp for your first year versus 2017. Thank you.

DR. REICHERT: Yes, we can certainly do that, and, if I look at the map here real quick, we do catch them off of Georgia, and so it's not that they are completely absent there, but, again, that white grunt is that disjunct distribution, in terms of the northern part and the southern part.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there any more questions? Thank you so much, Marcel. That was a great presentation, and I love the maps as well.

DR. REICHERT: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. We're going to go ahead and break for lunch, and we're going to go ahead and take our full hour-and-a-half. We have our Q&A today at five, and so we'll just see how efficient we can be this afternoon. Thank you, all.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAULEY: I am going to turn it over to Myra, and we're going to go through a presentation on Amendment 46, the private recreational permitting and reporting. I'm sorry. Chip is going to do it.

DR. COLLIER: This is just going to be a quick run-through, and I'll give a little bit of background on Amendment 46, which is an amendment to look at permitting and reporting for the private recreational fishery for snapper grouper species and how we got here and just a little bit of background.

Starting off, this was originally part of Amendment 43, and it was put together, if you remember, back in March of 2017, and Amendment 43 had twelve actions included, and then that was separated out into Amendment 43, which just focused on the ACL for red snapper and revising that, beginning in 2018, and so that was the one action, and then the other eleven actions we had separated out into Amendment 46, and that was December of 2017. Within that, we had recreational reporting, best fishing practices, and powerhead regulations, and it started off with some red snapper pieces in there as well.

After December of 2017, it was trimmed and separated again, and so we have Amendment 46, which is focused just on private recreational permitting and reporting, and Regulatory Amendment 29, which is focused on best fishing practices and powerhead regulations, and Christina is going to be giving you a presentation on that one following this.

As I mentioned, Amendment 43 did include private recreational permitting and reporting and best fishing practices, and that was taken out for scoping back in January and February of 2017. In that, we had 144 comments, and they were presented to you guys at the March 2017 meeting, and that was focused just on permitting and reporting and best fishing practices. As far as powerhead regulations, the last time they were scoped, and that was Regulatory Amendment 8 back in 2001, but there has been several discussions on powerhead regulations as well.

Going back to Amendment 46, we revised this options paper that's being presented to you guys, based on your requests, and we included pros and cons for several different options. Action 2 is now structured very similar to Action 1, and there was a comment to design the permits similar to the HMS permit, and that will come up later, as we further this amendment along, if you guys want to forward it. Under 4, we have pros and cons of making the permit compatible with MRIP, and, obviously, I think any system that is going to be developed in the Southeast Region is going to be compatible with MRIP, or at least complement MRIP in some way. It's not going to be independent, and so I think that's going to be included in the amendment as it gets developed.

You also asked to consider how to handle no fishing reports, and that's going to be structured depending on what your guidance is, as far as what you would like to see, if it's a vessel-based or individual-based permit, and how reporting is going to be handled. Then you asked that we have weekly and monthly reporting options included.

At this meeting, I have a couple of questions for you guys to consider at the end, after we go through Amendment 46, and the big one is should permitting and reporting be sent out for scoping, and I have two options there. If it is recommended, are there additional topics? If scoping is

recommended, are there additional topics to be considered in addition to permitting and reporting? If scoping in Amendment 43 was sufficient, should actions and alternatives be added or removed?

Going into under Tab 8, Attachment 6, we have the Amendment 46 options paper, and we have the purpose for the actions, and we also have the need. Under the purpose for actions, I have two different options for the purpose. The first option is the purpose of this snapper grouper amendment is to improve private recreational catch and release estimates for snapper grouper species, and then Option 2 is to improve information on effort and catch (landed and released) of fish in the private recreational component of the recreational sector of the snapper grouper fishery.

Then we can go into the need for actions, and the need for the amendment is to improve the quantity, quality, and timeliness of data from the private recreational sector that targets snapper grouper species while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse and socioeconomic effects.

DR. DUVAL: Would you like input on the two options for the purpose at this point?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure.

DR. DUVAL: I prefer Option 2, because I think, if we move forward with scoping for a recreational permit, that that is exactly the -- Improving information on effort is exactly what a permit would do, because it would narrow the universe of users, which can be used to calculate effort, and so it would be used by folks in the MRIP program to -- They could use it to create another strata, and so that speaks to effort, and then it will also improve catch, because of how those estimates of effort play into the overall estimates of catch that come out the other end of the calculations, and so I would vote for Option 2.

MR. HAYMANS: I would agree with that, with the caveat that why don't we hold on purpose and need, as we've done in the past, because, right now, both of them suggest snapper grouper, and our actions have alternatives for singular species or multispecies or all of them, and so, rather than choosing one, let's go through the discussion first.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right.

DR. CRABTREE: Just to Doug's comment though, it seems to me that the alternatives and actions we would consider in the amendment come out of the purpose of the amendment, and if the purpose is to improve the effort estimates for the snapper grouper fishery, then that would guide us to get rid of some of the other things in here and focus in on that, wouldn't it?

MR. HAYMANS: I think that discussion comes during discussion of the actions. If we select a purpose and need right now that says it's the snapper grouper fishery, then we're automatically going to say, I think, that we're picking Sub-Alternative 2b or 3b, and I think the discussion comes in the actions, right?

DR. CRABTREE: I mean, it seems to me we have a reason we're doing this, and then we have actions in here that accomplish the reason we're doing this, and part of where I think we've struggled with this is we haven't been clear on exactly what we're trying to do, the main issue being is this going to be a permit used to supplement the effort survey and produce a more precise effort versus a permit that we're going to try to use for some new self-reported program, and it

seems to me that those are very different things that would be set up in very different ways and have different costs and everything else, and so, if we can't focus in on what our purpose is, it just seems to me that we keep floundering a little bit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm looking around the room. What is the pleasure of the committee?

MR. BROWN: **I like the Option 2, and I would make a motion to choose Option 2 for the purpose for actions.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there a second to that? It's seconded by Michelle. Let's get the motion on the board. The motion is to approve Option 2 for the purpose of actions in Amendment 46.

MS. BECKWITH: I guess the only edit I would make to that would be maybe, instead of "the purpose is to improve information", I might say "estimates", that the purpose is to improve the estimates on effort and catch. It's semantics, but I feel like the goal here is to -- I mean, I guess it could be either or, but I am personally leaning towards "estimates".

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. What do other folks think?

DR. COLLIER: The reason that the IPT put this "information" in there, as opposed to "estimates", is because you guys use a lot more than just the landings estimates. You use catch per unit effort when you're looking at bag limits, and you use information from size from the MRIP survey, or whatever survey, and so we want to improve overall information and not just landings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion on this action? **Is there any objection to this action, or this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

DR. COLLIER: Then we have some background on why the council is considering some actions, and that's been revised based on IPT comments, and I didn't do a track changes in this, since it was just an options paper and not necessarily an amendment, and it also included some changes in the reason -- How this matches the vision blueprint. If you remember back to the blueprint, these were some ideas that were brought up by fishermen. Action 1, they had been calling for a stamp or a permit, and this is exactly what that's talking about with the permitting, and then Action 2 is looking at improving estimates by recreational fishermen, where they specifically asked to be able to report their catches.

Under Action 1, we have establish a private recreational snapper grouper permit to fish for, harvest, or possess snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region, and, under that, we have four alternatives, based on your comments. We have Alternative 1, which is no action, and we have Alternative 2, which is a vessel-based permit, and, under Alternative 2, we have some sub-alternatives, where we're looking at a specific species, red snapper, and we have 2b, which is the snapper grouper fishery management unit, which is the fifty-five species. Then we have 2c, the deepwater species, which we've heard quite a bit about, that the fishermen are interested in that.

Then, under Alternative 3, it's the exact same as Alternative 2, except it is focused just on private anglers, and I will go into some background on how this has generally worked. When we're looking at some of the state permits, they have generally been issued at the individual level. When you're looking at some more of the federal systems, they have been more on a vessel-based level,

and then Alternative 4 is request Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina develop a permit, endorsement, or license for private recreational anglers, and that was based on some of the discussion that you guys had that you wanted the states to implement.

I have included, under Table 1 -- I went and looked into the federal system, trying to find different permits that are currently being issued in the private recreational fishery, and I found four different examples. The Greater Atlantic Office is in development of a permitting and reporting system for tilefish. At the Alaska Regional Office, they have a subsistence halibut permit, and, in the Pacific Islands, there are some area-specific permits that you have to have, and these are all vessel-based, and then the highly migratory, where you have to have an HMS permit. Then, if you're going to be shark fishing, you have to have a shark endorsement.

Those are some of the examples on the federal side, and then I also provide some examples on the state side, where I looked into permits and licenses and stamps and tags. Florida has a reef fish stamp on the west coast, and they also have a stamp to harvest snook and also one for spiny lobster, and then they have a tag for tarpon. That tag for tarpon is more or less you're allowed one per year, and it's for somebody bringing in a trophy fish.

Georgia, the way that they do their state license, their saltwater fishing license is slightly different than most other states. As opposed to having an option to pick a saltwater fishing license, it's actually a permit associated with a freshwater fishing license, and then, in North Carolina, there is a recreational and commercial gear license that you're allowed to purchase, which would be separate from your saltwater fishing license, and South Carolina has a similar setup with their shrimp baiting license.

From there, we have included the option for permitting for snapper grouper fishermen, and there's a group of pros and cons there. Some of the pros are to improve estimates of recreational effort in the snapper grouper fishery, the potential to improve the estimate of recreational catch and release data, provides a defined group of recreational anglers to contact for outreach and catch-and-effort surveys and socioeconomic surveys.

There are some cons, and that's going to be an increased regulatory burden on fishermen and National Marine Fisheries Service or the state agencies, depending on which option you guys choose, and enforcement will have to increase in order to enforce this new permit, if selected, and there is potentially no additional funds to implement or operate the system.

MR. HAYMANS: Chip, just a minor correction. We do not have a freshwater fishing license. Georgia has a fishing license, and, if you're going to fish in saltwater, then you need the permit, but it's not called a saltwater fishing license.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you. I knew I was going to mess one of them up. There has been a lot of discussion around the table about the permit type, whether it's a vessel-based permit type or --

DR. CRABTREE: Just a few comments on it. I think, if our focus here is to generate better effort estimates specific to the snapper grouper fishery, then it seems to me that we need to pull in some of the MRIP experts pretty quickly, because we're going to have to make sure that the permit -- I mean, I don't know if a vessel permit can be configured into the current way they do effort estimates.

Maybe it can and maybe not, but it needs to be done in a way so that the effort survey can then be combined with the dockside estimates and produce catch estimates for the snapper grouper, because the way I'm reading this is that we would -- If we do this, we'll then have two effort surveys. We'll have the overall effort survey that they do now, but then we'll have a second effort survey specific to snapper grouper, and we ought to get them to give us some cost estimates about what it would cost them to do that, to make sure we're talking about something that the funding is there for.

Then, somewhere, I'm going to need some understanding of how many of these type of permits we might issue and how we would do it. Think about it. If there's a couple of million, a million or two-million, recreational anglers in the South Atlantic, if 10 percent of those would actually get one of these, you're talking 100,000 to 200,000 recreational permits, and that is way more permits than my entire permits shop deals with now, and I don't have any expectation of getting any more staff, and so, somehow, this would have to be set up in a way that was automated to the point that it didn't cost a lot of money, because I am worried about administrative costs with this and that we pass something that the agency can't afford to then put in place, and, if that happens, then we haven't gotten anywhere, and so I think we have to think very carefully about how exactly the permit would be issued and then how that information would be collected and be incorporated into the MRIP survey and what the overall costs of all of that would be likely to be.

MR. WAUGH: Roy is absolutely correct that we have to address all of those things, but let's just step back for a second and recognize where we are. We're looking at a short, brief document to go out to scoping. We're not drafting the amendment now, and we have things in place that will address the concerns that Roy has raised. We've got an app that will explore one avenue for a private/public partnership in issuing permits and that data going right to ACCSP, where NMFS could pull the data from the ACCSP.

We have applied for another FIS grant from the National Marine Fisheries Service to continue our work on this app that will heavily involve the MRIP folks, and so all the things that Roy has pointed out are in the works, but what we're dealing with here today is trying to get a short document that we take that first baby step and go out to scoping to get the public's response.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Gregg.

MR. BROWN: I don't know that we need a vessel permit here. This is an individual thing, and so most of the people are going to be going out there on a private boat. This is not like a headboat. There's going to be one or two people on the boat, or maybe up to four or five or six, but, to me, if we're doing this as a private recreational permit, it should be an individual permit. I don't think we need to even worry about it being a vessel permit.

MR. HAYMANS: I was just on the opposite. We already issue HMS permits to the vessel, recreational permits, and I would think it would go through the same shop in the same format, so that it doesn't confuse the angler.

MS. BECKWITH: Right, I agree, and I also think -- Until I'm convinced otherwise, I also think a vessel permit would be much more manageable for even the reporting aspect of it, where you're sending a survey out to a much smaller group of people, and our snapper grouper fishery is

prosecuted on a vessel, and so you would be able to catch -- Whoever the vessel owner is would be able to be surveyed and say whatever the case might be, when did you fish, how often, how many people did you have on the boat and so on and so forth, but it would be a universe that might be more manageable in the thousands instead of the hundred thousands, if you're issuing individual permits, and, for enforcement, I think it would be easier to check on a vessel and a group of vessel owners than it would be individuals, including mother, father, kids, so and so forth, and we've had some of these discussions around the table as well, and I think that's why both of those options are in there for further contemplation.

MR. PHILLIPS: Back to Gregg's point. Until we talk to the MRIP people and they tell us what they need, we may want to just leave all of this in there for scoping and then let's see how quick we can get an MRIP person in here to tell us what works for them and then we narrow it down, and I'm thinking that's the best path, and I see Gregg nodding in the back.

MR. DILERNIA: First, let me say though, speaking now as a committee member and not as a liaison, I happen to support this effort very strongly. I believe that, as far as the permit is concerned, it should go to the vessel rather than to a particular individual, and I believe it would make it a lot easier for the Coast Guard for enforcement if they had just a database of vessels, permitted vessels, rather than permitted individuals. If they did a boarding, it would be easier for them to look up in their database, and I happen to believe that this effort is very important, because I believe that the recreational community needs to step up and take more responsibility for their actions and for their fishing and their accountability, and I believe that this type of an effort would go a long way towards doing that.

Finally, I am advocating something similar to this in the Wave 1 fishery, the black sea bass fishery, during Wave 1 in the Mid-Atlantic, and so, personally, I am going to be watching this very carefully, because I believe there's a lot we can learn from this that we can carry over into the Mid-Atlantic. Thank you.

MR. BELL: I understand all the arguments for the desire for the vessel, but I think, going back to if we want this to be useful for MRIP purposes as a database, and MRIP deals in people and not boats, in terms of their survey, and so, again, when you talk to them, but, from my understanding, you would be better off, for that purpose, at the personal level.

MR. CONKLIN: I am not an MRIP expert, and I am not a state person or anything like that, but I do see that there is four states here that issue licenses to individuals, fishing licenses. When you buy a fishing license, it seems to me like we could all get on the same page and get the feds to tell us that it's okay and, yes, I'm going to go fishing for snapper grouper species, and you folks gladly collect whatever nominal fee it is to cover the costs on your end, and then it should fit the box, and we just tell them how many people are going out, and that's the effort. It's not rocket science, and it seems like it would fit right into the MRIP thing. I mean, it could probably be done over a cup of coffee one morning, with a little bit of help through the amendment here, but let's keep it simple and let's get it done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so what do we want to do here? Do we want to keep everything in and move it to scoping?

DR. DUVAL: I say we keep all three options, all three alternatives. We're just trying to get something out to scoping, and this is exactly how we solicit input to make a decision, and I think there's a number of great points that have been brought up here, in terms of the logistics and the pros and cons of going one way or another, and we did discuss, at the last meeting, getting someone from the MRIP program to help answer these questions and participate on the IPT, and it seems like this would -- Once we get some scoping comments in, that might help to inform that person's participation in this effort.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm not sure when the last time we've seen an HMS presentation is, but maybe we could hear something from them about why they went to vessels and what kind of information they're getting out of the HMS permit, how many they issue and cost, or we know the cost, but just some information from HMS.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip, is that something that we could bring back? Okay.

MR. DIAZ: I just want to weigh-in and kind of talk about what's happening in the Gulf. In the Gulf, there is data collection programs for red snapper, and all five states have implemented their own program, and something that was said just a minute ago is pretty important, that everybody get on the same page.

If you set your standards early and everybody builds to the same standards and all states cooperate, I think, in the end, you'll have a whole lot better product. In the Gulf, some folks got out a little bit ahead of MRIP, and some folks stayed back and waited on MRIP, and all this was very time consuming, and the states are footing the bill in the Gulf for everything. It is quite expensive, and some states have had to implement license fees to cover it.

You have to pull the money from somewhere, and I do worry about if these things are sustainable, because -- With tight budget times, are these things going to be able to keep going, but I think, if you all can kind of learn from maybe -- I am not going to say our mistakes, but you can definitely improve on the way that we did it, and a lot of the things that have been said is exactly what needs to be done, to get MRIP in there early and standardize and get everybody on the same page and try to build data that's going to be comparable. I mean, all those things will be important down the road, and so, anyway, I applaud you all's effort, and I think you all are on a good path. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dale. I agree with what you said and what Roy said, that getting the MRIP certification, and we can speak to that, because of our Gulf Reef Fish Survey, and it's not a small thing, and so having the MRIP folks involved is going to be important early on.

MR. BREWER: I just want to compliment the State of Florida, because the iAngler system is very, very good. I mean, it's very, very simple, and it takes you maybe thirty seconds, and that is also required per angler, per person, and not per boat, and I have actually gone it and gotten the license and all of that, and I was really impressed with it. I think that that system that's being used right now on the west coast of Florida could be used on the east coast of Florida and probably throughout our region, and you do need to standardize it, and there is no question about that. It does need to be per person.

DR. COLLIER: I will go into the second action, and you guys have started talking about that a little bit, which is the reporting side of it. On the reporting side, we have the option for reporting by vessels, and, also, we have some sub-alternatives, which include 1 percent, 10 percent, 50 percent, and 100 percent, and that more or less covers the entire range of potential people to report.

Based on your direction, we also added an alternative for just fishermen, and so you can see between 2 and 3 -- 2 is vessel and 3 is for the fishermen, and then Alternative 4 is looking at just promoting voluntary electronic reporting, and I believe that's what iAngler is right now on the west coast, and that's what MyFishCount is on the east coast for Florida, and, actually, that's all of the South Atlantic that you can use MyFishCount.

Then we also have a sub-action for reporting frequency and whether or not you want it reported prior to arrival at the dock, whether or not you want it weekly, or whether or not you want it monthly. Then there is some background language throughout the document that provides some pros and cons for each one, and what we're looking at for this, and I just want to point this out, and I have this table with all the pretty colors on it, but one of the things, when we're analyzing data, and I looked at this in Amendment 26, analyzing a lot of the data, is not only are you using MRIP to estimate landings, but you're using it to essentially create bag limits, seasons, and also size limit adjustments, and so you need a decent sample number in order to really understand how these different actions are actually impacting the fishermen and be able to predict how that's going to impact landings, if you're trying to remain under the ACL.

You can look at these estimates by wave, and I came up with a rough cutoff of less than ten intercepts is color-coded as red, and eleven to thirty intercepts are color-coded as yellow, and greater than thirty intercepts is color-coded as green. You can see this is for the private recreational fishery, and I have most -- We have a list of I think thirteen species up here, and then we have the rest of the snapper grouper complex, which would include another forty-two species.

You can see that I provided those. For some of these important species, and let's look at red grouper in 2015, there is not a single wave that had more than five intercepts. However, if you look back in 2014, there was one wave that had fifteen intercepts of red grouper, and so you're getting a decent number of samples there to compare alternatives, but, for most of the other waves, you have very minimal samples to compare. That is another thing to consider when you're developing any of these reporting mechanisms, is we need increased intercepts and not only knowing the universe of fishermen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there questions or comments?

MR. BREWER: A question. The permit, if we're going to call it that, license, is I think a -- At least insofar as this action goes, or these actions, it's of primary importance, because that is going to define, or help define, your universe, and it's going to also help the samplers target people to sample. It seems to me that, later down the road, you're going to have either required or voluntary reporting, which is sort of the second part of this. Is it possible that we could prioritize the permit/license part of this and try to get that in place as quickly as possible while not having it slowed down by the second action?

We split out the -- What was it that we split out? It was the descending devices. I think we split that out because we thought that was really important and we could move it faster if it was separated. Would it be possible to either separate these now or have them go out for scoping at the same time but then to work on them, the two actions, separately, so that we could prioritize the license/permit?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have concerns about separating them, because I think that the one is somewhat dependent upon the other, and I would hate for one to get ahead of the other.

DR. DUVAL: I understand what Chester is saying, and I think, technically, yes, that would be possible, that we take something out to scoping and then decide if we want to work on Action 1 now versus Action 2 later, and I guess my concern, which might be similar to Jessica's in that regard, is that, if there is the intention of using whatever permit instrument is developed down the road to get additional information, I would want to be upfront with the angling community about that ahead of time, whether it's simply a socioeconomic survey or whether it's a survey to determine how many fishermen fish for deepwater snapper and grouper species or whatever, but I think I would want to ensure that people aren't surprised that they might be asked to provide additional information as a condition of the permit. I can't say any more beyond that, in terms of support for splitting these two actions up and pursuing them under separate documents, until after we get scoping comments back.

DR. CRABTREE: I mean, for scoping purposes, I actually think this whole thing could be way more general than it is, but I think, post-scoping, when we start talking about it, it does seem to me that putting in place a permit for a secondary or a specialized effort survey and working that through the MRIP certification part of this, because I would think we would want to work through the certification part when we put this in place, and that seems, to me, to be a way more straightforward undertaking than the self-reported part of this, which I have no real idea how you would do that and the validation hurdles you would have to overcome and what the costs are.

I think, for scoping purposes, it's fine, but I do think, if this is the path we're going down, we probably will want to come in and think of this in steps. I mean, you're talking something that is going to take years, and I think we need to be upfront about that. It will take years to get this through the process and certified so that you're actually generating catch estimates from it, and so we need to manage expectations with some of that.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I have one maybe addition to Table 4, which is reporting requirements by agency or state, and, for North Carolina, we use a reporting station system for HMS species, as is noted here, and we did have a presentation on that I think back in 2014, and I think, Chip, what I would want added to this is just the indication that there is a reporting card and tag requirement, because you do have to put -- You have to fill out a reporting card, and you have to put a tag on the fish before you can remove the fish from the boat, and so it's not just a reporting station.

Then the other thing I had, while Chip is doing that, is just a question for Roy on Action 2. You know, right now, there is language, through Amendment 15A, that was developed that technically there is the authority to require private angling reporting, but, because of issues with OMB and the Paperwork Reduction Act, that has never actually been effective, and so I think, as we move forward and consider this, I think we would also just want to make sure that we're not running afoul of this issue again in any type of reporting requirements that we would implement. I mean,

I stand by my previous comments that I think, for scoping purposes, both of these actions should go out together, but Monica might have some insight on that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I agree. Thank you for that. I think we will look at that, and we'll double-check that and make sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip, are we going to discuss this further, or are we just looking for a motion to take it out to scoping, or what are you looking for here?

DR. COLLIER: You guys have the option to consider whether or not the scoping that we did in January of 2017 was sufficient scoping or you would like this to go out to scoping with it just focused on these two actions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm looking around to committee members. Do we want to scope again?

DR. DUVAL: I think it's been a long enough time that, and there has been more information added to this, that I think it would be prudent to scope it again, I think with the addition of the tables of information and the pros and cons of the different alternatives, and I think that would be valuable information for the public to review, and they could provide more specific input on these.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree. Was that a motion?

DR. DUVAL: **I was just going to say, Madam Chair, that I would be happy to offer a motion to direct staff to prepare Amendment 46 for scoping.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there a second for that? It's seconded by Charlie. We are getting that motion on the board. I am looking around to see if there is other comments or concerns or questions about taking this out to scoping.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I am not on this, but do you think it's possible when -- You have talked about a template around here and kind of some Roy's concerns of looking at a bigger picture and a longer schedule, and do you think that when you go out to scoping that you might would put a rough draft of what your endgame is, and maybe it's going to be three or four years or five years, and you've got to do MRIP calibration and what you're looking at, and so that way it gives the folks out there -- You're not doing scoping every other month or every few years, and it kind of gives them an idea of the endgame and what this council wants to do or the direction that it wants to go, just to put that out there as part of the scoping document.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that's a good point, because, just above this motion, I see that we have final action in June of next year, and I'm concerned that we're not going to make that deadline with everything that we need from the MRIP folks, and so yes.

MR. BELL: I think, also, to that, is what Roy was saying about managing expectations, is some sort of explanation of whatever might come out of that, and it's not going to be an immediate fix. It's going to take a little time.

MR. PHILLIPS: Looking at the draft timeline, I am assuming that, as you are reviewing the scoping comments in September, that's when you also would have somebody from MRIP come and kind of help keep us between the ditches on exactly what is doable and that they can use and what's not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: My experience is that's a much larger discussion, after trying to get our Gulf Reef Fish Survey through that process. It's multiyear, it's sitting down with scientists, and I don't think it's something that the council members need to be present for. That will be a long, protracted event. We have a motion on the board.

DR. DUVAL: I think, to that point, I think that's why it would be great to have someone who could participate in some of the IPT discussions, to help with that, and I know all the MRIP staff are strapped right now and busy working on the recalibrations and everything, but hopefully someone will have time after that, and it sounds like Chip wants to speak to that, and the only other thing I was going to say is I really appreciated all the fleshing-out of this document and the inclusion of all of the pros and cons, and I do note that, right above the information on how this amendment matches the vision blueprint, that there is an indication -- There is a sentence that says that it may take years to develop validated catch estimates, and so there's a hint of what Dewey is talking about in there, but I think it would be good to include additional language to indicate the timeline for actual implementation of something like this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree, and so I'm going to look to Chip, who had his hand up, and maybe you could address some of those points as well.

DR. COLLIER: We do have MRIP on the IPT, and we have people from the Science Center on the IPT, and people from the Permits Office as well. There's been a lot of interest in this amendment, and so a lot of people are getting engaged, but we do recognize the fact that MRIP is doing a lot of work right now on the recalibration, and we have tried to be cognizant of their time while they're doing that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. **We have a motion to approve Amendment 46 for scoping. Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Thank you, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Just a little plug for tomorrow night. Kelsey is going to give a presentation, in association with Bouncer, and he is going to be giving a presentation at West Marine on snapper fishing, and the snapper that he's talking about is mutton snapper. There are other snappers in the ocean, and so he's going to be talking about how to catch mutton snapper at West Marine, and then Kelsey is going to give a short presentation on how to use MyFishCount in order to report recreational catches, and so that's at 6:30 tomorrow night.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right, and so the next item on our list is the best fishing practices, which is Amendment 29, and Christina is going to come up and talk about that.

MS. WIEGAND: This is the stuff that you guys pulled out of Amendment 26 at the last meeting, in hopes that it could move a bit faster than some of the recreational permit and reporting actions, and so this is tentative timing that we would be looking at. If you guys wanted to take it out to scoping, we would be doing that sometime this summer. We would be reviewing those comments

and approving the actions and alternatives to be analyzed at the next meeting and moving on to secretarial review sometime in June of 2019.

At this meeting, we need you guys to give us a little bit of guidance. We fleshed out, based on comments in March, some of these actions and alternatives, and we will get some guidance on what you guys are actually hoping to consider for this amendment and then consider whether you want to approve it for scoping. Like Chip just talked about, a lot of these actions were scoped way back with Amendment 43, and then the powerhead action has been scoped in different variations, most recently in 2001.

There are currently four actions in this amendment, and the first one specifies use for descending devices and venting devices. The second action deals with the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks. The third action addresses allowable rigs when fishing for snapper grouper species, and then the fourth action is going to deal with powerhead prohibitions in the South Atlantic.

If you guys will remember, the actions in this amendment also address some of the vision blueprint issues that were discussed, and fishermen were concerned, during those visioning meetings, about the practices that were leading to a high level of discard mortality and looking at ways to reduce that. Then looking at consistent regulations, particularly for the dive component, of the snapper grouper fishery, in terms of the powerhead prohibition off of South Carolina.

These are the draft purpose and need that we have right now, and the purpose is to encourage the use of best fishing practices in the snapper grouper fishery and to ensure consistent regulations for the dive component of the snapper grouper fishery, and the need is to reduce discards and discard mortality of snapper grouper species and to decrease the burden of compliance with differing regulations for the dive components of the snapper grouper fishery while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects. Are there any comments or concerns about this? Otherwise, I can move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am looking around the table, and there don't appear to be any comments or concerns about the purpose and need for action, and let's move on.

MS. WIEGAND: Here is Action 1, which specifies requirements for these descending devices and/or venting devices when possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit, and so we've got four alternatives under this. The first alternative would deal with requiring an approved venting device be onboard a vessel that is possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit, and then we have alternatives, sub-alternatives, for recreational vessels or commercially-permitted South Atlantic snapper grouper vessels.

Alternative 3 would require an approved descending device to be onboard, with the same sub-alternatives, and then Alternative 4 would require an approved venting device or an approved descending device be onboard, and so you could choose Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 as preferreds, and that would require both venting devices and descending devices to be onboard, or Alternative 4 is one or the other.

Based on discussion at the March council meeting, we did add this language to the alternatives stating an approved venting device or an approved descending device, and we were hoping to get a little guidance or a little discussion from you guys about what you intend to mean by an

“approved device”. Right now, venting devices are defined in the CFR as a device intended to deflate the abdominal cavity of a fish to release the fish with minimal damage, and there is no definition for descending device currently in the CFR.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It’s my recollection that the discussion was that we were going to be in the process of looking at, inspecting, and approving particular makes and models of these devices, and that’s my recollection, and I don’t know if we still want to go there, but I think that was the discussion, and I’m kind of looking at Chester, because I thought that you were one of the people that talked about this.

MR. BREWER: Lord only knows. I may have been, but I’m a little hinky about the use of the word “approved”, and maybe something like “effective” descending device, or something like that, and I don’t want to slow this down, and that’s what I am really saying. I want to get this in place as quickly as possible, and obviously we want to do it the right way and whatnot, but it’s -- Maybe some kind of language like “devices designed to be effective at descending finfishes to the capture” or “to a safe distance”, i.e., like fifty feet and below. That might be better language, as opposed to -- Because, I mean, if we approve devices and then, six months down the road, a better mousetrap comes out, what are we going to do then? We’re going to be a year-and-a-half or two years approving that device, and so maybe some language like I was talking about might be better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I’m concerned about the word “approved” as well, and so I have a number of people with their hands up.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, “approved” could just be anything capable of bringing a fish back down to depth, i.e., a milk crate with a rock on it, and so you just have a general description, and, if it fits in that general description, then it’s approved, because we’re going to have to approve it one way or another. Does it fit under a general description or is it some device that you buy from West Marine or something, but, if we just have a general description of what we want it to do, and then we’re going to have to leave it up to law enforcement to make sure it fits that description, and maybe that’s the way to run the rabbit.

MR. CONKLIN: I think, maybe this meeting last year, or in September, we had a big demonstration on descending devices and different types, and so I feel like we’re at the approval stage right now, and we’ve seen all the stuff, and, if something else new comes out, then we’ll need to approve it, and I know we’re not going into protected resources and stuff, but, with the turtle gear and stuff, NMFS has approved stuff, and there is a clear list of what you need to have and what you don’t and what constitutes that kind of useful stuff, and then now we’ve just had to go through and approve a new hoop net for the turtle or whatever, and we’ve done that, and so the precedent has been set, and I say we take the things that we have seen and put our hands on and watched the videos and go ahead and approve them, so we can get the ball rolling.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I just have some concerns with that, and I can tell you, at least on the descending device side, there are a number that we tested at FWC, and they worked, and then the manufacturers quit making them, and so I’m concerned about approving. This could be a constant process here.

DR. DUVAL: I think I remember, in March, I think Mel had quite a bit of input on this, or conversation about it, in terms of being concerned that, as Charlie mentioned, you could just have

something be -- You could have someone say, well, this is a descending device, and it's just a rock on top of a crate, and not that that doesn't descend a fish, but I don't know -- We're trying to walk the line here between having something that really is actually going to descend a fish and some general enough definition that isn't going to make some pieces of gear obsolete after just a year. I mean, could we ask the IPT to come up with some general definition that we could then include as part of the codified text for this amendment? I feel like us sitting around this table here and trying to wordsmith a definition is just not the way to go.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Right, and, also, the Gulf Council is working on a similar policy, including there has been some discussion about the venting tool, and there is a particular one out there that is not hollow, and so, for example, we had said that it had to be a hollow tube. At FWC, there's a new one out there that is not hollow that we think works just as well, and so I will look to Christina. I don't know if you want to add anything here.

MS. WIEGAND: I was just going to note that, while in our CFR we don't have a definition of descending device, when Chip and I were looking through some of this stuff, we did find that Washington State does have a definition for a descending device that they require in their regulations, and their regulations are written so that it is unlawful for any person to take, fish for, or possess bottom fish or halibut taken for personal use to fail to have onboard the vessel a fish descending or fish recompression device rigged for immediate use and capable of rapidly returning fish to depth of capture, and so the IPT could wordsmith something to bring back to you guys, but this is just an example of what the State of Washington has in their regulations.

MS. BECKWITH: Most of the points have been brought up, and the Protected Resources does have that addendum. We could follow something like that, but having a general definition that also doesn't tie this council to necessarily approving one brand and skyrocketing somebody's price on particular things that have been approved over others might be a nice way to go as well.

MR. BOWEN: I am of the opinion that we will let the IPT figure out the wording, and I am prepared to make a motion that Alternative 4 be our preferred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're not really there yet.

MS. WIEGAND: This is just an options paper, at this point, and so we're just going through the range of options.

MR. BOWEN: I was just trying to get the ball rolling.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I appreciate that.

MR. BOWEN: Let's move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're approving this for scoping, right, Christina? Okay, and so do we want to leave the word "approved"? I know that this is going out to the public, and we're trying to find something that is public friendly, and I'm afraid that we're going to get the public wrapped around the axle on this "approved" thing and that they're going to not comment on what we really want them to comment on and instead wonder if their particular device is going to be approved or not.

MR. BELL: That's what I wanted to talk about. When you use the word "approved", there is an assumption that somebody has looked at something or we've made a decision that these are good and these aren't or something, but that it really goes back to is the definition, and so it needs to just be to have a device onboard, or however we word it, that meets the definition of either the venting tool or the descending device, and then the definition needs to be worked out, but I would stay away from "approved" somehow.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so Christina is typing here, and it looks like we feel like we've given enough guidance to remove the word "approved", and, also, I think we talked a little bit about just developing a definition, and so you could also look to the Gulf, since they're working on that right now as well, and then is there more discussion on this particular action?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One thing is I do know, when we had the turtle gear that was developed that we had to have, if you put your definition in there, there is a good chance you will have outside interests to coming in to say here is my gear that meets your definition and we would like to get it approved, and so it's kind of like you've got to do the research part of it or put a definition of what you want. Therefore, people, industry or whoever, can come out and say, hey, we want to get this approved and it meets your definition. Then, maybe at a later time, you could say these are approved devices that met the definition.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think we've had enough discussion on this particular action, and I suggest we move on to the next one, unless anybody has a burning comment here. Then let's move on.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so next is Action 2, which would modify the requirement for the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks when fishing for and/or possessing snapper grouper species with hook-and-line gear, and we have the range of alternatives under this currently, and so, right now, in the regulations, there is a requirement to use non-stainless-steel circle hooks when fishing for and/or possessing snapper grouper species with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of that 28 degrees North latitude line.

Alternative 2 would modify the current regulations of where that line is, and Sub-Alternative 2a would move it to north of the 25 degree latitude, and this is right around the Key Largo area, and then Sub-Alternative 2b would extend it throughout the South Atlantic's Exclusive Economic Zone, and, if it helps for visualization, because it does for me, these are where those lines are, and so this is where the regulation currently is right now.

This line right here is based off of the Gulf's 2016 framework action for reef fish, which addressed circle hook requirements for the yellowtail snapper fishery, and so they do not require the use of circle hooks with natural baits south of this line, which is Cape Sable on the Gulf side and then the Key Largo area on our side, and so that is why this alternative is in there, and then the entire EEZ.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I can say that the Gulf line, there is not a -- It doesn't cross the state at a comparable defined place like it does on the Gulf, and so Cape Sable is kind of a no-mans-land, and so it's easy to know whether you're above or below that, and so I think, if we're going to pick a line on the Atlantic coast, that we would probably want to pick a different line.

MR. BOWEN: Well, I recognize your concern, but let's keep in mind that when the fishermen -- We're not fishing -- I mean, it's obvious that we're not fishing from land, and those guys, us, are

constantly looking at those GPS and LORAN, and a defined line, necessarily, in the ocean may not be the same thing as it is in a city limit or a town limit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Got it.

MS. BURGESS: To provide a little bit of context, the reason why it was chosen on the Gulf is it's uncommon for those folks who are yellowtail snapper fishing, and the Gulf's rule is specific to yellowtail snapper fishing, for them to go north of that line, and so it helped with enforcement, and it helped them understand. There was no purpose, necessarily, for them to be targeting yellowtail snapper with non-circle hooks north of that line in the Gulf, and that's why it may not work on the Atlantic, because where that fishery prosecutes would be different on the Atlantic coast.

DR. DUVAL: So is there a different line that would be acceptable on the Atlantic side?

MS. BURGESS: I really think this is where the council would benefit from public input.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Me too.

MR. GRINER: I just would add that it should probably be just a degree. I don't think you need to go into minutes and seconds.

MR. BOWEN: I am in favor of 33 degrees. For people that don't know, that's the Georgia/South Carolina line.

MR. PHILLIPS: Alternative 5 is remove the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks. I don't know, and maybe Zack could enlighten us, but would it help if we removed the circle hook requirement, and would we want to keep the requirement that we use steel hooks, and so, if they did gut-hook something, it would rust out, or does it matter?

MR. BOWEN: I think it does matter. I think the use of -- My opinion is the use of stainless-steel hooks should be prohibited.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, before I go to Michelle, if it's okay, I jumped in early, and I will let Christina finish going over the alternatives here.

MS. WIEGAND: Alternative 2 just addresses where the line is for the current regulation. For Alternative 3, it looks at requiring the use of non-offset and non-stainless-steel circle hooks, and then those sub-alternatives are just the current line, the Gulf line, and then the entire EEZ. Then you guys had some discussion about concerns about enforcement last time, in terms of actually requiring the use of these circle hooks, and so Alternative 4 would require non-offset and non-stainless-steel circle hooks to be onboard a vessel that is possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery. Then, again, those sub-alternatives are just the current line, the Gulf line, and the entire EEZ. Then Alternative 5 removes the requirement for the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks, with options to do that for commercially-permitted vessels or recreational vessels or both.

DR. DUVAL: I think if we want to get some public input on where best to draw a line, if we draw a line on the Atlantic side, we should include something in there -- A question for the public to

respond to or something in the sub-alternatives, maybe an additional sub-alternative that has some other line or something like that, if we're already operating under this structure.

Then I think the other thing is -- Let's see. I am trying to keep this all in my head here, but I don't think there is any information in here indicating the reduction in discard mortality that is attributed to the use of circle hooks in the red snapper fishery, and so I think it might be important to include a couple of sentences within the scoping document just that -- You know, what that has done, and that's it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sound great, since we're trying to prepare this and get comments back from the public, and I see staff taking notes.

MR. BREWER: I want to agree that it would be very important to get public comment on where the line should be on the Atlantic side, and I got cornered -- It's hard to believe that we've been looking at this kind of thing as long as we have, but I got cornered by a couple of these guys that are yellowtail fishermen down in the Keys, when we had a Key West meeting, and they were pretty adamant that they thought that circle hooks, in the way they prosecuted that fishery, was a bad mistake, and they were going to kill more fish than necessary, and it was also going to be a lot less efficient for them in the way that they prosecute that fishery, and so I don't know if we're going to be lucky enough to have any yellowtail folks from the Keys for public comment today, but I would love to know what they had to say, and they did tell me, but it's just been too long ago, and I can't remember.

MR. BOWEN: To Chester's point, I'm glad that those two fishermen resonated with you, because I've been saying the same damn thing about every other fishery up the whole coast for five years. It's the way we prosecute the fishery, and the circle hooks are a bad idea.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there anything else you need, Christina?

MS. WIEGAND: Not necessarily, unless you wanted to comment on your preference for requiring the use of non-offset circle hooks or requiring them to be onboard, and this is just a scoping document, and so we can keep both of them in there to solicit public comment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would prefer to keep them both, but I am looking around the room.

MR. PHILLIPS: Can we split -- I don't know if it's actually splitting it up, because that is totally removing the requirement, but I would like to see an option of not having to use circle hooks but still using -- Mandating the use of non-stainless-steel hooks, because I think that would help over stainless-steel hooks, and so I would like to see that as an option in there somehow.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and staff seems to be nodding their heads that, yes, they can work on that.

MR. BELL: I was just going to mention if we can leave all those in there, but remember yesterday, with the Law Enforcement AP, there was some discussion about having regulations that they never used or why are they there, and so I know, up our way, circle hooks kind of come up as it's not a particularly practical regulation or one that they do a lot of enforcement on, but we could certainly

take this out and get some public feedback on that, but that's -- Also, I think the easiest way to enforce this is the have it onboard part. The use, that's just not enforceable, usually.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so do we want to take out the one that says that they have to use it? I am looking around. Then, instead, just leave the option that they only have to have it onboard?

MR. DILERNIA: I would leave them all in there. I would take it out to public hearing and see what kind of reaction you get, and I would leave them there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right.

MR. HAYMANS: I agree with that, because, if you're going to just require it onboard, I would move the whole action to Considered but Rejected, because it's useless.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to -- Michelle has got her hand up.

DR. DUVAL: Just, Madam Chair, I didn't know if you needed a motion to approve Regulatory Amendment 29 for scoping, as modified.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We've got some more actions in there, and so hang on. I appreciate the enthusiasm, but we've got a few more actions.

DR. DUVAL: Sorry. I forgot about those.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just hold on, and we'll bring it back.

MS. WIEGAND: I am glad that you guys are jazzed about this. All right. Action 3 deals with specifying the allowable rigs when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook-and-line gear in the recreational sector. Alternative 2 would require the use of single-hook rigs, and Alternative 3 would require the use of a single leader, and I did just want to make one note about this action. In the recreational visioning amendment, you guys are considering allowable rigs for deepwater species, and so just to let you know that, and if you want to keep it in both amendments or remove it from one or whatever is the will of the committee.

MR. BOWEN: I would prefer to keep it in this one versus the Amendment 26, because we have yet to discuss that, and I think there's going to be some issues that come up with Amendment 26, or at least I have some concerns that we need to bring up, or I feel like I need to bring up, and so I would prefer to leave it in this one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I like it in this amendment, too. I feel like it kind of goes together with the rest of the actions. Any more comments or questions about this particular action?

MR. BELL: I will just say, again, from an enforceability standpoint, defining what we mean by "single-hook rig" is important, and then, also, it comes down to a matter of use versus having it onboard again, just from an enforceability standpoint of what was easy to work with, but that has come up in discussions. It's just something to think about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel.

MR. BOWEN: To Mel's point, maybe, for Alternative 2, in parentheses, behind "require the use of single-hook rigs", in parentheses, maybe we could put "one hook per rod-and-reel", and that would clarify the question, if there was one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

MS. BECKWITH: I agree with Zack that I think we are going to have some discussions when we get to the visioning amendment, but, in general, I think we did get some pushback on the single, and so, for this one, if it's going to go out to scoping again, maybe to add in a question specific to depth use, because we already know that they're not interested in seeing that for the deepwater species, and so I think we're going to get the same feedback, and the discussion is going to end, but, if there is a discussion on the shallow-water groupers and that sort of thing, or black sea bass or whatever, that might be more useful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point.

MR. BOWEN: It was just brought to my attention, and it's a great point, when we were talking about the single-hook rigs, we do use sabiki rigs, and I use them as well, and so maybe somebody smarter than me around the table could come up with a solution, but it was just brought to my attention, and I think it needs to be put on the record that we need to figure something out with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point.

MR. HARTIG: Just to reiterate what we talked about last time, and I know Zack mentioned one hook per rod, but the leader thing came up, where, in the Southeast, where I'm from, most of the guys fish double hooks with a half a sardine, and so they're fishing two hooks on one leader, and I know we had one leader in there at one time, but some way so that we don't get into a situation of precluding two hooks that are attached together, and triple rigs as well, and the headboats in particular, and I can see Tony chiming in. I mean, that's a staple of the headboat fishery where I'm from.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm just calling your attention to the title of the action. It's when fishing for snapper grouper, and I don't think you're going to fish sabiki rigs for snapper grouper species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Zack, does that help?

MR. BOWEN: Well, I understand Doug's point, and I totally agree with it, but I do drop down a sabiki rig in a hundred feet of water from time to time, and we do, as a bycatch, catch small vermilion and small sea bass, and now, am I fishing for snapper grouper species? Maybe.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more comments on this particular action that we're preparing for scoping? Then we're going to go on to the next action.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and, last but not least, is Action 4, which would adjust powerhead prohibitions in the South Atlantic region. Alternative 2 would allow the use of powerheads to

harvest South Atlantic snapper grouper species in the EEZ off of South Carolina, and Alternative 3 would prohibit the use of powerheads in the South Atlantic EEZ.

DR. DUVAL: Just I think a quick correction or addition. It was noted that powerheads were scoped back in 2001, but we did actually scope back in 2011 or 2012, because it was one of the first things that we did after I came on the council, was to look at prohibiting the use of powerheads off of North Carolina. We had wanted to pursue this at the state level, because of concerns that fishermen in North Carolina had, and we were told by our General Counsel that because this pertained to federally-managed species that we had to come to the body that managed those species first, which was this body, to get a prohibition, which we could then complement, and the whole thing sort of blew up. There were a lot of folks who were extremely unhappy with the thought of prohibiting the use of powerheads, and so I just wanted to add that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So are you thinking that -- Are you suggesting that this action not be in the document?

DR. DUVAL: No, but I just want to make sure that it's understood that we have taken this out in recent history, and so I have no problem with the action, and I have no problem with making South Carolina equal to the rest of us around here with regard to the use of powerheads, but I just wanted to make sure that we didn't get called out, because we have actually taken this out before.

MR. BROWN: That's all we want, is to be equal.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more comments on this action? Okay, Michelle. It's time for your motion.

DR. DUVAL: I am not sure that I want to make it, since I made one mistake already. **I move that we approve Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29 for scoping.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Mel. Any more discussion on this? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Let's take a five-minute break, and then we'll come back and go into the next amendment.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, folks. Let's head back to our seats. We're going to get rolling here. Before we get into Amendment 26, we're going to see a presentation, and I'm going to turn it over to Chip to introduce our guest.

DR. COLLIER: Today, you guys are going to get a presentation from Brendan Runde. He's a PhD candidate at North Carolina State University. He did his undergraduate research at Virginia Tech, and he graduated in 2013 with a degree in Fisheries Science and Biology. He did his masters work at NC State with Dr. Jeff Buckel, where he worked on -- His project was entitled "Estimating and Mitigating Discard Mortality of Reef Fishes". He is going to give you guys a presentation on one of the species he worked on, gray triggerfish, today.

He is currently working at NC State, as I mentioned, on his PhD, where he's working on evaluating two approaches to manage deepwater species, the use of descending devices to promote the survival of deepwater groupers and also evaluating the efficacy of the Snowy Wreck MPA, and so he is a wealth of knowledge, based on some of the conversations you guys had earlier of discard mortality and descending devices, and, today, he's just going to focus on this gray triggerfish presentation.

MR. RUNDE: Thanks, Chip. I'm happy to be here, and, as you mentioned, I would be happy to speak with anyone after this regarding descending devices and my current work with deepwater groupers in the Snowy Wreck MPA. We've got some really neat footage of what appears to be several species surviving after descended release, and so I digress already.

I would like to jump into talking about discard survival of the probably ugliest, yet most delicious, fish in the South Atlantic region, gray triggerfish. I want to start by thanking my coauthors of Paul Rudershausen, Jeff Buckel, and then Bev Sauls from here in Florida, who provided a monstrous dataset for this work.

In addition, I want to acknowledge NOAA, the source of funding for this work, the Cooperative Research Program, and we worked closely with Captain Tom Burgess, who at one time sat on this council, and the folks on the right-hand side of the screen were instrumental in the field work for this project.

When I am showing you here are MRIP data from going back to 1981, and this is a three-year moving average of releases and harvests for gray triggerfish in the U.S. South Atlantic. Releases are the dashed line, and you can see a major uptick around 2015 that coincides with the twelve-inch fork length minimum size requirement that was put in place for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

As I'm sure you all are well aware, there are a variety of potential causes of injury as a result of discarding that could lead to an increased risk of mortality, and those include exhaustion, fatigue, hooking injury, exposure to air and thermal shock, water column predators, and then a big one for demersal fish, like gray triggerfish, is barotrauma. The image on right-hand side of the screen is a little gruesome, and you're seeing a yellow streamer tag coming out of the abdomen of that fish, and so this is actually a recaptured gray triggerfish. The yellow arrow is indicating a pretty severe intestinal prolapse, and so, of course, this occurs as a result of the gases in the abdominal cavity expanding when the fish is brought to the surface, and this is organ displacement and, quite possibly, organ damage.

As far as mortality is concerned, immediate mortality for this species and others is easy to estimate if one were to use a severity of injury or even floating as a proxy to inform which fish live or die. However, determining whether a fish lives or dies after swimming back down, in other words delayed mortality or survival, is much more difficult to estimate, because some of these injuries, even if they are observable at the surface, may be sub-lethal, and it could result, down the road, in mortality, and better estimates are needed for many species, including this species, gray triggerfish.

Because this species has a very high level of discards relative to harvest, the discard survival and mortality is an extremely important component of the stock assessment. The last attempt to assess this species, as many of you probably remember, was in 2016, SEDAR 41, and the discard

mortality value that was used for that stock assessment was 12.5 percent. Of course, that is equivalent to survival, which are the terms that I usually deal in, of 87.5 percent.

However, that figure did not include any sort of delayed mortality component. The table that's on the screen is a reproduction from SEDAR 41, and it includes the six studies, some gray literature and some peer-reviewed, that were referenced in order to determine that 12.5 percent mortality figure. I would like to direct your attention to the two right-hand columns, and none of these six studies used what we might call an adequate control, although, of course, these were hard data. They all used conditional proxies at the surface to determine relative mortality rates, or survival rates, and then, in the far-right column, you can see wide-ranging survival estimates, from 7 percent up to 100 percent.

My objectives were to refine what you just saw in that table and determine condition-specific discard mortality, including that crucial delayed component for gray triggerfish using a conventional tagging study. Number two was to estimate fishery-dependent discard mortality by applying the tagging results to observer data of untagged fish, and so, for Objective Number 1, we captured gray triggerfish with hook-and-line and fish traps in two depth ranges, and one was actually a single site in thirty meters and one was a variety of sites in thirty-six to forty-meters.

The figure that's on the screen right now shows releases by depth in North Carolina in dark gray and Florida in light gray. Of course, these are the northernmost states in the U.S. South Atlantic region, and, because the shelf drops away very differently in these two states, they are the two states that I chose to analyze for this study, and you can see that the modality of the distribution includes that thirty-meter and the thirty-six-to-forty-meter range for both North Carolina and Florida, and this is a pretty popular depth for gray triggerfish releases.

We tagged fish with Floy internal anchor tags, and we categorized all tagged fish by condition upon release. The three condition categories are on the screen right now, and Condition 1, or best condition, are fish that showed no visible trauma at the surface and swam down immediately. Condition 2 are fish that showed visible barotrauma, such as the intestinal prolapse, which I am again displaying in the upper-right corner of the slide, but these fish still made it down, and then Condition 3, which we considered worse condition, were fish that floated, and so, in the lower-right-hand corner of the screen, you can see an example of a floating gray triggerfish.

We then used the relative tag return rates between these three conditions to inform our mortality estimates. Most previous studies of reef fish, including gray triggerfish, that have used this approach or similar approaches assumed that fish in the best condition, which in my case I'm calling Condition 1, did have survival of 100 percent. However, this is not a robust assumption, because even fish that do not have external injuries may be experiencing some sub-clinical trauma that could result in an increased risk of mortality, and so we really need a true, robust control group here from which to base our relative return rates on.

We obtained a robust control by using scuba divers to tag fish at the seafloor. This is an approach that was taken in, to our knowledge, only two previous studies, one that I know that has been presented to this council that was one of my co-authors. Paul Rudershausen and Jeff Buckel did a study that was published a few years back in the *Canadian Journal* for black sea bass, and then the original study that used this was in the 1970s in the British Isles, where they tagged groundfish at depth, and so, of course, the idea here is that the group of fish that are tagged at the seafloor

have not experienced any of the gauntlet of potential hazards associated with a surface release. Then, of course, the other treatments are all released at the surface. On the right-hand side of the slide, you can see that.

I am going to show sort of a cartoonish example of this. You may have seen something like this before associated with that black sea project, and this animation is adapted from that, and so let's say we go out in our red sailboard, NC State colors, but low budget, and so we tagged twenty fish at the surface in Condition 1. Then, on the same day, we send scuba divers down, and we tag twenty fish at the seafloor.

Because the site of tagging and the time of tagging are equal, the only difference between these two groups is that one has been exposed to injury related to capture. If we then receive relatively few tag returns from our Condition 1 fish, our surface-released fish, as exemplified by the red tags there, versus the yellow tags of the scuba control, that would suggest to us that there has been a relatively low survival of that group. However, if we received slightly more returns of the red Condition 1 tags, we would estimate a little bit higher survival.

In this approximation, twenty and twenty, if we got six tags back from the surface-tagged fish and ten tags back from the scuba-control fish, the approximation is shown at the bottom there, and we would estimate about 60 percent survival. In actuality, we use a more complex statistical model called the Cox proportional hazard regression model, and it takes into account the liberty period of the fish, and so the time from recapture minus the time when the fish was tagged, and this model is also nifty because it allows for the estimation of the effects of covariants, such as the size of the fish and also the gear that was used for capture, and, again, this all based on the assumption that seafloor-tagged fish do have 100 percent survival, which we think is a pretty safe assumption.

This is going to get a little muddy, and I'm going to try and explain it well enough, and I'm happy to get deeper into it either in the question-and-answer period or if you want to approach me later, but what we did is we used this statistical model in two different phases. Because we tagged an adequate number of Condition 1, or best condition, fish in tandem with these scuba control seafloor releases, we were able to use that first phase of the model to produce an absolute estimate of Condition 1 fish versus the control.

We then, in Phase 2, compared Condition 1 fish to both Condition 2 and Condition 3. This is, again, what is done in most tagging studies of reef fish. Because we have that connection, Condition 1 is in both phases, we can use a scaling procedure to estimate the absolute survival of all three conditions.

I am going to jump right into some results here. I am going to show you the results from the thirty-meter depth and then the thirty-six to forty-meter depth. What's on the screen right now is from that shallower thirty-meter site, and the estimated survival is the center column there. Of course, scuba control estimated survival is 100 percent. Even fish at the surface that had no trauma, we estimate survival of 43 percent, and we did not tag an adequate number of Condition 2 or 3 fish in the thirty-meter depth, and so I'm going to jump into the thirty-six to forty-meter depth and show you all three conditions.

Scuba control is 100 percent, fish that showed no trauma have an estimated survival of 24 percent, and fish that did show trauma, but swam down, have an estimated survival of 18 percent, and then

we received zero recaptures in the entire study from fish that floated. This is not surprising considering that there were not a whole lot of fish that floated and that a floating fish is probably a dead fish.

In order to take those data that are just very specific to those depth ranges and to those conditions, we need to apply them to observer data, and that's because we need to know what proportion of released gray triggerfish are in each condition in each depth bin. We could use our own data, which include observations of only tagged fish. However, the incision that we have to make in the abdominal cavity to insert the tag is equivalent to venting, because it releases those built-up gases.

Therefore, the tagging procedure itself actually alters the condition of the fish, and so we went to the fishery-dependent data, and we obtained this large observer dataset from the Atlantic coast of Florida, and this is from headboats and charter vessels, and I would like to comment, just briefly, on the excellent amount of detail that this observer dataset in particular contained. It had observations for each individual fish on things like hooking location, specific barotrauma symptoms that each individual fish had suffered, and then the depth of release for each individual fish, and this is in contrast to some of the observer programs, for example, off of North Carolina that contain just things like a total trip minimum and maximum depth fished and then primary depth fished, but you can't really trace it back to individual fish, and so kudos to the workers in Florida, the observers in Florida, who recorded those detailed observations.

From those detailed observations, I was able to generate the plot that's on the screen now. It's a little busy, and I'm going to walk you through it. We have our three conditions. In dark gray is Condition 1, light gray is Condition 2, and white is Condition 3. As we move from left to right, we're moving into deeper depths, and so, as you can see, the proportion of fish in best condition decreases as we move into deeper depths, whereas the proportions of both fish that display barotrauma but swim down and fish that floated generally rises as we move into deeper depths, and this should not come as a surprise to anyone.

From that previous plot, we were able to take the proportions in each condition from the two depth bins in which we did our tagging study and create a sum product of the estimated survivals for each condition by depth multiplied by the proportion of fish released in the fishery at each depth in each condition, and so what you're seeing here is that calculation in a table, and so we're going to multiply across. For example, in the first row, 43 percent is our estimated survival in thirty meters for Condition 1, and 76 percent of fish released in thirty meters are in Condition 1, and so we have 33 on the right there, and then we sum those up, and we come up with a total fishery-dependent survival in thirty meters of 40 percent.

Similarly, a procedure for thirty-six to forty meters, and we have a total survival of 20 percent, and so those are the two depth bins in which we worked, and so now we took some steps to extrapolate that to the other depth bins that exist, and so the table I'm showing you now I'm about to fill in, and so we already have our 40 percent survival in the twenty-six to thirty-meter depth bin and our 20 percent survival in the thirty-six to forty-meter depth bin, and those are from the tagging study, and we can interpolate to 30 percent in the narrow depth bin in between the two.

For the zero to twenty-five meters, we don't have any tagging data. We know that triggerfish tend to, in most areas of the South Atlantic, not be prevalent in that shallower depth bin. However, we

do know that, particularly off of this state, Florida, there are a number of releases in the shallow water, and so we actually took an approach where, for one estimate, we're using 40 percent, which is what we might call, from the fish's perspective, a worst-case scenario survival of 40 percent there, and then we also used a calculation where we had our best-case scenario survival of 100 percent.

Then, for the deeper depth range, we also note there are some discards in that range in every state, not a whole lot, but some, and so we took a best-case, cross-our-fingers-and-hope scenario of the equivalent survival to the thirty-six to forty-meter depth range, and so now we have an estimate for survival across conditions, across depths, for every depth range that exists, and this is just explaining the superscripts there.

Now what we need to do is look at the proportion of releases in each depth bin for the two states for which we have good quality observer data, North Carolina and Florida, or at least for which I targeted observer data, and so you can see, right there in the first depth bin, that only 1 percent of fish in North Carolina are released in shallower than 26 meters, but, here in Florida, 24 percent are released in that shallower depth range, and so it's necessary not only to produce an estimate for both the worst-case shallow-water scenario and the best-case shallow-water scenario, but it's also necessary to produce a state-specific discard survival, because of the differential releases across depths in those two states. What we wind up with here is an overall survival estimate for North Carolina of 26 to 27 percent and an overall survival estimate across depths for Florida of 29 to 43 percent, and so rather low survival there.

Some conclusions here are SEDAR 41 used 87.5 percent survival for gray triggerfish, and our estimate of survival is much, much lower than that, both in North Carolina and even up to our best-case scenario survival in Florida of 43 percent. In contrast, similar work using the scuba control approach for black sea bass found much higher survival than this, and they estimated about 87 percent survival for that species, and, as a result of this finding, the low survival of gray triggerfish may merit revisiting of the current twelve-inch fork length size requirement for this species in the South Atlantic. I am happy to entertain any questions or discussion at this time regarding this study. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that presentation. I see hands in the air already.

MR. HAYMANS: You gave me nothing on how many tags you put out and how many you got back, and I think that's pretty important. Also, why an internal anchor? Why not a t-bar or something that was less invasive?

MR. RUNDE: Thanks for the question. The first question was regarding our sample size, and it was about 200 in the shallow depth range and about 400 in the deeper depth range, thirty-six to forty meters, and the other question was regarding internal anchor tag --

MR. HAYMANS: Also returns.

MR. RUNDE: Thank you. Yes, and so our overall return rate for this study was 27 percent. For the scuba control fish, we received almost 50 percent tag returns, which is nice considering this is the open ocean and not a farm pond with a large amount of bass. The overall number of returns, from about 650 fish, we received about 200, maybe, or 175.

Then, regarding the choice of tag type, it was all about tag retention, and so t-bar tags -- We know that, in reef fish, they have much lower retention, and we think that these internal anchor tags have really high retention in gray triggerfish, and we didn't see -- We weren't concerned for the welfare of the fish after no holding studies with this species, but with others, and also our observations of high tag returns and our observations healed-over and walled-off discs of the tag inside the fish from recaptured fish. They seem to take them really, really well. Thanks for your question.

MR. BROWN: Did you all do a surface interval -- Did you keep track of how long between releasing the fish?

MR. RUNDE: Great question regarding surface interval. No, we did not keep track of that, but we attempted to mimic what we know of as normal fishing operations. The people onboard have all been on a lot of recreational vessels in the past, and, also, we had, again, worked with Tom Burgess, a commercial fisherman, and so I think those surface intervals were pretty rapid and reflected what you might see in the fishery if someone were going to release a fish, and so the tagging procedure took just a mere few seconds to de-hook the fish and measure it and shout out the measurement and a quick incision and pop it in and overboard.

MR. BROWN: Well, a triggerfish is a pretty tough-skinned fish, and where you were tagging them -- I had questions about that too, as far as whether it was doing any internal injuries or not, because I would have tagged them in a different location if it had been me, and, if you're doing it in a hurry, I just don't see how you could really not hurt the fish by shoving it in there real fast, and I'm sure that there would have been some injuries.

MR. RUNDE: Great question and great point about the tagging location potentially harming internal organs. I would point out that this tagging procedure was identical with the scuba divers in the scuba control release condition, and so any internal injuries or tagging-related mortality, in theory, would have also been experienced by that control group and therefore would come out in the wash in this model. I don't know if I explained that --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is that good, Mark, or do you have more follow-up on that?

MR. RUNDE: I'm happy to come back to it.

MR. DILERNIA: Also getting to the tags and Doug's question and Mark's question around the tagging, did you get -- I guess my question would be did you consider what we call the pass-through spaghetti tag, where it goes through just the musculature and it's looped in and tied into a knot, whereas you don't touch any of the internal organs, and my question was going to be did you consider that, and I think the survival rate would be higher, but I can't see a diver using that type of a tag, and so maybe I just answered my own question.

MR. RUNDE: That would be tough. I agree that might be tough for the diver.

MR. DILERNIA: I would be interested to see what your survival rate would be if you had used that pass-through spaghetti tag, and I know it's what the American Littoral Society uses for the amateur fish taggers, and it seems to have a pretty high survival rate. Those fish that are tagged that way have a very high survival rate.

MR. RUNDE: Yes, I appreciate the insight on the spaghetti tags, and I want to again point out that the control group was tagged the exact same way as the surface group, and so, if there was any tagging-related mortality, it would likely have been reflected in both treatment groups, regardless of tag type.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Brendan. Great study and great information, and I had talked to Jeff at the SSC meeting about some of this and trying to figure out why, when you release a gray triggerfish at the surface, it looks to be in robust condition, and we have this massive delayed mortality, which has showed up in your -- The next question is necropsy and what is causing this mortality, and I talked to Jeff, and the morphology of the triggerfish is much different than most of the reef fish we have.

Normally, when you catch a grouper, the stomach comes out, based on the pressure, and then, if you take that fish back to depth, that all can change and go back to where it was originally. Now, with triggerfish, that can't happen, because of the mouth structure, like you put up there. The morphology of the fish is much different, and so the pressure, as it impinges on the mouth area, it can't go anywhere, and so, to me, it looks like, since that pressure can't be extended a certain degree, that that pressure on the organs is going to be even higher for a triggerfish than other reef fish species, and the other thing triggerfish do, and I'm sure you're aware of it, is, when you have them out of the water, they continue to do that snapping and biting and spitting thing continually, and so that could, as well, enter into the more mortality and more injury to the fish over time.

MR. RUNDE: Yes, and thanks for the really thoughtful and insightful comments, and I would point out that gray triggerfish are one of three non-perciform fishes managed under the snapper grouper complex, and the three are ocean triggerfish, gray triggerfish, and queen triggerfish. They're all tetraodontiform fishes, which, in addition to being distantly related to the rest of the snapper grouper complex, of course, they have very, very different morphology, and so what I'm showing you on the screen right now, a little supplemental slide here, is a radiograph of two triggerfish.

Fish A, if you note the large, dark orb in the center of the fish, that's the expanded swim bladder, and so you're looking at gases there. Fish B, that gas has actually ruptured, the swim bladder has ruptured, and so you can see the sort of coiled-up intestine, but the really important to note here that I will zoom in on is, for Fish A, the buccal cavity of the fish is actually blocked by intestines, and so the arrow is pointing to what looks like a half-moon shape, and that is the entire buccal cavity that is completely visible in Fish B, the lower half of this image, and it looks like a funnel extending from left to right, a dark funnel extending from left to right, that is completely unblocked in that lower image, and it's blocked up into the back of the throat there in the upper image, and so something that we're working on right now, and actually I had an intern on it today while I was on the plane, was doing some necropsies of gray triggerfish caught with both traps and hook-and-line at both the thirty-meter site and then the thirty-six-to-forty-meter site, and so we're finding a really high prevalence of this condition, where the intestine comes into the buccal cavity, and triggerfish are durophages.

They eat mollusks and barnacles and things and whatever they can find at depth there, and so they have a relatively lengthy intestine to be able to process all of that hard material that they are consuming, and so that may, in part, come into play as far as that intestine slipping up into the

buccal cavity, and so here's kind of a gruesome image, but this is the necropsy right there, and you can see -- I don't have a laser pointer, but you can see the blockage, and the intestine has come way up into the back of the mouth, and so this may get hung up on the pharyngeal teeth, the gill rakers, and never go back to where it is supposed to be, and so it could result in high mortality. Sorry about the ramble. Go ahead.

MR. BROWN: You rambled on so long that I forgot what I was going to say. Let me think here. So, if you released them -- If you got them in the boat and you did it pretty quickly and you went back -- A lot of the triggerfish we catch, we see them go right back down, and so they may have blown that out into their mouth or whatever, but, if they get down to a certain depth quick enough, that should retract, correct?

MR. RUNDE: Unless it gets hung up on the gill rakers, which are pretty rough, and so, if you look on the screen right there, you can see some gill rakers, or pharyngeal teeth, that might snag that internal organ and never allow it to really, truly go back, or it might perforate the intestine, which could result in sepsis, and the fish would die.

MR. BROWN: Okay, and so, with the scuba control, you have 100 percent, and how did you monitor that? How did you know that you had 100 percent survival?

MR. RUNDE: Great question, and that's just an assumption, that any causes of mortality for the scuba control, for example, tagging-related or handling-related mortality, would also have occurred in the fish that were released at the surface, and so, because that potential cause of mortality, that latent mortality, would occur in both groups, it would come out in the wash, and, even if the mortality rate were -- Let's say there was 5 percent tagging mortality, but that would be the case for the scuba control and the other conditions, and so we would still be looking at an equivalent pool of fish after that reduction from tagging.

MS. BECKWITH: I didn't see, in your slides, the time period that the study was done. Was this just one season or one month, or was it done over a couple of weeks? Can you tell us a little bit about the length of the --

MR. RUNDE: Sorry, but the question is about the --

MS. BECKWITH: The time period you did the study over. Was it just one season?

MR. RUNDE: We tagged fish starting in May of 2015 at the thirty-six-to-forty-meter site, and we tagged fish in the summer, throughout the summer, and into the fall. I guess the only months where we didn't tag fish were January, February, and March, at the thirty-six-to-forty-meter site. In the thirty-meter site, we did just a pulse release last fall, in October, November, and December, and the reason we did that was actually as a follow-up, to sort of see what was going on in the other area of the modality of the depth of releases for North Carolina and Florida, and so we sort of had the deeper end of the top of the bell curve covered with thirty-six to forty, and so we wanted to kind of cover our bases with that shallower depth, and we found a really abundant site, a really dense site, of gray triggerfish in thirty meters and put out a couple hundred tags right away.

MR. BROWN: When you were capturing them, was that with a rod-and-reel or an electric reel?

MR. RUNDE: We never used electric reels for this study. This was all hand-crank, and we also recaptured fish using traps that Tom used to use when he was a black sea bass fisherman. One more comment to add. Our tags also had a statement of reward, and so we did receive some returns from the fishery, commercial, recreational, headboat, everybody.

MR. BROWN: Did you show somewhere -- I didn't see the -- Was there a recapture or anything on the scuba control that showed how many you actually recovered?

MR. RUNDE: A question about the number of recaptures for the scuba control, and we, across depths, tagged about 300 fish at depth, and we received -- Maybe 200 fish at depth and about a 50 percent recapture rate for that treatment, and so a high number of recaptures, in the three figures, for sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

MR. HARTIG: Just to that point, Jessica, and what was the recapture -- That was for the tagged fish, that you had 50 percent recaptured?

MR. RUNDE: For the scuba control fish. Overall for this study, across depths and across conditions, across release treatments, it was about a 25 percent recapture rate. It's higher than other species, speaking to maybe the site fidelity of this species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

DR. PORCH: Sorry if I missed it, but any possibility that the fish that are brought up to the surface, being more stressed, would emigrate out of the area?

MR. RUNDE: That's a really good question. I would think that the handling stress by the scuba divers might also come into play for the scuba control fish there, but, of course, the stress associated with being pulled to the surface would be different than that handling stress at the seafloor.

Some of you know Nate Bacheler and Kyle Shertzer, who have done a telemetry study of this species at one of the exact sites where I did my study, and they found pretty low emigration rates for these fish. A lot of fish came back into the array after they did leave, the small receiver array that they had out there. That's something that I haven't considered, and it certainly merits more thought. Thanks for the question.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

MR. GRINER: Did the telemetry study that you were just talking about have mortality rates associated with it?

MR. RUNDE: Are you asking whether they observed telemetered fish dying or whether they factored into their modeling the possibility of that?

MR. GRINER: Whether they were tagged and then released those fish and those fish staying there and staying in the array.

MR. RUNDE: They saw some transmitters stop moving, but it's difficult to parse out whether that's because the fish died or whether they lost their tag. I expect that may be presented to this council at some point. It's in review right now.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

MR. BELL: Just making sure I heard that. When you were releasing the tagged fish at the surface, and it's just back in the water and then they had to make their way back down, so time of year -- If you've got a thermocline and you've got barracuda, like we do, or you have sharks, then they have to contend with that on the back down, I guess, right?

MR. RUNDE: Absolutely, as would an untagged fish.

MR. HARTIG: I was wondering -- The reproductive strategy of triggerfish, they're nest builders, correct? Would that occur during the time that you were actually tagging your fish?

MR. RUNDE: The reproduction of those fish?

MR. HARTIG: Yes. I mean, did you see evidence of nesting activity when you were on the bottom?

MR. RUNDE: I am not a scuba diver. My scuba divers were focused on one thing, removing fish from the traps, but they, anecdotally, were bothered by some larger triggerfish that may have been male, and so you may be referring to that triggerfish form harems, and the males are typically larger, and they become very aggressive, and no one wants to be bit by a triggerfish, and, fortunately, my divers were wearing wetsuits, and so they didn't get hurt. I have been bit on the hand, and it's not fun.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? All right. Thank you so much for that presentation.

MR. RUNDE: Thank you. I will be here through tomorrow if anyone wants to follow-up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, Myra. Are you going to get into the public comments next on Amendment 26?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, I am. There is an attachment in your briefing book containing a summary of the comments, and let me pull that up. We held public hearings for the two visioning amendments in May, and we received a few written comments, and a lot of folks did use the online comment tool, and so this summary represents what we received up until the day that the comments were closed, which was the 11th of May, and I checked the comment form right before I came down here, and there were no additional comments, and so I think this is pretty much everything that you're going to see.

We held listening stations, and we conducted the hearings via webinar with the listening stations at various locations in North Carolina, South Carolina, and in Florida, and so what I've done here is basically just left the wording that the commenters provided, so that you could just sort of see. There is a lot of detail in some of this, and so I'm not going to go through each one, but, in general,

there was a fair level of confusion. There was frustration with how complicated some of the actions being proposed are, and some commenters in North Carolina were not happy with the action that would potentially require one fish of any one species within the grouper aggregate, and you can see that is being displayed on the screen.

Folks didn't comment too much specifically on preferreds. There was, I believe, one commenter that actually supported the restructuring of the aggregates, and so the webinars were -- They were, unfortunately, not very -- We didn't have a lot of turnout, and I know, at some of the listening stations, actually nobody came, and so we tried to gather as much input as we could.

What I have done here is I just wanted to mainly just point this out, that this is here for you guys to read through at your own pace, and, as we go through the amendment, I have included bits and pieces of recommendations or comments provided not just by the public, but also from your advisory panels, and so we'll go into more detail, and, if any specific comment is applicable to an action, then I will bring that up. If you don't have any questions on this, I will move on to a very short overview presentation to sort of get you oriented.

MR. HARTIG: How many online comments did we receive?

MS. BROUWER: There were a lot more for the commercial amendment. For the recreational amendment, I don't know exactly. I could tally it up, but I want to say there were probably about seven or eight online comments.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other questions?

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and so here is just a quick overview. What you did back in March, you selected Alternative 2 under Action 1, which is the action that would deal with the species composition of the various aggregates, and so Alternative 2 would create three aggregates, and I wanted to remind the committee that the draft amendment is structured based on that preferred, and so it's sort of -- It is tiered off of that one, and so, if things change under Action 1, then that's going to affect the rest of the actions in the amendment.

We revised the remaining actions and alternatives, and you provided some guidance on things you wanted to see included, and you selected preferreds for most of the actions on the sub-actions. Recall that this amendment is structured with several sub-actions that pertain to each of those three aggregates that would be created under Action 1.

We also talked about timing, and this is the timing that you approved back in September of last year, and so we are reviewing public comment, and you would, from here on, modify the amendment as appropriate and approve all actions at this meeting, and then we would be seeking approval for formal review at the September meeting.

I have already covered what needs to be done here. Obviously, consider public comment and then either select preferreds where you haven't or change preferred alternatives, as you see fit, and there are some updates to the analyses that I will point out, but, in general, there was not a whole lot that has changed since you saw this in March, and then, as I said, we would be looking for you to approve all actions.

The actions, I have listed them on the screen here, and so I will just go through them very quickly, just to get everybody warmed up for the discussion. Action 1 would modify, as I said, the species composition of the aggregates, and then Action 2 deals with management measures for the deepwater species aggregated, and here is where you have sub-actions that would specify a season for this group of species and would remove the existing recreational minimum size limits for three deepwater snappers. Sub-Action 2.3 would specify the aggregate bag limit for the deepwater species, and 2.4 is the action that was mentioned earlier that would specify a single-hook rig. I should mention here that the way these actions are worded in this presentation don't reflect any of the edits that we are going to be talking about and suggesting that you consider.

Action 3 specifies management measures for the shallow-water grouper aggregate. There is only two sub-actions here, to look at modifying the prohibition for red grouper in the EEZ off of South Carolina and North Carolina and then, again, specify the aggregate bag limit for this group.

Action 4 addresses the shallow-water species aggregate, the other-shallow-water species aggregate, and, here, we have a sub-action that would reduce the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the EEZ off of east Florida and then a sub-action to specify the aggregate bag limit. Then we have an action that would specify the aggregate bag limit if you wanted to not select your current preferred, and I will go through the current preferred that establishes those three aggregates, but, instead, you have the overall snapper grouper species aggregate, if you will, and so that action would give you the option to specify an aggregate bag limit.

As I mentioned already, if the committee changes the preferred alternative under Action 1, we would be looking for you to provide guidance as to which of the sub-actions you would want to retain and continue to develop in a restructured amendment, because the way it is structured now would have to change. If you do retain the current preferred under Action 1, then we would be looking for you to recommend removing of Alternative 4 under that action, because it would no longer be relevant, and then Action 5 then would, correspondingly, also would need to be removed. That is the overview, and so let me pull up the decision document, which is the tool that we're going to use here to continue the discussion, and give me just a second.

MR. PHILLIPS: Myra, can you refresh our memories on exactly where the AP stood on this, so, as we look at this, we can kind of -- I know we didn't -- It seems like we didn't get a lot of public comment from the listening stations, but can you refresh our memories on what the AP said?

MS. BROUWER: Sure. What I recall, and, as I said, as we move through the actions, I have included any recommendations that have come out of your advisory panels, but, in general, the AP had recommended -- I remember they said, very emphatically, no action on making changes to the shallow-water grouper closure, including red grouper, and they expressed some concern about the level of complexity and how this would be perceived and mainly how long it would take for the public to get used to this new structure.

They supported, definitely, the change in the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish and the removal of the minimum size limit for the three deepwater snappers, and that's generally what I can remember, but so I will -- This is the decision document, and it is Attachment 8c in your briefing book, and so we've already gone over the actions, and I don't want to go through them again, but they are listed here for your reference.

We have already covered what the objectives are for this meeting and the expected timing. On PDF page 3 of your attachment is the purpose and need statement, which is there for you to sort of keep in mind of what it is, what you have approved, and certainly always you have the option of changing that, and so I will pause here and see if there is any need to revisit the purpose and need at this time.

MR. BOWEN: After months of going over this, I know our intentions were good with this, quote, unquote, visioning document, but, to me, this has turned into what was a great idea, and it's really turned into a bunch of just normal actions or amendments, per se, and I don't think there is much visioning in this document. I mean, there is some actions in here that I think we need to address and we need to look at and that we need to consider, but, for all intents and purposes, I am leaning that we need to stop work on this. I know there is probably going to be some upset people around the table, and we've worked on this almost as much as we worked on the dolphin wahoo fillets from the Bahamas, almost as much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We don't need to go there.

MR. BOWEN: Again, I will repeat that I know our intentions were good when we started this, but we have somehow went from a visioning document to just a bunch of actions in one amendment, and so I don't know what the rest of the table feels like, but I am inclined to make a motion that we stop work on this document, and, if there's actions in here that we want to continue, then maybe we can hash that out, but that's how I feel. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thanks.

MR. HARTIG: I mean, I share Zack's concerns. This has been one of the hardest amendments for me to try and keep straight and try and put this thing together, and I appreciate all the work we've done, but I think we've -- Going ahead with this, with the limited public hearing comments we've gotten and the AP comments that talk about how confusing it is and things of that nature, and, if the managers are confused by this particular part of this amendment, I think we need to change things. Having said that, on Action 1, I would move to deselect Alternative 2 as a preferred and move Action 1 as our preferred. Alternative 1, I'm sorry. Deselect Alternative 2 as our preferred.

MR. BOWEN: A point of order. There was a motion on the table.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I didn't know that was an actual motion. I thought you said you were prepared to make a motion. I mean, was it?

MR. BOWEN: Okay. My intent was to make a motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Zack, we will pause here on Ben's motion and go back and let you make the actual motion, and I apologize. I just thought that you were going to start the discussion and then you were going to make a motion later.

MR. BOWEN: If the committee wants more discussion before this motion comes out, I am all for that, and, again, I know our intentions were good with this visioning document, but I just feel like it has snowballed into just a bunch of actions that's not a true vision of how I see the recreational

fleet moving forward. **I will make the motion that we discontinue work on the Amendment 26 visioning document, but, with that being said, if there is actions in here that this committee wants to move forward with, I feel like we should discuss those.** I hope I'm making sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I've got it. The motion is on the board to discontinue work on Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26. Is there a second for that motion? We can't discuss it until somebody seconds it.

MR. HARTIG: I am going to second it for discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Now we can discuss it.

MR. HARTIG: Basically, I mean, in order to accomplish what Zack wants to do, I would have approached it in a different way by going through each of the actions and either selecting no action or not and including the ones that we want to work on in this same amendment, and that's how I would have done it, and so I'm trying to do exactly what Zack is doing, but in a different format.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Zack, what do you think about that?

MR. BOWEN: That's okay, but I think -- I feel like the words "visioning document" or "visioning blueprint document", that needs to be gone, because, again, it's not a vision. It's just actions and alternatives.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

DR. DUVAL: Well, I'm sure it won't surprise anyone that I don't support this motion. I know this has been a really -- It's been a tough lift, and I think anything worth doing is difficult, and I guess, Zack, actions and alternatives are how we accomplish things. That's how we do things, and so, in order to respond to the input that we received during the port meetings for the vision blueprint, this is the type of vehicle that we have at our disposal to do that, and so I don't -- I guess I disagree that it's just -- Yes, it is actions and alternatives, because that's how we do things. That's how we change our management measures, is through a vehicle like this, and I think this is one step in the right direction.

I mean, my preferred vision is that we rearrange these aggregates to more appropriately reflect the way the fishery operates, and I think that's what we were trying to do. Is it difficult to understand? I think I have probably worked more with Myra and Chip than anybody else sitting around this table to try to make this as accessible as possible to the public, so that they could understand what we are trying to do.

I think, unfortunately, sometimes the way that we have to write what an alternative is sometimes gets in the way of the actual what it's going to do type of thing, and so, for example, Myra's overview presentation really kind of boils each of those actions down to their most simple language to establish a deepwater species aggregate, set a bag limit for that, set a season for that, remove some size limits, and I think the way I see this moving forward is you rearrange those aggregates to reflect how people tend to pursue the fishery, and I recognize that's not going to be exactly the same throughout the region, and I would establish seasons, establish a group of species, and establish a single bag limit for that group of species that has as few exceptions as possible.

I do think that some of the preferreds that have been selected are not as simple as they could be, but I maintain that the aggregates that we have now have so many exceptions to them that they are -- They are no longer useful, but that's just me, and I think that people are always -- It's always tough to, I guess, change. Everybody is resistant to change. I am resistant to change, because it means that you have to learn something new, and I guess I would just be really disappointed, with all the input that we've had from the port meetings, with regard to trying to simplify some of these aggregates and simplify some of the regulations, if we were to completely stop work right now.

I would love to see, for the deepwater species, a May through August season and just a two or three-fish bag limit with no exceptions for that group of species. To me, that's something that anglers and the fishing public can understand, and so I think I've said enough, and I appreciate, Madam Chair, your indulgence, but I won't be supporting the motion. Thanks.

MS. BECKWITH: I mean, obviously, I echo Michelle's thoughts, and I just feel like we're doing an injustice by just not having the discussion. I think stopping work on this is not appropriate. Let's walk through it. It's our process. If we want to move something forward, or if we don't, that's fine, but we need to work through our process. This is not an acceptable motion.

MR. PHILLIPS: Every amendment that we work on is a vision, whether we call it that or not. I mean, it just is. It's part of a greater vision, and, whether it's part of a blueprint or not, I don't know that it matters. There is some stuff in here that I think most of the council members would like to see, say the triggerfish or something, and we have put a lot of work into it, but, when you can't get the public to comment on it and when the AP is confused about it, I think we just -- Good intentions just went astray, and so, if we can make this -- I think the public is used to doing what we're doing.

Is there a better way of doing it, or is it worth changing? From what I gather, the AP said no, but there is some things that we probably know that we need to do, triggerfish or something, and so my suggestion would be to follow Ben's path and let's see if we can keep things as much like they are and tweak the things we know we really need to tweak, and the public is used to what we're doing, right or wrong or indifferent, and, for most species, I think it seems to work, and so my inclination is -- I don't care what you call it, but there is some actions in there that we want to pursue, I think, but I just don't want to get wrapped around the axle, and I am sensitive to what the AP has said.

MR. BELL: I understand Zack's frustrations and all, and Michelle is absolutely right. That's how we operate. Everything we do is an amendment with actions and alternatives, and so that's just the way we operate. We had a long period of time where we interacted with the public and we took all this input and processed it, and we tried to turn it into a usable, understandable sort of product that the idea was to make things better, and certainly good intentions to make things better, but where we seem to be having issues now is it's kind of become kind of complex for people to understand.

I think the thing that should really kind of stand out is when we kind of were ready to take this out and the public really didn't either seem interested or didn't seem to understand it, and, even with the AP, I think the AP didn't necessarily fully understand maybe what the intent was, and so they couldn't really get onboard and support it, maybe, as easily, and so I would be more inclined to do

maybe the Ben route here, is to let's come back and not waste the effort we've put into something and try to learn from it and maybe reprocess it and see what we can get out of this, with the intent being to make things better somehow for folks in the fishery, but I think we may have a disconnect right now.

If you look at the limited amount of input we got at the tail-end, when we finally had something ready to show them, we seem to have kind of lost the audience, and so, somehow, we've got to kind of reengage, maybe, and so I wouldn't be prepared to support this motion.

MR. BOWEN: I agree with Ben, and I agree with Michelle, and I agree with Mel. As I said when I was talking previously, there are some actions in here that I feel like are very important and that need to be addressed that we need to do something with, but the vision part of it -- I mean, this might be why I'm not here in September, but I'm going to say it.

The recreational vision, in my opinion, is they want no accountability, and they want no reporting, and they want no licenses or permits, whereas my vision for the fishery is a limited-entry program and total accountability for the for-hire sector and the recreational people and sector separation. That's a vision that I have, and I feel like that's a vision. These actions in here are just not a vision, and I'm all for going through it and trying to simplify it, but, as it stands right now, hell, I can't support this. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks.

MR. CONKLIN: When I look at Amendment 26 and 27, and we went through a ton of public input, and I see a product of two different -- Two different products that are completely different. You have one user group who has been held extremely accountable for a long time and has suffered through whatever has been thrown at us, and, somehow or another, we're still making it, and so we've come through and we've developed a vision. We figured out what we can do within the realm of management that no one is going to cry too much about, and we have a vision, and we're moving forward, and this is the path we're going to take.

When you take another group that we don't even know who they are, first off, and they have never had to be accountable or suffer or do much of anything, and don't want to, and tell them to come up with a vision, we come up with something like this, which there is good things in there, but, like I'm saying, it's not a vision. I say we do a few of the actions out of this amendment, and I don't want to stop work on it completely, but, at the end of the day, the whole visioning process was not a failure, by any means, but it's just the product of what you get when you have people that are oppressed or not. You have good ideas or you get no ideas.

MR. DILERNIA: I heard what Zack said, and I have to tell you that there are lots of aspects of what he said that I agree with. At the same time, I know that progress can't all happen at once. There are aspects of this action that goes forward that moves the recreational community towards more accountability. It doesn't do it completely, and I believe that the recreational community, if they do embrace their accountability fully, will actually find themselves in a better position to negotiate in the future than where they are now. While this action may not do everything that some folks would want, it does accomplish some, and it's a gradual movement towards what ultimately might be the goal for others. Thank you.

MR. BROWN: I have looked through this amendment, and I was at the listening station, and I heard the few people that were there, and I've had concerned about it ever since we started working on this, and I've asked a lot of questions about it, and I can go through here and I can pick out two or three things that I think that are important that we should continue to work on, but, for the majority of the aggregates of the document -- A majority of it, I don't see that we need to continue work on that.

DR. DUVAL: I think my comment is really following up on Tony's. I appreciate the vision that Zack has outlined that he would like to see, and, like Tony said, you can't do that all in one document or in one vehicle, and so, in our amendment documents for this committee, we have included how does this meet or how does this address what we've heard that we've approved in the snapper grouper vision blueprint.

For many of the topics that we're going to be considering throughout this meeting, including a potential scoping document for a for-hire moratorium, there is language in those documents that addresses the vision blueprint and what components of the vision blueprint it is trying to speak to, and so I think we can't do everything all at once within one document, and so we're having to tackle it via different things, and so that's why I say this is just one piece of that overall picture, and I realize that everybody's vision is a little bit different.

MS. BECKWITH: Taking a step back and looking at this document, also with the document that we just discussed on recreational permits and reporting, I think all of this eventually works together, and so, if we're looking at ways to supplement the MRIP effort, then having a season for the deepwater species will help that, and it will help, potentially, if we move to permits that look at the snapper grouper aggregate as a whole or specifically the deepwater species.

It will help having aggregates that are sort of a deepwater aggregate and a shallow-water grouper aggregate, to sort of figure out that this is a piece that will help us think about how we want to see those recreational permits as well move forward, what level of detail, and so I just see this as a piece of a larger whole and a path that the council is moving forward, and it's hard to see all of the puzzle pieces come together, but there is a few good puzzle pieces in there.

MS. BROUWER: I just wanted to, and Anna, actually, just mentioned it, but I just wanted to reiterate to the committee that the Amendment 46 and Regulatory Amendment 29 that you just approved to take out to scoping are also addressing a lot of the input that we obtained from stakeholders during the visioning process, and, even though those amendments are not called visioning, or they don't have the word "vision" in the title, they are still part of that vision for the recreational fishery.

MR. HARTIG: To Anna's point about MRIP, I mean, and maybe I didn't get it correctly how you were trying to put it, but MRIP is not going to monitor on aggregates. They are going to monitor on single species, and so everything that comes out of MRIP is going to be single species, and so I don't know how the aggregates actually help us in the single-species MRIP --

MS. BECKWITH: I was specifically -- In our permit discussions, we've looked at a permit for either deepwater species or the entire snapper grouper, and so my thought was this is a piece of that, and so, if we are interested in monitoring effort for our deepwater species, then that becomes sort of an extra checkmark on a fishing license that someone gets. We have to have a deepwater

aggregate that we're looking to monitor effort on, and so we would have to adjust what the aggregate is.

MR. BREWER: I can't support this motion. I could support the approach that Ben was suggesting, and so, if this motion does not pass, perhaps Ben would be kind enough to make a motion. I share the concerns about the understandability of the document, and I am Martindale Hubbell AV rated attorney with thirty-eight years of courtroom experience, and I have difficulty understanding parts of this thing, I really do, and I am not saying that to besmirch it, but it's just a fact. I have trouble understanding it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to say one thing, and then we're going to vote on this. I too have trouble understanding this amendment. I mentioned, when we reorganized into the species composition that we have now, that I had concerns, but I was willing to look at it, and so I still share those concerns, and I don't necessarily think that we should go forward with all the actions in this amendment.

That being said, I am fairly certain this motion is going to fail, but there does seem to be a number of people that want to do what we've been calling the Ben approach, which would be to go action-by-action through this document and decide what we want to pull out or take no action on and then what items we want to move forward, and so I'm going to go ahead and take a vote here on this particular motion, although I think I know where we're going, and then we will come back with Ben's motion that he was starting to make when Zack thought he had made a motion. **Can I see a show of hands of all those in favor of this motion.**

MR. BOWEN: I just wanted one last motion to fail before I left.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **All right, and so we have one in favor. Can I see a show of hands of how many are in opposition. One in favor and twelve opposed. Are there any abstentions? We have one abstention. I think that motion fails.**

I am going to go to Ben with the motion that you were in the process of making, and so I'm going to move over to that motion. I just want to note that Roy voted for your motion.

MR. BOWEN: Second.

MR. HARTIG: **The motion is deselect Alternative 2 as preferred under Action 1 and select Alternative 1 as preferred.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Zack, were you seriously seconding that motion?

MR. BOWEN: Yes, ma'am.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we have a motion, and it's been seconded. Now this is under discussion.

MS. BECKWITH: **I would like to make a substitute motion to select Preferred Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2b as our preferred.**

DR. DUVAL: Second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That was seconded by Michelle. Let's get the substitute motion on the board.

MS. BECKWITH: I was just going to speak to the motion. Again, my idea is to have the deepwater species and the shallow-water grouper species, but to allow the -- To exclude the black sea bass and vermilion snapper and those other species that I think the public is already accustomed to having their own bag limits, and we've gotten some feedback from that. Then, later on in the document, through the beating of the horse into the rug process, when we look at a bag limit for the other-shallow-water species, we would not have so many exceptions, because they just wouldn't be sort of included in there, but that has been feedback that I have received.

DR. DUVAL: I would not have supported Ben's motion, because I think it's not a whole lot different from the motion that we just voted on, and I think it would be difficult to make any progress on any of the other actions, given the way the document is structured, unless you select something in here with regard to the structure of the aggregates.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We've already had a lot of discussion here, and I feel like even when we were discussing Zack's motion that we were covering some things here. I am looking around the table to see if we want more discussion on the substitute motion.

DR. DUVAL: Sorry. I guess maybe I would just ask Ben. Like where would you have gone, or where would you go, if you selected no action on Action 1? I mean, where would you have gone from there?

MR. HARTIG: Basically, we fall back to how we manage now, the aggregates that we have now, for the different species, and we manage the same way as we have before, except, as we move forward with the deepwater species, I want to keep the deepwater species -- I will call it an aggregate, and I will call it a complex, however you want to word it, but the deepwater species complex with a season I would like to see included.

Then, as we go through, I've got a number of other things that I wanted to do, but I just didn't want to change the major aggregates of the species that we have. I don't want to change that and start mixing and matching different complexes, like the species we have where we allow twenty other -- The other management complex, the ones we don't have any bag limits for, and we have a twenty-fish aggregate bag limit. For those, I think we should have ten. I mean, that's one thing I think we can include in this amendment, and it cuts down on some of the numbers of harvest.

Now, how it has to be worded as we go through this, I don't know, as far as the aggregates versus complex, because we use "complex" in the terminology that we have now, but there are aggregates -- Well, for the deepwater complex, is that not how we --

DR. DUVAL: The deepwater complex -- Remember that we had this discussion when we started this. Complexes were set up by the SSC for purposes of setting up annual catch limits, and so we have aggregate -- Well, I shouldn't even use that word. We have annual catch limits for complexes of species, and so you have a shallow-water grouper complex that has an overall annual catch limit, and you have a deepwater complex that has an overall annual catch limit, and it's completely unrelated to how the grouper aggregate is set up or how the snapper aggregate is set up or how all

the other species that technically don't have a bag limit except they're under the no more than twenty of any in that grouping are set up.

The complexes are only for monitoring of annual catch limits. The aggregates are for how many fish can you keep within this grouping, and there has never been any connection between the complexes and the aggregates. The complexes, the council set those up in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment back in 2012, and there was no conversation or discussion or anything about how that might have impacted our recreational aggregates, and so that's the difference.

MR. HARTIG: I mean, that straightens out, in my mind -- It just adds to the complexity of the discussion on how we treated things, but you're absolutely right that the aggregates are the way we monitor through the bag limits and the complexes are the way we manage ACLs.

DR. DUVAL: We had this discussion at the beginning. Remember that Myra had a presentation about it, and I think we were reminded by the folks at the Regional Office that if we wanted to make complexes and aggregates mirror one another that that was going to take a full plan amendment, and that would take in some pretty significant review by the SSC, who had a lot of input in setting up those complexes from the get-go, for the purposes of ACL monitoring.

MR. BELL: The conversation they just had may have covered this, but what I was thinking was just being able to put in simple terms the benefits of let's say if you went the sub-Alternative 2b route, the new construct, and the benefits of that versus where we are now and put it in terms of how does that affect the average fisherman, and I realize that part of our issue is the average fisherman, for us, is -- Somebody in the Keys may have a completely different view of this from somebody all the way to North Carolina or something, but, if we can express why some substantial benefits to life kind of arranged this way for folks, that might help people to just kind of grasp that, yes, that's better and we like that, but I know you touched on some of that. There are differences between complexes and aggregates, but, if there are any other things that we can point out, where we feel management would be easier or fishing would be easier or life would be easier for fishermen under this arrangement, that might help.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I will come back to Anna in just a second, but, just to let the public know, we're going to probably run an extra ten or fifteen minutes. We need to get these two motions on the table off the board before we end, and then we will go into the informal Q&A.

MS. BECKWITH: Michelle probably can always speak more clearly than I can about details like this, but the deepwater species is a great example. These fish are prosecuted way offshore, in really deep water, and we were trying to set a season, so we could concentrate recreational effort on these deepwater species, and so to reduce discards. This would allow us to give one aggregate bag limit for those deepwater species, but, in order to accomplish that, because, right now, some of those species were -- They were sort of intermixed amongst our current aggregates.

We were trying, specifically with the deepwater species, to take all the species that hang out together, generally, in deep water and put them into their own aggregate with their own bag limit and give them a season, a recreational season, so we could concentrate effort and reduce discards, and so that would be one benefit in change on how we currently do business that would be better, I think, for recreational fishermen, but also for the resource, and so that would be one example,

and we're removing the minimum size limit on those deepwater species, and so that would be the whole picture for the deepwater aggregate.

For the shallow-water groupers, we're just trying to reorganize them and try and figure out if we could get an aggregate bag limit that would simplify. As Michelle said, we had a slightly different vision than what is currently preferred. I would have liked to have seen two fish of any species, and Florida originally had some concerns about black versus gag, and I was going to bring up a new option when we got to that discussion, but we have to get to those discussions.

For the other-shallow-water species, it would have given us an opportunity to get to where Ben was suggesting, that, instead of having them all fall in under a twenty-species maximum, it would give us a chance to say, okay, no more than ten of each species, but you can have a total top-out of twenty fish within this group, and so it would help maybe with some of the concerns that we heard about with Atlantic spadefish and some of the other. I think there are some benefits in the long run, but it's just, as we've all pointed out, it's a bit convoluted and complex and jumpy.

MR. HARTIG: The problem I have with 2b, as I'm looking at it as the substitute motion, is that the only way we get there is by including the snapper complex in with the other species, and that's probably one of my biggest problems. I believe, for species that you have an assessment for, you should have an individual bag limit. I think that's much easier for the public to understand. The species that are highlighted as the most important in our fisheries are species that have had assessments, and, to me, a single bag limit for those species makes more sense, since we have so many exceptions anyway.

MR. BOWEN: To me too, Ben. In this previous action, or whatever amendment we were on a while ago, we were talking about mandating descending devices or making sure that they're on the vessels and this and that and the other. Now, in this action, or amendment, we're talking about cutting out the minimum size limit for the deepwater species, when everybody is praising the descending devices, and, if we do this, if we cut out the minimum size limit, I feel like all we're doing is offering an invitation for high-grading. I think we covered the reason why, or I think we covered a partial solution for having a minimum size limit with the deepwater species in the last amendment that we covered with mandating descending devices, and so I'm still going to go with Ben's opinion.

DR. DUVAL: I apologize for this, but I am just trying to understand what Ben's comment was about how he would want to see things. Ben, when you were referring to Sub-Alternative 2b, you're talking under Action 1, specifically this substitute motion to select Preferred Alternative 2, and select Sub-Alternative 2b, as the preferred, to maintain those single species bag limits for those five individual species, and I guess what I was confused about was when you were talking about how this action would change the snappers aggregate, because we would be pulling in some of those deepwater snappers into a deepwater aggregate with snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, and are you saying you don't want those deepwater snappers in there? Is that what you're saying?

MR. HARTIG: No, I think the deepwater aggregate, as it is stated, is probably functional that we determined, and I think a season, with that aggregate as stated, is appropriate, but I just don't know that if you're in Florida and you catch ten yellowtail and five gray snappers that you can only have five of any other species. I mean, that's one of the problems we're running into as far as how

many fish can you have. For me, I think you separate the snappers out, and you have your snapper individual limits, and then you have a ten-fish whatever else of the other species that we don't have bag limits for, and that fits better.

DR. DUVAL: So you wanted individual limits, bag limits, for the snapper species, for the remaining snapper species, that would not be included in the deepwater aggregate?

MR. HARTIG: Well, you mean what would they be? I don't understand the question.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can I make a suggestion that maybe you guys -- Let's maybe vote on this motion, if you think we can vote on it, if people have enough information, and I feel like we have these two motions on the table, and I would like to get them off, so we can start the informal Q&A, and I think that this discussion is really good, but I am just wondering if maybe it could happen offline tonight and other people can think about, as we come back to this in the morning, is this the way to do it or is there another way to do it, and people can think more about what are the pieces and parts of this that they're really wanting to keep and move forward, because I see a lot of heads nodding and shaking and confusion, and I think people are a little tired at this point, and so I'm going to go ahead and -- Chester.

MR. BREWER: Can I suggest that we sleep on even the vote tonight and come back at it in the morning and maybe vote then? I mean, this is pretty significant.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What I just heard was you want to table the motion until the morning.

MR. BREWER: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: We need to vote on a motion to table. **The motion to table is non-debatable, but we need to vote on that, and so let me see the show of hands of those in favor of tabling this until the morning. All right. Are there any opposed? The motion passes, and this is tabled until the morning.** Thanks, everybody, for this discussion.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 12, 2018.)

June 13, 2018

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Bahia Mar Doubletree by Hilton, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Wednesday morning, June 13, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, folks. We are still in Amendment 26, I believe is its number, the recreational visioning amendment, and we had two motions on the board when we left yesterday that were tabled, and we're going to start by picking up with those particular motions, but I think

I'm going to start this conversation -- It sounds like there were good discussions had last night and this morning, and so I think I'm going to start this conversation maybe with you, Michelle, and then maybe look to Ben, but, before we take the actual vote, I'm going to start the discussion with you.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I appreciate the concerns that were voiced yesterday, and I think particularly in regard to the lack of public comment that we had on this particular document, Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26, and I think probably North Carolina had the most participation and public comment during the listening stations and, also, during the fireside chat that we had last night, something that one of our advisory panel members brought up really resonated with me, which is that there's sort of -- Within a vision, there is strategic items and there are sort of operational items.

I think these two vision blueprints are really sort of operational items. One of the things that we heard from the public was trying to align seasons and limits, such that we tried to reduce discards and simplify regulations, and so those are operational types of things, and then you have bigger-picture strategic things, such as permit moratoriums and some of the items that Zack brought up, and so I think making it clear that this is one of those operational components of a vision, and that is the goal of this amendment, is to address some of those things.

That said, I am also sensitive to the fact that there's a lot in here, in this amendment, and it seems like we might be able to just tackle a small piece of this. Based on the conversations that Ben and I had, it sounds like we might be able to focus really more on some modifications to the deepwater species and setting up a deepwater species aggregate, and maybe it looks a little bit different than what we have seen in the alternatives here.

I think the concern seems to be, if you pull the deepwater snappers from the current snapper aggregate into a deepwater species aggregate, you're going to end up having probably greater impacts than what we would have realized in south Florida. Queen, blackfin, and silk snapper are important components of the charter industry. At the northern end of the range, we get some blackfin, and it's really mostly silk snapper. We really don't get much in the way of queen snapper, and so I think there are differential impacts that there was some concern about how moving forward, I think, with the substitute motion might impact.

I think, in talking to Myra about this, overall, we would tackle some changes to setting up a deepwater aggregate that really would consist of snowy, misty, yellowedge, blueline, golden, and wreckfish, and focus on a season and an aggregate bag limit for that, and maybe hold off on some of those other items, and then, in order to -- Because we have some paired actions with this amendment and Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27, in terms of the deepwater species size limits and the gray triggerfish size limit, Myra has suggested that we could probably pull those out of 26 and put them all into 27, since they impact both sectors, and we might need to retitle 27 a little bit, but that would ensure that both sectors are -- That the size limit changes occur for both sectors at the same time. That might be one way to, I think, maybe take some of the work that's been done and continue to try to move forward in small fashion, but I would let Ben speak to that as well, Madam Chair.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that, and I get to talk to Greg Mercurio this morning, and he's captain of that Yankee Cpts fleet vessel down there in Key West. Although he does not fish that much

of the deep water in the South Atlantic, and most of this occurs in Pulley Ridge and the Gulf, but, when I explained to him about the snappers and moving them into that deepwater complex, he said the guys down here are not going to be happy with that, and so he knew that the guys who target those fish in Key West on the Atlantic side would be impacted.

I mean, my concern has been through this thing is I've had a nagging concern at the back of my mind, but I went forward with this, and, as we went through these complicated issues, trying to simplify things, I was willing to wait through the public process to hear what the public had to say, and, yes, we have had limited comments during the scoping and the public hearing, but, if you go online and look at the comment form, there aren't any comments that are in line with Amendment 26.

I still have some real concerns. I have the concern that, if this thing was to go forward, that the fishermen wouldn't know what happened until they were impacted by it, and so I think, in talking with Michelle, we've got a way forward, and I think, as we go through the amendment, that we can do that.

DR. DUVAL: I think just one more point. Clearly, the timeline would be altered for this amendment, and so I think one of the things that I was thinking about, in talking with Myra yesterday, in terms of trying to -- As this document is reconstructed a bit and refocused, getting some public input. There are going to be August scoping meetings that are going forward, and so I think we could bring whatever reconstructed action that pertains to the deepwater species out for additional public input during those meetings. I mean, that would -- I would want that to happen. Thank you.

MR. GRINER: As I looked back through this, I was very sensitive to the AP's comments, as well as the public comments, the limited ones we have, and I did have a question for Myra. There was a -- You posted a public comment that said, "Wilmington private recreational", and there was a public comment there, but, as I went through the online comments, I did not see that, and where did that comment come from?

MS. BROUWER: The summary that you have in your briefing book contains what was in the public comment form and what was verbally transmitted through the listening stations, and so it may have been -- If I remember correctly, that person submitted a comment at both, and so during the online, and I just consolidated, but, basically, it was about the three-grouper aggregate, where only one could be of any one species, and that person was expressing concerns for the North Carolina folks.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. That was a very thoughtful comment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let me try to recap what I think that Michelle is suggesting here before we take some votes, and I will look around the room to see if there are other comments. I think that what Michelle is suggesting is that we pull out the couple of triggerfish actions and move them into the commercial amendment, and we're going to talk about that next, Amendment 27, and then, basically, this amendment would just focus only on the deepwater species, and so it's almost like this is getting a new title and the commercial visioning is getting a new title, assuming that the commercial visioning is going to move faster than the deepwater item, and then Michelle

is also suggesting, as is Ben, that then scoping would occur at the upcoming scoping meetings for everything else. Does that -- Have I captured everything?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, and I think maybe not -- I wouldn't necessarily call it scoping for this, but really additional public comment opportunity for the modifications that will have occurred to the amendment, since we've already scoped these issues, but that's just semantics.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that sounds good, and I think we need to give it a new title, too.

MS. BECKWITH: Well, if we're only going to look at the deepwater aggregate, are we not going to consider the other-shallow-water -- Like the twenty fish or ten fish of any one species, because there were some still concerns that we can take care of with Atlantic spadefish and gray triggerfish and having that maximum of ten within a twenty aggregate, I mean the twenty bag limit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What I believe we're saying is the triggerfish would come over to visioning, and I think I would look to Mel to determine if he would want the spadefish to come over to the commercial visioning as well, and so those would be pulled out of this.

MR. BELL: The idea with spadefish was just to somehow get it in the ten-fish limit, and so however the --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I would move it over to 27 with the two triggerfish actions. With that being said, we probably need to vote down both of these motions. We have a substitute motion on the board, which was to select Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2b as preferred. That was the substitute, and the original motion was to deselect Alternative 2 as preferred under Action 1 and select Alternative 1 as preferred, and so the Alternative 1 was no action.

Since we're going to kind of restructure this whole thing and kind of blow this document up, it's almost like we need to vote down both of these and start again, is what I am thinking. Since the motions belong to the council here, we can't just wipe them away. We've got to vote them down. **If there is no more discussion on this, then I'm going to call for a vote on the substitute motion that was to select Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2b as preferred. Are there any folks in favor of that motion? With that, I assume all others are opposed to that motion, and that motion fails.**

Now we'll come to the main motion, and let's let Myra catch up. All right. **We're back on the main motion, which was to deselect Alternative 2 as preferred under Action 1 and select Alternative 1, which was the no action, as preferred. Are there folks that are in favor of this that want to vote for that? Let me see a show of hands. Okay. Folks that are against that, let me see a show of hands on that. That definitely passes, and so both motions fail, including that main motion.**

Now I'm going to look to either Michelle or Ben to give us another motion here for restructuring this document.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. Before offering a motion, maybe just a little bit of clarification on the actions that would be moved into Regulatory Amendment 27. I think when Myra and I were talking that we were specifically talking about the two sub-actions that deal with

the gray triggerfish minimum size limit and the deepwater species minimum size limit, and so, in order to make sure that all of the fishing public would experience the removal of the snapper minimum size limits and the change in the triggerfish minimum size limit at the same time, just moving those actions over there. I think Anna was talking about something slightly different, which was imposing an additional bag limit on either gray triggerfish and/or spadefish, which is a little bit different, and so I just want to make sure we kept those two things separate and clear.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think all of them should come to 27, but that's just --

DR. DUVAL: I think you would want to -- I mean, my suggestion would be to, if you still want to tackle some of the recreational bag limits for some of the other shallow-water species, that you simply maintain those actions in this amendment. You will see it again in September, as it's been reconstructed, and you can get additional public comment on how do people feel about ten spadefish and ten triggerfish. We got a little bit of comment on that, but you could still get input in August, and maybe Myra can provide some clarification on that.

MS. BROUWER: The concern that I would have with that, Jessica, is that we already have the suite of actions that have been approved for Amendment 27. This would be introducing a whole new action that has not been part of that amendment, and so I suspect there would need to be additional comment for that, and then don't forget that you also would have to rearrange your purpose and need, and it would change quite a bit, which, while I have the mic, that's one thing that I also would encourage you to do as part of the discussion that we're having this morning, is make sure we get enough rationale on the record for us to construct a new purpose and need for Regulatory Amendment 26.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so I'm going to be honest that I'm confused, because I thought that both the triggerfish actions, the triggerfish size limit and the triggerfish ten-fish bag limit, were coming to 27, and so I'm confused.

DR. DUVAL: No, I think Ben's concern was that he wanted to move -- He wanted to make sure that the size limit changes still occurred on track and in conjunction with the timeline that was originally proposed, and so we were only talking about size limits. We were not talking about bag limits. That's probably up to the committee, if people care if there is a slightly different timeline for changes in a recreational size limit versus a commercial size limit, even though those changes are identical. It can stay in here. It's up to the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me speak to the triggerfish thing. The triggerfish item, what FWC did was implemented -- They went back to that twelve-inch minimum size and, at the same time, implemented the ten-fish bag, because they had some concerns, and they wanted to make sure that they were constraining the harvest. I have concerns about only pulling over one of those two triggerfish actions into 27 and leaving the other one in this amendment. I would rather those things go together. In the commission's mind, those actions were paired.

DR. DUVAL: Then I would recommend just leaving the size limit change and the bag limit change in 26, and it will just be delayed by a meeting or so, rather than pulling some actions over, because, as Myra said, then you're going to have to completely rewrite 27.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am looking around the room here, and so, if I was not sitting in this chair, I would make a motion that those two items come into 27, and so folks have been waiting a long time for that triggerfish change. FWC did this many years ago, and I could look to Erika and we could look up exactly the timeframe on this, but the triggerfish item is really important to the commission.

MR. BREWER: **I move what you just said.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: To take those two triggerfish actions and move them into 27.

MS. BROUWER: Just for clarification, there is not an action to -- It's a sub-action within a larger action to change the bag limit for triggerfish, and so you would be creating an action to do that, just for clarification.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there a second for this motion that's going on the board that is basically moving the two triggerfish items, and one is about the size limit and one is about the bag limit, into Amendment 27? Is there a second? It's seconded by Ben.

MR. GRINER: If we move these recreational items into 27, which was a commercial item, and change the purpose and need, what is this going to do to the timing of 27?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra says it's going to be delayed.

MR. BROWN: I was thinking the same thing as what Tim just said, and then I wanted to ask Myra -- If we just leave some things in 26, just reconstruct 26, and leave it alone and move that one forward with what we want in there, including the gray triggerfish, would that be a faster process?

MS. BROUWER: I think either way there is going to be some delay. It would probably be easier to only move the actions that have already been structured and analyzed in a particular manner in Amendment 26 -- To simply move those to 27, and that would be the fastest, but, if you want to proceed as you have stated right now, it's going to require a little bit more restructuring and possibly require more time.

MR. BROWN: The only reason I said that is because there is still a few things in 26 that I like, that I would like to see possibly stay in there, and I didn't know if we needed to kind of just leave that alone and just pull out the things we didn't want.

MS. BROUWER: That's fine. The analyses have been completed up to this point with the actions and alternatives as they have been structured, and so, if you're going to change them around, it depends on how substantial those changes are going to be. The analyses will have to be redone, but it obviously wouldn't take probably more than an extra council meeting, and so I would suspect that by December we could accomplish all of these things.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think you're starting to talk about what I was thinking, is that if -- I would listen to what Myra is saying in terms of what's the best way to accomplish these from a staff standpoint and get it back to you, and, if you're concerned about the two gray triggerfish actions, one being commercial and one being recreational, getting out of whack in a time sequence, you can adjust how you deal with Amendment 27, in terms of gray triggerfish, and kind of change

the timing on that a little bit so that you could be done with both amendments at the same time. I'm not sure if that was your main concern for gray triggerfish, but there's ways you can adjust the timing for both amendments.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to look to Mel, but, before I go to Mel, the triggerfish item was effective November 21 of 2015 for triggerfish in Florida state waters of the Atlantic.

MR. BELL: My thing is just kind of a process issue, because I'm having -- It would seem to me if you take 26 as it is now and you kind of look at each action and you just say leave it or move it to 27, and I think just kind of go through there, because I'm -- What we're really trying to decide is which things we might want to leave and which things do better in 27. Some things apparently are time sensitive, like maybe for you all the triggerfish is a little more time sensitive, and so then, depending on whether you move it to 27 or you leave it here, which gives you the best timing, and so I'm just kind of having trouble tracking what we're doing here, and there is five different actions in 26 right now, with all the sub-actions, and so it's kind of leave it, move it, or which is best, and work through it in a list, sort of.

MR. HARTIG: Basically, the simplest thing, since Amendment 27 contains moving the deepwater species -- Removing the bag limits for those deepwater snapper species, and then it has the twelve-inch size limit, and those are two things that are in 26, and so, as Michelle explained, taking the two -- I mean in 27. Taking the two from 26 and moving them into 27, specific to those two, is relatively easy. I am not -- I mean, I don't really want to delay 27, if we can help it, and I would rather keep it simpler, and so I will leave it there.

DR. DUVAL: I don't think that this motion is actually going to achieve what you would want, because you would end up having to delay Amendment 27 by pulling in the actions dealing with a bag limit from 26, and so, as Ben just said, if you want to tackle the size limit, that's something that is easier, and we had some input on bag limit from folks in North Carolina with regard to a bag limit for triggerfish, but I didn't see any other input from other folks as well, and so I would think that Ben's concerns about a lack of public input would still stand. I understand that the FWC is very concerned about it, but we might want to ensure that there is additional public input on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: To respond to that, there has been considerable public input on it and people talking about it during public comment at past council meetings, and the AP has been talking about how much they needed this change, and so previous AP meetings discussed how much they needed this triggerfish change, and so they didn't go into great detail at the last meeting, but other AP, and I could go back and look at it, this was one of the things that they felt like needed to be done.

MR. GRINER: We went down this road with these vision amendments as a recreational sector and a commercial sector, and now we're looking at delaying a commercial amendment over some issues we're having on the recreational sector, and I just don't feel comfortable with that at all.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so what I've heard is that, now that folks know that moving these two triggerfish items into the commercial amendment would slow down the commercial amendment, that they believe they want the triggerfish items to remain in 26, and so I'm presuming this motion is going to fail. **Let's see a show of hands of those in favor of the motion that's on the board to move those two actions to Amendment 27, two in favor; all those opposed, seven opposed; one abstention. The motion fails.**

MR. BREWER: Mel suggested that we try to pull some stuff out of 26, in particular leaving in the gray triggerfish, and maybe that's the only thing that we leave in 26 right now, and maybe the deepwater. I don't know. That's up to the committee, but it seems like, to me, that we don't want to mess up Amendment 27. There's been a lot of work put into it, and it's got some support, and so I'm wondering if we could do what Mel suggested, and I think what Ben suggested yesterday, which is go through 26 and see what we can drop out of there and what needs to stay in there, one of the examples being gray triggerfish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's do that. I don't know if we want to walk action-by-action. I'm afraid that that's going to be more concerning than us just sitting here and making a list and then figuring out which actions or pieces of actions accomplish the things that we want to stay.

MS. BECKWITH: I think it would be helpful -- Michelle had created like an Excel file sort of picturing the discussion that we had with Ben. I had sent it to Myra's email, and I don't know if she's got access to that, but I think putting that up on the screen for folks to sort of visualize what we discussed on one screen, with the aggregate bag limits and the seasons and the discussion about leaving the snappers, just a visual.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just so I understand it, in talking with Michelle this morning, it was my understanding that this did not necessarily reflect the discussion that you guys had this morning and that this is not accurate for what they want to move forward.

MS. BECKWITH: Correct, and so the three snappers in the deepwater species would be moved over to the shallow-water snappers, and so they would stay the same. I don't know, Myra, if you can just cut-and-paste those three deepwater snappers and toss them under the snappers, to make it visually easy for folks. Then just rename that aggregate to -- Instead of shallow-water snappers, it would be just snappers. This is just trying to make this visually easy for folks to understand.

If we have the deepwater species, which we're still talking about moving forward with, we would be looking at that aggregate group with a two or three-fish aggregate bag limit, which we would still need to discuss and choose, and we would be choosing the season, and that would be the entire set of actions for the deepwater. If you look, we would be doing nothing with the snappers. We would retain the snappers as is with the ten fish, and so there's nothing that we need to do with those.

With the shallow-water grouper, the only change, if we wanted to move forward with it, which we may or may not want, would be taking that sand tilefish over to that other-shallow-water grouper group, and so you can see Myra is pointing out where we would be moving sand tilefish over there.

The other aggregate bag limit decision that I was discussing earlier would be if we wanted to put that twenty-fish, no more than ten fish of any one species, limit on that other grouping, and so this visualizes everything in this amendment in one picture. This is what we would be achieving, based on the discussions that Michelle and Ben and folks had this morning, and then the others, the black sea bass, vermilion, greater amberjack, hogfish, and red porgy, they would stay as is. There would be no additional changes.

If folks are conceivably comfortable with the choices that we would have to make with this, then we could give direction to sort of come back and sort of give us something that is more simplified that achieves this, and so we would be taking out a lot of the extra actions and just really focusing on the restructuring of that deepwater aggregate and maybe moving sand tilefish into the others and dealing with those bag limit changes, and so this is a visual, and this is the best we could figure out of how to make it easy for folks to understand before we get too wrapped around the axle.

MR. PHILLIPS: I am inclined to agree with Chester and Mark. Let's just make our list of actions and not go through it one at a time. Right now, as I heard it so aptly put yesterday, we don't want to be moving the lawn chairs around on the deck of the Titanic, and the public hasn't looked at any of this, and so I'm inclined to just follow Chester and Mark's suggestion of make a list of what we think we can use and let's do it and let's go on, and, when we get some public input -- We're just not ready for this. The public is not ready for it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I would like to go back to the page that has the motions on it, and I would like us to verbally list out, in bullet form, what are the items that we want retained in here, and I said items and not actions, and so, if it is a sub-action or a piece of an action or an alternative under an action, let's get it on the board. I am looking around the room, and I want to see some hands in the air for what you want to keep.

DR. DUVAL: I think I've expressed already that I would like to keep the items related to a deepwater species aggregate and modify that deepwater species aggregate to include snowy grouper, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, and wreckfish. I would also like to keep the sub-items related to the deepwater species for a season and an aggregate bag limit. I am going to keep going on, because maybe I can fill out this list, and other people can say whether they agree with it or not, and would that be acceptable?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I'm going to get Myra to see if she can put these in bullets. Perfect. Thank you. All right. Keep going.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. The other thing that I would like to keep in there is the removal of the deepwater species minimum size limits, and the other thing I would like to keep in there is -- Hang on. I'm just scrolling through the decision document to get to the right place. I would also like to keep the actions for recreational bag limits for the other shallow-water species. I think, specifically, we had sub-alternatives for the no more than ten gray triggerfish or no more than ten Atlantic spadefish and no more than ten of any one species, and I think those are fine items to keep in there. Then I would also want to keep the gray triggerfish minimum size limit change in there as well.

MR. BROWN: What about the red grouper?

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. BROWN: I was just looking at that Action 3, and I was thinking that might be something we want to keep in there, too.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mark, do you want to add it to the list?

MR. BROWN: Yes, and I'm trying to figure out which one though. I am kind of looking at the Sub-Alternative 2c with Action 3, because a lot of the people we talked to said that they were seeing them in spawning condition in June.

MS. BROUWER: Mark, are you talking about modifying the seasonal closure for red grouper off of the Carolinas?

MR. BROWN: Yes, but is there an action in here for closing it north of -- There isn't one though, is there, closing red grouper harvest north of Georgia? According to what's in this document, then Action 3, Sub-Alternative 2c is the only one that I see that's close to what I am thinking would be the best for this alternative, I mean for this action.

DR. DUVAL: I think, Mark, you're just -- In keeping with Madam Chair's suggestion to just make a list, this is -- You want to maintain Sub-Action 3.1, which is just the red grouper seasonal prohibition, and I don't think we're -- We already have a preferred sub-alternative, and the action only pertains to red grouper off of the Carolinas, and we had extensive discussion about inclusion versus exclusion of Georgia, and we eventually removed Georgia.

MR. BROWN: Yes, that's correct.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am waiting to get back down to that part of the list, to see what that says about red grouper. Michelle, are you suggesting that we just say to retain Action 3.1 or does this modification of seasonal closure for red grouper off the Carolinas -- Does that do the same thing?

DR. DUVAL: It's exactly the same thing, Madam Chair, just retaining Sub-Action 3.1.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Got it. I am looking around the room to make sure -- Mel, we have spadefish in there, and I'm looking to see if other people have things, and, while you all are looking, I am going to Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Not to complicate your lives, but, for red grouper, you have red grouper scattered across four different amendments right now. You have the abbreviated framework that is undergoing rulemaking, and you've got Amendment 26 and Amendment 27, and then you've got a rebuilding plan amendment for red grouper as well, and so I can see why you want to keep it in here, but, if you wanted to deal with red grouper in your rebuilding plan amendment, you certainly could do that, if that's more straightforward for you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I like that idea. Let's see what Michelle thinks.

DR. DUVAL: I was definitely looking toward the red grouper rebuilding amendment, I think in particular for a commercial trip limit, because I think that's the one thing that is sort of outstanding. We've gotten recommendations on that from the public as well as the AP, and so, when we got to that agenda item, I was going to ask about doing that. I mean, I would be fine with pulling the red grouper actions from both vision blueprint amendments and putting those into the red grouper rebuilding plan, if the rest of the committee is satisfied with that. I would be happy to make a motion to do so whenever it becomes appropriate to do so.

MR. HARTIG: Myra, if we do that -- I mean, we had one action, correct, for red grouper in the rebuilding plan and it's just you implement the new catch level recommendations in the schedule, and so that could be done under an expedited framework, correct, and that could have been done that way or no? Okay. All right. We're fine then.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We will come back to red grouper in a second, and I'm looking around to see if anybody else has found their favorite nugget from Amendment 26 that is not already on the board.

DR. DUVAL: Then I think I would suggest removing this last bullet for the modification of the seasonal closure as part of the wish list for what you would want to keep in 26, because it would be my intention to make a motion to address that in the rebuilding plan amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Mark, think about if you're okay with that. I'm going to Monica first.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I had to step out briefly, and so I'm sorry if you talked about this, but, when Michelle made her suggestion on what should be kept in the deepwater grouper group, there were some species that are left out, right, that are currently in your amendment? Right now, you've got deepwater species, for example, under Action 2, and the deepwater species included are queen snapper, blackfin snapper, silk, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, and golden tilefish, and I think Michelle named only some of those, correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's right. Yes, and so we already had a discussion about the snappers are not coming into that on purpose, and so we looked at the table, and so I think that you're just reiterating -- You are questioning what we already had a discussion on. All right. I am looking around, and so we have our wish list that's on the board, but, also, we've had some discussion about red grouper. I would like to know if people are okay with moving all the red grouper items, commercial and recreational, into one amendment. Mark, what do you think about that?

MR. BROWN: I am good with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Anybody else? I see some thumbs-up, and I see head-nods that people are okay.

MS. BECKWITH: I am fine with that too, but I noticed that we -- Are we not interested in discussing the bag limit for the shallow-water groupers? I didn't think that made the list, and, if you guys don't want to tackle that one, that's fine, but it's not in there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Nope. I'm looking around the room, and I am seeing heads shaking in the no form, and so that seems to be a no. Okay. Would you like me to repeat the list, so that you can make sure that all the items that you want are in there? Let's get back to the top, if you can, Myra, of our bulleted list here, and so we have deepwater species, and this is what we're retaining. It's the deepwater species aggregate and modify species composition to include snowy, misty, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, wreckfish, and yellowedge. Remove the deepwater species minimum size limits, season, and aggregate bag limit for deepwater species. Recreational bag limits for other shallow-water species, specifically retaining the sub-alternative for the gray triggerfish, the Atlantic spadefish, and no more than ten of any one species, and then the gray triggerfish minimum size limit change. Is there anything else that we are missing from this list that we want to keep?

MS. BECKWITH: The only other thing I see is that we had previously discussed moving sand tilefish out of the shallow-water groupers into the other aggregate, and so if there is still any interest in doing that.

DR. DUVAL: I think my understanding is that the committee was -- If we continue to keep in the items that are related to the aggregate shallow-water grouper bag limit and moving sand tilefish, we might as well just keep the amendment the way it is. The only thing we've done is sort of restructure some of the species groupings, and my sense was that there was a lot of concern from the committee about biting off too much and that there hadn't been enough public input on some of those other changes, particularly the shallow-water grouper, and so, while I think I personally would support trying to do this, I am very sensitive to that, and so I think let's tackle the small pieces that we know we want to move forward with, and so that's why I wouldn't support it, and I just wanted to clarify that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree with that.

MR. BELL: I think what we're trying to work towards is a reasonably smaller, digestible, understandable kind of first bite at this, and so that's probably a good list.

MS. BROUWER: Just some clarification. Right now, the way you have listed everything that you want to keep, it pretty much keeps everything but a couple of sub-actions that are in the amendment right now, and I just want to clarify that, if you want to create a deepwater species aggregate, that means you have to deal with the other two aggregates.

If you don't want to mess with the other two aggregates and leave them the way they are, perhaps you would consider specifying a recreational season and a bag limit for that handful of species without calling it an aggregate, because then you don't have to restructure the aggregates that are left, and so just to clarify, because, if we keep things the way they are right now, essentially you are retaining what you already have, minus a couple of the sub-actions.

MS. BECKWITH: I think the first part, where we list all the different aggregate options, is what confuses the public, and so I think, if we are going to mess with the -- Create a deepwater aggregate, which I think in the long run is still easier for people to understand, and it would be the no action and then just one additional action that just lists the deepwater species aggregate and just keep it visually simple, and I don't know how you would do it. I understand what you're saying, but the list and the tables and all the words confused, I think, the public, and so taking out all the current Alternative 2, 3, and 4, as they're stated now, and just put the no action and the deepwater aggregate, and that, by definition, kind of shakes out the other ones that they're interacting with, but sort of, apparently, less is more.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think I agree with Anna. It's almost like that new action is just straight-up create a deepwater aggregate, and so you have no action and then creating the deepwater aggregate and that's it.

MS. BROUWER: Right. My concern is that, by creating the deepwater aggregate, you are removing certain species that are in a different aggregate, and you are revising the aggregate that those species are leaving.

DR. DUVAL: I think it's in the language, and so I think Myra's concern is that we want to make sure we're being very clear to the public that, by creating a deepwater aggregate, we are, by default, modifying the composition of the other aggregates, even if we do as Anna has suggested and simply have the no action alternative plus only one alternative to create the deepwater aggregate. You would want to list in there how -- What the impacts are to the other aggregates, which is really just the current grouper aggregate. You are just pulling some species from there to create a new deepwater aggregate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's basically that it would come underneath that, create the deepwater action, and then it would list out that, by default, this is what happens. I think we're all kind of saying the same thing. I am looking around to make sure there aren't other items, and, Myra, do you feel like this list is clear and that you could work from this for this amendment? Okay. I don't think we need a motion. It's just direction to staff for how to restructure this amendment, and is that okay, Myra? All right. Then I'm going to look to Michelle to make the motion for red grouper.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move that we pull Sub-Action 3.1, which is the red grouper seasonal closure, into the red grouper rebuilding plan amendment. I think it would be to move Sub-Action 3.1 of Regulatory Amendment 26 and then whatever the corresponding action is in Regulatory Amendment 27 into the red grouper rebuilding plan amendment.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra is getting that on the board, and it's been seconded by Mark. We've had a lot of discussion on this already, and I don't necessarily think we need more, unless somebody feels like they need to say something else here. **Is there any objection to creating this one amendment of all the red grouper items? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

I think we're okay to move on to the Amendment 27.

MS. BROUWER: One more thing, just to make sure that your purpose and need is still the same for this amendment and you don't want to make any revisions, and then we need to talk timing, because the changes you have requested here are most likely not going to allow this amendment to be approved for formal review at the September meeting.

DR. DUVAL: I am looking at the purpose and need in Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 right now, and I am thinking that the purpose -- I don't see that there's a lot of changes that need to be made to the purpose and need. It's address recreational stakeholder input to increase access and predictability for -- Perhaps the recreational deep -- We might be more specific about this is about addressing the deepwater component of the recreational fishery.

I think the actions that we have retained with regard to bag limits for spadefish and triggerfish and minimum size limits are still to minimize regulatory discards and improve regulatory compliance and consistency, and I don't know, Madam Chair, but I'm not seeing a lot that would necessarily need to be changed, but I don't know if we just want to make a specific reference to the deepwater component of the recreational fishery, and that might be the only thing.

MR. BROWN: At the end of it, say "and improve the deepwater regulatory compliance and consistency" or something like that.

MS. BECKWITH: I think just, under the purpose, we might want to strike the increase access and just focus on the predictability component, because, since we are putting in a set season, I'm not sure that that's going to be viewed as increasing access, but it does increase predictability, and so I would strike those two words.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more?

DR. DUVAL: I think, while Myra is doing this, I don't -- I think the need statement is still fine. I'm fine with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think so, too.

DR. DUVAL: In terms of timing, I think we've had a lot of discussion that we would most likely be taking final action on this in December instead of September and that the intent would be to also include this during the August round of public input, scoping, and public hearings that we'll be going through, to try to get a little more interest in some of these changes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds good. Any more discussion here? Are you good, Myra? All right, Myra. Finally on to commercial.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and so, as I did yesterday for Regulatory Amendment 26, I have a very short orientation presentation for this amendment. In March, you revised actions and alternatives, and you provided further guidance for how to develop the amendment. You selected preferred alternatives for most of the actions, and you approved the amendment for public hearings, which we've already talked about, and those were held back in May.

Here is the timing that you approved back in September of last year, similar to what we just talked about for the recreational amendment, and so what you need to do is consider the public comment and select or change preferred alternatives, as appropriate, and we've already talked about the revisions to the analyses, or rather the guidance that we received from the SSC regarding those first few actions of the amendment and the methodology that was used for those analyses, and you will need to approve all of the actions ahead of the September meeting.

The actions, right now, are Number 1 is to establish a commercial split season and modify the trip limit for blueline tilefish. Action 2 establishes a commercial split season for snowy grouper, and Action 3 establishes a commercial split season and modifies the trip limit for greater amberjack, and Number 4 establishes a split season and modifies the trip limit for red porgy. Number 5 modifies the trip limit for vermilion, and Number 6 establishes a minimum size limit for almaco for the commercial sector. Number 7 is commercial trip limit for the other jacks complex, and Action 8 modifies the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest and possession and red grouper off of the Carolinas, and Action 9 removes the minimum size limit for the three deepwater snapper species, and Action 10 reduces the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the EEZ off of east Florida.

We've already talked about the analyses. Just a reminder that the changes, based on those recommendations, were not applied to the draft amendment that is in your briefing book, simply because we didn't have time. The webinar was held on May 7, and the decision document that I

am getting ready to walk you through does have those recommendations in it, and Appendix J, which is part of the draft amendment in your briefing book, contains the details of those two analytical methods, if you are interested, for Actions 1 through 5. Moving on to Attachment 9b, this is the decision document.

MR. HARTIG: Madam Chair, there is one comment from that Key West commercial/for-hire, in the comments section, and he talks about the spawning of black grouper is much later in the year. When the season opens in May, they are still catching fish full of roe, and, at some point, I would like to see some kind of -- Some research done on that, so we can hopefully tighten up that season.

I can see switching months and giving them January and closing another month in the summertime, like we did for red grouper, because I think they're similar, both species, in that they're extended spawning, later in the season, and I've heard this more than from just this one person. I have heard this from several people.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me see if I can repeat it back. You're talking about researching the black grouper spawning season, and so it would be what the closed months are specific to black grouper, and don't you think we would also likely need to modify something for gag, since we have confusion among those species, and is your suggestion that we give back January and then -- Can I hear a little bit more about that?

MR. HARTIG: The suggestion would be, if you want to extend the season another month during the springtime or early summer, that you would give them back another month in the beginning of the season for black grouper, specifically.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great comments.

DR. DUVAL: We did have actions in this amendment previously that addressed that, and they were removed, and so the council can do whatever it wants down the road, but I just worry, because we bring these forward, and we have them analyzed, and then we remove them, and we flip-flop, and -- Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else about the public hearing comments?

MS. BROUWER: If you don't mind, and thank you for reminding me, Ben. I meant to point out that we do have a summary of public comments for this amendment as well, and that is up on the screen, and it's part of your briefing book. In general, I think there was a lot of support, in particular for the commercial split seasons that you are proposing. As Ben already mentioned, there has been some concern about the shallow-water grouper closure in the southern part of the range, and there is the perception that it's not working, and we've gotten some input from fishermen saying that groupers are still in spawning condition when the season opens in May.

I summarized the comments, as I did for the recreational amendment, those that were part of the online comment form and those that were submitted as part of the listening stations and webinars, and I have stated where the commenter is from, so that you can get a little bit -- You can gauge a little bit better where your stakeholders are coming from and what their issues are in their respective areas. Any questions? I didn't plan to go over every single one of the comments, but they're all summarized in there for your information.

MS. MCCAULEY: Any more questions on those public hearing comments? All right. Let's move on. Thanks, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. Now, moving on to Attachment 9b and the decision document for this amendment, we have already talked about the list of actions and the objectives that we want to accomplish at this meeting, the timing, and your purpose and need statement is up on the screen. It's on PDF page 3 of your attachment, and the purpose is to address commercial stakeholder input to enable equitable access for fishermen participating in the snapper grouper fishery and to minimize discards.

The need is to improve management of the commercial sector for the snapper grouper fishery to achieve OY while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse socioeconomic effects for the commercial fishermen in the South Atlantic region, and so, unless there is any desire to revise that purpose and need, we can move forward.

MS. MCCAULEY: I don't see any hands in the air, and so let's move on.

MS. BROUWER: The first action is on PDF page 4, and it's to establish a split season and modify the trip limit for blueline. Your preferred is Alternative 3, which would retain the calendar year as the fishing year and instead modify the trip limit during certain parts of the year, and so Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a is the one you selected, and that would put the trip limit at 100 pounds gutted weight from January 1 through April 30 and then bump that up to 300 pounds gutted weight from May 1 through December 31.

As we heard yesterday when George gave his recommendations from the SSC, Dr. Farmer, who conducted the analyses for these five actions in this amendment, conducted a retrospective analysis to see if the models' predictions -- How close the models' predictions on the respective season lengths would compare to when the fishery actually closed in 2017, and so, based on Dr. Farmer's analysis, the SSC moved forward with his recommendations for which of the two methods is most appropriate for each of the actions.

For blueline, it was sort of both of them yielded the same sort of result, and so we've -- You have a table here showing you what each of the two models predicts in terms of season length, and so you can see that it's very similar between the two, and so, under your preferred, you're looking at an in-season closure at the end of July.

Here is where I have summarized relevant public comments for this action, and there were other suggestions for different allocation of the trip limit poundage, and we got reiteration that blueline and snowy -- The management for those two species needs to be in line, and the IPT didn't have any recommendations at this point for this action.

Action 2 is on PDF page 7. This would establish a split season for snowy, and your current preferred is to specify two fishing seasons and allocate the commercial ACL into two quotas, 70 percent to the period January 1 through June 30 and 30 percent to July through December and structure it the same way we have it for vermilion, where any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2.

For this one, the SARIMA model was the preferred methodology. I'm sorry. It was the Last 3, and so you can see here some of the results of Dr. Farmer's analysis. The Last 3 yielded an 11 percent underestimate of observed 2017 catch rates, whereas SARIMA overestimated by 147 percent, and so, if you focus here on this table under the Last 3, your preferred for Season 1 would result in potentially no closure. For Season 2, you're looking at a season lasting through about the third week of September. There were a few public comments, and some folks suggested no action on a split season for snowy, instead increasing the trip limit, and there were others that were in support of what the council is proposing to do. The IPT had no recommendations for this action at this time.

DR. DUVAL: I think I just wanted to make just a couple of comments on these two actions. I think this really gets at what we were trying to accomplish with the vision blueprint and trying to address the regional differences, and there is no silver bullet here. There is nothing that is going to make everybody perfectly happy or meet everyone's needs, and I think the comments reflect that, and it's all about everybody giving a little bit, and I think that the way these two actions are structured sort of hits the sweet spot of what we're trying to accomplish.

You know, I had made comments at the last meeting, just noting that we've had more discards of snowy grouper because of the blueline tilefish trip limit during the early part of the year, and you know what's happening is you have this buoy fishery that has developed in southern North Carolina and northern South Carolina, and folks are going out and fishing for golden tilefish, which are in a different area than the snowy and the blueline, which are co-occurring, but, because the target is really snowy, once folks fill that 200-pound limit, they are continuing to fish just to fill the 300-pound limit that's in place for blueline, even though that's not necessarily their target species.

We found this in North Carolina, where, if you establish a trip limit, people will try to meet the trip limit, and so, consequently, there are lots of snowy grouper that are being discarded, and so I think the way these two actions are structured is going to address both those discards, and it's going to address the needs of folks who are more in the central region, in terms of their concern about the market and having snowy grouper available when other groupers are closed during January through April, and I think the other thing -- I know that there might have been some concern with regard to the analysis for Action 1 under blueline and the predicted closure date, and I guess I would just note that, with the ABC advice that we've received from the SSC, it's likely that annual catch limit is going to increase throughout the region, and so I think that is going to -- There is still uncertainty, I guess, in the projections of those seasonal closures under Action 1, and so I just wanted to thank the committee and the council for moving forward in this fashion and everyone being willing to give a little bit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more discussion? Otherwise, we're going to move on. Okay.

MS. BROUWER: Action 3 is on PDF page 8 of your attachment, and this one establishes a split season and modifies the trip limit for amberjack. Here, we have one small revision, just a clarification, wording clarification, and you see it highlighted there on your screen. Your current preferred is to specify two commercial seasons and allocate the commercial annual catch limit 50/50.

For this species, the fishing year starts on March 1, and so the first season would be March 1 through August 31, and the second season would be September 1 through the end of February. Any remaining quota would roll over, and then you would maintain the restrictions for harvest during April, which have been in place for some time, and your preferred sub-alternative for the trip limit would be to establish a 1,000-pound trip limit whole weight in both seasons.

Again, we have some more revisions here to the wording of the alternatives. For the analysis here, again, the Last 3 model was better at predicting the season length, and so you see here in Table 3a, under your current preferred, which is Sub-Alternative 2c, you are looking at a potential in-season closure at the end of June. This table here is for the last two alternatives, Alternative 3 and Alternative 4. Alternative 4, I should have mentioned, would not establish a split season. It would just modify the trip limits, and you can see there what the expected closure dates would be for those.

As far as public comment, there was some support for the council's preferred. There were some suggestions for a higher trip limit with a trip limit reduction, and, as I said, the IPT is recommending some revisions to the language, and that's it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I am looking around to the committee. Do we want to change the preferred? At the very least, we need to approve the IPT's suggested edits.

MR. BROWN: I have a question. Is it the preferred that was from March through August, and does that eliminate the April spawning closure?

MS. BROUWER: No, it retains it.

MR. HARTIG: Would you like a motion to approve the edits?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, please.

MR. HARTIG: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Michelle. **Any objection to approving the IPT's suggested edits to Action 3? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Action 4 is on PDF page 12. This one establishes a split season and modifies the trip limit for red porgy. Again, we have some suggested edits to the language. Your preferred is Alternative 2, which would specify two fishing seasons for red porgy and allocate the ACL into two quotas. 30 percent would be allocated to the period January 1 through April 30 and 70 percent to the remainder of the year, May 1 through December 31.

During January through April of each year, you would specify a different trip limit, and your current preferred is to have that be sixty fish. For the remainder of the year, from May through December, the trip limit would remain at 120 fish. Here is Alternative 3, which has a 50/50 split of the ACL, with the same trip limit alternatives for that early portion of the year, and then Alternative 4, which simply removes the sale and purchase prohibition January through April and then puts the trip limit at 120 fish year-round.

For the analysis here, the SARIMA model yielded more consistent results, or less uncertainty there, and so you can see in bold, under your Preferred Sub-Alternative 2c, you're looking at potentially no closure during that first season, and the same thing -- There is no closure under the SARIMA model for either of the two. In general, there was actually a lot of support for this action, for the preferreds for this action. As I said, the IPT just would need guidance to adopt the edits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. At the very least, we need a motion to approve the IPT's suggested edits.

DR. DUVAL: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Mel. **Any objection to approving the IPT's suggested edits? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Let's take a ten-minute break and get your coffee and come back energized.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I guess there was some confusion, but now that people are a little more energized, we are supposed to be reviewing our preferred alternatives in this document in addition to accepting the IPT edits. There apparently was some confusion by some folks, and so I'm going to back up to Action 1, which is to establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish. Right now, our preferred alternative is Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a, and so there seemed to be some confusion, and so I'm going to look around the room. Remember that we are either retaining the preferred we've already picked or choosing a different preferred.

MR. BROWN: **Madam Cahir, I would like to change the preferred to no action. I would like to make a motion for this to be no action.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: We have backed up to blueline tilefish, and there is a motion on the table to change the preferred alternative to Alternative 1, no action, and so Myra is getting that on the board. Is there a second to this motion? It's seconded by Charlie. The motion is now on the board, and it's basically changing the preferred to the no action alternative, and it's under discussion.

MR. BROWN: I had a discussion with Dewey during the break, and he said that, for them, that this would be the best option, and so that's why I went in that direction. I don't really fish for them commercially, and I would like for Dewey to speak towards this, too.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I would like to hear what Dewey has to say as well, because this is completely the opposite of everything that I have heard from public comment, and I know that the current 300-pound trip limit is resulting in a lot of snowy grouper discards, because people are trying to fill that blueline trip limit in the beginning of the year when they're fishing with buoy gear further south, and what they're doing is, because in the southern part of the range, or in the middle part of the range, the majority of the range, blueline and snowy are co-occurring.

Guys are going out and they're targeting their snowy, and they're hitting their 200-pound trip limit, but they are continuing to fish for blueline to fill the 300-pound trip limit and then they're

discarding more snowy down the road, and I know all the concern that I have heard from stakeholders in North Carolina is that the blueline quota was getting sucked up too early in the year and wanted to be able to have a smaller trip limit during the first part of the year, so that folks who are going out and fishing on snowy could still retain those blueline that they're catching incidentally, but we're saving quota for the folks who are in the northern part of the range, where there is not as many different species to capture, and so I guess I'm confused.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My rationale for saying this is, in the northern part of the area, when you start out in January, if you want to go bottom fishing, you have snowy grouper to catch and you have golden tile to catch. After the season closes in July or August, you have no snowy grouper to catch, because the season is closed, and you have zero golden tile to catch with your 500-pound hook-and-line, and, therefore, you're not going fishing with fuel at \$2.85 a gallon to go catch 300 pounds of blueline tilefish.

Also, and I probably should have done my homework a little bit better, but, in the southern part of the region, where these problems are with discarding of blueline tilefish with the grouper fishery, I have been unable to see that in the observer work or in the reports in the document of to what extent it's happening and exactly what location. For the northern area of North Carolina, you have no other fish to catch in September or October, when you want to extend the season, and so my rationale was trying to put a trip together for people in the northern areas for that in January, February, March, or April, along with your 200 pounds of snowy grouper and your golden tilefish, putting a trip together so you've got something, because you can't go fishing for 300 pounds of that.

If that doesn't work, I think it would go through January, February, and March at 100 pounds and start the 300 pounds in April, because other fisheries will have closed, whether it be somebody bluefin fishing or gillnetting. That pretty much wraps up about the end of March, and so that allows you to go fishing, and so the southern part of our state -- I would like to see further documentation after this, and I will have some discussion with Myra about the documentation from observer work or from logbooks or something that is showing these discards in these areas and these fisheries.

DR. DUVAL: Everything that I have heard from the folks in the northern area has been that they don't start fishing for these species until May, because you can't get out there, and you've got sharks that are interfering with everything, and the discarding is not the discarding of blueline tilefish in the middle part of the range, below Cape Lookout. The discarding is snowy, because there is a higher trip limit for blueline tilefish right now.

You've got a 200-pound trip limit on snowy, and you've got a 300-pound trip limit on tilefish, and so the folks are going out with the buoy gear, and they're hitting the golden tile, and they're getting their 500 pounds and they're coming in and getting their 200 pounds of snowy, and they may have a hundred pounds or so of blueline at that time, but they continue to fish for blueline to fill up that trip limit, and, in the meantime, they are discarding all these snowy grouper, and that concerns me.

The way we have this structured now would address those discards, and, Dewey, the concern that I heard from you and others in the past is that there wasn't -- When you all were able to access those fish, starting in the spring, maybe in April or maybe in May, that most of the ACL had been burned through by that time, and that has happened several times, where there has been very little

quota left by May or June, and we've had earlier closures, and so I feel like keeping blueline the way it is, with a 300-pound trip limit in the first part of the year, is simply going to allow for the discarding of snowy to continue to occur, and I am concerned about the fact that this would potentially burn through the blueline commercial ACL sooner.

I guess, out of what you suggested, I would rather see a 100-pound trip limit January through March then, if you're not satisfied with January through April, to address the discarding issue and to ensure that there is some quota left over, and, again, I guess I would remind folks that there is likely to be an increase in the ACL for blueline tilefish based on what's come out of the SSC.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, I would be in favor of the January through March and the 100 pounds, but, at the same time, we need documentation, through observer work or the logbook work analysis, of these discards happening, and so I think that would also further help us in the future, and so, I mean, this council can -- It's just a recommendation, and I don't even serve on this committee, but I do have interest for the northern part of our area and looking at putting a trip together and having a little bit of this and a little bit of that and a little bit of that, and I never thought I would have to say that nowadays, but that's part of it, and I understand the give-and-take a little bit, because I believe, in the northern area, we definitely give a lot, but that area addressing where these discard problems are needs to be brought forth with documentation and observer work and logbook work, to show to what extent the problem is. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Also, I thought, but I can't recall as well as Michelle can, but I thought that the Preferred Alternative 3a was a compromise among a lot of different groups and positions that we've heard among the AP and everything else, and so I thought that the preferred that we were at was a good compromise.

MS. BURGESS: As Jessica mentioned, a lot of compromise settled on one, but comments that Michelle made made me wonder about Action 2, and these two actions are really linked for the council. If snowy grouper discards are a concern, and I agree the snowy is a stock of concern, would it be better to select Alternative 1 under Action 2 as preferred, so that there wouldn't be a closure for snowy during the year while blueline tilefish remains open? I was just asking.

DR. DUVAL: No, and that was the point. That was the concern that we were trying to address with both of these actions, was that, in the northern part of the range, the ability to access those fish doesn't come in until the spring, and people are hitting snowy grouper so hard that that ACL was being consumed with only maybe a little bit left over starting in May or in the spring, when folks in the northern part of the range are able to actually get out and put a trip together for these deepwater species.

If we were to select no action under Action 2, just leaving snowy grouper as it is without a split season, I think you're going to find that there is -- You're going to have exactly the same problem, and we're going to get exactly the same complaints. I mean, having some type of split season for both of these species, or the way we've constructed this, is what I've hearing for years now, and so I'm concerned and a little frustrated that we've come to this point and we're reconsidering this.

Now, I understand what Dewey is saying about getting information from either observer work, which we don't have observers in the snapper grouper fishery, and there has been one ACCSP grant, as far as I know, that's been given to the Science Center to try to get some observer work

done and also information from logbooks. I mean, I agree that that would be helpful. I have received multiple phone calls from folks in the southern part of North Carolina complaining about the discards that are occurring as a result of the buoy gear and the fact that you've got these misaligned trip limits.

I think I had a question for Monica that if we were to -- Right now, there is no sub-alternative that has a 100-pound gutted weight trip limit from January through March, and we have January through April and January through June. If we were to create a new sub-alternative of a 100-pound trip limit of January through March, would that be within the range of sub-alternatives that have already been analyzed?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, but so you would want that information though, right? Myra would have to -- We could talk to Myra about that, but, if you're asking me whether you would need to go back out for more public hearings or anything like that, I don't think you would. You would bring this up when you saw it in September, and the public could comment on it then, and so I'm not sure -- I can talk with Myra at the break, but I'm not sure what else you would have to do to see if you could tease out any further information from what's already there to get you additional information for that specific alternative, but, yes, I agree with you that it's in the range.

MR. BROWN: Michelle, I was just trying to be sensitive to that fishery. I mean, I'm talking with Dewey about it, but he said he's good with this Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a, and so we could move forward with that and just vote down the no action motion. I would like to change my motion or vote the other one down, and how do we do that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: We still have people with their hands raised that are going to provide comments, and so I don't want to vote on that yet.

MR. PHILLIPS: I am looking at the difference in blueline and snowy, and, right now, whether you do no action or go to a Preferred Alternative 3, the fishing year is still January 1 through 31, and it's not a split season. You just change your catch rates in whatever date it happens to be, whereas snowy is not set up that way. It's set up totally different. It's either no action or you set up seasons, and so, to me, it would seem like, if you're trying to tie them together, you would have the same -- You would do the same thing of some sort, but I don't know that we could change snowy to mirror something like blueline, where it's still the January 1 to December 31, and you do 100 pounds or 200 pounds and then change it, which would be closer to blueline, and I'm a little confused on why we have two different methods.

DR. DUVAL: I feel like we've talked about this before, and the reason that there was support for a split season for snowy was people wanted to make sure that there was some guarantee of being able to access some fish later in the year and understanding the importance of snowy to the market during that first part of the year, when you do have shallow-water grouper in place.

The concern, in terms of establishing another split season for blueline, my understanding was administrative in nature and also the thought was that you could probably solve this with just modifying the trip limit, keeping the calendar year as the fishing year rather than two six-month seasons or one four-month season and one eight-month season, and that, from a regulatory perspective, simply establishing a trip limit and modifying that during the first part of the year was administratively easier.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I think you could do the same thing with snowy. If you felt like you needed more snowy in the first half of the year, have a higher trip limit in the first three months or four months and then lower the trip limit, so it stretches out, and that was where I was -- It does the same thing, basically.

DR. DUVAL: But I think the issue was, Charlie, that, if you increase the trip limit on snowy, you are decreasing the likelihood that there is actually going to be any of that quota available later in the year and starting in April and May and that area, even with the ACL having gone up about 20,000 pounds each year, and I apologize to Dewey for my frustration. I don't like being at odds with Dewey on these types of issues, and I guess I feel like it took us so long to get to sort of the compromise that we have, and I'm concerned about back-tracking or changing right now, and so thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's vote on this motion. **This motion is to deselect Alternative 3a and select Alternative 1, no action, as preferred.** Once again, this is on blueline tilefish. **All those in favor of this motion, raise your hand; all those opposed, raise your hand, eleven; are there abstentions? The motion fails.**

I think that defaults us back to our preferred alternative of Alternative 3, Sub-Alternative 3a, and is that okay with you, Mark?

MR. BROWN: Yes, and I would like to make that motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We don't need it. Since that motion failed, it went back to the preferred that we already had, which was 3a, and so we're good. Any more discussion on blueline? Now let's move into snowy and make sure that we're okay with the preferred that we picked for snowy, since there was some confusion when we were going through this earlier. The preferred that we have for snowy is Preferred Alternative 3. Are we okay with that? Please check out your document and make sure. I see heads nodding that people seem to be okay with this preferred, and let's go back to Action 3 and make sure we're okay with that preferred.

This is for amberjack, and this is to establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack, and the preferred alternative was Preferred Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2c. Can folks look at that and make sure that they're okay with that preferred? I see people scanning the document now, and I will give you a minute to look at that. Does anybody want to change that preferred? I am looking around just to make sure. Okay.

People seem to be okay, and let's move into Action 4. This is to establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for red porgy, and we also had a preferred, which is Preferred Alternative 2, on red porgy, and can you check that out and make sure that you're okay with that preferred? All right. We're rolling on. Just to remind people, as we work through this document, we are accepting IPT edits, if we want to accept them, and the other thing we're doing is we are creating preferreds if we don't have them or making sure that we agree with the preferreds that we've already selected, and so we're going to keep moving on to the next action.

MS. BROUWER: Action 5 is on PDF page 15, and it modifies the trip limit for vermilion. Right now, you did not pick a preferred for this action back in March. You have three alternatives, and

Alternative 2 would retain the trip limit and the trip limit reduction in Season 1, which is January through June. For the second season, it would modify the trip limit to 750 pounds gutted weight and remove the step-down. Then the transfer of quota would remain the way it is.

Alternative 3 again retains the trip limit and the trip limit step-down in Season 1. For Season 2, it sets the trip limit at 500 pounds gutted weight and removes the trip limit reduction. Finally, Alternative 4 simply modifies the trip limit for both seasons and removes the trip limit reductions, and your sub-alternatives there are 1,000 pounds, 850, and 700 pounds. We have clarified here, as you see highlighted, that that is in gutted weight.

For this action, you have the statistics here for which of the two models perform better, and so I believe the SARIMA model, which is indicated here by the star on your table, is the preferred one to use, and, as I said, you have not selected a preferred yet, and so you can see this column labeled “MEAN”, where the predicted closures would be under the various alternatives.

This is for the reduction in the trip limit, and so, under Alternatives 1 through 3, there is no step-down that you are considering, and so that’s why everything stays the same, and then the second part of that table shows you when the fishery would be expected to close for that first season, and so we’re talking January through June. The following table looks at the second season, July through December, and you have the top part of the table when that trip limit reduction would be expected, and then the second part of the table shows you when the fishery would be expected to close.

The AP had no additional recommendations during their last meeting, and you did have some public comment for this action, and you can see what those are. Folks from North Carolina expressed support for Sub-Alternative 4c, and that’s a 700-pound trip limit for both seasons, and there were other folks, including one from Florida, who also stated that a 700-pound trip limit would be okay. Then other people from Florida stated that the traditional bandit boats would need the largest trip limit available, and he indicated a reduction at a certain percentage of the ACL to a bycatch fishery might be something the council wants to consider.

MR. PHILLIPS: Going forward with our abbreviated framework on changing the ACL is going to give us some more fish, which would change these tables all around, and I would like to make the preferred Alternative 4, Sub-Alternative 4a. If I get a second, I will explain.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It’s seconded by Mark. I think you can go ahead and explain while Myra is getting that on the board.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Vermilion are still open right now, and we’re going to get a bump-up, and I think we can stay with 1,000 pounds. The 500-pound trip drop-down really doesn’t gain us much time, maybe a week or something, and I think we can run most of the year with 1,000 pounds, and it’s going to change. This year is unusual, and it’s run longer than normal, but we’re going to get more fish next year, if we can get the framework through on time, and so I’m thinking this is going to be simpler, and it’s going to be better for the fishermen, and I think we’re still going to be able to work most of the year, which is what a lot of people want, but I think it might also help us not leave fish in the water, when the guys need to sell them and put the money in the bank or pay the rent or whatever, and so that would be my rationale.

MR. HARTIG: Charlie made one of the points that I was going to make, in that the season is still open now. Rick, can you remind me when vermilion went to the 500 pounds, so I can have an idea of how much time there was between that and now that we're still open? I know it's an unusual year, Charlie, but it's interesting that this year in particular that it has stayed open for a longer time, and I know the weather has been crazy for everyone on the east coast, and I understand that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: While we're waiting on Rick, are there more comments or more discussion?

DR. DUVAL: I was just going to say the trip limit was reduced on April 26 of this year for vermilion, and, last year, it was reduced March 22.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there more questions or more comments on this particular motion?

MR. HARTIG: I was going to look to the AP comments, but I'm not really ready to make another comment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Does that mean you're also not ready to vote on this?

MR. GRINER: I am hesitant to take away that step-down right now. I know it's been an unusual year, but, when you look back, here we are in June and the fishery is still open, and we had that step-down quite a while ago, and that's one of the reasons why it's still open. It is an unusual year, but we've gone from this fishery closing in March to it closing in April, and now here we are and it's still open in June, and so I'm pretty hesitant to say that we go 1,000 pounds year-round. I know we're going to get a little bit more quota, but I don't really know what that allocation is going to be either.

MR. PHILLIPS: Tim, the problem is we don't really know how much of that 500 pounds -- You know, what it really -- Is the season still open due to the 500 pounds, or would it be open anyway? In most of the analysis we get on almost all of the species, the drop-downs don't give you much, and I think we're going to get maybe a significant amount of fish, and we're going to get another assessment, I think they're planning on, in five years, and I really would like to be able to see our fishermen make some money, so we can get toward that professional fishery, and, like one of the commenters said, the big boats need it worse than the small boats, and this is a big-boat -- This is one of their main things, and, like we talked about, the sweet spot is where can we live and most everybody else live, and I think we can live there.

MR. HARTIG: **Most of the comments I saw in the comments from the people in Florida that I had talked to were looking for something smaller for the entire season, and so, based on that, I would move, as a substitute motion, Alternative 2, to retain the commercial trip limit reduction January 1 through -- To 750 pounds straight through each season.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there a second for the motion to select Alternative 2? Seconded by Tim.

MR. HARTIG: If I may, I mean, Charlie mentioned some rationale for his. Basically, the big boats do need it, but this will extend the season at 750, and it's good, and he says we're going to get more fish, and it's not going to be that much more fish. It's half of 300,000 pounds, which is 150,000 pounds. That's not a whole lot of fish. It will help extend the season somewhat, but not

a lot, and that -- In addition to that, based on the information Anna provided yesterday that we lose fish every year in that vermilion projection, and so we'll be back in three years to about what we have now, and so I would go ahead and push for Alternative 2.

MR. PHILLIPS: Ben and I both have good arguments, I think, and part of the problem with the comments, the earlier comments, is they didn't know there was more fish coming on the table, and what would they have said had they knew there was more fish that was going to be on the table? That, we just don't know, and so I'm, obviously, going to vote against the motion, and I still think the 1,000 pounds is doable, and so, anyway, thank you.

MR. BOWEN: I am going to have to vote against Ben's motion as well, because it's just -- I mean, I know it's only a 250-pound difference, but that 250-pound difference to those multiday bandit boats makes a difference to them. Thank you.

MR. BROWN: I guess my question is going to be for Erik. When we do this recalibration on that assessment, how far out into the future will it be before we know how that's going to impact it?

DR. WILLIAMS: Let me get clarification. Do you mean what information we're providing and how far out in time that's going to go?

MR. BROWN: Yes, and, if we were to move forward with changes to the vermilion, then you're going to come back and do this recalibration on the assessment, and so I was just wondering how far into the future, if we did do this, what is the time that we're looking at that we would see that and having to make an adjustment to it again.

DR. WILLIAMS: Right, and so the plan right now is, if everything goes as I hope it will, we are going to get a correction vector from MRIP basically on July 1, and we'll start work on those revisions. There is four species right now that we're considering, and we're possibly going to add red snapper to that, and so the four species are vermilion, black sea bass, red grouper, and blueline tilefish right now. We may add red snapper to that list as well.

If we start those in July, we should have them in time for the SSC to review at their October or fall meeting, and then you guys should have it then in December of this year. You will have the new numbers in hand, and what we will be updating is exactly what we provided in the last assessment for vermilion, and so whatever projections were provided from that assessment will just -- It will have the same set of projections, the same number of years out and so on and so forth, and so I hope that answers your question.

MR. BROWN: So it could have an impact on that though, and so that's what I'm saying. I just don't know whether to make any changes, if that is going to be the case.

MR. HAYMANS: A clarifying question for Ben. I thought I heard you say that you wanted 750 year-round. Did I mis-hear you?

MR. HARTIG: What was it about the year-round? I'm sorry, Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: I thought I heard you say that you wanted 750 year-round, but I didn't see where Alternative 2 got that, and I just wanted to make sure that I heard you right.

MR. HARTIG: You were right. It's 1,000 pounds in the first part and then it drops to 750 in the second season, but that's still -- For me, it allows that second season, for the people in Florida and for a number of other people that have been talking about reducing that second season, because we have access to so many different species in the second season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more comments on this motion? We have a substitute motion on the board to select Alternative 2 as the preferred.

MR. BELL: What was the original motion? Could we just back up a second?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It was 4a for 1,000 pounds. Now we're back to the substitute motion. **All those in favor of the substitute motion, raise your hand; all those opposed. I count five in favor, three opposed, and two abstentions. The motion passes.**

MR. HAYMANS: Can you recount the no votes? I counted four and not three.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. **Let me see those in favor one more time, five in favor; let me see the no votes again. How do you count four? He's an abstention. Okay. We actually have three abstentions. The substitute motion still passes.**

The substitute now becomes the main motion. We're now voting on the main motion. **Those in favor of this as the main motion, raise your hand, ten in favor; those opposed; one abstention. It passes.**

We also need a motion for vermillion to adopt the IPT edits to this particular action.

DR. DUVAL: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Mel. **Any objections to adopting the IPT's suggested edits? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Action 6 is on PDF page 18, and this one establishes a minimum size limit for almaco jack, and you have two alternatives. Alternative 2 is your current preferred, and the minimum size limit would be twenty inches fork length. This is, again, just for the commercial sector, and the IPT did have some suggested edits, as you see on your screen.

Table 6a on your screen shows you the percent of the commercial catch that is comprised below and above each of those proposed size limits, and this is using data from 2014 through 2016, and then the following table shows you an estimate of the closure date and estimated total landings with the various minimum size limit, and the preferred there of twenty inches is indicated in bold, and so you're looking at an in-season closure possibly in mid-July.

There were some comments and some concerns about the potential for discarding when you put a minimum size limit, and there was some support for this proposed action, and I believe your AP didn't have any additional recommendations. They have previously been in support of the minimum size limit, and that's all I have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions for Myra on this particular action? We're on Action 6. Can we get a motion to approve the IPT edits?

MR. HARTIG: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Ben and seconded by Charlie. We have a preferred, and I'm assuming, since I don't see hands in the air, that we like the preferred that we have now, which is 2a.

MR. BOWEN: I am okay with that, but we have heard some testimony, if you will, from some of the North Carolina commercial fleet that the market price for the smaller fish is just not there, and looking at the closure dates and going along with Charlie's way of thinking, if we can extend the season for these guys, to keep them fishing, and it brings more money at the market for the bigger fish, I am almost inclined to make the motion to de-select 2a and go to -- I would ask for help from Charlie or Ben or Tim for a larger fish, like a twenty-four-inch, and so that would be 2c, or even 2d, to extend the season and bring more market price to the commercial guys.

MS. BROUWER: Sorry to interrupt your discussion, but I forgot to clarify that these results here are only looking at the size limit change, and they don't take into account the possible trip limit for the other jacks complex, and that's the following action, and so almaco is included in that complex, and so I just wanted to make sure you were aware of that.

MR. GRINER: I was going to say the same thing. I think what we were trying to do by establishing this was get to the minimum size that is a saleable fish that we can make money on, and that really is the twenty-inch fish. It's a five-pound fish, and so I would like to see it stay there.

MR. BOWEN: I am good with that. I just wanted to bring it up for discussion. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Good discussion. I am going to assume, after that discussion, that we don't want to change our preferred, and so let's move on. Sorry. **We need to vote to adopt the IPT's suggested edits. Are there any objections to that motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. BROUWER: Action 7 is on PDF page 20, and this is the one that establishes the trip limit for the other jacks complex, which includes almaco, lesser amberjack, and banded rudderfish. Your preferred currently is to establish a 500-pound gutted weight trip limit for this group of species, and we have here the table that shows the combination of the two, and so, under a 500-pound trip limit with a twenty-inch minimum size limit, you are looking at a closure date potentially in mid-September.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel has talked about this in the past, and they are still of the opinion that almaco should have its own ACL, and they realize that that's not as easily accomplished, and it's part of the complex, but they did reiterate that the trip limit you're considering would help slow down the harvest, and that would be helpful. As far as the public, there was some support expressed for your preferred. Two commenters from North Carolina said that they catch large almaco inshore in the fall, and they have to throw back 300 to 500 pounds, and so they were in support of the size limit. Then, again, we just had a couple of little changes to the action and the alternatives.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can we have a motion to accept the IPT's edits?

MR. HARTIG: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's moved by Ben and seconded by Charlie. **Any objection to accepting the IPT's edits? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MR. HARTIG: Just to follow-up a little bit on the public comments, I had made some comments in previous discussions about banded rudderfish and if the area where I fish in that people would have problems with that, but there is a comment from the Jupiter fisherman who said that he was fine with the 500 pounds, and so that helps in that regard, and so I'm fine with where we are.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Based on that, I'm assuming we don't want to change the preferred, and so let's move on.

MS. BROUWER: Action 8 addresses the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest and possession and sale and purchase of red grouper in the EEZ off of South and North Carolina. From what I understand, you would prefer to move this action into Regulatory Amendment 30, which addresses the rebuilding schedule for red grouper.

We have some proposed revisions to the language, and I wanted to make sure that it was in line with the codified text, and so you see it highlighted in yellow there, and I didn't want to show every single change, but Preferred Alternative 2 is currently up on your screen, and, out of the sub-alternatives, you selected Sub-Alternative 2a, which would extend the closure for red grouper only, off the Carolinas only, by an extra month, and so it would be from January through May. I guess, if you're okay with the edits and with the guidance that we've already obtained from the committee, we can move forward with this action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can we get a motion to accept the IPT edits?

MR. BELL: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Ben. Just to clarify -- **First, is there any objection to accepting the IPT's edits? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Just to clarify, this is going to the red grouper amendment, and is that right, Myra? She says yes.

MS. BROUWER: I just wanted to point out that there was a motion that the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel approved at their most recent meeting, and they recommend that the council consider a bycatch commercial trip limit for red grouper, and that passed unanimously. Just for the record, I wanted to mention that.

Moving on to Action 9, this one would remove the minimum size limit for the three deepwater snapper species. Your preferred is to go ahead and take that twelve-inch minimum size limit out, and there were no additional comments, and, generally, the public was in favor of this action, and so we don't have any recommendations from the IPT for you at this point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any desire to change this preferred? All right. Seeing none, we're going to move on.

MS. BROUWER: Action 10 reduces the size limit for the commercial sector for gray triggerfish in the EEZ off of east Florida. Again, your preferred that you selected a while back is to reduce that back down to twelve inches fork length, and you heard the extra information that Brendan Runde provided yesterday on discard mortality for this species, and you have here the estimated percent increase in whole weight of commercial gray triggerfish landings in federal waters at different size limits there, from twelve through fourteen. The concern here, or something to point out, is the potential for negative effects to reproductive potential when you reduce the size limit. As far as the AP, they had no additional recommendations, and there were very few comments during the hearings. There was some support and people that said no action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any discussion on that?

MR. HARTIG: In general, there is a new sheepshead paper out that talks about different size at age between geographic areas, smaller in the southern areas at certain sizes and larger in the northern areas, and this goes for a number of species that I fish for as well, and vermilion in the southern area and red porgy and gray triggerfish are three species, and so hopefully, somewhere down the line, we can get some research that looks at those chevron trap catches and determines the differences in the size of the southern fishes compared to the northern area.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Ben.

MS. BROUWER: I guess that takes us through the actions as they are currently developed in the amendment, and so, here, we would just need a motion for the record for you to approve all these actions. Then, in September, you could go ahead and consider submission, unless you want to keep that timing the same for both visioning amendments.

DR. DUVAL: **I mean, I have no problem offering a motion to approve all the actions in Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 to consider for final approval in September.** I think we already had a pretty robust discussion previously about how shifting actions from one to another would potentially impact the timing of both, and so I have no problem making that motion, Madam Chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Mark. Any discussion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

All right, and so we're done with Amendment 27, and we're going to move on to Amendment 47, the for-hire permit moratorium.

MR. HADLEY: I will start off with just a brief overview presentation. There again, this tracks the material that we'll go over in the options paper, but just to orient everyone and review what we did in March, we reviewed a revised options paper with draft purpose and need statements and draft actions removed, and so this is per guidance from the December 2017 meeting. The

amendment was not approved for public scoping. There was a pretty good amount of guidance to staff provided.

If you recall, in the last Snapper Grouper Committee report, there were several bullet points on what the committee would like to see kind of added or expanded upon, particularly in relation to background information. Also, to further develop the bullet points under why the council is considering the action. Also added were some MSA requirements, National Standard Guidelines that relate to limiting entry, information on other moratoriums, an option to tie a permit to a person rather than a vessel, and there is a question added asking for the desired length of a moratorium.

I also will mention, and this was another addition to the paper, and an option was added to examine the for-hire harvest prohibition for snapper grouper species in state waters when the species are closed in federal waters, and I will get into the details of that in a little bit, but, essentially, due to the permit conditions, a permit holder can -- If the species is open in state waters, that species cannot -- That snapper grouper species cannot be possessed if there is a federal harvest closure.

Looking at potential amendment timing, at this meeting we'll be discussing whether or not to send the amendment out to scoping, which would take place in the summer months of 2018 via webinar. In September, the council would review scoping comments as well as potentially draft actions and purpose and need statements. In December, the council would review and make final changes to the purpose and need statements and then work on the actions and alternatives. In March, there again, making further changes to actions and alternatives, potentially selecting preferreds, and sending this out to public hearings, which would take place in the spring of 2019. In June, the council would review public hearing comments and modify the amendment as appropriate and approve all actions. Then, in September, the amendment would be looking at final approval for formal review, September of 2019.

What needs to be done at this meeting, we will go over the options paper and many of the revisions that were made and just to make sure that it covers all general topics that the council would like to initially investigate and also decide whether to approve for public scoping, and so this is the necessary step to keep the amendment moving forward. There again, the scoping would take place sometime this summer.

A couple of clarification questions, just during the committee's discussion something to think about. If this amendment is sent out for scoping, what the committee would like to see in September regarding the purpose and need statements and then actions and alternatives. The expectation from staff would be to provide these. If that's not what is the preference, that would be great to hear from the committee, and then, also, how we should refer to this amendment.

In going over the minutes from the last committee meeting, there was sort of an inconclusive discussion on whether or not to refer to it as a limited entry system versus a moratorium, and so it was pointed out that a moratorium is really a suspension of issuing a new permits and allowing new entrants and sort of varying permit types gets into the realm of a limited entry system.

On the other hand, there was the desire that, if this was taken out to scoping, to kind of keep all the options on the table, so you have kind of the bookends of what could be coming along in the future, and so, really, the question being do you want to continue calling this a moratorium. With that, I will jump into the options paper itself.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We have a couple of hands up.

MR. BREWER: There is a lot more in here than just a moratorium, and so I think that that's probably not the right title, and there is a lot more in here than limited entry. I think that, really, the thrust of this has been -- I don't mean to say that they're not professional right now, but to professionalize the charter/for-hire industry in the South Atlantic area, and so something like to professionalize -- Action to professionalize the charter/for-hire in the South Atlantic.

MS. BECKWITH: I mean, I would be careful with that term, because I think most of our current fishing guides do consider themselves professional, and so I would suspect that many of our charter fishermen would find that offensive. I would suggest something different, but, in terms of the scoping document, we do have the entire range of things, and I think it's important for the guys to be able to comment on the moratorium all the way through what a potential limited entry program could look like.

I think a moratorium on its own I think doesn't achieve a lot, and we're probably not going to get a lot of feedback that it's potentially -- We'll get all kinds of feedback, but my desire is to make sure that the entire scope of what a limited entry program could potentially look like is presented to the charter fishermen very early on, so we can start to get some really concrete feedback on pieces and parts that they like or don't like or could work and the regional differences, so we've got something to work with when we get back comments. In terms of the title, I think you would just have to acknowledge that it's a range of future actions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We've heard two comments about the title, and both commenters agree that it should not be called a moratorium, but there's been some discrepancy about what to call it.

DR. DUVAL: Maybe perhaps For-Hire Permit Considerations or Issues. I think both Chester and Anna have made the good point that it's broader than simply a moratorium or limited entry. There is consideration of other issues as well, but it is specifically focused on the for-hire sector, and so is it for-hire permit issues or for-hire permit modifications or for-hire permit considerations, and maybe something along those lines would be more acceptable.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. What do you think about that? It sounds good to Chester, and it sounds great to Anna. Have you got enough direction, John?

MR. HADLEY: Yes. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are we using the options paper or the scoping document?

MR. HADLEY: The options paper. This is in Tab 8, Attachment 10a. I'll be going over the options paper, and I will mention that there was kind of a very draft scoping document included. This was included because there was some concern last time over seeing ahead of time sort of what kind of document would go out for scoping, but, in this case, we're going to go over the options paper, and the scoping document essentially tracks the options paper very closely, and so we'll be going over the options paper itself.

The paper starts out -- I will mention that it's sort of written in a hybrid form, per previous guidance that it's not really your typical options paper, and it's sort of a hybrid options scoping document, per the guidance that was given to kind of change it into more of like something that was taken out for the original Amendment 43 to solicit public input.

The options paper starts out with what issues are being considered, and this is sort of a summary in the amendment, and so the council is considering implementing a moratorium and issuing for-hire permits, and I have kind of differentiated this into the two separate big issues, sort of the moratorium and then the harvest prohibition issue, and so starting out with the for-hire moratorium part, and so some questions that could be considered is should the council cap the number of permits at the current number, a higher number, or should the council decrease the number of permits compared to the numbers that are currently held?

If there is a moratorium, what should be the eligibility criteria for the permit? Should there be exemptions to eligibility, and should there be a mechanism to allow new entrants into the for-hire fishery? Also, should there be an end date or a time limit established for the moratorium?

What the paper goes into detail on are the kind of general topics, as far as the start date of a for-hire permit moratorium, exceptions for eligibility, transferability of permits, allowing new entrants, and establishing a permit pool, implementing a time limit or sunset provision for a moratorium, and sort of catch-all other provisions for a moratorium. As I mentioned, you have the sort of hybrid scoping options format, and, also, this is the new sort of addition, per the guidance at the last meeting, was to add the issue regarding harvest prohibition on snapper grouper species in state waters when the species are closed to harvest in federal waters. Really, this is the first time that the committee is seeing this sort of fleshed out, and so any input on that is especially helpful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would note that this particular item -- It seems a little weird, now that we're going to retitle the amendment, that might be more helpful, because it was odd to me that this was in a document titled "permit moratorium", because I don't think a federal permit moratorium is going to fix this problem, because, to me, there would need to be subsequent actions after that that would make this change, and so it just was odd to be included in there.

MR. DILERNIA: A few comments on this action and perhaps trying to relate it to what we do in the Mid. Currently, just so that you know, we still have open access for for-hire permits in the Mid, so that what is a common practice amongst federally-permitted vessels in the Mid is, if there is a federal closure -- Well, you are required to follow the more restrictive regulations if you have a federal permit.

If there is a federal closure, what happens is the Regional Office gets inundated with vessels turning in their federal permits, and then they fish in state waters under their state permits, and, because it's open-access system, once the federal closure expires and federal waters reopen, they reapply for their federal permits again, and so the regional office is pretty busy with that bit of shenanigans, and I wouldn't even call it shenanigans. It's a common practice amongst for-hire vessels in the Mid-Atlantic region.

With the moratorium, if you have this, or if you have a freeze on the number of permits, I don't think that activity would occur in the South Atlantic, and I'm not saying if it's good or bad that

that activity occurs, but just, if you can't reissue a permit, then folks won't give up their federal permits to fish in state waters, and so that action is going to be a little bit different. How that's going to affect the total harvest, I don't know.

I still have difficulty understanding how you can go forward without a current mandatory reporting system, because you don't know how many permits are currently active, and, without knowing how many permits are active, you don't know how the effort is affecting the total ACL, and it may be that there is too many permits out there and once the moratorium goes into place some of those permits that are inactive become active, and I would perhaps suggest that you first institute mandatory reporting and see how the -- Determine which permits are active and how many vessels are active and then determine whether or not you have too many permits or not enough permits or whether Goldilocks -- Whether it's just the right amount of permits. That would just be my suggestions at this point, based on my experiences in the Mid. You all do what you want to do here, but, based on my experience, that would be some of my recommendations. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for those comments, Tony. I want to point out that we do have limited entry in the Gulf, and we still have this problem in the Gulf, and we do have people transferring, and people often have multiple boats, and they transfer the federal permit onto another boat and fish that boat during a state season and then transfer it back and forth, and so there is limited entry in the Gulf, and they are still switching around, and so it hasn't alleviated that by having a limited entry of those permits.

MR. BOWEN: I feel like if we don't have a limited entry program over here that we're not going to get people to report anyway, and so waiting I don't think is the right thing to do. It's coming. It's on the Secretary's desk, and so it is coming, we feel like, or I feel like, but, if we don't implement this program, I don't think the majority of the permit holders are going to report. I have actually had permit holders tell me that they're not going to report unless they have to, and that would be caused by a limited entry program.

MR. DILERNIA: To that point, what they're saying is -- So if the council says we're going to eliminate all the inactive permits, okay. I am going to hold my breath and puff out my cheeks and say I'm not going to report, and I don't report. I don't report for three years. Then the council says, okay, all these inactive permits, we're not renewing them. Well, how do we know they're inactive? Well, they didn't report. If you didn't report, you're not active. If you're not active, we don't need you. I mean, up north, that's where we would go with that one. Thank you.

MR. HAYMANS: Sort of tongue-in-cheek, but, Zack, if you know of individuals who plan not to report, the State of Georgia does maintain a tip line, and it would be to your benefit and others to report those who you know are not reporting.

MR. BOWEN: I am going to hold off.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We'll wait for that comment to come back.

MR. BREWER: I guess I am the one that's responsible for this new provision. I was pushing it, but I was pushing it because of conversations with Ira, who I saw just come in, and it is my thought that we should be doing whatever we can, short of limited entry, to help our federally-permitted charter folks.

That's our folks, and we should be trying to help them, and, if they're being put in an unfair situation because of a regulation that does not allow them to compete with the state folks, that needs to be changed, and, as has been pointed out already, you can have limited entry and yet you can still cheat, and it's done in the Gulf. They've got other ways that they're cheating over there that you haven't even mentioned yet, but that's the reason I think this should be in, and, following up on that, in my way of thinking, the objectives of the council, and the things that I have heard expressed, can be achieved without a moratorium and without limited entry.

A lot of the things that are in here that we want to achieve, like reporting, like weeding out sort of the bad apples, all of those kinds of things, professionalizing the fleet, can be achieved without limited entry, and so I think there needs to be a provision in here somewhere, John, that essentially makes that -- Not that statement, but just the issue of is there or are there a suite of provisions that are contained within the document that could be utilized to achieve the goals of the council without going into a limited entry program, and I had one other thing.

Another thing that we discussed the last time was an issue of putting a unique number on the permit, and I have read through it, and it may be in here somewhere, and I just missed it, but I couldn't find it, and I think that's a fairly important thing to be discussed, and that's all I've got. Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: Just to follow-up, that's something that has come up, and it is not in the document.

MR. PHILLIPS: I would like to follow up with Brother Doug and find out what is the teeth if they don't report in Georgia, and have we ever had to use it or fine anybody or -- I know I get calls or emails if I don't get a dealer logbook in or something, and then we say that so-and-so was sick, and then we fix it, but have you had any serious issues, and have you had to actually get around to fining anybody or something?

MR. HAYMANS: The report line -- It's different in state versus federal, right? Under our JEA, our state guys can receive the tip and go investigate whether or not someone is not reporting, and then it gets turned over to a federal case, and so there is a penalty schedule for reporting. Right now, it's just for dealers who are reporting, and it goes from \$750 to \$1,500. I'm assuming, once we get to mandatory for-hire reporting, there will be a similar schedule set up for that. From a state perspective, that's totally different. I mean, we fine for dealers not reporting now, and we take licenses, if need be, from that, but I'm just -- From what I mentioned about the tip line is that's a way for our enforcement officers to engage the non-reporting issue and get it to the federal level.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I don't know whether Georgia requires reporting. I thought that's what you were asking, actually, but, to correct the record, and we can get Karen up here, but I believe the current penalty schedule doesn't just address dealer non-reporting. I think it addresses non-reporting across-the-board for whoever is required to report.

MR. HAYMANS: Monica, to that point, I simply pulled up the Southeast. I didn't look at the national, and so, just scrolling through the Southeast penalty schedule, I do see there is a dealer failure to report, and I don't see any other reporting in that penalty schedule, and it's probably on the national side.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Is it okay if Karen just corrects the record?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure.

MS. RAINE: Thank you. Just very quickly, as we've gone over before, with the summary settlement, there are two different schedules that we look at, the Southeast summary settlement schedule and the national summary settlement schedule, and reporting is covered under both. Now, in the national, it covers both dealers and vessels, but, on the Southeast, it just covers the dealers, and so, if there is a case in which a summary settlement is appropriate, then, for the vessels, the agents would be looking at the national schedule and for dealers at the Southeast. Now, of course, that's just for summary settlement types of penalties. There is the civil penalty guidelines that, when a case comes to our Office of General Counsel that we look at, and, of course, all reporting violations are covered in that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

MR. BROWN: I had a talk with Ira too about some of the issues that they've been experiencing in south Florida, and I kind of wanted to ask Jessica. Why does the State of Florida not adopt regulations that are consistent with the South Atlantic? I know that the council has discussed this before, but it seems like it would make enforcement a lot easier.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The FWC has a rule where they automatically adopt the commercial regulations, and so they do not come before the commission. It happens automatically. The commission has decided that, for recreational, they would like to see and make a decision on every single one of those regulations separately, and so they don't happen automatically, and they make a determination based on how the fishery is prosecuted and a number of other factors, about whether or not they want to go compliant with those regulations in state waters, and that's for the Atlantic and the Gulf, and so it only happens automatically for commercial, but it does not happen automatically on the recreational side.

MR. BROWN: So they deal with each species individually?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: I think one of the things that I was thinking of was the red snapper and the warsaw grouper and how it's left open in the state waters and how that seems to be a big one.

MS. BECKWITH: I think definitely, for this to be successful, we do need to equalize the playing field between those charter guys who have the federal permits and the state, so we're not having sort of the state-permitted charter guys having more access than the properly federally-permitted charter guys, and so I agree with Chester's concerns, and there is really only two ways of handling this.

It's what Chester has brought up, in terms of taking away that prohibition, or the ideal way, which would be to have all the states complement federal regulations as they come in, and North Carolina does complement everything, or has completed pretty much everything, except the cobia closures, but we'll have that discussion in a different committee.

Forcing the states to complement is not within the council's power, and so we can't force Florida to complement, and so what we can do, and it would not be ideal, but it is within our power, is, in order to equalize the playing field between the state guys and what would be eventually the federally-permitted guys, would be to take this harvest prohibition out, and so I think I actually see what to see this discussion maintained in the document and maybe framed in a way that we are stating the concern about sort of inequity between state-permitted charter guys and potentially federally-permitted charter guys and the issues that we're having with states not complementing closures as a bit of background.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I've got a list of people going, but there was something that I heard, Anna, that I just wanted to correct, and so I agree it is an inequity. I heard you say that the state people have more access, and so I just want to clarify that our regulations do not allow state charter captains to go into federal waters without a federal permit, and so they can only take advantage of state-water areas, and they are not allowed to enter federal waters without a federal permit.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, I agree with that, and there is an additional loophole that we have in North Carolina that I think would cause an enforcement issue for that particular situation that I would rather not throw out here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

MR. BELL: I know we started out talking about the harvest prohibition thing, but then we kind of shifted over to the discussion of logbooks and all of that, and I will just say that that's been one of my chief problems with kind of moving along with this. We're using that when you go into the why section of why are we doing this, and we tend to lead with that discussion, that it will improve logbook reporting and it will improve data collection. Well, we don't have that in place yet, and I think -- I agree that you're potentially establishing a motivational factor, but we haven't even implemented it yet.

I can tell you, related to South Carolina, we've had a program in place for twenty-five years, and we've been enforcing it for twenty-five years. The way this would work for us, just because we happen to have a system in place, there is a state requirement to report to us. I would see what we would do, is basically replace reporting to us with reporting to the federal system, and that would be reporting to us, and so failure to participate in the reporting to the federal would -- You would be in violation at the state, and we would do the same thing we're doing right now with our dealers and all. We would basically write them up and work within the existing -- We could basically prosecute at the state level, and that's what we would do, but I know we're the only state that has that currently in place right now for charter boats, but we could basically enforce it from the state side, and we wouldn't even have to worry about it.

The failure to report on the federal side would be failure to report on the state side, but my point is we're using this as kind of a -- At least it's the leading argument when we get into discussing why we're doing this, and it's not even in place yet. We don't know what reporting is going to look like, and perhaps people are saying they're not going to report, but we don't know, and so, since we're kind of talking about that already, I just thought I would weigh-in.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I am probably, sitting at the table, the most reported person, between vessel monitoring system and cameras and five or six logbooks. Because I have a Northeast permit and

fish in the South Atlantic Council, I've got to do -- Every time I do a trip, I've got two logbooks that I've got to fill out for both, and it does tie back to the logbook, as Mel was saying, and another thing is, if you have to fill out a logbook and you don't fill your logbook out on time, if you take that permit, they won't go fishing, but it's tied to the logbook, and it should be tied to the reporting requirements of ten days or a week or something.

I had one occasion where I sent my logbooks in late, as part of the bluefin tuna amendment, and my scorecard wasn't good, and so I couldn't go fishing off my coast for six months, in my area, and so tying that logbook -- It's almost like you're getting the cart before the horse here. You've got to have a logbook in place to see who the players are and what's happening, and then, if they don't report, then they don't get their permits renewed, and you will see action, but, right now, this is just a wet paper.

DR. DUVAL: I wasn't going to say anything, because I was hopeful we would kind of keep going through this and not get so far into the weeds, but we don't have a problem with the issue of the harvest prohibition going forward in a scoping document, in terms of addressing that on the federal for-hire permits. However, we don't support making an exemption.

I mean, really, it just creates another inequity for commercial permit holders, and so you would be giving one thing to one user group and not to another user group, and we just inherently think that that is unfair. We agree that it seems to us that the simplest way to address this is if all states were to complement federal species closures when they occur. Clearly there is a different situation in the State of Florida, and I think that the State of Florida is a little bit different with regard to access to many of these federally-managed species compared to some of the other states where those are actually out in federal waters.

There is nothing that prevents someone right now who does not have a permit, a federal for-hire permit, from running out into federal waters and just taking their chances, and so I just wanted to get on the record that we just don't support this exception, and we have no problem taking it out to scoping, because there might be some other ideas that come forward about how to address this.

DR. CRABTREE: I just don't find this whole argument about the inequity very compelling. I mean, the permit, in and of itself, creates an inequity. Folks who have this permit are allowed to fish charter trips in federal waters, and people who don't have it can't, and so I guess you can say that's an inequity, but, anytime you get a permit, you get the privilege of doing certain things that you're not allowed to do without the permit, and that comes with some constraints. You have to comply with certain requirements to have the permit, and people choose to do this, and they choose to have this permit, and I think, if you look at every single permit we have, that's the way it is. It gives you the privilege of doing something that you can't do without it, but it puts constraints on things that you have to agree to do, and I just don't see that as a problem.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Doug, this is the last word, and then we're going to take a break.

MR. HAYMANS: Then I better make it good. Just to follow-up on what Roy just said, people choose to do this, and you choose to enter into an occupation whereby you know that there are both natural constraints and regulatory constraints, and it's been that way for decades, but now this whole action is designed to sort of give, we'll call it an advantage, to people who have chosen to

be in this field, and I think we're good the way we are. You choose to get into this knowing that there is natural and regulatory constraints.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's take a break for ten minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, folks. Let's get back to the table. We're going to get started. I just kind of want to remind us what we're supposed to be doing today with this particular document, and so, right now, we're looking at the options paper, but, technically, if you remember where we left off at the last meeting, we were trying to decide whether we were going to scoping or not.

We decided early in the week that we were going to scoping, and then, when we got to Full Council and had a broader discussion, we decided that we wanted to see the scoping document before we decided to go to scoping, and so I think that one of the main questions is to, first, figure out are we going to scoping, yes or no, and, if we are, are the right items in the document or are they organized appropriately for scoping, and that's what we're supposed to be doing today, and so I just wanted to remind folks.

Right now, we're looking at the decision document. If you go to 10b, that's the actual scoping document that folks wanted to see before they made a decision about whether or not to go out to scoping, and so just to point it out. It's not really listed in an action form with alternatives. Since we're going to scoping, it's more listed out as questions and trying to get public input on questions.

We asked for the document to be set up differently than a lot of our other scoping documents, and it is set up that way, but I think you need to be glancing through there. They have particular questions for the public and figuring out, if we're going to scoping, are the right questions in there, and is everything covered that we want to go to scoping?

MR. BOWEN: I am sure that everybody has read the scoping document, as contentious as this issue has been for the last three years, and so I make a motion that we send this to scoping. Then we can figure out, once we approve or not approve that motion, what needs to be in it. **I make the motion that we send the document to scoping.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for trying to move this along. We have a motion on the table. Do we have a second for this motion? It's seconded by Ben. While John Hadley is getting that up, I am going to start running through the list.

MR. DILERNIA: It may be related to the motion but not, but my question is does this -- Is this action going to require mandatory reporting? That is my question, and the reason I ask that is because, if it's not going to require mandatory reporting, then I cannot see a need for a moratorium permit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to let Gregg answer that.

MR. WAUGH: Yes, Tony. We have an amendment, and we just got a letter yesterday that the amendment has been approved, and we're waiting for the final rule to get published, and so there will be mandatory electronic reporting.

MR. DILERNIA: Regardless of whether or not this action takes --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. DILERNIA: So for the for-hire sector there will be required reporting?

MR. WAUGH: Correct.

MR. DILERNIA: Okay. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Specifically to the scoping document, I read through it, and I think I've already provided some input with regard to the one provision that there was discussion of retention of federally-managed species under the for-hire permit and some of our thoughts on that, but, regardless, I think staff did a great job on the scoping document. I think the questions in there are exactly the types of questions that we would need to solicit input from the public in order to make a decision as to whether or not the council would want to move forward with a moratorium or limited entry or any other potential tools to try to address some of these issues in the for-hire industry, and so, from our perspective, we're willing to support this going out to scoping. Thank you.

MR. HAYMANS: John did a good job on following up on what we were asking for last time, with the exception of a couple of areas, and one of the biggest for me is the overcapitalization statement. You know, we still use basically anecdotal evidence to say there is overcapitalization, and it's based on the number of permits by area, but there is really no socioeconomic data there that drives overcapitalization, or the statement of overcapitalization. We don't know what the market looks like and whether the vessels that are there are providing it or not or whether there needs to be less or more capacity. To me, that one needs to be fleshed out a little more.

It was an interesting statement that Anna made a few minutes ago. She said that, basically, she takes offense to the fact that, and if I get it right overall let me know, but the fact that we are professionalizing the fishery through this action, and she was like, well, we're already a professional fleet, or some sort of statement to that, and we've talked about the reporting issues, and so we'll leave that there, but just the overcapitalization, to me, still needs something additional.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Are there other comments on whether you want to go to scoping or not? I am looking around.

MR. BELL: I have been one of the, I guess, major whiners against this, and so we're making progress on finally implementing the reporting. My big argument has been you can't really say that it would improve reporting. You have no idea what reporting will look like, but I appreciate the concept that it might motivate people.

My biggest concern is, now that it looks like we're moving forward with implementing the reporting system, I know, from my people, who have been doing this for twenty-five years and are now trying to transition our system to match this new federal requirement, it's been a challenge keeping people motivated. This is kind of like smacking the hornet's nest, and it's just creating a lot of angst.

For that reason, I guess maybe it's, in part, selfish, and I didn't want to do anything to kind of derail implementation or getting this thing up and running, but, in the spirit of moving things forward and this sort of festering issue, I mean, I am willing to go along and just say, okay, if you want to take it out to scoping, we'll take it out to scoping.

We may be smacking the hornet's nest again, but keep in mind that we're smacking it at a time when we're trying to implement this other system, but you won't know what your reporting looks like until you've got a year or so of reporting under your belt, and so we can't sort of -- We can't argue that it might improve reporting. We don't even know what reporting looks like, but my point was, if we were a year down the road, we had a year under our belt, and we had 50 percent reporting, then you've got an argument, but there is not an argument now, but, in the interest of moving forward, I will support going to scoping.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I had some of those same concerns.

MR. BOWEN: To Mel's point, it has been stated on the record, and we've seen it somewhere in -- I've seen it somewhere in one of these documents over the last five years that the compliance level in the Gulf is higher because of the limited entry program. To say -- Mel, with all due respect, to say that we don't know what it looks like, we don't know what it looks like, but we know that it will be higher if we have limited entry.

MR. BELL: We're not the Gulf, and I agree, and I saw the data, and I know exactly what you're referring to, but I am just saying that it would be much stronger argument if we did it and we had a year's worth of reporting under our belt and we can talk about our reporting rate, but that's okay.

MR. BREWER: With great reluctance, I am going to support going forward with scoping. I have been one of the main opponents to this thing. I have been one of the main opponents because of what I saw happen in the Gulf of Mexico, and I think that what they have ended up with and their product there is a travesty. I don't want us going there, but, again, as Mel so eloquently states, we're not the Gulf, and so let's give people a chance to look at this.

I think that you've got options here that I like and that could serve to help our federally-permitted captains, and that's my main -- The two things that are the most important to me are, number one, helping our captains and leveling the playing field, and the second thing is I don't want to see what happened in the Gulf, and so, as this document is done -- John, you will put the individual identity number thing on there?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, I can put kind of an explanation in there and even add a question along those lines.

MR. BREWER: Okay. I will support going to scoping.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there other people that want to comment on this particular motion? If we do pass this and we are going to go to scoping, we will dive into the document. We have already done that some, but we'll just glance at those questions and kind of do a run-through of what all is going to be added before it goes to scoping. Anybody else want to say anything before we take a vote on this?

All those in favor of sending Snapper Grouper Amendment 47, as modified and as we're going to modify it, out for scoping before the September meeting, raise your hand; all those opposed; any abstentions. I've got eleven to one, and so the motion passes, and we are going to scoping with this document.

Now that we're going to scoping -- So we're in the scoping document, which is 10b instead of 10a, and we're going to run through some of the questions and how it's organized in the meat of the document for the public, to see if we're missing anything. So far, some of the things that I heard were to change the title of the document, the individual numbers that Chester brought up, the overcapitalization thing that Doug brought up, and those are some of the things that I've heard that maybe need to be modified in this document, and so I'm going to turn it back over to John to see if we can run through some of the things -- We're looking for what's missing or does something need to be modified before it goes to the public.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. Here again, we have switched over to Attachment 10b, which is the scoping document. Under moratorium, what should be the eligibility criteria for a for-hire permit and considering potential start dates for the moratorium and exceptions for eligibility and a target number of permits.

The start date of a moratorium is important in determining kind of who is able to receive a permit. As a reminder, the council has approved a control date for snapper grouper for-hire permits of June 15, 2016. This control date could be used to determine eligibility to receive a snapper grouper for-hire permit, or the council could consider another date or set of dates that fall either before or after that control date, and so there's a little section there about just explaining what a control date is, and then, additionally, there has been some concern expressed over permit speculation, or a run on permits, where people are essentially -- They may have purchased or will purchase the for-hire permit, in hopes of benefitting from the sale of these permits in the future, and, basically, the council would be interested in getting feedback on this potential scenario.

There is three public input questions here. One is, if a moratorium is imposed, what date or dates should the council consider when determining who receives a permit? Should the council aim to set the number of permits at the current number, a higher number, or should the council decrease the number of permits, and so kind of what is the target effort level there, or capacity level. Then should the council be concerned over permit speculation? Then what should the council do to avoid a run on permits? I don't know if we want to pause there, or I can keep going.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to pause, but, if I don't see hands in the air, I am going to let John keep moving through these questions. Okay.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Moving on to exceptions for eligibility, the council could consider exceptions, under certain circumstances, to allow participants who do not meet the moratorium control or start date eligibility requirement to still obtain a snapper grouper for-hire permit. Some examples that were included in the document are historic captains, and so looking at someone who may have worked on vessels under the for-hire permit of another person or a corporation.

You could set items such as a minimum proportion of personal income from working as a for-hire captain or some other proof of working as a for-hire captain before the control date, and then, also,

looking at commercial license holders, and so this was brought up by the Snapper Grouper AP. It was noted that some snapper grouper commercial permit holders intend to include for-hire fishing activity in their future business plans, either as a way to diversify their income or as an option for retirement from commercial fishing. In response, the council could add an exemption that would allow commercial permit holders to obtain a for-hire permit. The public input question under this subject, or questions, really, is should there be exceptions to eligibility requirements or start dates set by the council, and, if so, do you have suggestions as to what they should be?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No modifications to that? All right. Let's keep moving.

MR. HADLEY: Moving along, how new entrants would be allowed into the snapper grouper for-hire fishery, and, essentially, there are several options that the council could consider, but it mainly involves specifying the transferability of existing permits to new entrants, establishing a permit pool for new entrants, and establishing a new entrant -- This is sort of a greenhorn permit that has been discussed at previous meetings.

Looking at the transferability of permits, the council could consider no transfers, limited transfers, or open transfers. Within that kind of range of opportunities, the council could allow transfers, but only between immediate family members or between vessels with the same owner, and, also, transfers could be prohibited initially, but allowed to occur after a specified period of time, and so no transfers for a year or three years or five years, just thrown out there for an example. Additionally, the council could also opt to prohibit any transfer of for-hire permits after a moratorium. In this case, when a permit holder exits the fishery, the permit would be retired, and this permit could be added to a permits pool that would allow new entrants into the fishery, and we'll get into that in the next section.

The public input questions for this subject are should for-hire snapper grouper permits be transferable? If so, should there be restrictions on how and to who the permits can be transferred? There is also a question on should leasing be allowed for snapper grouper for-hire permits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's keep going.

MR. HADLEY: Moving along, looking at a new entrants pool, the council could consider a permits pool that would allow new entrants into the for-hire snapper grouper fishery and recoup the use of permits as they are retired over time. Should this occur, and so should retired permits be put into a pool for new entrants, the council may want to consider when would these retired permits be made available again, and would it be as soon as they are retired, on a specified date each year that this permit pool would kind of open, and, also, kind of set a minimum threshold for when the number of valid permits reaches a minimum number, due to permits not being renewed or transferred, and therefore being retired, and so kind of a minimum threshold on the number of permit holders triggers new participants in the fishery.

Also, it would need to be specified how these permits would be distributed, and so looking at options such as a lottery system or a waiting list where permits would be available to new entrants in a specified manner. The public input questions under this are, under a moratorium, should a permits pool be established to allow new entrants into the snapper grouper for-hire fishery? If so, how should these permits be made available to new entrants?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I had a question here, and it's not exactly about new entrants, but about if someone is initially denied the permit and the appeals process, and I don't know if we want to get into that with the public at the hearing, but would that be something that we need to consider, is if you're initially denied, but you don't think you should be denied, because of whatever expiration or you forgot to renew, would there be an appeals process through here?

MR. HADLEY: I would think so. That's something that would be established. I'm thinking of looking into the halibut fishery in Alaska, and that was kind of -- As they developed the moratorium, that was a kind of process that was established, as far as appeals, and so that would come down the road and be specified.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do want to add a phrase or a couple of sentences about this in the document, that it would be our intent to establish an appeals process for this?

MS. BECKWITH: I guess I wouldn't want to see that in the scoping document. Let's keep it on the positive side of things and not assume that necessarily people are going to be denied and just try and get some feedback without this sort of negative connotation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good points.

MR. HARTIG: Certainly in this venue -- I mean, Jimmy Hull just texted me and said when he transfers permits between his boats that they become new permits, and so, in this moratorium thing, if you have people who have had a charter boat permit before and they changed it to another vessel and then your date is after the moratorium date, the control date, then you could potentially have problems. This is not isolated for Jimmy. I have had probably three or four fishermen call me on this, because they lost their catch history too based on that, but that's something that, in this document, we're going to have to at least acknowledge happens and how we deal with it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so maybe it's not so much appeals, like Anna said, but more about that we would have to establish a process for dealing with that.

MS. BECKWITH: Just to Ben's point, currently, there is no catch history on the charter permits, because we don't have any reporting, but certainly, if we move this forward, the permits would be numbered, and it would be a numbered permit, because that would be part of the process. Once we would go to a moratorium, or any portion of this, then the permits would no longer be open access, and they therefore would have some sort of identifying characteristic to it.

MR. HARTIG: Roy, do you guys keep records? Do you know if the Permits Office keeps records on permit transfers between vessels for -- I mean, how long have you had records to know that that vessel had transferred that permit?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, we keep records and can trace -- How far back, I think it would be quite a ways, but I can't say for sure to that, but, yes, we track permits and where they are transferred and things.

MR. PHILLIPS: That issue applies more than for just the --

DR. CRABTREE: Just to point out that's for limited entry permits. If it's an open access permit, like now, there is no transfer.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think that's Ben's point. If there is an open access permit, but it's got a control date on it, then it's more than just the charter boats. It applies to dolphin and wahoo, and it applies to Spanish and other things, and so probably you need to fix all of that somehow, and that would track a number or -- I'm not sure how to do it, but that is something that needs to be worked on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before we go to Zack, I'm wondering if there is a part of the document that says it's the council's intent to consider things like transfers that have happened since the control date as well as an appeals -- Just like a little paragraph, maybe, about this, but I'm going to go to Zack and see what he has to say.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Anna and Roy actually made my point. Up until -- Previously, there is no catch history for the for-hire permits, and, to Roy's point, you can't transfer one. You just get a new one, and, hopefully, with this, that will be cut out.

MR. HADLEY: I think it wasn't clear, but I think that could be handled in the transferability, and so that was the intent of including that in there, as far as -- I mean, you can track the permits, and you could have the same -- When we're looking at how permits change hands over time, you can look at vessel number or -- Well, vessel changes, but you can look at who owns that permit, the entity, the address, that sort of thing, and so there are certain ways on there that I would assume that could be proven if you get a new vessel, but that was the intent of the transferability section.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

MR. DILERNIA: Regarding the transferability, could you have two different criteria for the permits, one that is individuals that have owned permits prior to the control date and a second criteria, transfer criteria, for individuals who acquired their permits after the control date?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I like that. I like adding something like that to the document.

MS. BECKWITH: That is actually part of my long-term vision, and I had sort of emailed that idea around at one point, about having the potential to have two types of permits, but it got so much into the weeds that we sort of said let's take a step back for now and let's get general input, and then we can sort of start to work through, based on scoping documents, and maybe create something that would be a transferable permit and one that would be non-transferable, and so we could, but we don't necessarily need to complicate the scoping document at this point. We can maybe get the scoping information back and conceptualize it, based on the comments, and then add something more specific in a public hearing document a little bit in the future, and I think it's going to get too complicated.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree, but I guess I just had some concerns that some people might respond to this document with the worry of like what Ben is bringing up, that I had to make some transfers between my own boats after the control date and I don't know what it means and so I don't know how I feel about this. That was just my concern, was to try to add some kind of sentence that it was the council's intent to look at that, to try to squelch those fears, so they could comment on the rest of the document.

MS. BECKWITH: To a certain extent, I kind of want people to be worried about this and comment and give us their fears. I mean, I sort of want that to be part of the comments that we get back, because we may not be thinking through all the concerns that they might bring up, and so I see what you're saying, and I think, in the previous discussion about permits types, having transferable permits or non-transferable permits, I guess you could add in one sentence that the council might consider multiple permit categories, and some may be transferable and some may be non-transferable, and just sort of leave it at that for now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. John, do you think you have enough input? Okay. Then let's move on to the next section.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Moving along to the new entrants permit, and so, here again, this is sort of the greenhorn permit idea of allowing previously unpermitted vessel owners, or previously owned permitted vessels, to enter into the snapper grouper for-hire fishery. The number of new entrants permits available each year could be limited, and presumably would be limited, and they could be renewed for a limited number of years, after which time the permit holder would be eligible to receive a snapper grouper for-hire permit if they could provide documentation of for-hire fishing activity.

That could vary, and the documentation could include items such as proof of for-hire fishing activity submitted via the South Atlantic for-hire logbook or some sort of income provision related to income derived from for-hire fishing activity.

Other provisions that have been mentioned, as far as that could be considered for the new entrant permit, would be establishing a probationary period, requiring an annual U.S. Coast Guard safety inspection and safety decal, and this would be specifically for uninspected passenger vessels through the U.S. Coast Guard sort of voluntary program, passing a boating safety course, proof of captains license, an additional fee, only allowing harvest of certain snapper grouper species under the new entrant permit, letters of reference, presumably from other permit holders, requiring logbook training, and also looking at making these permits renewable on a specific date during the calendar year, rather than just kind of having them rolling, and this would be for ease of enforcement, and then sort of a catchall category.

The public input questions for this would be should a new entrant, i.e., greenhorn, permit be established to allow new entrants into the for-hire fishery? If so, what provisions should accompany this permit? Also, how many new entrant permits should be made available each year?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Let's keep going.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Then looking at should a time limit or a sunset provision be added to the moratorium, and a time-limited moratorium could allow the council to evaluate the current for-hire sector conditions and to design a more permanent limited entry system without a large fluctuation in the number of permits.

At the end of the moratorium, a plan amendment could be implemented establishing an indefinite limited entry system that would remain in place until it was changed by the council, and there are several examples of this. There are two examples in here, one with the commercial king mackerel

permit, where there is a moratorium on new permits starting in 1995. This lasted until 2000, and the moratorium was extended until 2005, after which time an indefinite limited entry system was established. Then, also, in the Gulf of Mexico, and so the Gulf reef fish and Gulf CMP charter/headboat permits, a moratorium on new permits started in 2003, and it lasted until 2006, and then, in 2006, an indefinite limited entry program was implemented.

The public input questions here would be should there be a specific end date or time limit established if a moratorium on snapper grouper for-hire permits is implemented? If so, what length of time should be considered?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't see any hands. Let's keep going.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Moving along, looking at are there other requirements that should be considered, kind of the catchall category, and one example that was brought up is it has been suggested that a for-hire permit should be tied to an individual rather than a vessel, as far as helping with professionalizing the for-hire industry, or the for-hire fleet, and it would allow operators the flexibility to easily change vessels, rather than having the permit tied to a specific vessel.

The public input questions here are should a permit remain tied to a vessel or should it be tied to an individual, and so a person or a business, et cetera, and, also, are there other permit options that the council should consider in relation to a moratorium on snapper grouper for-hire permits?

MR. BOWEN: To keep in line with the other permitted parts of this fishery, I'm not sure that we want to put in there for a question about tying it to a vessel or an individual, because all of our other permits in all of the other fisheries are tied to the vessel. I'm okay with the second question, but I just think it's going to be a little more confusing to the public if we're trying to -- Especially if we are considering doing something else other than all the other permits have been done before.

MR. BREWER: I think I'm the one that requested that that be put in, and there was a reason. One of the things that I have heard repeatedly is we're trying to set up a system whereby these permits are not monetized. If they're tied to a boat, then you sell your boat and you sell your permit as a package, and so you're in a sense, monetizing that permit, and that's the reason this is here. It's not saying we're going to do it, but it's saying that we are asking for comments and thoughts on it, and so I think it should stay in.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I don't understand that comment, Chester, because it makes no difference. If the permit is transferable, it will have some value to it, and it doesn't matter if it's tied to the individual or to the vessel. As a practical matter, every permit we issue is issued to the vessel, but we also know who the individual is and the entity that owns the permit, and so we have both, effectively, and so I tend to agree with Zack that I don't think there's any reason why this really needs to be in here.

MR. DILERNIA: You create a safety issue if the permit must go with the boat. If I have a boat that's getting old and I want to replace it, then let me replace the boat and just put the permit on the new boat. You may have an upgrade provision that you're going to require that I have the same horsepower and the same length or something along those lines, but, if the permit is permanently attached to the boat, then I'm going to be using a lot of nails and a lot of fiberglass

and everything else to keep that boat floating, because -- Then you reach a point where it becomes a safety issue.

DR. CRABTREE: I mean, we don't have any permits that are tied to boats. They're all transferable, and so, if you need to replace your boat, you transfer it to another vessel, and so I don't think that's a problem or a concern. Now, in some permits, there are passenger capacity limits on the permit, but that hasn't proven to be a problem either.

MR. BREWER: Roy, one of the options that we have here is that the permits would not be transferable, and that is -- In other words, it would have to go back through a pool, and there wouldn't be a transfer that is directly between captains, and you wouldn't have a situation where we have safety concerns, and we talk about maybe having the requirement for new captains and that they go to and pass a Coast Guard school.

You wouldn't have a situation where, when the permit is on the boat, it doesn't matter who the captain is. Zack can go hire somebody that has never been out in water deeper than thirty feet in their life, and they can legally go out and fish and be a captain, and that's the reason that it's -- Certainly a consideration should be given to tying the permit to the person as opposed to the boat.

DR. CRABTREE: I mean, I don't agree with that. If you don't want the permits to be transferable, you can do that and it's irrelevant. It still should be issued to the boat, and it's associated with a person. If you're going to issue it to the person, it sounds like you're talking about then that person has to be on the vessel, and that's going to be a problem, because a lot of these vessels are owned by people who aren't on the vessel.

You may have some that are owned by corporations that have multiple owners, and you have, in all of our fisheries, situations where you have a vessel owner who owns several vessels and they have captains on them, and so you're going to have to deal with all those kinds of things, but I think you are needlessly complicating this if you consider issuing permits to vessels, and I think there are a whole host of reasons, and I haven't heard any reason as to why we would want to do that, but there are a lot of downsides, I think.

MR. BREWER: I am kind of taken aback. Why would you have a situation, and maybe it exists right now, but why would you have a situation where you've got an unlicensed man who is running somebody else's boat and they're taking people out sixty miles offshore? I just don't -- That is inconceivable to me. That's why I said that the person --

DR. CRABTREE: That's happening, Chester. It's happening in all of our fisheries, where the vessel owner is not the captain. Now, it's not like an unlicensed man is doing that. They have to have Coast Guard licenses and all those kinds of things in order to operate the vessel, but, if you're suggesting that we don't have charter boats that are owned by one entity, but that entity is not the captain on it, I can assure you that you're wrong about that. It's happening in commercial fisheries and in the charter boat fishery.

MR. BREWER: To your point, Roy, and I'm sorry to keep arguing with you, but we're talking about somebody who has a permit to go out in deep water and take passengers out there, and I think that everybody that is doing that should be permitted and have a license. I mean, I

respectfully disagree with you that -- I think that this permit should be tied to the person and not the boat.

MR. DILERNIA: Again, up in the Mid, we have both vessel permits and an operator permit. The vessel has to have a permit to operate in federal waters, and, if you're going to operate a federally-permitted vessel in federal waters, you need a federal operator permit. Now, if you're going to carry passengers for hire on top of that, you need a Coast Guard license, either an OUPV for passengers six or less or, if it's seven or more passengers, then you need a Master license, and so there are the three things, right away, that you need to take passengers fishing. I mean, you need all three, and that's what I would have, and so you have to have the operators permit, but they are separate. The operator permit is separate from the vessel permit. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: I think Roy made some of my points. I understand Chester's concern, but I feel like we have the requirements in place already for the Coast Guard license for anyone who is operating a charter vessel, regardless of whether or not that person is the vessel owner. I think the issue of monetizing a permit and allowing for transfers is something that can be addressed in that transferability section.

You can allow just limited transfers, and that's the discussion that we're hoping to get from folks and input that we're hoping to get, and I can't ever imagine a situation where we would not allow someone whose vessel currently holds a permit to be able to transfer it to a new vessel, for exactly those types of reasons that Tony brought up, in terms of safety. It's really, I think, one of the issues that the council might discuss down the road, is not wanting to monetize those permits, that you don't get into the commercial two-for-one type of situation.

MR. HAYMANS: In the little state of Georgia, with its fifty-seven or fifty-nine federally-permitted charter guides, all of those individuals have to have a charter fishing license if they're going to conduct business from the State of Georgia, and that's going to continue, I believe, into the future, and so, even if it's a vessel license in federal waters, they're going to have an individual license for the person, and, in my humble opinion, that's where -- When we start licensing -- I understand the vessel license and the commercial side. Larger vessels, the owners aren't there, but, in the charter fishing business, to me, the charter fisherman is the guy on the water and not the vessel, and so I agree with Chester on this one, but Georgia is going to continue in the foreseeable future with an individual charter license.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Florida has the same thing. Even if you have a federal permit, you've got to have the state permit as well to operate your business, and so let me make a suggestion. I have heard both sides here, but there are some people that still want the word "individual" left in this document. I say that we move on, and you guys can talk to each other, and, if you still have some heartburn about this, then when we go to Full Council we can discuss this a little bit more if we need to. All right, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and sort of the -- Moving over to the other subject, regarding reconsidering the prohibition on retention of snapper grouper species in state waters onboard federally-permitted for-hire vessels when the species is closed to harvest in federal waters, as previously mentioned, several snapper grouper for-hire holders have expressed concern over the inequity that occurs onboard vessels that do and do not have the federal for-hire permit when a

snapper grouper species is closed to recreational harvest in federal waters but the harvest remains open in state waters.

Under such circumstances, customers onboard for-hire vessels with the federal permit may not harvest these species, even though they may be fishing in state waters, where the species can be legally retained otherwise. In response to the stated concern, the council could amend or remove the federal regulations that prohibit this.

The public input question for this subject would be should the council change or remove the harvest prohibition for federal for-hire snapper grouper permit holders on snapper grouper species in state waters when the species is closed to harvest in federal waters? I would certainly welcome -- One other note that I would certainly welcome any wordsmithing on this, because this was a tough one to kind of put together.

MR. BOWEN: Again, I think we're adding more confusion to this document than necessary by putting this in there. I think that's a separate, totally separate, whatever, and it needs to be completely taken out for -- One, to me, it doesn't go with the rest of the document, and, two, it's just adding more confusion to the public.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree that it's more confusing, but remember we're changing the name of this document and broadening it out, and so, if we're going to broaden it out, then this does fall under what the broadened name would fall into.

MR. BOWEN: Can you tell me -- Maybe I missed it, but can you tell me now the new name of this document?

MS. MCCAWLEY: We talked about something like For-Hire Permit Modifications or For-Hire Permit Changes, and I think she had two or three different words there at the end, but it was a more overarching document, and, if that is the name, then this would fall under that.

MR. BOWEN: Did we decide on a final name or it was just suggestions, because, if it's not decided on a final name, then this, in my opinion, needs to be out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't think we picked the exact four or five words, and we could spend time doing that if you want to, but let me go to Chester and Michelle.

MR. BREWER: I'm already regretting my vote.

MR. BOWEN: It wouldn't have mattered.

MR. BREWER: I am still regretting my vote, because, with the different suite of options that we had here, and there were some things that I thought that could work and could help, and that's the reason that I voted to go to scoping, and now the things that I thought could help, before it even goes to scoping, we're talking about taking them out, and so I voted on the package that we were looking at to go to scoping, and now we're starting to already, already, to change that document, and I am not particularly happy about it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for your honesty. Before I go to Zack, I have Michelle, and then we'll go back to Zack.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't really have a preference on the whatever word is used for the title. It can be For-Hire Permit Modifications or For-Hire Permit Issues or For-Hire Permit Changes, and I think any one of those would cover this and allow for this public input question to remain. I have already expressed the fact that we don't -- We would not support this particular change in North Carolina, for the other inequities that it would create, and we feel that there is a different solution here. However, I support leaving this question in here, because I think it could generate additional responses to address the issue that is being brought forward, and so that's why I support leaving it in there. Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: I just want to remind you all that it's ten minutes after twelve, and we are into lunch. We need to try to finish this up, and, ideally, we should have gotten through red grouper, which I am hoping might take ten minutes, and we have a hard-stop this afternoon because of public comment, and so I know there is questions, and I am inclined to leave as much in as we can, and we get what we get. It is scoping, and then let's just go on.

MR. HAYMANS: I apologize for missing this earlier, but this is too big of a topic for a webinar. This has to be in-person scoping meetings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so we've had a recommendation for in-person scoping meetings. Do we need to go back to the name, or can it stay For Hire Permit Modifications? Okay, and so it sounds like For-Hire Permit Modifications -- Folks are okay with that. We've had a recommendation to not do this by webinar and instead do this in person.

MR. HAYMANS: There can be a webinar included. I don't want to exclude a webinar, but we've got to go in-person with this topic.

MR. BOWEN: I agree.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. In addition. Got it.

MR. DILERNIA: If you're going to have in-person scoping also, I would request that you have one in the southern area of the Mid-Atlantic region, please.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Good point.

MR. DILERNIA: Maybe a little further north in North Carolina.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tony.

MR. BOWEN: And the very southern tip of our range, which would be Key West.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

MR. HADLEY: Just a question for clarification. As far as the in-person scoping, this would -- Well, we have guidance on where it should occur, and this would go beyond listening stations.

This would be more along the lines of what we typically used to do, and is that a correct assumption?

DR. DUVAL: I would say, because of the fiscal climate that we're in, I don't have a problem doing listening stations like we just did in May for the public hearings, where staff is providing the webinar from the office and we have the state reps who are running the public hearing, the public listening, stations to collect the input, and I think that's probably less expensive and logistically easier.

MR. HAYMANS: Whereas I agree with that, I have not seen listening stations be as productive as I had hoped they would be, and I don't believe the council necessarily needs to have the entourage that typically goes, but certainly having an in-person -- John from the council presenting this document and having some back-up, I just -- I think an in-person, at least a few in each state, would be better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I kind of feel the same way, actually, having John there to answer some of the questions.

MR. DILERNIA: The Mid-Atlantic Council, in August of this year, will be meeting in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and so if you want to, perhaps Executive Director to Executive Director, perhaps arrange it, and you won't have to pay for a meeting room or anything like that, and we could probably accommodate you. The agenda hasn't been finalized yet, but that would be a good time and location.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Tony.

MR. BOWEN: I would also request Savannah be a webinar and not Pooler and not Richmond Hill, but Savannah, where we've had public testimony from permitted for-hire guys that they feel like overcapacity is going on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I think we're -- Michelle, did you have your hand up?

DR. DUVAL: Are you looking for input on locations right now, John?

MR. HADLEY: We could certainly take that, yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We could take some now, if you have some now. Otherwise, if you want to work on this and think about it between now and Full Council, you can do that as well. Either one is up to you.

DR. DUVAL: I will just get with John after this, and we can do it that way, and I think that's more efficient.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Florida will do the same. All right, John.

MR. HADLEY: I can certainly put that in the committee report, so everyone can see the final list at Full Council, and so we'll talk between then and now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great. Thank you, John.

MR. BELL: I know when we advertise things that we do it broadly, but we might want to also make sure that we focus on the folks that we want to make sure that we really hear from, if there's a way to reach out directly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and we had mentioned that in the past, about talking to all existing permit holders, but I don't know if we want to do an email blast or some kind of invitation to them, and we've also talked about that you have all the private anglers as well, and so I think, in Florida, we might do a hybrid, and FWC might supplement what we're going to do for the scoping, but I can't speak for other states, but do we want to send some kind of mail-out or email to all existing permit holders? Is that state-specific and you can decide between now and Full Council?

MR. HARTIG: Well, the comment was that they don't have all the email addresses for all the permit holders.

MS. MCCAWLEY: You could do a mailer, an actual hard-copy mailer, to them. I would feel more comfortable about that, if we sent a mail-out to all existing permit holders.

MR. BOWEN: It's totally off this subject, and I know we're trying to speed this up, but something that has been brought up that's not in here, and it's just come into my thoughts, is identifying the six-pack permits versus the headboat permits. I didn't see that in the document, and what we're trying -- What I wouldn't want to see is somebody having a six-pack permit and then going and buying a sixty-man headboat and using that permit, because, instead of reducing the catch or effort, we have just increased it, and one goal of this is to cap effort, and, if we don't put something in here to differentiate between the six-pack permits and the headboat permits, we could be shooting ourselves in the foot.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Would you be amenable to maybe something in the transferability section, and maybe something in the type of permit section, that gets added that is maybe not too specific that could get to that? I am looking at Anna too, because she was concerned about us adding some specifics, but would something like that work?

MR. BOWEN: Yes, and somebody smarter than me could figure it out, but I just feel like that we need to differentiate between the two somewhere in this document.

MS. BECKWITH: My personal feelings are we don't need to ask the public about that. I think that's just a choice that this council would make, in terms of capacity. I think there is -- Then we could have that discussion amongst ourselves later, and I don't know that we need public input on that.

MR. BOWEN: I just said that for total transparency.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Maybe that is another thing to put on the list to think about between now and Full Council. All right. John, are you good? Okay.

MR. PHILLIPS: John, how long do you think it's going to take to do red grouper?

MR. HADLEY: I am hopeful that we could run through that fairly quickly.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think the council works faster when they're hungry or before cocktail hour.

MS. MCCAWLEY: True. All right, and so now we're moving into Regulatory Amendment 30, which is to revise the rebuilding plan for red grouper, and it is Attachment 11.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and I will run through this very quickly, but, just to kind of orient everyone, what the council did in March was discussed the need to revise the rebuilding schedule to meet -- To address the findings of SEDAR 53 and meet MSA requirements, and, as a reminder, the rebuilding schedule needs to be in place by September 27, 2019, and so there was direction to staff to begin work on Regulatory Amendment 30 and some of the Magnuson-Stevens Act considerations.

On September 27, the council received a letter, and so that's where that September 27 date is coming from, from NMFS stating that red grouper are overfished and undergoing overfishing and not making adequate rebuilding progress, and an implementation plan needs to be in place within two years. Overfishing has been addressed through Abbreviated Framework 1, leaving the rebuilding plan that needs to be revised.

I will go through the timing very quickly. Essentially, the council could approve the amendment for scoping, which would take place in September of 2018. In summer of 2018, in September, review scoping comments and make final changes to the purpose and need and actions and alternatives and approve for public hearings, which would take place in the fall of 2018. Then, in December, the council would take final action on the amendment and send it for secretarial review for implementation on or before September of 2019.

There again, what we'll be doing is we'll go over the options paper, very quickly, looking at draft purpose and need statements as well as the draft action and alternatives and review timing of the amendment and approve for scoping. There again, final approval of this amendment is needed by December of 2018, in order to meet that September 2019 deadline, to allow the agency to run their end of things as far as getting it implemented. Also, it's been discussed in some of the previous discussions previously, but there is some uncertainty over the outcome of the MRIP revision stock assessment that is kind of going to take place at the same time. We would likely need to move forward to make that statutory deadline.

Moving into Attachment 11, which is the red grouper rebuilding options paper, very quickly, why is the council considering action, and so, there again, looking at SEDAR 53, which was completed in September of 2017, and that indicated that the stock was overfished and undergoing overfishing, and the results showed that rebuilding would not be possible by 2020, which is what the current schedule shows, and it likely wouldn't rebuild by 2030, even with no fishery present.

In reaction to the results of the stock assessment, as I mentioned, a letter was sent to the council on September 27 of 2017. There again, that's kind of where that September deadline is coming from that the council needs to take action within the next two years to end overfishing immediately and also revise the rebuilding plan for red grouper based on the results of this assessment. The council has developed Abbreviated Framework Amendment 1 to end overfishing, leaving the rebuilding schedule that still needs to be revised.

As a reminder, the council's SSC reviewed four rebuilding projections produced by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center at their October 2017 meeting, which one of the main take-home here is the expected -- Looking at long-term expected recruitment and then a low-recruitment scenario. Due to poor recruitment trends in the stock in recent years, the SSC has recommended the projections at FMSY in the low-recruitment scenario for the overfishing limit, but this is for the short-term, and so specifically in the next five years, with the idea that this assumption will be reexamined within five years. The SSC noted that recruitment could increase in the future and become consistent with long-term levels that the stock is predicted to produce.

As I mentioned, and I won't go into too much detail, objectives for the meeting are to review the purpose and need statements for the amendment and then also provide input on the draft actions and alternatives and decide whether the amendment should go out for scoping. With that, I will move on to the draft purpose for the action.

The purpose of this amendment is to modify the rebuilding schedule for red grouper based on the results of the most recent stock assessment, and I think that will probably need to be revised, given the additions that will probably occur within this amendment, and so that's something that the IPT can certainly do, unless the committee has any input at the moment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any guidance here, or are we good with the draft purpose and need?

DR. DUVAL: I think I am good with allowing the IPT to reformat the draft purpose and need, because we've pulled in these two actions that would consider additional protection for spawning red grouper, and I'm going to make a motion to add an action to consider a commercial trip limit when we get to the appropriate point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds good. Is everybody okay with letting the IPT wordsmith this? Okay. That sounds good. Thanks, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so, with that, I will jump into the draft action and the alternatives, and so the draft action is to revise the rebuilding schedule for red grouper. Under Alternative 1, no action, the red grouper rebuilding schedule is set at the maximum time period allowed to rebuild, or T_{max} . This is equal to ten years, with the rebuilding time period ending in 2020, and 2011 was year-one of this rebuilding schedule.

Alternative 2 would revise the rebuilding schedule to equal the shortest possible time period to rebuild in the absence of fishing mortality, and so this is T_{min} , and this would equal six years, with the rebuilding time period ending in 2023, and 2018 would be year-one. Alternative 3 is revise the rebuilding schedule to equal eight years, with a rebuilding time period ending in 2025. 2018 would be year-one. Then Alternative 4, which would revise the rebuilding schedule to equal the maximum time period allowed to rebuild, or in words T_{max} , this would equal ten years within the rebuilding time period, ending in 2027. 2018 would be year-one.

A little bit of rationale on how these numbers were provided, and guidance on the upper and lower bounds of a rebuilding schedule are very well specified in National Standard 1, and I won't go into too much detail though, but, in the case for red grouper, according to SEDAR 53, the minimum

timeline for red grouper to rebuild, in the absence of any fishing mortality, is six years. Thus, T_{min} is specified as being six years, and that's where the wording in Alternative 2 came from.

Since T_{min} is specified as six years, National Standard 1 defines the maximum time for rebuilding a stock, or T_{max} , as being ten years, with the guidance as follows. If T_{min} for the stock or stock complex is ten years or less, then T_{max} is ten years, and so that's where you had the wording in Alternative 4. Alternative 3 was provided as a midpoint between those two sort of bookends, and that's sort of the rationale for that.

One thing to keep in mind, as I mentioned earlier, is the timing of future red grouper stock assessments and potential amendments, including the need to revisit the rebuilding schedule if low recruitment persists in the stock, and so the MSA requires the council to act to revise the rebuilding schedule for red grouper, which is being addressed in this amendment. The next few years, there are two stock assessments that are expected for red grouper that will provide updated information on the status of the stock and stock rebuilding, one being the MRIP revisions, which I believe, based on earlier guidance, will be provided to the SSC in the fall of 2018, and so the council potentially be reviewing these at their December meeting.

This will be inclusive of the MRIP revisions and the new recreational catch estimates, and this could potentially -- This will result in a revised ACL, and it could change the rebuilding projections. Depending on the results, the council may end up wanting to reconsider the rebuilding strategy if the stock status for rebuilding projections change substantially. Unfortunately, there is no way to predict the extent to which the revised MRIP estimates will affect the stock assessment until the new data are available and the revised assessment has been completed.

The other timeline to keep in mind is a standard assessment for red grouper, with the revised methodology and updated data, is also scheduled to start in 2021. The likely FMP amendment that will occur will correspond with the SSC's recommendation, as far as timing, to revisit the appropriate long-term recruitment assumption for red grouper.

In summary, overfishing has been addressed through Abbreviated Framework 1. That is still leaving the revising of the rebuilding schedule, which is being addressed in the action that was previously provided and in this amendment to update the -- It satisfies the update of the rebuilding plan, as specified under MSA, and so, given the statutory requirement limiting the options for the council, it may make sense to revise the rebuilding schedule now. The council may then want to potentially revise the rebuilding plan and schedule in 2022, after the new stock assessment has been completed and there is more certainty regarding what the long-term recruitment assumption should be, and that has significant impacts on projections on how the red grouper stock can rebuild.

Then, there again, in the meantime, there will be some uncertainty over the actions that the council may need to take for red grouper that will be dependent upon that MRIP revision stock assessment, and, with that, I will go back up to the draft action and alternatives.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, John. I am looking for questions right now on the draft action, and also know that we need a motion to add these actions to the amendment and approve the range of alternatives, but, first, let's have some questions on this. Do we have any questions?

MS. BURGESS: John, I'm hoping you can provide some clarification for me, because there is information that doesn't agree with each other, and I understand the timeline progressed, but, at the beginning of the document, in February of 2017, the SSC said that, with no fishery present and F equals zero, the stock would likely take at least until 2030 to rebuild, which is beyond ten years, and then, in October, they received new projections that provided rebuilding schedules with FMSY and F rebuild, and are all of those new projections from October within a ten-year timeline, or were there some that would also take longer than ten years?

MR. HADLEY: That's a good question, and this is something that the IPT discussed quite a bit, as far as -- Mike Errigo, I might ask you to chime in here if there are further details needed, but, essentially, the way that the rebuilding plan was specified in the previous red grouper amendment, it requires at least a 50 percent rebuilding -- Probability of success for rebuilding in those tables, and so, given the tables provided in the updated SEDAR stock assessment, and so SEDAR 53, and so it's kind of an underlying assumption, because we had the exact same question, and we kind of worked through that, that at least 50 percent probability of rebuilding under F equals zero is kind of already built into the assumptions of the assessment.

MS. BURGESS: So I guess my question is, the projections that were given for F rebuild and FMSY at the October 2017 meeting, were all of those at least 50 percent chance of rebuilding within ten years?

DR. ERRIGO: You're asking about the projections that you guys saw that showed that it took like until twenty-forty-something? That's because those projections were done under the low-recruitment scenario, and these projections needed to be done in order to look at the rebuilding schedule, and they needed to be done under the average projection, the average recruitment in the projections, because, in order to assume that this low recruitment was going to persist throughout the entire rebuilding timeframe and into the future, that would mean that there would be a change in the productivity of red grouper, which means there would be a change in productivity of the assessment, which would mean the assessment would need to be rerun, which means that the benchmarks would change.

What you're doing is you're trying to rebuild the benchmarks with recruitment here, but, if your recruitment drops, your benchmarks will change, and so, if you're rebuilding to these benchmarks, the projections will need to be done with the recruitment for those benchmarks, and so that's why these rebuilding times are -- It seems you can rebuild within these timeframes, because you're using the long-term average recruitment from the assessment.

DR. DUVAL: Just to add to that, the SSC was concerned about this more recent period of recruitment that appeared to have kind of bottomed out, and so it's more conservative to use those low-recruitment projections than for your catch limits, but you're still, like Mike said, operating on the information from the assessment, which uses this long-term recruitment for the benchmarks, and so that's why -- I know it's a little tough to wrap your head around, and I remember, back in October, we were dealing with this, but that's why you have two different sets of projections like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I am looking to the committee. I need a motion to add this action and its alternatives to the amendment.

DR. DUVAL: **I move that we add this action and its alternatives to Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 30.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Michelle, and it's seconded by Charlie. Michelle, did you have some other motions for this?

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I would like to add a motion to Regulatory Amendment 30 to consider a commercial trip limit with sub-alternatives of fifty pounds, seventy-five pounds, and 100 pounds, and I think that's gutted weight.**

MR. HADLEY: I'm sorry, but what was the first?

DR. DUVAL: Fifty pounds, seventy-five pounds, and 100 pounds. I think my intent here is that this trip limit would be for the open season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What was the last thing you said, Michelle, that your intent was what?

DR. DUVAL: That the trip limit would apply for the open season, because one of my next motions is going to -- We have already had motions to bring in the consideration of extending the spawning closure for red grouper off of the Carolinas through the month of May, and so I think that is kind of a separate decision. What I have heard from the fishermen is that they think it would be prudent to have some kind of minimum bycatch trip limit for red grouper, regardless, during the open season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Is it clear that the intent is that this is for the open season, John? Okay. We have a motion, and we have a second. Any additional discussion of adding this action?

MR. GRINER: I think we're going to need a little bit higher range of alternatives there. I don't think 100 pounds is enough there. You're going to run into problems when you're trying to fish on scamp grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you have a suggested number in mind?

MR. GRINER: I would say 200 at minimum. You're going to need 200 pounds, or you're going to shut down scamp fishing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Michelle, are you amenable to adding 200 to this list?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, and I think we could -- Did we have a second to this?

MS. MCCAWLEY: The second is Charlie, yes.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, and so I would be fine with adding 200. Perhaps it might be take away fifty, but do seventy-five, 100, 150, and 200, and that might cover the range. **I am seeing nods, and Charlie agrees with that, and so it would be to take away the fifty, and so leave it at seventy-five, 100, 150, and 200.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Second, are you okay with that? Okay. Any more discussion of this? **Is there any objection to adding the consideration of this action with these sub-alternatives to this amendment? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

John, are we good here? Is it clear? I know we need a timing and move the amendment forward, but it's clear that we're bringing over those other actions, and we don't need a motion for that, since we already had a motion to bring them over to this document.

DR. DUVAL: I do just want to address a recreational bag limit. I mean, I think, in Regulatory Amendment 26, as part of the whole consideration of the shallow-water grouper items, there was an alternative with sub-alternatives to specify a one-fish per person per day red grouper with any aggregate or one fish per vessel per day for red grouper north of the Georgia/Florida state line. I just wanted to point out that those analyses showed that there would be less than a 1 percent change in red grouper harvest by imposing that.

I think, also, in the Chapter 4 environmental effects section of many of our amendments, in regard to whether or not to consider changes like this, we always note that harvest is constrained by an annual catch limit, and so imposition of a bag limit doesn't necessarily add or take anything away, biologically, from the conservation of the stock, and so I just wanted to sort of address upfront my reasons for not including a similar action on the recreational side to change the bag limit of red grouper, because it doesn't look like, based on the analysis done in Amendment 26, that it's going to do very much anyway, and I also think it would be somewhat hypocritical, given our earlier discussion this morning.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and thank you. Thanks for adding that information. I think we also need a motion from the committee to send this out for scoping.

DR. DUVAL: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Second by Charlie. Are there -- I'm sorry, but we didn't vote on the last motion, from what I can tell. Well, yes, we did. It's approved by the committee. Sorry. Back to the motion for the timing. **Are there any objections to sending this amendment out for scoping? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MR. PHILLIPS: You all did a really good job, and we're not terribly behind schedule, and, if we come back at 2:00, we'll get an hour-and-twenty-minutes for lunch, and we'll only be thirty minutes behind schedule, and, because I have faith in you being efficient, we will be through in time for public comment. See you promptly at 2:00.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're starting with golden tilefish, Regulatory Amendment 28.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Okay. As Jessica just said, this is Regulatory Amendment 28 for golden tilefish, and this is a quick presentation to help orient you as to where we are with this and why we're here and what's going on and what we hope to accomplish. You may remember that SEDAR 25, the 2016 update, indicated that golden tilefish was undergoing overfishing, but it is not

overfished, and so an interim rule that was put into place that was effective on January 2 of 2018, where the ACL was set equal to 75 percent of FMSY.

You all had passed a motion earlier about requesting National Marine Fisheries Service extend the interim rule by 186 days, but, even still, that runs out at the beginning of 2019, and so, if there's not a new ACL in place by January of 2019, it goes back to the pre-interim rule level of 558,036 pounds gutted weight.

In December of 2017, the council requested projections from the Science Center that set ABC equal to P^* of 30 percent. For somewhat unknown reasons, this resulted in a really, really huge buffer between optimum yield and ABC, and so, in March of 2018, the council then asked the SSC again to consider setting the ABC equal to the same value that was used in the interim rule, which is 75 percent of FMSY.

The SSC met in early May, and they agreed with the council's recommendation, and, if you want some of the logic behind their agreement, George Sedberry is around, and he could help you out with that, but, in a nutshell, it was basically that there is another stock assessment coming up, and they didn't seem to think that there would be any real problem with doing this for just a couple of years.

Like I said, the new assessment is starting in 2019. Now, the interesting thing that -- I want to make a comment about that assessment starting in 2019. It's really unlikely that the SSC would receive the results of that assessment prior to their October of 2020 meeting, and that might be pushing it as it is, and it's probably more likely that they won't see it until April of 2021, but, in either case, the council is not likely to be able to do a whole lot to affect any fishing year until probably 2022, even if it can go as an expedited framework just to change an ACL, because remember that this fishery goes pretty quickly starting at the beginning of the calendar year.

Our objectives for this meeting is to review and modify and approve the purpose and need and review and modify and approve the wording of the actions and to select preferred alternatives and review and modify and approve the codified text. Then we're hoping that you will then recommend that the council approve the regulatory amendment and the codified text. The issue here is we really need to finish this thing up in time, at this meeting, to be able to try to push it through to get it in place for that beginning of January of 2019, so we don't revert back to that pre-interim rule ACL, which could be rather disastrous.

The amendment has two actions, and one is to revise the ACL for golden tilefish, and we're going to go through these in more detail in the decision document, but I'm just giving you the preview now. Alternative 1, the no action, basically says that the interim rule, which is now 323,000 pounds gutted weight, will go back to 558,036 pounds gutted weight in January of 2019, when the interim rule extension expires.

Alternative 2 is the original ABC request that the council had asked the Science Center to do with P^* equal to 30 percent, and Alternative 3 is to set the ABC at 75 percent of FMSY when the population is at equilibrium, which is what the interim rule is, which is what you asked your SSC to do and that they have now -- That is now their recommendation. Then the Alternative 4 is ABC at 75 percent of FMSY, and that does not -- Assuming you make the assumption the population is at equilibrium.

Now, Alternatives 2 through 4 have the same sub-alternatives, where you could set -- You have seen this before, many times, when you have set ACLs based on ABCs that come from your SSC. There is a Sub-Alternative a, where ABC and ACL are equal to each other, and b is the ACL is equal to 90 percent of ABC, and c is equal to 80 percent of ABC. You might want to consider lower values than setting ACL equal to ABC if you think there is some kind of management uncertainty associated with monitoring this ACL. Then there is Alternative 5, which was in the amendment that you saw in March, but, as it really turns out, it's redundant with Alternative 1, and so one of the suggestions that you're going to get from the IPT is let's remove that alternative.

Just to give you a quick idea of the poundage difference that you're going to see between Alternatives 3 and 4, Alternative 3 would set the ACL to a fixed value for 2019 and 2020, until modified by the council in the future, based on the ABC recommendation from the SSC, and you can see that Sub-Alternative 3a, which is the ACL is equal to the ABC, is the same as that interim rule value, and so that's 323,000 pounds, and I believe that is -- It says whole weight, but it should be gutted weight. I'm sorry. It should be gutted weight and not whole weight. I didn't catch that before.

Then Alternative 4 would start out lower in 2019, and the values would increase over the years, and there is tables in the document that will show you that, and I'm just showing you what the values would be for the sub-alternatives for Sub-Alternative a, b, and c in 2019 and 2020, and you can see that they do go up a little bit over time.

Then your second action is adjust the fishing year for the commercial hook-and-line component. Currently, it's equal to the calendar year, which is the same as the longline component, which is the same as the recreational sector, but other alternatives that you currently have in the action are you can set the fishing year from September 1 to August 31, and Alternative 3 is to set the fishing year from August 1 to July 31, and Alternative 4 is to set the fishing year from May 1 to April 30.

Now, interestingly, the Snapper Grouper AP, and I wanted to point this out, when they talked about this, they recommended yet a fifth alternative, which is to have a split season, and the split seasons would run March 1 to August 31 and September 1 through the end of February, and the hook-and-line component would be split 50/50 between the seasons.

Their reasoning behind that is they would really like to have the hook-and-line component start after, but closely to, the end of the longline component, and, largely, it's for economic reasons, but then there is also a contingent of this fishery that really likes to fish in the fall, and so they came up with this as their approach to accommodate both groups of hook-and-line component fishermen, and so there we are. That's what we have as the run-through, and, if you give me a second, I will bring up the decision document.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I didn't know if you wanted questions now or questions when we're going through the decision document or what.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Let's wait until we get through the decision document and step our way through it, if that's okay. I have gone over a lot of the background things, the two actions, the objectives, and here is the expected timing. The council directed staff to begin this amendment in December of 2017, and you reviewed it in March.

In April and May of 2018, the amendment was reviewed by the Snapper Grouper AP and the SSC, and so now -- When you do your public comment period this evening, this is going to be the one and only time that you're having this out for public hearing. It's not like this is totally a new thing. We have been discussing this for a while, and you've heard from the constituents, and it's a fairly small group of folks who participate in this fishery, but they're going to have an opportunity to speak on this amendment this evening.

Then, assuming everything is okay, you're going to vote on Friday to send this amendment to the Secretary of Commerce, and that should hopefully get us to have this amendment in place by the beginning of the January 2019 season, so there is no break in the ACL, in the ACL value.

We've got a purpose and need, and, as you can see -- You've got to remember that this document was put together based on we thought perhaps -- We weren't sure what kind of amendment this was going to be. We thought perhaps it might be an expedited framework, but then, once the change in the hook-and-line component fishing year went in, it just became a regular framework amendment, and so what you see here in the purpose and need -- What is lined through is what the council saw in March, and the things that are highlighted in yellow are what the IPT is recommending, and so the former purpose for the action was adjust catch levels and implement management measures of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic. Now we just simplified it to end overfishing of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic.

The need for action used to be end overfishing of golden tilefish while minimizing to the extent practicable adverse socioeconomic effects and achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis, as per the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The IPT has recommended that you revise the need for action to end overfishing of golden tilefish while minimizing to the extent practicable adverse socioeconomic effects and achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis, as per the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

What we would like for you to do at this point is to discuss the purpose and need and review the IPT's suggested edits, but modify it how you want it to be and then let us know, and make a motion to that effect, and we can move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm looking around to the committee, to see what people think about particularly the modifications from the IPT.

DR. DUVAL: I don't have a problem with the revised purpose, in terms of end overfishing for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic. I think, if we do change the golden tilefish hook-and-line fishing year, it seems like we might need to modify the purpose or pull back in those words that indicate implement management measures for golden tilefish, and that would be my only suggestion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree. Brian, is that possible?

DR. CHEUVRONT: We can do it right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any changes? It's been edited by Brian, and it's on the board if you want to read it. We have added "implement management measures" back into the purpose,

and Brian is adding some items to the need for action as well. Michelle, I think that captures everything now, and I'm looking for a motion from the committee to accept the purpose and need as modified.

DR. DUVAL: I would just add a comma after "end overfishing of golden tilefish, maximize economic opportunity", under the need statement. **Then I would be willing to move that we accept the purpose and need as modified.**

DR. CHEUVRONT: Do you want me to read it into the record? Somebody probably should read this into the record.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I will read it. **The purpose, as we have modified it, is to end overfishing of golden tilefish and implement management measures in the South Atlantic. The need is end overfishing of golden tilefish, maximize economic opportunity for the commercial hook-and-line component while minimizing, to the extent practicable, the adverse socioeconomic effects and achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis, as per the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.** We have a motion by Michelle, and it's seconded by Charlie, to accept the purpose and need as modified. All right. Is there any more discussion on the purpose and need? **Is there any objection to the motion to approve the purpose and need? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

DR. CHEUVRONT: Okay. Your first action is to revise the annual catch limit for golden tilefish, as we discussed. In the decision document, and I want to make sure that everybody realizes that this is Tab 8, Attachment 12a. There was, in the late documents, an updated version added that is mildly different in the language in the recommendation from the IPT, because we took out language, or we modified the language, so that it would show which one was truly the one recommended by the SSC, and we made sure that all the poundage and everything was correct, but it's essentially the same things that you're seeing here. Nothing changed with numbers or anything like that. It's all the same intent, but it's just a little bit of change.

Alternative 1 literally is status quo, which means we'll go back up to that 558,036 pounds gutted weight in early January of 2019 when the interim rule expires. Alternative 2 sets the ACL at P* equal to 30 percent, which was your original request for the consideration by the SSC, which they did, and then you went back in March and asked them if they could look at using the same value that was used in the interim rule, which is yield at 75 percent of FMSY at equilibrium, and that's Alternative 3. Then there's the three sub-alternatives of setting the ACL at ABC or 90 percent of the ABC or 80 percent of the ABC.

Alternative 4 revises or would set the ACL equal to 75 percent of FMSY, but not put in the "at equilibrium" wording in there, and so those values would actually change over time. Now, Table 1 gets to be a bit long here, and I can't fit it all on the screen and have it even be anywhere close to being readable, but it sort of shows you what the total ACL would be like under all the different alternatives, and this one for under Alternative 3 actually -- Based on the SSC's actual recommendation, which was for 2019 and 2020 that specifically they spoke to, it really should be up in the upper part here, and that value would just remain place until you modified it, but the Alternative 4 actually has values that go through 2024, and so we have to modify the tables a little bit to make sure that they reflect a little more accurately what the wording says, but the numbers

are all there, and they're correct, but we just need to make sure that the layout is a little more accurate.

That's what you have for the total ACL, and Table 2 is what the longline component would have for their ACL, and, if you want to follow along with what your recommendation was for the SSC to consider last month, you're looking here at Alternative 3, and so this would set the ACL -- Basically, it would be 234,982, and it basically follows the numbers of what you had seen in the interim rule.

Table 3 is the hook-and-line component. Again, you can see the values here, and Table 4 shows you what the values would be based on the different sub-alternatives and alternatives for the recreational component, and realize that the recreational component is in numbers of fish and not pounds, and so we had to do a bit of conversion there, and so, to continue on, the projected closure dates -- We just did it for 2019 values.

The commercial hook-and-line component, if you wanted to go with the total ACL of 323,000 pounds like you have in the interim rule, that would show -- I'm just giving this as an example, but you can see them for all of them there, but the commercial hook-and-line component would be expected to close about April 26, the commercial longline on February 1, and the recreational component would probably close on April 4. I want to mention here, however, that, in the hook-and-line component, this is the assumption that the fishing year starts on January 1 and there is no change in there at this point for any of the other modifications at the beginning of the fishing year, but it's assuming that it is status quo.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have questions.

MR. PHILLIPS: Brian, I am looking at Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, and I guess one of them is at equilibrium and one is not, and so, if we chose Alternative 4, they would get a little bit less fish the first year, but the second year and thereon, they get more fish, and we're going to have another assessment when?

DR. CHEUVRONT: The assessment is going to start probably in late 2019, but, in talking with John Carmichael about how realistically this could get to the council and the first fishing year that the results of that assessment might affect actual fishing, particularly the longline component, I'm guessing it probably would be the start of the 2022 fishing year.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay, and so it looks like, if you average out all those numbers, actually Alternative 4 is better for fishermen, and so I will just leave it at that note, and maybe Ben can take off.

MR. HARTIG: Well, I had a comment on the projections for closure dates, and so we're already past that now and we're still open, and so the fishery is probably going to stay open a little bit longer.

DR. CHEUVRONT: You're speaking of the commercial hook-and-line?

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

DR. CHEUVRONT: This is based on projections on past years of data.

MR. HARTIG: That was the only point I was going to make, and, Charlie, you're trying to do -- What are you trying to do?

MR. PHILLIPS: I was just looking at the numbers, Ben, and it looks like, if we choose Alternative 4 instead of 3, they would get about 13,000 or 14,000 pounds less in the first year, but, the second year and the third year, the poundage goes up, and actually the fishermen would end up with more fish, on average, if you're figuring the fishing years are 2019, 2020, and 2021 before the new assessment comes in.

MR. HARTIG: I would just ask John. John, we went to the SSC with a specific request, and they -- Thank you, Mike.

DR. ERRIGO: The request to the SSC was for the ABC -- If it was all right for the ABC to be at the yield at 75 percent of FMSY at equilibrium, and they agreed that that was -- That it would have no negative impact to the stock and that that was an acceptable ABC. They did not, however, agree to -- They didn't say that the projections at the yield at 75 percent of FMSY, with the current biomass trends, was -- They didn't give that as an ABC recommendation.

MR. HARTIG: So we're stuck with what the SSC gave us, which is above what we had before, and so we are in a better place. I would like to get you where you want to go, but we can't get there based on what was approved by our scientific advisors, and so I appreciate what you did.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I was just -- I guess the question, in my mind, was Alternative 4, if it was not okay with the SSC, why is it here? That was kind of the rest of the question. How did it get here if it wasn't something that's really acceptable?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there more questions? Ultimately, we need to pick a preferred alternative and sub-alternative, when people are ready, but I don't want to stop on the questions if we still have some. First, we have Shep.

MR. GRIMES: I would say, first, that your SSC just looked at this last month, and so the alternatives weren't together before that, and that would be why one is greater than the ABC recommendation, as I understand it, but I also wanted to clarify that, reading the text of the alternatives, that Alternative 2 states that it's the recommendation from the SSC, and, just so everyone is clear, that was the prior recommendation. You have since been back to the SSC, and Alternative 3 is also based on an ABC, the most recent ABC, recommendation from the SSC.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Shep, we have changed that in the recommended language in the document, and so that is not in there anymore.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see that John has come to the table, and I don't know if you have something that you want to add here before we go to Michelle.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I just wanted to be there in case Ben had any questions, and so we're aware that the council wanted to prioritize tilefish as the next assessment once we get through amberjack and red porgy, which we're to start this year. The reality of what the Steering Committee dealt

with was, as we talked about, the delay from the revised MRIP data, and that has pushed everything back a little bit, and so, while we hope to get tilefish sooner, it's going to come once we get amberjack and red porgy done, and I think we haven't set timing for those next round of assessments, but, once we do, I will look at tilefish as being the priority for the South Atlantic to get done first. One of the challenges, of course, is, if it went to the SSC in October and comes to you in December, you just can't get the changes in for that fishing year, because it starts in January.

DR. DUVAL: This might be some language, Brian, that has already been addressed in the full amendment document, but I'm just looking in Chapter 2, and it's PDF page 20, but it says the immediate short-term ACLs proposed under each alternative are lower than what is specified under Alternative 1, no action, with Alternative 4 being the least restrictive, followed by Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, and so I'm just wondering if that -- To me, that language doesn't quite make sense unless it's Alternative 4 is being considered the least restrictive because of the increasing ACLs, and is that language that has been edited or modified?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That has not been edited or modified. This whole question about the language came up last Friday, and so we have been working to fix that, and we fixed it in the decision document and in the presentation, but not in the full document yet, and so that is part of the thing. When we get to a point where we ask you all to approve or recommend this for approval, that is the kind of editorial license that we need to get fixed and have the Chair approve that and make sure it's okay once we've gotten that done, but, yes, there are a couple of little issues like that that still need to -- We need to go through the document and make sure that stuff is all resolved.

DR. CRABTREE: I look at the SSC report, and they gave us an ABC of 362,000 pounds, and that appears to be whole weight, and this table is gutted weight, and so this 362,000 pounds is equivalent to what gutted weight?

DR. CHEUVRONT: 323,000 pounds gutted weight. Basically, what we did is we used the value that was from the interim rule that was in the gutted weight, but the SSC considered -- Their recommendation, the conversion was -- They had done it in whole weight, and so we had to convert it back to gutted weight to keep it consistent with the interim rule.

DR. CRABTREE: Is there a reason why they didn't just give us the yield streams in Alternative 4?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I don't know. Mike, can you answer that?

DR. ERRIGO: I'm sorry, but what are you asking about?

DR. CHEUVRONT: It has to do with why the SSC didn't consider the values that are in Alternative 4, that yield stream.

DR. ERRIGO: That's not what they were asked.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I wish when we asked these things that we would ask in a way that gets us a little more flexibility on it, because it seems to me that the logic behind the science would allow you to go with Alternative 4 if we wanted to, but I guess that leaves us with Alternative 3.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I believe so. Is there more discussion? Is somebody ready to make a motion?

DR. DUVAL: I will just throw this out there. **I move that we select Alternative 3, Sub-Alternative 3a, as the preferred.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: We have a motion, and it's seconded by Mel. We have a motion, and we have a second. Is there discussion? We've had some discussion already as to why we can't pick Alternative 4.

DR. DUVAL: I think some might wonder why I selected Sub-Alternative 3a, setting ACL equal to ABC, and I think, if you look at the yield streams under Alternative 4, keeping it at ACL equal to ABC, it still seems like we are, particularly if this is going to be in place for a couple of years, that we're still being conservative based on what might have been allowed, perhaps, had we asked the question a little bit differently.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point. Is there more discussion or more questions on this? I am going to take that as ready to vote. **All those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand, nine; those opposed. The motion passes.**

DR. CHEUVRONT: The second action was to adjust the fishing year for the commercial hook-and-line component. Right now, just to remind you of what you have here, it's to retain the existing calendar year for that component and modify the fishing year for the hook-and-line component to September 1 through August 31, and Alternative 3 is to modify it to August 1 through July 31, and the fourth alternative is to modify it from May 1 to April 30.

The Snapper Grouper AP comments, which I told you about before, they had made a recommendation that they would like you to consider an alternative that would split the hook-and-line component into two seasons, with a March 1 and September 1 start date, splitting the ACL 50/50, and neither the Law Enforcement AP or the SSC had any comments on this, and the IPT has made no additional recommendations on this action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there discussion? I am going to go to Michelle, but, first, I wanted to ask you something about the timing of this. If we were to choose the recommendation that was made that is similar to a motion that the AP put forward, is that going to slow down this amendment, and by how much? I can't tell if it's really in the range of the alternatives that were already prepared.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I think that becomes a Monica and Shep type question, whether that would be considered within the range of alternatives, but, regardless, I think it would slow things down, because that has not been analyzed yet. That was a recommendation that was made just over a month ago, and we haven't gotten any direction to analyze that, and so I think we run the risk -- If we include that alternative in there now and analyze it, we run the risk of not having this ACL in place in January, but that's a SERO question more than it is one for me.

MR. PHILLIPS: If we're going to pick an alternative for the start of the fishing year, I think I would choose Alternative 4, and my rationale being that everybody can access those fish through

the summer. **If you wait until late in the year, it's going to be a problem for those guys running seventy or eighty or ninety miles offshore, and 4a would be my preferred, Alternative 4.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we have a motion to choose Alternative 4 as the preferred under Action 2. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Mark. Is there discussion?

DR. DUVAL: Madam Chair, it's not necessarily discussion on this motion, but it's really that I had a question on one of the bullets up above the action, and so I guess --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, because I don't want to choose a preferred until we get the questions answered.

DR. DUVAL: Brian, the second bullet underneath Action 2 in the revised decision document says -- The second sentence says that the hook-and-line sector ACL for 2016 was 140,325, and then it says the hook-and-line sector ACL for 2017 was 132,215, and then it ends with the hook-and-line ACL for both years was 135,324, and I am just not understanding that sentence, that last sentence.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, you're right, because what happened was it wasn't the sector ACL. Those were the landings in 2016 and in 2017, the two sentences above.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Thanks.

DR. CRABTREE: I've got a note here that this creates an issue for us, because apparently the post-season AM for the commercial sector includes a payback of an overage of the commercial sector if the total ACL is exceeded, and, if the fishing years are different, it's hard to know if the total ACL was exceeded or not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so do you have a suggestion?

DR. CRABTREE: Other than keep the fishing years the same, I'm not sure that I do.

MR. HARTIG: Based on that, I think what I would like to see is no action on this and go back and take the SSC's recommendation and when you can do this at your leisure, wherever you can fit it as we go down the line in the next few years, and revisit what the AP had put forward and then try and go with that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, that would be fine with me. My second alternative would be no action. I just didn't want it starting late in the year.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, so the payback only happens if the stock is overfished, and it's not overfished at this point, and so I think, if you really want to, you could get away with going ahead and changing it, but then we would need to come back in here and correct that language before the next stock assessment, I guess, because it's not going to be -- The status won't change until we get another stock assessment, and so, if you really want to change it, I suppose you could do that. I think we just need to put some language in here that acknowledges that there is that issue and we're going to fix it, and we have some time to fix it, because the status won't change.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't have any heartburn over leaving it where it is. I like stuff as clean as possible, and so I don't have any problem with going back to the no action, and so I can vote against my own motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That or someone could offer a substitute motion.

MR. BROWN: **I would like to make a substitute motion for no action.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we have a second by Charlie.

DR. DUVAL: Just something to throw out there as we think about this is I recognize the difficulties of having a different start date for the hook-and-line component would incur, and it might be that -- I will just throw a couple of things out there. It might be that you look at a different split season, and I'm entirely aware of why the AP selected March and September, and I think it's my understanding that a lot of the Florida fishermen prefer to be fishing for sharks during the earlier part of the year, and that used to be their fall fishery, and so I understand that.

I know that folks in the northern part of the range fish on them earlier in the year, when they're fishing for snowy and whatnot, and it might be that we also reach out to the longline folks and see if those guys would be amenable with a March 1 start date, and you can just sort of align everything, and I just throw that out there for future discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Do we need more discussion on this, or are we ready to vote on the substitute motion? All right. **All those in favor of the substitute motion to select Alternative 1, no action, as the preferred, please raise your hand, nine in favor; anyone opposed; one abstention. The motion passes.** Anna, were you abstaining? Okay. **Two abstentions. That now becomes the main motion.**

We will wait to get it on the board, and so, once again, the main motion is now to select Alternative 1, no action, as the preferred alternative. **All those in favor of that motion, please raise your hand, nine in favor; those opposed; two abstentions. The motion passes.**

DR. CHEUVRONT: Madam Chair, I have one last thing here, and this is something you all might want to discuss how you want to handle it, but I have not been in this kind of situation before, where the committee has met and discussed an amendment prior to it actually having a public hearing, and so this may be something you might want to just punt on until you get to Full Council, but there is a motion here that we've already put together that would approve Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 28 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document and codified text and to give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text.

You may -- I just need direction. I mean, that's our standard approval motion, and so it would just -- Direction to me would be good as to how you want to handle this. Do you want to make a recommendation to the Full Council at this point, or would you rather wait until after the public hearing?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think I would rather wait until after public hearing.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's fine, and we'll make sure that that motion is available for you in the Snapper Grouper report, but that is it. That's all we have for this amendment.

MS. MCCAULEY: Thank you. Next up, we have the sea turtle release gear, Amendment 42, and Christina is coming to the table.

MS. WIEGAND: I am going to give you guys a quick overview of Snapper Grouper Amendment 42, which addresses modifications to sea turtle release gear. In March, you guys approved this amendment for scoping, and, after I go over this overview, I will give you a brief summary of the comments that we got during scoping.

This is the timing that we're looking at for this amendment. At this meeting, you guys are going to review the scoping comments and then approve the actions and alternatives to be analyzed. In September, you would review a full draft amendment and modify it as necessary and select your preferreds. We could take it out to public hearings in November, and then you would be reviewing those comments and approving all the actions and alternatives and then looking to take final action in March of 2019.

Just as a quick refresher, these are the three gears that are in this amendment. The first is the collapsible hoop net, which could be used as a replacement for a dip net, and it's much smaller and more compact and easier to fit on a vessel, and it's used for bringing incidentally-captured sea turtles onboard a fishing vessel to remove the hook and monofilament line. The other gear recently approved by the Science Center is the small sea turtle hoist. Again, this can be used as a replacement for the dip net, and it's also used for bringing incidentally-captured sea turtles onboard, and it's typically used for vessels that have a high freeboard or when space is really limited on the fishing vessel.

Last, there is a short-handled dehooker for external hooks, and this is for removing external hooks, typically when they can't be removed via needle-nose pliers, and this is approved only for external hooks and not for internal, the embedded, hooks.

There are two actions in this amendment. The first would modify the sea turtle release gear requirements for vessels with snapper grouper permits in the South Atlantic region to allow them to use these three new gears, and it doesn't require fishermen to buy these gears, but they are simply additional alternatives for them. Then Action 2 would modify the snapper grouper framework protocol to allow for changes to handline requirements and gear requirements for sea turtles and other protected resources to be made through the framework amendment process as opposed to the full amendment process.

Briefly, I will pull up the comments. We took this amendment out for scoping via webinar at the end of April, and online comments can be found at this link that is provided here, and this is Attachment 13a in the snapper grouper briefing book. Overall, comments from fishermen were that they rarely encounter sea turtles. There were some requests to reduce the number of required gears as well as concerns about safety issues, particularly for for-hire boats that would need to be bringing these turtles onboard when they perhaps have paying customers, and some safety concerns related to that. There were concerns about having to repeatedly buy this gear, because it

gets rusty and it breaks, because it's not used often, and then all comments that were recorded during the webinars are included in this document.

I did want to add, in addition to these three new gears, there are a couple of clarifications and specifications that will be made in the codified text when this is updated, things like -- Right now, it reads that the monofilament line cutter needs to be one-inch -- It can be one-inch or larger, and so small things like that would be specified, and I know, at the last meeting, you guys brought up concerns about the documents that fishermen have to carry with them, the careful release protocols document that they have to have on their vessel, and, when this amendment goes through and is updated, it will be specified that they can carry an electronic version of that.

This is how the purpose and need statement currently reads. The purpose is to include three new sea turtle release gear types in the current regulations for the commercial and for-hire components of the snapper grouper fishery and revise the snapper grouper framework to include modifications to protected resources release gear requirements and handling procedures after they are approved by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

The need is to provide flexibility to participants in the federal commercial and for-hire snapper grouper fishery in complying with sea turtle release gear requirements and handling procedures and allow for more timely modifications to the regulations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We are looking to review and make any modifications to the purpose and need statement and ultimately approve that purpose and need statement. Are there any questions or concerns about the purpose and need or discussion? Ultimately, we're looking for a motion.

MR. BREWER: **Madam Chair, I move that we approve the purpose and need.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Do we have a second for that? It's seconded by Ben. While we're getting that on the board, go ahead, Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: It says three new turtle release gear types, and, if we have some turtle release types, are we going to have to have another amendment to add it, or is there a way to just get those approved and put them into here, and do we want to necessarily say "three"? I am just kind of looking down the road.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The other action is to have a procedure to do this in the future, kind of like for spiny lobster. It's a framework. All right. Any more discussion on the purpose and need?

MR. BELL: It's not really, but, as we have this discussion, just keep in mind our discussion yesterday about other things like release devices and all, in terms of standardizing how you do things. It's kind of similar.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point. All right. **Are there any objections to approving the purpose and need statement? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so the first action would modify sea turtle release gear requirements for vessels with snapper grouper permits in the South Atlantic region. Under

Alternative 1, which is do not modify the regulations to allow for the use of new approved sea turtle release gears for vessels with commercial or charter vessel/headboat South Atlantic snapper grouper permits, and so they wouldn't be able to use those three new gear types that I described.

Alternative 2 would modify the regulations for vessels with commercial or charter vessel/headboat South Atlantic snapper grouper permits to allow the use of new collapsible hoop net, dehooking device, and small hoist to release incidentally-hooked sea turtles.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there questions? Anna, did you have your hand up?

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, and it wasn't related to this action, but, if we look at the decision document, on page 2, I just wanted to note that that hyperlink only links to the careful release protocols for sea turtles released with minimal injury, and it sounds like there should be a second thing that you guys are suggesting that is a requirement and we're supposed to be hyperlinking to. The permit holders are also required to post, inside the wheelhouse or in an easily-visible area, if no wheelhouse, sea turtle handling and release guidelines provided by National Marine Fisheries and available here, but that's not linking to that. It's linking to the protocol.

MS. WIEGAND: NOAA is going through a number of revisions to their website, and we've had some issues with the Protected Resources links. I will double-check the links in this document, but the website should now be updated to include an updated FAQ as well as correct links for those placards and for the release protocols, and so I will update that in this, but that's on the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's Protected Resources website.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I've got one question about the use of this gear, and this is a requirement that they have this onboard, and is that one thing?

MS. WIEGAND: There are requirements for snapper grouper vessels to have onboard, but these three new gears specifically are just additional options.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My next thing is do they have to go to class to get a placard that certifies them to be able to use this gear and safe handling and release techniques, as we do in the pelagic longline industry for turtles, and that it also has to be -- When we renew our vessel permits, we have to have our placard, and we also have to send this in as part of renewing my permits, or is it the same thing?

MS. WIEGAND: I don't believe they are required to take courses. However, there are courses offered.

MR. GRINER: Dewey, there is no requirement like that whatsoever.

MR. GRIMES: It stems out of similar biological opinion requirements, and they were put in place in the HMS regulations, and, for the HMS permitting, there is the training class. In lieu of that, for the snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic, they have to carry the manual.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My question is how do they know how to use it? That's why I go to class, is to learn how to use it, and so I was just asking the question about disparity and why you have to have it if you aren't certified to use it. I have to go to class every three years to get recertified, and

I wondered if it was maybe possible if I could get me a handbook now, or I will ask about that later. Thanks.

MR. GRIMES: Through HMS, but the release protocols -- The manual explains how to use the gear to safely release protected species.

DR. CRABTREE: **I move that, in Action 1, we adopt Alternative 2 as our preferred.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Ben. We haven't done an analysis yet, and I don't know if we want to wait for the analysis, and so, since we just scoped this, at this point, we're just reviewing the alternatives for the analysis.

MS. WIEGAND: I will note that this amendment is following the Reef Fish Amendment 49 in the Gulf. We're just a couple of steps behind, and they held public hearings last month, and they're getting ready for final approval, but we did scoping, and so now, based on the timing we have, we're looking to approve the actions and alternatives to be analyzed, and then we'll bring you back an analysis at the next council meeting.

DR. CRABTREE: **I will withdraw if you like. I just felt like we were far enough along that we could do this, but I will withdraw my motion.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. **The motion is withdrawn.** Instead, we need a motion to approve the range of alternatives.

DR. DUVAL: **So moved, Madam Chair.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Ben. **Any objection to approving the range of alternatives? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: Then the last action in this amendment would modify the snapper grouper framework protocol, and so, under Alternative 2, you would modify the snapper grouper framework procedure to include changes to release gear requirements and handling protocols for sea turtles and other protected resources through the abbreviated documentation process for framework actions. Release gear requirements and handling protocols could be implemented or changed that would include release gear requirements for sea turtles and other protected resources, and then Sub-Alternative b is handling requirements for sea turtles and other protected resources. This would allow you to add as well as remove protected resources and sea turtle gear requirements and handling requirements.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am looking for any questions. If there aren't any questions, once again, we need a motion to approve the range of alternatives under this action.

DR. DUVAL: **I move that we approve the range of alternatives under Action 2.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Ben. **Any objections to approving the range of alternatives? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: That is everything for this amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Next up, I believe, is Regulatory Amendment 32 for yellowtail snapper.

MS. BROUWER: Again, a little overview presentation on what you are considering. Under Regulatory Amendment 32, these are management measures for yellowtail snapper. In March you directed staff to start working on an amendment to revise the accountability measures, specifically to remove the in-season closures for yellowtail snapper for either sector until the total ACL is met, and you provided some guidance to include Alternatives 3 and 4 that were previously in Amendment 44, and I will come back to those in a minute, and also to explore accountability measures that have been considered or applied in other regions.

The tentative timing, based on the guidance we've received so far, is to continue work on this, and, in September, review, potentially, scoping comments, if you were to approve this amendment for scoping at this meeting, and approve the range of actions and alternatives to analyze. In December, you would review those analyses and approve for public hearings. We would conduct those around January or February of 2019 and bring that input back to you at the March meeting, and we're looking at approval for formal review in June of 2019.

What we would need to do at this meeting is to, first of all, clarify whether the changes you are considering would also include post-season accountability measures or not, and it was not immediately clear from your discussions in March whether that needed to be included. Currently, post-season AMs are not triggered unless the species is overfished, and, here specifically, we're talking about payback provisions.

Yellowtail is also currently included in the ten-snapper aggregate, and so we would need clarification whether you intend to seek to establish a bag limit within that aggregate, as one of the post-season accountability measures that you directed us to include has to do with imposing a bag limit if there are issues with the ACL being met, and so just a little more guidance, and, like I said, consider whether you want to approve this amendment for scoping.

The options paper is in your briefing book, and it is Attachment 14. Just to recap, and I'm not going to go through all of this, but, basically, you've been discussing issues with yellowtail for some time, and there was Amendment 44 that we began putting together, and we did get public input on that, and we also reached out to the Gulf Council in a letter indicating willingness from this council to work together on solutions for management for yellowtail, and the Gulf Council reciprocated that willingness.

However, the discussion in March was there had been some impacts to the commercial fishery in particular, the commercial sector, due to the hurricanes in 2017, and you expressed interest in moving more quickly with some solutions for this particular fishery, and so we have a draft purpose and need for you to consider.

The purpose of the framework amendment would be to revise accountability measures to minimize the probability of in-season closures for yellowtail snapper, and the need would be to achieve OY while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects due to in-season closures. If you were to want to include revisions to post-season accountability measures, we may need to doctor that up a little bit, and I don't know. I am not sure, Madam Chair, if you want to

pause here and talk about the purpose and need or whether you want to continue and then come back to this.

MS. MCCAULEY: Let's come back to it.

MS. BROUWER: Next, we just have a little bit of background, and this was updated from what you saw in March, and so we have just commercial and recreational landings for you from 2012 through 2017. The total ACL for this species is just over three-million pounds, and that is divided 1.5-ish million to the commercial sector and 1.4 to the recreational sector. You can see, on the table, what the landings have been in the past and the percent of the ACL that has been harvested by each of the sectors.

Over here, in 2015, and then the 2016 and 2017 fishing years, there has been overages, and we have been experiencing closures. Also, the fishing year for this species was changed in Regulatory Amendment 25, and that took place in 2016, and here is just a figure showing those landings, the commercial in blue, the recreational in green, the total landings in the solid black line, and then the ACL being shown up there in the dashed line at the top.

Yellowtail are assessed as a single stock, but are managed separately by the two councils. The ABC is divided between the two of them according to a formula, and 75 percent of that ABC is assigned to the South Atlantic and 25 percent to the Gulf. Another thing to note is -- Well, the stock assessment, the most recent one, was done through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute in 2012, and the stock is neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing, and the next stock assessment for yellowtail is expected, or at least the last time I looked at the schedule, it was to start in 2018 and be completed in 2019, and that may have changed.

The allocations, as I said, there is jurisdictional allocations for the ABC, and then the sector allocations are the regular formula, historical, 50 percent of historical landings and 50 percent of the current trend, and that was done through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment.

On PDF page 5 of your options paper is Action 1, which is to revise the in-season AMs, and we currently just have the two alternatives there, and Alternative 2 would read that an in-season closure will not occur for either sector until the total ACL is met or is projected to be met. Close both sectors when the total annual catch limit is met or is projected to be met. I will go ahead and pause here to see if there is any questions or clarifications needed.

MR. PHILLIPS: Myra, since this is one stock between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and it looks like the South Atlantic is getting 75 percent of the stock, and I scroll back up here and look at the landing percentages for the commercial and then the recreational, and it looks like the recreational is running 65 to 46 percent of their allocation for the Atlantic, and are they doing about the same thing -- I'm sorry, because the Gulf doesn't have a separation. They're all mixed together.

MS. MCCAULEY: Right. The Gulf doesn't have it allocated between recreational and commercial. Are there more questions?

MS. BROUWER: I guess we just wanted clarification to make sure that this Alternative 2 that we have here, that we have drafted, reflects what you had intended, and then we can move on and decide whether Action 2 is appropriate for inclusion in this amendment as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am good with the way that Alternative 2 is worded. That's definitely what I had in mind.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and the other action that the IPT put together for you to consider is to revise the post-season accountability measures, if you were interested in doing that, and so we structured this -- We would suggest two sub-actions. One would deal with the commercial sector and the other one for the recreational, just to keep it a little bit cleaner.

Alternative 1 for the commercial sector is the post-season AM is to reduce the annual catch limit by the amount of the overage in the following fishing year in the event of an overage only if the species is overfished and the total ACL is exceeded. There is also no commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper, and we included that language in there in case you want to consider imposing a trip limit as an accountability measure in the event of an overage.

Alternative 2 is a little wordy, but it mirrors the way that you have your other AMs for other snapper grouper species, and so the sub-alternatives there give you the option of selecting the trigger, basically, for this post-season AM, and so, if the species is undergoing overfishing, if it is overfished, or regardless of the status of the stock.

Alternative 3 is the one that you had directed us to include for consideration, and so, if the commercial landings are estimated by the Science and Research Director to have exceeded the ACL in the previous fishing year, then there would be a trip limit implemented for the commercial sector the following fishing year by the amount estimated to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded. We don't have any bookends right there, and we would have to look at the data and do a little analysis to figure out or, if there is a range that you already have in mind that you would like the IPT to look at for analysis, we could talk about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess I have some questions here. First, do we have to do this right now, and I ask that because I felt like we were going to look at all these additional yellowtail snapper items following the next stock assessment and the whole MRIP recalibration, and so I thought that this was going to be one of the items that we were going to look at with all those other items following the stock assessment.

MS. BROUWER: That's where we were a little confused, because it just wasn't clear in March whether you did intend to wait or whether you wanted to consider these things here, and that was the other thing. We were going to remind you that there's also the recreational AMs amendment that's comprehensive that Brian will talk about, and it creates an inconsistency when you address accountability measures for a specific species when you are wanting to establish more consistent measures for across the board.

MS. BECKWITH: I am sort of sensitive to what's going on in Florida with yellowtail, but I always have to sort of bring into the conversation that this is different than how we treat all of our other species, and this does have the potential to set a precedent for recreational fisheries in the South Atlantic, and so I would sort of tread carefully, and some of this makes me a little bit uncomfortable, but I think, to me, one of the reasons we were looking at some of these additional actions was in order to have some sort of bookends.

If we only went with Action 1, and we had no in-season closure for either, but both sectors would close when the ACL was projected to be met, then, conceivably with yellowtail, without a commercial trip limit, the commercial guys could take the entire commercial ACL and the recreational ACL and then close down the recreational season at the same time, when otherwise the recreational should not or would not have closed down.

When I look at that, in and of itself, I think that sets sort of a -- Personally, for me, it's an uncomfortable precedent, but, when you pair that with some of the actions in -- Some of the alternatives in Action 2, then it starts to build a whole picture. We've got the potential to close the recreational season, because the commercial is able to take all of the available yellowtail for one season, and then you look at the alternatives under Action 2 and then the following season there is an ability to adjust, to make sure that that doesn't sort of continuously happen, and so, given that I don't love the direction that this is taking, I am certainly more comfortable if those additional things are considered together, because then it doesn't sort of allow that a recreational fishery would just be closed for a number of consecutive years due to the commercial being able to take the entire ACL.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Those are good points, and so let me talk to both of those. I am going to start with the first action. Remember this is just a band-aid, and so we're trying to do a short-term thing prior to the next stock assessment, prior to the MRIP recalibrations, and so think of this as a super short-term fix, because the fishery keeps closing down.

The second thing is the reason I wasn't convinced that we needed to do Action 2 right now is we say that it's only if the species is overfished. Now, I guess we could choose a different alternative, but, since this is such a short-term action that's going to only be in place until we can get through the next stock assessment, we already know the species is not overfished or undergoing overfishing, and so I'm thinking you would never take this action, and so why would we ask staff to analyze it? Unless I missed something, that's kind of where I was coming from, because, right now, we're saying only if overfished and that's where we are and that's the status quo and a lot of the other options -- We usually only do that if overfished, and we won't have another stock assessment to tell us that it is overfished.

MS. BECKWITH: Right, but Alternative 3 does not require that overfished scenario, and since we would have -- It would potentially say, okay, we would put in a trip limit in the following year, regardless of status of the stock, if it closed down the previous year, and so we could work something into Alternative 3 that sort of stopped that sort of progressive continuing closure of the recreational. It may never happen, but it's still a precedent that this council has sort of not walked down before, and so I agree that Alternative 2 doesn't make sense, but some consideration of Alternative 3 might be worth discussing.

DR. CRABTREE: I tend to agree with Jessica about do the short-term fix and come back to it. It seems, to me, if we were to go in Action 1 with Alternative 2, which I guess is what we're leaning towards, then in Action 2 with these paybacks, why would we pay something back unless we went over the overall ACL, and why would we pay back more than the amount we went over the overall ACL, and so it seems to me that there is some more thought that could go into that, but I'm with you that it's not overfished and it's not going to change until after the next assessment, and so there is no urgency to really do this right now.

MS. BECKWITH: To that point, Alternative 3 isn't discussing a payback. It's just implementing a trip limit for the following year to maintain the commercial within their own ACL.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, and I'm looking at Alternative 2.

MS. BECKWITH: Right. I agree that Alternative 2 doesn't make sense. I absolutely agree that Alternative 2 does not need to move forward, but my suggestion is it would be worth having some additional discussion of Alternative 3, but I agree that Alternative 2 does not make sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Remember we're approving various actions and alternatives so that staff can analyze this, and so, if we can narrow it down, I think that would be great. On the trip limit thing, I will remind you that there was a whole paper that was moving forward, or a whole amendment that was moving forward on this, and you guys voted to wait to do anything, trip limits or otherwise, until after the next stock assessment, and so I get that this is a payback, but it seems a little counterintuitive, since this was something else we were working on, and you guys said you don't want to do this, and then now we're going to put it in as a payback provision post-season accountability measure, and it's just a little odd to me, since we said to wait and hold off and then we're going to implement this.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, I understand, and, again, I'm just voicing my sort of personal discomfort. How the committee chooses to move forward is fine, but I will continue to sort of beat this drum that this is a precedent, and if the recreational fishery closes because of the commercial take, and the commercial take doesn't even have a trip limit implemented, it's not a great move forward.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, that doesn't bother me at all. The fishery is running most of the year. If we start messing with trip limits again to keep it open all year, that means we'll leave fish in the water, and, economically, they will be worse off, and we have somehow got it into our heads that that's a good tradeoff, to have trip limits, but I think economically -- I haven't heard anything from the guys down there to lead me to believe that they really want a trip limit.

DR. DUVAL: Just going back to the minutes from the last meeting, we did give staff latitude to work with folks in the Region to explore if there were other creative options for accountability measures beyond the two alternatives that we had identified, and the first one was the do not close until the total ACL has been met, which is the one we have here, as well as one of the other alternative that was in the background document, which was noted in the minutes as Alternative 4, and that was where I think the implementing a trip limit for the commercial sector the following year, if applicable, came from.

That was part of the discussion that we had at the last meeting, and I think that's why that's here, and so I just wanted to clarify that. I don't have any preferences either way. I know that just not having the alternative that does not have a closure until the total ACL was met was your intent and that we would try to look at some more extensive things in a full amendment document after the stock assessment.

MS. BECKWITH: I am fine. I've said my piece.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I just agree with Roy that, if we're going to implement this trip limit as this post-season accountability measure, then I might suggest disbanding this amendment, because then

they will be worse off than where they are right now, and that is not accomplishing what our goal was with this band-aid fix.

MS. BECKWITH: Right, and, again, I wouldn't have expected a trip limit to be in place unless it caused a closure of the recreational in a progressive year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What's the pleasure of the committee, I guess especially regarding Action 2, if we're going to get that all analyzed or what, because that's a lot of work, or are we just going to stick with Action 1 or what? I am looking around to the committee members here.

DR. DUVAL: I mean, I definitely don't -- If we're going to include anything in Action 2, I definitely do not like Alternative 2. I do like the idea or the approach of Alternative 3, where you would look at -- Just as a measure of constraining harvest to the overall annual catch limit, and I think there is a similar alternative under the Sub-Action 2.2 for the recreational sector, to look at modifications to the bag limit. I think those are the types of approaches that I think I would like to see us pursue down the road. If we were going to continue with Action 2, my preference would be to only look at those alternatives, Alternative 3 under each of those two sub-actions. If we just want to consider Action 1, I am fine with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other folks, Florida folks?

MR. HARTIG: I am good with Action 1.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more discussion?

MS. BROUWER: It would be good to have a motion if you want to retain or remove Action 2.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

DR. DUVAL: We know that yellowtail is gearing up for an assessment. I mean, we just approved the terms of reference and the schedule for that, and I can't remember, off the top of my head, when the data workshop starts. Do you remember, Jessica?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I believe it's February of next year, and then I believe -- I could look at my schedule, because I've got it on my schedule. It's the week of February 25 of 2019 is what I have.

DR. DUVAL: Myra, I was just looking quickly through this again, to see if there -- Remind me of the timing again. This would be approved for scoping here, and we would take it out to scoping in August, and we would come back in September and review the comments and approve actions and alternatives. Then would the -- I guess I'm looking for when would final action be?

MS. BROUWER: It's going to depend on how many actions are included. If you choose to just retain Action 1, I think it could move more quickly, and my understanding is Florida would prefer to have this in place ahead of the next year's fishing year, to avoid an in-season closure, and so we could try to move it as fast as possible, and, if we have one action, that's more likely.

DR. DUVAL: Right, and so I'm just thinking about the fishing year starts August 1, and we closed earlier this year, like at the beginning of June, and so it would be in place prior to then, presumably

with just one action. The stock assessment will be done sometime by the end of 2019, I think is the intent.

MS. MCCAWLEY: With it being reviewed by the SSC I think in May of 2020.

DR. DUVAL: **I will go ahead and make a motion to not include Action 2 in this amendment.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Ben. Is there any more discussion? **Are there objections to the removal of Action 2 from Regulatory Amendment 32? One objection, and I assume everyone else is in favor. The motion is approved with one objection.**

We also need to talk about if we want this to be scoped in our next round of scoping hearings.

DR. DUVAL: I mean, we can certainly approve this document for scoping. I think, when we get to Executive Finance, there is a lot of stuff on the plate, and so we just need to prioritize what things go out and what things don't.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point. Okay, and so was that a motion to approve for scoping?

DR. DUVAL: **It sure was.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Ben. **Any objections to approving Regulatory Amendment 32 for scoping? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MR. PHILLIPS: Very good, Chairman. All right. Let's take a ten-minute break. I'm going to talk to Gregg, and we're going to see what we're going to do with our next hour. Let's take ten minutes, and we'll see what we can do in the next hour before Public Comment.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 13, 2018.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
July 10, 2018

SNAPPER GROUPEE

- ✓ Jessica McCawley, Chair
- ✓ Mel Bell, Vice-Chair
- ✓ Anna Beckwith
- ✓ Zack Bowen
- ✓ Chester Brewer
- ✓ Mark Brown
- ✓ Chris Conklin
- ✓ Roy Crabtree
- ✓ Michelle Duval
- ✓ Tim Griner
- ✓ Ben Hartig
- ✓ Doug Haymans
- LCDR Jeremy Montes
- ✓ Charlie Phillips
- Mid-Atlantic Liaison:
- ✓ Tony DiLernia
- ✓ Dewey Hemilright
- Staff contact: Myra Brouwer

SOPPs

- Chris Conklin, Chair
- Doug Haymans, Vice-Chair
- Anna Beckwith
- Chester Brewer
- Roy Crabtree
- Michelle Duval
- Jessica McCawley
- Staff contact: Gregg Waugh

SPINY LOBSTER

- Jessica McCawley, Chair
- Ben Hartig, Vice-Chair
- Chester Brewer
- Chris Conklin
- Roy Crabtree
- LCDR Jeremy Montes
- Staff contact: Christina Wiegand

2018 Council Members

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAIR

Charlie Phillips
Phillips Seafood/Sapelo Sea Farms
1418 Sapelo Ave
N.E. Townsend, GA 31331
(912)832-4423
Ga_capt@yahoo.com

VICE CHAIR

Mark Brown
3642 Pandora Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
(843)881-9735 (ph.); (843)881-4446 (f)
Capt.markbrown101@gmail.com

Robert Beal
Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland St.
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201
(703)842-0740 (ph); (703)842-0741 (f)
rbeal@asmfc.org

Anna Beckwith
1907 Paulette Road
Morehead City, NC 28557
(252)671-3474 (ph)
AnnaBarriosBeckwith@gmail.com

Mel Bell
SCDNR-Marine Resources Division
P.O. Box 12559
217 Ft. Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29422
843/953-9007 (ph); 843/953-9159 (fax)
bellm@dnr.sc.gov

Zack Bowen
P.O. Box 30825
Savannah, GA 31410
(912)398-3733 (ph)
zackbowensafmc@gmail.com

Chester Brewer
250 Australian Ave. South
Suite 1400
West Palm Beach, FL 33408
(561)655-4777 (ph)
wcbsafmc@gmail.com

Chris Conklin
P.O. Box 972
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
(843)543-3833
conklinsafmc@gmail.com

Dr. Roy Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727)824-5301 (ph); (727)824-5320 (f)
roy.crabtree@noaa.gov

Dr. Michelle Duval
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
PO Box 769
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557
(252)808-8011 (ph); (252)726-0254 (f)
michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov

Tim Griner
4446 Woodlark Lane
Charlotte, NC 28211
(980)722-0918 (ph)
timgrinersafmc@gmail.com

Ben Hartig
9277 Sharon Street
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
(772)546-1541 (ph)
mackattackben@att.net

Doug Haymans
Coastal Resources Division
GA Dept. of Natural Resources
One Conservation Way
Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520
(912)264-7218 (ph); (912)262-2318 (f)
haymanssafmc@gmail.com

Dr. Wilson Laney
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Atlantic Fisheries Coordinator
P.O. Box 33683
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919)515-5019 (ph); (919)515-4415 (f)
Wilson_Laney@fws.gov

Jessica McCawley
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Commission
2590 Executive Center Circle E.
Suite 201
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850)487-0554 (ph); (850)487-4847 (f)
Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com

LCDR. Jeremy Montes
U.S. Coast Guard
909 SE 1st Ave.
Miami, FL 33131
(305)415-6788(ph); (305)710-4569(c)
Jeremy.J.Montes@uscg.mil

Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation OES/OMC
2201 C Street, N.W.
Department of State, Room 5806
Washington, DC 20520
(202)647-3228 (ph); (202)736-7350 (f)
Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

Mmica Smit-Brunello
Dale Diaz
Dewey Hemilright
Tony DiLernia
Erika Burgess
Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. Erik Williams
Dr. George Sedberry
Karla Gore
Frank Heils
Mary vera
Dr. Clay Porch
David Muss
Shep Grimes

Nik Mehta
Dr. Jessica Stevens
Steve Murphey
Dr. Marcel Reichert
Dr. Luiz Barbieri
Karen Raine
Tracey Dunn
Stacey Weinstock
Lt. Warren Fair
Brendan ~~Ru~~ Ruffe

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Council Staff

Executive Director

✓ Gregg T. Waugh
Gregg.waugh@safmc.net

Deputy Directory-Science & Statistics

✓ John Carmichael
John.carmichael@safmc.net

Deputy Director-Management

✓ Dr. Brian Cheuvront
Brian.cheuvront@safmc.net

Fishery Scientist

✓ Myra Brouwer
Myra.brouwer@safmc.net

Outreach Specialist

Kathleen Howington
Kathleen.howington@safmc.net

Admin. Secretary/ Travel Coordinator

Cindy Chaya
Cindy.chaya@safmc.net

Public Information Officer

✓ Kim Iverson
Kim.iverson@safmc.net

Purchasing & Grants

✓ Kimberly Cole
Kimberly.cole@safmc.net

Senior Fishery Biologist

✓ Roger Pugliese
Roger.pugliese@safmc.net

Fishery Scientist

✓ Dr. Chip Collier
Chip.collier@safmc.net

Outreach Specialist

✓ Cameron Rhodes
Cameron.rhodes@safmc.net

Administrative Officer

✓ Mike Collins
Mike.collins@safmc.net

Financial Secretary

Suzanna Thomas
Suzanna.thomas@safmc.net

Outreach Specialist

Kelsey Dick
Kelsey.dick@safmc.net

Citizen Science Program Manager

✓ Amber Von Harten
Amber.vonharten@safmc.net

Fishery Biologist

✓ Dr. Mike Errigo
Mike.errigo@safmc.net

Fishery Social Scientist

✓ Christina Wiegand
Christina.wiegand@safmc.net

Fishery Economist

✓ John Hadley
John.hadley@safmc.net

SEDAR Coordinators

Dr. Julie Neer- Julie.neer@safmc.net
Julia Byrd- Julia.byrd@safmc.net

June Council Mtg Day 2 6/12/18

Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Bailey	Adam	adam.bailey@noaa.gov
Barbieri	Luiz	Luiz.Barbieri@Myfwc.com
Bell	Mel	bellm@dnr.sc.gov
Bianchi	Alan	Alan.Bianchi@ncdenr.gov
Bonura	Vincent	SailRaiser25C@aol.com
Boyd	Charles	a10.90streetcar@yahoo.com
Brennan	Ken	kenneth.brennan@noaa.gov
Bubley	Wally	bubleyw@dnr.sc.gov
Buck	Kari	karimac123@GMAIL.COM
Byrd	Julia	julia.byrd@safmc.net
Byrd	Julia	juliabyrd@safmc.net
Cheshire	Rob	rob.cheshire@noaa.gov
Clarke	Lora	lclarke@pewtrusts.org
Conklin	Chris	conklinsafmc@gmail.com
Cox	Jack	dayboat1965@gmail.com
Cunningham	Leda	ledacunningham@gmail.com
Denes	James	jamesd156@yahoo.com
Diaz	Dale	Saltwaterlife@live.com
Dick	Kelsey	kelsey.dick@safmc.net
Dufour	Jacques	merrymarlin@gmail.com
Duval	Michelle	michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov
Erwin	Gwen	gwen.erwin@myfwc.com
Foss	Kristin	kristin.foss@myfwc.com
Foster	Dean	dfoster@pewtrusts.org
Gerhart	Susan	susan.gerhart@noaa.gov
Glasgow	Dawn	glasgowd@dnr.sc.gov
Godwin	Joelle	joelle.godwin@noaa.gov
Guyas	Martha	martha.guyas@myfwc.com
Hadley	John	john.hadley@samfc.net
Hemilright	Dewey	fvtarbaby@embarqmail.com
Hildreth	Delaine	delaine.hildreth@dnr.ga.gov
Howington	kathleen	kathleen.howington@safmc.net
Hudson	Rusty	DSF2009@aol.com
Iverson	Kim	kim.iverson@safmc.net
Knowlton	Kathy	kathy.knowlton@dnr.ga.gov
Laks	Ira	captainira@att.net
Lamberte	Tony	tony.lamberte@noaa.gov
Lazarre	Dominique	dominique.lazarre@myfwc.com
Leavitt	Amanda	amandajacquelyn@yahoo.com
Levy	Mara	mara.levy@noaa.gov

Lloyd	Victor	vic_lloyd@bellsouth.net
McLemore	Michael	Michael.McLemore@noaa.gov
McPherson	Matthew	matthew.mcpherson@noaa.gov
Meehan	Sean	sean.meehan@noaa.gov
Mehta	Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov
Neahr	Todd	todd.neahr@myfwc.com
Neer	Julie	julie.neer@safmc.net
O'Donnell	Kelli	kelli.odonnell@noaa.gov
O'Neal	Aundrea	aundrea@ncfish.org
Package-Ward	Christina	christina.package-ward@noaa.gov
Poland	Steve	steve.poland@ncdenr.gov
Pugliese	Roger	roger.pugliese@safmc.net
Pulver	Jeff	Jeff.Pulver@noaa.gov
Records	David	david.records@noaa.gov
Rock	Jason	jason.rock@ncdenr.gov
Sauls	Beverly	Beverly.Sauls@myfwc.com
Scalise	Timothy	timothyscalise@gmail.com
Schroeder	Jammie	broschrodaddy@gmail.com
Scott	Alison	ayscott@outlook.com
Sedberry	George	george.sedberry@gmail.com
Sell	Jeff	unojeffro@yahoo.com
Seward	McLean	mclean.seward@ncdenr.gov
Shipman	Susan	susanshipman@att.net
Smart	Tracey	smartt@dnr.sc.gov
Stephen	Jessica	jessica.stephen@noaa.gov
Stillman	Karolyn	karolyn.stillman@noaa.gov
Takade-Heumacher	Helen	htakade@edf.org
Tong	Amanda	amanda.tong@ncdenr.gov
Travis	Michael	mike.travis@noaa.gov
Vara	Mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov
Weinstock	Stacey	stacey.weinstock@gmail.com
Williams	Erik	erik.williams@noaa.gov
Wiseman	adam	adamwisemancmtr@gmail.com
Wyanski	David	wyanskid@dnr.sc.gov
bowen	zack	fishzack@comcast.net
brewer	chester	wcbsafmc@gmail.com
brewer	william	williechet@aol.com
burchfield	joe	joeburch@comcast.net
klostermann	joseph	grkjfk@comcast.net
riley	richard	richard.riley@myfwc.com

sandorf	scott	scott.sandorf@noaa.gov
Abeels	Holly	habeels@ufl.edu
Blow	Wes	wesamy2000@cox.net
Exley	Gary	river92@bellsouth.net
Gilmore	Jeremiah	jeremiahgilmore@rocketmail.com
Hart	Hannah	hannah.hart@myfwc.com
Hartig	Ben	mackattackben@att.net
Helies	Frank	frank.helies@noaa.gov
ONeal	Benjamin	benfish22@hotmail.com
dilernia	tony	tony@rocketcharters.com

June Council Mtg Day 3 6/13/18

Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Abeels	Holly	habeels@ufl.edu
Bailey	Adam	adam.bailey@noaa.gov
Bianchi	Alan	Alan.Bianchi@ncdenr.gov
Bonura	Vincent	SailRaiser25C@aol.com
Brennan	Ken	kenneth.brennan@noaa.gov
Bubley	Wally	bubleyw@dnr.sc.gov
Byrd	Julia	juliabyrd@safmc.net
Byrd	Julia	julia.byrd@safmc.net
Cheshire	Rob	rob.cheshire@noaa.gov
Clarke	Lora	lclarke@pewtrusts.org
Cox	Jack	dayboat1965@gmail.com
Cunningham	Leda	ledacunningham@gmail.com
Cunningham	Leda	lcunningham@pewtrusts.org
DeVictor	Rick	rick.devictor@noaa.gov
Diaz	Dale	Saltwaterlife@live.com
Erwin	Gwen	gwen.erwin@myfwc.com
Fitzpatrick	Eric	Eric.Fitzpatrick@noaa.gov
Foss	Kristin	kristin.foss@myfwc.com
Foster	Dean	dfoster@pewtrusts.org
Gerhart	Susan	susan.gerhart@noaa.gov
Glasgow	Dawn	glasgowd@dnr.sc.gov
Godwin	Joelle	joelle.godwin@noaa.gov
Gore	Karla	karla.gore@noaa.gov
Gray DiLeone	Alisha	alisha.dileone@noaa.gov
Guyas	Martha	martha.guyas@myfwc.com
Harrison	Graham	Silentpride23@gmail.com
Helies	Frank	frank.helies@noaa.gov
Hemilright	Dewey	fvtarbaby@embarqmail.com
Hildreth	Delaine	delaine.hildreth@dnr.ga.gov
Howington	kathleen	kathleen.howington@safmc.net
Hudson	Rusty	DSF2009@aol.com
Iverson	Kim	kim.iverson@safmc.net
Johnson	Denise	denise.johnson@noaa.gov
Knowlton	Kathy	kathy.knowlton@dnr.ga.gov
Laks	Ira	captainira@att.net
Lamberte	Tony	tony.lamberte@noaa.gov
Lazarre	Dominique	dominique.lazarre@myfwc.com
Levy	Mara	mara.levy@noaa.gov

Lombardo	Steven	slombardo2018@fau.edu
Mehta	Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov
Neer	Julie	julie.neer@safmc.net
O'Donnell	Kelli	kelli.odonnell@noaa.gov
PUGLIESE	ROGER	ROGER.PUGLIESE@SAFMC.NET
Petersen	Andrew	andrew@bluefindata.com
Pickens	Chris	pickensc@dnr.s.cgov
Poland	Steve	steve.poland@ncdenr.gov
Pulver	Jeff	Jeff.Pulver@noaa.gov
Ralston	Kellie	kralston@asafishing.org
Records	David	david.records@noaa.gov
Runde	Brendan	bjrunde@ncsu.edu
Scott	Alison	ayscott@outlook.com
Sedberry	George	george.sedberry@gmail.com
Seward	McLean	mclean.seward@ncdenr.gov
Shipman	Susan	susanshipman@att.net
Smart	Tracey	smartt@dnr.sc.gov
Spencer	Erin	etspencer14@gmail.com
Stephen	Jessica	jessica.stephen@noaa.gov
Stillman	Karolyn	karolyn.stillman@noaa.gov
Takade-Heumacher	Helen	htakade@edf.org
Travis	Michael	mike.travis@noaa.gov
Weinstock	Stacey	stacey.weinstock@gmail.com
Williams	Erik	erik.williams@noaa.gov
Wyanski	David	wyanskid@dnr.sc.gov
bowen	zack	fishzack@comcast.net
brewer	william	williechet@aol.com
brewer	chester	wcbsafmc@gmail.com
brouwer	myra	myra.brouwer@safmc.net
klostermann	joseph	grkjfk@comcast.net
malinowski	rich	rich.malinowski@noaa.gov
moss	david	david@smoss.com
q	suz	suzanna.thomas@safmc.net
sandorf	scott	scott.sandorf@noaa.gov
Blow	Wes	wesamy2000@cox.net
Exley	Gary	river92@bellsouth.net
Hart	Hannah	hannah.hart@myfwc.com
Hartig	Ben	mackattackben@att.net
Moore	Cannon	cannonmoore@yahoo.com

Murphey	Steve	steve.murphey@ncdenr.gov
Rock	Jason	jason.rock@ncdenr.gov
dilernia	tony	tony@rocketcharters.com

Tuesday Public Sign In 5/12/18

Name	Last	How do you participate in fisheries in the South Atlantic? (Check all that apply)					If Other, please provide more information:
Kellie	Ralston	Private Recreational Angler				NGO	
Dean	Foster					NGO	
Rusty	Hudson						Fisheries Consultant
Stacey	Weinstock						
Leda	Cunningham					NGO	
sheri	mccoy			Commercial Fisherman			
Scott	Crosson						
Robert	Lorenz	Private Recreational Angler					
james	hull		Charter/Headboat/For-Hire	Commercial Fisherman	Seafood Dealer/Wholesaler	NGO	
richard	gomez		Charter/Headboat/For-Hire				
Russell	Dunn						NOAA Fisheries
Matthew	McPherson						SEFSC
john	polston			Commercial Fisherman	Seafood Dealer/Wholesaler		
owen	kogan	Private Recreational Angler					

Wednesday Public Sign In 6/13/18

Name	Last	Email	Mailing Address (if you selected New Contact in the dropdown above)	How do you participate in fisheries in the South Atlantic?				
Rusty	Hudson							Fisheries Consultant
Dean	Foster							NGO
Kellie	Ralston			Private Recreational Angler				NGO
james	hull				Charter/ Headboa t/For- Hire	Commercial Fisherman	Seafood Dealer/ Wholesaler	NGO
Sherri	McCoy						Seafood Dealer/ Wholesaler	
Josh	McCoy		807 Hampton Way Merritt Island, FL 32953			Commercial Fisherman	Seafood Dealer/ Wholesaler	
Russell	Dunn							NOAA Fisheries
richard	gomez				Charter/ Headboa t/For- Hire			

Brice	Barr				Charter/ Headboa t/For- Hire				
Lora	Clarke							NGO	
Robert	Lorenz			Private Recreational Angler					
Leda	Cunningham							NGO	
Amanda	Stoltz	adstoltz@gmail.com	1250 Lincoln rd Miami Beach 33139 FL					NOAA	
Gil	Scott	gil@keywestflorida.com			Charter/ Headboa t/For- Hire				
nuno	almeida	transprotpb@yahoo.com	586 edgebrook In west palm beach fl 33411			Commercial Fisherman	Seafood Dealer/ Wholesaler		
Craig	Jiovani					Commercial Fisherman	Seafood Dealer/ Wholesaler		
walter	kirchner				Charter/ Headboa t/For- Hire				

bill	kelly							Commercial fishing representative
ira	jaks					Charter/ Headboa t/For- Hire	Commercial Fisherman	