

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SNAPPER GROUPER ADVISORY PANEL**

**Hilton Garden Inn Charleston Airport  
N. Charleston, South Carolina**

**April 25 -27, 2023**

### **Transcript**

#### **SG AP Members**

Robert Lorenz, Chair  
James Paskiewicz, Vice Chair  
Vincent Bonura  
Richen “Dick” Brame  
Chris Kimrey  
Andrew Mahoney  
Randy McKinley  
Chris Militello  
Harry Morales  
David Snyder  
Mike Schmidtke

Tony Constant  
Jack Cox, Jr.  
Andrew Fish  
Robert Freeman  
Richard Gomez  
James Hull, Jr.  
David Moss  
Paul Nelson  
Cameron Sabastian  
Dr. Todd Kellison

#### **Council Members**

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John Hadley  
Ashley Oliver  
Dr. Mike Schmidtke  
Nick Smillie  
Suzanna Thomas  
Christina Wiegand  
Meg Withers  
Dr. Julie Neer

#### **Observers and Participants**

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Hilton Garden Inn Charleston Airport, North Charleston, South Carolina, on April 25, 2023, and was called to order by Mr. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: All right. I'm going to start a little early, if nobody minds, for those that are sitting, and, for those that still have to come, they'll be able to join us later. I want to welcome this AP to the April Snapper Grouper AP meeting, and it's a pretty varied agenda through the next three days, and so I would like to welcome you. I want to recognize anybody we have from the council, and we have just Kerry Marhefka, who is going to be presenting to us. Welcome, Kerry.

I guess we'll start with the introductions, and so I'm Bob Lorenz, and I'm your chair until this meeting next year, provided I don't mess up or you want to kick me out, and so I would like to start with our introductions. As everyone probably read in the minutes, we did start from the left side last time, and so we'll start from the right, and you can introduce yourselves and where you're from and what you do.

MR. KIMREY: Chris Kimrey, charter captain, Morehead City, North Carolina.

MR. FISH: Andy Fish, from Florida, commercial sector, east-central Florida.

MR. FREEMAN: Robert Freeman, charter, out of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

MR. CONSTANT: Tony Constant, recreational, ex-charter/for-hire, Beaufort, South Carolina.

MR. HULL: Jimmy Hull, Ponce Inlet, Florida, commercial.

MR. LORENZ: Bob Lorenz, Chair, as previously mentioned.

MR. COX: Jack Cox, Morehead City, commercial.

MR. BONURA: Good afternoon. I'm Vincent Bonura, commercial fisherman and wholesale dealer out of Florida.

MR. MORALES: Good afternoon. I'm Harry Morales, a recreational fisherman out of Hilton Head, South Carolina.

MR. MCKINLEY: Randy McKinley, commercial, North Carolina, and retail seafood dealer.

MR. MOSS: David Moss, recreational, South Florida.

MR. NELSON: Paul Nelson, commercial, Ponce Inlet, Florida.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Cameron Sebastian, operations manager, Little River Fishing Fleet, the Hurricane Fleet, Coastal Scuba, and I operate commercial boats and spearfishing on the North and South Carolina border.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, everyone. The next item on the agenda, we'll -- We have some online people. Mike, if you can guide me through that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes. Dave Snyder, go ahead. Dave, it's showing that you are unmuted, but we couldn't hear you come through.

MR. LORENZ: I will cover him then. Dave Snyder is a Georgia representative, and he's on the -- He's a chef, and so he's involved in sort of the seafood consumer group, and that is a position on this committee.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and we'll have somebody follow-up with you, Dave, so that we can hear your discussion later on, and then I see we've got Richie Gomez on. Richie, can you go ahead and introduce yourself?

MR. GOMEZ: Richard Gomez, charter/for-hire, Florida Keys.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and I think that's all for the online folks. While I have the mic for a brief moment, we sent out updated policies for the council, codes of conduct, AP policies, et cetera, that were updated during the March council meeting, and I just wanted to have, on the record, that I did request confirmation of receipt from folks, and some people -- I appreciate those that sent it, but I do want to put out here that, if anybody did not receive the policy documents, please follow-up with me after the meeting today, and we can make sure that we get those to you. Otherwise, we will assume that everybody received those. Thanks, Bob.

MR. LORENZ: All right, and then, as a follow-up, I would like to recognize -- I've been trying to recognize the members from the South Atlantic Council, and I noted, to the right here, is Mel Bell, from South Carolina, and he directs the marine fisheries area of the South Carolina DNR. Welcome, Mel. The next item, we will need to approve the agenda, and so, if you've reviewed at the agenda, and, I guess, at this point, would there be any additions or questions on the agenda, before approval? If there aren't any, I would like to have a motion to approve it.

MR. MORALES: I make a motion to approve.

MR. LORENZ: Harry Morales makes a motion to approve it, and David Moss seconds. Thank you, gentlemen. Is everybody in favor or have any objection to this being approved? Then the agenda from the October meeting is approved.

The final item for housekeeping will be the Approval of the October 2022 AP Minutes. That's the transcript. I should do a little test. Did anybody read page 193 of our transcript? If you have reviewed the transcript, is there anything in there that anybody had an issue with that they would like to make a comment, for the record? That would be probably a deletion or correction, and, if not, could we move to a motion to approve our transcript, which is our meeting minutes? Okay. With no additions or deletions or exceptions, do we have a motion for approval? David Moss motions for approval. Do we have a second? Randy McKinley will second, from North Carolina. All right. Any last-minute objections to that for approval? The AP minutes from October are approved.

Then the next item will be a council member who is going to make a presentation to us, and it will be -- Online, is there -- I didn't see anything printed online, and is there anybody online that wishes to make a public comment, before we start? None, Mike? Okay. So the record holds that there is no public comment at this time, and so, at this time, I have the pleasure to introduce the Snapper Grouper Vice Chairman for the council, from South Carolina, Kerry Marhefka. Thank you, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Hi, you all. How are you doing? Thanks for being here today. Real quick, I'm just going to give you an update on what we did at the last meeting, or since we met with you all in October, and the chairman of the Snapper Grouper Committee, Jessica McCawley, as you know, is normally here, but she had a scheduling conflict, and so you definitely get the second-best, because I don't hold a candle to her, but I'm going to do my best, and I'm here to talk to all week, and, if you have any questions, please let me know.

We met in December and March, since we saw you all in October. Since then, we have approved Amendment 51 for snowy grouper, Amendment 52 for golden tile and blueline tile, and we approved the ABC Control Rule Amendment, the Regulatory Amendment 35, which, as you all may remember, is red snapper and release mortality, and then Amendment 53 for gag and black grouper. If you want to look over where we sort of landed on that since you all met in October, it is in the amendments update in your briefing book, and so those have all been approved, and that means they've gone to -- Either they've already gone to NMFS or they're being prepared to go to NMFS. The council has done everything the council is going to do at this point, and we're waiting for approval, of course, or disapproval, and so keep an eye out for those moving through the system.

Then, currently, we're working on Amendment 46, which is the recreational permit, and I know a lot of you guys, who have been around for a long time, like I have, are probably, I hope, happy to see that this is moving forward, and we're getting a lot of work done, and we're taking steps in this direction, and so we're at the beginning, and we're holding scoping in January, and please keep an eye out for that, and please offer your opinion both here and when we scope in January. It will be really helpful. Scoping, as you know, is the beginning part of public comment, and so there will be plenty more opportunity for public comment, and you all will be seeing it, I'm sure, before we get close to the final approval stage.

We're working on Amendment 48 for wreckfish, which we meet with those folks separately sometimes, the wreckfish folks, and we're dealing with -- We have to do some sort of electronic reporting, like modernize this wreckfish ITQ fishery, and, if you have any specific questions about that, you can let us know.

We're working on Amendment 44 for yellowtail snapper, and the joint commercial logbook amendment is going to be, finally, which I also hope you all think is good news, is working through, getting hopefully to electronic logbooks. As someone who fills out many of those copies of those forms, I'm really looking forward to that one, and I hope you are too.

We got the management strategy evaluation presentation that you all had in October, and I have to tell you that Jessica and I sat in the back of this room and listened to the great, great questions that you all had asked, and we saw how much we felt that you guys were getting out of it, and the council was not supposed to get the same presentation, but we thought, after watching you all

interact with the folks from Blue Matter, that it would be helpful for the council to also get that same presentation that you all got, and we got it, and it was great.

I think we're all still, you know, trying to wrap our brains around it, but it was a great presentation, and I thank you, because your discussion really spurred us to have a meeting with those guys, and then, finally, we had SEDAR 68 for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and they're overfished and depleted, and, really, I listen-in to all those discussions, and these are some species that it's really looking like it's recruitment and not overfishing, as we've seen with other species in this complex that we've all dealt with before.

I don't know, necessarily, and hopefully I'm not the one to say this, but I think it doesn't necessarily mean that our decisions are going to be any easier, and I think we're all a little like what do we do about these fish? There still needs to be further discussion among the SSC before catch level recommendations are given to us, and so we're all getting some fun information, or not fun, but interesting information from our Florida council member, Laurilee Thompson, who has been telling us a lot about what's happening at the space center at Florida, and, at first, those of us who are not from Florida were like -- Not like blowing her off, but it was like what can we do about it, or how does it affect fishing, and she's really brought up some amazing points.

With the increase of what's happening with the private space industry, and how many launches there are now, weekly, and the fact that so much fishing area has to be closed for, you know, a decent amount of time before these launches happen, the council is now really interested in knowing and getting a briefing on really how does this affect the fleet down there because it's starting to really come up that it's going to have a big effect for a lot of area that can't be fished for decent periods of time.

Then we're going to have discussions on SEDAR 76, which is the black sea bass amendment results, and so we'll be doing that at our meeting in June, and I think that's everything, and so you can ask me questions now, if you have them off the top of your head, and, like I said, I'll be here the whole meeting, and so you can pull me aside and ask me questions, if you have questions.

MR. FISH: As far as like you said, like Amendment 53, it won't get approved until a certain whatever, and, if that happens in the middle of the year, will it get imposed, or is it only going to like start on like May 1 for the gag grouper and black grouper?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: It will start immediately, but it will take some time in between now and the final rule to come out, and there's still -- Because gag has not been -- Gag hasn't been submitted yet, and so it would be submitted soon, but, after it's submitted from the council to NMFS, NMFS still has to go through their process of putting out a proposed rule, and then have a comment period, and then a final rule, and so there are time periods within that, and so it's not going to be in place by May 1, and I can say that with pretty good certainty.

MR. FISH: But it could possibly be implemented and then go to the new proposal?

MS. MARHEFKA: There is no way it could get in before May 1.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So you're saying if it is approved during the middle of the season, and so like in July? The current season wouldn't go on, once that's approved. Once it's approved, it would

be put in place. I don't know that it's likely that it's going to happen over the course of this summer, just because of the required comment periods that NMFS has to go through with their rule process. They have a certain number of days that they need to leave open for comments before it can get its final approval, and so this summer is not very likely for it to be put into place.

MR. LORENZ: Any other questions for Kerry? Vincent.

MR. BONURA: Hi, Kerry. I was just wondering if Amendment 52 is past the council and being pushed towards being implemented, if we're getting the increase on the golden tile, and is that going to reopen this year, in 2023?

MS. MARHEFKA: The council is done with it. Has it been submitted?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: No.

MS. MARHEFKA: So the document is still being prepared, and then it will be formally submitted, because there's a time period, between when we finish at the meeting, and vote on all of our final action, that they have to then go back and look at the document and have the document reflect what our final action was, and so it's in that period right now, and the IPT, the team that works on it, is doing that now, and then it will be submitted, and then, as Mike just said for gag, after it's submitted, it's still has to go through the whole review process, which is, you know, the publication of the final rule and things like that.

The chances that it's going to come into effect with a higher ABC this year is probably not super high, but I would remain hopeful, and I may be speaking out of turn, that, by the next fishing season, January 1, the new number will be in effect, because you're right, and that's one that is good for everyone, right, and it's a positive one, and we need those.

MR. LORENZ: Any other questions for Kerry? Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: One clarification on Amendment 53. When I was reading it over, it does state that recreational vessels would be limited to two per vessel, and then for-hire vessels will be limited to two per vessel, and is there anything beyond that, as far as the numbers of passengers on certain vessels, that is accounted for?

MS. MARHEFKA: Cameron, we had a long discussion about that in December, and I'm going to tell you right now that I don't want to mess it up, and so I'm going to let Allie, who handles that, address that.

MS. IBERLE: The final preferred alternative, for both gag and black, and so the council decided to match the recreational management measures for those two species, because of ID issues, and the preferred alternative was establishing a private rec vessel limit for gag of two fish per vessel per day, not to exceed the daily bag limit, and then they had a second preferred to establish a for-hire recreational vessel limit of gag for two fish per vessel per trip for for-hire vessels, and then, again, restricted to the -- Not to exceed the daily bag limit, and so it was essentially two fish per vessel per day for private and then the same two fish, but it's per trip, and so, in theory, a vessel could take two trips in a day, but they would be limited to two fish per trip.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Just so I understand it, a recreational vessel, carrying four or five people, can keep two fish, and a headboat carrying 100 people can keep two fish? Got it.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Cameron. Any other questions? Thank you, Kerry. We're going to do just a little cleanup here, since we started just a little tiny bit early, and I think we had two folks join us, and I know that Dr. Kellison has joined us, and so, Todd, if you would like to just introduce yourself, for the record.

DR. KELLISON: Forgive me for being a few minutes late. It's good to see everyone. I haven't been here in-person in a couple of years, and so I'm Todd Kellison, and I'm with the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Science Center, and I'm based up in Beaufort, North Carolina, and I'm a non-voting member of the panel.

MR. LORENZ: We're going to ask you hard science questions on fisheries today. I know we went through public comment, and I noticed that we have a member of the public here, and so, sir, I don't know your name, but I would like to welcome you to make your comment, if you wish. You can come up here with us and introduce your name and where you're from and what you do in fisheries.

MR. SAKAKINI: My name is Charlie Sakakini, and I drove from Jacksonville, and that's why I was running late, and I had a hard time finding the place. The reason -- I would like to see hands up of the people who are going to vote on these proposals. Everybody that is sitting at the table is going to vote? Okay. Any of you guys do any fishing, deep-sea fishing? Can I see a -- Okay. Now, if you guys all go deep-sea fishing, you will know that some of these regulations that you guys are trying to pass are based on fiction, you know.

I've been a deep-sea fisherman since 1990, and I lived in Michigan, and I was a roofing contractor up there, and, in 1990, I went fishing in Florida, in Jacksonville, and discovered deep-sea fishing, and I've been hooked ever since. I used to fly down from Michigan two or three times a year, until 1994. In 1994, I decided to move permanently, so that I can pursue my passion, which is deep-sea fishing.

When I started deep-sea fishing in 1990, I used to go on the headboats, the Sea Love and the Mayport Princess and the King Neptune, and it's the Majesty now, and these boats, you know, take forty to sixty people, and, in the 1990s, when I first started going fishing on these vessels, a vessel with forty or fifty people might come back with two snapper at the end of the day, you know, and that was when the regulations had just changed, and they made it to where you could keep two recreationally per person, over twenty pounds, and there was no limit as to the number of snapper you could keep.

At the same time, before 2009, or before 2010, and I take that back, the commercial fishermen would go fishing for snapper, and they could keep every single snapper that they caught over twenty inches and sell them, all year long, and there was no closure, okay, and, in the 1990s, it was slow picking. Catching red snapper was really slow picking, you know, and we used to catch a lot of gag grouper inshore, within twenty miles, in the summertime, and, slowly, the number of snapper started increasing, and, by the year 2000, the snapper population was alive and well, okay, and, from 2000 to 2009, we could see -- I went fishing every single week, and I'm just a fisherman, and I don't own a boat or anything, and I just pay to go.

When I first starting deep-sea fishing, I used to pay thirty-five bucks to go, and, by 2009, I was paying eighty bucks a day to go, plus tips, and so, slowly, you could see the increase in the snapper fishery, and you could also see a size increase, you know, and we used to catch like twenty snapper, and twelve of them would be throwbacks, and eight would be keepers. Slowly, it started to become ten keepers, twelve keepers, fifteen keepers, and then it got to the point where just about every snapper you caught was over twenty inches. By 2009, we were living in a virtual fisherman's paradise, you know, and then you guys stepped in and messed it all up.

MR. LORENZ: Sir, I would like -- If you could get to what you would like to ask us to do, but I would like to --

MR. SAKAKINI: I don't want to ask any questions, and I want to make a statement. I want you guys to realize that these laws that you guys are making are bogus.

MR. LORENZ: May I make just one comment for your knowledge, and then I'll let you go on, but we, as a group, do not make the regulations. This is a group of fishermen and folks like yourself.

MR. SAKAKINI: Yes, but are you the guys who vote on the final decision?

MR. LORENZ: We -- Recommendations are made, or we are often asked for potential ideas on regulations, and we, just like you, are asked our opinion, and that's what we're going to do today, and then we think it over, as a first pass, before it gets to all the general public, and we come as representatives of the general public. We are selected to provide some input for --

MR. SAKAKINI: Well, I'm here to give you guys an overview.

MR. LORENZ: We make considerations, just like you, and then we vote, or make a recommendation, or we say we don't like it, and then it goes to the next level, which is the council.

MR. SAKAKINI: So all the men here that go fishing, do you guys realize that the number of snapper in our ocean, in St. Augustine and Jacksonville, is exploding? Do you realize that, pretty soon, we're going to have --

MR. HULL: If you've been listening in, for the last ten years, we've been telling them the same thing, and I agree with you.

MR. SAKAKINI: Then why are we having this meeting, if you guys keep telling them the same thing, and nothing happens? Who makes the decision?

MR. LORENZ: That is a question that we --

MR. SAKAKINI: I mean, it's insane, you know? I used to pay \$80.00 a day to go fishing, and now I pay 500 bucks a day to go fishing, okay, and that's the only way that I can catch anything that I can keep. I have to be out past fifty miles. Now, you go out fifty miles, and you still catch the red snapper. You go out fifty-five miles, and you catch a couple of mahi, and you catch a



couple of mango, and the snapper move in. You go to sixty miles, the same story. Sixty-five miles, same story. In November and December, I made a new discovery.

MR. LORENZ: I would like to recognize that Kerry is a council member, and she is actually --

MR. SAKAKINI: She listened to me over in Jacksonville.

MR. LORENZ: She is closer to the decision-making, final decision-making, process, and so we're earlier on.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, I am one of the people, and so this is what I suggest we do, because this body has an agenda that they need to follow, and public comment is very important, but let's you and I go out in the hallway, and I can explain to you --

MR. SAKAKINI: No, and I want --

MS. MARHEFKA: You will still have your opportunity, but I just want you to understand the flow of the process, so you know who to say it to and --

MR. SAKAKINI: But the problem is, in 2009, I went to every single town hall meeting you guys had in Jacksonville, and every single person that came in said the same thing, that we're catching more snapper, bigger snapper, than we've ever done before. People brought in pictures, and captains on the charter boats offered you guys -- To take you guys and show you how much snapper was out in the water.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay, and so, sir, here's what we're going to do. Three minutes is our normal time that we give for public comment. We'll start the clock now, and you can --

MR. SAKAKINI: Well, there you go, and you're stifling me already.

MS. MARHEFKA: Please give your -- This is not stifling you.

MR. SAKAKINI: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: Maybe I can offer -- We have an agenda, and there are like ten fish that we have to discuss, and I make a promise to you. You came all the way up here from Jacksonville. If we have time, towards the end of the day, at 5:00, if you wish to stay with us, we'll listen back to you, once we get through the agenda.

MR. SAKAKINI: Well, I mean, everybody here in agreement. The problem is we all are in agreement, and we all are fishermen, and we all know what's going on, and so what's going on behind the walls. What's going on? These people who make the decision, how do they make their decision? All I can see is money grubbers, corporations, closing off the fishery so that they can sell more frozen fish, and more farmed fish, and that's all I see. The gag closure, that's bogus. There is more gags out there than you can shake a fist at, but you've got to go out past forty miles. One of the captains that I go fishing with, he dives in 180 feet of water, and he goes down there to the ledges, and he sees caves as big as this room filled with gags. The gag is the hardest fish in the ocean to catch.

MR. LORENZ: I am going to recognize a fisherman from the area, Jimmy Hull, who was the chairman of this --

MR. HULL: Sir, I'm from Ponce Inlet, okay, and red snapper fishing was my bread-and-butter, before they took it away.

MR. SAKAKINI: I know.

MR. HULL: What I would recommend to you is this isn't going to happen quick, for what you want to make happen, and you need to get involved, and you need to go to MREP, Marine Resource Education Program. They will educate you about the entire process.

MR. SAKAKINI: What I would really like to know is if we are able to file a class action suit against NOAA for the closures, and that's what I want to know, and that's really why I'm here. I want to know if it's possible for us to file a class action suit, because I've got thousands of people that are willing to donate money for a class action suit against NOAA for the closure of the snapper fishery.

MR. LORENZ: Sir, with all due respect, we -- I cannot answer that question here, as, actually, believe it or not, a volunteer member of this committee, as we all are. We are interested fishermen, and we're here, and there are certain legal rights you have, and you have an offer from Kerry Marhefka to explain it more to you, and I think Mr. Hull would, if he has time later on, and, with due respect, I would kind of ask you to gain a little more information. You are not going through anything that the rest of us haven't discussed, as a member of this --

MR. SAKAKINI: Then why doesn't it ever happen?

MR. LORENZ: There is an application process to even be a member of this committee, and it is open right now. If you go on the council's website, you may apply, and you have every right to sit here, as the rest of us, and that's how we all did it, and you will get a voice. You will get -- You're part of the public, and I'm part of the public. We get a little more voice and influence, because we get to know the council, and the council wants us as, shall we say, volunteer -- Like a sampling of the general public --

MR. SAKAKINI: But, for the past ten years, you guys haven't recommended the reopening of the red snapper.

MR. LORENZ: Yes, we have sir, and it's all on --

MR. SAKAKINI: So why did I drive here? What's the town hall meeting all about?

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

MR. LORENZ: Sorry, sir. Thank you very much. All right. Further advice on our snapper situation, for the record, and I appreciated Kerry's report, and we have no further follow-up on that, and so the next item we have on our agenda is Number 2, which is the recent regulations and the status of the amendments, which Mike is going to present to us.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, Bob, and so, in your briefing book, Attachment A2a is your snapper grouper amendments update. Within here, we have all the amendments that are going on right now for snapper grouper, and some of those are further along in the process, and some of them are earlier in the process. I'm going to highlight a few, and I'm not really going to touch on the ones that you all are discussing in this meeting, because you will get updates on those as you get to those agenda items, and so, things like yellowtail snapper and wreckfish, you'll be able to get updates on those as we get to those parts of the agenda.

For right now, I do want to note that the regulations from Amendment 50 for red porgy are now effective. Those went into place January 19, and so I wanted to highlight that, because that's happened since the last meeting. Amendment 49 for greater amberjack has been submitted to NMFS. That happened earlier this month. For the final actions that were included in that, you can refer to the October amendments update, and I gave a link to that, but all of the actions are spelled out, and you saw those in your last meeting.

Then Amendment 51, snowy grouper, has been submitted to NMFS as well, and the summary -- There's a summary of the actions that are included in that amendment, and that's in that amendments update. Amendment 52, for golden tilefish and blueline tilefish, again, all the actions are included here, and that has not been submitted, but we're hoping to get that done before the June council meeting, and so that one is pending submission.

Gag and black grouper is another one that's pending submission, and we're hoping to get that done before the June council meeting as well, and so, at that point, it will be sent by the council to NMFS, and they will be going through their rulemaking process, and then, scrolling down, Regulatory Amendment 35 is another one that was approved by the council in March of this year, and we're working on getting that submitted to NMFS as well. Again, that one is -- That's another one that we're trying to get out the door by June, and so we've been busy, in terms of trying to shove out these amendments and get them through the process, so that NMFS can go through their regulatory process in putting those into place.

You will be talking through Amendments 48 and 46, as well as 44, this week, and we'll have some discussion on scamp and yellowmouth. That's going to be a new amendment, Amendment 55, and so that's going to be the one that will address those species, and then another approval was the Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment. If you will remember back, and it might have been two meetings ago, you all got kind of some presentation of how the ABC Control Rule is changing, and that's more of an SSC operation, but it does affect the snapper grouper management plan, and so you all did have some discussion about that, and that has been approved since your last meeting, and we're trying to get that out the door and submitted to NMFS as well, and all of the actions are included for that one.

Kerry noted that continued progress is being made on the commercial logbook, and that's not coming in this meeting, but, in March of 2023, that's the most recent update, that that was approved for public hearings by the South Atlantic Council, and so it's moving through the process, and be on the lookout for public hearings coming up, possibly this summer. That is all I have for the amendments updates. If there are any questions, I can try to field those right now.

MR. LORENZ: Questions for Mike on any of the amendments, as listed and as he reviewed? I am not seeing any hands, and I presume there's nobody online with any questions. All right. Thank you, Mike. We'll move on to the next item of our agenda. The next item, I would like to introduce Julia Byrd to give us the review of citizen science, and this is something that I know that I've followed from its point of inception here with Julia, and she's done kind of a great job, and it's probably about an eight-year effort so far, and it's gone quite a ways along, and this was actually the first council to really implement this with such formality in the program, and so, Julia, please talk to us.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, Bob, and good afternoon, everyone. I just wanted to let you know that Meg Withers, who is our Cit Sci Project Coordinator, and I are going to kind of tag-team in this presentation, and so we'll be going back and forth, and what we are really going to do is -- We want to update you guys on a few things that have happened since you met last fall, provide some findings for some of our recent projects, and then we have two things that are getting underway in the upcoming months that we wanted to ask some input from you guys on.

First off, the first thing I wanted to make you all aware of is that we have been working with some folks at NOAA on putting together a special issue of a magazine called *Fisheries* that was focused on citizen science. That special issue came out in November, and it included an article on our FISHstory project, and so, if you're interested in checking it out, there's a link in the slides in your briefing book, and then, if you all want to dig into a little bit more of what's been happening with the citizen science program, we recently did a seminar with NOAA Central Library, and there's a recording of that, if you want to check it out, and there's a link in the presentation as well.

The next things Meg and I are going to do is we're going to give you a quick update on things that have been happening in our kind of SMILE and SAFMC Release projects, and then, for the last two items, we're looking to get some input from you guys on kind of moving our FISHstory project forward and then some kind of cit sci evaluation work that we're doing.

First off, the SMILE project -- Last fall, at your meeting, I gave a quick overview. This is a new project that just got underway, where we're working with recreational divers to collect length information on some data-limited species, using kind of a handheld stereo camera that the recreational divers will be able to move around with and record video, and so REEF, which is a citizen science organization that's been working with recreational divers for a long time, is the group kind of leading this crew, and so they've been working to kind of develop an underwater camera, and one thing that's a little bit unusual that they're doing is they're trying to develop a stereo camera with just one laser, to be able to get the length of the fish.

You look at the angle of incidence from that laser mounted on the camera to the center of the photo, and so that will make the camera less expensive, and hopefully easier to get in more citizen scientists hands in the long-term, and so that camera development is underway, and they're actually going to be field testing it either -- I think it's next week, or the following week, depending on the weather, initially, and they will be doing more field testing this summer, and so that's a quick update on SMILE, and then Meg will give you an update on what's been happening with the Release project.

MS. WITHERS: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Meg Withers, for anyone I haven't had the chance to meet yet, and I'm the Citizen Science Project Coordinator, and I work predominantly on

SAFMC Release, and so this is our project where anglers are recording information about their released fish on the free mobile app SciFish, and the QR code on the screen right now will take you to our project webpage that has tons of information about the project, as well as some additional resources, if you're interested.

We have a few updates for you on this project. Participants are continuing to record information about their released shallow-water grouper and red snapper in the app, and we are also continuing a really close collaboration with the best fishing practices initiative. We consider the use of SAFMC Release to be a best fishing practice, and so our collaboration with the best fishing practices initiative has been really natural and fruitful, both in our outreach and our messaging, and so we're continuing to do that. We're going to highlight our participant recognition program, which was just recently launched, and touch on a couple of things from our 2022 annual data summary.

Starting with our participant recognition program, also known as PRP, because there aren't enough acronyms in fisheries management, this program was designed to celebrate participants' achievements within the SAFMC Release project. We really wanted to do something to highlight our participants and thank them for their incredibly meaningful contributions to this project and also do something that would support their long-term engagement in the project, and so this is what we came up with. We are going to recognize our participants, on various platforms, for reaching goals, or what we call milestones, such as recording five released fish in the app, and we will recognize them on various platforms, such as our Release newsletter and our social media.

We have announced our 2023 milestones, and that link at the bottom of the page will take you to those, and it will also show you the corresponding ways in which folks will get recognized, and we're really excited to launch this program. It's very new. We launched it last month, and so it's new, but it's really exciting, and we're looking forward to implementing it throughout this year.

Moving to our 2022 data summary, for anyone who is not familiar, every year, we look at the data that's been submitted through the app, and we analyze and summarize it. We share that summary first with our participants, and then we make it publicly available, and so I'm going to be talking through a couple of highlights from last year's summary, or this year's summary highlighting 2022.

What you're looking at here is where Release submissions came from in 2022, and we have representation from all the states in our region, with the most submissions coming from Florida, at 38 percent, followed by North Carolina, South Carolina, and then Georgia. The majority of submissions are coming from the recreational sector, at 71 percent, with 29 percent coming from the charter sector. We received data on seven species last year, with red snapper accounting for 50 percent of the Release submissions, followed by gag and red grouper, in second and third place, respectively.

Finally, something that we're really interested to learn more about is how anglers are treating their fish upon release, and so what you're looking at here is the percent of Release submissions, or released fish, that were descended, vented, or received no treatment, according to the depth at which they were caught, and so you can see, at depth zero to sixty feet, very few released fish received treatment, which makes sense, because, at these shallower depths, the likelihood that those fish are going to experience barotrauma, and be in need of descending or venting, is very

unlikely. As we get into sixty-one to ninety feet, we're seeing more released fish being descended, and that trend continues into ninety-one to 120 feet.

At 121-plus feet of depth caught, you can see that the percent of fish that are released with treatment is still quite high, but we're seeing more venting, as opposed to descending, and so it's really great to see this trend, whereas the depth caught increases and the likelihood that a fish will experience barotrauma increases, and anglers are, you know, using those treatment techniques to increase the likelihood of survival for those released fish.

If you would like to dive in deeper with our 2022 data summary, there is a link there for you, and we have a lot more insights from 2022, such as some length compositions, some notes about shark depredation, and the hook types that were used, and so please take a look. We are looking for any suggestions that you all might have about what to include in next year's data summary, and so, if you take a look, and you think that would be great to have included, please either come up to me, while I'm here in person, or shoot me an email. I would love to have your suggestions, and, with that, I will turn it back to Julia.

MS. BYRD: All right. Thanks, Meg, and so, moving on, the next thing I wanted to update you guys on is the FISHstory project, and so I know you guys are familiar with this project, and we're using kind of old, historic fishing photos from the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s to help us learn more about what was caught back then and what size the fish were that were being harvested back in the day, before we had catch monitoring programs in place, and so, last fall, there was some information on results from our pilot project, and we're really excited to share that we ended up getting some funding from the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, or ACCSP, to help us move this project from a pilot to a full-scale project.

We're excited to be working with some folks from NC State, and from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, to kind of help us on some of the analytical aspects of the projects, hopefully helping us kind of get into that next step of moving some of the information collected in this project into the fishery management or assessment process, and so one of the things that we really need to do first, in order to expand the project, is to get more photos, and so we were really lucky to have Rusty Hudson, who I know many of you all know, and he used to sit around the table with you, who provided, you know, over a thousand photos from his family's fishing fleet for this pilot project, and now we're really looking to get photos from different areas across the South Atlantic and photos that run through the 1980s and early 1990s.

I also will say that someone else sitting around the table, Bobby Freeman, was wonderful, and, when we announced this project, he gave us a bunch of photos too, and so one of the ways that we're hoping to gather photos from a much broader area to host kind of scanning nights, is what we're calling them, and so the goal is we want to invite people to bring these historic photos that they may have, or people in their family may have, to us at these scanning events. We're looking for photos from across the South Atlantic, from the 1940s to the 1980s, to use for this FISHstory project.

What we're really trying to do is we want to host these scanning events in collaboration with some of the upcoming council meetings and advisory panel meetings, and we would love to host one of these at you all's fall Snapper Grouper AP meeting and potentially get some of the other folks sitting around this table to maybe bring in photos, if you all have them.

What we want to do, at these scanning events, is kind of ask folks to bring in hard-copy photos, or digital photos, if they have digital photos, to the event. We'll scan hard-copy photos, and we'll save the digital photos, and then we'll collect a little bit of information about them, kind of where the picture is from, location-wise, what year was it taken and that sort of thing, and then, if people are providing hard copies, we want to also be able to share the digital copies that we're making back with them, so that they can have digital copies of the photos as well.

One of the things that I wanted to share is kind of what we're looking for, photo-wise, for these kind of analyses from the FISHstory project, and so what we're really looking for, in photos, is kind of pictures taken at the end of trip where kind of you're displaying the harvested catch, and the anglers who caught the fish are in the photo with the catch, and we really want to have kind of a year associated with that picture, so we can look at trends over time, and we want location information. If we can just get the state where that photo is from, that's great, and is useful, and then we also want to collect some background information from the photo provider, just contact information, and that's really just to let them know -- To keep them up-to-date on what's happening with the project and how their photos are being used.

What's even better for photos, for analysis, is if the picture is taken where the fish are kind of hanging on the leaderboard, because, that way, we're able to estimate the size of the fish in the photos, and not just kind of what species were caught, and more details on dates can be really helpful. If we have month and year, then we can start to look at some seasonal trends. For photo location, if we can get more specific than state, city, and dock, that's really helpful, and then, also, we love to get information on the vessels and captains themselves, if that's possible.

The next thing I wanted to do is just kind of show you some example photos that are great for the analysis, and I probably put in a few more of these than I needed to, because I love looking at these old photos, and so the first one is one that was provided by Rusty, and we've used in the FISHstory pilot project, and this is kind of the gold standard for kind of the photos, as far as FISHstory analysis work goes. You know, this is a picture of harvest at the end of a trip, the people who caught the fish are around it, and the fish are hanging on the leaderboard, so we can get the size, and we know the year, the month, and even the day, and we know what state, city, and dock the photo is taken from, as well as kind of the vessel name and captain name, and so is kind of the gold standard for photos that we're looking for.

Another example of kind of a really helpful photo, and this is one that we got from the Outer Banks History Museum earlier this year. This is another wonderful photo. You know, the fish are hanging on the leaderboard. We have a year, and we don't have a month, and we know the city and dock and state that the photo is from. Again, another example of a really useful photo that we're looking for.

This is actually one provided by Captain Freeman, sitting at the table, and this is another great photo. This one, again, fish are hanging on the leaderboard, and we have a year, but not a month, and we know kind of the vessel, captain, city, and dock, and so these are examples of photos that are really great and helpful for the project.

Some other photos, and this one was provided by Judy Helme, who is a captain out of Savannah, and she sits on the council, and this is one that she provided, and it's another great one. Although

the fish aren't hanging on a leaderboard, and so it becomes harder to get size, they're all displayed out, and you can count the fish, and identify the fish, within the photo, and so these are great photos as well.

These photos get a little bit harder, as we're kind of moving on, to use for analysis, but this is another one from the Outer Banks, and it's still good. You can see the people, and you can see the fish that they caught, and you can identify most of the fish they caught, but now we're starting to kind of get some fish blocked by people, or turned in ways where it becomes a little bit harder to identify, but still we would love to get more photos like this, from across the region, and then other ones that people likely will have are like this, and this is one that was provided by Judy as well, and so, again, it's great. However, it gets a little harder to identify all of the fish, because many of them are kind of in a pile in front of the anglers, but, still, if anyone has something like this, we're really interested in getting these types of photos for the project.

With that, I want to pause for a minute and ask you guys if any of you all might be willing, if we held kind of a scanning event at your fall meeting, if you might be willing to bring in photos to help us kind of scan, or, if you don't have any photos, do you know other people in your community who might be willing to bring in photos?

MR. MAHONEY: Are you all taking into consideration the socioeconomic impact, that showing the next generation of fishermen examples of what the baby-boomer and adjacent generations had before they harvested these species to a point that left nothing on the ledge but a sea tumbleweed?

MS. BYRD: I don't know if this is going to answer your question, but let me take a stab at it, and so, from this project, there are a couple of things we're trying to do. One is to characterize the kind of size fish caught during this historic time period. There are a number of stock assessments in our region that start prior to the 1970s, and, for the for-hire and private recreational fleets, there aren't kind of catch monitoring programs back in place then, but, a lot of times, they have to kind of estimate what the historic catch was, and getting the length information can help kind of characterize the size of the fish that are being caught, and so that's one we're hoping the data could be used, and another way, and we're really excited about this, is folks from NC State and from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center reached out to us, after seeing kind of results of the project, and they're interested in seeing if they can put together a relative index of abundance from these historic fishing photos that could help inform the stock assessment.

Right now, we just have photos from one region, and kind of off of Daytona Beach, Florida, and so we're looking to get photos, more photos, from across the region, so it's more representative of the catch everywhere, but that's how we're hoping the data will be used, and I think we are learning a lot. From talking with Rusty, just about his photos, we're learning a lot about that historic fishery too, and we're hearing a lot of -- We haven't done formal oral histories, or anything like that, but I think we're learning a lot about kind of how the fishery operated back in the historic time period too, and so I don't know if that got at your -- I guess I'm not understanding the question.

MR. LORENZ: Julia, maybe I can help a little bit here. Your question, the way I observed it, and I may be wrong, but I'm just wondering if a little more clarity -- Is your question based on the fact of the experience of today, that people are getting accustomed to smaller numbers of fish, or are you concerned, or would like to know more, from research, about a fact that some people tend to think is going on, that we are increasingly getting accustomed to smaller and smaller fish, with



any species, which is what I thought you were leaning, and could you just give a little more clarity, for the record?

MR. MAHONEY: Yes, I think you're on the right track with that.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, and so you're interested in studies, and kind of an analysis, on why we are getting, it seems like -- There are people thinking that we're getting more and more accustomed to the fact that fish will generally be smaller in any one species, and it's kind of --

MR. MAHONEY: Right, and celebrating what was happening in these pictures might not be the best thing to set forth for the next generation.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you.

MS. BYRD: I guess I'm not exactly sure how to answer your question, and it sounds like you're talking about shifting baselines, that the fishery today looks different than it did back then, and is that --

MR. MAHONEY: Right, and it was kind of taken advantage of back then, and it left us sitting here, and people coming here to publicly comment about fish, right now, that -- You know, it just seems like it's not shedding a good light on where the future of fishing is going, compared to what I see in those pictures and then what we see in the pictures today, and I think that it might end up having a negative impact.

MS. BYRD: So I guess what this project is helping us do is better document what the historic catch looked like, because, right now -- There weren't any catch monitoring programs back then, and so there really isn't much information about that, and so that's really what we're trying to do, through this project, and not necessarily celebrate what was caught, or things like that, but really document what was caught during that historic time period, because, right now, there is really limited information, and I think these historic photos are kind of an untapped source of information about what those historic fisheries sort of looked like.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Julia. I want to recognize Jack Cox, a lifelong fisherman, and he has a comment.

MR. COX: Well, Julia, I think that's pretty cool, because I love looking at all these old pictures, and what fishermen can share, and I see a little bit different than Andrew, because I see it as -- One of the reasons that I'm here at this table is to take my experience over the years and to try to teach fishermen what we did wrong, in some places, and try to help rebuild fisheries, and so a picture tells a thousand words, and we've heard that, and I think it's cool to go back and look at it and just say, hey, this is why we do what we do, and we try to provide for the future, and so I'm looking forward to it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew and then Cameron, please.

MR. MAHONEY: That's fine, coming from somebody that was close to being a part of that generation, but, from others outside of that generation, it might seem differently.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. Cameron, you're recognized.

MR. SEBASTIAN: You know, just a general comment. You know, history is history, and you can't change it, and so the pictures are what they are, just like anything else, and so it is what it was in the past, and I'm glad you're documenting it, and stuff like that, because, if some of the current regulations keep going forward, then charter/headboat guys like me are going to be in these pictures, and then the only guys who are going to be looking back here are going to be like, wow, you used to be able to pay per person to go out fishing, and now we've got to have our own boat, and have \$200,000 invested in it, and the blue-collar and low-income guys are totally out of the game, because it's pretty much been whitewashed and made a gentrification of the ocean.

MR. LORENZ: Note well taken, Sebastian. Well said, and I agree with you. Anybody else with a comment, or Julia.

MS. BYRD: I was just going to say that I saw some heads nodding around the table, about maybe bringing photos, and I was going to try to write down names, so I can gently remind you, once the time gets -- Paul. Awesome. Cameron, Dave, Randy, Harry, Andy, Chris. Awesome. Thanks so much. Jack. Awesome. All right. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I don't have any more photos for you, but I was just going to make one comment, quick. I think it's great what you're doing with these photographs, and the fact that you're able to get lengths now, and see the average size of all these species, over the many years and pictures that you have, it gives information as to what, you know, the population looked like over -- What the normal population looked like back in these times, when we didn't have as much fishing effort as we have today, and compare it to what we see today, and it gives us a picture of where we're at compared to the past, and so I think it's a great project, and I fully support it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Andrew Fish.

MR. FISH: What I think might be even more interesting about these pictures is probably most of these boats didn't have to get out of the sight of land, when this happened. I mean, in all reality, and I'm guessing something like that is in the late 1960s, or the early 1970s, you know, and I think that's something that hits hard the most, is these boats probably did eight knots, on an old party boat, and they probably didn't get out of sight of land to do something like that, and that's my input.

MS. BYRD: Well, and I think that's a good point. I know, when we talked to Rusty, and Allie knows this more than me, but they went and sat down on a map and said sort of where did these boats go, when they went on a normal bottom-fishing trip, or a trolling trip or whatever, and so maybe that's something else that we should be asking folks who are bringing photos in, so we can get more of a sense of kind of where they were going, or how far offshore they were going, just to have that kind of background information, too.

Then one other thing that I will mention, before moving on, is I was wondering if you guys know of any other opportunities to kind of gather these historic photos in your community. Alana Harrison, who is out in the Outer Banks, is actually the person who suggested to us to go to the Outer Banks History Center, which is in Manteo, and it was a treasure trove of all these historic

fishing photos, and so I don't know if you all know of any other like libraries, museums, or places that may be good to check out.

AP MEMBER: Frank Timmons, in St. Augustine, has a lot of pictures.

MS. BYRD: Rusty Hudson provided me with a lot of Frank Timmons, I think, family's photos.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: We're doing our seventy-fifth anniversary of our company this year, and one of the things that we're doing to do, this summer, is we're going to invite the public to send in their old photos of old family pictures, and then we're going to do some prizes, based on X, Y, Z, and stuff like that, and so that might be an angle that you could work with, or something like that, down the road.

MS. BYRD: Yes, awesome, and I don't know if it's appropriate to ask, or maybe we can talk after, but if we can use some of those photos that are being sent in for FISHstory. We can talk more later.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss.

MR. MOSS: I've got somebody right now checking into -- Richard Stanczyk is going to look into what he has at Bud and Mary's.

MS. BYRD: Awesome.

MR. MOSS: I don't know what's going to come of it, but I'm checking into it.

MS. BYRD: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else with any comments on where Julia can get some further photos? Captain Bobby.

MR. FREEMAN: Sonny Davis, there at the Captain Stacy Fishing Center, and he was probably one of the first North Carolina headboats in fishing, and he will have some history there.

MS. BYRD: Thank you so much.

MR. LORENZ: Do you have what you need, Julia?

MS. BYRD: I do, but I have one more thing that I wanted to run by you guys, before moving on.

MR. LORENZ: Please. Go. Absolutely.

MS. BYRD: Thank you, you all, for offering to bring photos and for providing suggestions. That's huge, and I will probably be sending emails and calling folks, as a reminder, once the meeting gets closer, just to remind folks to bring photos.

The last thing that I wanted to talk with you guys about is a project that we've been working on, and I mentioned it a little bit last fall, but what we're trying to do is to gather some baseline knowledge about kind of folks' attitude, competence in, and trust in using kind of citizen-science-collected data in the fisheries management process, and the idea is we want to be able to ask that question now, and then in five years, and then in ten years, and see if people's attitudes, or perceptions, are changing, and so we're really interested in gathering this information from fishermen, and from scientists, and from managers, because those are the main groups of folks that we're working with through the citizen science program.

We've been really lucky to be working with some researchers to help us on this, and so, as a first kind of crack at things, we were working with Rick Bonney, who has been our kind of -- He's a citizen science sort of expert, and he's been advising our program since its beginning, and he's our citizen science Yoda, but he did interviews with a very small group of fishermen, scientists, and managers, and so those interviews focused on these kind of four areas. They asked folks about the health of the U.S. South Atlantic fishery, whether there is sufficient data to support fisheries management, and he asked about folks familiarity with citizen science, and the council's program in general, and then their support and faith in citizen science, particularly in using it for kind of a fisheries management context.

I know some folks around this table participated in those interviews, and so I really thank you for that, and, if you all are interested in seeing the interview results, there is a link in the slides that you can check out. I learned a ton from kind of the findings from those interviews, but one of the main focuses, on doing those interviews, was using what we learned from those to kind of collect information from a much broader group of fishermen and scientists and managers. We talked to only eighteen people, and we know that views may vary a lot amongst those different groups, and so we were lucky to find a little bit of support to help us with this work, and so the next step is to collect information from a broader group of scientists and managers.

We're working with Rick Bonney, who is leading those efforts, and he'll be doing an online survey, and then we're really excited to be working with a team of researchers, Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, who is from Georgia Southern, Tracy Yandle, who was with Emory University for a long time, and just recently moved to New Zealand, then Bryan Fluech, who is with Georgia Sea Grant, and they are going to be conducting interviews with a much broader group of fishermen.

I wanted to share a little bit of information about these interviews and their research that they will be doing with you all. They're really hoping to gather kind of diverse perspectives, and they're putting together a sampling method that could be repeated in the future, so we could look at results over time, to see if people's kind of perspectives are changing, and they really want to make sure that they're including fishermen across all three sectors, commercial, for-hire, and recreational, as well as across all four of our South Atlantic states.

That's pretty daunting. There are a lot of fishermen, and so they have limited resources for this project, and so what they decided to do is, you know, how do you eat an elephant? You eat an elephant one bite at a time, and so they kind of came up with a sampling strategy that was doable, based on kind of the resources they had to gather information from a broad group of fishermen.

For the commercial and for-hire sector, they're trying to figure out who should be in kind of the universe of people that they could ask to do interviews, and so, first, they looked at the NOAA

permit database for all the South Atlantic permits, and that's still a ton of people, and I think it's over 19,000, or something like that, and so, to kind of narrow down that group, they decided to focus on the snapper grouper and the mackerel fisheries, and those are two of our really big fisheries, really important fisheries, in the South Atlantic, and so they kind of are going to limit their universe to folks who have these permits for these fisheries, and then the South Atlantic region is pretty broad, and so they're going to focus on kind of four geographic areas.

To figure out which geographic areas to focus on, they're looking at recent landings for the snapper grouper and mackerel fisheries, as well as there is some social science data that looks at kind of which snapshots of fishing communities, and so what different species are important to different communities along the coast, to figure out where to kind of -- What four geographic areas to focus on.

The private rec sector is a little bit harder, because there's not a federal permit, and so what they decided to do is focus on people that have kind of a sustained interest in fishing, and they kind of define that as they belong to some sort of fishery organization, whether that be kind of a local fishing club, some sort of national or statewide fishery organization, or like a Facebook group online, and, again, they're going to try to focus on the same geographic areas as the commercial and for-hire guys, so there's kind of an apples-to-apples comparison. Once they get their kind of universe of people to sample, they're going to kind of randomly select people, randomly select a person, and then ask them if they're willing to do an interview.

To do recruitment for the commercial and for-hire sector, they're planning to send postcards, or do telephone calls. For the private recreational sector, again, that's a little harder, and so they will kind of try more things, like emails, social media, hopefully talking to some folks at these fishing organizations, and figuring out would be the best way to communicate with folks in their group, and then, once they contact fishermen, and if a fisherman is willing to be interviewed, they will be able to select the interview method that they prefer, whether it be by phone or kind of via a webinar, or a virtual meeting, or an in-person interview, and so they will be traveling to each of those four regions once, and they would love to do in-person interviews with people, too.

The reason that I'm telling you all this is that, if you are contacted by these researchers, I would really ask you to please consider participating and doing an interview. The interviews will kind of last as long as you want them to. I think -- I know that Rick Bonney's interviews are about thirty minutes or so, depending on kind of the interviewee, but I would really encourage you, if you are contacted, to please participate.

Then the last thing I will say is we were looking for some input from you guys on, in particular, suggestions for contacts in fishing clubs, or other kind of fishing organizations, that may be good for us to cover for that kind of private recreational sector, and I know Jennifer, and her team, have come up with a list of organizations, and we're kind of feeding them organizations. The Mackerel AP met on Friday, and they provided a lot of suggestions for this too, and so we'll ask you guys, now or later, sometime during the meeting, or shoot me an email, if you guys have any kind of fishing clubs, or organizations, or Facebook groups, things like that, that you think that it would be helpful to be included and contacted about this work.

Then the other thing that I wanted to get input from you guys on were suggestions for recruitment methods. You know, for the for-hire and commercial sector, is an email or a phone call good?

Some people, when we talked to another group last week, said text message may be better, and it may offer a quicker response, and so we're looking for feedback from you guys on organizations and recruitment methods.

MR. LORENZ: Does anybody want to make some statements for Julia on what your personal opinion is of what may be the best way for us to go forward and find participants for these studies? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: My first -- Julia, thank you, and first would be a question, and so how are these people identifying themselves when they contact us, because I get emails from like university students, and people that are doing different projects, and I participate with them, but they don't ever say that they're with citizen science programs, and so would they identify themselves as such?

MS. BYRD: I think that would be a piece of information that would be great to get from you all, and what would make you -- I mean, they will say they're doing research for the South Atlantic Council's Citizen Science Program, but, if there are certain things that may be good to cover, in like a recruitment email, that would be really helpful to know, or to get you all's opinion on.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else like to state something now? Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: You know, I think that a text will go a lot quicker for you, in general, for most of the charter/for-hire, and another way would be to find that charter/for-hire's email site and email. They may or may not have the phone number, but, if they do, 90 percent of the time, it's their cellphone, and so that text will follow-up and get a quicker response.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else? All right, Julia, and you're leaving us, and so, just for the record, you are leaving us with kind of a little homework assignment, that, if we think of anything, or names of any clubs or organizations or ways to contact people, to get that information to you, via an email or text.

MS. BYRD: You took the words right out of my mouth, Bob.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So you want individuals for this, right, and so like I represent charter, but then I have thousands, or tens of thousands, of people on my email list, and so I'm assuming that would be of value, to reach out to them somehow, and so maybe just get up with me, and we can work something out, where you can go through that.

MS. BYRD: Thank you, Cameron.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard you state earlier that the Science Center had shown interest in developing an indices of abundance using the FISHstory pictures, and probably you need some more timeline, and more area, but how about their acceptance to say the SSC, in general, or in stock assessments in general, and the use of citizen science, and has any of this

information been used in any stock assessments, for instance maybe the discard depths, or anything that you know of, at this time?

MS. BYRD: Not yet. The scamp stock assessment, that is wrapping up now, the data workshop was -- I can't remember, and it was during COVID sometime, and so we shared the information we had through our Release project. We had limited releases on scamp at that point, but I think some of the information, gathered through the app, and for talking with some of the participants about the fishery itself, was really helpful, and some of that information helped explain some of the trends they were seeing in other datasets.

Nothing has been used directly, and there's an upcoming king mackerel stock assessment, and I can't remember, and is that a year or two? Anyhow -- It's 2025? 2025. The lengths coming from FISHstory are kind of included in the statement of work of things that will be considered in the assessment, for a sensitivity run, and then, for the upcoming gag and red snapper assessments, we will be sharing information from our Release project to be considered for use.

MR. LORENZ: Continue, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just, for me, it's kind of like the -- Even the SSC, they might even look at a fisheries performance report, in a stock assessment, from us, on a particular species in the future, and they may be able to look at -- Let's look at the citizen science, in particular, like you're really going to be strong in the recreational sector, like how a fishery is prosecuted, maybe, or what depths are predominantly -- You know, it will be kind of like that type of thing, probably, right?

MS. BYRD: Yes, and, I mean, I also think there's some cases where some of the data collected may be able to be used more directly in an assessment, or a management, you know, analysis, that sort of thing, but, also, I think it could be used kind of informationally. The other thing that I was going to say is so, back to FISHstory, and kind of the length methodology that was developed, and that was actually presented to the SSC, and they provided some good feedback on it, and we actually talked to the person who assessed king mackerel, the stock assessment analyst for king mackerel, and he was really excited about this new kind of data source that may be able to better help describe what the king mackerel fishery was like in some of that kind of historic time period, and so we're trying to make sure that we're talking with the people who we would like to use the data during the project to get their input, but then also to make sure they know about these projects, moving forward.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Anyone else with a question?

MR. CONSTANT: Julia, it's funny this came up in this format, and I have about six or so professional fishermen, meaning charter/for-hire or tournament guys, what I would consider, you know, high-end fishermen, that I've been asking these questions to, since I've been on this panel for the last three years, and, recently, I've got some shocking results that maybe probably would be better for us to spend thirty minutes, and I will update you.

MS. BYRD: Sounds good.

MR. CONSTANT: Okay.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else? All right, and so, in summary, Julia has given us sort of a little homework assignment. As we think of fishing organizations and people, get back to her for this information. Julia, I would just like you to note that we did have some comments here on what this information can mean for somebody, such as Mr. Fish stating that he kind of thinks it might have been a lot easier to fish back then, and not go so far, and we had Mr. Mahoney that has a worry about we are just getting more accustomed to smaller and not quite as good fishing, and interesting, in that swag, to the council, and to fisheries managers at NMFS, is how might they also use that data and for some of us to think, well, that could -- Not to open a can of worms, but that can go two ways, because I think, with snapper, red snapper, we're kind of looking at that, going back to what the history could have been and how big the fish must be, and their age, but, as Mr. Mahoney says, you know, getting used to the fact that that may never come back, and so what do we do, and so some interesting thoughts for us in the future. Julia, anything more?

MS. BYRD: Other than to just thank you guys for all your input and feedback. I really appreciate it, and I will follow-up with folks on a variety of topics, later at this meeting and beyond. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Julia, and thank you, Meg, and welcome, Meg. If anybody needs to take a break or something go ahead, but we'll just move into the next item that we have on our agenda, which will be the Southeast Reef Fishery Survey, the 2022 trends report, and, Walter Buble, and I have liked your presentations in the future, and so let's take it away. Thank you.

DR. BUBLEY: Thank you, everyone, for having me here. I'll get a little into our survey methods. It's been a while since we've presented this to the Snapper Grouper AP, and I think it's probably been prior to COVID, and so some of you were around, and have seen these before, and, for others, this may be new, and so, if you have any questions about what we're doing, and how we're getting this, please follow-up with this, but I will move ahead, and I don't have any homework for you, like Julia does, and so be thankful.

This is just a general outline of what we're going to get into today, and this is the survey design, and so I'll give you a basis of what we're actually doing, an example of what we did in 2022, the catches that we were seeing, as well as the trends, and we'll look at those trends in abundance, length, and distribution of some of these selected species, and then I will also follow-up with what we're planning on doing for this sampling year, and our first cruise is scheduled to get out in about a week-and-a-half, and so we'll be out shortly and catching fish.

Just a brief rundown of who we are and what we are, and, a lot of times, you'll hear people refer to MARMAP, and that was the principal funding source, starting back in 1972, for some of these reef fish surveys. The chevron trap survey, which I will predominantly be talking about today, has been going on since 1990, and, in 2009, 2010, we started to get some other partners that contributed vessels and salary and staff, and funding in general, just to expand the survey, and not just distribution-wise, but as well as density too, and so now the current funding -- The Southeast Reef Fish Survey is what you will hear this referred to as from now, and it's our MARMAP group, the SEAMAP South Atlantic group, and then both of those are housed at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and then SEFIS, which is the Southeast Fisheries Independent Survey, which is housed in Beaufort, North Carolina, with the federal lab up there.



Currently, we have three vessels that are typically going out every year, and we've got the R/V Palmetto, based in South Carolina, the R/V Savannah, which is utilized by the Beaufort Lab folks, and out of Savannah, and they also utilize the NOAA Ship Pisces for a couple of trips every year.

A brief overview of what we're actually doing, and so we're utilizing these chevron traps that are targeting low to medium-relief live-bottom habitat, and so we're looking for structure, when we're doing this, and we're dropping these traps on anywhere from fifty to 360 feet of water, and these traps have been utilized and deployed the exact same way since 1990, and so we have the standardization process that's helping us to see what's happening with these catches, and so, if we're tending to catch more fish than the previous year, the thought is that the population has increased, and so we're using this standardized methodology to try to get rid of some of the noise that might be there normally.

We bait them with menhaden, and we soak them in the water for about ninety minutes, and then a relatively new addition is, since 2011, when SEFIS came onboard, we now have video cameras on every single trap, and so we have at least two cameras on all of them, and you can see the red circles here that are pointing -- They face in opposite directions, and we'll use one to count fish and the other one will give us an idea of habitat as well, and so, if the trap is turned in a certain direction, and we're right on the edge of some habitat, if we only had the camera facing the one way, we wouldn't know what sort of habitat we're on, but, because we have them pointing in opposite directions, we have pretty close to a 360-degree view.

This is the chevron trap sampling universe that we've had. It has changed throughout the years, but, as of right now, we have roughly 4,300 trap sampling stations, and we're covering an area from Cape Hatteras, North Carolina down to Port St. Lucie in Florida, and so, each year, we're randomly selecting 1,500 of these stations, and we then go, and we sample those randomly-selected stations from mid-April through mid-October, and, when we bring these traps up, we do a variety of things.

We identify and measure and weigh every single fish that's brought up out of the water, and so we get some ideas of the abundances from that, and we also select certain species, and we'll take life history information, and so we'll take otoliths from them, so we can get age structures of population, and we'll take some reproductive tracts, so we can look at sex ratios in the population, and we can look at which ones are mature, when they mature, as well as determine spawning season of these fish and fecundity, how many eggs they're producing.

We also sometimes take DNA, and we'll take stomach samples, and so these are all things that we're trying to incorporate. When we get our hands on these fish, we're trying to get everything that we can from them that will be useful moving forward. The SEFIS group, in Beaufort, is responsible for the video indices, and so they're reading all of the videos that are coming off of a trap and trying to get some estimates of abundance and species composition, based on those, and all of these data are publicly available, and so, if you want to look and see what some of the catches are from the traps, they're all on [seamap.org](http://seamap.org), and so, if you go to that, and you sign up for it, you are able to pull queries of the data that we've caught from this survey, and you can specify kind of how you want to look at it, whether it's by species, if you want to look at lengths, if you want to look at abundances, and so all of that information is there, and you can tailor it to how you want the data, if you wanted to ever look at it.

So, in 2022, we kind of got back to a normal year, and so, in 2020, we didn't sample hardly at all, due to COVID. In 2021, we had those sea days that we didn't use in 2020, and so what our goal was in 2021, it was to sample as many traps as we could, and we weren't as worried about life history, and we wanted to do some exploratory work with the data that we were getting, and so we sampled as many traps as we could, and had the most traps that we've ever put out, and we had over 2,000 traps that we deployed that year. This is coming back a little more to normal, at this point, and so, between the groups, we had eighty-six days at-sea, and nearly 2,000 gear deployments. Of those, almost 1,700 of them are chevron traps.

We also put these CTDs down, which are conductivity, temperature, and depth, and so it's basically just getting some profiles of what's going on in the water column, and we deployed almost 300 of those, and, from the chevron traps, we caught nearly 29,000 fish, in those 1,600 deployments, of fifty-nine species, and, as I mentioned before, we measured, weighed, and identified every single fish that came onboard. Of those fish that we caught, over 9,000 of them, of twenty-five species, we retained for life history of some sort, whether it was age, reproduction, or DNA.

As I mentioned before, the chevron trap index has been going on for quite a while. Since 1990, it's been standardized in this methodology, and I will also be talking about this video index that we started, and starting in 2011 through 2021, and so you'll notice there's a one-year lag between the two of those, and that's because, when we get the catches from the trap, and we measure the fish, it's almost instantaneous that we have those numbers available to us. With the videos, they have to take them back, and they have to download them, and they have to have somebody sit in front of a screen and read them all, and so, obviously, there's a little bit of a lag, and this tends to be about a year behind, and so I'll be presenting the information from the chevron traps up through last year, and the video information will be one year prior to that, and I will explain how I'm kind of denoting that, so it's a little easier to see.

I mentioned before that there was no sampling in 2020, and I'm not going to get into specifics with what we did, but we standardized the data, and so, if there was some disparity between years, and so say that one year was colder than another year, we can take that into account, and so, for certain species, we might not catch as well, if the temperature was colder, or if we were fishing in certain areas at certain times of the year, and we're taking into account that sort of thing, to try to, again, eliminate as much noise as we can and try to get down to the actual signal that's coming out of there.

What I will -- Well, as I mentioned with this, with the traps, we're getting numbers of fish, and we also have the soak time of these traps, and so they're roughly ninety minutes, but we're setting them out in sets of six, and so sometimes it's ninety-three minutes, or ninety-seven minutes, whenever we get to them, because we're hitting one after another.

With the videos, what they're using is something called a mean count, and we don't need to get too much into the specifics here, but what they're doing is, once a trap hits the bottom, they allow everything to settle, for about ten minutes, so they get visibility, in case it stirred up some sediment down there, and then, every thirty seconds, for twenty minutes, they're taking a count and identifying every single fish that they see on that screen, and so, sometimes, when you have screens that look like this, it takes a little bit longer than when you have some of the ones that don't have that.

Let me give you some examples of the format of how I'm going to be showing you everything today, and so, with the distribution, it's just a recent distribution. We're just taking the most previous five years that we've had, and we're creating this heat map, where we're looking at the number of fish per trap hour, and this is only off of the catches, and so any of these blue, cooler colors are indicating lower abundances. The warmer colors are indicating the higher abundances, and then the white areas are the areas that we don't have any traps or we didn't sample over the last five years.

Here's where it gets a little more confusing, but this is the index for the chevron trap, and they're all going to look set up similar to this, and what you want to focus on is that black line is going to be the actual standardized index, and so that's going to be the number of where we think the number of -- The abundance of fish is relative to other years, and the gray shading around is just the error estimates around there, and so it's the uncertainty that we don't know for sure, and those red dots are just the nominal values, or that's what happened prior to us going through the standardization process, but focus on that black line for these traps, and that's probably the most important part of that.

It's also worth noting that that dashed line is indicative of the average for that entire time series, and so, if you see that black line is above that dashed line, that means it's a higher-than-average year. If it's below it, that means it's a lower-than-average year. Also, the way that it's scaled is that you can go up a lot higher than you can go down, and so, because it's on a -- That one line is the average, but a value of two on here, which is higher above that line, is twice the long-term average, but a value of 0.5 is half of the long-term, because you can't go below one, obviously, or below zero, with these species, and so just be aware that it's kind of more condensed below the line than it is above the line.

To make it very confusing, the group that put together the video index flip-flopped the colors, and so, with the video index, what you're looking at is the red line, and so, in future years, hopefully we'll work this out, so we don't have to confuse everybody that's sitting around, and they can just look at one color, but the red line, for the video index, is what you're going to be looking at. That's that standardized index, and they go through a slightly different procedure, and they can look at habitat, and things like that, when they're looking at that standardization process, whereas we're only looking at depth and latitude and time of year and things like that.

The uncertainty estimates are these red dotted lines around it, and then those black dots and lines are their nominal index, prior to that standardization, and so, as I said, it's very confusing, because we inverted the colors, but what you'll see too is we've put a box, up in the chevron index, to indicate the time series that that video is, because it starts at a later date. It starts in 2011, and it ends at an earlier time period, in 2021, and so it just gives you a frame of reference, so you can compare the two and see what they look like, but you'll notice, when we're going through this, that they actually track really well, and so we feel a lot more comfortable now, seeing that we've got two different ways of developing these indices of abundance, and they're very looking very similar to each other, for the most part, and so it makes us feel good that we're getting the appropriate and proper data, when we're going through this process.

The last bit of what I will show you is just length frequency plots, and these are bubble plots. It's only going to be for the chevron trap, because we don't have length measurements, currently, for

the videos, and it's just the total length of the fish, making it as long as we can. Each length bin is a one-inch area, and the bubble size is indicative of what proportion of fish that year are in that length bin, and so, the larger the bubble, the more that year were in that bin, compared to other ones from that year.

The red line just gives us the average total length for those fish throughout the time series, and you will also notice there's a couple of spots where you see, horizontally, just blank spaces, and it goes until 2011, I believe, and that's just due to some of these species have fork length, versus don't have fork length, and what we did is we tried to standardize everything to a total length, but, in earlier time periods, we were taking measurements at the fork length, and so that's just a factor of using -- Of converting those fork lengths to total lengths, and it's just a rounding issue, where it always rounds up or down, and it doesn't hit that bin, and so just be aware of that. It's not that the fish are missing, but it just looks kind of weird, and it's a factor of rounding.

Then I do want to give, before I get into it, some of the caveats, and so this isn't an update on stock status. While these data do go into stock assessments, this isn't the only thing that goes into stock assessments. They have catch data, and they have life history information. There's a lot of other information that goes into it, and so I just want to put that out there, that this is just one component of that.

We have -- Based on the numbers that we're putting out here, in terms of sample sizes, sometimes this is different from the stock assessments as well. We try to put this all together, so all the fish are in the report, treated the same way, but, when it comes to stock assessments, sometimes certain years are truncated out, and so, with red snapper, I'm going to show you from 1990 through 2022.

When it goes into the assessment, because of SEFIS coming onboard, and us sampling Florida more frequently, we're actually only using the index from 2011 to 2022, if we do it for those years, and so just be aware of that, that these are different for the traps, potentially, than they are in the stock assessments, and potentially with the videos as well, though they're a lot closer, but there are fewer of them as well here, and so it's not every species is going to have an index of abundance for the video, and the reason we can't always do what was in the assessment as well is that not all these species have been assessed.

There are certain ones that you wouldn't expect to be, like tomtate, that are more ecologically important, but then we have other ones, like white grunt, which just -- They never get assessed. They keep getting pushed back, over and over and over again, and so I just wanted to get all of this stuff out of the way, and then I'll get to the fun stuff now, and I know you guys are sick of me telling you all these caveats that are going into this.

MR. LORENZ: I saw a question.

MR. FREEMAN: What was your reasoning for not using the traps deeper than sixty fathoms? For the snowies and tilefish, deeper than 360 was our better fishing.

DR. BUBLEY: Right, and they are, and that's -- Unfortunately, with this project, part of it is just what the gear is capable of doing. If we're trying to look at really high-relief areas, these traps aren't going to be good, and so we've utilized some other gear, in the past, called short bottom longline, or vertical longline, is what they've called it, where it's a ninety-foot rope with twenty

hooks attached, twenty gangions on it, and so this isn't ideal for every species, but -- And we're aware of that, too.

We know that certain of these deeper habitats, and deeper species -- That this isn't going to be ideal for, and that's why it's not really utilized for a lot of the deep-water species. We have short bottom longline, and we also have a project that's ongoing now with cooperative work, this South Atlantic Deepwater Longline survey, which is covering -- It's overlapping with the traps, but it's using commercial longliners that are fishing out to 1,200 feet, and so it's covering that area, and that's a better estimator for things like snowy grouper, for blueline and golden tilefish, and that's the point of that one, is there was a gap, based on this gear didn't work very well for those ones, and so what we've done is we've taken gear that does work better, done some cooperative research with the commercial industry, and trying to get a better idea of what's going on now at this point.

All right, and so these are the species I'm going to talk about today. These are the top catches, or at least the top eight species that we have, from tomtate through white grunt, and these make up roughly 90 percent of what our catches are, and so it's predominantly what it is, and then a couple other species that might be of some interest, like scamp, gag, and red grouper, and the asterisk on the tomtate and *Stenotomus*, the scup, are one species that don't have a video index, but just the trap-based index.

Tomtate, the distribution, you can see, obviously, it's pretty prevalent, all over the place, and this is going to be nothing different for any of you, and you guys are all very familiar with where the distribution of these things are, and so just bear with me, because we put this presentation together for some other folks as well. What you really want to see, probably, are the indices of abundance, and so, with tomtate, we see that it declined in kind of the mid-2000s, and it has since steadily increased, and it's now back to roughly normal, over that long-term time series, and the length frequency is basically exactly the same. The tomtate are -- Pretty much, they're all about the same size, when you catch them.

Vermilion snapper distribution, and here is their index of abundance, and you'll notice that it also had a decline, a little later than what those tomtate were, but it has been increasing, and, over the last few years, it's been above the average, and so, in 2021, it was slightly lower, but, in 2022, it bounced back up above, and so, as of right now, it's around the long-term average, or it's hopping along the long-term average.

This one, we do have a video index with it, and, as I mentioned before, you will notice that most of these trends follow almost exactly, and so what we see here is a very similar trend with the trap catches, and their last year is down, but you have to remember that their last year was 2021, and the trap catches were down as well, and so we're expecting that the index of abundance for vermillion snapper next year will be -- For 2022, in the video index, will be increased.

The length distribution, we've seen an increase in length distribution over the years, and so we're seeing more larger fish, or, conversely, maybe less smaller fish, and we'll see that with some of these other species that we're thinking may have some issues with recruitment, where we're not seeing nearly as many of the small fish as we are the older ones, and so that's kind of -- That will change some of the distribution patterns of the lengths that we'll see moving forward.

Black sea bass is shallower water, and, not to anybody's surprise, but they are pinned down towards the bottom. This was the second-lowest year we've had in thirty-ish years in this survey, and the video index is showing the same pattern. It came in right around the time of that peak, and it has shown just this decline, and it's staying down towards the bottom since.

This is the length distribution, and you can see, towards the end, it's slightly higher, and that's possibly due to this lack of these smaller fish that are in these traps. If you look back in the early to mid-1990s, you see a lot more of these smaller fish are being caught, versus what we're having now, and we're still seeing some of them, but not anywhere near the numbers we used to.

Red snapper, obviously, the distribution is mostly off of Florida, up to about southern South Carolina, and then there's a pocket in North Carolina that we've seen as well. Also not a surprise to anyone here, and the actual numbers of fish out there are large. They're still up there, and this last year was the highest one that we've had over this entire time series, and the video data are showing essentially the same thing.

The size distribution looks a little different, because they were so infrequently caught earlier on in the time series, and now, with larger numbers, you can get some ideas of size classes, or age classes, potentially going through, and so, in that big year class of 2008, 2009, somewhere along those lines, if you follow that up diagonally from 2010, you can actually see that year class going through the catch.

The Stenotomus, or scup, longspine porgy, used to be a lot more frequent than what we're catching it now, and that's another species that's taken a dive, and, obviously, this isn't fishing pressure, with this species. This isn't something that's regularly targeted by anyone down here. Here is the length distributions, and I don't know what is happening in those most recent years, why we're having these larger, older fish, or I'm assuming they're older fish, but that's something that we have to look into a little bit, because, up until 2012 or so, it was pretty stable, and then, all of a sudden, we started to catch these larger fish, as we were going, and so that's something that I can't answer that question. If you want to ask it, that's fine, but I will give you a blank stare.

Gray triggerfish is pretty abundant throughout the range, and, again, this is another species that has kind of bounced around that long-term average over the last few years. It's slightly below the last couple, but it's trending hopefully in the right direction, and we'll see what happens with the next year. The same thing with the video index, and it looks very similar to the traps, again, the same kind of patterns, and they are moving through. Length distributions are relatively stable throughout the time period, from about 1995 or so on.

Red porgy is a little deeper water, and we've seen that decline, and that has stayed down. We have a little uptick this most recent year, and maybe that's a sign of something good, and we don't know, and we'll find out, but those values have been very low the last few years. It used to be a species that we regularly encountered in the traps, and we don't see nearly as many now, and red porgy is showing the same trend in the video index.

Then the size distribution. With this one, we have seen a change in size over this time period, and so, from about 2005 on, we've started to see an increasing level, to around the time where SEFIS came onboard, in about 2011, and then it has sort of stabilized from that point, and you can see

that there tends to be less of the smaller ones that are caught, and I think that's what is driving a lot of this increase in length frequency.

Then white grunt, which has the opposite distribution pattern of say the red snapper, and we see it a lot off of North Carolina, and we don't see it much in the range of Florida, and we don't sample far enough south in Florida to get to the point where they show up again. This is another species that's kind of been around the long-term mean. The last couple of years, it's been slightly below. The previous three years from that were above, and so it's around the long-term average for us, with the video index showing the same patterns. This is kind of noisy, going around, but there's not much change in length frequency with the white grunt throughout the years as well.

Scamp has seen a decline since the mid-2000s, from the chevron trap catches, to relatively low, or not relatively low, but low catches for this survey over the last few years. The video index is showing the same thing, and, here, we jump around, and we have a change, it appears, in the mean length. Keep in mind that we're not catching a ton of these fish with this gear, and so there's going to be some variability with it, but it does appear, since a little before 2010, that we're starting to catch -- The mean size is larger, and that could be a function of not having those smaller individuals, or as many of those smaller individuals, as we used to catch.

Gag grouper, this one is below the long-term mean, for the last say eight years, or nine years, and the video index is showing something similar. Then the length frequency distribution, and, because they are -- We're catching a few dozen of these every year, and so it's going to bounce around, and so it's not quite as informative as some of these other species.

Then red grouper, and this used to be relatively frequently caught in the trap, and, as you can see, and not surprising I think to anyone out on the water, is those numbers are really low, and those numbers have been really low since about 2010. The video index, this is one instance where you have to take everything into context, because, if you're just looking at the video index, it looks relatively stable. It looks straight, which I guess technically it is stable, because it's staying at that lower level, but we have these historic chevron trap catches that are showing that we were actually catching these, at higher abundances, over the earlier part of the time series. The length frequency distributions of these, and then I will get on to the 2023 plans.

The sampling season is about to get underway, as I mentioned before. We actually had to -- Our big blue boat, the Palmetto, just got back from the yard, or is getting back from the yard tomorrow, and I believe it's tomorrow, and so we obviously can't be on the water yet, but I think the plan is, in about a week-and-a-half, we'll be out on the water with that vessel, and the SEFIS vessel will be out on the water shortly as well, and so the plan is about seventy-five to eighty-five days, depending on what funding is coming through this year.

Those three vessels are all going to be there, deploying these chevron video traps, and we're going to have a complete scientific crew, and this going to be year-two of normal, following COVID, and so what's happening with -- What we need to do now is we've been relatively level funded for a pretty long period of time, and, obviously, the costs have stopped this increase, and so what we've had to do is cut back. We're still trying to get on the water, and we're still trying to get as many fish as we can, but sometimes this life history sampling has to take the brunt of this, and so we're not always getting as many ages, or we're not getting as much reproductive samples, because

we have to make some cuts somewhere, and we felt that getting out on the water is more important, in this aspect.

What that means is some of these fish that are coming up -- We're still trying to get as much information as possible, and so, for certain things -- In this case, it's the red fish are on the rotation, and so vermilion snapper, red porgy, and red snapper. We're doing full workups. We're taking otoliths, and we're taking reproductive tracts from just the females, and the males tend to not be as informative, and so we're trying to do that, but we're also macroscopically saying what sex they're at, and so, because we're taking just the females, we know the ones we haven't taken are males, and so we can still get an idea of what the sex ratio is out of the population.

After this year, we're rotating those fish off, and we do this in a three-year rotation, and we're going to get to the monochromatic species, and so we've got black sea bass, gray triggerfish, and white grunt, and so those will be coming on the following year, and what we'll do with vermilion snapper and red snapper, the following year as well, is we won't take any reproductive information, but we're still going to record what the sex is of those species. We're still having them in-hand, and we're still taking otoliths, but, with that instance, we can confidently say if it's a male or a female, and so we'll use that information to look at sex ratios, as we're moving forward, and so, even though they're not being taken for histology purposes, where we get more detailed information, we'll at least get something along the lines with these sex ratios.

Then we've got some other activities that we're doing, that are going along with this, and so one project that's wrapping up right now is this short bottom longline expansion, and this was what Robert Freeman was just asking about, or I was trying to mention with this, and we tried to expand the range of our sampling efforts, to see how well this gear would work and catch some of these species, like snowy grouper and blueline tilefish, that aren't recruited into the traps as well, and we're also looking at something using the stereo cameras, in the middle, and this is a really neat kind of thing.

We typically -- The cameras we have on those traps are normally just GoPros and housings that go down there, but we don't get any information on the lengths of these species, and so these stereo cameras are kind of cool, because they're spread a certain distance apart, and they're angled in slightly, so it's like our own vision, and it gives us depth perception, essentially, and so it's taking two videos, and that what we essentially do is we combine the two videos, behind the scenes, in some computer program, and we can take measurements of those fish, and the slight offset differences between the two cameras will allow us to get a length measurement of the fish.

What we've done, in the past, is we don't know what the lengths of those fish are that in the videos, and we were assuming they were the same as in the traps, but that's not always going to be a great assumption, and so at least, this way, we can test it out in the future, and we can identify what lengths these fish are and if it matches up well with the traps.

Then the last one that I will mention is this snapper grouper survey, this juvenile snapper grouper survey, and so a lot of these issues that we're facing with some of these species are recruitment-driven, and so what we want to do is we want to try to get some ideas of if we can get -- If we can put together something like this trap survey, but with a little more inshore, smaller-mesh gear, sabiki rigs, to try to get some ideas of what's out there, these smaller juvenile individuals, and try to see where these choke points might be happening with this recruitment, and so, if we tend to



catch some fish in this trap, but they're not showing up in the chevron trap, maybe something is happening in that time period, and it helps us narrow down what's going on, and maybe address it.

I want to acknowledge everyone who has played a role in this. As I mentioned, MARMAP has been around since 1972, and so it's long-term, and there's a lot of people that have been involved with it, but the SERFS survey, and all these other groups, have taken part, and it's a lot of work to put down 2,000 traps a year, in the range that we're covering, and so it relies on a bunch of staff, students, research vessel crew, and it's been going on for a long time, and I also wanted to acknowledge that we are funded federally, through NOAA, for the main portion of these surveys, and getting support from South Carolina DNR, as we're going through this, as well, and so I am more than happy to answer any questions that might come forward.

MR. LORENZ: All right. We'll begin the questions for Dr. Bublely, and we'll start with Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you. I always enjoy this one. My question is sample size, and so, for an individual species, in the SERFS sampling of the trap, I thought I heard you mention, like gag, maybe this past year, you caught a couple dozen, maybe was the sample size, and so is that available on the -- I think you said seamap.org, and so the sample size for the year, for a certain species, is available?

DR. BUBLEY: Yes, and you can get individual trap catches, and so you can pull up -- Say you want to look at gag, and it will spit out a value that has every single fish that was caught, and, depending on which toggle you use, you can get lengths of every single fish out there, or you can just straight up get abundance, if that's all you're looking for, and so it will give you the number of fish that were caught every year, and so a species like gag, which might not be ideal to utilize for an assessment, for abundance indices, that's why that selectivity study is going to be useful, and hopefully that --

They do show up on the videos, and they show up a lot more frequently on the video, and they're just not as voracious as something like a black sea bass, or a red snapper, that are just going to go into the trap, no problem. We see them along the outside, and they're a lot more cautious, and so, by using that video survey, along with the selectivity study, where we can determine what the lengths are of these fish, that will make that survey a lot more useful for some of those species that the trap gear doesn't work quite as well for.

MR. HULL: Perfect. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Really good stuff. My question is I'm curious if you're able to sort of juxtapose like the geographic abundances -- I'm saying that wrong, and hopefully you understand, but over a longer period of time, and so to kind of get an idea of species shifts, and so, as you see like these lower abundance --

DR. BUBLEY: The problem we've had is, when we initially started, when we first put those maps in, that's what we wanted to do. We had a five-year period at the beginning of the time series and

a five-year period at the end, and we wanted to see if we saw any shifts with it. Unfortunately, it's a little trickier than that, because, prior to SEFIS coming onboard, and the funding from SEAMAP, we were putting 300 to 500 traps a year in the water, and it wasn't always -- The range wasn't always quite the same, or at least the density wasn't the same.

While we've been in Florida, like the Cape Canaveral-ish area, since 1996, there's nowhere near the density that we're getting now, and so, if you were just looking at it just based on the actual numbers of traps there, you're going to be like, oh, look, it has shifted a lot, and we're seeing this, but it's just a function of where that survey has slightly changed, and so there is methods to look at shifts in abundance, but they're a little more complicated, and we're exploring that.

We're exploring that with some of the species that do trap well, like black sea bass, trying to get something together and see if we can see some shifts in abundance with them. Unfortunately, not everything -- Over a five-year period, ten-year period, or thirteen, since SEFIS has been onboard, it's not -- We don't see a ton in that relatively short time period, but it would be useful. It would be great if we had that data since 1990 all the way through, because it would be interesting to see the patterns of distribution change.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Mr. Fish, a question?

MR. FISH: Yes, and I personally got the pleasure to be diving in an area where these chevron traps were, outside of Wilmington, and it was my worst day of my whole summer in Wilmington, and I was just curious of where do these fish go when you're done with them, and are they donated, or are they --

DR. BUBLEY: Everything that does onboard, via us sampling, we fillet and we donate to local homeless shelters and things like that, as we go through the process.

MR. FISH: It was just disheartening to hear the captain call me and say, hey, are you getting them over there, and we're killing them, and we caught six gags last night, and it's not a really warm, fuzzy feeling, as a fisherman.

DR. BUBLEY: No, it's not, but they're utilized.

MR. FISH: I understand it's part of the process.

DR. BUBLEY: Right, and, I mean, as you said, with the gag, this was -- We do some hook-and-line fishing as well, to get some alternative samples, but we're still talking about handfuls of fish a year, and so it is small, and it stinks to hear about that, and I get it.

MR. FISH: Maybe the fishermen should be a statistic in that, the guy that didn't get to catch their fish, in your little graphic.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Mahoney, did you have a question?

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. Is ninety minutes enough for it to be down there, and would an increase in time result in an increase in sampling or the overall count in that area?

DR. BUBLEY: It probably depends on the species, for certain things, and I was just having this conversation with Jimmy about black sea bass, and, in ninety minutes, there would be no bait left, and the fish would be just completely crammed in there, when the abundance levels were higher. There have been some studies, early on in the process, where we were looking and seeing where they're kind of tapering off, and ninety minutes seems to have -- You're getting less bang for the buck after ninety minutes, and so we get large trap catches, as I showed you, and, I mean, we're catching nearly 30,000 fish over that time period, with ninety-minute soaks, and so there's definitely -- Fish are in there.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you, and can I add to that, real quick? Where was I going? How does the tide play a factor in that?

DR. BUBLEY: We have a tougher time dealing with that, at least with the trap catches, and so we're sampling throughout daylight hours, and so we're going a half-hour after sunrise to a half-hour before sunset, and so the hope is, because we're putting nearly 2,000 traps in the water, we're going to get a good representation of the tide, as it's going through the process. If the current is moving too fast -- Actually, we don't come into that too much very often with the chevron traps, but we try to -- I mean, we fish where we can, when we can, and so there's very few instances where the current, the tide, is too strong for us to put the gear down, but the video index --

One of the things that they look at, when they're standardizing their index, is the direction of the tide, basically, and so, if the current is moving across the trap, or to it, or from it, that gives an idea of potentially where that bait plume is going, and so they can try to take that into account, when they're doing their standardization, so they can say, if the tide is moving, or the current is moving, the trap is upstream from the tide, where the opening is, they tend to get slightly more catches, and so they can adjust for that, because it's bringing that bait plume to the direction of where the opening of that trap is.

MR. MAHONEY: Right, and I guess I'm getting towards the interactions with the fish due to the certain stages of the tide, and not necessarily the direction.

DR. BUBLEY: Right, and that's what I -- Basically, it's a numbers game, and so the fact that we're putting nearly 2,000 traps in the water every year -- We're going to get all of those different stages, hopefully, throughout the time, because we're consistently sampling, and the tide isn't denoting when we're sampling, and we're sampling throughout that time period, and, obviously, the tide is slowly changing every day, and so we're probably, just based on sheer numbers alone, which is why it's important for us to get these large sample sizes, is so we can try to capture some of that variability that might be there in the tide, whatever phase of the tide it's in.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. Cameron Sebastian, you have a statement?

MR. SEBASTIAN: Yes, and so, when you're sampling and stuff, are you doing stomach content as well?

DR. BUBLEY: We do some. Funding has been relatively light for that aspect of it, and so there are certain species that we're trying to look at, but it's been lower, in more recent years, and we've tried to apply for some more recent funding to explore that more, because, again, we get our hands

on these fish, and we want to utilize them as much as possible, and so we would love to do more stomach content, but we just don't at the moment.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Thank you, because, I mean, one thing that I clearly saw in the graph is that, as the American reds grew, then everything else started shrinking, especially in the size, and so, you know, I mean, I've been diving out there for thirty-five years, and, you know, the reds used to be in pretty much a pretty consistent slot in the ocean, and that's just where they were found, and now I'm seeing them like six miles off the beach, and they're catching them at forty-six miles, and so, I mean, is it the red -- The increase in the red, in the thousands and thousands of reds out there, taking out the smaller fish?

DR. BUBLEY: It gets brought up every time, and that's one thing that we've done some initial looks into that, and I'm not going to bring Kevin up, but he has presented in front of the council, and at seminars before, with this, and he is -- He was looking at some red snapper diet, and things like black sea bass is typically why it ends up coming up, but we would love to expand the range of that, and we've applied for some future funding, to start to look at it, because it was a limited geographic range, and it wasn't quite as large as we would like it to be, and so, if that funding would go through, we would get the opportunity to look at something like red snapper, throughout the entire range, and get a much larger sample size, so we can get a better idea.

MR. LORENZ: Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: I'm assuming the cameras on the trap, that you were pointing at, and, if we're looking off in the distance, and you see let's say three or four gags, in particular, that aren't easily trapped, are they recorded in these -- Being as they are ten yards off?

DR. BUBLEY: Yes. Anything that's visible is being recorded, and so, as long as you can get an ID on that species, it's being counted when that time period comes, and so I mentioned before that it's every thirty seconds they're looking at a frame, basically, of it, and so, if it's in that frame, during that time period, and you can identify it down to species, it's being counted.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just one more from me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Walter, there's a real skill level in deploying these traps. You know, I have deployed a lot of traps in my life, and, I mean, you get beyond a hundred feet of depth, and a trap that size, and what he's saying with the current, and, I mean, to hit the spot that you want it to be on, you've got to know a lot of things, and be able to do a lot of things, and so the captain of the vessel -- Is it the same, and how long do you have the same crew, or is it a new crew, or what's going on there?

DR. BUBLEY: The captain of the vessel has been with us for fifteen years, something like that, and I think he was boat crew prior to that, and so he's been around it a long time. He was actually a commercial fisherman prior to becoming the captain as well, and so he knows his way around a boat.

MR. LORENZ: Great comments and questions. Anybody else with a question, or a comment, for Dr. Buble? I know we always enjoy those charts. Dr. Todd.

DR. KELLISON: I don't have anything to add to Wally's very well done presentation, but I did want to respond to I think David's question about species distribution shifts, and we hear a lot about that on the east coast, predominantly in the Mid-Atlantic, where the continental shelf temperatures have changed pretty dramatically, from an oceanography standpoint, over the last fifteen years or so, and species are definitely -- Like the center of their distribution is definitely changing, and we've probably seen -- We have some challenges in detecting that, as Wally described, with our trap video survey, because, as he mentioned, the spatial distribution of our sampling has also changed over time, and so those things kind of confound each other, but it's been pretty consistent since about 2011, or 2012, and that's also -- 2011 is when video was added to the survey.

We now have more than a decade of time series where the sampling is spatially consistent, where we could really start to look at those kind of questions, and I was just looking at water temperature data for the South Atlantic, which, unlike the Mid-Atlantic, has been much more consistent over time, with a lot of variability, but we haven't seen the warming that they've seen farther north, probably because of the influence of the Gulf Stream, but it does appear that we are starting to see that, and I say now, but going back a number of years.

I was looking at sea surface temperature, which is what I could most easily get access to, which is not where most of the fish that we're talking about are, but it's probably a proxy for what's happening down below as well, and we do have some bottom temperature data as well, but I just couldn't find that time series, and it starts to be above the long-term mean starting in about 2014, and it has kind of stayed above that long-term mean, and, from my experience, talking to like climate modelers, they suspect that we are going to start seeing the warming trends in the South Atlantic that have been evident farther north, and so my point in all this is to say like we probably have enough of a time series of data now where we can start to look at those questions. In the Mid-Atlantic, they have much longer spatially-consistent time series, and so they have more power to detect those changes.

Another thing I'll note is Jim Morley, James Morley, who was a post-doc of someone at Rutgers, who has looked at these species distribution shifts across the coast of the U.S., looked at South Atlantic data, but they looked at trawl survey data that South Carolina DNR -- They have done a coastal trawl survey, and so a nearshore trawl survey, since 1990, I think, roughly, and so for several decades, and it has been like methodologically consistent over time, and so it's a good data source to look at those species distribution shifts.

It's been a couple of years since that research was published, but they didn't see -- Again, these are nearshore species, but they didn't see any trend of like, for example, northward shifting distribution at that time, but it is, I think, time for us to start taking a look at that again, and we might expect to see some of those changes, if those sort of elevated temperatures remain. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Jack Cox.

MR. COX: Todd, I agree, and I was talking to Jeff Odin today, and, up in the Hatteras area, they're seeing a lot more gags further north, here in the last week, than we've seen in a long time, and so -- But, you know, I remember fishing in the 1990s, off of Morehead in a hundred feet for gags, and seeing these surveys, and we would be on some of these rocks, like what we call the 210 Rocks, and some of the guys here know what I'm talking about, but they would set these traps off

of the rocks and the sand, and I was always trying to figure out what they were doing, missing the mark, and why would they set a trap in the sand, and it would be interesting to see what this data would look like if we incorporated some of our up-to-date commercial fishermen, because fish do move, and to see what some cooperative work, using some of our highliners, what would these guys, and these surveys, over a period of time, and how the sampling would look.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Anyone else? Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So, right now, are you dropping cameras on all the traps or just -- So pretty much you have an exact idea of what your miss-to-hit ratio is.

DR. BUBLEY: We do. We have a lot better understanding now than we did prior to the cameras being on the traps, where we get good glimpse of if we're hitting the habitat or not. As Jimmy was mentioning, obviously, some deeper ones, with some current, maybe you're not going to get nearly as close.

There's also been some studies looking at kind of the range of influence of the trap, basically, and so, even if we're missing it, if we're missing it within twenty meters or so, it's still probably not going to affect the catch rate. They're going to, potentially, depending on the direction of the current, or if it's a clear day, or clear water, those fish may still be attracted. If you miss it by a certain amount more, that's where we have some ideas of what's going on now, and there's been a couple of studies looking at I think red snapper and gray triggerfish, and seeing how far away before they're starting to make movements that are more random and less influenced by the trap.

MR. SEBASTIAN: That would be of great interest, because, I mean, from my experience, I mean, if it's not -- If I am not on the structure, thirty feet off is a ghost town, and so, yes, it would be really interesting to see if fish will make that jump to bait, to get into the traps as much, and it would be really interesting to find out.

DR. BUBLEY: I will say, with some of these, because we have the two cameras going in opposite directions, there is some times where the camera that we're using to count the fish is the one that's over the opening of the trap, and so it's just sand, and you don't see anything else out there, but you see fish all over the place, and then, if you look on the camera on the backside, you'll see that it's missing by twenty or thirty feet, but that bait plume, and whatever the current direction is, is enough to bring them in, and so we've seen that, and we know that there is -- It will attract the fish to it, and it doesn't have to be necessarily directly on it, but that plays a factor, potentially.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: That's where soak time would make a difference. If you did miss the habitat, the longer it sat there, as to what Mr. Mahoney said, they would find it eventually, you know, investigating to eat, but there's nothing you can do about it, and you have to have a standardized soak time.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, all. We appreciate it, and thank you, AP, for a lot of good questions and input back on this. I think what we'll do is let's take about a ten-minute break, and then we're going to get into -- We'll have to participate even more, because we'll get into the gag grouper and any updates on the performance report, and, if there is time today, just for those of

you from Florida, we'll maybe start discussion, which was meant for Thursday, where they want a little bit of comments from us on how we might feel about the situation going on near the space center that was brought up at the council, and so we have a few Florida folks here, and so hopefully they'll have some things to say about it, and I appreciate that, and so let's go for ten minutes, and be pretty punctual. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Calling all AP members. Please take your seats, and we'll continue on with our AP meeting. The next item on our agenda will be updates to the red grouper fishery performance report, and, for those who haven't been here for a while, we went through all our input for the performance report that currently exists, and I believe the intention of Mike is that any updates, changes, that sort of thing, more of a modification to what we already have, and so we'll be probably looking for some of your input with respect to that, on what's different and not what's already in there. All right. Thank you. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, Bob, and so we are updating the red grouper fishery performance report. Red grouper is being assessed in an upcoming stock assessment, SEDAR 86, and that's getting underway, and so, as we do at the beginning of the assessment process, we're coming to you all to update the fishery performance report, and this will be used in that process to kind of help inform the modelers of potentially what they're seeing, what are some of you all's observations, and how that information ties into the data that they'll be looking at.

Red grouper was last -- The fishery performance report for red grouper was put together by you all in 2017, and so we're kind of thinking -- The last year of that stock assessment was about 2015, and so kind of around that time period is our starting point here, and any changes, or things that you've observed in the fishery since then, and there's a list of discussion questions that we will get to. We don't need to go through those questions in a line-by-line fashion, and they're more for you all, just kind of to provoke thoughts, provoke your discussion, and just kind of for you to think, internally, have there been changes along this line, or this line, and, if you have anything to say in response to that, that would inform the report, then we'll get to that discussion at that point.

Ahead of the discussion, I'm going to pull up our overview app for fishery performance reports, showing the document that's in your briefing book right now, and you can see, right here, is a link, where it says, "Red Grouper FPR", and that takes you to our fishery performance report Shiny App, and I will get it to fit the page.

This is our app, and all of the fishery performance reports that have been put together, many of them by the Snapper Grouper AP, all of them are listed here on this website, and so, if you want to see what the current report is for red grouper, just click on that link under the Fishery Performance Reports tab, and click on "red grouper", and you will see what you all put together in April of 2017, and you can read through what's there.

I went through this report, and I pulled out some of the main points related to the questions that we'll go through, and so you all can review those main points, but, if you have anything that's finer detail, that you remember from the last time this report was completed, and it's not captured in those main points, then please point it out, and we can add it. I want to make sure that this is as complete as we can possibly have it.

For this meeting, we are looking at red grouper, and there's a bit of information, and I'm going to see if I can zoom-out. I am going to zoom us out a little bit, so we can fit the page. Here we go, and so, for red grouper, I'm just going to point out some of the information that went into the last stock assessment, and some of the information that's been caught since then.

Chip is going to look into the information issue, and so I will pause on, I guess, what's available from the last assessment, and maybe we can go through, initially, some of these questions, and, if you have questions that are data-related, then we can maybe circle back, when we're able to get that information up visually for you.

The first set of questions relates to fishing behavior and catch levels, and, again, I don't need to read through these, and we don't need to answer these in a point-by-point fashion, because some of them may be applicable to red grouper, and some of them may not be, and so I would just kind of ask if you would kind of look through those bullet points, especially if you have your own screen, if you're able to look through the materials that we put out, and see what those questions are, but the overall -- The overall point of all of these questions is have you, you yourself, or have you observed any changes in fishing behavior, the way that you, or others, fish, and then what types of catches are resulting from that behavior change, the way that you fish,

Some of the notes that were highlighted in the current fishery performance report are that the -- At that time the fishery primarily occurs off of North Carolina, and that's what was stated then, and red grouper are not the primary target, but they are commonly caught on multispecies trips. South Carolina representatives stated that they were a bycatch species. In Georgia, there were some incidental catches, but not common, and then there were a couple of Florida comments, but most of these talked about red grouper not really being a target species, but part of a multispecies snapper grouper fishery that occurs in kind of the shallow waters.

I can pause here, and folks can kind of take in what's on the screen, what's in the report, and, if you have any responses related to the fishing behavior aspect, and we're going to -- It's up? Okay, and so I'm going to give the data one more shot, give the app one more shot. Here we go. All right. In that case, hold those thoughts, and so I can go through this information, and then we'll come back to those thoughts, okay?

All right, and so red grouper, from the information that we have through the last assessment, and some of it is going to extend into more recent information, things like catch that we monitor on a year-to-year basis, and we'll have those updated through I believe 2020, but most of the other information is coming -- That came out of the assessment would have gone through 2015, and so, in the life history aspect, red grouper has an average maximum age of thirty-two inches, or maximum size of about thirty-two inches, and the maximum observed age is twenty-six years, and here we see the length-weight relationship, and I keep on getting kicked off. I'm going to see if it loads back up. All right, and so now we're going to jump back in our discussion. See if you all can follow me.

All right, and so, thinking about fishing behavior, catches, that have been observed, and we will get to other questions, and we're just kind of going down the way, and social and economic influences, and there will be a section on management measures, on, you know, kind of environment and ecology, things like that, and so we will get to those parts, but, right now, we're



just focusing on the fishery, how the fishery is operated, what the fishery itself is observing, and has observed, particularly since 2015, when that last assessment ended.

MR. LORENZ: Any comments? We have some grouper fishermen here. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: It has, obviously, changed for us in North Carolina, since they closed red grouper in May, and so that shifted what we did, and we had to really, you know, try to stay away from them, and we were targeting the gags and the scamps, and so that was -- But that can be done, but it does seem like the last -- May was our big month for red grouper, and now it seems like June, July, and August -- You just don't see many, and I don't know if the population is less. The only thing I would say is that, last year, I saw the most maybe twenty-inch fish that I've seen in a while, and so there's a little bit of recruitment going on, but it definitely changed the behavior of how we fish for those.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Anybody else?

MR. FISH: I didn't do much diving here in Florida this year, but there was a big -- I did hear my buddies talking about a lot of red snapper after the hurricane, and I think there is a lot of push from these Gulf storms, and it's always been kind of common that stuff does kind of slide around, and there has been a lot of small lobster, and red grouper, coming to our ninety-foot reef area, and I'm talking, you know, illegal to just legal, but that is one thing that, this year, was noted to me for that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. Jack Cox.

MR. COX: This is really a North Carolina -- This was really a highline fishery back in the early 2000s, and I always look back at this fishery, and I go, man, we really screwed this one up, as far as managing a fishery. We managed it right on down to nothing, and it's very sad, because it was such a thriving fishery, for about ten years, and we just beat it up so bad that there's not much left of it, and it's a story I tell a lot of people, when we're managing stuff like scamp or gag, and people are not really wanting to take the cuts, but this is an example of what can happen.

We used to see a lot of recruitment, but, this year, I didn't see much at all, gag fishing, and July was the time of year that we were really going to catch these things, but I don't know how many people are going out there to the red grouper bottom, that used to go out there and sample it. Anyway, I just -- I just want to say that I don't see much recruitment, and we used to see those small fifteen to eighteen-inch fish.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Anyone else? Cameron, anything going on with the headboats? How are you doing?

MR. SEBASTIAN: Really, on the reds in our area, we just don't ever see them, really. I mean, they slide up towards the shoals, and that's about the only time they will pick one or two up, but they've never been prevalent in our area at all, and it's always up to the North Carolina line.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: You will see them especially farther south, south of me, and I'm in Palm Beach. They will come on the patches especially, pretty thick, the smaller ones, in the wintertime, and the same thing this year. I was actually talking to a buddy of mine down in the Keys, and, when he was fishing like the thirty or forty-foot range, a lot of the really small fish, and he said he saw a decent number of smaller ones this year, and I will confirm what Andy said, that, any time there's a hurricane event come our way, the reds are always the first ones to show up, and you will see them kind of in waves, like heading north.

MR. LORENZ: I have heard that before, also. Thank you, David. Anyone else with the roundtable? Mike, back to you for the socioeconomic.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you. Just, before I jump off of this topic, was there anything in the past report that is no longer applicable? Did you notice any of the points that were made here that doesn't need to be included further, because it's not the case anymore, or is everything that is stated from the last report still pretty applicable to the current fishery?

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mike, I read the 2017 report, and, from a Florida perspective, it's still the same as it was then. It's just part of the catch, and it's incidental, for the most part, and I would also state that you could look back at some of the citizen science that's been done with FISHstory, and you can look at some of those catches from the headboats, over the past history, and you'll see that it's just an incidental amount of red grouper that were being caught back then, also, and so it really hasn't changed much in a long time.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Anyone else? Okay, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so I'll take that and just kind of add a couple of extra points to what was in the 2017, but largely keep what was in the 2017 report there. All right, and so, for social and economic influences, here, we're thinking about, from the economic end, price, demand for red grouper, and we have a little bit of information on price per pound, but what are you all seeing, maybe on a local level, and that's -- What we have is kind of on a larger, regional level, but, if there's local effects that need to be noted, certainly state those.

Thinking about demand for this fish, within restaurants, or for charter trips, or any of the for-hire sector trips, if there are specific communities that heavily value red grouper, things of that nature, and so some of the notes from the current FPR is it was reported, from Florida, that red grouper isn't a key commercial species, that there's a general grouper demand, but, specifically, red grouper isn't something that's noted.

It was also noted, in the last report, that there is a smaller commercial yield for red grouper, due to the large head size, and relatively less meat, and so there's not as much consumer and restaurant demand for this particular species of grouper, for that reason. Then, in the Keys, last time, it was noted that some of the pricing, at the time, that Gulf red grouper was up to \$6.00 per pound, but there were some differences in seasonal access between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and so there were some differences in price, but, generally, the price would range between five and ten pounds, and so is there any additional information, as far as the social or economic dependence on red grouper?

MR. LORENZ: Jack.

MR. COX: I mean, there's a -- Anytime you've got fresh grouper on the menu, there's always a high demand for it, and I don't care what you say, but grouper is grouper, and, you know, if we could rebuild that fishery, it's going bring a premium price, because the consumer is willing to pay what they need to pay for a fresh piece of fish like that, and that's a really nice piece of grouper fillet, that red one.

MR. KIMREY: Last week, I saw \$35.00 to \$38.00 a pound, in two stores, for red grouper. That's just some FYI there.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Fish.

MR. FISH: Is that a Gulf of Mexico closure, or is there an actual Mexico closure, just for my --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I wasn't sure about that, and I might have to call on somebody that was here during that report, that might know that a little bit more.

AP MEMBER: It was Gulf.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Gulf? Okay. Gulf.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy, go ahead.

MR. HULL: Well, there's a lot of imported grouper that comes in and affects the marketplace, and the price of grouper, and Mexico does have a conservation closure, and I think it just ended, and so, I mean, it does affect the price of fish. When Mexico is closed, the domestic price goes up, in general, and then, when there's -- Some buyers will say, well, they don't have any other option, and so there's a lot of Mexican fish that comes into this country, grouper. I would need to read that closer, just to say that we weren't stating that, and we were stating Gulf, and is that what you're looking at, that paragraph right there, which I can't see, but --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The report says Mexico, but I can check on that. I can check on the regulations, you know, in Mexico, related to red grouper. I will do my best to locate that, and I will have to do a little digging, but I can check on that, to see.

AP MEMBER: I mean, I have buddies that fish in the Gulf, and I think it's a quota system, and so I don't believe there's closures when there's quotas, or -- I mean, I'm not sure on that, but I thought that as well.

MR. LORENZ: Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: You know, I spend a lot of time, with my customers, trying to distinguish between the import and -- You know, the imported, versus our local fish, and, like Jack said, I mean, our fresh grouper is something worth it, and people don't distinguish, really, between the red, the scamp, and the gag, not when it's fresh. I mean, they just want fresh grouper, and that's

what I try to push and promote, and I try to stay away from the imports, and it's very important that we do whatever we can to keep fresh grouper on the market.

MR. LORENZ: I will throw this one out, and I don't know what happens from what you all get from off the boat, or in your market, but, as a consumer of this, I can say, before the season closed down, for what we call our local grouper, in Wilmington, North Carolina, and so this would be right before Christmas, and, again, as Randy said, it's just labeled, usually, as grouper, and I should ask more often, but it was \$32.00 a pound, retail.

MR. COX: I am just looking at my email here, and Atlantic red grouper out of Mexico, today, a three to five-pound fish is \$6.00 a pound, and a five to ten-pound fish is \$6.50, and you have to add about fifty-cents a pound to that to get it up, trucked up, from Miami, and so I would imagine that a fresh red grouper, domestic, would be somewhere around seven-bucks a pound, if that gives you an idea. That would be a boat price.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Anyone else that sells or catches grouper? Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: In our neck of the woods, Beaufort County, the secondary stakeholders have been left out of being provided grouper for so long that there is no demand for it now, regardless of what color it is, and there has really been no priority set forth by the council to increase their opportunity in obtaining the species. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. I would like to recognize James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I just wanted to get some clarification on the Palm Beach and Wilmington, and is the \$35.00 a pound -- Is that a fillet or is that a whole fish?

AP MEMBER: Fillet.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Because I think it's worth noting in here that, when we're talking about a \$7.00 per pound off the boat, that that's a whole, gutted or whole, fish, and so there's that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James, and, in Wilmington, it's a fillet, or even a chunk. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I have already promised my guys that I would be getting at least -- That they would be getting \$8.50 to the boat, regardless of what kind of grouper, this year, scamp or gags or whatever, which I'm working on a packing piece, and it's pretty much about a \$9.00-a-pound fish now, and I think you're going to see that for about everybody, for the whole fish.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Cameron, please.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Being where I'm located in South Carolina, maybe in a very small area that's possible. In my area, my restaurateurs will pay me whatever to get them fresh grouper, and they will take every bit we get, and so it could be just the area, but I'm saying, in our area, Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Little River, they want anything they can get their hands on.

MR. LORENZ: I would like to recognize Chip Collier.

DR. COLLIER: Just to follow-up on what Jimmy was saying, there is a closure in Mexico for red grouper, and it varies, depending on the time, but, going back to 2017, it looks like it was in place from February through March, and so it seems like it's closed during the spawning season.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chip. All right. Mike, next topic.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so then, moving down next to the management measures, I do have to note, and it's been brought up since -- In some of the earlier discussion, but it was kind of something that's happened since the last fishery performance report, is that we have a different structuring of the shallow-water grouper closure now, with North Carolina and South Carolina, and that closure extends through the month of May. It extends through the month of May, and, for Georgia and Florida, it goes from January through April, and the season opens in those states, or off of those states, in May.

That went into place -- The first year of that regulation was 2020, and so I just wanted to highlight that that is a new regulation that's gone into place between the time periods of these fishery performance reports, but, in addition to that, are there any other new management measures that the council, at this point, from your perspective, should be considering? Are there existing management measures, size limit, trip limit, bag limit, season, that should be changed? Also, are the current ACL and the allocations -- Do you view those as appropriate for each sector?

Some of the notes from the last report, it was noted that the minimum size limit may have limited benefit, due to the depth and release mortality. For the Florida Keys, it was noted that red grouper are less likely to suffer barotrauma, and so they viewed the minimum size limit as sufficient, and you all said that it was important to keep the seasonal closure, for spawning purposes, and then it was -- There was kind of an overall, conclusionary note that the current management measures, at that time, don't really limit the ability to catch and keep red grouper, and so we would see if you all still think that's the case, or are there any other notes that need to be added to that?

MR. LORENZ: David Moss, please.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. I don't know what the data is for -- Where it says that red grouper are hardy and less likely to suffer barotrauma, and like I don't know how scientific that is. I can tell you, anecdotally, that I don't necessarily agree with that. In fact, when demoing descending devices, red grouper are kind of usually the easy ones to show, because, nine times out of ten, if you bring one up from deeper than sixty feet, it's going to have barotrauma, and it will be reversed fairly easily, and you can take video of them going back down and surviving, but I don't know that I agree to say that they're less likely to suffer from it, and I would actually say the opposite.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Jack Cox.

MR. COX: I never understood the rationale the council had, when we went back and revisited red grouper and set new management regulations in, and why did we have a trip limit, I think, of, what is it, 250 pounds, when we had a fishery that was in such shape, and it seems, to me, that it would have been more appropriate to have a hundred-pound trip limit, you know, to keep people from doing discarding and trying to fish on them, but, when you've got a fishery that's in trouble like this, I ask that question to myself all the time, and why would the council have a trip limit set as high as they did, but I do think, looking back over time, the mistakes that were made in the red

grouper fishery were, when we would gut, at the fish house sometimes, several thousand pounds a day, during the season, when we were really catching them, back in the 2000s, the early 2000s, and those fish were really roed up.

I mean, we were just dumping it over the side of the dock, just baskets and baskets of eggs, and I knew that was going to come back to get us one day, and it did, but those fish -- They were big, healthy fish. They were fifteen-to-twenty-pound fish, and they were just roed up, and that was -- Man, that was late May, you know, and we were fishing on them pretty hard, and, to me, I think that's what happened to that fishery, is we were just working so hard on those female fish, and they never could recover, and so I think there's something to be said for really protecting these fish when they're spawning, or they're high in the eggs.

MR. LORENZ: Looking around, any other comments, before we move on to the environment? Mike, go ahead.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just in response to David's comment, the note about less likely to suffer barotrauma, that came from comments that that AP made, and that wasn't a data-driven comment, necessarily, and so, if that's something that you all view that it's not really applicable, then you all can take that out, and that doesn't need to be in there, and so I guess I would put that back to the AP, based on your experience.

MR. LORENZ: David, go ahead. You're recognized.

MR. MOSS: Well, just a question, and do we need to make a motion to take that out or just, in general notes, it will happen?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: No, no motion is needed, and, I guess, if there is disagreement with that point, then at least to have some discussion here at the table, but, if everybody is kind of onboard, and views red grouper as no less likely to suffer barotrauma than any other fish, then we can just take it out.

MR. LORENZ: Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: That probably has to do with the Keys. They catch a lot of the grouper in shallower water, and that's probably why that comment was made, is what I was guessing, and a lot of the patch reefs are shallower, and James would know more.

MR. LORENZ: James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I mean, they are a fairly hardy fish, and, in the Keys, you know, geographically speaking, it is a fairly shallow-water fish, but I think I'm, you know, with David here on this, is that they -- Just like any fish, they're very susceptible to barotrauma, and, you know, the geographic sector really shouldn't have that much bearing on whether, you know, they get labeled as hardy.

Also, geographically, in the Keys, if you are catching the grouper beyond sixty feet, they are much, much more likely to be of legal harvestable size, and you're not going to run into that many

incidents where you're catching multiple, you know, red groupers, and it's still a fairly sparse species that we come in contact with. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James, and so would there be anyone here that would like to put a contrarian view, and it looks like what we have there is to cross out that -- There was apparently a statement, at some point, probably due to the shallower nature where they're caught, that the red grouper is hardy and less likely to suffer barotrauma, and that that be removed from the performance report, and that isn't something that we're going to generally give out to the public, because they see them, everywhere other than there, to show classic symptoms of barotrauma. Are we okay with crossing that out? Anybody with an objection to that, saying that should be in? All right, Mike. We're striking it.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Then I will keep us moving down into the environment and ecology and so this has to do kind of with the fish population itself, as you've observed it, and also where it's located, some of the habitat types that you typically find it in, or that you target it on, and has it changed in location, in the times where you've observed it, and then, in terms of the fish itself, recruitment, where small fish might be located, and is there any segregation between small and large fish? Do they mix? Then, finally, kind of from a larger environmental standpoint, how have -- Have sea conditions in the last seven or eight years -- How has that affected your ability to fish for red grouper? Are there any changes on a seasonal basis that you've noticed over those years?

Some of the notes from the last report, it was noted that the size of the fish have been observed as being fairly consistent. The depths where fish were caught, it depended on the region, and so I think it was -- I think it was further south where it was noted, maybe to a hundred feet, but there was an observation that they saw red grouper in eighty to a hundred feet, and there were other folks that saw red grouper in the 140 to 180-foot range.

In North Carolina, it was noted that they were mixed with triggerfish, at the shelf edge, off of Morehead, and there were some observations by divers as shallow as eighty feet, and there was some note of declining abundance since around 2008. Off of South Carolina, particularly Charleston, there is notes of patchy distributions on porgy bottom, and it was noted that there may have been impacts from the past use of roller trawls, and so that may have affected the habitat at that time.

Off of north Florida, they were noted to be caught near the shelf edge, 140 to 180, with sizes and availability being fairly consistent, weights ranging from seven to twenty pounds, and then, off the Keys, it was noted some abundance on the shallow-end of the reef, and there were some big fish caught on the outer reef, and smaller fish in the shallow reef waters, but no observed issues with abundance. There was a note that there is typically more abundance when there's colder water, but that also coincides with the seasonal closure at the beginning of the year.

In terms of small fish, there were some caught in Florida estuaries, and there have been some observations of fish less than twenty inches in shallow waters, and somebody noted cyclical abundance trends that could last anywhere from seven to nine years, and they noted that there might be a low period that happened in the mid-2010s. It was also noted that there was a potential decline in abundance since the four-month closure went into place, and, just to note the timing on that, that went into place in July of 2009, and so the first fishing season when the closure would have been experienced would have been the 2010 fishing year.

Then there was a note that Florida fishermen have not seen the decline in abundance, like what's been reported off of North Carolina, and there are some research recommendations. We're looking at life history and effects on MPAs, and we can possibly put the research recommendations on hold, to maybe address those separately from some of the other observations that you all have had, and so I know that was quite a bit of information. A lot of times, a lot of information is covered in the biology, and the observations of the population, but, if you all have any additional comments related to red grouper, in this realm, or if you heard any of those comments, and they didn't sound quite right, and you would like to change them, please let me know.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The one thing it's probably important to note, and, again, Andy said it earlier, but you will definitely see a spike in encounters after a major storm event, you know, a hurricane or something like that, and it won't just be localized to the area, necessarily, where that storm directly hit, but you'll kind of see it almost in stages, moving north, at least in Florida. You know, it will start in the southern end, depending upon exactly where the storm hit, and then you will see these fish, and I guess they get pushed in from deep or something, but we definitely will catch a lot of them after -- You know, like a week or so after a major storm event.

MR. LORENZ: Our Vice Chair, James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. In my opinion, there's an awful lot unpack here, when we start talking about environmental and ecological and habitat, and something that continually binds our hands, as an advisory panel, as people very concerned about fisheries management, is what's going on in all the lands around all the waters, coastal development and, you know, whether it be agriculture, or whether it be for, you know, private use, or commercial use, and it really doesn't matter.

We've just seen our coastlines become so populated, and we have to wonder, with that demand that's being put on the coastline, is what we're doing here even going to start solving the problems of that, and I hate to be like that, but I ran into a scientist this morning, at the airport in Key West, and she's been diving the coral reefs in the Key West area for the last eight years, and it was kind of terrifying, to me, that this woman said to me that there are less than 1 percent of the coral reefs that are alive and viable in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and she's looking to get out of that job.

I don't know what's going on, but, when we're talking about catch levels, and sustainable rates, and all of this, we've got a big problem, when it comes to what's going on on land, and I know that's not our charge, to solve that problem, but some of the questions that we need to start asking are why are we not seeing the recruitment in the nearshore areas, and I know, in the Florida Keys, where I'm not seeing the little red groupers in my lobster traps, and I'm talking about in seven to ten feet of water.

We might catch -- I mean, I harvest from over 4,000 lobster traps, and we might harvest -- Not harvest, but we might catch-and-release, and so no barotrauma and no anything like that, but, you know, 500, in the months of August and September, and I don't see five, and this is problematic,



and I kind of wish that I was part of this in 2017, and that's just the shallow waters in the Florida estuary, in the Florida bay estuary, just outside of the park.

When we start talking about all of our experiences and bringing it all together, and how we can make a change, and how we can do best for these species. Sometimes I'm starting to think that it's a little bit more out of our control. Now, that being said, we do want to get fish to the table.

You know, we do want our national resource of fish to be available to the general public. That's what we are supposed to do, and I know I'm kind of going on a little bit here, but -- And I'm going to bring up the subject that we always bring up, is we have this species that is thriving, and we're not doing anything with the red snapper, and like we at least have to exchange it and put some red snapper fillets on the table and take some of these red grouper and put it in our pocket, and take the gags and put it in our pocket, and stop harvesting them, on the recreational sector and the commercial sector. When we're talking about all these things, it's -- I mean, I get fairly emotional, and I'm very passionate about what I do, and I'm really worried. I'm really worried. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. There's a lot of food for thought, and a lot of things we could say, and I know someone with opinions on this. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: James, I am with you on that. I'm a developer, or not a developer, and I'm sorry, and I'm a builder, and commercial as well, and I see more runoff, especially down in your neck of the woods, than almost anywhere, but I noticed, on the North Carolina catches, a lot was over 140 to 180, and I would say, in South Carolina, we don't see red grouper very often, but, when I do catch them, they're over 140. Wednesday, I put five gags in the boat, at fifty-five feet, but I haven't seen anything red, red grouper, in that kind of waters in, I don't know -- For a long, long time.

MR. LORENZ: Just some thoughts for us, as a group here that -- You know, we're here to give advice on this fishery, but we are also citizens, with some credibility for what we do, who are participating in a group like this that helps service the U.S. government, with respect to managing fisheries, but I was reading an article, and I'm not going to mention it, to give press to various publications, but there was a very good article written about some folks in Florida that are very concerned on why you can't, in south Florida, seem to resolve that situation, with the pollution that goes forth from the Okeechobee area, basically probably due to big sugar, and on to both your coasts, with red tide over on the Gulf coast and then what happens over, I guess near St. Lucie and that sort of a thing.

The crux of the matter was -- It's like from the play *Hamilton*, and you have to be in the room, and the article was about a challenge to a representative in Florida who simply stated, why don't you listen to all these things you're reading about complaints we have of what the public opinion is, and her answer was you all here, to the gentlemen, and, in other words, you're not showing up to Tallahassee, in the State of Florida, to that legislature.

The same thing I know is going on in North Carolina, and so one of the things to start addressing the frustrations that James has is just a lot of us -- We write, or do this, and besides letter-writing campaigns, or the NGOs that will have, you know, a push the button, and in comes a massive amount of a particular articulated complaint to representatives, is that, if you know them, or let

them get to know you, some of us -- If we have the time, or can take the time, we have to get in the room.

We have to get up in each of our states, and even with our federal representatives, and we have to specifically talk with them, give them a face with the complaint, and apparently just the paper, and the complaints, be it on TV, be it in the news, is not enough, and so I just wanted to share that with you, and it's kind of compelling, and I've heard that before, that, a lot of times, we're not there. We complain here, and we're gone, and we put something up and throw it to the council, and that's where it goes, but, as voting citizens, if you can get to your reps -- You may mean something, and that's where I think we all have to go on some of this in the future, because, as James said, we're all dealing with this development and the impact of the fisheries, and there's been all these statements about, you know, how terrible it is with runoff and this and that, but, you know, development, big agriculture, big sugar in Florida, does have the power, and they have the people paid to do it.

They may not have many people, but my understanding is that they may not see a single guy like me in the North Carolina legislature talking about this, but they will definitely get somebody else who wants to do something with respect to cutting down the forest or a development or whatever, and so I just wanted to pass that on to you, as a thought, and thank you for allowing me to do that. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Bob. Just kind of a plus-one for what James had said, and then I will expand just a very little bit, but, if you want put like near the increasing coastal development and population, as kind of an extension of that, it's that a constant degradation, or disappearance, of the estuarine habitat that all these animals, all the snapper grouper species, use as either nursery habitat, or forage fish, which we're seeing disappearing as well, or have seen disappearing.

They are disappearing, and you don't see them when they disappear, I guess, but, as that continues to happen, and we can't solve that problem -- You know, we've had the grouper closure for, what, twelve years, fifteen years, and I don't even remember now, and we still haven't seen -- You know, I get asked this all the time, by lots of people, and, you know, we've closed it down, the spawning season, and we're supposed to see this great uptick in grouper, and it's kind of gone in the other direction, and why, and I don't have an answer. The best I can come up with, again, is that there are either too many people fishing for them or that the estuarine habitat is disappearing, but that's a huge issue, again, as Bob just hit, especially down in my neck of the woods.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Jack Cox.

MR. COX: I was just -- When we talk about essential fish habitat, I think of Carteret County, and where I grew up fishing, and we would set our bait traps, for years and years, to catch bait, to catch grouper and stuff, and, at certain times of the year, we would catch quite a few baby gags and stuff in it, and now I look back and see all the condos, and I consider Carteret County now the condo and boat slip development of the whole east coast. I mean, you can't fight that big money, and they're destroying that habitat.

You know, I think about, as we discuss these things in fisheries management, how little of an impact that we can have on protecting that, because development has so damn much money and power in a community, and it's sad, because there's not much we can do at our setting, and what

we do here, but, you know, I mean, it's -- I just don't think you can fight it. There is so much money in it, but I think about all the marinas and places where we had that marsh, and that grass, that really provided habitat for these species that we're trying to manage, and it is said, and it affects me, you know, just looking back over time. I ride by these places that I remember setting traps in the marsh, and now it's a bulkhead with condos on it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Anybody else? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I would like to discuss further the point that James brought up about, you know, the situation we're in with a changing ecosystem, with, you know, the changing ocean environment, the changing composition of the snapper grouper stocks in general, and, you know, of course, that goes back to the council and the way we manage these species and, you know, ecosystem-based management, which is a discussion that is there, you know, things like that, and it's probably not the time now, while we're in the fisheries performance report, but red grouper is a prime example of, as he stated, the changes that we see, the changes that we see in bass, and then we see for other species, like the red snapper, going the other way, you know, and so why aren't we managing these stocks to the way that, when I grew up as a kid, when there was no management and science, and it was what Mother Nature provided, and what was in abundance is what we harvested, and, if it wasn't in abundance, we didn't.

We didn't bother wasting our time, and we harvested what was in abundance, but that's a simplification of the problem, but, you know, I think it's worth discussing with this AP, as recommendations, and also to the -- Initially, it goes to the science, because the managers get dealt the science, and, you know, you can see they still want to rebuild these stocks back to levels that they're never going to go back to, you know, and so, for all those reasons, with the changing environmental and ecological things that we're dealing with -- I think it would be -- I would love to get into that discussion, and see what we can come up with, maybe later on in the meeting, if there's time, and it's something that we can look forward to talking about with the council, and possibly even, you know, the Science Center, some recommendations that we might have.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I totally agree with Jimmy and James on this, and there are many tools available that I feel like we could at least suggest, including tax bases based on your impervious and pervious soil percentages, and that will keep these waters from running off and into our estuaries and changing from the microorganisms that the grass shrimp eat, all the way up to the bait fish, but that would be a great conversation to give to the council.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. I just have a recommendation, which I think is the next part down, but I would like to see research done on how vegetative aquaculture will benefit, or not, the red grouper fisheries.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Andrew. Thank you, and I don't know if you want to give a little more color on that thought, or are you -- So we all understand, or are you interested in just, at this time, placing this as a motion, meaning that you would be interested in a study that would show the

benefits of vegetative aquaculture, and it might help that this is going to the council on what you know, or think, would be behind that, why that would be good, and are you talking about --

MR. MAHONEY: So absorption of heavy metals and excess nitrogen could all benefit -- Especially down where this red tide stuff, or this sugar stuff, is going on, and it could reduce the impact that it's having on the species around it, starting with keystone species that will benefit from having extra habitat, and I am on the right track with what you're asking here?

MR. LORENZ: This is scaring us a little bit, I think, and I don't know how onboard we all might be with our thoughts, but you're certainly welcome to make a motion, because then we can see if it's seconded and carries through, if you're interested in saying -- You would like to do a study on the benefits of vegetative aquaculture, and so would you be able, maybe, to just make a motion on that for us, and word it with you want to say, and then we'll see if we can get a second on it, and we'll see if we can get a vote on it, and then you'll get your day in court, so to speak, if the AP agrees to go with that or not. Michael.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I think, just process-wise, we don't necessarily need a motion, and we'll get to a section where the AP is going to throw out ideas of what types of research do you all think could be looked at, in the future, that could benefit the red grouper stock, and we don't need to do it in the form of a motion, necessarily, but it would just be listing out, similar to the way the last report listed these four priorities for research, and it would just go to the group of what you all would like to say that these are some of the important points that should be looked at in the future.

One thing I do -- One question that I do have, Andrew, and so just to clarify, and the aquaculture -- What would be raised in the aquaculture would be the plants, and it would be the seagrasses, and it would be the things that make up the habitat type of thing, and it wouldn't be an aquaculture of the fish that live in that environment, correct?

MR. MAHONEY: That's correct. It's just indigenous, vegetative aquaculture.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andrew. It's kind of taking us off a little bit on the wrong road there. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Not to get into a debate with that, and I think that that's a great idea, and it's a super valid idea, and my only problem is where do we concentrate those efforts, if we did decide to do that, and how do we make sure that those efforts would not be interrupted by poor water quality, again and again, and I feel like we have -- We have these areas that are supposed to have, you know, the seagrasses, and all of the components, to be a great habitat for these species, but they're constantly being interrupted by water quality problems, and so, I mean, I think I would need a follow-up to where are we going to do this, and that's all.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Jack Cox.

MR. COX: You know, when I think about red grouper, what we could do to enhance the fishery, and try to bring it back, I often think about those fish that I was talking about a while ago that had roe in them later in the season than we think they do, in June, and what kind of research can we do to get people to cooperate with citizen science, and what kind of incentive can we get fishermen to, when they harvesting red grouper, later in the spring or early summer, to find whether or not

we should be protecting that particular season a little bit longer, because it seems like that there were a lot of times in early June that we were seeing a lot of roe in those fish, and so I think about that, ways that fishermen can buy into the citizen science to help rebuild fisheries. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just to clarify, Jack, and so you're thinking potentially a way that people wouldn't catch red grouper and use citizen science avenues for, when people catch red grouper, especially if they see that they've got roe, that they're in, you know, kind of a spawning condition, that that information could be recorded? Okay.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Mike, it just came to me, and bioremediation is the word that I was trying to think of, and so that's using vegetation to absorb pollutants, pretty much.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. There is also habitat, and we all know seagrass is in the ocean everywhere, and there is all kinds of issues because of that. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Just so I understand, that would be like a filtration system, on a nearshore basis, you know, where you would have these specific vegetation that would withstand pollution, the types of pollution that we're encountering with different runoff, and is that what I'm understanding?

MR. MAHONEY: Right, and so the placement of it is going to be important, to not interfere with endangered or protected marine life, I guess, sea turtles and stuff like that, and so the placement of it would have to be in relation to where the less likely encounter with them would be.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and just -- Okay. We've already -- Before we move off of environment and ecology and biology of the species, anything else, from observations that you all have had, that isn't already captured here, or that isn't already captured in the information that was shown a little bit earlier, and is all of that still applicable?

MR. LORENZ: Mike, I'm not seeing any hands for any additional input.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay. Then, moving down, just kind of a general catchall, and is there anything that has not already been stated, that has not already been shown, that is important for the council to know about red grouper, as we move into this process, and I'm just kind of reminding you all that what's going to happen is we have a stock assessment that's about to go through, and I believe this one is operational, and so that means that we'll get new catch levels out of this stock assessment. It will be used to project new catch levels, and, following that, there would be an amendment to implement new catch levels, and so the assessment itself -- I would have to look back at the timeline, and, Chip, is it 2024, when it finishes?

Okay, and so it would be tentatively projected to finish in 2024, and then there would probably be about a two-year period in between there, when we would go through the amendment process,

before regulations would be changed, and so that just kind of gives a rough timeline on when potential new regulations would be considered for red grouper, and so, knowing that that's kind of what we're looking at, is there anything else important for the council to consider, ahead of this process, or for the assessment panel to consider, when doing this assessment?

MR. LORENZ: Jack Cox.

MR. COX: When we -- A twenty-inch-sized red grouper, how many times -- Is there anybody here with insight that would know how many times that red grouper had an opportunity to spawn? Should we be considering maybe upping that size limit a little bit, to help this fishery out?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I am going to try one more time to pull up the -- I don't think we have the full -- I guess the spawning frequency in here, but we at least have the maturity information, and we have it -- At least momentarily we have it, and so a twenty-inch -- A twenty-inch fish, you would be looking at -- For a female maturity percentage, you would be looking at just a little over 50 percent of the females would be mature at that size.

MR. COX: It seems like we would increase that minimum size a little bit, to see if we couldn't get a little bit more spawning out of those fish.

MR. FREEMAN: Jack, I just wonder about your catch rate on the red grouper. Are you seeing them? The reason I ask is, the last two years that I ran my boat, we caught one red grouper, and he was in that place that, I don't know, six or seven years before that, we caught six red grouper in one spot, 140 feet, lots of triggerfish mixed in with them, but, like I said, the last two years, we caught one red grouper, out of about 200 trips, and so whatever is done really needs to be in favor of the fish.

MR. LORENZ: Jack.

MR. COX: Back to his point, well, we used to catch a lot of red grouper gag fishing in the deeper water, when we were out there for the 210 Rock, on out a little bit further, and we would see -- We would interact with a lot of those fish, from about the 210, which would be about 120 feet, 115 to 120 feet, onto the southwest of the Papoose, in that area, and we would interact with a lot of those juvenile red groupers. I mean, you know, we would go catch pink snapper, and that's where we would see the most red grouper, is when we were red porgy fishing, but we haven't seen that in a long time, when we would be gag fishing, you know, and that's primarily what I target, are the gags, and so we just don't see those juvenile reds, red grouper, but I don't know, and it's just a science question, to me, that we could get some benefit out of increasing that size, and that's all I'm saying.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss, a comment?

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Jack, I don't disagree with you at all, and I think that every little bit is going to help. However, I believe the rec limit, right now, is twenty inches, if I'm not mistaken, already, number one. Number two, and I understand that, like up north, you guys see the spawners a lot later in the season, but, down south, you know, it's usually that wintertime, where you get them, and the unfortunate truth is that we're still not seeing any kind of uptick whatsoever. In fact, quite the opposite.

You know, we're seeing the indices of abundance, and I got it right that time, is still really low, and, you know, we have to look at -- I'm not saying this to you, and I'm just saying this in general, and, you know, we have to look at all kinds of other measures to try to save this fishery, because it's definitely in trouble, and we've all seen it, and we've all said it for a couple of years now, sitting on this panel, and, again, I'm not saying -- I completely agree with what you're saying, and I would support it, but, you know, we need to look at some other measures, too.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Jack, a reply?

MR. COX: To your point, no, I agree, and, also, I would do what I could to help that fishery, and I would go from a 200-pound trip limit, commercially, down to 100, to truly make it a bycatch fishery, if we really are serious about trying to help rebuild this fishery. That way, when we do start to interact with these fish, and they do start rebuilding, we can give them more of an opportunity to do what they need to do.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Does anybody else have a comment? Michael, did you have everything you need?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so just one note that's in this document that I wanted to point out, and so we mentioned, when we went through the amendments update, that the council approved the Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Amendment, and part of that is there's going to be kind of a new method for the council to evaluate the risk that is associated with each stock, and, when I say risk, I mean the management risk every time, you know, you set a quota, or say that you can catch a certain amount of fish, and there's a chance that you're going to overfish that stock, that overfishing will occur, and so how much of that is acceptable, basically, how much risk is the council willing to accept to say that there is the benefit of being able to catch the fish that outweighs that.

In order to do that, within that amendment, there was a method developed that incorporates a biological fishery, and environmental factors, and the way that we'll go about this process is the evaluation of these factors will be brought before you all, as the advisory panel, as well as in front of the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and your input, and their input, will then be brought to the council, and the council will make the final decision on what the risk scores will be associated with that, but, basically, if a population lends itself to being able to bounce back more easily, you know, it's more resistant to overfishing, or it's able to come back from -- You know, if it is overfished, if it's able to come back relatively easily, then you would theoretically be able to fish harder on a stock like that, as opposed to a species that can't bounce back as easily. These things will be weighed, as we go through that evaluation process.

As that amendment was approved in December, we haven't had time to kind of put it into a workable format, before this meeting, but what we will do is we'll revisit red grouper, using that tool, because, by the time this stock assessment is done, that amendment should be in place, and we should be able to use it, and so we want to make sure that we gather the information from you all, before that amendment goes into place, so that we can use that new ABC Control Rule for this species, and so that will be something that's coming at a future meeting, and we'll show you the risk scores associated with red grouper, and get your input on whether they are appropriate or not, but I just wanted to kind of give that precursor, that we'll revisit red grouper for that purpose.

One other thing that I wanted to note, related kind of in general to fishery performance reports, is we've got I think four or five stock assessments coming up within the next year-and-a-half, and the main thing is we have more fishery performance reports than we do meetings in that timeframe, and so, I mean, it's a good thing that things are getting assessed, but we've typically been doing one fishery performance report per meeting, and, at that pace, we won't be able to keep up with the stock assessments, and so what we may do, and I'm going to, you know, talk to Bob and council folks, and superiors, and make sure that we can figure this out, but we may be looking at possibly a summer webinar meeting that would just be focused on fishery performance reports.

I know that that's fishing season, and we're going to need to schedule that very carefully, and hopefully we catch a bad-weather day, but that's just something that we may need to do, to be able to get through those performance reports, and those also may be a good time where, you know, not everybody is fully invested in every fishery, and so that may be a moment where, you know, if there's a particular fishery that you don't really catch, and it's not really in your area, then you may not, you know, feel the need to have as much input on that performance report, but, if there's something that does significantly affect you, then you would -- You know, we would want to be able to plan for that, and make sure that your input is incorporated.

We can also use other online means, you know, email commenting, get it reviewed, and all of these, of course, get reviewed via email by you all anyway, and I type it up and send it out for your review, and so we can incorporate input that way, but just to try to be able to keep up with the assessment schedule, and so, again, that's a future -- Be on the lookout for information about that, as we come out of this meeting and moving into the summer, but that's all I have related to FPRs.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Mike. Jack has something to say.

MR. COX: Mike, could you remind us, for the next year-and-a-half, what those five assessments will be?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Kathleen left, and so Chip has got it. I know that tilefish is one, golden tilefish, and I know that's one, or both tilefish, blueline and golden, both of them, but Chip is coming with better information than what I can come up with from my own head. This is within the next about year-and-a-half, and so through like the end of 2024, maybe.

DR. COLLIER: All right, and so, through the end of 2024, you'll be getting the red grouper operational assessment at the end of 2023, the gray triggerfish research track assessment will be completed at the end of 2023, and there will be an operational follow-up for that, and we have both tilefishes, both blueline and golden tilefish, and then we're going to have mutton snapper, and Florida is going to be working on that assessment, and I think that is all that I'm seeing right now, but, yes, it continues to be a lot that we're going to have to go through.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Going into 2025, I know red snapper is coming back around, beginning in 2025, and so I'm thinking more when things would be starting, because our performance reports need to go in like right ahead of -- Or at the beginning of that process, and so I think I might have been thinking of triggerfish, blueline, golden, red snapper, and I think we already did mutton snapper, unless that's being started up again, and I think we're finishing the mutton snapper one.



DR. COLLIER: Well, it was a delayed assessment, and so I'm not certain on when you -- On when it was done, and I'm trying to -- I remember doing the fishery -- Doing this overview, and so --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I think it was maybe two or three meetings ago, and so I think that one is still, I guess, current, and we won't have to revisit that one, but still within that timeframe, the main point being that there are more reports than meetings.

MR. COX: Mike, at some point, I think it would be really nice, in our briefing book, to add, you know, about -- Learn a little bit more about the science, for the AP here, about what the different type of assessment are and why we do them.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull, go ahead.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chip, Mike just mentioned that red snapper was coming around next year, and isn't red snapper currently in a research track?

DR. COLLIER: That's correct. It's going to be a research track assessment, in order to incorporate the findings from the red snapper research project that is -- It's a similar project to what happened in the Gulf of Mexico, where they were estimating abundance of red snapper, as well as other projects that have been going on in the region.

MR. HULL: So but it is currently in the research track assessment, officially, or is that just getting ready to begin?

DR. COLLIER: It's going to start late in 2024, and the research project, the red snapper research project, isn't going to be completed until probably late 2024, or early 2025, and so we wouldn't have that data, and we feel like that's a key piece of information for the research track assessment.

MR. HULL: Okay, and a research track lasts for five years?

DR. COLLIER: No, and, I mean, it's open-ended on how long a research track assessment takes, but it's generally around two years.

MR. HULL: Okay. That's good, and that changes -- Because I thought it was five, and then, right after, and so that's two years of research track, and then they immediately do an operational, and so we say immediately, and whatever that means, and then you can get a new stock status, at that time, from the operational, and so you're stuck with the red snapper stock status, right now, for at least three more years, at this moment, or longer.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, that's correct.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Chip, you mentioned mutton snapper, and you said the word "Florida", and it's being studied -- I mean, it's counted all the way up through all the states, correct?

DR. COLLIER: That's correct. They're including information from all the states. However, it's the State of Florida that leads that assessment.

MR. CONSTANT: Sure. We're seeing more and more in South Carolina, and that's where our catches are racking up.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any more general comments on the topic that we just had with Mike, or we're about at a closure point here, and does anybody have anything different to say? It had been my thought to use every possible minute we can, but, since we only have six -- I was thinking of going a little into Number 9, but I think, with six minutes, it doesn't even make sense, and I was going to ask Kerry to introduce us to why we would be doing anything on -- Why we need AP feedback for the space center operations, and I think it's scheduled for Thursday, and we'll do it, and we have one amongst us who knows a lot about how the space center operates, and so that's something to look forward to on Thursday. With that said, I know a lot of you traveled, and you look a little tired today, and this Snapper Grouper AP is adjourned.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We'll be back at 8:30 tomorrow.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 25, 2023.)

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APRIL 26, 2023

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Hilton Garden Inn Charleston Airport, North Charleston, South Carolina, on April 26, 2023, and was called to order by Mr. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: Good morning, AP and everyone online. I would like to initiate our day two of our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel meeting, and we are moving to agenda -- We completed Agenda Item 3, and we're on Agenda Item 4, which will be the Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 and the Reef Fish Amendment 55 on yellowtail snapper, which will, you know, involve the results that came from the SEDAR 68 interim analysis and how this amendment now is for modifying the catch levels in the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico for yellowtail snapper. To introduce it all to us, and speak to us about everything yellowtail, Allie Iberle.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so this amendment has kind of come and gone a couple of times, especially with the assessment history on this one, and so I'll kind of just be going over a quick background, giving you guys a refresher, and then we'll be having some time to ask for some input, so that the council has some input from you guys as they move forward on this one.

A really quick background for yellowtail snapper, and so it's considered a single stock in the South Atlantic and Gulf. However, it's managed by two different FMPs, and so we manage it under the Snapper Grouper FMP, and the Gulf manages it under the Reef Fish FMP, and so you're going to

see Snapper Grouper 44 and Reef Fish 55, as we move forward in the process. The other kind of part of that is that both the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico needs to agree on the preferreds for the actions in this moving forward, and so we'll have to come to a kind of joint decision on that.

I am going to use Table 1 to go through the rest of the background on this one, and so it was assessed through SEDAR 64 in 2020, and the stock status from that assessment was not overfished or experiencing overfishing, but there is concerns on the years of data, and they wanted to kind of refresh those years of data and include some more recent years, and so that's where the SEDAR 64 interim analysis comes in, and that was performed in 2022, and the stock status from that assessment was also not overfished or undergoing overfishing.

Kind of the schedule of this amendment is the original SEDAR 64 was reviewed in October of 2022, and the council gave staff direction to begin a joint amendment in December of 2020, and then, in December of 2021, the joint amendment was paused to wait for the interim analysis completion, and so then the joint SSC reviewed the results of that interim analysis in August of 2022, and the Gulf reviewed the results of that analysis, and then the South Atlantic Council reviewed them in September of 2022.

We've been trying to kind of fit this in with the workload, and there's a lot going on in snapper grouper right now, but the council is wanting to really prioritize this amendment, since we want to get these catch levels in, and so we're really going to try to fast-track this one.

What's going to be done in this amendment? We're going to modify the stock OFL and ABC and the jurisdictional allocation, and so we have the new catch levels for the entire stock, and so we'll update those and then split that stock in between the two regions, and then, from there, we'll adjust the South Atlantic ACL and OY, and the Gulf will adjust their ACL, and then the South Atlantic will revise sector allocations, and so what we're looking for from the AP today is I'm just going to go through these actions and options again. The council hasn't seen this yet, and so we're kind of at the beginning stages. I've got some prompts for discussion, and then we'll take any feedback that you guys have back to the council, so that they can make decisions on this in June.

I talked a little bit about tentative timelines, and so, again, September of 2022 is when we reviewed those results. In June, both councils will review, again, the actions and options that we see today, and then your feedback. Hopefully we'll approve for public hearings in September, and then, in November, we'll conduct those public hearings. Then final approval, tentatively, is December for the South Atlantic and January for the Gulf of Mexico.

Then the ABC -- So this is a stock ABC, and this is coming out of the SEDAR 64 interim analysis, and so these are the updated catch levels, and so we have these years here, single years, and that's how they came out of the assessment, but, as you will see moving forward, the planning team decided that, since the fishing year is -- Sorry, but I'm blanking on this, but it's August 1 to July 31, I believe, and it's not a calendar fishing year, and so you'll see 2023 and 2024, moving forward, and this is just how we got it out of the assessment. I believe these values are just slightly lower than what's in place now. I guess I will pause for any quick questions, before we go into the actions.

MR. LORENZ: James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. So, the last AP meeting that I was at, we discussed advising to the council a little bit more of a conservative approach, when it comes to what the numbers might look like moving forward, and what the science has suggested, and then now, you know, taking a look at all of this, it seems to be at that level, at that level range, but it's different than what we were looking at before, and why is that, exactly?

MS. IBERLE: I will look to other people who understand assessments a little bit better than I do. When they updated SEDAR 36, through the interim analysis, the -- I am looking at Chip, but the data that went into that interim analysis just kind of resulted in the different catch levels, and I think that the catch levels from the original SEDAR 36 were also a little bit lower than the status quo, than what we have right now.

The other thing that we're looking at here is it's currently tracked in MRFSS recreational estimates, whereas we're going to be transferring it over -- This kind of same song and dance that we've been dealing with for a lot of the snapper grouper species, and we're transferring it over, so we'll be incorporating the recreational estimates from the FES, and so that's another reason that the numbers are going to be a little different.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Okay. That's fine, and then we -- You know, in this, I see that we're going to revisit sector allocation, even once we get out of, you know, what percentage is going to be retained in the South Atlantic, and to the Gulf, and then we move into sector allocation again, but, you know, it's been the opinion of this panel, pretty much unanimously, that sector allocation between recreational and commercial does not need to change until we have some sort of accountability, when it comes to the recreational sector, and why is it that we keep getting this shoved in front of our face, when like it's pretty much unanimous that we can't change that until we have accountability on the other side.

MS. IBERLE: Because of that switch over in the recreational estimates that are going into that catch level, and we have a new catch level, we have to, kind of by default, look at allocations. However, we can retain that same percentage, and so, if the AP recommends, and the council feels that they want to keep that sector allocation, that can be done, but we just have to apply it then to those updated catch levels, and so it's kind of more of, you know, you have a new catch level, and you have to make sure that that allocation is applied to that new catch level, and so it's kind of more of a -- I see Chip is coming to the table, and so I'll let Chip talk.

DR. COLLIER: Well, I think Allie was explaining it really well, but another thing to point out is the estimate of recreational catch changed, and so the recreational catch, relative to the commercial catch, is now very different in the historic time period that was used to set the allocation, and so, if nothing is done, that is, in fact, changing the allocation, and so it gets a bit confusing on how it is, but we need to make sure that everybody is comfortable with the allocation that's going forward. It's not necessarily that we're revisiting it, but we're making sure that it's appropriate, based on the landings that were used.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Chip. Allie, move on.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so, with that, I will move into possible actions. The other thing that I wanted to note too is Myra was the last one that worked on this amendment, and she put together

a really nice kind of summary of what's happened on this amendment so far, and that's included in the appendix of this document, and so, if you did want to review that, and review the AP's input, that is included in your appendix.

I will start with Action 1, modify the yellowtail snapper stock ABC and jurisdictional allocation of that ABC between the South Atlantic and Gulf, and so Table 3 kind of shows you a breakdown of the options that will be presented to the council in June, and so Options 1 through 3 were included in the amendment that last time it was -- Before it got paused, and so, essentially, Option 1 is a non-viable true no action, and so the current allocation is 25 percent to the Gulf and 75 percent to the South Atlantic. Using the years from 1993 to 2008 and average landings -- Sorry. From 1993 to 2008 and average landings from 2006 to 2008. The calculation to get to those percentages was including the MRFSS recreational estimates.

Option 2 takes those current percentages and applies them to the updated stock ABC, and then Option 3 takes that same formula from the true no action and recalculates them, including recreational estimates from the FES. Then Draft Option 4 the council will see in June, and so the planning team kind of looked back, and the Gulf requested looking at an allocation using more recent landings, and so the Draft Option 4 uses the distribution of landings from 2012 to 2021, and so the last ten years, and that is also inclusive of recreational landings estimates from MRIP-FES, and that results in a 16 percent allocation to the Gulf and 84 percent allocation to the South Atlantic.

If you scroll down a little bit further, and I will note that these -- I love a good color-coding, but the color-coding helps you track which allocation you're looking at throughout the rest of the document, and so that will go throughout the rest of the document, those colors, to help you keep it straight, because everything kind of tiers.

Table 4 is the actual numbers that correspond to those options, and so I'm not going to go through each option here, but you can look at how those numbers play out, and so you have those first two columns are the stock OFL and the stock ABC, and then the next two columns are the jurisdictional ABCs, and so the discussion kind of just goes over, again, the rationale for -- The methods for developing those jurisdictional allocations, and so what we kind of want to get from the AP is which jurisdictional allocation does the AP recommend the council consider, and then are there any other options that the council should consider when allocating the stock ABC between the two regions, and so, with that, I will turn it over.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Allie, and so you are looking for us -- The deliverable is sort of a recommendation, which would be a motion.

MS. IBERLE: No, and I can just record the discussion.

MR. LORENZ: Just record the discussion? All right. Thank you. I've got a first experts here. David Moss. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Allie, I probably should know this, but how close is each region to reaching their ACLs?

MS. IBERLE: I should know this, too.

DR. COLLIER: I would say, for the recreational side, it doesn't matter. The tracking in CHTS, versus FES, is very different, and sometimes you can have very different estimates coming out of those two, and, now that I'm saying that, I'm realizing that we're back one more data system in the recreational side, and we're going all the way back to MRFSS, which was outdated in 2006, and so I don't even know how it converts to that, and I haven't looked to the conversion to the conversion, but we could look at the commercial, and, for a few years, it was reaching the ACL, and it's getting fairly close most years.

MR. MOSS: What about region-wide, like Gulf versus South Atlantic?

MS. IBERLE: I can look this up for you, like during lunch, so I'm not -- Because I don't want to speak for this and be incorrect, but I believe the Gulf is getting a little closer to their limit, but I want to look that up before I say.

MS. MOSS: (Mr. Moss's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and so let me look that up for you.

MR. LORENZ: James, take it away.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Is there any graph that we could possibly look at that might show the line between the old recreational dataset and the newer system, you know, just to kind of see what those estimates look like in comparison to one another?

MS. IBERLE: So we have a fishery overview. I've got to get it queued up, and let me get with Chip and make sure that I'm pulling up the right thing.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Just a clarifying question or two, and so, Chip, you said that the -- That you really have no idea where the recreational sector is, and, I mean, you can't even say where they're at, as far as amount of catch and how close they are to their quota?

DR. COLLIER: No, and what I'm saying is the difference -- Looking at how close they're getting to their ACL, in CHTS units, has nothing -- It isn't necessarily comparable to what they would be getting in their ACL with FES units. There can be quite a bit shift between those two, because the stock assessment is changing, the data series is changing, and so it's difficult to say what's going on, how the current catch would translate over into an ACL with FES.

MR. HULL: Okay. So, really, you don't know where they're at, and you can't estimate, or project out, where the recreational sector is currently, or even in the past, and so, in ten years -- That Draft Option 4 was using data from the last ten years, and so, in the last ten years, have they ever -- Has the recreational sector ever reached their ACL? Do you know? Do you know that?

DR. COLLIER: I don't believe so.

MR. HULL: Okay.

DR. COLLIER: We can track it, with CHTS, to that CHTS ACL, and that's not an issue. We can track that, and we can also look at how it's likely to change, going forward, in FES, but merging those two would be like taking euros and American dollars and trying to compare the two.

MR. HULL: Okay, and so the other options are based on the original formula, but the Option 4 is ten years, just the past ten years, and that was requested by the Gulf side?

MS. IBERLE: Yes.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thanks.

MS. IBERLE: I've got the fishery overview queued up, and this is looking at recreational landings for yellowtail snapper from 2000 to 2020, and the dashed line is releases, and the blue line is landings, and I believe that these landings are MRFSS landings. Is that correct? I'm looking to Chip.

DR. COLLIER: (Dr. Collier's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. IBERLE: Okay. Perfect, but, if there's anything else that you want me to kind of flip through in this fishery overview, just let me know.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss, you're recognized for a comment.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, and so the basis for my question was, and I will wait to find out, but, if neither sector, particularly the Gulf, and this is nothing certainly against the Gulf, but, if neither sector is coming close to their ACL, or hitting their ACL, I guess it's kind of a why are we looking to shift allocation from one sector, one region, I should say, to another?

I'm fairly certain that the vast majority of the recreational catch is going to come from the Atlantic, the South Atlantic, on the Atlantic side of the Keys, and so, you know, as James had said, we agreed to take a cautionary approach with yellowtail, so that we don't -- You know, we don't run into that same problem that we've had a million times, where everything is okay, and then, all a sudden, one day we look up and it's not, and I don't know why we would look to shift allocation to one region, or sector, particularly. It's kind of a rhetorical question, but not really.

MR. LORENZ: James, input?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I guess Chip's explanation earlier kind of does it, for me, when it comes to that, and it seems like there might be more fish needed on the recreational side, in order -- I mean, quote, unquote, needed, and, again, we need to look at everything and really process what it means, if the rec data is coming in at a higher level than what was once thought, and, absolutely, and, you know, why would we move part of the ACL from region to region, if that's just going to mean that more fish are going to be caught and landed and harvested and all that?

I mean, going through this, toward the bottom here, you know, what are some of the other things that the council could consider, and I think some of this has been answered already, but what does

the Gulf Council -- What are the inputs that the Gulf commercial fishermen -- What are their concerns? You know, I mean, they're not sitting here at this table, because this isn't their advisory panel, but are they jumping up and down and screaming and saying that we don't want to give any of our allocation away? I would like for that to be answered for us, if that's possible.

MR. LORENZ: Allie, do you have a comment on that for James?

MS. IBERLE: We're working closely with the Gulf, kind of behind the scenes on that, and I think that's something that we can definitely kind of provide for you guys, is the input from the Gulf. That can be done. The Gulf, for the last three years, was at 30 percent of their total ACL.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: It's just -- It's not my fishery, but it's interesting, and you showed a graph, a second ago, Allie, of the recreational landings that you had up to 2020, and there was a blue line, and it was hard to see from here, but it looked like, in 2020, they caught 700,000 pounds, maybe, or somewhere around there, if you go across. That's total, and so, in a couple of years, they went over a million, way back, and, if you look at these ABCs -- If that's total ABC for both sides --

MS. IBERLE: This is landings combined.

MR. HULL: Combined Gulf and South Atlantic recreational, right there on the screen, right?

MS. IBERLE: This is just annual rec landings from 2000 to 2020 in the South Atlantic region.

MR. HULL: That's the South Atlantic region?

MS. IBERLE: Yes.

MR. HULL: Okay, and so that doesn't include the Gulf, which is going to be much smaller. It looks like, currently, around the last year or two, 650,000 or 700,000 pounds, but it has been high, and it has been low, and then, if you look at the total for the South Atlantic, for any of these options, the ABC, we're in the three-million pounds, in most instances, or more, and then so the commercial -- My question is then where is the commercial side, as to how close are you to, you know, exceeding the ABC in the last many years, and that kind of is important to know, to make a recommendation.

DR. COLLIER: There's a document that was put in the chat for everybody, and if Allie can pull it up, and this is a document called a SAFE report. It's a draft document for right now, and we're working on a completed version of it, and that will be available to the council in June, and to everybody in June, but it's going to have all this information that you're asking for, a comparison of CHTS to FES units, looking at the historic ACL compared to the catch levels, and so you should be able to go down and click on yellowtail, and so, if you scroll down a little bit from there, it starts off with some of the information on the stock assessment.

If you go down a few from there, that one right there has the comparison of CHTS units to FES units, and what you can see, on the left side, is it starts off at a million pounds, where, on the right side, it starts off, I believe, at 1.2 million, and so it's a slight difference, but, if you look in the



more recent time period, it's a very dramatic change, changing from around 2.5 million pounds being harvested in 2018, I think 2017 and 2018, all the way up to right around three million pounds being harvested, and so there is a pretty dramatic difference then, and that's why I'm saying it's hard to compare what was being landed in CHTS to what's being landed in FES and compare that to an ACL.

What you have to do is take the information coming out of the stock assessment and look at the current catch levels, and I believe there is a projection table that's in there, if we scroll down a bit more. Maybe I don't have it in there for this species, but I will work to get it in there. That way, the information is available to you, but this document is available as a link in your -- In the webinar, if you want to look at it, and it will be posted at the council's page, under the Snapper Grouper FMP, and it will be there in June, and so you guys will have this information to look at.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you very much, Chip, and, online, we have a member of our AP, and he was in the charter business from south Florida, and he wishes to address us, and so I wish to recognize Richard Gomez. Richard, you're on.

MR. GOMEZ: Good morning. I just was wondering, and, I mean, James brought up a very good question, and, if we're working closely with the Gulf Council, and I don't know if I heard the answer or not, how is the Gulf fishermen feeling about these allocations? Are they jumping up or down, or do we just not have that answer yet?

MR. LORENZ: Allie, go ahead. You start.

MS. IBERLE: I don't think that we have that answer, and I don't want to speak for -- Certainly for anyone in the Gulf, but I can imagine that they would not a big decrease in their jurisdictional allocation, and I feel like that's a safe bet, I think so what we can do is make sure that we're kind of relaying messages, as we move forward in the amendment process.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Allie. Thank you. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, and so my overreaching question, or overarching question, is, if they're only getting 30 percent of their total ACL, and this isn't -- I mean, again, it's somewhat rhetorical, but it's for the panel. If the Gulf is only getting 30 percent of their current ACL, why would we look to switch any allocation that way, if they're not -- I mean, they're not even coming close. It's going down, and I just don't understand -- Like I guess -- I would be okay with allocation going heavier to the South Atlantic side, as they tend to get closer with their ACL, and certainly the Gulf isn't anywhere near it.

MR. LORENZ: Allie, do you have a statement, or you're just recording what Mr. Moss stated?

MS. IBERLE: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, David. Jack Cox.

MR. COX: It's not my fishery either, but, when I look at these charts, the thing that concerns me is it's kind of like in my fisheries, when I see that we're not even getting close to the ACLs, and it kind of puts up a red flag, because what we do know is it's not because of lack of effort. You

know, I know there's fishermen that maybe want to be a little bit more conservative in the fishery, and I would like to hear from those guys.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. David.

MR. MOSS: I mean, I kind of went down a little bit of a rabbit hole, but that's kind of what I'm saying, is, if we're not coming close to our ACL, and, again, like James said, we've agreed that we want to be a little bit more conservative with this, then I would like to see not a ton of changes, as far as this goes, and so, yes, I would err on the side of caution, understanding that yellowtail is a little bit of a funny fishery, from a recreational perspective anyway. I mean, we can go out there and see the fish, and that doesn't mean that we're going to catch them.

MR. LORENZ: James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. To speak to what Jack was saying, in the Keys especially, the effort side of commercial participation is a little bit of an issue, because of working waterfront disappearing, and that becomes a little bit challenging, when you start to factor in the commercial effort. I know, just from a dealer standpoint, that more than 60 percent of the people that I used to buy from are out of business, and, you know, myself, in my own boat, when we go out on the water, I don't have a commercial fisherman in ten miles in either direction of me harvesting yellowtail snapper. I am not proud of that, you know, but it just -- I happen to own land, and I have my feet firmly placed in my area, but that is a problem, when it comes to the commercial sector, and so, when you weigh out, you know, the vast, limitless possibility of the recreational sector, I think, with Chip's guidance here, that we do need to be very careful, when we start talking about allocation shifts and who needs it more.

I mean, as a commercial fisherman, I would say that the viability of our commercial industry is super important, when it comes to those people having the ability to maintain their stronghold there, because it takes a lot of money. It takes a lot of revenue, and it takes a lot of fish, just to maintain our quality of life, and so we really do need to be careful, moving forward, in what we decide to do. Do we need to be more conservative in the recreational sector? I mean, we have to look at that. We absolutely have to look at that. Just because that sector needs a bigger piece of the pie, do we -- Is it our charge to give it to them?

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Allie, do you have something to say?

MS. IBERLE: I guess I would just make sure that -- I'm recording feedback, and so make sure that I got everything up here, and, if there's any additional points that I missed, before we move on to Action 2.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just for -- Again, it's not my fishery, but just looking at the fishery, what you have here, and, for the last ten years, it hasn't been considered overfished, or overfishing occurring, from the science, okay, and so you've got a fishery with millions of pounds of possibilities, which is -- Compare that to what we're dealing with all of our other fisheries, and this is a fishery we would all love to have to deal with, right, and, the way you're describing the situation down there, you know, it's a vitally-important fishery for both sectors, and there's a lot of fish available, but

you need to make sure there's fish available year-round, for the entire year, for both sectors, if possible.

Apparently, what we've been doing has been working pretty well, and so it's just like you say, and we've got to be careful that we don't screw this up, but what a beautiful -- The way it looks on paper, it looks like what we all wish we had everywhere, right, and, I mean, this really looks good, but I know it's not as good -- Things aren't as good as they look, and you don't want to screw things up, and so that's just -- I'm absorbing the situation that we're in, that you're asking us to advise allocation options on jurisdictional, and we can't -- We don't know where the Gulf is at, and we don't know a lot of information, and it's kind of hard for us to do, other than to say we need to be very careful. I think that's kind of like answering the advisory panel discussion of we're saying you need to be very, very careful what you do here, and not screw this up, and that's kind of where I see it, on the first part.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Jimmy Hull, and what Allie has asked us for would be do we have any preference for jurisdictional options, and I think Jimmy summarized some things very well for us here, but I want to look to my left, to our co-chair, for one last word, if he wishes, James Paskiewicz, and this is a big fishery of yours, and do you have any last things you would like to say, before we move to Item Number 2?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Sure, Bob. Thanks. Yes, I would say, you know, for speaking as a panel as a whole, we would need that information on what the Gulf feedback really is, when we start talking about regional allocation. I mean, just as a kneejerk reaction here, Option 2 -- It kind of looks like the most conservative, and it may not be the most popular, you know, but, again, you know, once we come out of this, we're going to have to discuss sector allocation too between the commercial and recreational side, and so, unfortunately, I don't think that there's a ton that we can do today.

Looking at Option 4, I like -- I like the numbers associated with it, because it's based on a little bit more current time slot, but the allocation, or the regional allocation part of it, I think that might be a little bit too aggressive, and so, you know, maybe some sort of a combination between Draft Option 4, and, you know, based on that later dataset, and then we can discuss a different regional allocation. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Allie, that's the best we can do.

MS. IBERLE: I want to make sure that I'm recording that correctly, and so I heard back from our colleagues in the Gulf, and the feedback was the Gulf fishermen are open to revising the jurisdictional allocation as long as the season stays open, and so they're just wanting to make sure that whatever allocation doesn't result in a closure on the Gulf side, but, James, I want to make sure that -- So you were saying kind of a hybrid option between 4 and 2? Okay. All right. Awesome. Let me get that recorded, and then we can move on.

While Allie is recording, I know, Richie, you're online, and do you have any last thing you would like to say? You have often commented, over the years, about yellowtail. Anything you wish to say in the end here?

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, and my hand was up, and I don't know if you noticed it or not.

MR. LORENZ: I guess it was kind of a divine inspiration that I had, but, no, I did not see it.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. Yes, I would tend to agree with James on this, and I like what David Moss said about maybe moving some more allocation to the Atlantic, and this is a great fishery, and I would hate to lose any part of it, but, thinking about what David Moss said, you've got to be careful. If we're looking at this conservatively, we have to be careful about giving more allocation to the Atlantic, where the majority of these fish are caught, because it could open the door to the possibility of creating more fishermen, and then creating an overfishing kind of situation, and that's about it for me.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie. James is going to respond, also.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and, Richie, yes, I mean, I'm with you on that. I feel like that's a valid point, and I do see that Option 3 is very close to that hybrid. I mean, just for mathematics' sake, if we were going to look at it, and just say 80/20, and, you know, that's a little bit easier to digest for -- You know, just for the simplicity of the mathematics, but we do need to just really take a look at everything, and I think that the nuts-and-bolts are going to come down to sector allocation, when that's in front of us, and when we have the best idea of what that sector is really harvesting. Then, you know, that's going to be the point where it's very, very pivotal. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Anyone else have a comment? Allie, next step.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That will take us to Action 2, which will revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for yellowtail for the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, and so this action has two sub-actions. 2b is included in your appendix, and I'm not going to spend time on that today, because that's the Gulf -- That's revising the Gulf ACL. Obviously, the councils will have to agree on that, but I don't think that the South Atlantic is going to have too much opposition to what the Gulf wants to set their ACL at, and so we're going to focus mainly on the South Atlantic, and, obviously, our process involves setting an annual OY.

Table 5 has kind of a suite of options that we'll be looking at, and so Option 1 is that true no action, and it's non-viable, and so keeping the ACL and OY equal to the current ABC. Option 2 sets your ACL and OY equal to the updated ABC, and Options 3 and 4 include a 10 or 5 percent buffer, respectively, and then Options 5 and 6 are kind of cut from the same cloth, if you will, and so Option 5 sets the ACL and OY equal to the lowest ABC value, and it holds that value until modified, whereas Option 6 sets the ACL and the OY equal to the yield at F 30 percent SPR at equilibrium, and so that's the true constant catch option.

Then, if you want to see how these play out for the actual numbers in pounds, we have Table 6, and, again, the color-coding will show you which jurisdictional allocation option you're looking at. Obviously, we didn't include the non-viable jurisdictional allocation, because it wouldn't be - - It's not viable, and so you're looking at the blue is the current South Atlantic jurisdictional allocation, and the green is the 81 percent, and then that orange color is the 84 percent, and so that's the coordinating South Atlantic ACLs.

Table 7 shows predicted dates when the ACL will be met underneath these different scenarios, and so this table -- We have -- We've looked at this analysis for many of the jurisdictional allocation

scenarios, and so I need to make sure that I'm explaining this table correctly. This table shows predicted dates when the ACL will be met for Action 1, Alternative 2, and so that's the current jurisdictional allocation of 25 percent Gulf of Mexico and 75 percent South Atlantic, and then the current commercial and recreational allocation percentages, which are listed there in the table caption, and so that's the scenario that's set when we're looking at these dates, and so consider that when you're going through these tables. Sorry, and I know there's a lot of tiering involved in this amendment. That's what we've got going on there. Again, those are those constant catch scenarios, or the true constant catch and then the lowest ABC value.

Then we've got some advisory panel discussion, some things for you guys to consider while you're discussing this action, and so which ACL and OY does the AP recommend? We have a note here that the AP previously recommended the constant catch option, or the constant lowest ABC option, and so I think there was some confusion around terminology, on what was constant catch and what was that constant lowest ABC value, but, in looking back, I think the consensus was the lowest ABC option was what was recommended previously. Then are there any other options that the council should consider when setting the yellowtail snapper South Atlantic ACL and OY, and so I'll turn it over.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Allie, and Richard Gomez is online, and, Richard, I did get a note that your hand was raised, and it was during Allie's presentation, and so maybe there's a question related to what she presented, and I would like to recognize you now to speak. Richie Gomez, are you there? We are not hearing you. Okay. We'll check back with you later. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Allie, just to confirm, and so the fishing year ends on July 31, correct, for both sectors?

MS. IBERLE: Yes.

MR. MOSS: For Alternative -- For the action in Table 7, Action 2, Alternative 3, which is probably the most conservative, as I'm looking at this, under Table 7?

MS. IBERLE: Action 2, Alternative 3, this section right here?

MR. MOSS: Yes. It's saying that the rec season essentially would end -- We would have three days of a closed season, essentially, in 2024-2025, and then the commercial would have about a week in 2024-2025, and then roughly two weeks, moving forward, and so -- No. Sorry. That's a month. Okay. I just wanted to make sure that I'm reading that correctly. Ask James, and I don't know -- How long were you guys closed this past year? You haven't been, right?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: David, I don't think we've closed in four seasons, or maybe longer than, and you know how time flies these days, but something that I'm looking at here, and please forgive me, but I feel like we are doing this out of order, and I feel like we need to establish what our ABC is, and what our ACL is going to be, before we start talking about regional allocation and sector allocation again. All of these numbers -- If we have a preferred pathway, it completely changes what we were looking at in the first stage, and so, I mean, like everything we talked about initially, I can't even apply any of that to my brain mathematics until we have this established.

MR. LORENZ: Any other comment? Any comment on that, on what James stated? Allie? Are you okay, or you just recorded what he said? Okay. Any other comments with relation to the ACL and OY actions? James, please.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Bob, thanks. I mean, I guess, given that we are doing it in this order, and there's really nothing that we can change about that, you know, when we start looking at Action 2, Alternatives 5 and 6, the years moving past 2023-2024 -- That would be looking at a constant, the constant rate, moving forward, and so the -- In Action 2, Alternative 5, the 2.679 million pounds, and then the 2.555, and those will be constant, moving forward? Until modified? Okay.

Then, if we were to establish let's just say Action 2, Alternative 5, that's probably the third-lowest number that I'm seeing overall, close to it. I think that we should be somewhere in this range. I know that, at the past AP meetings, we did agree to be conservative, and we did want something that was more consistent from year to year, to know the numbers that we were looking at weren't going to change wildly. I know, from a commercial fisherman standpoint, that is -- That is more ideal for me, and I think that that's pretty much the direction that we should be steering this fishery into, and so there's my input on that, as it stands and the order that we're doing it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: I am inclined to agree. Yellowtails are kind of the bread-and-butter, down south, for both rec and charter, really. I mean, in the summertime, they tend to shift a little bit, and not the yellowtail, but fishing tends to shift a little bit more offshore, but with -- Not to bring up a sore subject, but the uncertainty of mahi fishing, and people have been hitting the reef a little bit more, probably, but, yes, I'm inclined to agree with James for this.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. All right. Richie Gomez, I'm recognizing you for your statement.

MR. GOMEZ: I just got off the phone with a person at the Key West Charter Boat Association, and I knew the answer, but I just wanted to double-check with him, and, I mean, down in the Lower Keys, we certainly don't want to lose any of our recreational allocation to commercial fishing.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie. Anybody else with a comment or statement here? I see Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I just -- James, I seem to remember, the last time we talked about this, that was -- You're pretty much on the same recommendations that you had then, which was, if we could have a straight ACL for every year, in line, and it's reasonable, and you even -- I can remember, in the past, you said, if we shut down for two weeks at the end of the year, it gives you a chance to recuperate somewhat, and haul your boat out, and fix stuff, and take a break, and so whatever you recommend -- If it's your fishery, I agree with you, and it looks like that's the type of thing that I would support as a recommendation, at this time, but still there's so many things that are changing, and that this could change, but, at this time, that kind of looks like Action 2, Alternative 5 seems to be -- That it would get some support.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Richie, you're on again to speak.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. Was my hand up or down? I'm getting a little confused with this.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Your hand is up right now.

MR. LORENZ: The most recent information we have is that your hand was up, and so I'm recognizing you to speak. Say what you wish.

MR. GOMEZ: No, and I'm good for the moment. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie.

MS. IBERLE: So, if the little hand icon is red, that means that your hand is up.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. I've got it now. Thank you so much, and so the little icon is green now, and that means my hand is down.

MS. IBERLE: Yes.

MR. GOMEZ: Got it. I'm with you.

MR. LORENZ: I think I saw Tony Constant with a real hand up. Okay, Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Yes, and I want to say that this is not my fishery either, on the rec sector, but, listening to what you all have, and knowing the fishery a little bit, I totally agree, with you all and James, that the slight conservative side is probably a good, safe bet for everyone, but I would like to mention that the white elephant is still in the room, and we need to do something with the recreational reporting and data.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else, while Allie catches up? All right. Allie, when you're ready, we can go into the -- I guess sector allocation is next, right, that discussion?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and so, again, if you wanted to look at the Gulf's options for developing their ACL, that's included in your appendix, and I just didn't want -- We have a pretty full agenda, and so I don't want to take too much time on that one. The final action, as of right now, for this amendment, it would be to revise the South Atlantic allocations and sector annual catch limits. Table 9 has your options, and, right now, we have two options. Option 1 is retaining the current sector allocations, which are 52.56 for the commercial and 47.44 for the recreational.

The years that were used to get to that were average landings from 1986 to 2008 and average landings from 2006 to 2008, and then it's really simple. Option 2 just takes that same calculation and, instead of including the recreational estimates from MRFSS, substitute those for the recreational estimates from the MRIP-FES, and that results in a 40.73 percent commercial allocation and a 59.27 allocation for the recreational sector.

I probably should have jumped to these graphs a little earlier, and so this is -- Figure 1 looks at the yellowtail snapper monthly commercial landings from 2016 to 2021, and the dashed-red line is projected landings, and then Figure 2 is the same figure for recreational. Then Table 10 shows you what those options would look like, in the actual poundage numbers, for each sector ACL, and

so you have -- The first column is the total South Atlantic ACL, and, again, we have those numbers, or those colors, and so you can follow-through each of those jurisdictional allocations, and then the last two columns would be the commercial ACL and the recreational ACL, and so you have Option 2 under the current jurisdictional allocation, or I'm sorry. Option 1 under the current jurisdictional allocation, and then Option 1 under the 81 percent jurisdictional allocation, and then that third jurisdictional allocation, and so each alternative underneath those scenarios, and so sorry, and there's a lot of tiering. If you need me to point one out, just let me know, and we can set this table straight.

The last thing, before we hand it over, is Table 12 shows the predicted date when the ACLs will be met under each different allocation scenario, and so the same table as before, but we're looking at -- We're shifting the allocation percentages in this table, whereas, the other table, we kept those allocation percentages as the same, and so I will hand it over.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Allie, and so does anyone have any discussion, or comments, with reference to leaving the allocations alone or it looks to me, in simplicity, a higher allocation for the recreational component. Richie Gomez, I noted that you had your hand up, and so we're going to allow you to speak first. Richie, you're recognized.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. Can we go back to those two options for a moment? Okay, and so, as a fisherman that's been losing all his life, as most of us have, man, when I look at somebody wanting to give something back, I sure want to take it, but I think the fishermen of the Lower Keys, on the rec side, would like to leave it as-is, with Option Number 1, because we don't want to lose the ability to fish this fishery that is very strong, especially the way things are going in the offshore sector, with all the other migratory fish. We lean on those yellowtail a lot more than we used to, but we certainly don't want to take anything from the commercial fishermen that need it to sustain, you know, their living, and so I think all of us would agree to stay with Option 1. That's it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie. You're getting a little bit of head-nodding here from David Moss. Dave, do you have something you would like to say?

MR. MOSS: I agree.

MR. LORENZ: David agrees. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so I guess, to bring everything together, we would be looking at, from the Table 4 perspective, the Option 3, maybe revising that to 80/20. You know, from the regional perspective, moving down the line and adopting the Action 2, Alternative 5, from Table 6, or from Table 7, and then -- You know, from the numbers that we acquire with those two recommendations, or actions, I'm in agreement with Richie, that the no action is probably the best route to take here, you know, especially considering that boosting the commercial sector allocation isn't even here, and it's not even close to a thought, and I don't know, and it just --

It seems one way, and I know we're moving in that direction, but, again, to Tony's point, we've got to get a grip on this stuff, before we can start to change and think about what we can move to another sector that isn't really fully accountable. I guess that kind of rounds out everything to this point, and I think that we would get a lot of support from both the recreational and commercial sector on all of this, being conservative and being consistent. Thank you.



MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James, and the key note, Allie, is James' last comment is the support for both sectors, and that can sometimes be difficult to get, and it's nice when we have it. Randy McKinley.

MR. MCKINLEY: I mean, just looking at this, I mean, even just to propose to switch that much allocation from recreational to commercial, when it doesn't seem to be needed, and I just don't want this to start a precedent, and I know that me and some of the council members have talked about that, and that could -- I mean, we're already hammered enough commercially, but, when you start shifting something that there's really no need for it, I don't want that to start into the other species also. I know it's going to come, but, man, that's scary.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Jimmy Hull, a comment.

MR. HULL: Well, and it goes back -- It's great to hear that, you know, the cooperation between sectors, and trying to be fair with each other in this fishery, because, especially in the Keys, and it's a tight community down there, and everybody knows what everybody is doing, and they all are much closer than the rest of us up here in the other part of the world.

That's really good, and you see, if you do shift it, to where then you start seeing a much earlier closure for the commercial side, that, you know, maybe they can't handle, and no closures ever, at least on paper, for the private recreational, but that's all unknown, because, as the effort is endless, and it never stops growing at this time, you have -- As James is saying, we have no clue where it could end up, and they could have yellowtail forever, and let's go get them, and everybody is welcome forever, and now that's overfishing, and so, yes, it's weird, but it's really good to hear the cooperation, but the other question I have would be probably to the council member that's present.

There is a way to do Option 1, isn't there, even though it's based on MRFSS and not including the FES, and it seems like that you all were able to do no action options on this in other fisheries, and is that true, because, previously, Allie, you're saying that Option 1 is not viable, in some of these other actions, and I remember that we've talked about this before, that they've said the Option 1 isn't viable, and it's just there, because it needs to be there, and is that right? Correct me.

MR. LORENZ: The council member that Jimmy Hull was referring to Kerry Marhefka, and, Kerry, come up and make a statement, please. Thank you.

MS. MARHEFKA: Jimmy, I think what you're thinking -- Yes. Myra has said that, yes, you can do that, because you're just keeping the percentages. What I was wondering if you were thinking about, and we absolutely did that, is the numbers change, because the numbers have to be converted, and we can't just stick with -- When you say, you know, we're told we can't do that, we can't just stick with the old numbers, but we can stick with the old percentages.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so, if you choose no option, and you go down in the table, which there is so many tables here now that it's hard to find it, with all of that, but, anyway, that's good. I won't go any further, and that's good to hear, that you can -- That you can choose -- Obviously, the numbers are going to change, because the percentages are the -- Gotcha.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and we did that -- One of the things that came up, that we've been sort of -- That NOAA General Counsel has suggested to us several times is to be really clear, as we move forward down these allocation paths, and, no matter what option you choose, to be sure that we can really justify why we're making that decision, and you all, in your discussions here, are a huge part of us then being able to have great rationale for why we're choosing what we're choosing for allocations, and so, you know, to that extent, this discussion has been great, and it helps us then go forward and have rationale, regardless of what we choose. If it's going to stay the same, we need to say this is why we believe these percentages should stay the same, and so talk that up as much as you can, and that helps us a lot in the future.

MR. HULL: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Kerry. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I was just going to say is there a way that we can move forward with James' suggestions on each table?

MR. LORENZ: Can I come back to you on that in a minute, Tony, because, due to the last discussion, Richie Gomez had just something to state, and there's still a comment with respect to our cooperation on the allocations. Richie Gomez, you're recognized to speak.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. First, a statement and then a question. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, but the question I had is do we have any information on how often, and at what size, yellowtail snapper spawn, because I'm often amazed at the ability to go out there, on any given day, with the right conditions, and the right amount of chum, and draw out an endless supply, as far as you can see, of yellowtail snapper, and I wonder how that can happen, year after year, and so I'm just curious how often they spawn.

MR. LORENZ: James, did you want to respond? Did you have something to say?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Sure, Bob. Thanks. You know, from a strictly hands-on perspective, Richie, I have seen this fish spawn from April all the way through October. Different biomasses will spawn at different times, based on different criteria. I see young male fish, in the eleven to thirteen-inch range, milking almost twelve months out of the year, and I will see aggressive behavior from female fish, mainly from mid-March to mid-April, and that is very consistent, year-to-year, and then, the next size range down, you know, your one to one-and-a-half-pound fish, we're coming up on that size range being more sexually active, if you will, but, in my experience, these fish -- They will go off in different groups all throughout the year, and so, I mean, that may answer why you see that, at any given moment, when the conditions are right, and you see fish that have completely let their guard down and are lined up behind your boat.

MR. GOMEZ: Well, that would make sense, and so, comparatively speaking, when we look at other fisheries, is there any other fish that spawns as much, besides maybe, I don't know, dorado, dolphin, grunts, any other fish like that?

MR. LORENZ: Richie, who are you addressing, all of us?

MR. GOMEZ: No, the same gentleman, and I'm not sure who just answered that question.

MR. LORENZ: I'm sorry, and that was James. Jimmy Hull wants to say something.

MR. HULL: My guess would be vermilion. They're very similar, and they, most of the time, have roe present, in some stage. We don't get the different sizing and grouping, but that would be my guess.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Richie. Anything else?

MR. GOMEZ: No, that will do it, and I'm sure we need to move on, and I'm good for now. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Andy Piland, hello. I am told that you have your hand up, and you're recognized.

MR. PILAND: A question was asked about year-round spawning, and the bluelines spawn -- They have been shown to spawn year-round.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. All right. Let's circle back. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Richie, I said the same thing. If it's not broke, don't fix it, but what I was bringing up is can we move forward with James' suggestions on all the graphs, all the choices?

MR. LORENZ: You certainly may, if you would like to lead that, kick that off.

MR. CONSTANT: I could, but I think it would probably be better coming from James, if that's what he would like.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Tony. I would just want to clarify if we do actually need a motion for that, or if what we've collected so far is going to carry.

MS. IBERLE: I don't think we need to have a motion, and so what I did was I wrote down kind of -- There's some shorthand here, and so I've got 80/20, and it's bold, and I made it a little bit bigger here, and so I've got 80/20 for the jurisdictional allocation, the lowest ABC, that constant lowest ABC, Action 2, Option 5, and then retain the current sector allocations. I don't think we need a motion, and so what I will do will be to kind of package this discussion and then present that to the council when they go through this document in June, and then they can consider you all's discussion.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you. That's great, and something else moving forward, and, I mean, we're really trying to be fair in this particular fishery, and, if the council could take in advisement, you know, to not exceed a 50-50 split on this fishery, moving forward, between the two sectors. I think that, if you have half of something, and you're one of two sectors, you're never going to be disappointed.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James, and, in summary, never exceed a 50-50 split in allocation, and then, Tony, you suggested a motion, and are you satisfied with our discussion here?

MR. CONSTANT: Yes, and that's great, going to the council as written.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Allie.

MS. IBERLE: I will note that I added like a formal recommendation there, and so that will stand as you all's formal recommendation, and, again, all the discussion will be summarized for the council, but that will be the final formal recommendation.

MR. LORENZ: Allie, are you finished?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and that will sum it up for me for yellowtail, unless there's any last questions for me.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any last questions from the AP, comments, statements, anything? By that, Allie, you're stating that you're ready to speak wreckfish?

MS. IBERLE: I think we were going to do scamp, but if you don't mind giving us a couple of minutes to queue that up, and we take a biological break and queue up the stuff we've got for scamp.

MR. LORENZ: Excellent. That's precisely what I was thinking, regardless of it. Ten-minute break, AP, and be back at, well, just about -- By five of ten. It's breaktime.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: Okay, AP. We'll call back to order, and we will move on from the last story, which is just a beautiful fishery, with beautiful cooperation, et cetera, and now we'll move on to one of our shallow-water groupers and things we have a little more challenges with, and so, with that, I would like to introduce Chip Collier to kick us off. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Thanks, Bob. Like what we've been doing for the past few stock assessments that have been completed for species that are managed by the South Atlantic Council, we developed what we call a fishery overview, and it's composed of four different components. It has an introduction page, and it has a history of management, and, with that history of management, it's mainly a history of management regulations, so you can see when different things changed.

We also include the latest fishery performance report, and so that's going to be one of the tabs, and then we have just a bunch of data and some information. What we're trying to do is put together graphs that are informative to -- That could be informative for developing management, and this is not necessarily finalized data, and so we're trying to get it to the AP, as well as to the council, before they're making any management decisions, and this is more or less to help them think about, all right, if we have to take a cut here, what would happen, and do we need to do a -- Would a size limit be effective to get a 5 percent cut, but just a rough idea of what has to happen, and so let's start off with the history of management.

Like I said, this is a history of management going back to 1983, and it includes all the information for kind of comprehensive management actions that might cut across several different species, but then it also has management that's directed at scamp and yellowmouth grouper.

Your fishery performance report, that was developed in October of 2019, prior to the stock assessment coming out, and you can see what was said back then, and you can also see the advisory panel members that helped to create that, and then the final thing that I'm going to be going through with you all today is the graphs. In these graphs, we include some of the stock assessment output, and, from the first graph, that's the fishing mortality rate, and that's how we determine if overfishing is occurring, and the way that we typically determine overfishing, in the South Atlantic region, is we do an average of the last three years, and so, looking over here, from 2019 to 2020 and 2021, it's indicating that the stock is not overfishing.

However, it is overfished, and you can see this declining trend, starting in 2000, and, after 2005, just really dropping out, and this -- It's not due to overfishing, and what it appears to be is recruitment failure for this stock.

Then, continuing on with some of the other graphs, getting back to the recruitment information that I was talking about, you can just see how low this recruitment has been through time, especially since 2005, and you just see very low levels of recruitment and not really much bouncing back from there. Then, continuing on from yesterday, and Wally gave you a presentation on the index of abundance, and these are all the indices of abundance that were included in the stock assessment, and you can see this blue line here, which was the video trap survey that he talked about yesterday, and you just see this continual decline from 2010, and so not great news for scamp.

One of the most important things that we think, for the advisory panel, is figuring out where the current catches are, relative to what the projections are coming forward, and so we have this table here provided, and it's not the final information that the SSC provided, and they just finished up last week, and so I have not adjusted this figure to incorporate their recommendations from that, but you can see the gray line, and this was the previous catch, and it's declining basically from 2004 up to 2020, and then this orange line, and that is going to be the projections going forward, and that's the overfishing level. We're not going to be able to harvest at that level, and it's going to be decremented from that a little bit, and so the overfishing is right at the level of catching, of catch, in 2020, and we're going to need to go down from there.

Looking at the combined sector, who is catching more fish, where the catch is coming from, and, if you're looking for this, it was linked in the agenda and overview. Sorry for not saying that earlier.

We can look at the different states. Most of the landings -- This is a little bit different than most of the species that are described here, and most of the landings are coming from South Carolina, with the exception of 2014, and a lot of harvest occurred down in Florida and Georgia, and that was an estimate coming through the MRIP numbers. We can look at the sectors, and you can see that, in the early years, it was about 50-50, and, most years, since 2010, it's been mostly commercial. However, there is that one change in 2014, where there was a very high number of recreational catch.

Looking at catch by month, if you remember, 2000 to 2010, or 2009, it was a year-round season for scamp and many of the grouper species. However, in 2010, there was the implementation of

the shallow-water grouper spawning season closure, and you can see that reflected in the data from 2010 up to 2021. You see very few landings, if none, in that early time period.

Then we have data for the recreational sector, and also the commercial sector, and I will go over the commercial sector first. You're seeing the declining trend, like I've been talking about, and one important note here, for the declining trend, is there's been very little change in management, with the exception of the spawning season closure for scamp, and you still see this declining trend in landings.

Here, we have the seasonal trend in the commercial fishery, and you can see that it tends to spike in the May, June, July, and August, and that tends to be consistent over the entire time period, and then by state. Once again, this is mainly a South Carolina harvest, at least for the commercial fishery, and then, for the size of scamp being harvested -- If anybody has harvested scamp, you know how they have those filaments, and so measuring them can be a bit of a challenge, and so this red line is just an approximation of where the size limit would be, but you can see, over the time period, it's been pretty high compliance for scamp grouper in the commercial fishery. However, one thing to note is the overall number of fish being measured is declining through time, and, basically, that's a reflection of the availability of scamp grouper for measuring.

The next series of graphs we have, we've binned the catch of scamp grouper into different bins, and so what I'm talking about with a bin is let's say you come in from a trip, and you have 100, or 150, pounds, or 160 pounds, and we need to bin those, to make it a little bit easier to understand, and so what we have is a graph with less than 100 pounds harvested on a trip, all the way up to greater than 900 pounds. If we go over 900 pounds, it gets to be confidential data, and that's why it's lumped in this way. There is currently no trip limit for scamp grouper.

One thing to note in this, as I've been talking about the entire time, and so looking at 2011, and that 900 pounds per trip -- That was -- That's where most of the catch was coming from. However, in 2020, hardly any -- Very few of the weight of catch was coming from those trips with 900 pounds or more, and, once again, this is just looking at the number of trips, and so it's to be expected that the number of trips with a very low catch is quite often very high, and this is typical for almost all graphs like this, but you also get a spike here at the end, in that 900 group, meaning that there's more trips catching 900 pounds than 700 to 900 pounds, and that's common, because we have to lump at the end, but it does show a trend in this as well. If you look at 2011, and then go back all the way through 2020, you're seeing a decrease in the commercial harvest with trips having greater than 900 pounds.

Going into a very similar group of landings, or group of graphs, and sorry about that, for the recreational sector -- My computer is having to think a little bit this morning. It's thinking really hard. Let me refresh, real quick. Well, I think this is telling me one thing, is I have to change my way that I'm presenting this data, and so you're going to get a different version of it next time it comes to you. Sorry about these little hiccups. If you guys have this app open, if you don't mind closing it. That way, I can get it pulled up.

Anyway, without seeing the recreational data, I will just let you know, once again, a negative, and, overall, there is a decreasing trend in the number of scamp caught in the recreational fishery, or landed in the recreational fishery, and, interestingly enough, sometimes we'll see a change in the releases. Quite often, in the most recent time period, we're seeing a lot more releases with scamp,

and the releases were following the landings, going straight down, like you saw with the commercial fishery, and the length distribution for the recreational fishery -- It just came up, and so here is what I was talking about, how it was following the -- The landings were following the discards, and then both of them staying fairly low, with the exception of that 2014 point.

Going into the timing, similar to what you saw in the commercial fishery, it's the May-June through July-August, and those were the most frequent months with scamp catches, and, once again, you're seeing this overall fairly high, in the early 2000s, to extremely low in the later time period. As far as the distribution of catch, it's a little bit more -- A little bit more of the landings were coming from North Carolina in the early time period, and you have this one high catch in Florida and Georgia, and then South Carolina has some high catches in the most recent time period.

The length distribution, they're not observed as much in the recreational fishery as in the commercial fishery, and so we don't have all that many lengths for them, and you can see that with this very sporadic length distribution, but this does give you a rough idea of the size distribution harvested in the recreational fishery. Due to limited data, I did end up lumping how many pounds, or how many scamp, were caught on a trip, and, on the left-axis, or on the Y-axis, we have the number of fish per year, and then, on the X-axis, we have number of scamp per angler.

One thing you will see, in this 2010 to 2016 time block, is the average scamp per angler is one, and then, when you move over to the 2017 to 2021, you can see the dominant is less than a half-a-fish per angler, and I know it's a little bit confusing to think of a half-a-fish per angler, but, if you have multiple people per boat, and this is trying to aggregate how many fish were caught on a vessel. I know you're going to ask me how many were caught on a vessel, and so that's the next graph down, the number of scamp per vessel, and, once again, you see this shift from three fish per vessel being the dominant one, to the shift to around one fish per vessel being dominant. There is this one spike in the charter boat fishery, but that is -- It was basically one trip that caught that, and so it wasn't very frequent.

With that, that's a lot of the information that we have for you guys on the fishery going on for scamp, and we're just trying to give you an update on what's going on before Allie gets into a lot of the nuts and bolts of the amendment, and I do have some life history in there, if you're interested in that, and scamp is a very interesting little fish, and they got the name because they are bait stealers. Back in the day, they even knew that, and that's why they're called scamp.

They grow very different than many groupers, and they start spawning at around twelve inches, fork length, I believe is where they begin to start spawning, but they get up to thirty inches, and so it's a very weird life history to start spawning that early and grow that much afterwards. Usually, you start spawning at 75 percent of your maximum length, and they're doing it at one-third of their maximum length, and so it's an interesting behavior that this fish has. Once again, that twelve inches is about 50 percent maturity, and there is a size limit on them of around twenty inches, and so there is some -- It's a little bit different than what you guys talked about with red grouper yesterday, where it's right at that 50 percent line. This fish definitely gets a chance to spawn a couple of times, and, actually, some of them transition over to male around twenty inches, and so they are starting to transition as they enter into the fishery.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chip. We have a question from Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: A question for Chip. Any reason for that spike in 2014, the consistency of the lengths in 2014?

DR. COLLIER: I haven't looked into detail on what might be causing that, but, quite often, when you see a large spike like that, that's not followed the year before or the year after, it can just be what we're calling a blip in the MRIP, and so it could be an intercept that has a high weight, and that can lead to high catch levels.

MR. LORENZ: Any questions or comments from the AP with respect to the fishery, the life science, natural history? Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: Can you explain why recruitment is so low, if the reproduction happens at twelve inches?

DR. COLLIER: Well, we're seeing this low recruitment for several of the grouper species, and even black sea bass we're seeing it, and so we're not exactly certain what might be causing it. Yes, they do spawn at a small size, and, quite often, some of those fish -- They might not have the egg production of a twenty-four-inch female, and so, even though they might be spawning at that small size, their ability to produce the number of eggs is still limited, but, overall, many of the shallow-water groupers are showing very poor recruitment, and we don't know the causes of that. There's some speculation what it might be, and the Science Center is working on it, to address that issue, and we are looking to have a seminar series, and I think it's in -- I'm trying to remember when we're having it, and it's either August or September, when there's going to be a seminar series where they're going to be talking about potential causes of low recruitment in some of these snapper grouper species.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Fish, and then I've got Harry.

MR. FISH: I saw that, on some of your charts, you were equating it to the pounds per trip, and I wonder if you ever thought that the trend for commercial fishing is doing fewer day trips, in some areas, and that, if you're drawing conclusions based on that, they might not totally see -- Or were you basing it on the length of the days of the trips, I guess I should say, and is that factored into the --

DR. COLLIER: That's a good question. What we're trying to do, when we're displaying the catch per trip, is, if the council were to implement, you know, a trip limit for the commercial fishery, what range do they need to consider, and it's not necessarily information that would be used in the stock assessment or anything like that, and they will use those indices of abundance that I showed you on the assessment output page.

MR. LORENZ: Harry Morales and then Sebastian.

MR. MORALES: Thank you. I was wondering if there's any significant effort to look at the habitat, and the loss of habitat, as part of the reasoning for the less recruitment.

DR. COLLIER: So I know they're looking at all kinds of stuff, and we actually have our ecosystem status report, and that was developed last year, and Todd might have more information on that than I do.



DR. KELLISON: Thanks, Chip. I am not directly involved in that project, but, as Chip mentioned, there are a number of species that spawn in the winter, like red porgy, black sea bass, gag, scamp, and there's -- Red grouper. Those are some that we have pretty good data on, and they are at pretty low abundances, and it's certainly possible that something environmental is driving that lack of recruitment. It could be -- So Chip mentioned that there is recently-completed, and it's been a year-and-a-half or so now, ecosystem status report for the South Atlantic, which compiles time series of lots of different metrics, things like abundance of different fish species, but also socioeconomic and environmental and climatological factors, like large-scale forcing, things like -- I mean, one that you hear about is El Nino and the Southern Oscillation, but there are numerous like large-scale coupled atmospheric-oceanic phenomenon that sometimes act over really large time scales, and they have shifts that could affect, for example, the strength and location of the Gulf Stream over time, which could then affect the amount of upwelling that occurs, or deeper water coming to the surface, which supplies nutrients to the surface and affects the productivity at the surface, which could be food for very small fish, in the planktonic stage.

There are a number of people with, as Chip mentioned, the Science Center that have been sort of exploring these different hypotheses, and I wasn't aware that maybe is a presentation coming up before too long, but that's about the extent to which I'm familiar with the results, but it certainly seems possible that some larger-scale environmental phenomenon is potentially driving some of these changes in these winter-spawning species. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Kellison. I had Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: With the graphs, was there any correlation seen by the effort of commercial? It seems like, in our area, the commercial -- You know, the commercial effort has been just almost decimated, especially between this 2010 and 2020 timeframe, where, you know, we used to have nine, ten, eleven commercial boats, and now there's like one or two, and so that's a 90 percent reduction in effort, in just my area, and I believe someone alluded to, and maybe it was James, that, you know, 60 percent of the working waterfront in his area have evaporated as well, and so is there a correlation between effort put forth on the commercial and to create decline as well?

DR. COLLIER: We didn't look at number of individuals for that, but what we're looking at here is a lot of how the fishery is responding, and so what we saw was the indices of abundance, whether it was commercial, recreational, or fishery-independent, and so the trap survey, and all of those went down. The recreational went down, and the commercial went down, and we didn't look at the actual number of vessels out there, but, if there was less competition for the same amount of fish, you would expect that 900 bin to be going up some, or at least seeing some positive responses to more availability of fish being out there, and we're just not seeing that, and so, I mean, combined, I think this is showing a pretty negative picture for scamp, and the stock assessment is showing that as well.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back to Dr. Kellison's information about, you know, the food source for the planktonic level of these animals, when they're going to

become future recruits, and I think we discussed it a little bit on the side yesterday, and, you know, I had recommended to look at the successful recruitment of red snapper, for instance, and how come its recruits continue to go off the charts, and these other species aren't, and the first thing you said to me was we are looking at the differences.

Well, snapper spawn in the dead of summer, in July, and all these grouper are in the dead of winter, and so, I mean, that's the kind of thing I think that you need to be looking at, is starting to compare down, because it could be that they're starving to death, that all these tiny animals are starving, for no nutrients in the water. Off of my area of Florida, we get the upwellings in the summer, and that's when we get our cold-water events, and so, if that's bringing the nutrients up at the same time that, you know, it's needed for the recruitment of snapper, that would make sense, and then, in the wintertime, if it's not there, they could be -- That could be the gun, but I don't know, but it's interesting that snapper recruitment, living in the same ocean, but timing of all of that -- That could be the deal, but thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob, and, to that, you know, on that note, I had brought up, on some sidebar conversations, you know, about the currents that were associated with the Florida Keys being saved by the BP oil spill and how there was a detachment in that loop current to the Gulf Stream in that timeframe that kind of kept some of the contaminants from reaching our really precious area, but I wouldn't mind if we could bring to the table what the currents looked like the ten years prior to the BP oil spill and then the ten years after, if we could take a look at the way just the known currents behave in that timeframe, and maybe the Gulf of Mexico isn't sharing its population with the Atlantic in the same manner that it used to.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Captain Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: One thing has to be impacting the data that we wind up with, so far as catch rates and all this kind of stuff, and, the last few years, the number of grouper, tilefish, whatever that they're allowed to catch has really wiped out the ability to book charters to be concentrating out there, and so the recreational count has to be down, because nobody is focusing on that fishery. You know, you can't book a charter for somebody from New York to come down, and he's going to be able to keep one grouper per boat, or two grouper, or one tilefish, or something like that, and so fuel costs, the last few years, have been astronomical, and so all of that has to be showing up, you know, in a hidden manner in the data that is collected.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Bobby. Jack Cox.

MR. COX: I don't know if I have a whole lot to add, but I would just like to tell you about my experience with scamp. I fished on commercial boats in the 1980s, on the wrecks and in the rocks, anywhere from 130 feet out to about 220 feet, and we would have catches of 500 to 600 pounds of scamp per trip, in a four-day trip, and they would average anywhere from -- You know, they would be big fish. They were twenty or thirty-pound fish, and, you know, once we started getting into the 1990s, I started noticing declines, and on up into the early 2000s, and we were seeing those 500 and 600-pound catches that we saw in the 1980s dropping to a hundred or 150 pounds per boat, and so, yes, we don't see those big fish.

We don't see those scamp like we did in the 1980s and 1990s, and I don't really know what happened. My commercial fleet has certainly decreased in size, when we used to have fifteen or twenty snapper boats out of Morehead, back in the 1990s, and now we're down to just a handful of four or five or six boats, but something for sure is going on with those scamps, but I never -- It just started really declining hard after about the early 2000s, and we used to see some really big ones, and they would be concentrated, too. You would go to a wreck, and it was -- You know, we would go out there, and we would catch 500 or 600 pounds of them on a wreck.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I forgot to point out, when I was doing this, that this is a combination of scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and yellowmouth will go by a different name, that I'm not going to say here, but so it's a combination of those two species, just because they are extremely difficult to tell the difference between the two.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chip. At this time, Andy Piland, who is online, wishes to speak. Andy, you're recognized. Andy Piland, you're recognized. We cannot hear you.

MR. PILAND: Sorry about that. I can say, on the topic of recruitment, that I know, with all certainly, the red snappers, this week, are feeding on baby black sea bass, because I've caught several this week, looking for triggers, and there's been --

MR. LORENZ: Andy, hold on. I might ask you to repeat from the beginning, and we cannot hear you, and there is a background screech and echo, and it was difficult to discern what you stated, and so you would you repeat it?

DR. COLLIER: Andy, it's showing that you're on with two different platforms, and so if you could mute one, take the audio and just say no audio on one of those, and then the other one you can speak in.

MR. PILAND: All right. I can say, with all certainty, that, on the topic of recruitment, that the red snappers are actively feeding on baby sea bass, this week. I have caught several, when we were fishing triggers, and they're spitting up, you know, three to five-inch sea bass, and other bottom fish, and, you know, the high population of red snapper in my area would have a big problem on anything that's spawning the fry and the juveniles, and, you know, I only have experience in my area, but I know that's what is happening right now, and I would feel confident that they're eating other things, other than sea bass, as well, you know, including your baby groupers and snappers and other species, and, with the restrictions that we have on red snapper, the continued restrictions, it can only get worse, in my mind. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Andy, and, for the record, Andy stated his area, and Andy's area is he fishes off the central Outer Banks of North Carolina. Anyone else? Jack.

MR. COX: Andy fishes out of Hatteras, and so he's going to be on the northern end of the Outer Banks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would like to add -- I mean, I don't know about the Americans, but I agree with Jack that there used to be a lot more scamp, and they're a harder fish to catch, obviously, but then you've still got -- A reef can't hold but so many fish, and there's so many caves, and with, you know, the shark situation, there's got to be a problem, and, you know, scamp seem to suspend more high in the water and stuff, and so they can't -- You know, anything off the reef is probably going to get eaten, and then, you know, the lionfish was something else that -- I don't know about that, but all these things factor, and it's pretty fascinating to listen to something maybe even bigger than all that, but something is going on, for sure, with all our grouper.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: We can see that the scamp are a South Carolina species that we targeted fairly hard, and, when I was chartering, that was one of our regular catches. We frequent them from seventy feet to 200 feet, and, typically, the bigger ones were about 130, or 150, feet deep, and I do find it -- I noticed about the 2014 spike, and I noticed that most of that spike came from Florida and Georgia, which is --

You know, I'm in southern South Carolina, which we often fish off the Georgia coast, and just our port is right there, and I also know that a friend of mine caught the state record scamp in 2014, which I find a little funny, but I also know that, when the scamp did start slowing down, they slowed down pretty drastically from that time period, and it did correlate directly with snapper growth and population, and maybe Andy is on to something that's going further than just the sea bass, but the graph I'm reading, in front of us, looks a lot like I feel, and I guess it's a pretty accurate description of what I would describe. We caught a lot throughout the early 2000s, of scamp, and we're not seeing them as much as we did in South Carolina, and we still catch them regularly, and don't get me wrong. On any given day, we could pull a scamp up, but not like we did in the early 2000s.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else with a comment for Dr. Collier? Are you finished, Chip?

DR. COLLIER: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you very much, Chip, and now we will move to the management response from Allie Iberle.

MS. IBERLE: Okay, and so Chip mentioned that the assessment that was most recently completed lumped scamp and yellowmouth together, and so the catch levels that came out of that assessment are for both species combined. That makes this amendment a little bit more of a process than we had originally anticipated. If it we had catch levels for just scamp, we could have updated catch levels and allocations and whatever else the council chose to update and establish a rebuilding plan. However, we have to do some kind of re-jiggering of complexes and ACLs, to make sure that everything in the Code of Federal Regulations is correct.

I'm going to walk through what this amendment will look like, some tentative timing, kind of some status quo stuff, and so I'm going to start with kind of the current regulations and how things are divvied up, and so this table kind of looks confusing, but how I want you to read this is the stuff in the orange font is the current shallow-water grouper complex, and so, technically, gag and

black grouper, and red grouper, are shallow-water groupers, with regard to the spawning season, but what we're thinking about is those species of grouper that are lumped together with the purposes of the ACL, and so this -- When you're looking at, you know, the ACL monitoring page, these species are all lumped together under one ACL from the complex, and so, from here on out, I'm going to just refer to these as shallow-water groupers.

They include coney, graysby, both hinds, red and rock, yellowfin, and yellowmouth, and then scamp has its own individual ACL currently, and so here we see the aggregate bag limit for scamp and all of those shallow-water groupers match the three-grouper aggregate bag limit, and there is no trip limit for either scamp or any of those shallow-water groupers, and then scamp has a twenty-inch total length size limit, and then two species within the complex, yellowfin and yellowmouth, also have that minimum size limit.

Then all of those species, scamp and these shallow-water groupers, have that spawning season closure that runs, and so this season is when the season is open, and so sorry that that gets a little confusing, and the season is closed January 1 to April 30, and the season is open May 1 to December 31, and so that's how the situation currently stands.

When you're thinking about that complex ACL, it includes all of those species that I mentioned, and each of those have a different apportionment of this 104,190 pounds whole weight, and so, because we're removing yellowmouth grouper from this complex, and I'll get into how we're going to do that in just a minute, I wanted to show you kind of how yellowmouth fits in the total pie, essentially, and so most of that ACL is for the hinds, and yellowmouth grouper is around 4 percent, and so, when we're thinking about removing that, think about removing 4 percent of that complex ACL.

Chip just showed you some landings for scamp and yellowmouth from the assessment, but these landings show you a comparison of scamp and those shallow-water grouper, and so how does the current scamp landings stack up to the current shallow-water grouper landings, and so we have the orange line here for commercial is just scamp, and then we have our little food pyramid of shallow-water groupers below that, and that corresponds to the teal line, and so, obviously, declining commercial landings of scamp. However, the shallow-water groupers have been relatively low compared to scamp, and pretty steady, and the dates for these is -- You're looking at 2012 to 2022.

Then, when you're looking at the recreational, keep in mind these are CHTS landings, and the reason I did that is because we needed to compare it apples-to-apples, essentially, and we need to be looking at the same estimates, and so the orange line, again, is scamp, and then the teal line is shallow-water groupers, and then we're just giving you kind of a different perspective on it, and so these are the recreational landings, the updated landings, from the assessment for scamp and yellowmouth, over the long time period, and this is 1969 to 2021, and so you can kind of see that decline there, and we're lumping the species together.

All right, and so what are we going to have to accomplish through Amendment 55, and so it's kind of a complicated process, and so we're going to go through it step-by-step. Like I mentioned earlier, we have two ACLs, is how I like to think of it. The shallow-water grouper ACL, which is based on -- That includes recreational estimates from the MRIP-FES, and we've got a scamp ACL that also includes rec estimates from the MRIP-FES.

The first step in this amendment will be to reorganize the shallow-water grouper complex and establish a new complex that says scamp and yellowmouth grouper, because our catch levels are for both of those species. Some byproducts from doing that, we will need to modify a shallow-water grouper ACL, and so, you know, we've talked a lot about switching those catch levels over, incorporating those updated FES recreational estimates.

Because this amendment is going to be under a statutory deadline for rebuilding of the scamp stock, we felt that, and the SSC recommended, that the ACL for the shallow-water grouper complex should be converted -- Not converted, but should be updated to incorporate those FES estimates in a different amendment, and so what we're going to be doing is taking a simple subtraction, and so think of that pie chart, and we're just going to be removing that 4 percent of yellowmouth and then leaving the shallow-water grouper ACL inclusive of those CHTS estimates. I feel like I'm throwing around a ton of acronyms, and so I will walk through the rest of this process, and then pause for questions, because I know this is kind of complicated.

Step two will be to start to build things for that new complex, and so, essentially, the scamp and yellowmouth complex doesn't exist, and so we will establish stock status criteria, and so that's MSY, MSST, minimum stock size threshold, and MFMT, or maximum fishing mortality threshold.

Then we'll establish a rebuilding plan for the scamp and yellowmouth complex, and that will be based off of the rebuilding projections from the SSC, and so we've done steps one through three. Next will be establishing ACLs, and so here's where that shallow-water grouper complex will factor back in, and so we'll take those catch levels that we got from the scamp and yellowmouth assessment and create that ACL, and then this is where we'll do that simple subtraction, and so we'll be pulling the yellowmouth portion out of the shallow-water grouper complex, and so you'll end up with an ACL -- It's currently at 104,000 pounds, and change, and it will go down to a thousand pounds and change, if you remove yellowmouth, from that simple subtraction method.

Then we'll establish allocations and sector ACLs for scamp and yellowmouth. Again, the complex doesn't exist, and so we're starting things from scratch, and then we'll establish commercial and recreational accountability measures. Again, here's where that shallow-water grouper complex will pop back in. Because we removed yellowmouth -- Currently, the way the AMs are written for the complex, it includes yellowmouth, and so just we'll have to remove yellowmouth from the accountability measure language, and then we'll establish accountability measures for scamp and yellowmouth.

Then I have this tiny little management measures bubble, and the planning team that's been working on this amendment has kind of been going back and forth on how to handle the management measures through this amendment. Currently, scamp and yellowmouth have matching management measures, and so they have the same bag limit, and they don't have a trip limit, and they have the same size limit, and so we're kind of tossing back and forth how to deal with that, and whether or not it needs to be established for the new complex, and so TBD on if those will be actual actions in the amendment, but those are all the very complicated kind of chicken-and-egg situation that we're dealing with with creating this new complex and reorganizing shallow-water grouper, and so, before I move off of this flow chart, I'm going to pause for questions.

MR. LORENZ: Questions from the AP for Allie? James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so that 4 percent that you took from the general pie, that would be added to the ACL that the scamp already is, or would that need to be revised to the combination of the two?

MS. IBERLE: That's a good question, and so the catch levels that came out of the assessment are already inclusive of the species, and so, because it was assessed together, those catch levels essentially incorporate both species, and so we don't have to add anything to scamp, per se, because it came out of the assessment that way.

MR. LORENZ: Jack Cox.

MR. COX: Just a little bit more broader, but rather -- When I think of scamp, I think a lot of -- Scamp is a little bit like gag, in terms of the fishery and how it's changed over time, and so, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, what can we learn from gag and incorporate into some management strategies that we're doing with scamp, and it seems like it would save us a lot of time and effort in trying to rebuild this fishery.

MR. LORENZ: Allie is writing down your request, but --

MR. COX: Well, but I understand that -- I think there's a lot of things that are very similar, in the way we're trying to rebuild this fishery, and so we already know what we've done with that amendment, and, I mean, you know, there's a lot of things to look at, but I would certainly take some of those ideas and try to incorporate them into what we're going to talk about here.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Allie.

MS. IBERLE: To that, in gag, we modify a lot of management measures, and so is that kind of what you're suggesting, is looking at trip limits and looking at bag limits, you know, revisiting the season, and is that something that you would be suggesting?

MR. COX: That is. That's part of it, yes.

MR. LORENZ: Andy Fish has a question, Allie, and I was just letting you catch up.

MR. FISH: I mean, I think there definitely needs to be a trip limit, absolutely, and I can't believe there's not one, and it's really kind of sad that we're just getting to it now.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Allie. That came from Andy, and Randy was shaking his head that he liked it too, also. Any other questions or comments for Allie at this time? Go ahead, Jack.

MR. COX: In response to the trip limits, I think that's how we got in trouble with red grouper, because we were having day trip limits of a thousand or -- We were catching a thousand, or 1,500, pounds of red grouper, back in the heyday, and so I think that's how we got in trouble with that fishery, and so I don't understand why we haven't ever had a trip limit on scamp.

MR. LORENZ: Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: So is hind going to say with the shallow-water groupers and be treated as gag?

MS. IBERLE: Everything that is not yellowmouth will stay under that shallow-water grouper complex ACL, and the other clarifying point, the trip limit, and so you were just referencing including a trip limit for scamp and yellowmouth and not the shallow-water grouper, and sorry, but I just wanted to clarify.

MR. FISH: Right. Scamp and yellowmouth. I think what you're doing is you're lumping those together, right, and, I mean, yellowmouth, they write them down as scamp anyway, and so --

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else around the table? Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Since this is creating a totally new cut, I mean, you know, and I know you guys are working together, but, I mean, when I'm looking at what all is getting ready to happen to gag, and what I'm hearing at black sea bass, and what I'm looking at with scamp, you know, this might be a time, you know, to take a hard look at specifically the headboat side of the deal, because, you know, for me, it's -- I'm a businessman, at the end of the day, period, and so I've got weigh out whether I'm going to stay in this game or I'm going to sell my land and stuff to a condominium complex, and I'm going to go retire somewhere and just chill for the rest of my life.

I mean, that's the hard, cold reality of it, and, if somebody like me goes out of it, then you just wiped out half of South Carolina, and half of North Carolina, for opportunities for people to do headboat fishing on a pay-per-person basis, and so, you know, if we're going to go into this, you know, maybe it's time to look at some type of mechanism, and I don't know what the council can do along those lines, but, I mean, I know, in South Carolina, our headboat stuff has been reduced by 60 percent in the last fifteen years, and we're one of the few guys left who are still standing, and we're in a great position, and don't get me wrong, but the cold, hard reality is do I want to take a chance on holding all this stuff when I've got this much risk in front of me, and, I mean, it's risk versus reward.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Very good points, and they're well taken. Anyone else have a question? Allie, where are we?

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so I wanted to go over some timing for this amendment, really quick, and so this is the proposed timing on this amendment, and those arrows correspond to when you guys will see this next, and so, again, the council will see a decision document in June, and hopefully approve it for scoping, scoping this summer, and then come back to you guys in October with a little bit more fleshed-out actions and alternatives, hopefully. In winter 2024, we're hoping to hold public hearings, and then final approval in September of 2024, and so that's all I had for scamp and yellowmouth, if there's any last questions.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, as we talk about all these different species, particularly with the groupers, you know, there's really two facets to it that we talk about, and it's the fish taking and fish making, and, as an AP, and then as an extension of the council, we regulate a lot of the fish taking, and we try to do things with the fish making, and we've done things, over the years, like the grouper closure, you know, from January to May, and then even establishing some of the spawning SMZs, and we're seeing, pretty consistently, that recruitment is going down,



across the books, and I'm not suggesting eliminating any of the things that we've put in place, but -- You know, Dr. Todd kind of alluded to some of it, but, obviously, there's some other pretty major things that are going on that's affecting these things.

You know, it doesn't matter how many fish we stop people from taking if the fish aren't making more, and, you know, we need to consistently look at all these different facets, as we talk about these things moving forward, because it's really frightening to look at and to think of the steps that we've taken to try to increase recruitment, and it's gone in the other direction, and, again, I want to emphasize that I'm not suggesting that we take away any of the steps that we've done, but we really need to look at everything that is happening out on the water, from forage fish, from everything.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Jack.

MR. COX: I think it was Randy that said something earlier about sharks. I mean, when I talk about these things with the fisheries in the 1980s, we had a very thriving shark fishery, and I remember, on this wrecks that we were fishing, we didn't have interactions with as many sand tigers back then, very few, and the sand tigers have taken over in our area, off of Morehead.

All the wrecks that we used to fish in the 1980s, and now the divers say that, you know, they will go down there and see sharks stacked up from the surface all the way to the bottom, these big, you know, 300 or 400-pound sand tigers, and so, you know, there's something to be said about eco-based fisheries management, and that incorporates harvesting sharks, and we don't do that anymore, and so we've talked about sharks. You know, we've heard so many people, over the years, come to the meetings and discuss these problems with sharks, but there's something to be said about that, when we're trying to figure out what's going on, and we certainly need to think about it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Along those lines, I would out just the other day, and, in literally like a 900-foot area, I saw four sand tigers and a great white in sixty feet of water, off of coast, and so, I mean, there's a bunch out there right now.

MR. LORENZ: Don't mention that to our various chambers of commerce along the beaches at this time of year.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I'm holding that in my pocket.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else on these shallow-water groupers, the scamp and the yellowmouth? All right, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: That's all I have.

MR. LORENZ: All right. We have completed Agenda Item 5, which will put us to Agenda Item 6. We're going deep, Amendment 48 with the wreckfish, and I think what I would like to do is give Christina a minute or two to get organized, and so why don't we do like a five-minute break,

and I would prefer if it's here, kind of stand up and chat and shake hands and whatever, and we're going to get going in five minutes, or as soon as Christina is ready.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: All right. We are going to return to our AP meeting, and the next item on the agenda is Item 6, and we're going real well, and we're going to go deep, and so Amendment 48, with wreckfish, and we're going to start with the overview from Christina Wiegand. Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: Thanks, Bob. It's nice to be back. I haven't gotten the pleasure of presenting to this AP in quite some time, and so I'm looking forward to running through wreckfish with you. I believe this is the first time that you guys are seeing this amendment. At your meeting in October, you asked to get a little bit more detail on what the council was looking to modify with the wreckfish ITQ program, and so I did want to give you all just a little bit of background on how this amendment got started.

If you remember, the Magnuson-Stevens Act does require that any ITQ program be reviewed every five to seven years, and so the review for the wreckfish ITQ program was completed in 2019, and it covered the fishing year 2012-2013 through the 2016-2017 fishing years. That review found that, ultimately, the wreckfish ITQ program has been pretty successful, and it is the oldest finfish ITQ program in the country, but that there were some things that could really use some updating and some modernization within the program, in particular moving from the current paper-coupon-based program to an electronic program, updating and requiring cost recovery within the fishery, which is mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Looking into the wreckfish permit requirement, which the review found to be a little redundant, and I will get into that in a bit more detail as we get to that action, and then addressing some possible allocation issues, some offloading site and time requirement issues, as brought up by the shareholders, and then some issues with economic data collection, and so, really, the purpose of this amendment is to sort of bring the wreckfish ITQ program into the twenty-first century.

I am not going to go over every single action in this amendment with you all today, and some of it is pretty specific to shareholders, and, for example, cost recovery is something that might not be super applicable to this AP, unless you do happen to own wreckfish shares, and so we're going to focus on a set of four actions today, actions related to sector allocations, the electronic reporting system, the permit requirements for wreckfish, and then the offloading site and time requirements. I have, however, included the entire suite of actions in this document, and so, if you do have questions about sort of the other two main actions in this amendment, I would be happy to talk to you about it.

We are nearing the end of development for this amendment. The wreckfish shareholders met last summer, to talk about this amendment, and we held public hearings this past March, at the March council meeting, and so, in June, the council is going to be reviewing some possible actions related to a hail-in our hail-out requirement for the fishery, and, again, I will talk about that in a little bit more detail when we get here, and then the council is tentatively scheduled to take final action on this amendment in September.

Going ahead and scrolling on down to the first action for you guys, looking at revising sector allocations and sector ACLs for wreckfish, and this is a recommendation that actually came from the shareholders, as well as this advisory panel, and there was a little bit of concern that the recreational allocation for wreckfish was too high, as it was originally intended to only be a bycatch fishery, and not a targeted fishery, for wreckfish, and, in addition to that, the Marine Recreational Information Program doesn't do a great job sort of picking up wreckfish, and, in fact, I believe there has only been one instance of wreckfish within the MRIP program since 2019, and so there was one intercept in 2012.

There are a couple of preferred alternatives, or alternatives, underneath this action. The current allocation is 95 percent commercial and 5 percent recreational, and this was set in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment. The council's current preferred alternative would modify that to be a 98 percent commercial allocation, 2 percent recreational allocation, and then there's also Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, would shift to 99 and 1 percent and 99.5 percent and half a percent, respectively, and, in the table on the screen, you can see what that would ultimately count out to, in terms of pounds whole weight.

One other thing that I will note is that, sort of prior to the Comp ACL Amendment, this was a fishery that was allocated 100 percent to the commercial sector. That 5 percent allocation was put into place through the Comp ACL Amendment, because there was concern about increasing incidences of recreational encounters with wreckfish, and while, as I stated, MRIP has not necessarily picked up on those rare encounters, through things like social media, fishermen, at the time, were sort of concerned about increased incidences of recreational fishermen catching wreckfish, and so they wanted to put that 5 percent allocation in place.

With that, I'll turn it back over to you, Bob, if there's any sort of discussion this AP would like to have, or any input they would like to provide to the council, and, again, this is something that you all asked to get more information on, and so the council didn't necessarily have a lot of direction for you on this action, but would certainly be grateful for any input you all have to provide.

MR. LORENZ: All right. We don't have too many of the deepwater fishermen, but let's see where we go. Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: I was just going to -- To that point, I think, Vincent, don't you participate in this fishery?

MR. BONURA: No, I do not participate in it, but I did have concerns about being able to lease shares, or the ITQ, if you had an SG 1 unlimited permit, and I think, currently, you have to own a share, in order to lease them, and I was wondering what's going on with that.

MS. WIEGAND: We'll get into that in a little bit more detail once I get to Action 3, but, right now, there is a wreckfish permit in place, and, in order to get that permit to harvest wreckfish, you must be a shareholder, and so that's sort of the current system in place, and, again, I can get into that in a lot more detail when we get to Action 3 in this document, that deals with that permit.

MR. LORENZ: Jack Cox.

MR. COX: My concern with this fishery is that some of my guys deepwater fish for the tiles and the snowies, and there are times they interact with them, and they will catch a few of these fish, and sometimes as many as a hundred pounds, in the past, and so, when they're fishing in that deep -- In that 800 foot of water, what are they supposed to do with these fish, when they don't have a way to bring them back, and what is that -- What is the bag limit, or what does that 0.5 percent represent, in terms of catch?

MS. WIEGAND: So that 0.5, in terms of catch, would be right here, and it's just shy of 2,000 pounds for a recreational ACL, at a 0.5 allocation.

MR. COX: What I mean by that is per vessel, and what can that fisherman have, to stay within the legal catch limit?

MS. WIEGAND: The recreational season is July through August, with a bag limit of one fish per vessel.

MR. LORENZ: James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob. Maybe something to look at here would be to take -- Instead of taking all 5 percent from the recreational sector, maybe it might be some sort of an idea to move that to commercial fishermen who are holding SG 1, and they might be able to retain that one fish, instead of -- You know, maybe share that among SG 1 holders in the rec sector.

MS. WIEGAND: So, to make sure I'm capturing that correctly, you would be interested in sort of retaining that 95/5 percent allocation, but, as opposed to making it a recreational-specific allocation, it would be an allocation that fishermen that have the SG 1 permit, but do not hold shares or allocation, could also harvest on, in addition to the recreational sector?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Correct.

MR. LORENZ: Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The recreational sector isn't a hard hit on this fishery, but, in South Carolina, it's becoming more and more, and there has been a good many recreational fishermen who do catch these fish, and a lot of them are out catching tiles and so forth, and I would think -- I don't think we're catching 5 percent, and so I would be in favor of the 2 percent, and then put the 3 percent toward something else, and that would kind of make sense, but I wouldn't feel good about going under the 2 percent for the recreational sector, simply because there is a whole lot of guys that I know, especially in the Charleston area, and I would think -- Chris, do you all run into these fish? No? Maybe it's just that Freeman group, but there's a lot of guys bumping the bottoms of the closed areas, as well as going deep for tiles, that are catching wreckfish.

MR. LORENZ: Andy, I'm going to get you in a moment. Thank you for checking in, and I have David Moss ahead of you here.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My only concern, with lessening the recreational allocation, is that one intercept can really influence what the -- What our hit is going to be with the

ACL, and, with being such a shortened season to begin with, and, as Tony was saying, there's a lot more people, certainly down by my way, down my way, that are deep-dropping and hitting a lot of these deeper spots, and so the chances of an intercept are going to be greater, which means that we're going to hit the ACL quicker, and potentially go over it, and then there's going to be buyback, and so there's going to be no season the following year, and so that would be my concern for lowering the rec ACL.

MR. LORENZ: Christina, did you want to respond?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, and so just a note. That is also a concern that the shareholders brought up, that, you know, lowering the recreational ACL to a point, with one intercept, it could cause problems, and so, just as a note for you guys, while you're having the discussion, and the current recreational accountability measures for wreckfish are to close if the ACL is reached, or projected to be reached, and then monitor for a persistent increase in landings and shorten the season, if necessary, if wreckfish is considered overfished based on the most recent report to Congress and the total ACL is exceeded, and so if that helps inform your discussion at all.

MR. LORENZ: All right. At this time, I would like to recognize Andy Piland from North Carolina to speak. Andy, you're recognized.

MR. PILAND: Thank you. Knowing how MRIP works, and how few interactions it would take for us to go over the limit, I would be opposed to changing what we have now. The fishermen in our area do catch wreckfish occasionally during that short open season, and I would just -- You know, our group would be opposed to reducing our season, and especially understanding how MRIP calculations could affect everybody's fishery. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, hearing what I'm hearing about other states, that are catching, you know, more and more -- More and more people are catching these, and I would -- Christina, you said that you're having difficulty recording these, because of social media, and it's that kind of thing, from the rec sector, and this is a perfect example. The guys that I know, that are catching these fish in the rec sector, would be the first to buy the permit and be the first to record data, and so, if the recreational data was being mandatory, I think our data, on this fish in particular, this fishery, would be very accurate, at least in the rec sector.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else with a question?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob. I guess it would lead me to the question then -- I mean, I guess I know the answer, but why would the preferred alternative be moving it to 98 percent from 95 percent to the commercial sector, when it seems to be pretty clear that everybody is kind of afraid of, if reporting changes a little bit, that it could be skewed very quickly, and then those accountability measures would kick in and kind of be a little bit weird for one sector?

MR. CONSTANT: James, when I stated that, it was before I heard from different states, and I totally agree. I was -- In southern South Carolina, we don't catch many wreckfish, but, from south Charleston north, they do, and then I'm hearing, from Florida and so forth, and even North Carolina, and I agree. I don't think it's a good idea to change what we have.

MR. LORENZ: Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: Is the commercial allocation met every year, or is that confidential?

MS. WIEGAND: I don't believe it's confidential for the last year or two, and I'm looking at Chip, who has dug into this data a little bit more, but, also, no, I don't believe that their catch level has been met.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Anyone else have a question or a comment? Harry.

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are now, recreational fishermen, going deeper, simply to get out of the way of the red snapper and see what else we can get, and so now it's a trolling trip, with a deep-bottom drop that's occurring, and so I would say too that the 95/5, no action taken, is what our group should be proposing, because the recreational guys also do need a little bit of leeway here, and 5 percent is not a crazy number to give, and so my recommendation would be that the AP make a recommendation that Alternative 1 remain in place. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: I will pick that up in a moment. Jack, go ahead and comment.

MR. COX: I was just looking at the ACL SERO page, and, in wreckfish, the landings are confidential, and so we don't have all the information that we need to talk about some of this stuff, but the ACL, commercial, is 377,000 pounds.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: To tie into what Tony and Harry just kind of implied, I have no problem with supporting the 5 percent, from my end, but I think I would also like to add that, as the private recreational sector is doing what you are saying they're doing, and they're moving further offshore, and the effort is increasing, and we need a deepwater permit, or a stamp or something, for the deepwater recreational, so that we can have required reporting, so that we can keep track of -- Because, if they continue to grow, as they have no limitations, and they're going to, then they are going to start fishing heavier, and landings, and implement indications on the commercial side, which historically has held the fishery, and so, you know, we need a deepwater stamp, or licensing and permitting, involved, and at least that needs to be on the record for the council to hear too, in my opinion.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy, and, kind of as a pulse check here with what you had said, Harry, do you want to formulate, or articulate, as a formal motion, and we can make one.

MR. MORALES: **Yes, I would. I would like the AP to recommend to the council that Alternative 1 be considered the preferred alternative.**

MR. LORENZ: Let Christina catch up, and I will read that. **The motion we have is that the AP recommends Alternative 1, which is no action, be considered for the preferred alternative.** Do we have a second? David Moss seconds that motion. All right. That leads us to discussion of this motion, and any challenges to it. Captain Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: Where is the intercept data coming from that determines what is being captured by the recreational or the commercial?

MS. WIEGAND: For the commercial sector, it's an ITQ program, and so it comes from the paper coupons that they submit, and, for the recreational sector, it's MRIP.

MR. LORENZ: Are you satisfied, Bobby?

MR. FREEMAN: Well, at previous meetings, we were asking for permits and something to determine how many folks are participating, and I don't see that has occurred, and, to say that 5 percent of the total catch is being captured by recreational boats -- I don't know how you could even guess that's true. You don't know who is doing it.

MR. LORENZ: Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: To go along with what Harry said, more and more people are going deeper, simply to get out of the snapper, and our grouper holes are covered up, and you have to go deeper and deeper, and that is -- The recreational sector is -- Of course, the boats are bigger and faster, and so they continue to go, and it's not going to slow down until -- I think the people who are actually the ones that are going there are the ones that we're looking for, meaning that they are the ones that are committed to the fishery, and they will be glad to do the bottom permit, as well as record the data, and I think, the sooner we put this in place, the better we all will be.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Any other comments to the motion? Jack Cox.

MR. COX: Would this be an appropriate time, Jimmy, to make that motion, because I think you would have some support here.

MR. LORENZ: Jack, if we might -- Could I suggest that we put this up as a clean motion, with a second one, following this? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that, if we're going to recommend this 5 percent, that we add with the addition of some type of any shape or form of deepwater wreckfish permit to the private recreational sector. We can add it to it or make a separate motion.

MR. LORENZ: So what you're stating is your preference would be to ask Harry to --

MR. HULL: No, and let's vote on this and do another one.

MR. LORENZ: I think it's easier to do two.

MR. HULL: I agree, and we need to do a separate motion. I agree.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you.

MR. MCKINLEY: Just real quick, I mean, I just -- Going back to what Jack said about bycatch and stuff, you know, these grouper species -- We're going to be hammered on them, and our boats will push off further for the tile and stuff, and we may encounter them, but I don't want to take the

5 percent away from the recreational, because I understand that with them too, but would it be impossible to have some kind of fifty or a hundred-pound bycatch taken off of the shareholders, and I guess that's probably not going to happen, but, I mean, I just hate to see any fish discarded, even if it was a 1 percent, and give the 1 percent to commercial, and 5 percent to recreational and 94 to the shareholders, but that's probably something that couldn't happen, but I'm just throwing it out there.

MR. LORENZ: So, Randy, that's actually a further tweak within this Amendment 48, and I'm just wondering -- Let's keep it on the burner, if we have a third thing to slide in here, okay? I would like to recognize James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so, with what Jack said, and what Jimmy kind of supported here, and I'm going to tie in enforcement to this, which is something that we all talk about all the time, and why are rules in place in the first place anyway, and then, from law enforcement, most of the time, you will get the response of, well, you know, X amount of the population are going to follow the rules anyway, and so, with a fishery like this one, if we put in the guidelines that, if you catch a wreckfish, as a recreational fisherman, you must report it? Instead of having a permit to catch one, to collect the data, to get it initialized, how about we just make the rule that, if you catch one, you have to report it, and it's just a thought.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I personally would rather see the recreational sector having to report everything on the bottom, versus a specific species, if it would be possible.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. It looks like maybe what we'll do is -- Let's get a vote on this motion, and it looks like there may be a follow-on, and I will let all of you decide how to word that. Though this motion is made, there are definitely some other factors that you're going to want, in order to have this supported, and can we agree on that? All right.

I will read the motion. **The motion, as clean as it is now, and it's very simple, is the AP recommends Alternative 1, no action, be considered for the preferred alternative. Is there anyone -- I think that would be a little easier. Is there anyone that does not agree with this motion and wants to vote nay, no?** I am looking once, twice. **Is there anyone that is abstaining?** Andy is with us also. **Okay, and this motion passes unanimously.** I will leave it up to you, Harry. Go ahead.

MR. MORALES: You know, this is my second year on this panel, and, as a recreational fisherman, you almost feel that that term is a bad term, and I'm a bad boy, for whatever reason, and, at the end of the day, I don't think that there's a fisherman that I fish with that would go into federal waters and not report what they catch. I think I could get every fisherman, recreational fisherman, that is in federal waters to report every frickin' thing that gets put on the boat, and, ergo, MRIP wouldn't be guessing what it is I'm doing, or not doing, and you all wouldn't be guessing as to how many fish I'm killing and everything else like that, and we would report.

The charter guys that I know, they do an incredible job, and they hated the moving over to electronics, but they did it anyway, because that's what the law is. I am too new to know why this is such a big issue that cannot get resolved, when it is so simple, if it's a federal mandate that,



when I go out into that water, I have to tell you what the heck I brought back on my boat. That's my point.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. I am going to go to Jack, because I wanted to get with this previous motion. Go ahead, Jack, and then Randy.

MR. COX: Harry, no, I appreciate that, and I don't think that it's intentionally -- That recreational guys would not intentionally want to report, and I think, from the commercial standpoint, we are required, within seven days, to do these reports, and we have an accountability measure that is tied to our permit, and the permits cost money. They're a lot of money, and, I mean, they're expensive, and that's our livelihood, and so, in order to continue to fish -- If we don't -- If we fail to comply to those reportings, we're not able to go fishing, and so it's kind of like we have to have something.

You have to have collateral to make -- Like, if a recreational fisherman has to comply to keep his permit active, then it's going to make him think twice about, when he gets in, that this is something that I don't want to lose, and so I really need to make sure that I spend a few minutes and do this, and not that he doesn't want to, but it just -- It reminds you, and, you know, it's something that has to be done to continue to fish, and I don't know if that's what you wanted to talk about, Jimmy, but that's how I would kind of respond to what he was saying.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I wish that I could say that about all the fishermen that I know, and North Carolina just doesn't have much enforcement, and I know numbers of boats -- I mean, I ran a tackle store for thirty-one years, a convenience store and stuff, and I talked to people, and there is a -- There's a group of people, and gas is expensive, and they catch everything, and they bring in every single thing they catch, and they're not going to probably be the ones that are going to get federal permits, and, I mean, I know that happens, but there is that group that are running out there, and, if they go that far, they're going to catch everything, and keep everything they catch, and they don't care about limits or sizes or nothing, and North Carolina just doesn't have enough enforcement, and that's going to keep happening until the enforcement gets in.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy, and I am going to add that to this AP, because this is going to become pertinent when we discuss the recreational permit, which is an agenda item, but I don't know if everyone knows this, but North Carolina does not have a JEA, a joint enforcement agreement, with the federal government, and it goes beyond that.

About ten or twelve years ago, a statute was passed, in our state legislature, that strictly forbids the Director of the Department of Natural Resources for entering into a JEA, and so, with respect to enforcement, at the time, North Carolina -- I checked the record, and it was leaving \$350,000 on the table that could be used for enforcement, and it's probably up to half-a-million, and so I went on my little teeny tirade about, you know, getting in the room, and getting in the offices of state legislatures, and that was one of the things on my mind, and so just so you all know, and it's a little worse, Randy, than you even think. Even if we want enforcement, and enforcement takes money, and we specifically have a law that we in North Carolina have to work on getting changed, if we're ever going to make any improvements, and so I would just like to offer that to the group, and I happy that it's going on the record. I would like to recognize Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think is a perfect opportunity, and this is such a small, specialized fishery, both commercially and recreationally, that perhaps we could make a motion, and I would like to make a motion, and I'm going to need some help on this, because there's a lot to think about, but, you know -- **I would like to make a motion that the council require, for the private recreational sector, some type of wreckfish permit, and specifically just for wreckfish, because I think it would be easier, rather than going the whole snapper grouper deepwater complex, but specifically for wreckfish, some type of either they have to report it, or we have to have a permit, for wreckfish in the recreational sector.**

Why? Because this could be a pilot, because it's so specialized and small, and it could be a pilot as to future recreational programs, because, as you all know, we've been requesting private recreational permitting for as long as I've been on here, and it hasn't happened. They're talking about it, but they could possibly do something with this, because it's such a small, specialized fishery, and just something along those lines. I would need help with this, to make it make sense, but something to do with just for wreckfish, to make it a requirement to -- They either have to report their catch, and how would they do that?

Well, they would report it to the port agent, the federal port agent, or to the MRFSS, and, somewhere, they're going to have to call up -- Or here's another idea. They could report it on one of our great apps that have been developed by citizen science that are already established and in place, and so they have to go to the app and report on one of these apps. You guys are better than me at this, and so I'm going to leave it at that, and see where it goes, and then we'll finish the motion, and is that okay, Christina, to kind of start the motion, and it's not finished yet.

MS. WIEGAND: (Ms. Wiegand's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. HULL: Thank you so much.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy, and, for everybody else, I am going to look and get your names down on the list, but David Moss was the first to raise his hand, and, if anyone else wants to speak, raise your hand while David is speaking, and I will get you on the list. David.

MS. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jimmy, I would support this. However, I would recommend expanding it beyond wreckfish, for the simple reason being that, for the most part, in the rec sector, if you catch a wreckfish, it ain't going to live, and so, if you don't have a permit and release it, it's still a dead discard, right, and so I would recommend, if you're going to do this, to expand that permit to the deepwater complex, with required reporting for -- Then, if you want to dial it down, that's fine, but that's just my recommendation.

Again, with more and more people deep-dropping now, we're going to be encountering these animals more and more, and we have already, and, you know, you go on any social media site, and you will see people catching these fish. If, for instance, I go out there, and I don't have a permit, and I catch one and release it, chances are it ain't going to live, but I'm also not going to report it.

MR. HULL: That's fine with me. I mean, we can -- I'm flexible on this, whatever you all want to do, but we do need to put something together, and I agree, and so, if they don't have a permit, then they're not going to report their dead discard, or they're not even going to report anything, and I understand that, and so -- But I'm just trying to think of what -- I mean, as I started doing

this, I think that the council members are laughing, probably, because you guys have been asking us to do this forever, and, you know, it's not going to happen, but we at least need to put it on the table, right, because it would be common sense to do this. **Yes, I would support, you know, changing it to support all of it.**

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Jimmy, I have a queue though of four people that are still going to help you, and so we're going to circle back to you. I have, in order here, Tony, then Andy Fish, James, and Vincent.

MR. CONSTANT: Jimmy, I was thinking along David's lines, and I understand that streamlining it -- It has a lot better chance of this thing getting through at all, but, if we do include at least tiles and snowy, some things that are going to be in the same area, in the deep-drop, versus -- You know, I would like to include the snapper grouper, but I understand that's a big chunk to chew, and why not use SciFish? It's set up, and my understanding, Julia, is that we can put state-by-state catches on this, and it could be added to SciFish for reporting, and I don't think a permit alone is enough, and we need data, and so you have to report, and, if we report on something that we already have in the works, let's do it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I was going to reiterate that, if it's a bycatch of tilefish, or snowy grouper, recreationally, then it might need to be together with a deepwater permit, and, generally, it's the swordfish guys too, because they're the ones out fishing over the rocks, that's in the really deep water, which, in my neck of the woods, is they're in 1,700 to 3,000 feet of water, I think, and that's the guys that are going to be involved with that too, and I'm just throwing that out there.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. We're still trying to help Jimmy here, to get some more words, and this is getting big. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I would just like to point out, along with what David is saying, and then Tony is reiterating, that we have to keep in mind that the process, the process to accomplish these things, takes a very long time, and we've talked about, in the past, about how can we streamline these timeframes, and kind of get them to where we can get action more immediate, and we don't really have any answers for that, at the current -- You know, at the current timeframe, and so incorporating as much as we can into the initial onset of this for the recreational sector I think is hugely important, and, if we have a good, solid outline of what -- You know, what types of fishing, and what species are outlined in this initial reporting, the better off we're going to be, moving forward. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: I have you next, Vincent. You're up, and then Jack.

MR. BONURA: I just had a quick question here. Would charter and headboats be included in the recreational permit, or is the wreckfish on the charter and headboat permits that we currently have?

MR. LORENZ: David Moss, are you wanting to answer Vincent?

MR. MOSS: Well, somebody smarter than me could probably answer it, but I'm assuming, since it's part of the rec ACL, it would be -- It would have to be a part of that, since charter and headboats are part of the rec ACL, as far as this goes.

MR. BONURA: Well, then would we need to add charter and headboat onto this motion as well, or --

MR. HULL: Well, of course -- Thank you for that, and it complicates things when you bring in the for-hire sector, tied together with the private recreational sector, but for-hire boats currently have federal permits for recreational harvest of snapper grouper species in general, and I don't think they're the issue that we really have with this, and I think it's the private rec, I think, that we're really trying to -- So I don't know really the answer to your question, but they're going to be -- This is geared toward the private rec sector and not the for-hire sector.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. I have Jack waiting for a comment, but, Christina, would you like to make a statement?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, and so my understanding, and, Chip and Mike, correct me if I'm wrong, but there's already sort of a permit and reporting requirement for the for-hire industry, and so they would be reporting encounters with wreckfish already.

MR. LORENZ: Well, that sounds good, because that's going to keep this a little cleaner. Jack, did you have anything? Help us out.

MR. COX: I think this council has already identified a deepwater complex species, and so it would certainly be easier just to call this a deepwater complex motion, permit, and that would include those deepwater species, and I can't recall what they all are, and we've covered some of them, and maybe somebody can refresh us on what that is, but, you know, the council has talked about doing something like this for a long time, and it's definitely time to do it, because there is a lot of people fishing for these things, and we need to know what's going on.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss.

MR. MOSS: I was just going to say, Jimmy, if you wanted to change it to the deepwater -- Take out "wreckfish" and put in "deepwater complex", I would be happy to second.

MR. LORENZ: Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: Just a side note, and this also might create somewhat of a goldrush to all these recreational people to it, and it might cause a lot more people to all of a sudden go out there, and it might create more of a problem, to go out there and -- I just thought about that.

MR. LORENZ: A comment? Go ahead, James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I think that, to put the wreckfish situation to bed, that we go ahead and get this cleaned up the way it is, just for wreckfish, and then have it automatic that, the next time the deepwater complex is being discussed, that this panel adopt this exact verbiage for that complex. Therefore, as soon as it's discussed again, they're going to adopt this as well, or, you know, just

put it in the notes, for discussion, that this should take place for that complex, and kind of put this to bed with wreckfish alone. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Christina wants to speak, for a little clarity here.

MS. WIEGAND: I did want to let you guys know, and we've sort of been looking up what's in the recreational reporting amendment that you guys are going to hear about, I believe tomorrow, and there is an alternative in that amendment that considers a permit for the deepwater complex. Now, it's important to note that wreckfish is sort of on its own, and is not a part of that deepwater complex, and so you guys could certainly recommend that, you know, wreckfish be included in that permit discussion.

MR. LORENZ: Go ahead, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so this is all great discussion, and good additions, and more thoughts, and so, if I read what's up there now, the motion is to recommend the council require, for the private recreational sector, a wreckfish and/or the deepwater complex permit and reporting requirement, using existing SciFish app, or whatever apps that we want to put there, using existing apps, recreational reporting apps, and that would pretty much, I think, clean it up pretty good, and they will understand our intent, and we've made this motion before, and then our bullet points, the reasoning, is it could be used as a pilot for future recreational reporting for other snapper grouper species, and I think that -- I like the way that sounds right there, and it's going to put forth what we're thinking, and then they will take it from there, and they will kick it over to their reporting committee and go from there. I am good with it.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Jimmy. Thank you. I think just a -- What I see is I'm almost thinking a comma is needed there somewhere. Recommend the council require, for the private recreational sector, a wreckfish and/or -- Would be "a deepwater" -- Deepwater complex permit and reporting requirement, and maybe a comma would go there, and then using recreational reporting apps, such as the citizen science app SciFish, and does that sound a little better?

MR. HULL: I am good with that, I mean, but let's read it again. **The motion is recommend the council require, for the private recreational sector, a wreckfish and/or a deepwater complex permit and reporting requirement, using existing recreational reporting apps, such as the citizen science app SciFish. A bullet point is it could be used as a pilot for the future recreational reporting for other snapper grouper species.**

MR. LORENZ: As typed up there, that makes sense for all of us here? Does someone have a statement? Okay. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way that, with adding, and it's something small, but it's meaningful, and adding the "and/or a deepwater complex permit", you're essentially saying to have a permit for wreckfish or a permit for the deepwater complex, of which the wreckfish is not a part of, and the whole purpose of this was to have wreckfish included with this, whereas, before, when you take that "a", that one letter, out, you put wreckfish as part of the permitting that you would want to do for the deepwater complex, to include wreckfish in that. Even though, technically, it's not in the deepwater complex, you want to include it, from a permitting perspective.

MR. LORENZ: Yes, and you would just say that you would need one for both.

MR. MOSS: Right.

MR. HULL: Or you would need one just for wreckfish and not include -- If they decided it was easier to just do wreckfish, and so however that needs to be, but I think the idea of what we want is being put forth, and they can figure out the fine details of how it works out, because what we're recommending -- What they do is what they do.

MS. WIEGAND: (Ms. Wiegand's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. MOSS: Look. At the end of the day, I'm in favor of this, one way or the other, but I'm just saying that, the way it's written there, it could be one or the other. It could be interpreted as to have a permit for one or the other and not both, all encompassing.

MR. LORENZ: I think have it here, and it was after -- We have "a wreckfish permit", and that consolidates that, and I like -- I thought it was good, "and possibly a deepwater complex permit". Now, to me, that's very clear that there's a wreckfish permit, and that's what we're asking for, and possibly do the deepwater complex permit, and maybe I would entertain any comments on that. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just want to make sure that it's clear for folks what "deepwater complex" means here, because, in terms of how -- When we talk about a complex, a complex, in terms of the way that we manage, is when we group several species together and they are all managed under one annual catch limit, okay, and so we have like the shallow-water grouper complex that was brought up earlier. There was one ACL that has all of those shallow-water groupers grouped together, but something that is a shallow-water grouper, that has its own ACL, such as red grouper, is not part of that complex, and so the deepwater complex -- The verbiage that is normally tied to that, the species that are included in that, would be yellowedge grouper, silk snapper, misty grouper, queen snapper, sand tilefish, and blackfin snapper.

That being the case, just kind of listening to the discussion that you all are having right now, I am guessing that the discussion about the deepwater complex means the other fish that are caught in the deep water with wreckfish, and so, just putting this clarification kind of out there, or possibly confusion, but that verbiage may need to be something different, and, if this motion is directed primarily at wreckfish, it may be useful to specify wreckfish, because, as Christina noted, in Amendment 46, you will have an alternative there, that you will discuss tomorrow, that says what species should be included in a private recreational permit, and there's an option there that can say to include the deepwater complex, or include this group of species, and that group of species, and so there may be some use of saying wreckfish here, and then, anything additional to that, possibly holding off and making that motion all together tomorrow, but that would simplify this, and simplify some of the verbiage here, so that you all know that you're voting on one specific species right now, and you will address more tomorrow.

MR. LORENZ: So, Jimmy, would there be any thought -- Again, as we did on the other amendment, with the status quo from the wreckfish, to keep it real clean for the time being, and just have this focus on wreckfish, and are you okay with that?

MR. HULL: That's how I wanted to do it from the beginning.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Mike.

MR. HULL: **So everything except wreckfish.** Then let me read it.

MR. LORENZ: Go ahead and read it, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: **The motion is recommend the council require, for the private recreational sector, a wreckfish permit and reporting requirement, using existing recreational reporting apps, such as the citizen science app SciFish.** Perfect.

MR. LORENZ: Then you had bullet points, and keep them?

MR. HULL: **Yes.**

MR. LORENZ: All right. Christina, is there just one bullet point down there? All right, and so we have the motion, and it has been read by Jimmy, and do I have a second? Okay. I saw one, and let's give Randy the second. We had discussion, and so the next step is any further discussion before the vote? Does anybody want to discuss this motion any further before we take the vote? Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: Is compliance something that you want to address now, or are we just going to kick that down the road?

MR. LORENZ: We are going to kick that down the road, and we're trying to keep this clean, and, the way the process goes, I mean, the council can get this, and they do things like -- I've seen them take motions saying considered but rejected, meaning they've read it, and they thought about it, but they're not going any further, and so this sausage has to go a little further down the line eventually anyway. Anybody else? I guess, for formality, I should read it again.

**Recommend the council require, for the private recreational sector, a wreckfish permit and reporting requirement, using existing recreational reporting apps, such as the citizen science app SciFish, and then the bullet, for some clarity, is it could be used as a pilot for future recreational reporting for other snapper grouper species. Anybody opposed to this amendment, to this motion? Anybody abstaining?** Andy hasn't stated anything? Okay, and so Andy is onboard with us. **This motion is approved unanimously.** Nice job. Tony, go ahead.

MR. CONSTANT: This isn't to change anything, and I'm perfectly fine, and I'm just curious. In the deepwater complex, where does tile, blue tile and golden, and snowies fall? I'm just looking for an explanation.

MS. WIEGAND: So it's the Snapper Grouper FMP.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Blueline has its own single species annual catch limit, and golden has its own single species annual catch limit, and so the only time we use a complex is typically for species that are not as commonly caught, and, because they are, you know, so -- They have such small catches, and we don't have a stock assessment for those individual species, those were grouped

together, during the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment, and so that's why we use complexes, but species -- Particularly assessed species, typically, we'll have an annual catch limit assigned to that one species.

MR. CONSTANT: (Mr. Constant's comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just getting on the record what Tony just summarized, each of those species with a single-species ACL, they would need to be spoken of in individual terms, as opposed to as a complex.

MR. LORENZ: Christina, I'm getting a voice in my ear here about it's getting to be lunchtime, and we're doing pretty good with the schedule, and so, with your permission, maybe break for lunch.

MS. WIEGAND: You don't need my permission. This is your meeting.

MR. LORENZ: As a courtesy, I would like to ask you to break for lunch. All right, folks. We're going to take an hour-and-a-half for lunch, because there's a bit of travel, if you want to leave this area for lunch, and we have 3.5 hours, and we do have a hard stop this afternoon, because there is public comment and things going on this afternoon, and so we are adjourned until 1:30, and please be punctual at 1:30 to finish this.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: We will reconvene our meeting at this time, and we're continuing on with Agenda Item 6, Amendment 48, wreckfish, and Christina Wiegand will now introduce us to -- I guess we'll discussing permitting, with respect to wreckfish.

MS. WIEGAND: Thanks, Bob, and so, diving back into Amendment 48, as I talked about a little bit before lunch, one of the reasons the council started working on this amendment was to start modernizing the wreckfish program, and so that involves moving towards an electronic reporting system, and so the current preferred alternative, as you might expect, is to do just that, and it would move multiple systems online, and so it would move away from that sort of paper-based coupon system that the wreckfish shareholders have been using and allow the wreckfish ITQ program to track things like ownership, transfers of quota, distribution, and annual allocation electronically, and it would also move the wreckfish logbook electronic as well.

One of the big things that we're talking about, related to the electronic program, is modifying the requirement to possess a vessel permit for wreckfish, and so, for wreckfish, you have to possess two permits in addition to owning shares, and so that would be the wreckfish permit, the snapper grouper unlimited permit, and then, of course, you need to own shares, and, going through the review process, it was found that all of those permits are not only a bit duplicative, but are kind of unnecessarily burdensome, both for program participants and for data managers.

In addition, requiring NMFS to figure out who is an employee, contractor, or agent of a vessel owner can be incredibly difficult, without requesting a lot of additional information than is typically requested of permit applicants, and it creates a lot of administrative burden, and it also



creates a lot of challenges, when we're trying to deal with data confidentiality for this program, and so the council has four alternatives underneath this action.

The first alternative would maintain that wreckfish permit, and the second alternative would maintain the wreckfish permit, but it would remove that sort of complex owner-operator must be an employee, contractor, or agent of the shareholder language, and the council's current preferred alternative is Alternative 3, which would remove the requirement to have that wreckfish permit, but it would still require a commercial permit for snapper grouper, the unlimited permit, be issued to the vessel, and the permit holder must be a wreckfish shareholder.

Then, recently, there was a new alternative added that would simply require a permit for snapper grouper unlimited to be onboard in order to harvest wreckfish. Now, this is a little complicated, and so I'm going to get into a little bit more detail about what sort of the current situation is, and then what it would look like under Preferred Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, and so, right now, in order to get that wreckfish permit, you have to be a shareholder, and the vessel harvesting must be the shareholder's vessel or an agent of the shareholder, and the vessel must have the SG 1 permit.

Anyone can become a shareholder, but you cannot get that wreckfish permit unless you are a shareholder. Allocation, which is the poundage that's associated with the share, can be possessed by a shareholder, or it can be transferred to the agent of a shareholder, and then, in order to harvest wreckfish, the vessel must have all of the required permits and the coupons and so that allocation. That is the current system that is in place right now.

Now, under Alternative 3, which is the council's current preferred alternative, harvest would require just the snapper grouper permit, and the person harvesting would have to be a shareholder, and so, to open an account within the online system, you would simply have to have a snapper grouper unlimited permit. In order to receive shares, and the shares needed for allocation, which are then needed for harvest, you would have to be a shareholder, and so sort of the only way into the fishery, under Preferred Alternative 3, would be to purchase shares.

Alternative 4, which is, again, a new alternative, and I'm not sure it's really been explained to the council in sort of these words, is you could harvest -- The harvest would be based on having the snapper grouper unlimited permit and any sort of eligibility requirements that are built into the online system. Everything sort of operates the same as above, but, in order to receive allocation, the only prerequisite would be having an account within the online system, and, essentially, what this does is it mimics the current agent language that is in place, and it would allow say -- For example, because this is how it works best to explain in my head, if I am a shareholder, and I have shares, I have an allocation, you know a yearly allocation that's associated with those shares, I can then lease that allocation to someone else, so long as they have a snapper grouper 1 permit and an account within the electronic system, and so I know that was really complicated.

We can try to talk about it in terms of these two alternatives, and I also recommend -- One of the ways we've had sort of the shareholders talk about it in the past is, if you have comments on how you think eligibility should work within the wreckfish fishery, for the most part, we can build the online system that way, and so it's also fine to sort of talk about it in sort of broader terms than just these specific alternatives, and then staff can explain that and sort of get the recommendations to fit in language that works for the system, and so, now that I have confused everyone, right after

lunch, I will turn it back over and allow you all to provide some feedback on how you feel about eligibility and participation within the wreckfish fishery.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. James. Thank you.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so I was speaking with a personal friend of mine about red grouper in the Gulf of Mexico, and I think this holds true with the red snapper fishery as well. When we start talking about leasing different allocations, we should think about -- Which has been a problem there, and we should think about how many times you can lease that piece of your quota before you have to sell it, because what ends up happening here is you have a long-term entity that does nothing but lease their shares, and they don't participate in the industry anymore, and it becomes a bit of a monopoly, and I know this fishery isn't that large that, you know, dollar-wise, but, still, I feel like there should be -- If we're going to talk about leasing it, you know, maybe lease it four times, or eight times, or whatever, and then, you know, you're going to be required to sell it, and that's just something that might be looked at when we talk about this. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Anyone else with a comment or input? Harry.

MR. MORALES: Is there anyone here who has shares? No?

MR. LORENZ: No, sir. It doesn't look like it. Vincent.

MR. BONURA: Alternative 4 would be anyone can get an account and lease shares off of a current shareholder, and is that correct?

MS. WIEGAND: Could lease allocation, and so, sort of briefly, when we're talking about shares, and we're talking about allocation, those are two separate things. Shares are, you know, I have a, you know, 15 percent share of the fishery, and then there is a poundage allocation that's associated with that 15 percent, based on what the ACL is, and so, yes, you could -- If you are eligible to get an account, which, in Alternative 4, you would simply need to have that snapper grouper unlimited permit, then, if there was a shareholder who wanted you to function as sort of their employee/agent/contractor, that type of language, it could still happen through the electronic system, and they would be able to lease you allocation.

MR. BONURA: All right, and so then, in Alternative 3, you still have to own one share, in order to lease allocation?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes. That's how it works under Alternative 3.

MR. BONURA: Okay. I would like to recommend Alternative 4 as our recommendation, if anyone here would like to speak about that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Vincent, am I correct in understanding that you're making a motion to move with Alternative 4? Is that what you wish? Okay. Let's take a minute, and we can make that motion, if you wish. Is there anybody here on the AP who wants to generally make a statement? Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. I just have a question, and are any of the alternatives that don't permit leasing? Do any of the alternatives not permit leasing, I guess?

MS. WIEGAND: None of them ban leasing entirely, but it's sort of what would be required to harvest, and so, for example, under Preferred Alternative 3, you would have to be a shareholder to lease shares and harvest.

MR. MAHONEY: Is it okay if I make a motion to do another alternative that --

MR. BONURA: **I mean, I would put a motion in for Alternative 4.**

MR. LORENZ: Andrew, we will come back to you, but we're just discussing if there's any color that anybody wanted to give, noting that Vincent wanted to make this motion. Yes, Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I just wanted to add that even the preferred 4 though doesn't mean that any of us could participate, and we would still have to purchase shares, and is that correct? We would have to be a shareholder, or purchase shares, or lease shares?

MR. HULL: I will second the motion, Mr. Chair.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Jimmy Hull seconds the motion, for discussion, and I give it back to you, Randy, and you're discussing. Okay. You made your statement. Jimmy, did you have something?

MR. HULL: Yes, and I'm confused. Right now, if you want to participate in the wreckfish fishery, and you have an SG 1, and let's just assume that's where you're headed. In order for you to do that, right now, you have to own a wreckfish -- You have to have a share, right, and you have to have a share already, and so the only way to -- Then you say the only way you can get allocation is by owning a share, and so the difference between allocation and -- I know what allocation is, but somewhere there's some mixture here that I'm not getting, and then, if you did Alternative 4, you don't have to have a share, which the only way you could get a share is if you have a share, and so it's basically you could never enter the fishery, unless you do something, and is that where we're at?

MR. BONURA: That is not -- That isn't totally correct.

MR. LORENZ: Christina wants to make a statement.

MS. WIEGAND: Let me try to clarify it. The issue with the way things currently are is that the wreckfish permit is in place. In order to harvest wreckfish, you have to have the wreckfish permit. A prerequisite of getting that permit is owning shares, and so you cannot get that permit to harvest unless you own shares.

Alternative 4 removes that wreckfish permit, and so there's no more wreckfish permit. Now all you need to -- Like say I have an SG 1 permit, and I don't own any shares, but Bob has an SG 1 permit and owns shares. If Bob is willing to lease me allocation, or shares, he can do that, because I am able to get an account within the online system, because I have that SG 1 permit, and so that

sort of wreckfish requirement, where like I can't get that permit, because I don't have shares, no longer exists under Alternative 4.

MR. HULL: So that tells me that a wreckfish permit -- It's a closed fishery, and it's limited access, and there is no availability of those, right, and so, basically, that's the stopping point, and, if you get rid of that, then you can have new entrants, and is that correct?

MS. WIEGAND: Under Alternative 3, I would say participation is much more limited, because, in order to harvest, you have to be a shareholder, whereas, under Alternative 4, to harvest, you don't have to be a shareholder, but you just have to be sort of working with someone who has shares who is willing to lease you shares or allocation, but, if you didn't want to be in that sort of business arrangement, and you wanted to purchase shares, you would still need to purchase shares from a current shareholder, to have those be your personal shares.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Jimmy, noodle on that for a few minutes, and I'm going to recognize Harry to speak.

MR. MORALES: After listening to that, I take it that 4 facilitates leasing, and pretty much that's it, okay, and it just facilitates -- Yes, it is.

MR. LORENZ: Christina signaled that she agrees with Harry that Alternative 4 facilitates leasing.

MR. MORALES: It just declutters it, and anybody that wants to lease -- If I've got shares, and I'm willing to lease them out, guys, here you go.

MS. WIEGAND: You have to have the SG 1 permit, and so you have to have the snapper grouper unlimited permit.

MR. MORALES: If I'm SG 1, and I have the wreckfish shares, I no longer need the permit, with 4, and I can freely lease out to any other SG 1, and that's my business model. I own the shares, and I lease them out, and I think that gets to Andrew's point, down there, or is there going to be - - Or was it you, that there's going to be -- Is there going to be a limit, and do we need to get shareholders fishing again, or at least move it over to a younger crowd that's going to fish, and that's what you're getting at.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. Andy Fish, did you have your hand up to speak? Then Andrew Mahoney.

MR. FISH: Right now, Alternative 3 is the way it is right now, right, and so, I mean, really, nothing is changing, and the preferred is just the now, and that's the confusion, I think, with some people, and that's the way it is right now, Number 3, and the way it's always been.

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, for the -- It essentially removes the wreckfish permit, while still maintaining that, in order to harvest, you have to be a shareholder, and so it --

MR. FISH: Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: It does sort of maintain the status quo, but without the permit.

MR. FISH: Okay. I'm just clarifying.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Would someone please explain to me why we're allowing somebody that's not contributing to the fishery to lease out their shares?

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Go ahead, Paul.

MR. NELSON: Because they were told, when this went down, many, many years ago, that they were able to hold these shares for the rest of their lives. That's what they were told when they sold this bill of goods to them. I was here when it all happened. They were told that they could keep them from now on, and they could lease them, and they could hold them, and they could move them, and they had two-million pounds, to start out with, and it got reduced down to 287,000 pounds, and they spent \$100,000 of their own money to do science to get more quota, and so there's a lot of real cash invested in it.

These individual owners that have these coupons have a lot of their individual cash invested in this fishing industry, by getting their own science, to prove that there's more fish out there than what there was back then, because they had two-million pounds to start out with, and it was distributed out amongst the landings that they had, and so, if you had 200,000 pounds of landings in a year, that percentage of quota went to you, and then you had the option to move them around to individual wreckfish fishermen, if you wanted to, or you could keep them on your own.

Some individuals have died, and went away, and they had quotas, or landings, or coupons, that was left to their family, and they distribute them out amongst the individuals that still have boats that are capable of doing it, and still have captains that are capable of doing it, and so that's why the landings aren't like they used to be, is because the effort is not there, like it used to be. Like, last year, none of the boats in Florida, where I fish, even fished for them, because of the hurricanes, because of boat breakdowns, because of captains dying.

It was a combination of everything, and so that's why they have control of the fishery, is because that's what they were told, because they were the first IFQ people to be told they have to have IFQs, and so they were told that this is you all's fishery, and you all manage it the way you want to manage it. They had two-million pounds, and they had several hundred thousand pounds taken away from them, and they went and sued them, got a lawyer and went and sued them, and got their own science, and they got the quota back up a little bit, to where they can make a little bit of money at it, and so that's why they have control of their fishery.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Paul Nelson. That's showing that's an asset, and a lot of people are going to look at it like that's a retirement, too. Christina, did you have something to state, at least on what Paul mentioned? Andrew, did you want to speak? Go ahead, Andy.

MR. MAHONEY: Sure. Thank you. I guess I appreciate them funding the science, but, as the laws read, permits can be taken from them at any time, and, if they're not harvesting, utilizing, the shares that they have now, then it's only hurting the next generation of fishermen, which is essentially what's going to be there when they're all gone.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Andrew. I have lost my train of thought for a very small moment here, and we have a motion from Vincent. Did somebody second that?

MR. HULL: I will second it.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy seconded it. Okay, and so I just made that clear for the record, and so it was already there. We have proceeded with discussion, and we're still having discussion. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, to that point, and where Paul brought up that, you know, there's a very small number of guys that participate in this fishery, because they controlled it from the beginning, and I think they have their own -- Not an AP, but they get together on their own and decide how they want to manage their fishery, because it's basically their fishery, and, I mean, I have to kind of -- I mean, I get Andrew's point, where we need new blood, and probably some of those guys -- I don't know what their discussions have been, and so I just have to defer, because it's not my fishery, and I'm never going to participate in it, because it's a very difficult, long-range fishery to participate in. I would have to leave it up to them, and I would probably abstain from voting on this, supporting it, and I'm just letting you know where I'm at.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew, you have another statement?

MR. MAHONEY: Just a question to Paul, I believe, and did they ever benefit from putting forth the money to get the research done?

MR. NELSON: Yes, and I think they added like over a hundred thousand pounds to their quota every year.

MR. MAHONEY: Gotcha. Okay, and so they got what they wanted out of paying for the research. I think that door is closed now, and, even though they put up the money at the time, that was their choice, to block other people from entering and having to depend upon a third party to provide to their community, and it's going to have a bad long-term effect. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: James, did you wish to weigh-in?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so, I mean, taking all of this into consideration, and, again, like Jimmy, this isn't my fishery, and this isn't something I'm going to participate in, but allowing participation at the exact same level is not going to change anything that's happening with the fish and the way the allocations are, and the shares will still be distributed based on their ACL.

Having one more avenue open for fishermen that have the qualifications to obtain part of that allocation I don't think is a bad thing, inherently, and, furthermore, and thank you, Paul, for your additions, and I might elect, in this case, to take away some of my statements that I said about the number of times they can be leased, because, generationally, these folks depended on the decisions that they made, and, directly out of pocket, made some expenditures to protect that, and so, with that, you know, I could support this recommendation, but, again, it's one of those things that I'm never going to have any participation in, and I would like to defer to the people who own the shares to call the shots on this and not really -- Not have so much of an effect from this panel or the council. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Yes, Paul. Go ahead.

MR. NELSON: Just so you know, the captains that died and lost their shares, or they gave them to their families, the other wreckfish buyers did buy those shares from them, and so they definitely have some generational stuff, and they took care of the families of the owners of the shares that died, and they passed them on down to other fishermen.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul. Go ahead, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: The current shareholders may fully support a way to easier lease their shares, and that's what I say, and, if that's what they want to do, then let them tell you that's what they want to do, and I don't know if this Alternative 4 came from them or if it came from staff, and I don't know, but they're the ones, in my opinion, that need to decide what they want to do, because this is the original IFQ for the whole -- All of it, and so they were promised what they were promised, and it is what it is.

MR. LORENZ: I will recognize Christina, and then we're going to have a guest commentator.

MS. WIEGAND: We did have a shareholders meeting, earlier this summer, and I will say that Preferred Alternative 4 was not an alternative that was in the amendment or being discussed when we met with the shareholders. The shareholders indicated to us that what they would like is to maintain the status quo.

They were comfortable with where things were, and they wanted the electronic system to simply reflect the current situation, and then Alternative 4 was a proposal that was made at the council, after the shareholders met, because there was some concern that Alternative 3 might prohibit some of the leasing of allocation that was currently going on, because of that sort of agent/employee/contractor language, and so Alternative 4 was added, but I believe, Bob, we have one of the wreckfish shareholders online who might be willing to speak to that, perhaps a bit more eloquently, than myself.

MR. LORENZ: Yes. Being that we have a shareholder listening in, I think this is a great opportunity for us to hear from one of the shareholders, and so the shareholder is Mike Freeman, and, Mike, if you're there online, and you can speak to us, address us with your thoughts on this. Thank you.

MR. M. FREEMAN: Thank you. A couple of things that I would like to address, because I think there's potentially some confusion. Initially, I believe the -- This all stems from the Alternative 3 versus 4, as far as the having to own shares versus not having to own shares, in order to be able to lease, and I can clarify that a little bit.

The way the system is currently structured, you have to be a shareholder in order to get the wreckfish permit, and, without the wreckfish permit, you can't participate in the fishery, and it's basically a holdover from when this was all implemented, years and years back. The problem that we ran into is, in order to transfer to an online system, there really is no support to bind a shareholder account to more than one requirement, and, essentially, it would either have to be bound to a wreckfish permit or bound to a snapper grouper permit.

We had some discussion, at the wreckfish shareholders meeting, as to whether to drop the wreckfish permit requirement or not, and I don't believe that any of the shareholders really had any strong opinions on that one way or another, but, essentially, if Alternative 4 were to go through at the council, you would be able to lease shares, from an existing wreckfish shareholder, without having to own shares yourself, which would make it a little bit easier to participate in the fishery.

However, I think there is a little bit of confusion as to it being a closed fishery, and that's not really the case, nor has it really ever been. Just in the last two or three years, I believe we've had two or three new --

MR. LORENZ: We lost you, Mike. Two or three new -- Then you died.

MR. M. FREEMAN: Can you hear me now?

MR. LORENZ: You're back.

MR. M. FREEMAN: Give me one second. I'm having some connectivity issues. It should be good now, but I believe we've had two or three new entrants, in just the last couple of years, that purchased some shares from some guys in southern Florida, and so it's not necessarily a closed fishery by any means, and Alternative 4 likely would make it a little bit easier for many people to get into it, without having to purchase shares directly, and I don't believe that any of the wreckfish shareholders would have any opposition to that, beyond potentially being a little bit less of a -- Not necessarily less of an accountability measure, since we would be bound to the SG 1 anyway, but I believe there was some concern, from one of the Carolina fishermen, that, essentially, if somebody had less to lose -- They were concerned that they may fish beyond their allocation, but, outside of that, I don't really believe there was any true opposition to it.

Then, as far as the quota, and I believe that Paul spoke to it a little bit, back in, I believe, sometime in the late 1990s, we went from roughly a two-million-pound allocation, and that was based on catch history, to, I believe, a-hundred-and-ninety-some-odd-thousand pounds, and it was one of the only scientific assessments put out without any actual science done. In absence of actual landings to build a model off of, they essentially took the last five or six years of the fishery, averaged the catch, and decided that was going to be the new allocation, which, unfortunately, back then, everyone transferred over to the shark fishery, due to it being more profitable, and so we ended up having, instead of forty or fifty boats fishing, only a handful that landed a handful of fish, and, unfortunately, we took a 92 percent cut to the quota.

That's when it started to get consolidated a little bit, just because there really wasn't enough to even be able to fish more than one or two trips a year, and that is when we really saw that shrinking, from I think forty boats to twenty boats to ten boats, and I believe there's about eight or nine boats still active now in it.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you very much, Mike. Thanks for calling in and giving us the information.

MR. M. FREEMAN: I will say, at least from our perspective, that we have no real opposition to making the fishery more easily accessible, and we're still in a scenario where, unfortunately, there



is not enough quota to be able to field the boats that there are year-round, barring some breakdowns that some people have had, and some terribly inclement weather, here in the last about two years, but, if anybody is looking to get into it, I'm sure all of the shareholders would be very willing to see how that would -- I know of one boat in St. Augustine and one boat in Georgia, or two boats in Georgia, that have gotten into it in just the last couple of years.

MR. LORENZ: We're going to go back to any AP discussion, because we do have this motion on the table. Jimmy, did you have something to say?

MR. HULL: That's who I need to hear from.

MR. LORENZ: Great. That was good, and it was nice that Mike called in. Vincent.

MR. BONURA: I just wanted to add that that I think, in my opinion, Alternative 4 just makes it, you know, easier for guys to get in, new entrants, you know, and the other one, Alternative 3, is just -- You know, it holds it to the five people that own shares, and so I would say that Alternative 4, for the future of the fishery, is our only option, really.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Vincent. Let's take this to a vote, since the motion is on, and it has been seconded. Is there anybody else with a comment, before I go to that? What I'm going to do is -- This is a little more complex and out of the wheelhouse for some of us, and so, this one, I want to do hands, and I'm going to record them, because I will ask Mike that we actually record what the actual vote is among all of us. To start, Alternative 4 -- It's a little bit of trouble for me to read that, and, Christina, would you read Alternative 4?

MS. WIEGAND: **All right, and so the current motion on the board is to recommend the council select Alternative 4 as preferred. Alternative 4 is, to commercially harvest or sell wreckfish, a commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper unlimited must have been issued to the vessel, and the permit must be onboard.**

MR. LORENZ: All right. The motion has been read. **Anyone in favor of this motion, raise your hand, so I get my count, twelve. Fourteen with Richie and Andy, and so fourteen yea. Who is nay? Who is not for this motion? No one? Zero. Okay. Anyone abstaining? Three abstentions. Okay. Thank you. The motion passes.** Christina, back to you.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so we'll continue on to the last action that I wanted to cover with you all today, and that's modifying offloading site and time requirements for wreckfish. Currently, wreckfish must be offloaded between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., only at the fixed facility of a dealer with a GSAD permit, or the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic dealer permit.

In talking with shareholders, they have expressed some frustration over these offloading time requirements. Specifically, they don't often run into law enforcement when offloading, and they find these offloading times to be sort of excessively burdensome. What can sometimes happen is they will, you know, get into dock just late enough that they can't offload, and so they have to sit and wait before they can offload, which then sort of reduces their efficiency to be able to quickly turn around and get back out.

Right now, there are a couple of different alternatives. Here, we've got Alternative 2, which would expand those offloading hours to 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Alternative 3 would expand it to 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and then Alternative 4 would remove the offloading hour requirement entirely, and, just so you can sort of see that, here's the difference in the number of hours available for offloading under each alternative.

The council has had quite a bit of discussion about this, trying to sort of balance the desire to make sure that shareholders can operate as efficiently as possible, while still considering both enforcement needs and officer safety, and so one of the things they have directed staff to look at is an action that would maybe implement a hail-in our hail-out requirement in this fishery, and that's not something they've have the chance to discuss yet, and that's something that staff will be bringing them more information on in June.

MR. LORENZ: All right. We have a member of the council, Kerry Marhefka, that wants to address us and give us a little more information. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thank you for indulging me, and this is sort a pet peeve of mine, this whole entire concept of offloading hours, and I don't know what happens at you all's individual offloading facilities, but, at ours, if you have only a small window to unload, you could be stuck for a day or two, and we're very tide dependent, and we're very dependent on all kinds of other boats unloading, and it's just this -- We don't operate nine-to-five, by any stretch of the imagination, or sundown to sunset, and, when this came up at the council meeting, I think I was one of the ones who spoke passionately against sort of getting rid of any of these, and there was some question from NMFS, as far as like, you know, someone made a comment of, well, does anyone really need to unload at midnight, and I can tell you, in our case, yes, often. Not midnight, but 2:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m., 4:00 a.m., and so what I would like to hear from you all -- Maybe that's a unique perspective, and maybe that's just us, and, if that's the case, then I will drop it, but this is a good opportunity, I think, in general, to talk about this, not just relating to wreckfish, but, you know, the industry as a whole.

I think we all know that we're losing infrastructure, and we're losing everything, and so, to the extent that you all have experience with unloading at different hours, and operating at different hours, it would be really helpful if you would discuss that here, and that could come up -- I could bring that back to NMFS, and to the council, and say, sorry, but we're never going to have an eight-to-five industry, or at least we're not, where we're operating, and so I would love to hear some discussion about that. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Kerry, just for full understanding, this is with respect to the hail-in and hail-out, or are you saying there is going to be a time element with the -- I got a little mixed up, and does anybody else -- I am thinking that we're discussing whether there should be a hail-in or hail-out, but you're saying there may be a time piece.

MS. MARHEFKA: There already is a time. Right now, technically, to unload wreckfish, and, to be fair, it might even be to unload snapper grouper, but I haven't looked that up, but, to unload wreckfish, it is currently -- What's our current, 8:00 to -- It's 8:00 to 5:00, is the current rule, and you can only unload wreckfish from 8:00 to 5:00.

In the effort to expand that, one of the things that has come forward -- Because what we hear is, you know, we need law enforcement to have a window to be able to get there, and they're not comfortable going at night, or they're not comfortable going early in the morning, all of these things, or they need time to prepare to get someone there, and one of the things that has been floated as an alternative to having specific hours is hailing-in and hailing-out, so that they know when they need to be down to meet your boat.

Now, granted, I will tell you that we heard, from a lot of the wreckfish panel members, that they're not being met by law enforcement anyway, at the moment, and it's just the option to be met, is kind of the way it's working, and so, you know, in a perfect world, to me, myself only, and I'm not speaking on behalf of the council, fishing can no longer operate in a small window of hours.

If National Marine Fisheries Service, or the Law Enforcement AP, or other council members, feel strongly that there needs to be this availability for law enforcement to be notified, so they can meet the boat when it's unloading, is it more preferable then to have a hail-in and hail-out, versus a set number of hours, and does that make sense?

MR. LORENZ: Gotcha. Gotcha. Yes, I do. That's good. All right, AP. Is there discussion? Based on what Kerry has told us, the status quo is an 8:00 to 5:00 rule, and it looked like the council discussed to get a little more freedom, with an option for a hail-in and a hail-out, which would allow offloading at different times, and so, with that, I will open discussion, and I will start with Andrew Mahoney. Thank you.

MR. MAHONEY: I don't really like the timeframe, and I think they probably have enough to worry about, but the hail-in and hail-out I like, because of the relationship it may build with law enforcement and reduce the want to be enemies so much. Does that help?

MR. LORENZ: It's your comment, Andy, and it counts. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would agree with Kerry 100 percent on that, and I can't imagine that restriction, and I've got multiple boats coming and out. In the daytime, I've got net boats coming in and out, and, I mean, I've got to do it when I can do it, and I've got limited space, and so it's important to get them unloaded when they come in, and, also, if they want to do a turnaround trip, that does hinder that, and so I can't imagine that.

As far as law enforcement, I mean, I'm assuming it's state, and I've never seen a federal guy, but the state guys are out there all night long, checking on the flounder, although we've got a very short season now, but they're out there at night. I mean, if they wanted to come and check, they can come and check, and so I think that's something that -- I would highly recommend doing away with that, and that's just too restrictive.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Anyone else want to comment, anyone else? All right. Jack.

MR. COX: I am prepared to make a motion.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Jack. You're prepared, and may I just ask if anybody else has a quick comment? I'm just trying to speed us up. All right, Jack. Go ahead and make your motion.

MR. COX: Okay. **The motion would read to remove the 8:00 to 5:00 offloading requirements for wreckfish fishermen, to be consistent with other snapper grouper species offloading requirements.**

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Jack's motion, which Christina has said is Alternative 4, and I'm going to read the motion. **Remove the 8:00 to 5:00 offloading time requirements for wreckfish, in order to be consistent with the other snapper grouper species, and it's Alternative 4.** Do I have a second? David Moss has seconded. With that, the next step is discussion, and we've had some, and does anybody wish to discuss? Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: Was the intent not to have to call the law enforcement of your motion, or -- To be consistent with the grouper snapper, and we don't have to do that now, and I was just --

MR. COX: Right. I mean, if you're not going to require other fishermen to do the same thing, why hold them to do something different? That's the only reason that --

MR. FISH: So Alternative 4 would not be the same.

MR. COX: **Yes, and, in that motion, it needs to be wreckfish fishermen.** Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Christina is going to make a clarification for us on this motion and the alternative.

MS. WIEGAND: Just as a note, there is this other language, within the alternative, that talks about sort of the site requirement, and it's simply that, if you're not going to be offloading at the fixed facility of a dealer who has one of those dealer permits, you would need to just give law enforcement a call, twenty-four hours before offloading, and so that's not a hail-in and hail-out requirement, and that's simply, if you're not going to be offloading at the fixed facility of a dealer, you need to let law enforcement know, but, assuming that you were going to be offloading there, there is no hail-in requirement.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Christina. Andrew Mahoney has a comment.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. What are the intentions of law enforcement, when they're having them hail-in or hail-out or set up a timeframe? Are their intentions to catch them doing something illegal?

MS. WIEGAND: I wouldn't necessarily say to catch them doing something illegal, but it's simply a way to monitor and enforce the fishery, and so this was -- To give some rationale for why these offloading hours originally existed, this was put into place back in 1991, I believe, and it was the assumption that it would sort of prevent -- The reasonable probability of there being a dockside inspection would prevent quota from being exceeded, and that was the original rationale for these offloading hours. As Paul has detailed, back in 1991, it was a significantly bigger fishery than it is right now, and there were a lot more vessels operating, and the thought was the wreckfish vessels are typically large enough that they have sort of the hold and ice capacity to be able to wait for those offloading time requirements, and so that was the rationale for those hours, at the time.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Christina. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I think it's very similar in the Gulf, with their catch shares, is they have to notify their landing time, within six hours, and they cannot come in early. They have to be there at that time, because of the -- To be accountable, so that you can't basically hide fish from your quota that, in some cases, you're paying \$4.50 a pound for it. It keeps the honest honest, I guess.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andy. We have a comment from Jack.

MR. COX: Are they still required to carry VMS in that fishery? No?

MS. WIEGAND: Not to my knowledge, though I will admit to -- I am not super familiar with the Gulf ITQ programs and how sort of their different ITQ programs different from what we have here. I will say that they do have offloading hour requirements in the Gulf fishery, and theirs are 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MR. COX: I mean, with losing infrastructure on the coast, it's a no-brainer.

MS. WIEGAND: Myra is nodding at me that they do need VMS in the Gulf, and I believe they have a hail-in and hail-out requirement as well.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I mean, I agree with Jack. They should not have this time constraint, to unload at these docks, for this fishery. The other issues, the hail-in, that's a whole other different discussion, but, as far as the time restrictions, I would support this as that, and I don't believe -- In this fishery in the Atlantic, I don't think they ever had to have VMS. I don't think they ever did, but I would definitely support the motion. I'm just letting you know that.

MR. LORENZ: Any other comments, and we'll bring this to a vote? Vincent.

MR. BONURA: I was just going to add that one of the dealers just messaged me and said, because of this issue as well, they've had missing trucks, or they missed a truck, and they couldn't pack-out the fish, all kinds of issues with that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Vincent. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Can you imagine riding for twenty-four hours home, from where you've been fishing, 200 miles away from home, and then you've got to go sit there and wait and try to catch the tide, at her dock? That's ridiculous.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: Well, they could just start leasing them out, and then they don't have to worry about it anymore.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you. Let's bring this to a vote, and so this is a nice, clean motion that Jack has put forth, and I believe I'm correct in saying that this is not mentioning a hail-in our hail-out requirement. **The motion is to remove the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. offloading time requirements for wreckfish fishermen, to be consistent with other snapper grouper species.**

Am I correct? Okay. I think this one is a little simpler. **Those who are not in favor of this motion, who want to be retaining that window of a requirement for reporting? Who is with the status quo?** That means you're voting down this motion, Andrew. Okay. **Sorry, and I may have made that confusing, and so there is no one voting against this motion. Am I correct, and do we have anybody abstaining from this motion? I see no hands abstaining, and so the conclusion is that this motion is approved unanimously.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Well, thank you, guys, for that input, and that's all I had for Amendment 48 and wreckfish. Again, there is sort of two other actions in here, one about the commercial fishing year and one about cost recovery, and those are mostly administrative actions that would primarily affect shareholders, who would need to pay that cost recovery fee, but, should you be looking at this document later, and have any questions, please feel free to come talk to me, and I'm happy to provide any detail.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Christina. Now we're going to move to Item 7 on our agenda, which is the Snapper Grouper Management Evaluation Input, and we'll do that when we come back, and so let's take a ten-minute break, while everybody gets organized for this. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: We're on Agenda Item 7, which is the Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Input, and I have here Dr. Chip Collier, who will introduce our presenter today. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you, Bob. Thanks again to the advisory panel for allowing us to take some time. We really like the feedback that we're getting from this group, and we're going to be coming back to you guys a few more times, and so don't get bored with the presentation, and this is really to make sure we're taking a slow and deliberative process, that we're getting input from the stakeholders, as we develop the management strategy evaluation.

Today, we have Adrian Hordyk, and he presented to you guys at the last meeting, and he's going to present to you on some updates to the management strategy evaluation that he's been working on, but we also have Kai Lorenzen, and he's our -- To help guide me along in the process, and he's our facilitator, and he's also a member of the SSC, and so, if you have additional questions, and you can't get with me or Adrian, Kai is also an excellent source, and he knows these models, backwards and forwards, and so he can talk to you about them, and really get into the details, if, like I said, you can't get with Adrian or I. I will leave this off to Adrian, and he's going to be talking to you about the updates.

DR. HORDYK: Great. Thanks, Chip. Thanks, everyone, for having me back here again, and it's good to be here. Like Chip said, I'm going to give you an update on the management strategy evaluation project that we're busy working on, and then I'm going to start off with a quick recap of management strategy evaluation, MSE, and some of you may be very familiar with this, but I just want to make sure that everyone is back on a level playing field, in terms of the terminology and things we're going to be using, and then I want to talk about the management options and performance metrics that we've developed, that we've been developing since our last meeting, based on the feedback from the meeting you had in October and some work we've done in between then and now, and then, lastly, I want to talk about the operating model development, and this will be -- A couple of areas we'll be really quite keen to get some information, some feedback, from

this group on decisions that we need to make, in terms of developing the operating model, and so I will start with a quick recap of the MSE process.

This is a schematic of a fishery management system, and up at the top there is the fishing activities that go on on the water, and, also, underneath the water is actually the fish population doing their thing, and data gets collected from that fishery, in various ways, and then, at the bottom -- The picture at the bottom there is the data being analyzed and processed and converted, one way or another, into management regulations, which then get implemented -- There's compliance, and they're implemented back into the fishery, which impacts the fishery in the future, and the cycle continues.

In management strategy evaluation, we're just reproducing this system in a virtual fisheries system, in a computer model, and so we've replaced the activities that go on on the water, the fishing activity and the fish populations, in an operating model, and I will talk a lot more about that later. The data collection process, we call that an observation model, and that's where we're trying to replicate the process of collecting data from that fishery.

The data analysis, and converting that data into a management regulation, is called a management procedure. In the context of MSE, the management procedure is the management strategy that we're evaluating. Data is going in, and it's being analyzed one way or another, and some recommendation is being made by the management procedure, to keep regulations the same, change them this way or that way, the set of rules that do that, and then there's an implementation model that tells the model about the compliance of that regulation back into the fishery. We're not going to talk too much about that one right now.

The idea is to just reproduce that fishery management system in a computer model and then use that model to conduct experiments, to play around with different operating models, and different management procedures, to try and answer some questions.

In a nutshell, a management strategy evaluation, MSE, is a framework for a reproducible, transparent, and defensible decision-making for a system with high uncertainty. We're doing these things -- We need to do these things with less uncertainty in the system, and we don't know the answers to any of these questions unless we do some sort of experiment, and, by reproducible, we mean that the analysis can be repeated by somebody else, and they will get the same result. Anyone who runs this analysis with the same assumptions, the same parameters, you'll get the same result. They're reproducible.

It's transparent, and that means we document all the steps in the decision-making process, and so we're not claiming that anything is necessarily correct, but at least we've documented the decisions that we're making, so that others can follow this process and understand why decisions are being made and what justifications there were for those decisions, and related to that is defensible, and that means that these decisions are based on data, and, where they're not, it's with clearly-explained rationale, and, where they're not based on data, where they're based on some sort of assumption, we've got rationale, explanations, for why we made these decisions, and so that's what a management strategy evaluation is.

There's four questions, really, that an MSE is focused on, and what do we know, what do we want, what can we do, and what should we do, what can we do and the option of what should we do,

what's the right decision to make, and so I'm going to go through those questions in the context of a snapper grouper MSE that we're working on.

The question of what do we know, what's our understanding of the fisheries system, is what we are showing in the operating model, and the operating model is a mathematical model, and it's a plausible description of a fisheries system, and we talked quite a lot about this at the meeting in October, last October, but, essentially, it's a description of the biology of the exploited species, the historical pattern of exploitation, and other things that might be of interest for the MSE, or a description of the system, and so a spatial distribution of the fishing stock and the fleets, the current stock status, and that's information estimated in a stock assessment, and so, in many ways, an operating model is quite similar to a stock assessment, in terms of what's inside of it. It's a description, a prediction, for what's going on in the fishery.

One of the differences in an MSE is that we're trying to capture system uncertainties. A stock assessment tries to say this is the best understanding of a fisheries system. In an MSE, we're not trying to say this is the only -- That this is the true picture, and we're trying to map out the uncertainties, and so, rather than having one stock assessment model that everyone agrees is the best model, in an MSE context, we can have many operating models, and each one of those is a plausible description. There might be differences of opinion, different data sources, and each of these is a hypothesis about what's going on in the fishery, and so we could have many different operating models, each one of them representing a different hypothesis of what's going on, and we try to include that uncertainty in the MSE process.

The second question of what do we want, and we capture that in a thing called performance metrics, and performance metrics are quantitative measures of management outcomes, and so these are management objectives that we can convert to something that we can measure in the MSE, and we'll be talking more about these in a second, the ones that we've developed so far for the snapper grouper MSE.

These get at things like how do we define good management outcomes, or how do we define bad management outcomes, and what does the law require, in terms of management performance, and these things may differ amongst different stakeholders, and the MSE is used to try and evaluate tradeoffs amongst the management options against those different measures of performance, and so management options, like I mentioned before, are just sets of rules for converting data to a management decision, and, in the context of an MSE, these management options, management procedures, are objective and reproducible, just like the whole MSE process, and what means is it's a set of codified rules, and it's not a decision that gets made around a table like this, but it's a rule that says this data gets processed in this way, and, if the data looks like this, this is the rule that's going to be made.

If it looks like this, this is going to be a different decision. There's lots of different things that can go into them, and we'll talk about that in a minute, but the main thing is there's a set of codified, written-out rules that anyone can follow. If you put the same data in the top of it, you're always going to get the same advice at the bottom. It doesn't depend on maybe like the time of day or something at meetings, where decisions that get made at meetings can depend on lots of things, like how hungry people are, or how keen they are to get out of there.



This is what options exist for management, what data can be used for management advice, what additional data can be collected, or how can data be improved, and this is a list of things that we can do, and what are all the different options that could be considered.

Once we have these three pieces of information, what we know about the system, what we want, in terms of management performance, and what we can do, we put these things together into the MSE framework, and, really, that's just a -- It's a computer model, based on conventional fisheries models, and it's really just a calculator. You put these numbers in the top, and it's going to do the number crunching for you, and the results come out. The results are the answer to what should we do, in the sense of it tells you what management option is most likely to achieve those management outcomes that you specify, given the uncertainty, given your description of the system.

It can tell you what is the most important data to collect to generate management advice, and it might tell you that, if you improve certain data streams, you might get better management outcomes, and it can also tell you what are the most important system uncertainties that determine management performance, and so we spoke before that we can have uncertainties in lots of different operating models, and one of the results of an MSE is that it can tell you which of those uncertainties are really important to management outcomes and which ones aren't important, and, if an uncertainty in the system, a description of your understanding of the system, doesn't impact the decision that you make, in terms of management, then it's not an important uncertainty for management. It might be important for other things, or for scientific knowledge, but, in terms of management, we can try to find the things that matter most, to try to determine our management performance and focus on, for management purposes at least, prioritizing those things for further research.

That was my lightning tour of our MSE, and I happy to spend more time talking about any of those components in more detail, if there's questions, but I didn't want to spend too long on it now, because we have spoke of that in the past.

I want to go actually into the management options that we're considering so far, and these are really just sort of a short list of the types of approaches that we intend to test in this MSE. As you remember, we're focusing, for now, on the red snapper and the gag grouper, just those two species, and the management options can be divided into sort of two groups. One of the static controls, and they are management regulations, management rules, that don't change over time, and they're not related to data, and so they could be a seasonal closure, or bag limits, size limits, total allowable catch, and they could be about regional management, and these things can be set by region as well, and so these are regulations that can get set and remain unchanged over time.

You can also have sort of a dynamic management, dynamic controls, and that's where these regulations, any of those regulations, or any combination of those, can be linked to a data stream, or some sort of data streams, multiple data streams, such as a size frequency of a catch or some transient catch rate or indices of a survey, and you can have like an index of abundance, and you may have a rule, for example, that says -- That follows an index of abundance, and so, if the index is going up, then the regulations can be relaxed, perhaps, one way or another. If the index is going down, or it's starting to head toward some limit, then the restrictions need to be -- The regulations need to be restricted more, one way or another, and so these things would change in response to the data, and so these are dynamic controls.

We can test both of them, and we intend to test both of them, in the MSE, but what is -- It depends on the context of the fishery and what is the most appropriate type of management control to use, and it depends on the fishery, right, and so there are some fisheries where it's really difficult to change regulations over time, but, for example, with the recreational fishery, you might not want to have the size limit constantly changing, and it's difficult, and there is lots of effects from that, whereas other fisheries, that are managed just for commercial fisheries, for example, they're quite used to having a TAC that gets set every year, or every two years, and gets changed by a set of rules.

MSE gets used in a lot of places that are managed that way, just a commercial fishery with a TAC, and they basically go through this process and have some rule at the end, usually based on an index of abundance that just says, from now on, the TAC is going to get set according to this rule, and just adjust it up and down based on some rule. Then everyone can understand it, and it's easy to implement. In a mixed fishery, like this, it can be more complicated to do those sort of dynamic controls, and so they might be more interested in static measures that just -- For example, we can just test different size limits for different species, or for different sectors in the fishery, and, anyway, these are the sorts of options that we've discussed in the past, and, if you have other things that aren't listed here, that you think could be useful, you know, I would like to hear them in the conversation and the discussion later.

The MSE framework is set up, for these two species, to have three sectors, commercial, recreational headboats, and general recreational, and so there's an option of doing any of these management controls by those sectors, and so, again, this is a decision for -- This is where we're looking for input from this group on different options you might want to have there, different controls maybe for the commercial fishery, and maybe the recreational fishery will have different regulations, different size limits, or whatever, but these are the options we've got, and we can set those management regulations by each of those fleet types.

In terms of performance metrics, what do we want? Really, again, it depends on the fishery, the fishery contents, what those are, and, in general, there is sort of two categories. You have biological performance metrics, related to the sustainability of the stock, and then you have social and economic performance metrics, and so that's catch, stability of catches, and things like that. I've got a list here of the performance metrics that we've developed so far, based, like I said, on feedback that we've had in the last few months, but, again, this would be an area where we would welcome input from the group on things that I'm missing here or things that you think should be changed.

In terms of biological performance metrics, there's a management objective to avoid the stock being in an overfished state, and so that's an objective, and so a quantitative metric for that, that we can measure in the MSE, is a probability that the spawning stock biomass is greater than the minimum stock size threshold, and so that's something that we can measure in the MSE, and we start projecting the population forward, under different sets of rules, different scenarios with different management rules, and we can calculate, in any given year, or any given point in time, what the probability is that the spawning biomass would be above, or below, that reference point, and, in this case, it's been defined as 0.75 of SSB MSY.

Another management objective is to avoid overfishing the stock, and so we do something similar. We convert this into a quantitative metric, and we calculate the probability that  $F$ , the fishing

mortality, is less than the limit, the threshold, for that maximum fishing mortality threshold, which has been defined, at least in the assessment documents, as  $F_{30}$  percent. The fishing mortality relates to 30 percent SPR for red snapper and for the gag FMSY, and so we can calculate the probability that any type of management option will result in overfishing the stock, at any point in time.

Then the third management option, or, sorry, but the third management objective that I've got listed here is -- It relates to rebuilding, and so we can calculate, if the stock is overfished, if it's in the overfished state, below the minimum stock size threshold, what is the probability that it will rebuild by some point in time, and, again, these are the rebuilding targets that I got from the stock assessment documents, 2044 for red snapper and 2040 for gag, and so we can calculate, under any given management strategy, what the probability is that the stock will rebuild by that time. These sorts of things are probably fairly familiar to you from stock assessment processes.

For recreational and commercial objectives, from the socioeconomic side, the information we got was from this AP meeting we had last October, and we had a meeting with the council in March, last month, and then there's some documents here that have been -- These documents had information from the public and the recreational fishers on sort of what their objectives were, and so we used those documents listed here to try to summarize what the recreational and commercial objectives are, but, like I said, this is certainly an area where we welcome your input.

For the recreational side, one of the objectives that was listed in those documents was the objective to catch a lot of fish, or at least to keep enough to make the trip worthwhile, and the way it was defined in that document, in the feedback, was enough fish meant one trophy fish to keep, and some to take home, and so we can convert that into a quantitative metric. It's the average catch rate, relative to the current catch rate, for example, and also calculate the probability of catching a trophy-sized fish, and so the information that we would need here is what people consider a trophy-sized fish for these two species, because that wasn't listed in that document, but that would be something -- A piece of information we would need, and what would be considered, or what's the minimum size for something to be considered a trophy-sized fish, and then we can calculate the probability of catching a fish that size, under any given sort of set of circumstances.

The second objective was to maximize fishing opportunity, the opportunity to go fishing where it best suits the angler, and so, as a metric here, we can record and report the season length and the average catch, and the last one was to reduce discards, compared to the kept fish, and so there is several different ways you can report that, and one is just the absolute magnitude of the discards, but, also, maybe a more useful way to think about it, and to report it, is to calculate the ratios of discards to kept fish for the recreational fleets, again under different size limits or whatever, and we can try and use that as a way of measuring, you know, how many fish are kept, relative to how many are returned to the water.

From the commercial side, these are ones that we haven't discussed a lot, and we got some information in the council, and so some more discussion of this in, like I said, this AP meeting, but these are kind of very general objectives and quantitative metrics that I've got listed here. Stability in catch, and that was mentioned a few times, and so the idea of trying to keep the catches, the TAC, the ACLs, to keep the variability in that low, so we can measure the interannual variability in the catch and report that.

Maximizing yield, and so just, again, what the maximum, or the average, catch that you expect to get under a certain management scenario, and, again, the same thing, just to reduce -- It doesn't seem to be as big of an issue in the commercial fishery, but we can report the information there, because it's recorded anyway, for the number of discarded fish relative to the number of kept fish.

The last section is the operating model development, this is where there's a few things that I would really like to get from this group. As a reminder, an operating model is a description of a system, and our initial approach was to try and -- This is what we presented last October, was to use the recent assessments for these two species to generate operating models, essentially import the assessments into the MSE framework, and we ran into a couple of issues doing that, and the main one is that the assessment structure -- The assessments aren't really concerned about this question of different management options, and they're trying to answer the question of what the stock status is now, and so, in the assessments, the fleets were structured into landed and discarded catch.

The discarded catches include catches that were discarded during the closed season and discards due to just size limits or bag limits, and it all gets lumped together, but, for the MSE, we're interested in testing different season lengths, particularly for the red snapper, looking at different lengths of the closure or how long the fishery is open, and, to do that, we needed to structure the fleets differently, and we need to have them structured -- The catches we need to have recorded, or especially the discards, but we need to have the discards separated out for the discards that are taken during the open season, discards due to a size limit or whatever, and the ones that are discarded because they're caught when the fishery is closed, and they're returned to the water.

That means that we need to restructure it, and we can't just do it as they were used in the stock assessments, and we need to recondition the operating models directly from the raw data, and, to do that -- This is what we're working on right now, is getting the fishery-dependent data, the landings and discards, from different fleets, indices of abundance and length and age composition data that we have, as well as any indices of abundance from surveys, especially since the season that we introduced for the red snapper and gag grouper spin those records into on-season and off-season catches and discards, and so that's what we're working on now, and we would like to complete in the next few months, and that will be a conditioned operating model, which will be a different structure than the stock assessment, but essentially the same thing, a description of the fishery based on these data, and that's what we can use to start testing these management decisions.

I have already talked about this, the structure of the fleets, and the next thing is spatial structure. Based on the discussions that we've had, there's some interest in looking at impacts of regional management, and these are the three regions that have been defined: North and South Carolina, Georgia to Cape Canaveral, and then south of Cape Canaveral. That map on the right-hand side is a map of those three regions, and the numbers though is just a calculation of the area, the relative area of that map, and so it's 61 percent in North and South Carolina, about 30 percent in Georgia to Cape Canaveral, and then the last part, Cape Canaveral and Florida, is about 10 percent, in terms of the size.

What we need to get at is the distribution of the stock biomass across those areas, what is proportional to the stock, using each of those areas, and the distribution of fishing effort, the total fishing effort, how that's distributed over those regions, particularly by fleet, if we can, and so, for the stock biomass, we've got some information on that being provided with the SERFS survey data, and so we used that to try and get at calculating the proportion of the spawning biomass that's

in each of those three areas, and we're distributing the biomass in our operating model across these three regions, and so we're working on that, and we're making good progress.

There is one thing that we still need to work on, actually, and I've been talking with Chip about this, is that survey only goes down -- It doesn't go the entire length of the Florida fishing region, fishing area, and so we need to try and -- If we calculate that directly just from this data, we'll underrepresent the amount of biomass that's in the southernmost region, and so there is a possibility of getting some survey data, dive survey data, from southern Florida, and trying to use that, and perhaps we can do it with catch data as well, if we have catch data by region, to try and use that information to try and extend the biomass down to the south tip of Florida, and so that's what we're working on, and at least we've got an idea on distribution of biomass.

Fishing effort is where we would like to get some feedback from this group, and so the question is are landings data available for these three regions, and is fishing effort data available by region, and, if it's not, we need to characterize the distribution of fishing effort across these different areas, preferably by fleet, and it's even better if we could do that over time, to say what fraction of effort in this whole area is in each of these three colored areas on that map.

The Shiny App, and it's called Shiny, the software that runs it, and, if you click this link, it will take you over to it, and, maybe at the end of this, I can go and have a look at that, and just walk you through it, and the idea is that it's a way of being able to map out what the fraction, or the proportion, of fishing effort, relative effort, in each of these areas is over time, or we could do this just through discussion with this group, or some combination of the two. I will just finish this presentation, and then maybe we can jump over and have a look at that, but this is the sort of information that we would like.

The default picture you can see there is it's just -- By default, it's just the map, and the portion of effort is related directly proportional to the size, and so it's going to -- It says 10 percent of the total effort in the most southern region and 60 percent in the most northern region, and that's not the assumption that we're going in with, and that's just the default. It's showing you that right there, and that's what can get modified, but that's probably -- From what I understand, that's not correct, but that's what we would like to update with something that's closer to a representation of what's going on in the fishery. Again, if there's differences of opinion in what this effort distribution looks like, that goes in as an uncertainty in our model, and we can account for that uncertainty.

The second part, if possible, that we would like to get at is adding some additional spatial structure for nearshore, shallower than a hundred foot, and offshore, and so, if we can characterize the fishing effort by depth, that will be even better, and so the second part of that of app -- It's got, for the two species, red snapper and gag grouper, the proportion of the effort that is in the nearshore and offshore waters, defined that way, and, by default, it's just set at 50/50, and so it's assuming that 50 percent of the effort is in the nearshore and 50 percent is in the offshore, but, again, it would be useful, if you've got information on that, to try and update that.

I noticed that, here it's not -- It is by species, but it's not over time, and it's not by area, and so whether it's actually useful, or just a discussion, and it doesn't really matter, but this is the sort of information, in particular, that it would be really useful to get from this group.

Then, lastly, there's a bunch of other uncertainties that we discussed last time that we intend to include in the operating models, uncertainties in recreational data, uncertainties in commercial discards, and there's uncertainties in the life history parameters, and these were dealt with in the assessment, sensitivity tests, recruitment scenarios, and I don't really need to go into these in detail yet, I don't think, because, once we've got what we call a base-case operating model, an operating model that we kind of agree is like a first stab at describing the fishery system, then we can build more versions of that that include other uncertainties, and so we don't need to go into this in too much detail, unless people have things to talk about there.

Just to wrap it up, in conclusion, we have a preliminary set of management options defined, those things that are listed as static and done under controls, and so, at least as a first pass, we can test the performance, and we have preliminary sets of performance metrics, where we're measuring performance for these things.

What we're working on now is operating model conditioning, and so we're working right now on getting -- On formulating all the data and doing the conditioning, operating model conditioning, actually rerunning and fitting the models to that data, and then the part that we just described now is adding that spatial structure to the operating models, and so what we require, what we would really like to get at this meeting, is a definition of the spatial structure of the fishing effort, particularly, and any information you have for the spatial structure of the stock, relative to those three areas that I had on that map, would be useful. We do have some data on that, but certainly anything else you have would be useful. In particular, we would like to get a definition of the fishing effort, the relative effort, in those areas, by fleet and by time, and, if we can, by onshore and offshore as well, but that's sort of secondary to the distribution of effort across those three areas, and that's it for me, and so thank you very much for your attention.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Adrian. Go ahead, James. I will let you go first, and then I had a couple of comments.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob, and so there's a lot here to take in, and, initially, I'm just going to go with my reaction, is this seems to parallel what we do, and the request for the amount of information to plug into this machine is extremely -- It's a large request, and, without some sort of accelerated data collection process, and an outline, as a way to fund that data collection process, how do we get the numbers to plug into the computer?

I am very unclear about that, and I know that you're trying to use data that's already been collected, and, you know, stock assessments for these two species, but, still, this seriously parallels what we do here, and, along with this, I would like some sort of guarantee that it's going to expedite the process of fisheries management that we seem to be stuck in, where we're not moving quickly at all, and I would like a couple of explanations about how that might streamline the process, as it currently is, and how could MSE streamline that process?

DR. HORDYK: First of all, just to the issue of the data request for the setting up the structure, the MSE, I mean, there is -- I know we've requested a lot of information, and a lot of that information we already have, from the assessment, and, right now, we have all that data, and so we don't need anything different, other than -- It's just really the part on the effort distribution that I talked about that would be useful from this group, but that's something that, once you set up the framework, and you have a description of a fisheries system, which, with an assessment, you've pretty much

really got that, the idea then is, once you've done this processing and testing, is you find a rule, a management way of doing business, or setting regulations, that is simpler.

In that case, it's something that, if it's a static control, it doesn't require data at all, and you might find that you can close a certain area, or set a size limit, for certain species, and it does what you need it to do, in which case, if the results show that, then you've got a reason for saying this is the decision we're going to make, and, unless something goes off-track, and there's ways of monitoring that, you don't need to make any -- It's done.

If it's done in the control, if it's a regulation that changes over time, again, the idea is to find a rule that uses some data stream that you have, and it could be say size compositions from the reported size composition data, and so a rule that adjusts, I don't know, the season length, based on that data, and, again, once you've accepted the rule, then, again, it simplifies the process of doing management, because you've agreed on a set of rules, and, from now on, you just collect that data, which is already being collected, plug it into the rule, and it will tell you what say the season length is for the next cycle, or whatever, and so certainly the idea is to try to streamline it, but I acknowledge what you're saying upfront, that there is work involved in setting it up.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Just, along with that, it seems to take eighteen months, at minimum, for, once we've identified something as being a problem in any particular fishery, it takes that kind of time for it to be carried out, and I kind of was looking for a little bit more, to see how we're going to expedite that.

DR. COLLIER: I will get to that, but, first, you know, we do have a lot of information that can be used in this MSE. However, there's a lot of questions with it, right, and we're relying heavily on MRIP, and everybody is skeptical of MRIP, and, as you break it down to finer and finer details, it becomes -- There's a lot more variance in the data, and experts like yourselves -- You guys know the fishery, and you know how the fish behave, much better than we do, and so providing the knowledge that you have can help us inform this model, and it's been shown, comparing what fishermen describe, and how they feel about the stocks, and their perception of the fisheries -- It can be as effective as a stock assessment, and so we want the input from the fishermen.

The second part about that is can we get management to respond more quickly, and, well, if you have better stability, you can respond more quickly, and I will give you an example of that. When we were looking at black sea bass and vermilion snapper, after their last stock assessment, there were very minimal changes in the MSY. Therefore, very little changes need to be done for those stocks, and so, from the end of the stock assessment to the implementation of the new catch levels, it was only, I think, around six months.

However, when we have shocks to the system, like what we're having with gag grouper, with what we're having with snowy grouper, when you're going from a stock that was somewhat stable to a condition that is overfished and overfishing, that requires huge management changes, and so, if we're able to do smaller things more quickly, we're probably better off than doing giant steps, and these stocks to the system, and those take a lot of time.

It takes -- Nobody likes those big changes, and you guys talk about it quite a bit, and the council talks about it quite a bit, and there's a lot of uncertainty, when you're looking at potentially

changing some of the catch regimes by over 50 percent, and that's -- Nobody likes that feeling, and so does that help a little bit, James?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: It does definitely help, and I think it is a nice, new way of thinking. I just know that we struggle with the data that we trust, and the way it's collected, and I do appreciate you pointing that out, and, as a commercial fisherman, it is, and I'm sure most other commercial fishermen can agree with this, is that our input has never had enough of the weight that it merits, and so, I mean, you know, maybe, if this is a way for that to happen, it would be a good thing. I mean, I'm as open-minded as the next person, and, you know, I feel like, if we could especially get a picture of, you know, a potential output from this, and get that in front of us, after we give the information that we have, that would be really interesting to see.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. I want to recognize Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As to your first ask, on the additional spatial structure nearshore, less than a hundred feet offshore and a hundred feet. Now, as far as the commercial sector, we have multiple reporting that happens, both with the states, and like, in Florida, we have a trip ticket, which has area and depth included, and, also, the logbooks, our commercial logbooks, for snapper grouper, and so you can define it down to species, from the commercial data that we already have coming in.

As to area and depth, for individual species, such as, you know, snapper grouper, each species is going to be identifiable separately on those data collection systems, whether they be state and federal, and you can actually link, on the logbook -- Our state SPL report is linked to the logbook, with a number, and so they all match, and everything is verifiable and trustworthy, and it has money associated with it, and this is the invoice, basically, when we unload, you know, and how we get paid out, and so, on the commercial side, you're going to be able to obtain, just from what's already coming in.

On the recreational side, I don't know how you're going to do it, other than from what these folks are going to tell you, and you could -- The few intercepts that they have, and, I mean, that's going to kind of guide you as to, you know, where to look further, maybe, because, you know, if there's no intercepts -- I mean, go back to wreckfish, recreationally, and there's no intercepts, but they will tell you that they've seen them caught, and so, I mean, how do you -- How do you have any weight in that? I mean, there's no empirical -- There's no data collection system for that that you can trust, and so anyway, but, on the commercial side, I think you can get a lot of information, as to different species spatially and the effort.

I mean, just as an example, red snapper, off of northeast Florida, I mean, it's starting in fifty or sixty feet of water, and it will -- But it can -- Most of the effort is going to be out to maybe 120 feet or so, and that doesn't mean there's still not effort beyond that, but that's predominantly the depth range, whereas grouper is going to start deeper, and then another species is going to be at another depth, but, on the commercial side, I think you've got a chance to get some pretty good stuff and have a good measure of weight in it, you know.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy, for the aspect on the commercial. I have Harry Morales, and did you want to state something? Harry is from the recreational side.



MR. MORALES: Thank you. Julia, how large of a database was the 2022, that you have already?

MS. BYRD: I don't know the numbers of records, off the top of my head, and it's still relatively small, and so I guess our number of participants have been increasing, and so what that captures is we have depth of released fish, and not depth of caught fish, and then we also have some location information. GPS location is optional, and so not everybody puts in it, but we have some limited kind of -- That kind of location information, too.

MR. MORALES: I've been excited about MSE, from the very beginning, and extremely hopeful that perhaps, finally, what we are seeing on the water, for the last thirteen years, is actually going to have some weight, because everyone here will tell you that it's had none, and so I'm hoping that this is the turning point, where perhaps we're able to give you data, and I don't see why, whether -- If it's, you know, promoting the fish app, and/or -- You know, I'm just questioning, and is live data, what's happening on the water this year, is that of any value to MSE, to make a difference and move this logjam one way or the other, because there is plenty of data, and the fishermen, I believe, will be more than willing to provide you with that data, less than a hundred feet or over a hundred feet, what month, how many, you know, releases, the girth of the fish, the length of the fish, and you tell us what it is that you need to help feed this thing, and I believe that there's more than enough motivation to get you that data, versus you using 2019 data that is already out of -- Or of very limited use, in my opinion. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. A headboat owner's perspective from Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: You know, one thing, to me, that stands out is the biggest thing you said you want, and you need, is the data and information, and, as Jimmy already alluded to, the commercial side is done, and, in all reality, the charter/headboat stuff is already done, for the entire area you're looking for.

We've been doing logbooks for years and years and years, and it goes from Key West to the northernmost tip of North Carolina, and you can extrapolate exactly where the fish are being caught, how many area being caught, and you can do a historical record of every bit of information for the entire charter/headboat history for as long as all of this has been in place, and so you have two key factors that should -- That are easily obtainable, that are already there, and so the only missing piece of the puzzle would be getting a recreational license, where the strict recreational guys report what they catch, and then you have all three legs of your information that you could utilize to rob the best information possible out of it.

I mean, from the charter/headboat side, you know, we're getting to the point where this is where it's going to go with -- You know, we're going to have to look at charter/headboat, getting a section, and getting carved out, from normal recreational.

MR. LORENZ: Go ahead, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I do want to point out something, and it gets a little confusing, because the way it's done in stock assessments -- So general recreational generally is -- It's the MRIP program, which includes charter boats and private recreational, as well as shore-based catches, and then the headboat is separated out, because it has that different survey that you were mentioning, Cameron, although coming online is the SEFHIER, which is the reporting system for charter boats, but we

don't have that data validated yet, and so we can potentially look into that and figure out, you know, where are the catches coming from, the depths, and probably have a lot more accurate information than what we could pull from MRIP.

The other thing to point out is you guys are on the water quite a bit, and your observations on the water of where some of these recreational trips are occurring is beneficial. You see the boats, and we're not out there, and so, if you have any guidance on where you're seeing the majority of private recreational fishermen fishing, I think that provides a lot of information as well.

MR. LORENZ: Just one comment that I would like to make is I always like -- It's kind of an investor mentality, and so I always like to look at the probabilities of success, and so, in summary here, the summary of probability of success with this is you're going to get the most bang for your buck the quickest by analyzing the commercial industry. That's where you get the most data, and the most qualified data.

If you go the next step down, as Cameron said, now you can pick good stuff up from the headboats, and you're pretty ironclad there. Now you're going to get to the charter industry, and you're going to start doing okay, and it's nowhere near as strong as the commercial or the headboat sector, and then you're going to get to the recreational, the private recreational, and you've got a lot to build.

In other words, your building blocks are really there to come out with something, I feel, that would be strongly qualified, and it's just so unknown how many people are going out there. If you want to put in something like effort, on any nice weekend, there will be millions of boats, and who is catching, and we don't even know how many millions of boats there are and how many fishermen are participating, and so it would be in that order, and it's going to be -- Your success is going to come from focusing on commercial, and then look at the headboats, and you've got the charter is coming in, and then the recreational component is -- There's quite a few other things that have to come in place before you're going to get really good data that most people are going to buy into as fully qualified. Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. So are we coming to the conclusion that data, accurate data, is important to the MSE?

DR. HORDYK: Is your question is accurate data important to the MSE? Yes, but certainly we'll try and get the best characterization of the fishery as we can. I am not sure if that's what you're referring to, but, when I earlier said that it sorts of encompasses uncertainty, what I mean is if there is -- For example, it sounds like we've got the commercial and the headboat data that exist, and that's excellent, and I haven't got hold of that data yet, and all we've been provided is the assessment, and that just lumped it all together, and that's great, but, for the recreational, it sounds like there's tons of uncertainty in that, and so what we would like, if possible, is just a relative -- We don't know the total numbers, but like the relative proportion of effort, recreational effort, in each of those areas, right, and all I meant, before, with the uncertainty, is, if we don't really know, people might say -- There might be differences of opinions.

Then we don't need to -- No one really knows what the right answer is, but we try and encompass all of those differences of opinions in the MSE, and so certainly we try to have -- Where there is knowledge, we try and narrow things down to the knowledge that we have, but, where there's uncertainty, we like to represent that uncertainty, and so we say that we don't know something,

and then, in the MSE, we acknowledge that we don't know it, and then we have to set either the parameters really wide, to say what we know about the system is that we don't know, and it could be anywhere between this and this. Yes, as accurate as we can, and also as accurate, in terms of describing the uncertainty as accurate as we can. If we don't know, we say we don't know.

MR. LORENZ: For a little more information, I would like to recognize Kai, our consultant on this.

DR. LORENZEN: Thank you. I just wanted to mention that, although, you know, we know about the issues with the recreational data, but you can -- You know, there are two sources of that, and one is the intercept samples and then the Fishing Effort Survey, and you can actually drill that down regionally quick well, and so my colleague at UF, for example, produces reports for all Florida counties that lay out the fishing trips, mostly the charter and the private boat trips, that go out of that county, and what they're targeting, and three miles more or less from shore, and so there is actually quite a lot of information, particularly when you're looking just for a relative apportionment of effort across these areas, and so I just wanted to mention that there's actually a fair bit of information there that I think will be usable. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Jimmy, I saw you hand your hand up.

MR. HULL: So, with what you said, Chip, and, you know, the time that I've spent on the water, which is pretty long, because I'm getting old, and, for the private recreational fleet, bottom fishing off of Ponce Inlet, Florida, I would guesstimate that, in my opinion, 70 percent of the effort is inside of a hundred feet, and 30 percent is outside of a hundred feet, and so that would be my guesstimate, off the vast majority of the private recs. Inside a hundred feet, they're going to spending most of -- 70 percent will spend their time there, and then 30 percent beyond.

DR. COLLIER: Just a little bit more on that, and has it changed over time, or has that been fairly consistent?

MR. HULL: No, I think it is changing. I think that, in the earlier years, there was -- It was probably more inside a hundred feet than now. Now, it seems to be expanding further out, deeper, but it's still -- You know, most of the private rec boats are still fishing inshore of a hundred feet, and I don't know why you chose the hundred feet, but, using that, I would say inside of a hundred feet, and 70 percent, but it is -- It seems to be increasing more towards the offshore every year too, with the faster boats, the more reliable boats, species that they can keep in deeper water, and so that would be my impression of it.

DR. COLLIER: Adrian can speak to this more, but I think the hundred feet is more of an arbitrary number, and so, if you have guidance on a better way to split this out, please don't hesitate to guide us in the right direction. You are our experts.

MR. HULL: Again, it's going to be regionally-based, and so, again, off of Ponce Inlet -- I mean, we have a lot of bottom inside of a hundred feet, and you can go just north, off of St. Augustine, and they don't have near the bottom we do, just, you know, thirty-five miles to the south, and so, you know, it's going to be very variable, but you can -- There's an awful lot of private recreational effort inside a hundred feet off of Ponce Inlet. I mean, you can go any weekend, and there's an

awful lot of artificial structure too that the county has put out that they're fishing on, and so, yes, I stand by my estimate of 70/30.

MR. LORENZ: I would bank off of Jimmy, and I think what would also be needed is maybe two ways of saying the same thing. As Jimmy said, there's a lot of effort in a hundred feet, and that's in Florida, and so that's only a few miles. Where I live, a hundred feet is twenty-eight miles, and so you get that other safety factor in there, and so interesting, because, when we deal with things like barotrauma and the effect on the fish, there's a lot more folks that can easily hurt fish, down in Florida, because they can go out so close to those depths, where, for us, we'll be limited to the folks that need those bigger boats, and so it's almost -- You've got to get two slides in there, and it's going to be depth, to some degree, but it's also going to be distance from shore, in the northern part. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just one follow-up to what you said. Off of northeast Florida, in particular Ponce Inlet, to get a hundred feet of water, it's twenty or twenty-five miles. Now, obviously, the further south you get, it's closer, but it's still a little hop, and so there's a lot of bottom there, too.

MR. LORENZ: James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so I'm going to ask David Moss and Richie, if he's still listening, and so this will be for about 125 miles of reef line, from a little bit north of Key Largo to a little bit west of Key West, and, on any given day, you know, for recreational boats -- On a day that it's blowing over fifteen miles an hour, we might see four recreational boats per mile, and that ranges from thirty-five to a hundred feet of water, and so we're talking, you know, some areas, give or take a half-a-mile, or give or take a quarter-of-a-mile, swath of reef. I would estimate about 500 boats, when it's blowing over fifteen miles an hour, up and down that 125 miles of reef line.

Beyond that, if it's ten to fifteen, I would probably expect double that, and so a thousand boats in that swatch, and, under ten miles an hour, probably more than a dozen boats per mile, and so we're talking about 1,500 boats in that 125-mile section of reef.

Now, inside of that, from inside the shallow reef, inside the patches and everything, I would probably take those numbers and just double it. If that's the type of information you're asking for, that's what I can give you, based on what I see, and I would love for David, and maybe Richie, to either, you know, have a confirming or a conflicting input on that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. With that said, we're going to hold for you a minute, David, because we have two folks online. Since James mentioned about Richie, Richie Gomez, you're recognized to speak next.

MR. GOMEZ: I think that was James talking, wasn't it?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Yes.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. I mean, James, I would think that day of the week matters, too. You know, obviously, on weekends, there's going to be a lot more boats, but what Jimmy was saying, that 70/30 split, I mean, I would think, for the Lower Keys, it's more 80 inside of a hundred feet, versus 20 outside of a hundred feet, and that is growing, also, because of technology and these fishermen,

these rec fishermen, able to, you know, pinpoint small structure much better than they used to, but I mostly agree with you, James, but just, you know, I think weekends are always a little busier.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Richie. Next, I guess online also, is Andy Piland. Andy, would you like to speak?

MR. PILAND: Yes. In North Carolina, the northern part of North Carolina, we're probably 80 percent above 100 feet, and 20 percent inshore, and I think the 100-foot designation is where the fish start having barotrauma, and, I mean, nothing is hard-and-fast on that, but, generally speaking, the hundred feet is where they start having trouble. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I would agree with a lot of what James said. In the Keys area, that hundred-foot line is -- Well, it's a little bit shallower, but it's kind of the edge of the reef, and the vast majority of bottom fishing is going to happen inside that, and I would say it's probably closer to what Richie said, and 80, if not 90, percent of the bottom fishing is going to happen inside that. As you go a little bit further, like Miami into the Fort Lauderdale/Palm Beach area, it's much more condensed.

A hundred feet, to us, is less than a mile offshore, and so it's an interesting kind of juxtaposition, because you're going to have fewer boats, maybe, because you just can't fit them all, but it's definitely more condensed there, and we also don't do a ton of bottom fishing in that area, partly because of that, until you start to get to kind of the like -- To the Jupiter area, but, yes, the vast majority of bottom fishing, snapper grouper fishing, happens within a hundred feet, again, up in kind of the West Palm/Fort Lauderdale area, and you get to do a lot more offshore stuff, where you're going really deep really quick.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, and Mel just walked into the room, which may be a good help to me, and it's funny the difference in the numbers, when you come up the coast a little bit. South Carolina has approximately 100,000 annual saltwater fishing licenses, that are annual renewal, and, including the tourists, the fourteen days, the three-day, and the three-year as well, and they go up to about 400,000 per year, and you figure that -- I would estimate, at best, 20 percent of those go offshore, and I would say at least 80 percent of that number would stay inshore, and so now we're dealing with, say out of 100,000 -- Is that approximately right, or do you know any of those numbers, Mel?

MR. BELL: (Mr. Bell's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. CONSTANT: Just saltwater licenses.

MR. BELL: (Mr. Bell's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. CONSTANT: That includes the tourists and everything, and 80/20 is a possibility, and I'm just going to use an example, and I went offshore on Wednesday, and it was a very calm day. I saw ten boats all day long, and six of those were coming from deep. I was in about sixty feet. The

Saturday prior to that, I probably only saw six, and it was a rough day. In Florida, you're going to see a hundred-times that number, and -- But I think, if we do have the saltwater licenses to run by, but we don't know how many of those are going offshore, because the majority of saltwater fishermen stay inshore.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Randy McKinley.

MR. MCKINLEY: I mean, I'm commercial, but, from what I see in North Carolina, it seems like one of the variables is the fuel price, because, when the fuel price gets high, you don't see nowhere near as many boats offshore, and so there's definitely a factor in it. They're stay inshore, and they'll be sitting on the sandbar, you know, inside the waterway, but, with the cheap fuel prices, there's just way more boats.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: At the North Carolina/South Carolina border, to get to a hundred feet, you're looking at running thirty-eight to forty miles, just to get to that hundred-foot area, and so, when my fleets are going out, I mean, we see the majority of the guys, the strictly recreational guys, in what we would consider the shallow, shallow, and it's like five to ten miles off the beach, and, the further we go, the fewer and fewer boats we see, and a lot of the guys who go out deeper -- They're going out to the deep to do trolling, and they're going out for, you know, wahoo, dolphin, tuna, stuff like that, and they're not going to screw around with a whole lot of bottom fishing, because they've got a very particular fish that they want to catch in mind, if they're going to burn a grand to go out and go fishing, and so, you know, I would say, in our area, it's probably 70/30, within ten miles, and another percentage goes out to about twenty-five or thirty miles, and then, past that, they're -- To my opinion, there are very few that consistently go out on a regular basis.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Harry.

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so the southern part of South Carolina, Hilton Head and Beaufort County, based on your fleet thing, most of us are fishing in Georgia waters, and so that's really us, and, I mean, yes, we can go up to Charleston, but not a whole lot of guys do, and they typically are 120 degrees, to 150 degrees, all the way down to the Triple Ledge, and that's all -- That's all Georgia.

I was going to say 60/40, 60 percent inside of a hundred and 40 percent over, but 70/30, somewhere in there, and we're the same thing. In order to get a hundred feet, you're thirty-five or forty miles offshore, automatically, and so, where I fish, there's a hundred-foot of water, and then 140 foot of water, and then all the way, and you go 200-plus, and, when we're going out that deep, to 200, you're starting your day off trolling. However, in the afternoon, you're going to pick that stuff up, and you're going to deep-drop, and we're finding some good spots that are now better than what it was in the 140 area, big triggers, and no grouper yet, but, you know, nice, healthy vermilion, and so that's what we have.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. The timing of the year will have a big factor, too. From eighty to 150 feet, if I'm out there in the wintertime, I feel like it's more rare for me to see another -- A

recreational boat fishing than it is to not see them, and, I mean, I can think of a couple of times this year, where I was out there for a week, and I never saw another boat in that range. Then, once you get out to the ledge, we have a pretty popular tournament now that you see a lot of boats driving around fast trying to catch a wahoo, and I rarely see them engaged in bottom fishing, and I think, like Harry said, if they strike out, maybe they will drop a little bit, but, by then, they're pretty ineffective, and so --

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. Chris.

MR. KIMREY: I just wanted to back up a little bit, and I think Chip would probably be who I'm addressing here, but, as far as validating the reporting, you know, different types of reporting, years ago, when we were piloting eTRIPS, before electronic reporting became mandatory, long before, for the for-hire and charter, you know, side, and I was part of that, and, you know, we were sold that as this reporting is going to be hugely beneficial for things like we're talking about right here, and then, once we got into it, we started learning a little more, and then, at one point, I was even told that, you know, the for-hire charter boat reporting would never be validated, in any fashion, and it sounds like maybe there's a little backstep on that, at some point, and I'm just curious, and what's the process?

If we're spending all this time and effort, and money, you know, for all this reporting, if it's not validated, how is it used, or, if it is eventually going to be validated in some fashion, how valid will it be, and what is that process, because I just -- I am really confused why there's all this effort, for all this reporting, and, you know, what we're talking about here, with the MSE and using this, and, if the reporting is not valid, and if you use it or you can't, and I'm just really trying to figure it out, you know, and, here at the AP, last year at this time, we recommended, you know, Amendment 46, recreational -- For the however many times it's been recommended, and I know that the council -- I listened in on last month's council meeting, and they spent a lot of time talking about it, and it looks like they're leaning towards, you know, maybe issuing another permit, but there's no reporting attached to that.

You know, the reason we recommended it is because we really need to tighten up the data, especially on the recreational side, and so at what point is all this effort we're putting into trying to collect data, you know, commercial, charter boat, for-hire, and recreational, and at what point is all this information that's being gathered, through all this reporting, going to be used and validated, or not, and is it used just as a means of persuasion, and it's really confusing, to me, why we're trying to do all of this and there's not a clear-cut answer as to why, as far as from the science side.

All of us know why we want it, because we want to tighten up the numbers, but, if the people on the science side aren't going to do that, what's the point? That's kind of where I'm at, and so I'm just really curious about the validation process, if it happens at all, and does that --

MR. LORENZ: Chris, Chip is here chomping at the bit to give you some answers.

DR. COLLIER: So we'll start off with the validation, and so there's processes, within MRIP, on how to certify a new program, or a new data collection system, and so they're going to be going through that, and I don't know what the plan is right now for the for-hire system, and we've heard

that they cannot validate what we're getting on the east coast, because we did not have that VMS attached to it.

There are some efforts out there where they're trying to compare what's being reported to what's being observed through a program like MRIP, and so maybe, with a little bit of samples, we can get some validation there, but, with that validation, that is mainly looking at comparing catches to ACLs, and so you're looking at a point estimate, but, for some of this, what we're looking at is relative effort, and relative effort -- You don't need that precise number, and what you can do is you can use that information to guide you, as you're developing more and more precise estimates, and so I think we can use some of the information that's been provided through SEFHIER to indicate where the charter boat fishery is -- Where most of their effort is occurring.

What would be really helpful, from you guys, and so we have the last three years, or two years, of data that would have come in through the SEFHIER system, but is the most recent time period any different from the past, because we don't have that time series going backwards, and I know I'm mixing things up and asking you a question as well, but does that help you understand how validation can be used, and also why we still need SEFHIER?

There is other parts of it, like for the economics, and they're gathering some economic data, and so that's going to be useful, as they describe the economics in the fishery and how it changes over time, and potentially in responses to how management changes over time.

MR. KIMREY: So, yes, and, I mean, that helps a little, and I was actually familiar with some of what you were saying, the economic standpoints, and I'm glad that it applies more so to MSE than it would, you know, like in an assessment situation or whatever, and, as far as the VMS, does the lack of VMS -- Is that derived because of how adamant they are about VMS in other places that were ahead of us on the reporting, or does it not mesh with the model, and how does VMS eliminate the possibility of using our data? I'm just curious about that.

DR. COLLIER: It might be a combination of the VMS and the hail-out and the hail-in that they have as well, and so one of the issues is they don't know where people are going out of, and so it's hard to dedicate efforts to figure out where they're coming in from, and so being able to show up at the dock, without people knowing, is a very important part of that. That way, you can make sure that, when they're coming back, you're getting -- You have the reports already, because they're supposed to report prior to getting back to the dock, and so, when you go to do that sample, and do the validation, you're able to see that, all right, this person, as I sampled them, they reported.

You can get the zero catch, or the people that would not have reported, and so that would have been out of compliance, and you're also able to improve your sampling efficiency, and so you're able to know which docks are most important, and also what time to go out there, because it's a limited budget, you know, and we're in a pretty tight budget scene with the National Marine Fisheries Service, and so they're trying to optimize where they can go out and sample. That process of having the hail-in and hail-out, along with VMS, it enables them to make more efficient samples, and I know it's not the greatest of explanations, but --

MR. KIMREY: I don't know I buy that, to be honest. I mean, I'm just -- I'm just baffled that they're that adamant about hailing-out. I mean, somebody like myself, and I've been charter fishing full-time for sixteen years, and I've changed my port location once, and so you might not



know what days I'm fishing, but you know exactly where I'm leaving from and returning to every single day. I mean, so, you know, that was one of the things you said that was advantageous about the VMS. Hailing-in and hailing-out, I mean, who are they -- Are they doing that via an app, and is that how that works, on the Gulf, as far as hail-in and hail-out?

DR. COLLIER: I would imagine that's how it's being done, and I am not an expert on that system.

MR. KIMREY: Right, and so that seems like it would be something that would be very easy to implement without VMS, and, if you're underway, and if you're leaving from the same spot, and somebody wanted to survey you, and you pull with charter clients, and you're not hailed-out, then you're not in compliance, and, I mean, that seems like a pretty easy way to catch somebody not being in compliance. Your boat is underway, and you didn't hail-out, and so, anyway, I -- I don't want to sound like this guy, but it's frustrating to all of us, and not just me, and I will speak for a lot of people here that I've had sideline conversations with, and it seems like there's always a long list of why not to do something, but there's -- Everybody knows there's things that need to be done, and it's just Kerry can attest with the permit.

They're talking about implementing this recreational snapper grouper permit without any facet of reporting, and I know, personally, the only reason I care about the permit is because of the reporting, and nobody wants another meaningless permit. I mean, it takes me forever to renew all of my commercial and charter boat stuff, and, you know, nobody wants another permit that doesn't have some sort of, you know, validity to it, and that's how I see that. What's the purpose of the permit, you know, and they're saying it's going to help them track effort, and, no, and it tracks the intent of effort, but true effort is when you leave the dock, not when you buy the permit, right? So, anyway, thank you, and, I mean, you have answered a lot of questions, and thanks, Chip.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris, and Chip wants to answer a few things for you again, and then Tony had his hand up, and I will recognize Tony afterwards.

DR. COLLIER: So, just to let you guys know, in December, we're going to get a presentation from SEFHIER, and so the charter boat reporting program is going to provide a presentation to the council on exactly what's going on in the program. In addition to that, I just wanted to let you guys know that, right now, the charter boat reporting in the Gulf of Mexico is invalidated, and there was a lawsuit that basically caused an injunction and removed that requirement for the charter boat fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, and part of the reason for that was because of the VMS and the hail-in and hail-out.

MR. LORENZ: Tony, may I hold you up for just a minute? Adrian would like to make a statement.

DR. HORDYK: No, and I can go after.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Listening to Chris, I agree with you a lot on that, and it also goes along with what Harry was saying. The last twelve years that I chartered, I chartered out of one dock, and I left out of one port, basically, or I ran around to Port Royal Sound, but we're managing a fishery from North Carolina to Key West, and, at a hundred foot of depth, in the Carolinas, the fishery is not that different, and so, to say that we've got to know exactly where he is, or where he was

docking, I don't buy that either, and I just don't think it's going to be a concern, and, if it is, maybe it's misplaced.

If I fish the Triple Ledge, for bottom fish, and then I run up to the Edisto Banks, which is fifty miles away, the fishery didn't change. The fish bite might have, but then, whether I ran into this side of St. Helena Island, or this side of Hilton Head, it's not going to make any difference either. Now, if you want to catch what I have, then come by. The address is on the permit, and so there's got to be a more accurate way to get this ball going, instead of kicking the can. Like you said, there's tons of information there, and we've got recreational guys all over, ready to raise their hand, and we're still sitting here having this conversation.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. I would like to take a moment here and get back to Adrian, to give us a few more things.

DR. HORDYK: I don't want to cut off this discussion at all, but I've got some really useful information, and so thank you for that, on the distribution of fishing effort by depth, by area, and that's -- But what I would like, and I think you've been talking around it, and it sounds like, with the knowledge that you've got for the recreational fishery, if we can throw some actual numbers out there for what proportion, and, first of all, just for what now, and then, if it's changed over time, I would like to know that too, but what proportion of the recreational effort is in each of those areas? It sounds to me like, from what I heard, there is lots of lots of folks down in Florida, and maybe fewer further north, but what would be useful would be to get some numbers that we can put into those boxes for those areas. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, and Tony started that, and some of the rest of us could probably state that. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: In response to that, each state should have those numbers for you, that will really break down a really good amount, and into the areas even.

DR. HORDYK: Thanks. You mentioned that earlier, and so that's a question, I guess, for Chip, or I'm not sure who, but do we have, or can we get access, to that state data?

DR. COLLIER: Well, I'm just wondering -- If we're looking for relative effort, could we use the MRIP survey, because it does allow you the ability to go in and search the database for a suite of species and say, all right, if they caught these individual species on a trip, they were in the area where red snapper or gag grouper were common, and so I'm thinking something like black sea bass, obviously red snapper, gag grouper, red grouper, triggerfish, vermilion snapper, a bunch of those, and could those be used as indicative of trips that were in the area where red snapper and gag grouper were, and we could get estimates of angler effort from the MRIP survey that way? Kai is giving me a thumbs-up.

MR. LORENZ: A comment from the AP on what Chip stated? Go ahead, Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I'm sure that the snapper would be around all of those that you just mentioned, but I don't know how -- We're back to ground-zero, I think, on as far as the recreational goes, and I don't know you're going to get that information without asking the -- Because that part of it is not going to be available from the state. You know, we might be able to get a headcount on

saltwater licenses, and then we're going to break down to maybe, what, 15 or 20 percent actually go offshore, but then, to actually find out how far they went, and so forth, is a total guess, in my opinion.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Because you asked, and in regard to specifics, and I'm still assuming that we're talking about all snapper grouper, and not any species in particular, correct, and so I'm going to -- I am going to run some pretty basic numbers by this panel, and just so you can kind of understand what goes on in the Florida Keys. On any given day, I will probably cover between five and fifteen miles of reef line, and so I have a pretty good idea of the number of boats on the reef line on any given day.

Now, I did explain some numbers, earlier, about some estimates, and I'm just going to take a mean number of 750 boats per day, and most of these boats are going to be targeting yellowtail, because, as we outlined, they're super prolific, and it's a strong fishery, and so I'm going to say that six boats, on average, will be on mile of reef line, and I'm going to say, of those six boats, three of them effectively catch one limit of yellowtail snapper, and so that's fifteen yellowtail per one mile of reef line that's being actively fished on a daily basis.

To run that out over a year, you're talking about 684,375 fish, based on some really basic -- Which, in my opinion, are very lowball average day numbers on the recreational sector harvesting yellowtail snapper in the Keys, and that number alone, as a low estimate, I don't even think is being registered as the recreational harvest. These fish will -- I am going to say they will average a pound apiece, but they're probably bigger than that, and so I think that, if we make more generalizations like this, that, if each one of us, in our zone, can kind of calculate how many boats maybe per square -- This is just on the reef line, but maybe how many boats per square mile we see on any given basis, you know, any given day, then maybe we can come up with some real estimates, you know, of how many fish are being landed, based on the concentration of boats.

This may not be what you're asking for, and this may be exactly what you're asking for, but, for me, based on my knowledge, and days on the water, this is about what I am seeing from the recreational sector on the reef line.

Now, we're talking about hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of square miles that are left blank from my report, and, you know, probably a thousand square miles, and let's say that the reef line starts about four miles off the shoreline, over this 125-mile area, and so we're talking about a lot of space, and so, when we're thinking about, you know, how much the recreational sector is really consuming, when it comes to ACLs, and when you're using the MRIP data, and we're using, you know, different extrapolations, my basic numbers, of what I'm seeing, they're not corresponding with that information. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Is there anyone else with a comment, or I will be handing it over to Chip and Adrian to set us off further. Go ahead, Jack.

MR. COX: I couldn't even come close to what you just tried to do, where we are, because we don't have like a reef line, and we've got like just sporadic bottom that just is all over the place, and it goes anywhere from a couple of miles off the beach all the way out to forty, and so that

would be like throwing a dart into complete darkness, to try to even sum that up, but there's considerable effort, recreational effort, where I'm at.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would think, agreeing with what Jack said, it would be a lot easier if they would just see if people -- There's not that many inlets that they can go in and out, and it's just to do boat counts going out of the inlets and stuff, and that would be the only thing that you could really do to get any kind of sense of it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. I think, along the lines of what Chris was saying, if somebody else is making an estimate of the amount of boats out there, then it's not going to be validated, right? If another vessel is making an estimate on how many he's seeing, there is no way to validate it, correct?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, but that doesn't mean that it can't be used. I will give you an example. For the blueline tilefish estimate, landings north of the North Carolina-Virginia border, there was very -- There was no landings of blueline tilefish, yet there were reports of world-record blueline tilefish being caught, and so they did what was called a Delphi method, in order to estimate landings in that region, and it was primarily the charter boat captains that estimated the recreational catch, the private recreational catch.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Well, going back to MRIP, you've got some intercepts across the region, and you're already taking those and expanding them in the MRIP formula, and so, I mean, that's, obviously, available, even though it may not correspond to what our eyeballs are seeing, but it's giving you something, right there, to start with, and then you can add information from us, but you've already got what intercepts are happening, for some species, where there's a lot of intercepts on some species, I'm sure.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I am curious on how things have changed over time, and one person that -- Sorry to point you out, but, Bobby, we have your pictures from back in the day, Bobby Freeman, or Robert Freeman, and we were looking at your catches, and, I mean, we were seeing speckled hind and snowy grouper, a lot of deepwater species, and my perception of the headboat fishery is a little bit different from that, and so I'm imagining that it has changed over time, from a deepwater fishery to more of a shallow-water fishery, or how has the headboat kind of changed over time in the Morehead City area?

MR. FREEMAN: I am not certain about the headboats, but I'm sure they're still targeting sea bass and beeliners and that sort of thing, but our thing, and, you know, my thrill was fishing that deep water, and, I mean, we started out there in 1972, in a boat with a depth sounder that wouldn't go

beyond 240 feet, and you would just run until there appeared to be a ledge, or something like that, and I'm sure there were more fish then, but my belief is there's still lots of fish on those same spots, and I'm going to send back some numbers that I gave to Michelle Duval, years ago, that hopefully was going to be included in some of these surveys, because what I was seeing, and catching, every day was not indicative of what I keep hearing from the advisory panels and all.

This is going back a long time ago, and I'm not sure what years that I was submitting data to St. Pete on grouper and stuff, and, for a couple of months there, my submissions was not included in the data they would publish, and I was told, at one of these meetings, that the reason was that, if there were I think less than three submissions, they couldn't use that data. Well, so far as I am concerned, it's still good data, and are we creating unreasonable rules that have no purpose in us truly knowing what's going on out there?

Up until I sold the boat, our goal was, every day, to fish that 400 to 600-foot water, because folks wanted those snowies and all that, but, when the limits got to where they were so restrictive, you couldn't book a party to go catch two groupers for the whole boat, and that sort of thing, and so we moved back inshore and beat on the beeliners and the triggers. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. Chip wants to bring some clarification up, and then we have Andy Fish.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and you had mentioned the with less than three vessels, that they can't report the landings, and that's right, and it's confidentiality reasons that they can't report it. If you are required to report landings, then it's written in Magnuson that that data becomes confidential. It's not that that data can't be used, but we just have to aggregate it, so we get to three or more vessels, and so we can do that and feel comfortable with it, or we can report it in such a way where you cannot determine how many landings were caught in that area. We're not going to ignore your data, and we're going to use it. Don't worry.

MR. FREEMAN: But, at that point that I was most active in it, there were very few charter boats that were doing what I was doing, because of the aggravation of putting up the electric reels and all that kind of stuff, and the tackle losses, and, I mean, we would go through several thousand pounds of sinkers a year and that sort of thing, and that all eats into the overhead, and I was pulling my own, and, you know, it was just a wintertime activity, but, you know, I still believe there's lots of fish out there that could be had.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert Freeman. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: In my hometown of Port Canaveral, if you're asking how things have changed over time, in the last eight to five years, the sharks have shown up, and, in the last three years, they've gotten really, really bad, and I don't think the recreational -- The recreational people that go out are like on the partyboats, because they don't know any better about the sharks. The actual private guy, that's going to out with him and his four buddies, and go try and fish for mangroves and things they can actually catch on our ninety-foot reef, those guys aren't doing that anymore, and it's very rare for those guys to go do that, because they can't really get anything past the sharks, and it's not as bad, but, outside of a hundred foot, there's still the sharks, but then you run into the red snapper more, that you can't catch, and that's definitely changed in the last five years of the recreational pressure.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Just for overall pressure, I've been fishing in our area since the 1980s, and the headboat and the -- Specifically the headboat, we've actually sort of -- We've backed away from doing as many longer trips, like to the Gulf Stream and stuff, and so we've adapted our model to what's available and what the customer is demanding, which is shorter trips, and, you know, for those shorter trips, I mean, we just flat out tell them that, hey, on the shorter trips -- You know, I don't care if, you know, we can't keep a sea bass, and that's all right.

As long you tell them that you're not going to be keep anything, and you're firm with them, we don't get a whole lot of blowback, but, you know, if they cannot keep anything, because the rule is they can't keep anything, that's a whole other matter. As long as I can sell the illusion that they have a chance of catching something, and bringing something back, then that's the reality of it, and most tourists absolutely love it. Now, there's a big distinction from somebody who is going to go in and go for a half-day, four-and-a-half-hour trip and somebody who is going to grind for eleven or twelve hours.

That's a totally different animal right there, all right, and so, in our area, you know, I've seen the -- Especially the headboats, and, you know, we used to run like three or four Gulf Stream trips on the big headboats, and we're down to two, and, of those two, the one that is predominant is just the Saturday trips. The one that run during the week usually doesn't sell out anymore, but our niche is a twenty-man boat, and our twenty-man boat sells out as many as -- If I put it seven days a week, that boat would sell out seven days a week, because that's what the customers are demanding, and that trip has actually increased, and so there's -- You know, a lot of it is customer supply and demand and what fish that they can go out and catch.

MR. LORENZ: David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. From a fisheries evolution standpoint, down south, in the kind of St. Lucie area to, again, down by where I'm at, there's a lot less people going out bottom fishing, again because of the sharks, and they kind of feel like it's not worth it. There are still plenty of them out there, and it's almost like, for every one that stopped doing it, we've got two more that move into the area and start going out there anyway, but one of the other things that has really -- That we've seen an influx of are you could still technically call them long-range trips, and so going out like out of the Keys, over to the Tortugas and stuff like that, you know, going further west, which is still part of our purview, I guess.

A lot more of those, as people get bigger, stronger, faster boats, and so there's a lot more people accessing waters that they didn't access before, and, also, I would say, and this is completely anecdotal, but there is a lot more smaller fish being caught, and like we don't get the big, you know, thirty-pounds blacks, like we used to, and stuff like that, I'm assuming because people are catching them and keeping them when they're a lot smaller, and, again, there's a lot more people out there, but I would say the biggest issue has been just a an influx of people. We've got a ton more people down there, and a lot more people going a lot further quicker.

MR. LORENZ: Chip, what you would like from us next, or Adrian?

DR. COLLIER: I think I will pick on Paul next. As far as off of Florida, and I haven't heard you talk much, and I know you've been in the charter boat fishery for a couple of years, and has there been any big changes?

MR. NELSON: Well, definitely the smaller boats are moving further offshore than they used to be, like Jimmy said, and it's probably about 70/30 still, but definitely we're having bigger, faster boats that are touching the edge, and there's a lot more people golden tile fishing now than there ever was, recreationally, and they're trying to catch the snowies recreationally, and they're doing a lot more deepwater diving, the trimix, 180-foot commercial diving, and there's a lot of changes going in the last five to eight years, especially the sharks and red snapper, and it's just frustrating, for anybody that's been doing it all their life, to go fishing anymore, but a lot of people still enjoy it.

On the headboat, we've acclimated them to fish whatever catches, and we advise them upfront that we've got to release a lot of stuff, and they're all good with it. The boat is full every day, and so a couple of the boats left, and there's only one left now, and so it makes it easier to fill a boat, but there's a lot of changes, but we're adapting to them.

MR. LORENZ: Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Chip, I don't guess that I mentioned anything about the fishery so much, as to how it's changed over the years, and one of my most popular charters, when I was chartering, was a six-hour near-wreck fishing, and it was usually out to about twenty or twenty-five miles, out to about sixty feet of water, and that has probably changed the most. It is covered with snapper now, and very little sea bass, where we used to catch five-to-eight-pound sea bass, all day long, and it used to be that, if you wanted to go have a family cookout, you would just -- A couple of guys would go get, you know, twenty-five fish, and that would feed the family.

I do think that, because of that, it has pushed out -- We used to have an all-day charter too, to the Gulf Stream, trolling, but I know that that area of 130 to 150 feet is probably my go-to, as far as grouper and snapper and trigger. That has been covered up with very large snapper now. I mean, it's a very common place to catch twenty-five to thirty-five-pound snapper, on a regular basis, and we have seen state-record snapper caught and released there, but I think, because of that, it has pushed the average -- Well, not the average angler, but the more qualified angler on out deeper.

Now they've started to drop on 200 or 300 feet of water, and I think, because of that, they have found the tilefish, and they have found the snowies, and that fishery is becoming bigger and bigger, and more sought after, and I think it's been a progression, because of the way the fishery has changed to those deeper waters, and you still have the average Joe that buys the twenty-three-foot Sea Hunt and runs out to those twenty-foot wrecks, but that's not the guy hitting the 500 feet of water.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. It's all yours, James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and I would agree, you know, with a lot of what I'm hearing about the sharks being a major change over the last five to ten years, but, specifically, in the Keys, over that timeframe, or maybe even closer to fifteen years -- In the early part of my career, I remember a predominantly west current, which would be behind the boat, with a predominantly

east wind, and, in those years where we had that current, we had a little bit different dynamic, when it came to the numbers of yellowtail snapper that we would see, and the number of mangrove snapper, and the number of black grouper, and, you know, we had -- I don't want to think that it was specifically because fishing was so much better, and we had that much more fish that we had opportunity at, but, you know, things do change and now, you know, in the last fifteen years, we encounter a lot more east current, and maybe the Gulf Stream is a little bit closer, on an average basis, and we have a lot of days, throughout the year, where there is absolutely no current, and, up and down the reef, it will be going, you know, very slowly in one direction, and, a mile down the road, it will be going another, and we might have, you know, swirling conditions, you know, and more than a hundred days out of the year where we don't have any current, and so, you know, stuff like that, it kind of goes back to what Todd was saying.

You know, we might have some environmental changes, and we might have some shifts in the way that things are going over a longer period of time that are affecting everything that we're seeing and encountering on the water. Thank you.

DR. COLLIER: All right. I think we've talked a bit about how things have changed through time, and over the areas, and another question that Adrian was talking to you guys about, or was interested in, is what is a trophy-sized fish, and, also, I think we also need to identify what species would be considered in that trophy category. You know, one that wrestles around in my brain right now, and it's not always considered the trophy fish, but a decent-sized greater amberjack. Sometimes that's good for a trip, whether you're a charter boat captain or not, and it could make the trip a positive trip, but, also, we recognize that grouper and red snapper, are a trophy fish, and so what would be a trophy size for those species?

MR. LORENZ: Tony, kick us off, and then Randy.

MR. CONSTANT: For the AJs, they were -- I always called them a charter saver, and they were a great charter saver. You know, a big AJ around us is seventy pounds, and I think fifty is -- Thirty to fifty is common. What was the other species that you mentioned?

DR. COLLIER: Grouper and snapper.

MR. CONSTANT: Snapper, you would be above thirty pounds, and, for grouper, above -- Above thirty is a good fish, but that's common. I see those, and I even see forty still, and so a forty or forty-five-pound grouper.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Randy McKinley.

MR. KINLEY: I had a little different thought on that. I mean, to me, and we're talking about recreational, right, going out and catching them, and I would think a ten-pound snapper, or a ten-pound grouper, that would be what I would consider a trophy fish and they would be happy with. That's going to feed them more than one meal, and then along with a few other fish, but, I mean, for us, you're not going to -- The recreational really doesn't have the means to catch the inshore gags over twenty pounds, and we're using braided line, hundred-pound test, and we can't get them out of the rocks, and so that's just not going to happen, unless you're doing real deep water, but I think ten pounds is a trophy now.



MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Obviously, it's highly subjective and regionally-specific. Down by us, probably a twenty-pound grouper, black, would be a really nice-sized fish, especially these days. For muttons, I would say twelve to fifteen, or above, is going to be a really nice-sized mutton that you're going to want a trophy of, or consider a trophy. Yellowtails are interesting, and you can catch some really big yellowtails, but they don't photograph particularly well, and so I don't know what you would call a trophy. Maybe above probably two to three pounds, for your average recreational angler, is probably a trophy yellowtail, and amberjack are what we get mad at.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I mean, I would -- That's highly subjective, and, I mean, a ten-year-old girl, or boy, anything she catches, you better say it's a trophy, you know, I mean, but I would just go off the state records, times 0.7, and anything there is going to be -- I'm just guessing, off the top of my head, but, I mean, obviously, the gags get smaller north of North Carolina, and I think I rarely get large gags, like I did back home here in Cape Canaveral. The red snapper are the biggest right here, I think from Canaveral to Georgia, and, you know, they taper off on the northern edge of North Carolina, the smaller ones that I've seen, but it's regionally-dependent, and I would pick a number off of the state record of whatever state you're in kind of thing.

MR. LORENZ: Very good point, Andy, because we do know -- I think most of the states, and I think South Carolina has it, and North Carolina has it, and they have essentially trophy fish programs, and they're not record fish, but they're fish that you can get a little citation for and that sort of a thing, and so that could be a treasure trove of all the years, of how many they gave out, and that actually may be a good indication of how many fish that are considered a nice catch that each state had over how many years, and just go back in the history of each of those recognition programs. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: By the way, I wasn't talking about a charter fishery, and this is an Avalon boat, or a Freeman boat, but, you know, we bump the records regularly, and I would say -- Whether we break them or not, but we bump them, and, as I said, a friend of mine broke the scamp in 2014, and so we're close.

MR. LORENZ: Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: One of those trips to remember, I had a guy, and he was Mr. Burger King from Greenville, North Carolina, and I took them to a wreck off there, in eighty fathoms, and I caught two thirty-one-pound grouper on one drop, and I made another drop and caught a twenty-nine, and those are the only three above twenty-pound fish that were caught that day, and they accused me of cheating, but it was memorable times.

MR. LORENZ: Good story. Am I missing anybody? Harry.

MR. MORALES: So, where I am, the AJs, while they might be a trophy fish, they're cat food, and we give it to the ladies that feed the cats on the island, and nobody wants to keep them, and so that's it. A twenty-pound red snapper, or grouper, we're going to be happy with, you know, and, I mean, hell, I don't know, a fifteen-pound, you know, blackfin, that's great, okay, and what else?

A six-pound trigger, and, I mean, you know, we're happy with that. I won fifty-bucks for one in Beaufort, and it was the biggest one, and it was great.

AP MEMBER: We had some nine pounds last year.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Is that it, Harry?

MR. MORALES: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Paul.

MR. NELSON: You all keep throwing your amberjacks back. I will take every one you throw back, and, as far as the headboats go, we don't fish heavy enough tackle to catch anything big, and so, usually, if you get a ten-pound, or twelve-pound, snapper on the boat, it's pretty fortunate, and, most of the time, they break the leader and get away. Offshore charter fishing, I always deep drop when I'm charter fishing, and it's 200 to 300 foot every day, and it gets old, dealing with the sharks and stuff, but fifteen-pound snapper, during snapper season, is a good snapper, and above. We do catch some twenty-pound gags, occasionally one bigger. Amberjacks will vary in size from twenty pounds to fifty pounds, if you can get them in the boat.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul. Anyone else want to weigh-on what they consider a great catch?

MR. HULL: It sounds like a great catch is one that you get past the sharks and into the boat.

MR. LORENZ: Let me talk to the guy that sells sharks. Okay. Anyone else? The next question, Adrian.

DR. HORDYK: Thank you for that, and that was useful for the recreational side. I guess is there any other thing that is just like a review for the commercial side, or really for any type of fishery, but our list here on the commercial is any other metrics that we should measure for what defines good management outcomes, and so the things we're going to measure, so we can compare the performance of different management types, and so what I have here is variability in catch, how much catch is going to vary between years, and usually low variability equals better, better performance. Then average yield, average expected catch in any given year, and that would be measured in tons, or in pounds, or whatever, and then the other thing I've got is just the portion of discards, but it would be useful to -- Is there anything else that we should be measuring and recording that's not listed here?

MR. LORENZ: Well, I have one, but it might be a little -- It may be a little bit too much out there, but -- Because you would need scientists to do this, but what about age? I mean, I've seen in journals, and there's many people having a hunch that, due to the way we fish, and release small ones, that we may actually be developing fish populations that are more in the midget class, and so I just wonder if that's really true, that there's certain fisheries that you want the fish to get a certain size level, and will they, and are we heading, in the long-term, for a genetic distribution that's going to give us smaller fish at a given age? We know that, often, with the days of the big ones, they were the aggressive ones, and so I might throw that out there. Jimmy, do you want to comment?

MR. HULL: Commercial fishermen just want to work. We need to have the ability to count on having something to fish, to work on, okay, being open, and the fishery needs to be open. We need to be able to retain what we catch, and we don't need to be discarding. We don't need to be discarding and wasting our time and effort on a perfectly good product, food product, and just wasting it back to the sea, and I think you covered that on discards, and so it would be -- For us, for me, it would be total retention. I mean, I should be able to keep -- If I want to keep a smaller animal, because I have a market for that smaller animal, I should be able to keep it. Total retention, and, when I catch my trip limit, I stop, and I go home, okay, instead of wasting my time out there discarding and discarding, so I can fit the size limit that supposedly is going to benefit the fishery.

It's just -- All it's doing is wasting all kinds of resources, right, plus my human resource, and so there's that, and the other -- You had three bullet points there, and, you know, the stability of being able to have a business plan, that, again, there's something there that I can work on, and so I have the ability to -- You know, here's some good weather, and the fish are available, and I can work for a few days, and, you know, get something done, and so I think you pretty much covered it, but it's just not -- Take the boot off of our neck. In the commercial sector, we go through a lot to be able to do what we do, a lot, and so, you know, let us do our job. We want to work. We're food producers.

MR. LORENZ: James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Kind of speaking along the lines of what you were saying, but in a little bit different manner, our -- I mean, I think all of us know, that hook-and-line fish, or maybe we don't, but that fish tend to learn behavior, and, when you catch and release a fish, there might be a learned behavior that keeps that fish from having the same behavior the next time. I mean, I know, a lot of different times, I can have fish behind the boat, and they will eat everything but my bait, and they're becoming more and more selective, and so is some of what we're seeing an evolution in different species, and so maybe that's worth looking at as well.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else have certain traits of fish, in the fish we catch to be monitored and to put in the database? Captain Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: Todd, when we did the trips for the Mid-Atlantic, were you on one of the trips where the big guy, one of my party, went with us?

DR. KELLISON: I was not, Captain Bobby.

MR. FREEMAN: Okay. Anyway, this guy -- We were doing a tilefish sampling, and this guy was a regular customer, and he happened to be in town, and he was from Virginia, and I called him and asked him if he wanted to go with us on that trip, to put another angler on the boat, since the intent was to find out whether the North Carolina tilefish were the same fish that they were catching in Virginia, because he was telling me that he was going out on headboats up there, and they were allowed a seven-fish limit, and the mates would take those seven fish and clean them and hide them somewhere and let them keep on fishing, but that's not my point.

Three drops in a row, he was the only one that got a bite, and I finally said, all right, what's your secret, and it was swish, swish, gulp, I had never used it before, and I haven't used it since, and it's

I guess it's a commercial for gulp, but it was amazing how successful he was in catching fish, and the rest of us not getting bites, and so stranger things.

MR. LORENZ: Chip and Adrian, back in your court.

DR. HORDYK: Thank you very much, everyone, for the information you've given me, and I think that's certainly enough to work on for the performance metrics, and I've got it for the commercial and the recreational, and I've got information on -- Direction on where to start looking for more information on the spatial distribution, on fishing effort, and so I think I've pretty got a bunch of the things I needed from this meeting. I think the next step, for us, is to try and -- We've got identified data sources, but we don't have them yet, and so I guess that's something for me to check with Chip, but is there anything else that you wanted from this group?

DR. COLLIER: So, later tonight, at 6:00, we are going to have a public scoping, talking about this MSE process, getting additional comments from other stakeholders, but you guys are the target stakeholders that we're dealing with, but just making sure that we're getting all the perspectives, as we're developing this MSE, and so we're going to be talking to them about some of what they think are the most important species, as well as how their fishing changes due to regulations, and so, if you guys want to stick around for that, later tonight, it's at 6:00 to 7:30, and I know you've had a long day, talking about this the whole time, and so don't worry about sticking around if you don't want to, but we would welcome your feedback, if you do want to join us, and so it was a great discussion today.

You know, I learned a ton, and I've been involved in this fishery for over twenty years, whether it was sampling at the dock or doing some commercial fishing or recreational fishing, and so it's great to hear how things have changed, and not all of it positive, but it's still fun to be involved in the fishery and hear how it's going, and so thank you, guys, so much for sharing your thoughts and your wisdom.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chip and Adrian. That concludes our agenda through today, and we will start up tomorrow at 8:30, where we'll move on to Amendment 46, which is recreational reporting and permitting, and there's going to be a presentation by John Hadley, and there have been a number of meetings, I guess, with -- The fisheries managers have met, and I think there's one in Tampa, in the Gulf, and maybe tomorrow -- We all know the issue with it, but we need ideas of how to make it better, if you have some, and I would like to see some input on -- You know, rather than this be the woes we're having about trying to get it, it would be more about how we work, ourselves, to help make sure that happens.

Then we'll have our feedback for the space center operations and the fishing activities off of Florida, and there are a few of you, and Andy Fish has agreed to chat with us a little bit on what he knows of the space center, and then we'll finish with the recommendations for the snapper grouper fishery, and we'll have SEDAR updates, and we'll get to some other business. Mike, did you have something?

All right. With the group's permission, Mike has asked me that, since we're ahead, and this will help us get done tomorrow, that we knock out two of the easier things for tomorrow, since we have the staff here, and so is Kathleen here? Kathleen, are you ready? Okay. We have twenty minutes, and we'll have the SEDAR Updates from Kathleen Howington.

MS. HOWINGTON: Just one moment while I pull up our website. Hello, everyone. I am Kathleen Howington, and thank you very much for staying for another twenty minutes for me, and don't worry. I will not take up all twenty. I am the SEDAR Coordinator for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and so, whenever you all are appointed to a SEDAR, and you're a part of one of those assessment processes, or you're reading an assessment report, I am the one who coordinates that project, and so hello.

What you're seeing right now in front of you is, of course, our website, and this is where you can go and get all kinds of information on SEDAR assessments, whatever you need. If you know the number, you can go to the quick links on the right, and what I am clicking on right now is actually our project grid, and so this, and I'm going to go ahead and scroll down, is a rough estimate of what's going to be coming up and what you should be keeping on your radar.

First things first, we have SEDAR 82, which is gray triggerfish, and that is currently ongoing. We've already finished the data part of the process, and we are moving on the assessment part of the process. Harry Morales and Jack Cox are actually my Snapper Grouper AP members, and so thank you very much for participating. We have a webinar coming up on May 18, and we're hoping to be able to finish this with a review workshop on the week of October 16 in Beaufort, North Carolina and then have this released by December of this year, and so we're hoping to be able to wrap that up. We'll have the follow-up operational, and hopefully it will be, you know, six months that we'll be able to, at the end of 2024, give you that assessment, and so that's right here. That's this timeline.

Of course, you know, black sea bass, SEDAR 76, actually just finished, and so we released that to the SSC, and they are reviewing it currently, and then the red grouper operational assessment is also currently ongoing, and this is hopefully going to be completed as well in December of this year, and we don't have Snapper Grouper AP members, and this is closer to what historically we've called an update. There is no topical working groups, and there's no webinars, and it's just a few little tweaks, adding in some additional data, and then hopefully we'll be able to get that to the SSC.

Now we have, starting this year, SEDAR 89, and that is tilefish, and so that's right here, in the orange, and that's Vincent and Mike Freeman, and so Vincent Bonura and Mike Freeman are my two Snapper Grouper AP members for that, and so thank you very much. That's going to be starting in November of this year, and so you'll be getting emails. Actually, you should have already gotten at least one email, but you will be getting emails starting in October, or September, just to warn you about everything that's going on.

After that, then we have blueline tilefish upcoming as well, and that's SEDAR 92, and that is Byron Shults and Dewey Hemilright are going to be our two fishermen representatives, industry representatives, and that is starting in April of next year, and it's going to be ending next year as well, and so you'll be getting tilefish and blueline tilefish next year.

Then one thing that I do want to keep you guys in the loop on is this red snapper research track. Currently, I have, on the schedule, to be requesting, the next time you all meet, who wants to be a part of the red snapper research track. This is going to be a two-year-long process, but there are steps in the process that you all can sign-up for, depending on what you want to do, and so there's

the data part of the process, and then the assessment, where we talk more about the modeling, and then there's the review workshop. If you want to sign-up for all of it, go for it, and I encourage you to. If you want to sign-up for just like the data and modeling, that's also cool, or just the data, and that's great. However I can get you guys involved, to able to come, and we will be having an in-person workshop in April of 2025, and that is really where I want you guys to come and tell us what's going on out on the water. I am going to be requesting this in the fall.

That is going to be upcoming, and then we also have, currently on the books, a gag grouper, Atlantic cobia, and a red porgy assessment, coming up in 2025, and all of those should be starting and ending in 2025, and so you'll be getting all three of those that year, and then, of course, as usual, everything in blue is our wish list, and white grunt -- One day it will happen, and SEDAR 100 is coming up, and it might be white grunt, but so everything else on there, you know, hopefully will happen. We have snowy on the list, and we have a dolphin management procedure up there, and greater amberjack as well, and hopefully it's going to be a research track that's going to be able to integrate that greater amberjack count that you may have heard about that's going on, and so all of those are hopefully going to occur. Does anyone have any questions for the South Atlantic SEDAR updates or ongoing projects?

MR. LORENZ: Questions or comments for Kathleen? Does anybody want to raise their hand, on any of those species, and say, pick me, pick me? Now is the time. All right, Kathleen. They're quiet, but I think they heard you.

MS. HOWINGTON: I see Chip's hand right behind David Moss's head, and what is David Moss volunteering for? Well, thank you, guys, and, of course, you will be hearing from me in the fall about the red snapper research track, and so just think about what time commitment that you want to do, four months, six months, one year, and I will be able to help you and walk you through each step and everything that's going to happen, and I will be able to give you a more detailed schedule closer to.

AP MEMBER: What is involved in this participation that you're seeking?

MS. HOWINGTON: All right, and so this is a research track, and so, like I said, it's two years long, and you've got three sections, the data, assessment, and review. The data is going to be a few pre-workshop webinars and a few post-workshop webinars and then a one-week in-person workshop that's going to be here in Charleston, South Carolina, and that's going to be where we get data providers, and we get our state guys, and we get our Science Center guys, and we get, of course, fishermen, and we get them all together in a room, and hopefully they're able to compile and sort the data that is available and what we have and what we think we can integrate into the model, and we're going to be looking at everything. It's a research track, and so that's the plan.

Then the next step, after those few webinars, is going to be the assessment process, and this is more modeling and more analysis, and so this is all webinars, and there is no in-person involved, but it is a lot of sitting through some long webinars, and so I warn my fishermen, every single time, and I am not going to be called a liar. However, this can also be where some of the most important problems occur, of suddenly they're looking at the model, to integrate commercial and recreational, and everything has gotten put together, and something is spiking weird, and they can't figure out why, and so it's really important that we do get fishermen in there saying that, oh yeah, that was when this management change happened, or that was when this hurricane occurred, and

you are able to inform us of what's going on with the data that we wouldn't necessarily be able to know if we're not on the water.

The final part of it is the review process, and so that's when we actually get our certified independent experts to come in, and they review the whole thing, and it's a 500-page report that they're going to be reading and nit-picking, and the big part about having fishermen there is, again, to be able to say, okay, I was part of the data process, and this is why this decision was made, or I was part of the assessment process, and this is why this decision was made, and this is the fishermen feedback, and the fishermen opinion, of what's going on out on the water, and so that is another in-person meeting, and typically it's about three days, and so that was a very detailed description. This is nice, having time.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Kathleen. Any other questions? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just to piggyback a little bit on what Kathleen is talking about, in terms of your participation in these stock assessments, I would -- Especially as like the snapper grouper staff person, I would definitely encourage participation, and especially active participation, from those that are involved. When we see weird spikes, and we know that there's a management piece that's tied to that, there is an element of like I'm trying to listen into the webinars, and I'm trying to be able to talk about it, and provide context, and you all definitely provide context through your fishery performance report, and that's one of the ways that you do it, but kind of -- I am going to play off of Bob's in the room when it happens type of thing.

To have a fisherman be able to tell the scientists that this is what we experienced, and like having a staff person do it, and I do the best that I can, but I am going to have -- Number one, I don't have as much credibility as you do, because I don't spend the time on the water that you do, and, number two, I'm not going to be able to give the level of detail that you would be able to give if you are actively participating in these things, and so, to be able to have fishermen that can listen-in on this process and be able to say that that data point doesn't make any sense, or explain that, and, even if it's a moment where a scientist like actually has a good reason behind what they're seeing, and they can explain it to you, and then there's a back-and-forth, and an improvement in the communication, there's benefit in that as well, and so I would just heavily encourage -- Volunteer, yes, but also actively participate, when you're in these meetings.

MS. HOWINGTON: Yes, please. You all know about gear, and you all know about the fleet, and you all know about historical usage, and that's not something that we're going to necessarily get with our data, and so we really need you all's input.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Kathleen.

MS. HOWINGTON: See. I told you it would take less than twenty minutes.

MR. LORENZ: Well, we have a few more minutes, and, of course, it saves us tomorrow, and it was the last thing on the agenda, and so I just wanted to address Christina and Ashley, and would you like to do any presenting at this time? You do? Okay. Good job. Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Thanks, guys, and I promise that we won't keep you too long, and this will just take a minute or two. I wanted to give you a brief update. If you remember, as part

of Reg 35, which was the red snapper amendment, the council had agreed to do a large expansion of our best fishing practices outreach initiative, and this not only includes additional money for an outreach effort, but it included the position of a brand-new position with the council, the Best Fishing Practices Outreach Specialist, and I am very excited to say that we have gone ahead and hired Ashley Oliver into that position.

Of course, now, because she has moved over from her original position as the Sea Grant Reef Fish Fellow to the council, we have also now hired a new Reef Fish Fellow, who will be starting next week, and so you guys will certainly get to know him very soon, and he will be here in-person at your next in-person meeting.

That's the biggest update, but I do want to remind you a little bit of what all was in that appendix. It includes, you know, increased tackle shop tours, going up and down the coast, visiting key tackle shops, and it involves doing seminars with fishermen in the area, fishermen like yourselves, and so, if you have any interest in participating in things like seminars, where perhaps you would partner with us to give a presentation on best fishing practices, as well as citizen science, if you have recommendations on people that we should be talking to, and collaborating with, as we try to get this message out to as many fishermen as possible, we would really, really appreciate it, and, even if you don't say anything now, you will be getting emails from us haranguing you about participating and helping out in these projects, and so we're going to be relying heavily on this AP to help us, you know, make some inroads into this community, and so I just wanted to let you all know that that was actively moving forward, and you'll be hearing more from us.

MR. LORENZ: Christina, we have a quick question here.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So, along with the best fishing practices, are you guys incorporating any best fishing ethics, you know, involved in that, because, as we move through time, I get older, but I remember a time where people gave us each other more space on the water, and were more respectful of each other out there sharing a resource, and so, I mean, I was just curious if you guys touched on that at all. Thank you.

MS. WIEGAND: I would say we haven't touched on that type of stuff yet. You know, coming from the council, we do sometimes want to be careful, and there is an ethic that you, as fishermen, have that it's not always necessarily well received if that type of message is coming from us, as the council, and I do think that's an important message, and I would certainly, you know, be willing to sort of talk to you guys about how we, as the council, might best be able to help push that message, but then, of course, I will forever and always remind you guys that it will always mean more coming from you, as fishermen, to your peers than it does coming from us as the management body.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Christina. Anyone else here that has anything that they would like to say or ask to Christina or Ashley? All right. Thank you, Christina, and welcome, Ashley. Mike, I'm going to adjourn, unless you have any last things to say to us? All right. The Snapper Grouper AP, for the day, is adjourned, and we meet at 8:30 tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 26, 2023.)

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APRIL 27, 2023

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Hilton Garden Inn Charleston Airport, North Charleston, South Carolina, on April 27, 2023, and was called to order by Mr. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: Good morning, everyone, and we'll reconvene our Snapper Grouper AP meeting. We're doing great, and we're on schedule, or maybe a little bit ahead, and let's hope we can keep that pace, because we've got a number of our AP members that will have to deal with a little pinch point. We have the state line, with Georgia, and then there's Jacksonville, and then there's some us that have to go up Route 17, and so let's do what we can do to remain on point. To begin, Mike wants to make a few comments before we go into Agenda Item Number 8, and so, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Bob. I just wanted to point out -- It was pointed out to me, by Jimmy this morning, that we have several public comments that have been submitted for this meeting, and so I wanted to bring those to your attention. I'm not going to go through the public comments myself, but I'm going to show you how to get to them, so that you can take a look. This is just navigating from the council's home page, safmc.net. Underneath Meetings, you can go to Advisory Panel, we have our meeting, April 2023. If you click on that meeting page, there's a button, right here on the side, that says, "read public comments". If you click that button, then it takes you to the Google form, where you can read all the public comments that are there, and so, that way, you all can take a look, as you're going through today, and as we wrap up.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you very much, Mike. I want to recognize Jimmy Hull, and he wants to make a statement.

MR. HULL: Yes, and I just wanted to say that I would think that it would be really important for the council to respond to these public comments, because every one of them says to open red snapper, okay, and like we've been hearing forever, and somebody needs to tell them why the council can't open red snapper, so they understand. Otherwise, they just -- It's just not good, and they need to be told why the council can't -- That's what I wanted to say.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. I think what I'm going to do is make a note, because I've been invited to address the council, with respect to the proceedings of this meeting, in St. Augustine in June, and I will mention that, you know, or count them up and read them myself, also, in addition to the fact that they should do that.

MR. HULL: Yes, and, I mean, it would be a quick summary of the comments, and it's like, okay, the preponderance of them want you to open red snapper, because they're overwhelming everything else, and here's why we can't. The council would open it if they could, but the science says, blah, blah, blah, and so, you know, these people are not as involved and knowledgeable about what's going on, but they are very interested, because they're taking the time to comment, and they should be probably answered, rather than not answered.

MR. LORENZ: Good point, Jimmy, and thank you for looking out for the people. I appreciate it, and we'll take care of it, and we'll do something. We'll do more than we've done. All right. Agenda Item 8, we're going to move on to recreational permitting, and there have been some meetings on it, and, from what I had, there have been meetings of what I would call the fisheries professionals, and so they're not folks like us, that we're the citizens, but I know there are people that have jobs in fisheries management, et cetera, and are on the council that have discussed this, and I'm going to give the floor over to John Hadley, who is going to discuss where we are on that.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. All right, and so this -- There's a decision document, and it's Attachment 8 in your briefing book, if you want to sort of follow along on your own, but that's what I will be going over today. I just want to kind of update the AP, and sort of get some initial comments from AP members, on where the council is thinking about going with a permit.

I won't go over a bunch of the background, and I know that many of you have heard it several times before, and have followed along in this process, but I do want to take a second to go over some of the recent actions and kind of bring everyone up to speed on where the council has gone with this and over their past few meetings, and so this really came back up to the council's -- To the forefront, and it's been sort of -- It was worked on for a while, and then it was put on hold for a bit, and it's come back up to the forefront of the council's workplan, and so the council has really been discussing this since March of 2022, and working on developing it.

To go along with the input from the Snapper Grouper AP, they've also come up with an hoc technical AP, if you will, that's really focused on the technical aspects of permitting, and so this is -- It's being reviewed by the Snapper Grouper AP, as well as the technical permitting AP, before the council's next meeting, but they worked on developing a permit, over several meetings, and also developing a potential education component to go along with that.

Of note, before the council approved this amendment for scoping, they did not include recreational reporting, and so I kind of want to -- I know that a lot of the discussions have been permitting and reporting, and the reporting aspect is no longer in Amendment 46, and so I wanted to help -- I think that will help frame some of the discussion with that, as we move along.

There are several reasons for that. One of the main reasons was that the council is really looking to build the foundation for potential other aspects in the future, so they can move towards reporting in the future, but they're trying to get that foundation in place with private recreational permitting, and also the benefits of a permit on its own, and really do that in a timely manner, and so the timeliness is another important aspect of this amendment, and trying to get something to move forward, because, as many of you know, as you've followed along this process, this has been years and years and years of discussion, with no sort of rubber meeting the road on a permitting and reporting for the private recreational component, and so that's where it stands right now.

It's really two major topics, and we'll go over some of the potential actions, but, you know, at a very high level, you're looking at creating a private recreational permit and then potentially creating an education component to go along with that.

A few of the objectives for this meeting is to get sort of your initial feedback on where the council is going, sort of the actions that are in there, and sort of the range of alternatives, and the AP will

have another shot at this in the fall, where you'll be going over a much more developed document, with a lot more of the details worked out, and so just to kind of keep that in mind, and this is the first shot at it, and it's not your only shot at it, and you'll be seeing it again in the fall, with some more of the details filled in.

Looking at some of the timeline for the way the council is moving on the amendment, you know, right now, gathering the initial feedback from the APs, and they've sent it out to scoping, and they received scoping comments in March, and sending it out to the APs for initial feedback, there again getting feedback from the Snapper Grouper AP, as well as the Technical Permitting AP, and, as long as this amendment stays on track, as it is planned, or at least as far as we know right now, and as planned for right now, the council will be developing this through the end of this year and into the beginning of next year, looking at a potential final vote in March of 2024, and so that's sort of the draft, and it's still a little bit of a tentative timeline, but that's what it's looking like at this moment.

I am going to go over the draft purpose and need, because I think this will answer some of the potential questions and direction that the council is going with this, and then I'm going to take a break and hand it back over to the AP for any questions and some discussion, and so, very quickly, the draft purpose and need -- The council has really taken a pretty good amount of their time to help come up with the goals of the permit and their intended outcome, and so a lot of that has been captured in the purpose and need, and so the purpose is to develop a recreational permitting system that will identify the universe of private anglers or vessels targeting snapper grouper species and would enhance the ability to collect recreational effort and catch data. It's also looking to promote best recreational fishing practices, I should say, through education.

Then the need is to improve education on best fishing practices and improve the quality and effort of catch data for the private recreational component that targets snapper grouper species, and so, really, there again, trying to improve those recreational data estimates, and, specifically, improve the precision of the recreational data estimates, that this AP has certainly discussed quite a bit, and some of the pitfalls that go along with that data. So, with that, I'm going to take a pause, before jumping into the potential actions in the amendment, and I'm happy to answer any questions. I will turn it over to the AP. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John. AP, questions for John, at this point, with what he's presented? Harry.

MR. MORALES: So we're approaching this bringing a water bottle to a house that's on fire, and somehow we're believing that that's going to have some kind of impact that is greater than what MRIP is giving you, and so you now have an additional bureaucratic permit that counts the number of fishermen, but does not necessarily tell you anything about the effort, and I am struggling to see something that -- At this rate, we will be here for a decade before there is ever a consideration of learning what the recreational fishermen, me, is actually doing to give you valuable data. This timeline seems to be incredibly long and inefficient. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Harry, and, just to bank a little bit off of what Harry said, when I brought this out before, and this is way back, with speaking with Michelle Duval, when she chaired the council, up in North Carolina, and we started way back then, eight or nine years ago, talking about the permit, and one things that's interesting about this, to me, when I canvassed

recreational fishing, is the fishermen are, and somebody else can comment, but they're almost split down the middle, 50/50, whether they want this or not.

One of the pushbacks that I kept getting was that, oh, another tax, you know, and that's how they view it, and they said to me that, well, you may be able to afford it, but, you know, some others can't, and I would have a -- You know, that's one of the fears, without some more teeth in this, is just we are getting the one thing out there that we did want, is identify the universe of fishermen, and that's good, but there's also the other part, and it's so what are you going to do, and the buy-in would be that we could get better fisheries management, but watch some folks come back and state that, well, it's just more money in order to fish, and that's my statement. Thank you for allowing me to do that. David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I recall, and, again, when I first started on the AP, nine years ago, there wasn't much of an appetite for rec reporting. We were saying that we wanted it done, but, overall, the general public -- There wasn't much of an appetite for it, and so this was the, I guess, at least give me this kind of scenario, was to start off with just a rec permit, and let's at least identify the universe of anglers, right, and that's where we started.

Since then, there's, obviously, been a bit more of a groundswell, and I think, as Harry said, you know, the unfortunate truth is the timeline of something of like this is just beyond what's acceptable. Understanding the way the process works, I get it, but there also has to be times where we need to be more nimble, and, if we're got enough support behind actual reporting -- I'm even reading through some of the comments, the public comments, and, even in there, you know, it's saying things like there should be some sort of a ticket system, a tag system, and let's report, and, you know, this is a little bit more of an appetite for it now, and it's something that is absolutely needed.

Again, you know, nine years ago, when I first started on the AP, we couldn't move it forward at all, and so we kind of just settled on, well, let's at least start with a tag, or a permit, and we couldn't even decide what to call it at the time, and now, I guess, it's moving forward with this, which is a great first step, but we're beyond where we need to take a first step now.

We need to kind of take five steps at a time, and, again, I fully understand the way the process works, but we really need to be thinking much quicker, in terms of how to accomplish this stuff, and there's just way too much of an effect on the fishery, and we see it in all of these other fisheries that we've talked about, and, you know, we could sit here, probably for the three days that we're here, and go back and forth on rec reporting, and I know that nobody necessarily wants to, but, you know, we really need to be more nimble, and, when I say "we", it's the royal we, and it's the council, and it's NOAA, and it's NMFS. It's everybody. Really get this done and figure out what's going on with our fisheries, especially from a rec side in the Southeast, and there's just way too much participation.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Very well said. Thank you. Chris Kimrey.

MR. KIMREY: Everything Harry said, everything David said, and I'm just wondering, as an AP, if we could make a recommendation, or something, to the council, where it be just a straight-up recommendation or via a motion or whatever, to at least come up with some kind of timeline on the reporting side of this, because, you know, obviously, there's a few benefits, and, you know,

it's the first building block of getting there, and everybody understands that, and there's some other benefits.

You know, it's going to let you count, you know, the recreational snapper grouper side, and I don't think it's going to do anything in the way of effort. I mean, I think it's -- But is there some way that we can ask for a timeline, from the council or whoever, on when reporting might become part of this, so it doesn't take ten years, or should we pass a motion asking to expedite this process, or could we come up with some kind of, once the permit is implemented, to just at least have a random sampling of the recreational snapper grouper permit holders, even if it wasn't required reporting, you know, and just do some kind of random sampling of them, like, you know, an MRIP for this particular permit, you know, via phone or email or whatever.

Once they get the permit, most likely, we're going to have an electronic trail to that stakeholder, and so it should be a little more streamlined to do that, and, like they said, you know, ten years -- If it took six, eight, or ten years, I mean, that's just -- If you ask any fishermen in this room the differences we've seen, in the past six, eight, or ten years, in the amount of pressure, and the availability of bottom fish, and, if you do another six, eight, or ten years forward, it's -- I mean, it's exponentially devastating what could happen, just after what we've seen in the last six, eight, ten years, and so this -- I mean, I am very passionate about this, and I think a lot of other people are.

Nobody says it's a small task, and we all know that it's a huge endeavor to make this happen, but it seems real important to do it as timely as possible, and, if somebody has a recommendation for, you know, asking for expediting this, please feel free to chime-in.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris, and, in the beginning, you -- I guess maybe you were making a statement, but I also noted that you asked questions, and you asked two questions in the beginning of your statement, and, with that said, I was thinking of asking you to go one-by-one with the questions, but, at this point, I will let John Hadley step in, and maybe he -- Maybe he can give some answers to what Chris just said.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. I wanted to, I guess, provide a little bit more information on some of the feedback that the council has gotten, because they are -- I guess they're looking at -- The feedback that they've gotten, and some of this is directly from MRIP, is that they could identify the universe of anglers with this permit, and then, once you do that, it can immediately be -- Basically, that angler -- That's a new sampling frame, outside of just the saltwater recreational permit, which covers this and that and the other species, from inshore all the way to, you know, pelagic offshore species, and so you've really narrowed-down that universe and that sampling frame.

You can plug that into existing random sampling, through MRIP, to improve the precision of the catch and effort estimates, and so there's sort of an immediate plug-in for the permit. Now, it's not as good as 100 percent reporting, and it's never going to be census-level data, but the feedback that the council has gotten, and I just wanted to relay that to the AP, the Snapper Grouper AP, is that there is an immediate potential plug-in there, once you identify the universe of anglers, to improve the sampling on the private recreational side, thereby tightening that sampling framework for MRIP, and so I just wanted to put that out there for the AP, to kind of just increase the

information and just -- I should have included that earlier, but that's some of the feedback that the council has received as well.

MR. LORENZ: All right, and, to just circle back for a minute, and I do have a queue here of Richie, Cameron, Jimmy, and Harry, and then David, and I do want to go back to Chris, because you started with asking real questions, and do you wish to ask -- Do you wish for another shot to ask the question and stop and maybe get an answer, with John Carmichael sitting over here, who may give us an answer on some of that, who has attended these meetings, or are you satisfied for now?

MR. KIMREY: I think my questions were a build-up to my little monologue, if you will, and I was hoping to incite just a little bit of conversation from somebody on the panel, or elsewhere, about, you know, at least trying to define a timeline for, you know, more than the basic sampling that can be plugged in, that I'm sure is helpful, and, you know, it gives you that, but I just -- I don't think that anybody in this room would disagree with me that the recreational sector is consuming a huge amount of what's in our ocean, and I don't think anybody is getting close to counting it correctly, and so this is hugely important, when, you know, a lot of the stocks we see are plummeting, and it correlates with the same timeframe that the accessibility is increasing exponentially, and it's not going down, like the commercial side, and it's growing, you know, at a snowball effect, and we need -- We need some way to make this happen fast, and I can't say it any other way.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Chris. Thank you, and the record records what you stated, and maybe some of this will get teased out with our queue that we have here. We have, online, Richard Gomez, and so, Richie, you're recognized to make your comment. Are you there, Richie, or are you under a bridge? Richie, you are self-muted. Would you unmute yourself and speak, or I can come back to you. Okay, Richie. We'll be coming back. I will circle back, in the interest of time. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: You know, I guess one of the key things is, number one, the establishment of the recreational universe is absolutely key, and so we all know that, and so that can be done through a permit, and we all agree on that. Now, the next thing is getting -- How do you derive the quickest, fastest information in the shortest amount of time possible?

Well, you know, so we already have this stuff set up on apps, where people can at least put in what fish they're catching on their app, and so, as part of an educational piece, you put that in, and, you know, the possibility is there any way to at least get some data. Now, whether it's certified data or what, but, right now, we're not getting anything for really solid data, and so you could start getting data streams almost immediately, once you get a permit, on a voluntary basis, and then you can extrapolate from there what's going on.

With the advancements in technology, especially AI and stuff, you can have stuff right on your phone, where they could snap a picture, and something could identify every damn fish on the boat, the exact length, and spit that stuff out in seconds, possible, within a few years, and so, you know, the key, for me, is get the permit in place, and we've been talking about this stuff for years, and so, you know, things just take a while, and everybody on this council knows that it's not going to happen overnight.

It's impossible to happen overnight, but, if we can at least move forward and get the permit there, then that's the first building block of the next step of where we can go, and then do education and outreach, and maybe at least we can derive some information that they can start to at least plug into the MSE, and then they can -- You know, as that advances, they will have another leg of what I would say the three-legged stool is for the MSE, commercial, charter, and the recreational side, and it gives a point to go with, and it's way better than what we've had in the past.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. I recognize Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chris and Cameron are right on target, and it will make a difference, even if you just have the basic permit and the extrapolation of effort on these intercepts. Now it could turn that 800,000 dead discards, or whatever, down to a more realistic number, rather than the entire everybody included, and so it will make a difference, but the reporting obviously needs to come along with it, if we can get it done, a voluntary basis possibly, with a better education part of this initial amendment. It could be, you know, you guys need to report, and you need to do this, even if it's not mandatory, and some of them will, and then you will have that subsection. The question I have is to John, and can the amendment -- Can the council amend the amendment and add anything to it at this point?

MR. LORENZ: Yes, John. Answer.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and so it's fairly -- The amendment is just past scoping, and so it's fairly early in the process. If they wanted to do that, it might extend the timeline that you saw earlier, but it can definitely be done. You know, at this point, I think, if the council wanted to add anything along the lines -- You know, in relation to what's been considered, they could.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so just one follow-up would be, you know, try to get all you can get out of it at this time, but don't lose -- If it's going to cost us more time to get just this basic first step, building block, don't do that either, and let's get it and then develop it from there.

MR. LORENZ: Great points, Jimmy. Harry Morales.

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jimmy, I agree with most of what you say, and I do believe that, if it took an additional three to six months, that's better than adding three to four years, and so that tradeoff, for me, I will do it every day. My concern is that MRIP, which reminds me of the old internet, which was one way, and MRIP reaches out to the fishermen, and we're in the twenty-first century, and now we have two-way communication.

We have an app already developed for two-way communication, and I believe that the recreational fishermen will in fact respond with a voluntary effort, which will now give you better information, and it would probably quadruple the amount of information that MRIP can possibly get. For fifteen years, I haven't met anyone in Hilton Head that has ever spoken to an MRIP representative, never, right, and yet they would get a ton of information from whomever. If that were there, and I do believe in incentives, and so my fishermen talk about, you know, give me a tagging program, or give me -- Let me buy a snapper tag, right, or two snapper tags, whatever, something, versus nothing, and guess what?

If you had something like that, and voluntary feedback, and your name goes into a lottery, and maybe you get a tag, my god, I believe that you would get so much damn information that we would then clean this up in the shortest possible time, and that's the house that's on fire, and the fire has got to get put out. Thank you very much.

MR. LORENZ: Beautifully said, Harry. David Moss, I have you on my list.

MR. MOSS: Jimmy actually stole most of my thunder, and so, in the interest of moving us forward, I will reserve comment for the rest of John's presentation.

MR. LORENZ: Next in the queue is Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. I would agree with a lot of the comments that have been made, and so I'm not going to be too redundant, but one of the things that I've been wondering is how would this permit be purchased, or given, or would it be through the states or through the federal administering it somehow?

MR. LORENZ: John, you can answer any questions as they come up.

MR. HADLEY: Okay. Thank you. The idea, right now, and this is something that I think you'll hear more of, as the council develops the concept, and you'll hear it again in the fall, but, based on the council's discussion so far, the idea was to have a federal permit, and so an overarching South Atlantic federal permit.

The discussion has evolved, and I think we'll hear more about this, but for the potential to allow states to have their own permitting system, as long as it meets the federal requirements, whatever that may be, and so basically an equivalent permit on the state level, and allow them to opt out, and so similar to the saltwater angler registry, where there was that nationwide, you know, saltwater angler registry, but then there was a system in place where states could basically create their own saltwater angler license, and they could opt-out of that program, and so, the way that the council's discussion has gone, I think that will be considered, where states can opt-out, as long as they have an equivalent permit on their own, you know, thereby making sure that the universe of anglers is identified, but the details of that have yet to be worked out, and so I think we'll hear more about that.

MR. CONSTANT: We know that Florida has a successful permitting, and the people in Florida love it, and it does identify the anglers, and I was kind of thinking through this, and, as a matter of a fact, Jimmy sparked something. We have the app that does the recording, and I don't know if it's capable of administering a permit or not, but if you -- Even if it's a situation where you have to buy, to purchase, the permit, for twenty-five or fifty dollars, whatever it may be, and, if you could do that on that app, then that particular permit -- That permittee would already be on the data-gathering device, and so you would already be registered in the field that does the recording, and so that's another step.

I mean, obviously, it wouldn't be required yet, but at least, through the education that we're going through, we could teach them how to use that app, and then you can purchase your permit on that app, and why not use the app, and so that's just one thought, but one thing I feel that -- This has been going on for the three years that I've been here, and I really feel that the public is losing its



appetite, and losing its patience, with this whole process, and I feel that the timeline is crucial, because -- I don't know, and it just seems, to me, like, through the fishermen's eyes, this is going south.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Our Vice Chair, James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. As I'm listening to everybody here, and I'm trying to gather all of the wonderful ideas that are being put forth, I started to think about how much of this information that we're going to gather can be validated, and where is the point where the information, whether it be voluntary or mandatory -- When is that information going to be taken seriously?

I know, as a commercial fisherman, we have felt, for a long time, that we put up so much valuable information, and we're not really sure how it's used, and so I'm not trying to add a layer of negativity to this, but we do need to have some sort of uniform blanketing permit, you know, application process, that is linked to some sort of real data collection that is going to carry weight when it comes to fisheries management and full accountability in this sector.

Let's really -- If we're going to try and really nail it down, and hit a home run with this, you know, we need to make sure that we're asking for everything that we need, right from the jump, and I don't know that I have any, or all, of the answers to that, but we need to make sure that the collection point, and where the data is collected and processed -- That it can be validated at the same time. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Next on our list is Jack Cox.

MR. COX: I mean, this is something that we've talked about. In our visioning, in 2013, it originally started with either a permit or a stamp, on your recreational saltwater license, to identify the universe of people in the fishery, but, you know, commercial fishermen have been doing this for twenty-six years, and it's not a very hard task. I mean, it just really isn't. I fill out my logbooks, and I fill out my discards, and, you know, it's not hard.

The challenge is that we have another system that will have to prove what we're doing, so that, when the dealer buys our fish, they also have to go behind what they bought and have an accountability measure that shows this is where the fish came from, and this is what they caught, and so that makes our system much more valid than what the recreational guys will be doing, but, you know, when we see our fish stocks doing what they're doing, and we continue to get cuts and cuts in the fishery, people should feel that they want to help the scientific community in identifying what's going on in the ocean.

So many people go to council meetings, and they're upset with the science, and SEDAR, because they don't agree with it, and the cuts they're taking, but the only way to get better at that is to do what we're talking about doing here, and I heard some council members, at the last council, that wanted to send this back to us, because they wanted us to tell them again why this needs to be done, and so it's important that we get the message back to the council and say this is why this has to be done, and be done, just like a lot of you guys are saying, as soon as possible.

I do like what Harry was saying, that fishermen should have an incentive. They should be rewarded because they -- You know, commercial fishermen have to do this, because it has to align with our dealer reporting, but the recreational -- They don't have that component, but there has to be an incentive, and we certainly have some red snappers that we could give up, I think, if we did something, to help these guys really want to do something, and give them something back, to want to get involved, but we have to send a message to them that this is helping our scientific community, and this is helping us count fish, figure out what's going on in the ocean, and try to get us back on track and rebuild fisheries. There needs to be a buy-in, and they have to understand that they're not being forced to do this because we're trying to take something from them, but we're trying to give something back. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Jack. I would like to recognize Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just it's kind of a question, but, I mean, we have, like Cameron said, and Harry said, and we have the app, and do you need the council's permission to promote the app and go out there and say, hey, let's use this, and we've got it, and let's use it? Do you need their permission to do that?

MR. HADLEY: No, and so I think the council has been very supportive in promoting volunteer reporting, developing the MyFishCount app, and, it's evolved now, I think into Fishbrain, and it hasn't evolved into that, and I take that back, but have several apps out there, and the council has been very supportive of voluntary reporting. You have the MyFishCount app, that the council developed and tried to push out to private recreational anglers, and you've gotten some very good feedback on that from -- You know, you can look at sort of a cross-section of catches and have a lot of additional information that MRIP doesn't capture. There is nothing -- You know, the short answer is there's nothing that the council -- The council has been supportive, and the council doesn't have to take any action for anglers to go ahead and start reporting voluntarily.

MR. MILITELLO: So let's just -- Let them do their -- I would rather not wait three years, or five years, or whatever it's going to take, but, if we've got a tool that we can use now, let's put a little social media and do it, and say, hey, let's -- Explain that this is for the good of tomorrow, you know, and it's there, and let's use it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: When I am listening to what everyone has to say, it's all valid, and it's all important, and it can all move the ball forward, and so one of the things that I always try to do, in my business, is work as smart as I can and not as hard as I can, and so, literally, when I'm looking at this, every state already has fishing licenses. Am I correct on that, that all the states have a personal fishing license? I am guessing that's the case, where you get issued -- Okay, and so we already have a universe of people out there who have to have a fishing license to fish.

It would seem, to me, that, if we utilize that information, and we do what Harry is asking, with some incentives, and, I mean, the way incentives work is you've got to frickin' throw out an incentive. If you want results, you've got to throw incentives out. Now, how you get to those incentives, I don't know, but I would say somebody like Freeman has got a pretty damn big interest to make sure that fishing keeps going, and they can keep selling boats for the next fifty years, and

that's the link between how we go from the zero and one block to building multiple blocks in a fast period of time, is getting some kind of collaboration with state and federal and private entities.

Then you go in, and you hit something on social media of, hey, this is what's going on for now, and we're ready to do a permit for ocean fishing. You hit every single person at every single state who already has a permit, and you say, hey, somebody is going to win a Freeman, and you've got fifteen-million people signing up, and who gives a shit? That's great for us. Somebody is going to win a Freeman.

I will guarantee you that you will have results immediately if something like that goes on, and you're going to start to get the information that you derive, but it's going to have to be -- If you want to go from the one block to the multiple blocks quick, it's like Chris, Harry, and Jack said. You've got to have the incentive, and you've got to have the reason why. My personal opinion, as a businessman, is the incentive, unfortunately, is going to outweigh the why. That's just the way human nature is, and so that's just my two-cents.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Harry Morales, did you have your hand up? You're in the queue now.

MR. MORALES: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. Before we leave here today, I believe that this AP has to either pass a very strong resolution to the council, as to what actions they should take with Amendment 46, and now I've heard, Jack, you talk about validation of information, and so, therefore, I take it that the recreational fishermen -- Even if I tell you what I do, it's not validated, and so, therefore, it's not good.

However, we can take MRIP, who I guess talks to fishermen, and surveys them, and that's valid. In the recreational world, when there's a fish that lands on the boat, to stay on the boat, almost the first thing that somebody wants to do is snap a picture, and the snapping of those pictures is validation that that fish came on my boat, just like at the dock. They're lined up, and what do we do? We snap pictures.

Hooks, put them all up, and snap pictures, and so, in the twenty-first century, the validation occurs with those pictures, which is exactly what you're looking to do with the wreckfish, and so I would say to you that the fishermen pictures is the validation that we could go with, and it does need to be incentivized, and, in my opinion, it's a very simply way to do it, and include the fish app that we currently have, but this AP has to send a very strong message back to the council, because that house is on fire, and I think they know it, and their credibility has been shot, from what I've heard from everybody here, and so it's time to right the ship. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry, and, maybe at the end of this, maybe we can -- It will be more difficult, but maybe put a few bullet points down as please do this, and have a couple more statements there, and I do have David Moss in the queue.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Chris, just to respond to what you had said, so the council has worked actually with a couple of different organizations in the past, on some of the apps and stuff, but the problem is that participation is nowhere near where it needs to be to really have a decent sample size, number one.

Number two, the council's budget, and reach, is only so far, and remember, in a lot of aspects, they're the bad guys, and I'm not saying that I agree with it, but, when they go out to the public and say, hey, please use this, please do this, you know, and this is where it's incumbent upon us, as representatives of our respective communities, to help with that, to help with that outreach, and to help engage those people, and to, you know, get influential fishermen involved, and anglers involved, and to try to do this.

There's, you know, a million different apps out there, and not a million, and probably half-a-dozen to a dozen, apps out there right now that anybody can use, but, for the most part, they're really just kind of your own personal logbook, and they don't go anywhere, and that's one of the other problems with some of these apps, and, you know, hopefully, and this is why I wanted to kind of move this forward a little bit, is we can propose a recommendation to include reporting in this, and they can start to engage some of these different app developers to work with the science committee, work with the SSC, and so on and so forth, and get some of this data actually used.

Some of this data is floating out there, and there's not nearly enough right now, because nobody is really using it, but the unfortunate truth is, and what a lot of these anglers see, is that the data is not going anywhere. It's there, and, you know, you can go on to MyFishCount, or not MyFishCount, but iAngler, and you can go onto the Release app, or you can go onto -- No, and you can go on to MyFishCount, and you can log all this stuff, but it's really just -- At this point, it's only for your own personal logbook.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David, and I just want to jump in just with a little bit of information that I have here, since we're getting to possibly the formulation of some ideas back to the council, and some bullet points, but just a couple other things to keep in mind that no one has said, but I just keep thinking of.

Throughout this AP, I, from time to time, mentioned about get involved, get in the room, talk to some reps, and I've been following this council, actually going to their meetings, on my own, for probably the last fifteen years, and what I'm seeing, recently, with this -- I thought I should share with you that there are some issues, I think, and this is my personal opinion, at the state and local level, at the state and federal level, to just give some thought, if you're looking at ideas, and what I have seen, and this is my personal opinion, and so I will start with the federal, and, you know, there is this idea of the permit to be federal or state-administered, and so it's seeming like, with infrastructure, it's leaning towards at least the states beginning to administer that, and there are some reasons you have.

One, if you look at the -- One issue I see with the federal government is think of what you may be able to do, and so, with Andy Strelcheck, our NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator, he gets it. He wants it, but he's not raising his hand saying I can do it, I can do it, I can do it, and there's a reason. He can only get, as you know, the money that it costs for the permit, and so there aren't extra people sitting around in his shop to give this assignment to, and that's what I'm gathering, okay, and when I had talked to Andy.

The states, every one of the state head fisheries managers came up with an issue, with the exception of Jessica McCawley in Florida, who Florida's infrastructure, with their reef permit, and it doesn't seem to be any big deal, with Florida and Jessica, but, in the other states, there's an issue. Carolyn Belcher, with Georgia, states that she cannot just implement anything she wants without -- They

all seem to have stepped back to the need for getting the legislature involved, in their state, and they don't have just total authority to bring some of these things about, and so, if you're in the State of Georgia, maybe you want to talk to some reps and think about that and find out whether I'm true in what I'm telling you.

Mel Bell, who is the Director of the DNR, the office of fisheries management here in South Carolina, he states -- I believe I have heard Mel say, and I'm not sure that, in South Carolina, that you can even set bag limits and size limits without it going through the legislature, okay, and so, if you want it to be administered in South Carolina, that's probably a bridge that has to be crossed. If you live in South Carolina, maybe you want to do some talking with your house or state senate reps on that.

I, in North Carolina, stated, to my friend Jack over here, that we actually have a statute, and the other part we're not talking about is this will need some teeth, called enforcement, and, as I mentioned yesterday, North Carolina does not have a JEA, a joint enforcement agreement, and, not only that, about ten or twelve years ago, a statute was passed to make it illegal, and so Cathy Wallace up there -- She doesn't have any ability to do this without that law being changed, and, in our state, and probably all the other states, someone like our Director of Marine Fisheries cannot lobby. Someone like me has to go and get that done, and so I just wanted to pass that on.

There's some homework that some of us may have to do, if you want this to go a little better and faster, and it's something to think about, if you get the opportunity to talk to a state or a federal rep, to help out Andy Strelcheck, and, for years, it's existed that they can only, with permits and all, have enough -- The money to administer the program, and nothing extra goes to research or enforcement and that sort of a thing, and so -- I am getting long-winded on this, but I do want to bring this to the table for you to think about, because it is what I see could be a behind-the-scenes, and nothing is really said, but it's a block. I think it slows it down. Thank you. With that, I would like to recognize James to speak.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I guess I want to ask a question. If the panel could suggest something similar to this, and, along with what Cameron was saying, we send a heads-up to all state-licensed fishermen of, hey, there's going to be a federal permit required that's going to go in place at this point, January 1, 2025, just for example, and then, at that point, you know, with that information, this is the app, or these are the apps, that you're going to be able to find that information on this permit and apply for this permit.

Maybe registration starts six months ahead of time, and then the first 250,000 get a chance to win a whatever we deem is going to be the incentive, and could we outline something that specific, and that be our recommendation, because, I mean, I believe that's a bit of a summary of what I'm hearing from everybody of some very specific ways to do this, and can we do that?

MR. HADLEY: Absolutely. You know, you can outline the recommendations as you see fit. I didn't say anything, because I like the outside-of-the-box thinking, but the incentive part -- If it's going to be non-fish related, and so if it's going to be something from the private sector, there is a lot of constraints on that, on what can be can tied in, what NOAA can do, basically, and so that would -- I'm not saying that's impossible, but it would take some additional problem-solving, I guess, but that's not to squash any recommendations, and I say, you know, put forward what you think is the best recommendation.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John. The queue is getting long. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chris, to the point on these apps and so forth, about being used, Julia Byrd, and the girls behind you, have, along with citizen science, have developed an app, and they have gone through a pretty extensive traveling, up and down the coast, to tackle shops and fishing clubs, and, if I'm not mistaken, you all are going, like in the next month or so, down to north Florida, from St. Augustine through Jacksonville, and they're stopping at the tackle shops, fishing clubs, and they actually had a show at Port Royal Sound Foundation, in my neck of the woods, at Lemon Island. They had a pretty good gathering there, and so they are spreading the word, and the app is up and ready and available, and that's the one that you've heard me talk about a handful of times. It was Amber von Harten's baby, and Julia Byrd, and they developed a great app that's useable.

To Bob, what Bob is saying about every one of these states are going to have to address this, and the council is not going to take this through each state, and we are going to have to do our homework, and you're right about South Carolina. Any regulation in South Carolina, redfish, trout, flounder, it has to go through the legislature, and I have taken it upon myself, along with CCA, and we've already moved, and it's in our legislature, about doing saltwater permitting, recreational permitting.

It hasn't developed to a bill, but it has the language, and it's being accepted through the senators and so forth, and it's no further than that, but it's there, and it's in front of them, and they're looking at it, and it's going to coincide with whatever the council comes out with. I mean, if they come out and say that we're going to do the data, well, that's fine, but, if they're going to ask the states, South Carolina is in front of them in this legislative session, and, so far, we've had zero complaints, and it's all checking the boxes, and so I hope that goes in -- Like you said, Florida said good things, and Georgia -- You know, they don't have a lot of participation. I think they will go along with whatever Florida and South Carolina does. North Carolina is a different story.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Thank you very much. Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So, with the restrictions that, you know, it would have to be within NOAA, and so whatever it is, and so we just spitball and throw ideas up there, and so, if NOAA wants to give a free right whale ride to somebody who wins the thing, so be it. That's their deal, and they can do that, and so, you know, we can start there, and then we can build, and we can work on things to bridge the gap, so it can be what I would say would be meaningful to anglers to get involved, but the whole purpose is -- No matter what it is, whatever, that you get your first free American snapper tag or whatever, or a permit for life, whatever, but you start small, and then, you know, somebody can come in, down the road, and get the big ideas put together and really get it moving forward.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Last in the queue, right now, is Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I mean, call it what it is, and it's a red snapper permit, and the incentive is to be able to catch red snapper, and if, all of a sudden, you can't have a red snapper unless you have this permit, if there's ten-million people that apply for this permit, that's kind of all you really need, is -- That's what you really want to know, is how many people want the red snapper, and the red

snapper is the problem child, or not really, but the elephant in the room kind of thing, and I don't know, but I'm just putting that out there.

MR. LORENZ: We call it the choke species in fisheries. Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of things. You know, talking about the incentive on this, the incentive is you have to have the permit to address the federal fisheries in federal waters, and that's going to be snapper grouper. They are controlled by the agency, the federal agency, and so, if they say you have to have this permit, or you do not fish in federal waters, you do not fish in federal waters if you don't have it, and the other incentive, to the states, to make it -- If that's the way it's going to go, which it should, to where you apply it to your recreational state license, is, if my state citizens don't have a way to get this permit in my state, they don't get to fish in federal waters, and you see how quick they get that ability done.

The first step is the federal government says you have to have this permit, and the incentive is, okay, I've got to have this permit, period, and that's the incentive. It's I can't go fish without my permits, and that's my incentive. I don't get rewarded, and the reward is I get to go participate in what I do. I've got to have the permit.

The second thing is you've got MRIP-FES, and the opportunities that are right now before us, for this recreational -- They're endless. The council, they should be drooling at the opportunities to better improve what they do. I mean, the things that are going to come from this, once they get this implemented, where you have this information -- Things that we're not even thinking about now are going to come into play. It just has to happen, and it has to happen immediately.

Ideas like Harry's, to take pictures. Well, add a ruler to that picture, okay, and let's -- While you're doing it, I mean, these things can develop and be endless, and that's the point. The first step is to get a federal permit that's in place, whether it's just this basic step, and then you get the reporting in, and the voluntary, and the ways that you can purchase the permit, possibly, online, get it all done quick and easy, but require the permit, and everything else will go into place, and it's just endless opportunities.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy, and that's what comes with nine years of experience in dealing with the issue. Thanks, Jimmy. We need a cross-check here, and maybe if John, for me, and Mike can help me out, and where should we go now? Jimmy and Harry had mentioned about us putting a few bullet points and things down, and where are you, John? Maybe there's more for you to present before we do something like that.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and so the next step is to run through the draft actions that are being considered, and so I think that might help formulate some of the recommendations, and, if you don't mind, I might run through those, and we can come back to maybe a --

MR. LORENZ: Absolutely.

MR. HADLEY: Okay. With that said, I'm going to have two basic sets of actions, and so these are draft actions, and they haven't been approved by the council yet. The council has sort of given some recommendations on how they want to see these decisions made, and how they would like to address each decision, and so this is really fresh material, if you will, and so I want to emphasize

that, but the first three actions are permit-related, and the last three actions are the education component, and they're related to the education component.

With that said, Action 1 really looks at establishing the private recreational permit for snapper grouper, the snapper grouper fishery, and what it's doing -- It's really doing two things. It's establishing the permit, and it's specifying who needs to have that permit, and so there's really two major options there. It can be a vessel permit, which matches up with the for-hire and commercial permits that are issued to a vessel, or it could be an angler-based permit, and so, essentially, the permit would be issued to a specific angler. Alternative 2 would essentially establish a permit and make it a vessel permit.

The last three alternatives establish an angler permit, and one option would be to have a -- It would be to specify that any angler onboard a vessel would need the permit to participate in the snapper grouper fishery, and Alternative 4 specifies that at least one angler onboard a vessel would have to have the permit, and then Alternative 5 specifies that any angler participating in the snapper grouper fishery would need a permit, regardless of where the fishing takes place, and so that's sort of the broadest spectrum, if you will, there at the end, and so that would include anglers on vessels, anglers fishing off of bridges, piers, the beach, what have you.

That's sort of the spectrum there, and I am not going to go into too many details, but the council has gotten some feedback, from their technical AP, where they discussed an angler versus a vessel-based permit, in pretty great detail, and sort of the take-home, based on their discussion, was to recommend a vessel, rather than an individual permit, angler permit, since it helps reduce the initial universe of how many permits will need to be issued, and so it sort of lowers the barrier there to getting this permit in place, and it makes it a little bit -- The logistics a little bit more feasible, and it will -- We had a great deal of discussion from staff from MRIP, staff from FWC, and both seem to agree that a vessel-based permit could be plugged into their system and used to help with survey design, help with validation, and help with -- Ideally with the precision of recreational catch and effort estimates, and so that was their recommendation, to go with the vessel-based permit.

That's sort of the first step-one, if you will, and so establishing the permit and then specifying who it needs to go to, the vessel or angler, and there's a couple of discussion questions there for the AP, if you have any comments on the initial range of alternatives for establishing a vessel or an angler-based permit, and I'm certainly happy to hear those at this point, and are there any other alternatives that you think should be considered, and so keeping in mind that we are, again, early in the process, and we're kind of looking at, you know, are the bookends there, are there other bookends that you think should be added, sort of the range of options, or the range of alternatives, and, you know, there again, keeping in mind that this AP will have another shot at this in the fall, to come up with additional recommendations, and, with that, I will turn it over.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John. Okay, and so what we see here -- We see there is a top alternative, or at least the recommendation from that committee, is a vessel permit, probably for the simplicity of numbers, and then beyond that is individual permits and where those individuals might be while they're using that permit, and so let's entertain comment with respect to that. I need to get my queue together. David Moss, go ahead and begin, and everybody else put your hands up.



MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is, again, one of those situations where we're going to settle and say that something is better than nothing, I guess. At the end of the day, a vessel permit is, again, better than nothing, but it still doesn't really identify the true universe of anglers, unless there is reporting attached to it, where you have to say that four anglers went out with me today, or five anglers went out with me today, whatever the case may be.

For that reason, again, if we're just going to use these ranges of alternatives, I would say that any angler should be the preferred, and I'm not making a formal motion just yet, but throwing it out there for discussion, unless, again, we attach reporting to this and if it's -- You know, if you get a vessel permit, then you have to report, at the very least, how many people went out.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. So your initial statement, right now, is a recommendation. All right. I am recognizing next Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So I disagree slightly on that. You know, the first thing, in my opinion, is it goes back to the very simple fact that you've got to get the first block in place if you're going to build anything, and so, you know, just like in commercial, it's usually the vessel that's tied to it, because, if you don't have a vessel, you're not going to go into federal waters, and it's kind of pretty damn hard to get out there.

If you stick with the vessel, at least in the beginning, it would give you a point to start with, and then you can follow-up with apps or whatever, and, you know, you're going to have a certain catch on the boat, and you have to have anglers on there, and it has to be listed, for their bag limits and things, things of that nature, and so it could be something that could be very easily incorporated.

Once again, we're not even talking about gathering information right now, but we're just talking about getting the first block of getting a permit, and then layering on the information down the road, and so I think the easiest, fastest, simplest way to move the ball forward would be with a vessel permit.

One, you're going to reduce the amount that you have to do dramatically, and at least get the program up and running, because, if we get into the weeds with all the individuals and stuff, we could be sitting here at this table, ten years from now, and still saying, hey, remember when we were talking about this a decade ago, and, you know, maybe a third of us won't be here then, and so, you know, in my opinion, it's whatever we've got to do to get the ball moving, and that would be the easiest, fastest thing, would be to get the vessels going first, and then we can layer in other things after the vessels.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Well said. Thank you for the suggestion. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I am in complete agreement with Cameron. I think it's got to be the vessel. You start -- I mean, what do you do with a family member that comes down that wants to go? If you start requiring this, you would have to have a temporary, three-day, fishing permit, and so it gets into a lot of different levels there. With the vessel, you could put a vinyl sticker on, or whatever, to mark it, just like we have to have on our boats, and it would be very easy to do, and so I think the starting point is the vessel.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: I agree with what Randy and these guys are saying, that we should just start it with that, start it with that, and, you know, if you get a family member or someone that comes down, just like Randy said, it's going to be a pain in the butt to make it that, and so let's just start it with that, and we'll go from there.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, this AP has spent countless hours discussing this, and our last recommendation was to go with the vessel, for all of the reasons that are listed here in the bullet points, and to make this happen quickly, and it does provide -- Everything is set up for the vessel, at this time, in the agency, and it's the easiest way to go, and it's the quickest way to get this done. There is less resistance from the agency to do it that way, and, yes, it would be nice to have individual, but, at least the vessel, you're getting things started.

The vessel owner is the responsible person, and he has to have that permit on his vessel, and, usually, whoever owns the vessel is responsible for the trip, and, I mean, it's his vessel, and he's buying the fuel, and he's doing this, and he's arranging the parties, and then, eventually, he's the one that's going to be responsible to potentially report, or he can't get that permit, and it just shrinks it down, and it doesn't make it -- It's not perfect, but it sure is a good, quick way to go, and it seems like this has been reviewed by the agency, and they are saying this is the way to go, and so there's the resistance from the agency away on that one, because there's a resistance there to figure out how to do this, and so I think that that's the way we should go with our previous recommendation, and this has been talked about a whole lot, and we can continue to talk about it, but it seems like that's the way it's going to go, and we should probably stick with our previous recommendation.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy, and, with that thought, maybe there's a motion coming, at the end of these discussions. Our co-chair, James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and I think we're hearing lots of the same thing being said over and over, and I'm completely onboard with that. You know, from a federal permit standpoint, for the vessel, I think that's absolutely the way to go. From an information-gathering standpoint, and, to kind of go backward a little bit, when we start talking about identifying the entire, you know, universe of fishermen, to get some more data one each angler, as an individual -- I mean, I think everybody in this room carries around one of these, and every individual that wants to participate in the fishery, whether it be in state waters or federal waters or some sort of overlap between the two -- When they apply for their state license to fish, a less than five-minute survey about what they did the previous year should be required.

It's not a time burden, but at least it will give us that bit of information from every individual, and I think that, you know, since we're in the interest of gathering the data, to see how many fish are being caught, we should look at that, you know, and maybe launching that at the same time as this, and that's my opinion. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. I have a few people online, and I mentioned to Richie Gomez that we will circle back, and so, Richie, if you're on, get yourself unmuted and get ready. There

is someone in the queue right ahead of you, and, at this time, another person online, a member of our AP, that wishes to speak, and so, Andy Piland, you're recognized to speak.

MR. PILAND: Thank you. I was going to pretty much agree with everybody that the permit should go to the vessel. The vessel owner would be, you know, the most vested in ensuring that the trip tickets were filled out, you know, so that he can continue to fish under the same requirements that charter/headboats and commercial guys are at this time.

For verification, every day that I fish, or don't fish, I have to check a box swearing, so to speak, that my reporting is accurate, and, you know, they're a bigger group, in numbers, than we are, and they're bigger than the commercial and charter, and, I mean, they outnumber us. I don't know what the exponent is, but exponentially, and there is no way that our group, for the AP, nor the council, can make up rules to manage the fishery without knowing what that group is catching. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy, and, for our last comment, I am circling back, and I don't know if you're there, but, Richie Gomez, are you there, and, if you are, you are recognized to speak, and we'll wait a few seconds for you. Okay. I am going to assume that Richie is not online, or is unable to communicate. There's a lot of good discussion here, and I would like to -- Okay. We have one more comment. Go ahead.

MR. MAHONEY: I am going to talk for a second, and it might seem like I'm going to steer away from it, but I'm going to tie it right back up, if that's okay. Is that okay?

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Please be -- What I was really hoping to do is I think we have a really quick, sweet motion to get in, with respect to the vessel, but go ahead.

MR. MAHONEY: Absolutely. Go ahead. Go for it.

MR. LORENZ: Can we do that? Okay. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. **I would like to make a motion that this AP recommend that a vessel, rather than an individual, permit be required for the private recreational sector.** That's my motion for this amendment, in Amendment 46.

MR. LORENZ: Short and sweet. Thank you, Jimmy. Hearing that, does anyone second? Randy McKinley seconds. I will let John catch up a minute. **We have the motion is the Snapper Grouper AP recommends a vessel, rather than an individual, angler permit be required for the private component of the recreational sector in Amendment 46.** We're open to discussion, and we've had a lot of it, and does anybody want to make a statement with respect to this? Usually it's support or I have second thoughts. David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not going to die on this hill. I mean, any way that the AP, as a whole, wants to go, I'm fine with moving forward with this, but just, in response to saying that it would be pain for somebody from out of town to get a license, blah, blah, blah, in Florida anyway, if you come from out of town -- You know, if you've got an aunt or uncle coming down from Ohio or Michigan, you're supposed to get an out-of-state license anyway, and so it would just be another check on a box, when you're trying to apply for that license, and, I mean, again, at

the end of the day, a thirty-second inconvenience, to try to something to our fisheries, to me, is worth it. You know, inconvenience doesn't mean that you're not getting access, and, again, I'm not going to die on this hill. Any way that we want to move this forward, I'm fine with.

MR. LORENZ: I will recognize James, who has just a slight observation with respect to this motion, and maybe put a little more color on it.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Really, no color, but just is this any different than just recommending Alternative 2 being adopted, Jimmy?

MR. HULL: (Mr. Hull's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HULL: **So we would recommend Alternative 2, and we could change the motion.**

MR. LORENZ: It's Alternative 2. Go ahead, John.

MR. HADLEY: Really quick, to that point, I can add sort of an additional context to it, at the bottom. That way, it's -- Both are there, and so --

MR. HULL: Obviously, just for reasoning, obviously, and to David, the council is going to change it, and this is a long way off, and this is all going to be talked about again and again, and this is just, for the reasons that we've already heard and talked about, over and over, you know, the agency -- This is the way they kind of want to go, and there's no opposition there, and so then we're not -- That's one fight out of the way to getting there, you know, and we'll see what happens.

MR. LORENZ: Well said, Jimmy. Harry, do you have a comment with respect to this?

MR. MORALES: Yes, and so I was going in the other direction, and I will support any vessel as a means of moving it forward, and David, in South Carolina, it's the same thing. You know, if you're here visiting for whatever number of days, and you want to fish in the saltwater, you've got to get a saltwater permit, and so, beyond this Amendment 46, if the council is able to work through the powers-that-be, where, on a state saltwater fishing license, you check-off that you're also going to go into federal waters, we would then have the database that shows the population, whether they're local or visiting.

You know, I have a lot of people that come down to South Carolina, and, of course, the husband is a fisherman, and what does he want to do? You know, I'm his recreational charter guy that takes him out on my boat, and, you know, he's only here for a few days, and we have a lot of that, and there are a lot of people visiting the state, and so it would be good to capture that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. James, you had something quick to say?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I did just want to kind of address Harry on the sentiment. I think it's a wonderful sentiment, but, in Amendment 46, I don't think it really falls into that, and, when we get to the stage of Other Business, maybe we can make a recommendation to the council that we

urge the state licensing body to incorporate checking that box and filling out that survey. I think that that's probably a more appropriate place for that. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. I have Tony Constant and David Moss.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Chair. I agree with David as well, and to the point where I'm not going to die on this hill either, and I want this thing to move forward, but I would like to point out that the recreational guys on this committee all think that this would be a regular angler-driven permit, and I understand why the commercial are leaning towards vessel, because that's what you do.

We also -- The reef permit that's in place in Florida, it's very successful, and it's not even a five-minute -- I have had one for years, ever since its conception, and I live in South Carolina, and I am assuming, also, that this goes vessel, which it seems to be -- I am in the Keys fishing at least twice a year with my personal boat, as well as other boats, and I'm assuming this is a federal permit, and so they're all going to look alike, and so it won't be state-dependent on where they're issued, but I don't think it's cumbersome to do it per angler, and it would give us a better headcount, and it would give us better reporting. That said, I understand why the vessel is moving forward.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Just, again, as kind of a -- Since this is my last meeting anyway, as kind of a parting shot, I will give a warning to the AP that settling for something like this is why we are where we are now. Again, nine years ago, when we wanted, as an AP -- When we were talking about reporting, and we couldn't move it through, we said, okay, fine, let's just do a permit, or a stamp, because that was all that we thought that we could get at that point, and now we're fighting for that reporting, because, back then, we said, okay, fine, let's just settle, and so, again, I will support you on this, Jimmy, and I understand, you know, in the interest of moving this forward, but I'm just going to caution everybody here on this AP that, if we settle, and we don't really do what we want now, or say what we want now, then we're going to be fighting for it in years to come.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we're in this comment section of this recommendation, I am just going to play devil's advocate a little bit. Now, when we talk about a vessel permit, and all the commercial guys in here will understand what I mean, when we go a little bit deeper in this, but what happens when the private recreational group is asked how much fuel they burn, when they're asked how much fuel they carry? What happens why they ask how long their vessel is, what type of vessel it is, how many horsepower is on that vessel, how much money they spent on their trip?

When you issue these permits, we're not outlining all the type of information that is going to be asked in the future of these vessel permit holders, and so we need to think about limiting the types of information that we're going to gather, unless we're going to state, right from the jump, that we're going to ask all kinds of questions about your private recreational fishing lifestyle, and,

again, I fully support this action, and I will continue to do so, but, you know, being a devil's advocate, and a commercial fisherman, a lot of the time, the burden is uncomfortable. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I would argue that the vessel -- Requiring the vessel permit, for a lot of reasons that we've discussed, for a long, long time, will actually be more accurate, in that put yourself in the position of the agency and the number of individual private recreational anglers that there are, that are doing this. The task that would be ahead of them, to get all of these people online and the way you want them -- You're much better off -- They are set up -- We're all set up for vessels, and it's all set up for that way.

The vessel owner would be the responsible person, and he's the one that's taking these people out, okay, on his vessel, whether it's family or whether it's friends, and he's already doing all the things that we've discussed, the responsibilities, and it's going to be his responsibility. He's usually the initiating party, that says, hey, let's go fishing, you know, and it's on him. He's the one that owns the vessel, and he's the one that has the means to do it, and, again, as from the agency standpoint, there's no resistance, and this is the way that they're set up to go, and I think it's really a better way to go than the individual, in my opinion, at this time.

Somebody is going to be responsible here, and not millions of people, potentially, that they're going to have to deal with. You know, if you look at the commercial side, the vessels, there's probably 400 or 500 of us left in the snapper grouper vessels, if that many, and, I mean, or less. In the charter/headboat, there's a smaller number, and, when you start talking individual private recreational anglers, now and in the future, I mean, it's just tremendous, and it's just almost overwhelming, and it needs to go to the vessel, in my opinion, and that's why I recommended it. We have talked about this endlessly. The agency has looked at it, and that's the way they want to go, and that's why I recommended it, and I think it moves it forward, and they will find the opportunities are endless. There are endless opportunities for information from the vessel level.

MR. LORENZ: Just as a check, and I would love to end up getting a vote on this, and I certainly don't want to stifle conversation, but I now have a queue of five, but I would just like to state that I would love if we could at least just get the vote on this, and we can record numbers at some point, and so I just want you all to keep that in mind as we continue on with our queue of five people that wish to make a comment. I believe I had Tony. No? David Moss. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I just wanted to respond to James, and those questions -- The questions, and I think that our answers, behind all of that, for commercial fishermen, because they want to figure out exactly -- Have some kind of idea of, you know, what you're catching, and they know what you're going to make and so those questions should never be asked for recreational fishermen, is what I think, but --

MR. LORENZ: James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Yes, Randy, and I think that we all have some sort of understanding that, you know, our private lives should be our private lives, and I don't know if we could, you know, make a -- Put an asterisk here or not, but either way, and I think that the world of information, the potential that can be gathered from this, is, you know, is the way we need to be going, I mean, and

I think that, along the way, I trust that the government -- That government that is isn't going to infringe on anybody's rights, and I don't think that, from a legal standpoint, we can put anything forward that would, and so I'm just going to go ahead and say that I would support this, and here we are.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: I just wanted to say that I also support the vessel-based, and is that going to go to a vote soon, the vessel or the individual?

MR. LORENZ: Yes, sir, and that's my --

MR. MAHONEY: Okay, and I just wanted to say that the vessel-based is going to be way more beneficial, especially in cases where like owners of the vessel's children take the boat, instead of them, and you know what I mean, than to have an individual permit for each person, and I feel like it would be easier to have it on the vessel, and that's what I'm trying to say.

MR. LORENZ: Well noted. With the AP's permission, is it time to maybe take a vote? Okay. We're going to actually do this backwards, so I can give some color to the council if there is someone who has a difference of opinion, and I think I know where this is going to go, but who is going to abstain from this vote? No one. Who is no on this motion?

**I'm sorry, and I should read the motion. The Snapper Grouper AP recommends a vessel-based, rather than an individual angler-based permit, be required for the private component of the recreational sector in Amendment 46. Additional context for the motion was that this is Alternative 2 in Action 1, and we have no one abstaining. Anyone voting against this motion? I do not see a hand raised, and can I confirm that there's nothing online? All right, and so the logical conclusion is this motion passes unanimously from this AP and goes on to the council.** Thank you. Go ahead, Andrew. Yes, you stated that you wanted to --

MR. MAHONEY: Yes, and if I could just have an opportunity to talk here, and I guess my first question is when are you going to have a permit, or become a moratorium, so that I can start leasing to the next generation of fishermen, similar to that of the scumbags in the commercial industry are doing to me right now? All joking aside --

MR. LORENZ: I would just remind that they do read what's been sent out with respect to our proceedings.

MR. MAHONEY: Excuse me?

MR. LORENZ: Read about our proceedings, and so a statement, and "scumbags" would probably not be totally --

MR. MAHONEY: Oh, I apologize.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you.

MR. MAHONEY: But, really, where is it going to end, because you constantly have new people moving into our coastal areas, and they mainly are wealthy, and are going to be part of the recreational sector, and I am going to tell you a little bit about where I'm from in Hilton Head, because a lot of people think that I'm rich, because I'm from Hilton Head, where I guarantee you that nobody in my immediate family could ever afford to be part of the recreational sector and participate in the snapper grouper complex, and, when I was growing up, we really had one school on the island, and everybody, all the way out to what is now Okotie, that would all come to the island, and we had a lot of people, and now it's all split up.

A lot of the people that I grew up with, who are from the island, were Gullah, of Gullah descent, and I don't know if you all know what that is, but it's pretty much descendants of freed slaves, and their ancestors pretty much started the fisheries offshore of the islands that are located around where I'm from, and they pioneered the fishery out there, and, you know, it's not necessarily publicized there as much, but, in Charleston Harbor, it's publicized a little bit, about the Gullah community pioneering the fishery. Unfortunately, nobody really took any reporting on it back then.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew, please, with all due respect, we have still got a lot going on in the agenda, and may I move you towards the end with public comment on this, and I guess what I'm starting to state is where is this going with respect to the --

MR. MAHONEY: Like I said before, it's going to seem like I'm steering away, but I will come back to it.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Just understand we have a lot of people to travel a lot, and so please go ahead.

MR. MAHONEY: I'm sorry, but that travel a lot?

MR. LORENZ: We have a lot of folks that -- We're trying to end the meeting timely, and they have travel plans to go, and planes to catch and that sort of thing.

MR. MAHONEY: Okay.

MR. LORENZ: I don't want to cut you off, but I just wanted to put you in a little bit later, because we're trying to get somewhere with this recreational permit. Thank you, Andrew. John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you, and so, the next action, we switch gears over to specifying what species would fall under this permit, and so, you know, certainly it is a snapper grouper permit, and so, within that context, it could be any species, or include all of the fifty-five species within the complex, or it could be specific to a subset of species, and so there's a few different alternatives that have been developed. Again, this may change a little bit, and we're early in the process, and this is sort of a fresh action, if you will.

The Alternative 2 would look at -- It would include all species in the complex, and so all fifty-five species would be covered by the permit. Alternative 3 has a subset of any assessed species in the snapper grouper complex for which harvest is allowed, and that would be covered by the permit,



and Alternative 4 matches up the species list with what is currently within the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, and so that state-based permit that Florida currently has in place.

Alternative 5 focuses on any species within the deepwater complex, and Alternative 6 covers the shallow-water grouper complex, and so I'm going to get into -- You're probably thinking, okay -- I know I personally don't know all of those off the top of my head, what falls under that, and so there's a table here that has the different -- All of the species within the snapper grouper complex and how they play out into the various options that I just mentioned, and so whether or not they're assessed, whether or not they currently fall under the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, whether they fall within the deepwater category or the shallow-water grouper complex, and so you can see there's the table there. If there's an "X" next to them, then that indicates that that species is covered by that individual topic.

Keeping in mind that the council can choose several options, and so they could sort of stack alternatives together, and I'm throwing out something here, but, you know, they could say the shallow-water grouper complex, as well as assessed species, and, you know, they could put those two together as their preferred at the end, and so that's sort of an option there, but this is something that, you know, I think they're hoping to get feedback from, from both the Snapper Grouper AP as well as the technical AP, as far as, you know, what species should they be considering, and so, with that, there's a couple of discussion questions here.

Does the Snapper Grouper AP have comments on the initial range of alternatives, and so, there again, looking at -- Are the bookends covered here, and is there a different group of species, or are there other species, that should be considered under this potential permit, and so, with that, I will turn it over to the AP.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John. I will open it up to the AP with respect to the species in this group. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm a little torn on this. For the ease of moving through it, it might be easier to recommend doing just what's covered in Florida. However, a few of the -- I mean, they're all important, but a few of the species that are left out of the Florida -- I think scamp is not included, and yellowmouth is not included, and trigger is not included, and I think some of the porgies aren't included, and so, you know, with my Florida blinders on, I would say go with Florida, but, again, for the whole region, it's probably best to do any of the fish in the snapper grouper complex. I will just throw that out for comment, and then I will make a motion later.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would agree. That would give -- It looks very complicated, and I would just suggest going with the entire fifty-five species.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Anyone else want to comment with respect to the species list, additions or deletions? Jack. Thank you.

MR. COX: I will just add to what everybody else is saying. I mean, it's going to be a computerized deal, where you just check what you caught, and so keep it to all the species.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. I'm a little bit -- I think that Florida, the reef package, is a pretty good one, and it does leave out a couple, and so the shallow-water grouper is also a good play, but, for simplicity, and it's working now in Florida, and I think maybe the Florida package is a good deal.

MR. LORENZ: Tony for the Florida package. Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I would go with whatever is going to be the most inclusive, so we can cover as many species as possible. Since the permit is going to be federal, and it's going to stretch through the entire South Atlantic, it really doesn't matter where it's located, and they've got it covered. We pretty much should be charged with covering as much as possible.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Anyone else? David, you said you might like to make a motion. Could you do that and help us out?

MR. MOSS: I can. **I make a motion to recommend that the council select Alternative 2, any species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit.**

MR. LORENZ: Let John catch up. I have a motion by David and a second by Jimmy. Okay. **The motion, by David Moss, is to recommend that the council selects Alternative 2 (all species within the snapper grouper complex).** That motion has been seconded by Jimmy Hull. One more round of any statements with respect to support or not for this motion? Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I kind of want to think that it should be all species that they would encounter, and like I don't think that cobia is in the grouper snapper complex, and is it? I don't think it is.

MR. LORENZ: It is not, and I believe we're speaking just for this complex. Cobia is -- That's actually not -- I don't even think the council deals with it anymore, and they actually farmed that out to the Atlantic States Commission.

MR. FISH: Okay.

MR. LORENZ: Are we okay to go ahead with the vote? All right. I am going to go the same way that I did before. **Anybody abstaining? Anybody that does not support this motion, a no? I am seeing no one, and, therefore -- We have confirmed that there's nobody online. Okay, and this motion passes unanimously.** Thank you, everyone. Okay, John. Next.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Well, thank you for that, and so the next action, and this is the Draft Action 3, covers specifying the area where the fishing activity would apply for that permit, and so, you know, what area would be covered by this permit, from a fishing activity perspective, and so, you know, this is a pretty short list here of options, but, you know, there's really -- As far as the council has considered it at this point, you can cover -- You can specify that the permit is applicable only in the South Atlantic EEZ, or, with I would say robust rationale, the council may have the authority to specify that the permit would cover fishing activity for snapper grouper species, regardless of where the fishing activity took place, and so, essentially, what you're doing there is you're tying in state waters as well as the EEZ. That is a very quick overview, but, you know, it's

a pretty short action there, and I will turn it over to the AP, if you have any recommendations or a different range.

MR. LORENZ: John, there's a question from our Vice Chair.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, in Alternative 3, if you did apply for the vessel permit for the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone, and it did cover you in state waters, but that wouldn't be a requirement to fish in state waters only, and is that -- Just for clarification's sake, and so, if you had the permit, and you did fish in state waters, you should still -- If you're required to report what you caught, then you should do it no matter where you're fishing, and, in Alternative 2, it's only in the EEZ.

MR. HADLEY: So the -- Well, I will start off by saying that would be a decision to be determined if the council -- If or when, depending on your opinion on that, but, if the council were to tackle reporting, that would be a decision made at that time, but that may determine, you know, how the permit is laid out, and so, you know, under Alternative 2 there, if it covers fishing activity in the EEZ, presumably any other requirements would fall within fishing activity within the EEZ, but, there again, those would be details that would be worked out in a separate action, and probably a separate amendment, if reporting was pursued.

MR. LORENZ: Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: From my perspective, either Alternative 2 or 3 would work, to move this forward, and all of this is going to get fleshed out further down the line, because there is so much things to ask about -- I mean, you can take the example of state waters in Florida, and, usually, they will align their regulations with the federal -- Most states will align, but there are some instances where they don't, like you can private -- Recreationally, you can catch one red snapper a day, in the State of Florida, in state waters. You know, it's kind of like I don't know how we can, as an AP, you know, really dig into all the ins and outs of this, but I would support either Alternative 2 or 3, just to move it along.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, Jimmy kind of said some of what I wanted to say. Just something to be on the radar is the differentiations in some of the regulations, and there's not a ton, but red snapper is one of them, and mangrove snapper is another one in Florida, and there is different state regulations, versus federal.

I would be in favor of including both the South Atlantic EEZ and state waters, and, again, speaking from Florida, it's still astounding, to me, the number of people that don't realize that there is actually different federal management beyond three miles, and they're fairly convinced that FWC is responsible for everything, and so, to eliminate that, I would say include both federal and state waters.

MR. LORENZ: Which, John, I'm having difficulty seeing that, and is that -- Which alternative is that, and is that 2 and 3, as Jimmy had discussed?

MR. HADLEY: It would be 3.

MR. LORENZ: That would be 3. Thank you. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Chairman. I would support Alternative 2. I think that, if we want to muddy this thing up, Alternative 3 is sure going to do it. I think you will have a lot of kickback with the states, as well as Florida and South Carolina, and red snapper is both open year-round, and so I think that's going to be a big conflict, right off the bat, but, yes, I would strongly support Alternative 2, in this situation.

MR. LORENZ: So we have supporters of 2 and 3 or both, and is that what you gather, John, and what I'm looking for is -- You're stating recommendations, and so you're getting recommendations, and we don't necessarily need a motion, I guess, at this point, but we could give you one, if that's what you would like, and if anyone wishes to make one.

MR. HADLEY: Absolutely, and so I think that covers it. You know, there again, the AP is going to get another shot at this, to come up with your recommendations for each one, which you're, you know, absolutely welcome to at this point, but, you know, if you think -- It sounds like, from opinions around that table, that sort of range has been captured. If you're okay with this, you know, that's something that we could come back to the council with as well.

MR. LORENZ: David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Tony, just to respond, I actually think it would muddy the waters even more if we didn't have it in state waters, and you look at like from the Keys, let's say up to West Palm, and most of the snapper grouper fishing is happening in state waters. You can do some kind of -- Like, in the Keys, once you get to the edge of the reef, that's federal, but it gets to be -- It gets to be pretty confusing down there, and so I would rather just encompass the whole thing.

Again, if we're going to really try to get the universe of anglers, if we're going to try to figure out who is out there, there's a whole lot of people fishing inside of state waters for snapper and grouper down -- I understand that I'm just using south Florida as the example, but, you know, there's a whole lot of people fishing for snapper and grouper in state waters in south Florida, and I would much rather it be more inclusive than less, and I think that would be less confusing, again putting on the Florida blinders, because of the number of people who have no idea about the South Atlantic Council and their jurisdiction beyond three miles, and so, if we made it all-inclusive, I think it would be a lot easier, and we would really get a better idea of who is fishing where.

MR. LORENZ: Tony, I will let you -- A response, and I have Harry waiting.

MR. CONSTANT: When I mean muddy up the waters, I am not necessarily meaning anglers, and south Florida does have a unique situation, especially to the east coast, but what I am talking about is I think you're going to get so much blowback on the states, and the states alone are going to just buck this like a ram.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Harry.

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe, in Alternative 3, since we're not dealing with reporting, and we're simply dealing with permitting, that we would be helping the council

lay the foundation for the future reporting, and so, therefore, if I am fishing with you, James, and we're three miles out, and, now, you're commercial, and, if you were totally private, and we just drifted out a little further, right, and I don't have a permit, because I'm in state waters, but we drift out five miles or whatever, and now I'm in federal waters, and, oh, by the way, I get intercepted.

Oh, poop, and I don't have a federal permit, and so, if you just simplify it, and say, Harry, are you going bottom fishing? Then you've got to have permit. Okay. Done, state or federal, and I'm on the water, and it's too late, and I'm covered, and so I believe -- Somebody talked about building blocks, and here is one of your building blocks. Just make it simple, and combine it state and federal, and away you go, and, eventually, when reporting comes into place, everything is in place. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right, AP. We do have a range of opinions coming about, and, as John has stated to us, we get another shot at this, to discuss this, and the council is going to be looking at this, and their paygrade is actually a little higher than us, and they'll look at this also, and I don't feel that we need a motion at this point, but what we'll do is let's send the council with just a little more information, and we'll just do a show of hands for Alternative 1, Alternative 2, or Alternative 3, just your opinion, as you sit right now, with what you've heard from John, just so we can give the council some guidance on what this group of twenty or so people feels, and is that all right? Okay.

A show of hands of anyone who wants no action, Alternative 1, and you like that the best so far. Zero. Alternative 2, and, John, help me out, and is that -- That's the EEZ. Alternative 2 would be the EEZ, and so that's the three miles and out. A show of hands. Eight for the EEZ. Alternative 3, the states. Six. Thank you, and there we give the council a little more work. Let them clean I up a little for us. Thank you. All right, John.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and I think that's helpful, and that will be helpful guidance for the council as well, when they discuss this again in June, and so I appreciate the discussion and the sort of summary feedback there towards the end.

We're going to switch gears here a little bit, and we covered the sort of high-level, broad topics on the permit side, and we're switching gears a little bit to focus on the education component that may be developed and go along with this action, and I'm going to kind of knock all these actions out at once, because they kind of play off of each other.

Action 4 would establish an education component for the recreational portion of the snapper grouper -- For the private recreational portion of the snapper grouper fishery, and so what you're doing here, in this action, is just establishing that component, and, really, you know, it's kind of a binary action at this point, and you can either do it or don't, and so, you know, Alternative 4 is establishing it initially.

The technical AP did discuss this a little bit, at the council's request, and they felt that an education requirement, or certificate, may not be necessary, or it may not be required, on an annual basis, and so they didn't feel like it was a good substitute for a permit, but they did feel that it would pair well with the permit, and, potentially, on the initial issuance, or in the renewal process, to help identify information and help educate anglers on best fishing practices, the species that fall within the snapper grouper complex, species ID, descending devices, some of the potential tools, such as

the Fish Rules app, to know some of the regulations, and so they felt like the education requirement would pair well with a permit.

There is two other actions in here. Action 5 would specify whether the component would be mandatory or voluntary, and so that's, you know, a specification that the council will need to make, whether or not they want to make it a mandatory education component, presumably to get a private recreational permit, or it would be a voluntary measure.

Then, last, but not least, specifying the timing of implementation, and so knowing that an education component will likely take some time to develop, and then also implement, they wanted -- The council, thus far, has wanted to maintain the option to implement the education component immediately, and so, essentially, it would be implemented when the permit is established, or potentially implement an education component at a delayed -- At another date, and so a delayed implementation, and so Alternative 2 there, in Action 6, covers -- It would say the education component would be implemented immediately, and Alternative 3 would say there will be an education component, but there's going to be a delayed implementation, and, presumably, the council would specify additional details on what they're thinking, as far as the delay for that implementation.

That covers the three main decision points for developing and implementing an education component. You know, this is something that I think the council -- It's a little bit of a work in progress, and the council will weigh-in on it quite a bit more at the June meeting, as well as their September meeting, and so, when you see this again, it will probably be a little bit different, and a little bit -- Some of the details worked out, but that's where the council is going, at this point, with a potential education component, and I will turn it over to the AP for discussion on -- Do you feel the initial range of alternatives, or, you know, the thoughts thus far -- The bookends there, are they appropriate for establishing an education component, mandatory versus voluntary measures, and then timing of implementation. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. I think where we'll probably end up with this is just what we did before, and so we will start with those who wish to make a comment, and a statement, on this, so we give the guidance to the council. I'm going to try to get my queue back together again, with the help of James, and I have David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry, guys, and you're probably sick of hearing from my already, and so, for my money, I would say that an education component absolutely needs to go along with this, and I would say that it should be implemented immediately, and it should be mandatory when applying for the permit, and, again, I would caution everybody to delay things.

You know, I understand that we want to get this through, and we want to get all of this stuff through as quickly and painlessly as possible, but I would caution everybody on the AP that, when we delay, that means that we are delaying for a long time, often, and so put it in there now, and hopefully it gets in, or maybe it doesn't, but that's where my head is at.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So I would definitely say that an educational requirement is definitely due. You know, I would differ in that, you know, sometimes you have to strike when the strike is

available, and take advantage of it, and, right now, the time to strike would be now, and so I would say do the education, make it a requirement, and, you know, great if it can get the educational part done, but definitely have it in there to delay it, if necessary, because, right now, there is nothing out there, and so at least get the permit in place, and it can come in, you know, down the road, but it would at least need a primary goal of putting the first block in place and identifying who is in that realm and move the ball forward, without any -- Without more delays and waiting for something to be developed, and it could be super easy, just like we do with sharks.

I mean, granted, that is the royal pain in the ass, to do that thing every year, and so I would drop the every year thing, but, you know, if the angler with the vessel does it when they get their permit, whether it's this year or two years down the road, when the program is implemented, it will be beneficial, and I just don't want to see the process get delayed and held up waiting for an educational aspect to be implemented.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. I have a list, and I have Chris.

MR. KIMREY: Just like David and Cameron said, I mean, I really support the educational side of this, and I can't speak for all of the South Atlantic, but, you know, about half of the coast of North Carolina I frequent, and not just fishing, charter fishing and the little bit of commercial fishing that I do, but I'm really involved with science projects, you know, for state-level stuff and speaking to fishing clubs, and, you know, I see a lot of the general public, and, for our area, just the lack of education a lot, on the recreational side, is rampant, and it's something that we should not delay the permit for, but we need to emphasize that, as the permit evolves, it should be required that we can put as much education, especially on the recreational side, as possible.

I mean, it's imperative, and, in my experience, where I'm at, geographically, it's -- From everything, from the process of fisheries management, to fish identification, to everything, and the general public is just mostly out-of-touch with what's really going on, and we need to do everything we can to improve their insight on things that are happening in fish, outside of them having a boat, a fishing rod, a license, and being able to catch stuff and take pictures of it and put it on the internet, I mean, because, to a lot of people, that's what fishing is.

They don't know anything about it, outside of that, and so I think it's very important, like they said, to not delay the permit, but to be adamant about seizing the opportunity to educate as many people as we can with this permit, sometime in the near future, and so, what is it, Alternative 3.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris, for your comments on Alternative 3. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to sound like a broken record, but all of those things. You know, education is definitely necessary, and it should be a requirement, and we should definitely not delay. Now, with that, I would like to add that, during this process, you know, the time that it takes, that the educational portion -- That there needs to be a big push to have that ready, and, with that, at the end of whatever that presentation looks like, there should be some links for more information, you know, check this application out, something that gets our users used to the places that they're going to be directed in the future to help us gather more information.

You know, as users in this field, we should all, you know, start to use the apps that are there, and have more interactions and really promote those things, and so, with that education, I think we could get into the next step, you know, where we're all hopefully going, as quickly as we can. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Chair. I think education must be immediate and mandatory, and it's very important that this gets done, and we also maybe ought to look out at the private sector. I know that, in the last couple of years, for some reason, Shimano has really jumped onboard, and they've done some really good educational videos. They're short, and they're not long and boring, and, ever since they've moved to Charleston, they have been very good about giving that out, and that's something that we could look at, maybe speeding up the process, since that already exists.

Something with the permitting too, is we were talking about renewals and education, and maybe, if it's a vessel permit, and as long as the owner of that vessel continues to not let it expire, and maybe he has to go through the education once, and, if you sell the boat, or you have to get a new permit, well, then you have to take the education again, and that might take some of the cumbersome out of it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else have a comment, and, again, keeping in mind that we're going to have the reference vote, as we did. Harry.

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do believe that education should be immediate, and I do believe that it should not delay the rolling out of the permit, and so my question is why don't we have a hybrid alternative that says that education is immediate; however, not to delay the establishment of the permit.

MR. LORENZ: John, do you want to answer?

MR. HADLEY: That can be a recommendation of the AP. You know, the education component -- I mean, the council can move forward, at-will, with a voluntary measure, and there's no regulation that goes along with a voluntary measure, and so, you know, if the direction was to go ahead and move forward with an education component -- I mean, you'll hear about it I believe later in the agenda today, but the education and outreach efforts that the council staff has been undertaking, and have developed to help specifically target private recreational anglers, and so there's a lot of effort underway to improve education, and the council can move forward with any sort of voluntary measures, but it just can't make it mandatory without some sort of regulatory change, and so, you know, I think, to your point, and to your question, that certainly can be a recommendation of the AP.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John, and, with that said, Harry, would you like to just articulate a quick recommendation for that recommendations list?

MR. MORALES: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend an Alternative 4, which is a combination of Alternative 2 and 3, whereby the council immediately implement an educational program, to go along with the permit; however, not to delay the establishment of a permit. Thank you.



MR. LORENZ: All right, Harry, and you're actually stating that -- You said that you would like to recommend an Alternative 4, which is an additional one, and is that true, or is that -- All right. Then John would need to correct that. Harry is recommending an Alternative 4.

MR. HADLEY: So this would be Alternative 4, and that was in Action 6, I believe, in the table that you have in front of you, and so, essentially, you would add another one here to go along -- Or wherever may be appropriate, and we may have to shift this around a little bit, but can I maybe say recommend adding an -- Just leave it a little bit more generic, and so recommend adding a new alternative that would immediately implement an education component, to go along with the permit, but to not delay implementation of a permit, and so, essentially, what you're recommending is go ahead and go forward with the education requirement, and whether -- You know, how the cards fall, or how the chips fall, in relation to the permit, and the education part can at least move forward. Got it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, and what I'm gathering from this AP, John, is that there seems to be almost an overwhelming support for don't wait, and get something started ASAP, and so that should be in there, probably somewhere, as our recommendation, or what our conversation was about, and that's it. David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to tack on to what Harry has on there, which I think is great, and then I would just add on, if it's okay with Harry, is to select that as the AP's preferred.

MR. MORALES: Yes, I support that.

MR. HADLEY: Mike had a good point, and, if it's okay with the AP, and so I'm going to zoom-in here, so it's a little bit easier to read, and so this top bullet point, to recommend an alternative that would immediately implement an education component to go along with a permit, but do not delay implementation, would -- It sounds like you want to make that mandatory, and is that correct? Okay, and so I'm going to go ahead and add that in there, and so implement a mandatory education component to go along with the permit, but to not delay implementation, and so you're trying to make that mandatory education component move forward, regardless of what happens with the permit. Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to make that clarification, and thank you, Mike, for pointing that out.

MR. MORALES: (Mr. Morales' comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. LORENZ: I don't think we need it at this point, Harry, and they're going to discuss this more, and we made a recommendation, rather than a motion, and so I think we're good there, and I would just like, for the record, that there's been a lot of head-nodding on this recommendation that Harry has made, and so there seems to be a lot of support here, at this time, for what's been said. Anything else that anybody wants to say on this item, the education component?

MR. MORALES: For me, this education could roll out tomorrow, and it wouldn't come out fast enough, because it's not just educating people on the best practices of what should be going on, but it's also educating them on everything that's going on here and why this is so critical, and so, you know, whether it take a year or two to roll out a permit, this piece can come out a heck of a

lot sooner, and it's going to benefit -- Because the public is hungry for -- I think they're hungry for more knowledge, even if they may not know it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry, and we have Andy Piland online, and he wishes to make a statement. Andy, you're recognized to make your statement.

MR. PILAND: Thank you. When NOAA added the recreational shark endorsement option for our HMS charter/headboat, they sent out a little video there, with a test on it, and it's pretty simple, and, you know, every time we get the permit, we have to go through the shark video and test, and it is a good reminder, if you're not fishing for sharks every day, what you can -- It helps you remember what you can and cannot catch, and, you know, something similar would be a start for education on this permit, for the recreational group. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. John or Mike, next steps?

MR. HADLEY: I think we're good. You know, I think we've captured the AP's recommendation that, you know, there is strong support for developing an education component, and it seems like there's some strong support for making sure that that is mandatory, and it would move forward regardless of what happens with the permit, and so, you know, I appreciate the discussion on that, and I think -- You know, the other portions of the discussion on the permit, and so I appreciate all of your comments and concentration on this effort, because it's a -- You know, it's not a new realm, but it is a new realm for the private recreational sector, and so, you know, I certainly appreciate the comments there and the thoughtful comments behind that, and I think that's all we have, unless there are any other comments, and, again, we'll probably be -- The AP will probably be seeing this again, in a little bit different form, with some of the details worked out, at your October meeting, and so thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John, and, with the AP, I would like -- We have two agenda items left to go, and we have feedback on impacts at the space center and research recommendations for the snapper grouper fishery, and we also have an Other Business item, and Andrew Mahoney has asked me to bring up -- Or to have an opportunity to discuss later. We all have to check-out and move on, and so I would like us to take just a ten-minute break to gather your stuff, whatever you want to do, and then please come back. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: All right. I would like to call the AP to order. The next agenda item is the feedback on impacts from the space center on fishing activities off of Florida, and we're going to get introduced by Kerry Marhefka, who is going to state why we're being asked for this, and this came from a businesswoman, a fisherwoman, along the space coast, and then we are going to give the floor to Andy Fish, who has some experience there fishing, and so, Kerry, tell us what we need to hear, or what we're being asked to do.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thank you. A little background. In November of 2022, the council, I guess, got notice that there was an opportunity to comment on a proposal from the Coast Guard regarding five temporary safety zones they're called, I think, for the safe splashdown and recovery of re-entry vehicles launched by SpaceX, in support of NASA and other private space missions, and this was for a period of between January 1 of this year and February of 2024.

The council, and I have to say a lot of kudos to staff, because I think there was a short turnaround time from when we saw that they were asking for comment and getting a letter off to the Coast Guard about the concern of, you know, sort of the fact that these safety zones would have impacts on not only, you know, people fishing in that area, but also we started really thinking about, you know, the stuff that splashes down there could potentially have harmful environmental effects, and that's something that Laurilee Thompson, who is a commercial council member from north Florida, or Florida, has been very, very proactive in making sure we understand how much the space industry is changing and how, you know, rapidly they're sending up stuff, more days and more days.

The council has gotten input from the Shrimp AP, the Mackerel AP, and the public regarding concerns over disruption to fishing activity due to these closures, and, again, I looked at it yesterday, and I think it's like forty -- It's a good period of time, and maybe, Andy, you know, but I think it's like at least twenty-four in advance, and it's almost like a full day that these areas will be closed, and, again, they will close more than just the one they need, and so it's not like, you know, they've already narrowed down where it's going to land, and they close multiple areas, so that they have multiple options.

We got some input from some of the APs about the concern of that, and then, in June, we're going to receive a presentation from the Vice President of Government and Community Relations for Space Florida, and so we're looking forward to that, but, basically, this space thing, in words I never thought that I would say in fisheries management, I think has legs, and I think it's going to have some impacts on folks in Florida, and so we would like to hear your AP's input on this, and then perhaps any questions that you may want us to carry forward the Space Florida people, and so thank you for allowing me time to explain that to you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Kerry, and, just for the record, we do have I know at least three commercial fishermen that are impacted in that area, and maybe we'll have someone from the recreational here, but we do have three fishermen impacted. Andy Fish has stated that he has knowledge of the space center, and he is a fisherman that is impacted by this, and so, Andy, it's open for you to start a discussion, comment, and you're on first.

MR. FISH: I just -- I will give you a little bit of my background, and I was born in Cape Canaveral. My family was in the space industry, my father, and my brother is a NASA employee, and I hired, in 1996, into the space shuttle program, and I did fifteen years with the space shuttle recovery booster team, and I was on the ships recovering the boosters, and we would dive down and get all the parachute stuff and bring it back and refurb it. I did that for fifteen years, and it ended in 2011, with the program ending.

As a fisherman, they do have these zone launch closures, and it usually depends on the trajectory of a rocket, and depending on the space station, or, I mean, so there's usually a swath that goes out with the rocket. Sometimes it's six hours in advance, and I don't ever think it's been twenty-four hours, and I'm not really sure on when the closure was, but they will have closures, and they will put out pamphlets, and there will be a little -- We've got a banner in their port when they're going out, a big electronic sign that says, for more information, call this, you know, but it's not really widely known, or it's -- You know, nobody pays attention, but there is -- You cannot go in that

area, and that area could be, you know, from north of Port Canaveral to approximately ten miles, or probably twenty miles, south of Ponce.

It's going to be an area that they're going to patrol, and, you know, they get sailboats, and they get the regular people, that they don't even know what's going on, and they can stall the launch, or they can delay the launch, but, for the most part, what it comes down to is I've seen a fleet of forty kingfish boats, and charter boats, where they will say that, you know, people ignored it, or just didn't go, or, I mean, just ignored it, or didn't even care, but they have had the Coast Guard helicopters -- Everybody comes out there, and they say, okay, you've got move ten miles offshore, or two miles south, and I have seen the whole fleet have to move from a zone area closure for the launch.

That being said, I do know -- I think, in 2024, I think they're talking a hundred launches, between SpaceX and Ares 1-X and the Falcon 9 and all these new rockets that are coming up, and with the possibility of up to 300 launches at a certain -- You know, out to 2026 or something crazy like that. I don't know anything about stuff falling in, and I know they want us out of that area for liability of something landing on us, and we've even talked about signing waivers that we don't care, and we -- Go ahead and land on us, and we want to go fishing, that kind of thing, and that's not going to go anywhere, but that has been brought up, and, you know, tongue-in-cheek, but that's mostly -- I mean, Laurilee brought it to my attention, and that's why I made the comment, is we were talking about maybe we should -- With these zone area closures coming for fishing for red snapper, and discard mortality, that maybe we should get -- That that should go into the computer, as far as we've already experienced some zone area closures, because of this, this unique situation where we are. That's it, in a nutshell.

MR. LORENZ: So, in a statement, these are essentially, for you, an almost -- I won't call it an in-season closure, but it's a stock closure that impacts your operation.

MR. FISH: Absolutely.

MR. LORENZ: And you would like to get credit back. In other words, that impacts the season more, you know, a longer time, and you can't fish when you can, that sort of thing.

MR. FISH: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Andy. The way I would like to proceed here is I would see that there would be some comments and all, but I want to focus first on the Florida fishermen that are most impacted, to be able to make their statements, and then everybody else can chime-in. With that, Jimmy Hull, you could be impacted.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I have been impacted, my entire life, because they've been launching down there for -- So has Paul, and, you know, in the past, it's been such a small amount of launches that, you know, we've been able to deal with it, and fish around it, but I think, with the major increase in launches, that's where we start to have a problem, and, of course, if you're sitting -- We're on the edges of it, and, if we fish to the south, that would eliminate us fishing to the south that day, because it comes often to Buoy A, which is what he described as the northern end of it, which is about twenty miles south of our barn, and it goes way out into the deep, but I have been kicked out of in the past, you know, years ago, and like he said, but it's an access

issue, in the future, and it's also an environmental issue, okay, with the potential of what is coming down with these rockets, and probably Andy could tie into that more, since he was diving down in that debris, and bringing stuff up.

You know, the other thing is what we can we do about it? Well, I don't think you can do anything about it, and I think they're going to -- They're going to rule the day, on these launches, and, you know, if they interrupt fishing, I don't think -- Nobody cares, you know, and it's going to be all about the space program, and so that's my take on it. I don't think there's much we can do about it, and maybe we can massage it a little bit, and affect something about timing of letting us know, or shortening the time that it's closed, with better education, because what happens is, like you said, you get a boat in there, and, until they get the boat out of it, they're going to delay the launch, and so better -- A better way of identifying the time that these are going to be closed, and maybe shortening the time, and that's about it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Andy.

MR. FISH: It was also brought up, as far as the risk factor, that somebody brought up that, at any given moment, there is planes over everybody, over the whole United States, and it's part of the, you know, we want to go fishing, and we don't care kind of thing, and maybe if it could be put into the map, of what are the actual odds of a rocket blowing up and then landing on you, but, I mean, it's -- The new ones blow up, but I don't think you're stopping -- There's a lot of things you're not starting, and you're not starting red snapper, and you're not stopping the rockets. They're going up, and there ain't no way.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy Fish. Chip Collier.

DR. COLLIER: So one thing that we were just thinking about is, generally, the space launches are only on nice days, and that's also when you guys go out as well, and so, if they're talking about a hundred days, it's likely to be of greater impact than just those hundred days, because you're already limited by weather, and so you're cutting out additional nice days, and is that likely to happen to you guys?

MR. FISH: Well, you know, they will go -- Like we're launching tomorrow, and, if there's a chance that rocket is going to go, even though the forecast is to be not so good, they're still going to go until the last minute, and hold until the last minute, until they launch that rocket, and so it's not only -- You are not only missing that day, but it's the next, and the next, and the next.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: Andy, I thought that there was a catch boat. Isn't there a catch boat that catches the --

MR. FISH: That's the Falcon 9, or the SpaceX, and they don't do that anymore.

MR. MILITELLO: Oh, they don't?

MR. FISH: No, but all that happens way offshore. There is a big, giant ship, that used to look like a humungous --

MR. MILITELLO: It's pretty cool.

MR. FISH: It's huge, and it had these humongous hundred-foot outriggers, two on the front and two on the back, and it suspended this huge net, and they would try to -- They would catch this dome of a rocket that they wanted back, and I don't believe they do that anymore, and that's just the SpaceX one. It burns up or --

MR. LORENZ: I am going to go with the Florida fishermen first. Paul Nelson.

MR. NELSON: They're making billions of dollars on this, and why don't they just compensate the fishermen for days they're missing?

AP MEMBER: That's a great idea.

MR. LORENZ: Repeat that slowly for the record. Mike is typing.

MR. NELSON: They're making billions of dollars, and why don't they just compensate the fishermen that are affected, and not recreational, but charter boat and commercial, and I don't know if they could get anything for the recreational side, but, as far as the guys making money and depending on it to make a living -- The deal with the BP oil spill in the Gulf, they paid-off the fishermen over there, and they're making billions, and so why wouldn't they just say, all right, guys, you guys missed so many days of fishing, and here's a check for that many days you lost, and there's a record of what they make during the day, during days fishing, and it's already been recorded, and so they can average it out, and that's just a suggestion.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul. Jack, did you want to make a statement, and then I have Andrew.

MR. COX: That's what I was going to say, Paul, the same thing you did, but that's another reason to have VMS, because you can document where you fish and where you've been.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew.

MR. FISH: We've brought up having, you know, boats with the AIS, and could they be in that zone, because they do -- If you do get caught in the zone, they'll be like where are going, and what speed are you making, and how many persons do you have onboard, and they will do their own risk assessment, and there have been people that have been allowed to just keep transiting the rock zone, that kind of thing, but, as long as you communicate with them, but they do threaten with humongous fines, if you're in that zone, and all that kind of stuff.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. I will open it up to the entire AP, if you wish to make a statement. Andrew Mahoney, you were in line.

MR. MAHONEY: Yes, and I was going to third what Paul said.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. I will recognize Randy McKinley from North Carolina.

MR. MCKINLEY: You know, we've got a similar situation, and Camp Lejeune is exploding up there, the Marine base, and we get run off all the time, by the military warships and stuff, and, I mean, it happens all the time, and it really impacts our fishing, and they could solve that problem by just shifting offshore about twenty or thirty miles, and I know, with rocket launches, you couldn't really -- I mean, the launch is what it is, and it's coming off the land, but, if the recovery efforts could shift offshore a little bit, it would be -- You know, that would at least eliminate that, but we do encounter that same problem down there, and it's aggravating. If they would just shift offshore -- If you've got these helicopter gunships, and carriers and stuff, and, if they just went twenty miles offshore, we wouldn't be affected by them, but they pretty much rule the sea, and so you will do what they say. Anyway, that's just to throw that in.

MR. LORENZ: Should we note that, Mike, that there's similar pain elsewhere around military installations? I guess we might as well, to get people thinking about it, because this, obviously, will be something we'll deal with more and more. Thank you, Randy. Anyone else with a comment, here from the AP, with respect to the feedback on the impacts of the space center operations on fishing activities off of Florida? Going once, twice. All right. That's all we can provide. Have we met the objective, Kerry, before you go? Okay. Thank you very much, and thank you, AP. Our next agenda item is the research recommendations for the snapper grouper fishery and an overview by Dr. Chip Collier.

DR. COLLIER: This is going to be a team effort by Mike and I, and that's why it lists council staff on the agenda, and why we're bringing this to the AP is the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that the council have a research and monitoring plan that is delivered to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and to the Secretary of Commerce. It's supposed to be done every five years, at a minimum of every five years, as long as -- And also updated within the time period.

That's what we're doing today, is we're -- We do ours on a two-year timeframe, and what we try to do -- We have some short-term recommendations, and those really focus on some of the stock assessments that are coming up, and then we have some long-term recommendations that are in there, and this is -- Like I said, we do these on every odd year, and so we're bringing these to the group. We're also supposed to do this in conjunction with the SSC, but, as we're doing more and more of ecosystem-based fisheries management, what we're seeing, and hearing, from the APs, is some of the emerging ideas on the water, what they're seeing on the water, are important research topics that probably need to get into the system a little bit earlier. That way, we're not waiting five years down the line to figure out what happened five years ago, and maybe we can get this into the system a little bit quicker.

Some of these research recommendations are used to develop grants. When they're listing items in the grants for researchers to do, they can list certain topics in there, and so hopefully we can get some of these topics. It also enables some staff here to -- If they want to do some of these research topics, it gives them the flexibility to apply within, and potentially do some small research projects, or it's also -- If academics want to apply for larger grants, and not just National Marine Fisheries Service money, but for some larger grants, and it gives them the flexibility, and a document to cite, saying, hey, they need this information, and this is why we're doing it.

We feel it's very important to get out there, and this is probably the second time that the Snapper Grouper AP has seen this. We haven't always brought it to the APs, but, like I said, you guys are

on the water, and you're the first scientists that probably see the changes, more rapidly than most, and so we have a long list of items for the snapper grouper fishery, of research topics.

What you'll see, on basically page 1 and 2, and I believe those are the short-term research stock assessment needs, and so those are pretty fleshed out, but, if there's certain topics for those species that you see in there, please add these. We're not looking to take anything out, but what we want to do is add to it, make sure that we're having an all-encompassing research plan that you guys think is good as well, and so we'll start off with the first one, and we have black grouper.

We've got a stock assessment for that planned in 2025, and you can see the list of items there, and I'm not going to read through all these items, but, like I said, if there are certain species that you guys want to talk about more, we can talk about it and get these into the research plan. We also have a stock assessment coming up for hogfish in 2024, and so there's additional items there. One thing that this is focused on, this research here is focused on, is mainly off of Florida, and it's not the North Carolina-South Carolina stock of hogfish.

Then, going down, we also have a red porgy operational assessment. As you guys have talked about quite a bit, there could be some impacts of red snapper on different species in the snapper grouper complex, and we do have that listed as a thing to investigate for red porgy, but it's also looking at lionfish, going beyond just the single species of red snapper, but lionfish could be having an impact of some of these species as well.

Blueline tilefish, we have an operational assessment starting in 2024, and we have a few items there, and we also -- Just to let you guys know, we have a longline survey that has been started up in our region. If you have questions about it, Todd has all the details that you would want, but it's encouraging that we're getting a longline survey to get more information on species like blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, and golden tilefish. Along with that blueline tilefish, we have a golden tilefish stock assessment that's coming up in 2024. There's a lot of research recommendations in there.

Snowy grouper is going to be starting in 2026, and then we go into species that are a little bit further down the line, and not necessarily coming up with stock assessments in the next couple of years, but we do have a long list of items to include for these, and we have gag grouper, red snapper, black sea bass, blueline tilefish listed again, red grouper, mutton snapper, yellowtail, and then we have -- We want to obtain life history traits for priority unassessed species, including almaco jack, Atlantic spadefish, hogfish, the Georgia to North Carolina stock, lane snapper, and white grunt.

That's the list that I was going to go through, and that's a lot of stock assessment information, but, if there's additional comments, or suggestions, that you have, that might have overlooked, and I know I went through it very fast, but this is really -- If you just want to email me, after this as well, some suggestions, we're all-in for getting comments from you guys and really trying to incorporate that into the research and monitoring plan.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Chip, and so some homework, if you've got any thoughts or any things you're thinking about, and you can email to Chip any ideas that you have, but, for right now, we do have Mike, if you want Mike to record any research needs that you feel you



would just like to bring up here in front of the AP, and provide your argument, and now is your time. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just say that, you know, you have such a list here, of so many items that are needed, or so much that's needed, but just, from my perspective, I would prioritize, as to what we're most concerned with here on this AP, is snapper grouper species and the lack of recruitment that we're seeing in many of these species and to prioritize the need for understanding whatever research needs to be done, however they do it, to understand why we're having this lack of recruitment, and so I would prioritize that as a pressing need immediately.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jimmy. Anyone else have a statement? Going once. Thank you, and I'm going to continue on with Mike with more information.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thanks, and Chip kind of went through the assessment portion of it, and certainly Jimmy's comment concerning recruitment causes falls in line with that, and that's something that is very important and used in stock assessments, and we also have some additional research needs for other areas that the council -- That the council is in charge of, in terms of managed areas, spawning SMZs, and deepwater MPAs.

We have a couple that are listed there, looking at the occurrences of spawning for snapper grouper species within those SMZs, kind of seeing -- The closures that exist, or the conditions that exist, in those SMZs, are we seeing the effect, in terms of the spawning for those species, and then characterizing the usage of deepwater MPAs by managed species, again kind of checking in on those areas, to make sure that they're doing what we're intending for them to do, that they're having the benefits for the stocks that we want them to have.

Those are listed there, and then there are some things from more of the management end, not necessarily the stock assessment portion, but kind of the management side of things, and so looking at -- This is something that got brought up earlier in the discussions in this meeting, but characterizing kind of the usage, the compliance, with the best fishing practices, and that's something that we're moving on and that we would, you know, definitely love to partner with others, as researchers continue to come onboard.

Then we have a list of social and economic priorities, and this is an area where the council is really trying to incorporate a lot more information than just the biology of the stock, but also incorporating how the fishery -- How the people interact with the fish and how they're affected by the management decisions, and so there are several different areas there that the council is looking for additional research on the impacts of management decisions and the way that a stock, or a fishery, operates on the people that are using that fishery.

I just wanted to note that below this is kind of like the full list, and so you have the full list of research priorities, and we're only touching the ones above that highlighted text, because those are the ones that are specifically snapper-grouper-oriented, but, if you have interest in looking at other fisheries that the council manages, dolphin wahoo, mackerel cobia, on down the line, those are all included within those materials, and feel free to, you know, provide your comments related to those.

If you don't have anything today, that's fine. Just giving some information on the timing, the council is going to be reviewing the research plan, and kind of finalizing it for the next time period, at the June council meeting, and so, if you have items that you would like to, you know, kind of throw in, in between now and possibly the middle to end of May, and, that way, we can get those together, from the staff end, and have them ready for the council, and then we can operate via email, that way, but, if anybody has any comments that you want to give right now, from the standpoint of the managed areas, or the management research type of thing, any priorities, or any additional areas of interest, then we can take those down right now.

MR. LORENZ: All right, AP. Any comments for Mike on the MPAs and related issues to the research priorities at this time? Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: How much research has been done on the MPAs and their effectiveness and things of that nature? I can remember, when we created some of them, when I sat on that board, I don't even know, twelve or fourteen years ago, and we never really -- I have never really heard, or seen, anything that, hey, they're working, or they're not working. You know, I know what I see underwater, for like when we build reefs and stuff, and so we built one twenty years ago, and it's literally taken like fifteen years before we started seeing like small juvenile scamp and grays, you know, coming into a structure that we built, and so, you know, that kind of long-term research, you know, could be very beneficial, well beyond our lifetimes, if we plant the seeds now, for something that pays off twenty years down the road, but it takes the vision, and the research, to see if it's really working.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. James. I'm sorry. Chip has a response.

DR. COLLIER: So there's been a few research projects that have been done relative to different species and how different species are responding to the closed areas. It's usually pretty limited on the amount of data. Those deepwater MPAs are pretty far offshore, and so it takes quite a bit of research to get out there.

We had some -- We were funding, through the Coral Reef Conservation Program, some submersible dives in these areas, in the deepwater MPAs and adjacent areas. However, the funding for that ran out, and so they still continue some of the work here and there, but it's not the level that we were getting before, and then we also have some information from the SERFS program. They're able to go into those areas and look at different areas and abundance and species, and now, with the cameras being on there, they're getting a little bit more information, and so you also know those deepwater MPAs are also greater than the depth range, quite often, and so we're not getting the full suite of information from the MPAs, but we're working on getting more and more information, and that's why we always have it in here as a research recommendation, trying to characterize it. We have pieces, but just not the whole picture yet.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chip. We had James waiting.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob. Chip actually answered some of my questions about how, you know, the science, the data, was being gathered and if those cameras that we saw on the chevron traps were being used with submersibles, and I think you answered my questions on that, and, if submersibles, or unmanned-drone-type underwater gear was going to commonplace, and if we can get real size data, and, you know, quantities of fish through that method. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Chip, a comment?

DR. COLLIER: Just to let you guys know, if you're interested in those deepwater MPAs, we did have a seminar on that, and I will send that to the AP, where Stacey Harter presented some of that research, and so it was interesting, and she had some really good pictures on some of the fish in the area, but, you know, compliance is always an issue for those deepwater MPAs.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chip. David Moss, a comment?

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Just as an extension of that, TNC just, and when I say "just", like I think it was last week, did some sampling over at Georgetown Hole, here in South Carolina, and then have submitted a proposal for a grant for funding to do Devils Hole, and also the Warsaw Hole, which is down off of Key West, to take a look at the effectiveness of a lot of these MPAs and long-term sustainability and all that good stuff.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, David. Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: Can I make a recommendation to add to that list right there?

MR. LORENZ: Absolutely.

MR. MAHONEY: Okay. Identify and address underserved communities resulting from the structure of commercial permitting.

MR. LORENZ: It's noted and on the record. Anything else, Andrew? Okay. Thank you. Anyone else with a comment for Chip and Mike? Thank you. Does that conclude that for us? Okay. That concludes Agenda Item Number 10, and so we are at the final agenda item, which is Other Business, and this is generally a chance to bring something up, and usually I prefer it would be short and sweet, because it is potential topics for other AP meetings, and things for us to consider, and then we do bring this to the council. When I go down to St. Augustine, anything you bring up like this, I would present to them.

I would like to take the opportunity to bring up the first item though of Other Business, which is kind of a closure of business, and we have two AP members -- This organization is a volunteer organization here, and they have maxed out on the time limit that they may volunteer, and so, at this point, I would like to recognize that both of them served as chair, and we have David Moss and Jimmy Hull. Give it up for them for nine years. (Applause) Thank you, gentlemen, and you can see what nine years does. You can see how much they have to say. Thank you, guys. All right. Is there other business? Andrew, you spoke to me, and I will give you the floor first, with your items.

MR. MAHONEY: Thank you. I've got two things that I want to talk about, and I just want to get through what I was talking about before and the importance of certain parts of our society that have been left out of being able to participate in the species managed under the snapper grouper complex, either through not being able to obtain a natural resource, to serve as a high-protein food or in recreational capacity, and that's kind of where I was going with the role that the Gullah have played where I'm from.

It's so important, and we just turn out back on them, in fisheries management, and the potential for more recreational fishermen to be coming in, without addressing the people that are the heartbeat of the region that we're in, and the area that we're in, in the low country. I had a bunch of examples, but I'm not going to hold you to that. I just hope that everybody will start taking that into consideration when they're making management decisions.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew, and that's probably an item that actually goes beyond just this AP, with snapper grouper, and that, I believe, is a kind of thing that you may want to have a conversation with John Hadley, because he thinks of those kinds of issues.

MR. MAHONEY: Okay. I don't know who that is.

MR. LORENZ: You still have the floor.

MR. MAHONEY: Yes, and I've got one more thing to talk about, because I'm kind of getting a little bit frustrated with how we're holding on to what we've got left, as it kind of slips out of our hands, and, you know, listening to the MSE a few times, I kind of, in my mind, believe that it's -- There is kind of two possible trajectories that it's going to take. One is it's going to slow down the closure of the fishery, and one it's going to speed up the closure of the fishery, and the probability that it's going to increase the amount of allowable catch is -- As a holistic, of the entire snapper grouper species, is probably zero, I'm guessing, and so I'm trying to think outside of the box.

I've got a lot of unpopular thoughts, obviously, but there is this thing now called gene drive, which, if people aren't quite familiar with it, it's using this tool CRISPR, which I'm sure a lot of people are familiar with, where you stitch into DNA a trait, possibly from another species, into the gene to -- Well, for example, we have -- We might have a problem with pollutants down in Florida, and there's a fish called a killifish, which I hear some people from up north talk about, but I don't know a lot about it, that is very receptive to pollutants, and, by splicing their gene into other genes that are species that we manage, we may be able to build up the resilience, in that case.

Now, you can increase growth rate and reproduction by using this method, and, currently, in one of the examples that they're using it for, is to decrease the transmission -- They're trying to eradicate the transmission of malaria in mosquitos to human beings, and they will splice in this trait that will stop that from transmitting. Once that send that into the wild, it reproduces, and it passes that on to the next generation of mosquitos, to where, eventually, all of them have that trait that they don't pass the malaria on to humans, with very little effort after the initial entry of this modified gene.

I feel like things like red porgy, that are kind of never going to come back, and it's a losing battle, and I think this would be a good time to try to do some gene editing with the red porgies, to see if we can increase recruitment. I mean, we could essential double recruitment, or do whatever we want with it, and, now, I know it's really taboo, what I'm talking about.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew, I'm just going to stop you for one minute.

MR. MAHONEY: Sure.

MR. LORENZ: Just so we can type in a couple of these things, and so you just noted research recommendations, for the purpose of Mike, and so you have a research recommendation of genetic analysis, and you're speaking of --

MR. MAHONEY: It's called gene drive.

MR. LORENZ: Genetic studies within fisheries stocks. All right. I just wanted that clarity, so we can go. Proceed.

MR. MAHONEY: The cool thing about it too is that it essentially -- With using the gene drive, you can essentially use the CRISPR as an eraser, and so, once you've created the stock that you want, you can go back into the gene and replace it with the original part of the gene, and from the DNA, and it will then -- When you release it into the wild, it will then reproduce throughout the species again, changing it back to its original DNA makeup, and I just wanted to let everybody know that this is the type of thing that is going to get some negative stuff said about it, I'm sure, but it is the type of thing that could stop us from just coming in here and holding on to what little we've got and really making an impact.

With the amount of people that are underserved in my community, the amount of people that will soon be coming to be a part of the fisheries, and this is a science-based field, and I think that we need to use the technology to our advantage. I mean, essentially, we won't need any of this stuff, after that, and so that's all I've got.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andrew. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Just to comment on that, you know, I mean, technology is definitely the future, and the gene splicing, and things of that nature, you know, that's some very, very valid points, and, I mean, it's going to revolutionize the world, as we know it, definitely within our lifetimes, and so, if funding and research can be put into that -- I mean, it very well could hold a solution to every damn problem we have on this council, which seems like, as we've heard this week, is going back to recruitment, and so that's a comment on that.

Just some food for thought is, you know, as I sit here, and I listen to, you know, the way the species, and the stocks, are going to be reduced, and my particular industry is going to be drastically negatively affected, and I'm throwing it out there that, you know, I've been sitting on the sidelines for years, as far as separating out charter and headboat from recreational, and, you know, it's just something to think about.

You know, if you look around this council right now, the majority of the individuals probably got their start by doing some kind of charter, or some type of headboat, and literally we are a dying breed. You know, the same thing with the commercial fishermen, you know, and it's just getting to fewer and fewer of the regulations, not just on the fish, but the Coast Guard, the FCC, all the way down the pipe, loss of working waterfronts, you know, and, within twenty years, it will be all gone, and that's just going to wipe out a whole segment of the population who will never get to experience to fish, unless they can sink \$100,000 or \$200,000 into a boat, and so, you know, over the next timeframe, just think about that, going forward, because I'm going to --

You know, seeing where things are going, I'm going to definitely start raising the question of whether we can have something cut out specifically for headboats, because we're hemmed in. We can't troll, and so we can't do the top water, and we're specifically hemmed into bottom fishing, and things of that nature, and, for the survival of the industry, it's going to be something that we're all going to have to take a look at and work on going forward, and, with that, I will pass.

MR. LORENZ: So, Cameron, just for a simple summary, for the record, and it will go to the council, and so you're suggesting, as an Other Business item, that we may, at some point, want to discuss -- I think the vernacular is sector separation, and so headboats from charter from private anglers.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Correct, yes, the separation from all vessels, all the stuff being put into this exclusive recreational sector, and maybe carving out a sector for vessels that -- Carving out a different sector for vessels that are really going to go extinct if something is not done, probably.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, and it's noted. Other items? Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. Real quick, to Andrew, I live on St. Helena Island, and Representative William McBride is addressing what you're talking about with the Gullah in the state legislature, and you might look into Representative William McBride.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: Just real quick, and I know it's not going to go anywhere, but two different things. The American reds, I mean, we come to these meetings, and I have to go back and say, well, it's probably going to be three or four years before anything gets done about that, and it's crazy, and it's not -- I encourage you to read Chris McCafferty's first public comment, and these little baby red snapper are coming into places that they've never been, and historically crazy, but we're seeing them four, five, six miles offshore, and there's no reason that there couldn't be a bycatch of some of these things, and it's just insane.

I mean, what's going to happen three or four years from now, before anything is done, if the reef can't support all these babies? It certainly can't support it when they're twice that size. They're going to run everything off, and it's going to take fundamental changes in the scientists, the way they're looking at, but it's just going to be the same result as what the sharks have done.

Then the second point is that we are -- Our fleet is aging out, and, I mean, it's insane, and we lost one of the best vermilion snapper fishermen a month ago, and, I mean, five years from now, we're all going to be gone, and I just -- I think there needs to be some method, or some kind of research done, to try to get -- To encourage something to make it more easily available, but doing away with the two-for-one, and I say this every time, and I know it's probably not going to happen, but just somehow make it a little bit easier for some of these guys to get into the industry, and that's all I've got to say.

MR. LORENZ: Randy, it's interesting what you said, because, with red snapper, I keep constantly getting this thought, and I know that Jimmy Hull has done this, but there's a term out there that was brought to fisheries from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and it was originally with menhaden and things, and they started the term "ecosystem-based management",

and so they were dealing with the baitfish as a way to -- Don't just worry about the species that you're harvesting, but worry about the baitfish that the harvested species feed on, and it's kind of interesting that we have a --

This is my personal opinion, and I'm agreeing with you here, of, if you look at an ecosystem-based management system, the way the red snapper are, where you've built this biomass back, historically, but you can't fish for them, or harvest any, because we don't have the end of the age distribution, and size distribution, and you do have to wonder, if you're truly living with ecosystem-based management, what your preferential treatment of one species, over a such a large part of the ocean does, and it's almost now a curve that we have, based on -- That actually started with baitfish, but now we have species that are special and protected, and gosh knows what's going on because of that, and so I share your thoughts there. Anyone else have other business?

All right, and Mike has just reminded me that -- You know, I looked on this Sunday, and there wasn't any, but we have considerable public --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: You have written comment, but if we have verbal comment, but to give the opportunity.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Well, there is -- What I will ask is, you know, check over the comments that are written, and I guess I will go directly to the public for verbal comment at this time. Mike, help me out here. Who is there?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I see, first, we've got Alana Harrison on, and, Alana, I am unmuting you now.

MS. HARRISON: I have been listening in, and I just had a couple of thoughts. You touched on this at the end, with the two-for-one, and I'm in Hatteras Village, and we're experiencing that, you know, we have the bulk of our fishermen are sixty-five to eighty-five, and, with the two-for-one, those permits are going to be cut in half in a few years, and then they're going to be cut in half again, and so I just -- I want to know when we're going to put a stop that, and I've been reading the minutes from 1996, from when it was put in, and, in 1994, there were 2,883 permitted vessels, and they were looking to make a reduction of 49 to 60 percent, and so that would mean an ideal range of about 1,500 to 1,200 permits.

Now, in 2020, we have 639, and so that's a 78 percent reduction, and I want to know like where is it going to stop? Are we trying to get to zero, because, right now, like we're headed there soon, within like twenty years soon, and I have been looking at the context of why they put two-for-one in, and it seems like it was just to identify the universe of fishermen, which is what we're grappling with with recreational fishing right now, and so this was before trip limits, quotas, season closures, area closures, and I find it fascinating that they decided to do a permit moratorium, but they were trying to narrow the participation.

It was interesting, because they said it was the first time they had so much interaction from the fishing community. Fishermen realized that they were facing perhaps a permit sanction, if they didn't get their reports in, and they were finally getting involved, and I am young, and so my dad was involved, but I am imagining that a lot of you all got involved because of that two-for-one, and because you all of a sudden had logbooks, and you had permits that were going to be taken away if you didn't fill them out, and so I would like for you all to request the minutes from the

May 1996 joint AP committee meetings, and kind of read through it, and see what your opinions are, and if we're at the point where we can stop taking away permits.

Then I guess I would also, on the permit subject, and I don't know why reporting got dropped, and it doesn't feel like there is any skin in the game, and so, if a person doesn't have any vested interest, and then, all of a sudden, they do, they're going to be a lot more inclined to comply with the rules and regulations, and so we had logbooks before the permits, and so the permits were issued based on the logbooks, for the commercial sector, and so we're just going to say, if you want a snapper grouper permit, go get one, but we don't have any idea who needs it, and I don't know, and it's a big question, but the reporting definitely needs to be involved, at some point, and so those are my comments, and, again, May 1996, and that's when the two-for-one was being discussed, and so I urge you to go read about it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Alana. Next, Mike. All right, and then I would comment, with that two-for-one permit system, or situation, I actually did bring that up at the Wrightsville Beach council meeting, and Andy Strelcheck, our NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator, was interested, and had a few questions to me, and I apologize, but I was out of my wheelhouse, as a recreational fisherman, and I don't quite know what that is, and so I am going to follow-up, so we get this out and discussed again, because we have the Regional Administrator's ear on this in St. Augustine, and so, Randy and Jimmy, I'm going to be contacting you to give me a little education, so I can do a good job down there in getting your points across, and maybe I will have you on my phone that day, so I can say, I don't know, and I will get back to you. Thank you, Jimmy. Anything else in Other Business? All right. With that said, thank you, and we are ten minutes ahead of time, and I adjourn this meeting with the AP.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 27, 2023.)

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Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By  
Amanda Thomas  
June 5, 2023



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Representative  
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SC PA Attendees  
4/26/23

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Report Generated:

04/25/2023 06:21 PM EDT

**Webinar ID**

687-372-123

**Actual Start Date/Time**

04/25/2023 12:10 PM EDT

**Duration**

4 hours 49 minutes

### Attendee Details

**Attended**

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

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Bianchi

Brouwer

Byrd

Chaya

Cox

Curtis

DeVictor

Dixon

Finch

GOMEZ

Glazier

Griner

Habich

Harrison

Helies

Hooper

Hudson

Iverson

Klasnick

Laks

Ledet

Lee

Lempke

Meeks

Mehta

Meyers

Militello

Neer

Oliver

Pellicer

Peterson

Schiano

Schmidtke

Smillie

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Myra

01Julia

01Cindy

Derek

Judd

Rick

Michael

Margaret

RICHARD

Edward

00 Tim

William

Alana

Frank

Matthew

Joseph

Kim

01Kelly

Ira

Vicki

Max

Ben

Thomas

Nikhil

S

Chris

Julie

Ashley

Joseph

Cassidy

Samantha

01Michael

01Nicholas



Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes

Snyder  
Sweeney Tookes  
TROY  
Vecchio  
Wahl  
Withers  
oden  
thomas  
vara

Dave  
Jennifer  
MATTHEW  
Julie  
Armin  
Meg  
jeff  
suz  
mary

## April 2023 Snapper Grouper

### Attendee Report: AP Meeting

Report Generated:

04/27/2023 03:09 PM EDT

#### Webinar ID

687-372-123

#### Actual Start Date/Time

04/26/2023 07:30 AM EDT

#### Duration

9 hours 31 minutes

### Attendee Details

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Yes	45	Bianchi
Yes	98	Brouwer
Yes	38	Byrd
Yes	56	Chaya
Yes	38	Conklin
Yes	42	DeVictor
Yes	44	Dixon
Yes	35	Finch
Yes	67	Freeman
Yes	91	Freeman
Yes	95	GOMEZ
Yes	32	Glazier
Yes	34	Greene
Yes	97	Griner
Yes	37	Habich
Yes	96	Harrison
Yes	39	Helies
Yes	87	Hemilright
Yes	96	Hooper
Yes	39	Hordyk
Yes	60	Hudson
Yes	98	Iverson
Yes	71	Keppler
Yes	93	Laks
Yes	38	Lee
Yes	50	Lorenzen
Yes	55	Marhefka
Yes	49	Mehta
Yes	82	Menegolo

Yes	37	Meyers
Yes	69	Murphey
Yes	39	Neer
Yes	90	Newman
Yes	39	Oliver
Yes	35	Peterson
Yes	100	Piland
Yes	39	Ponte
Yes	49	Schiano
Yes	99	Schmidtke
Yes	36	Smarrito
Yes	32	Smart
Yes	33	Smillie
Yes	55	Snyder
Yes	84	Somerset
Yes	39	Sweetman
Yes	38	TROY
Yes	90	Vecchio
Yes	41	Wiegand
Yes	44	Withers
Yes	35	Wyanski
Yes	70	collier
Yes	77	moss
Yes	90	seaton
Yes	41	thomas
Yes	37	vara
No	0	Chandler
No	0	Coggins
No	0	Cox
No	0	Curtis
No	0	Duran
No	0	Estes
No	0	Foss
No	0	Freeman
No	0	Garber
No	0	Gentry
No	0	Glazier
No	0	Howington
No	0	Iberle
No	0	Jr
No	0	Klasnick
No	0	Knowlton
No	0	Ledet
No	0	Lempke

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Mahoney
Meeks
Militello
Moore
Patten
Pellicer
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Poholek
RINCONES
Reyier
Sedberry
Stewart
Sweeney Tookes
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Report Generated:

04/27/2023 03:11 PM EDT

**Webinar ID**

687-372-123

**Actual Start Date/Time**

04/27/2023 07:08 AM EDT

**Duration**

4 hours 44 minutes

### Attendee Details

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Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

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Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

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Bubley

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Cross

Curtis

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Helies

Hooper

Howington

Hudson

Keppler

Laks

Marhefka

Mehta

Menegolo

Meyers

Murphey

Neer

Piland

Reyier

Roller

Schmidtke

Smillie

Snyder

Somerset

**First Name**

Marina

00 Mel

Alan

Myra

Walter

01Cindy

Tiffanie

Judd

Rick

Margaret

Kristin

RICHARD

00 Tim

William

Alana

Frank

Matthew

Kathleen

Joseph

Blaik

Ira

00Kerry

Nikhil

Jean Paul

S

00Trish

Julie

Andy

Eric

Tom

01Michael

01Nicholas

Dave

Carly

Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes

Wiegand  
Withers  
moss  
thomas  
vara

Christina  
Meg  
david  
suz  
mary