

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER ADVISORY PANEL

**Town and Country Inn
Charleston, South Carolina**

October 10-12, 2023

Transcript

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

Robert Lorenz, Chair
James Paskiewicz, Vice Chair
Vincent Bonura
Chris Conklin
Tony Constant
Jack Cox, Jr.
Andrew Fish
Robert Freeman
Richard Gomez
Chris Kimrey

Joe Mathews
Randy McKinley
Thomas Meeks
Chris Militello
Harry Morales
Paul Nelson
Andy Piland
John Polston
Cameron Sebastian
Dr. Todd Kellison

Council Members

Jessica McCawley
Tim Griner

Kerry Marhefka
Mel Bell

Council Staff

Julia Byrd
John Hadley
Kim Iverson
Ashley Oliver
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Nick Smillie

Dr. Chip Collier
Suzanna Thomas
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Judd Curtis
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Attendees and Invited Participants

David Hugo
Amy Dukes

Tom Carruthers
Dr. Walter Bubley

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on October 10, 2023, and was called to order by Mr. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Good afternoon, Snapper Grouper AP. I'm Bob Lorenz, your chair, from the recreational side, and I would like to get the meeting started now. We'll initiate with our introductions, and we'll start on the left, I guess, with Mr. Paul Nelson. Your name, your port, and your specific section.

MR. NELSON: Paul Nelson, Ponce Inlet, commercial and charter.

MR. POLSTON: John Polston, Kings Seafood, wholesale and retail, Port Orange, Florida.

MR. FREEMAN: Robert Freeman, recreational and commercial.

MR. MORALES: Harry Morales, recreational, out of Hilton Head, South Carolina.

MR. PILAND: Andy Piland, charter, Hatteras, North Carolina.

MR. MILITELLO: Chris Militello, recreational, West Palm Beach.

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

MR. PASKIEWICZ: James Paskiewicz, Marathon, Middle Keys, commercial fisherman and wholesale dealer.

MR. LORENZ: Bob Lorenz, recreational fisherman, Wilmington, North Carolina.

MR. MATTHEWS I'm Matt Matthews, recreational fisherman, Statesboro, Georgia.

MR. CONSTANT: Tony Constant, ex-charter, recreational fisherman, out of Beaufort, South Carolina.

MR. FISH: Andy Fish, Port Canaveral, commercial.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, and I just -- Sorry, Chris.

MR. KIMREY: It's okay, Bob. Chris Kimrey, for-hire and commercial. Morehead City, North Carolina.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you very much. We have two online. The gentlemen online, could you introduce yourself?

DR. SCHMITKE: We can go first to Vincent Bonura. You should be unmuted. We'll touch base with Vincent, and we'll check in with him. Todd Kellison, if you're able to get your voice, on for recognition.

DR. KELLISON: Good afternoon, everyone. Todd Kellison, NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center. I'm in Beaufort, North Carolina, and I'm a non-voting member of the panel, and I'm sorry to not be able to be there in-person this week.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right, and we got notification that Jack Cox will be joining us, and we'll have Jack introduce himself when he signs on. I would just like to recognize that we have a council member with us today, and she'll also be giving us a presentation, and that's Jessica McCawley from Florida, and she's from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Marine Fisheries Management. I missed one. Tim Griner. Thank you. Welcome, Tim. Tim is from North Carolina, from the commercial side, on the council.

The next item is we'll go to the approval of the agenda, and I will do it with some small, minor tweaks that I would like to do, with your approval, if you've reviewed the agenda, and it's more or less in the timing. One of the things that I noted, and this is just my prediction, would be that our discussion if limited entry will be something of interest to many of us, and probably take some more time, but, ahead of that, in case you get tired during that, I would just like to bring up two people a little more forward in the agenda, ahead of Item 8 for the limited entry, and I would like bring --

This will occur on Wednesday from SEDAR, and get the presentation from Chip Collier, who will come, and then citizen science with Julia Byrd. I would like, as a courtesy to them, to move them ahead of Item 8, and then we can Item 8 for as long as we wish at the end of the meeting. With respect to those changes, is there anybody that objects to changing just that last order of which we speak. All right. With no objections, then I will say that our agenda is approved for this AP meeting. The agenda is approved.

Before -- Has anyone reviewed the -- The review of the AP minutes, and I need to approve the minutes, and so, if you have reviewed them, I would just like to ask, I guess in general, and is there anybody that does not agree with the minutes or if you have what I would call an addition, deletion, or a change, then speak now. I see no hands raised, and nobody from online, and so could we have a motion and a second to approve the minutes?

MR. MORALES: Mr. Chair, I make a motion to approve the minutes.

MR. LORENZ: Motion by Harry Morales to approve the minutes. Is there a second?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I will second.

MR. LORENZ: Second by our Vice Chair, James Paskiewicz, and so the minutes are approved. As I mentioned, I'm going to bring -- I have asked to move Chip and Julia Byrd up, but, kind of as a courtesy to you all, and with Julia, Julia has, with our citizen science effort -- She's going to be asking for some of you -- She needs volunteers, and they've got to come from the AP, for some efforts that are out there in citizen science, and they are roughly AP position type things, and advisory positions, and so I've asked Julia to give us, to give you all, her two-minute elevator pitch, in case, during the next three days -- If you want to think about it before her formal presentation, and you can talk to her, and maybe help, and, in addition, she's asked, and she will

probably make a pitch, that, if your pictures are here, at any time, for the FISHstory apparatus, to get that online. Julia.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, Bob. I know there's some new folks around the table, and so I'm Julia Byrd, and, as Bob mentioned, I run our Citizen Science Program, and so I want to make a few quick pitches to think about during the week. First off is I'm sitting in the back corner, and we have a project called FISHstory, where we're trying to gather historic fishing photos from the 1940s through 1980s, and are looking to get pictures from throughout the South Atlantic, from North Carolina down to the Florida Keys.

I know some folks sitting around the table have already provided photos to us, but I wanted to encourage you to, if you have photos here, come visit me, and I will kind of scan them in and collect some information on them from you guys, and, if you have photos, but weren't able to bring them today, also please come visit me, and we'll figure out a way that we may be able to kind of share photos, and I appreciate you guys looking through your old files and drawers and things like that and trying to find some of these historic photos.

Then the second thing I wanted to quickly mention is we have a couple of citizen science advisory groups, and one of them is made up of representatives from all of the kind of council's advisory panels, and so Jimmy Hull and Bob were the representatives on that committee, and I know that Jimmy has rotated off the AP, and we're kind of looking for someone else, or a couple of other people, to kind of join this advisory panel.

It's a group that only meets via webinar once per year, and it's not a heavy lift, and one of the kind of biggest responsibilities of this group is really letting us, or helping us, identify research priorities across all of the council fishery management plans that citizen science may be able to help with, and so, if you have any interest in that, I'm happy to chat with you more about those, but it's a really great way for you to kind of help guide the types of projects that our Citizen Science Program takes on over the next few years, and so it really makes a huge difference, having input from fishermen on the types of projects that may work well and for kind of the types of data that we need, and so that's my three-minute pitch. I'm happy to talk about it more, if any of you guys are interested.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Julia, and I would like to ask some of you, particularly if you have any kind of management experience, to give some thought to what Julia has asked us to do. I have heard that Vincent Bonura is online now, and we would like to do the voice check and the interface check with him. Vincent.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Vincent, it looks like you're unmuted on our end. I'm not sure if it might be picking up a different audio input from your computer.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Vincent. We'll pick you up later, at an appropriate time, should you have any comment, but, just for the purpose of public record, Vincent is from south Florida, with the commercial fishing. That's his sector. All right. Thank you.

The next item on the agenda is public comment, and I see no one here. Is there any here to make comment? All right. There is a no on that, and there's nobody to comment. Mike, is there anybody online? All right. I don't know if you've noticed, but Jimmy Hull has made a written comment,

and he's the only one that has put in written comment for this AP meeting, and, as a courtesy to Jimmy, and he spent a lot of time here with things, and has just rolled off our AP in April, and just to make sure that everybody has heard what he would like to ask us, since he's the only one out there that has done this, I will just read -- I will kind of paraphrase what he's done, in case you haven't gotten to read from Jimmy.

He's asking for our support when we get to Amendment 36. He has participated in the black sea bass commercial pot fishery, and he mentions about being closed down from ninety feet of water last year, and he apparently did one of the -- There was sort of an outreach, or a sampling, that was done in north Georgia on this ropeless gear for black sea bass, where there does seem to be an issue with right whales, as far as the gear not being allowed with the Endangered Species Act, or at least the rope gear, and so he's asking for support of Amendment 36, for the fact that he has tried out the ropeless gear and liked it.

With respect to Amendment 46, he's also asking for your support on that. He's from the commercial sector, but he's asking for support on the private recreational snapper grouper permit, and, on Amendment 47 scoping, he just wanted to weigh-in that he's all for the snapper grouper for-hire sector to have limited entry, and so that's from Jimmy Hull from Ormond Beach, Florida. All right. Our next item will be for the Committee Chair Remarks for the council's Snapper Grouper Committee, and Jessica McCawley from Florida Fish and Wildlife. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Bob. Once again, I'm Jessica McCawley. I'm a council member from the State of Florida, and I'm the chair of the Snapper Grouper Committee. All right. Just to go over some highlights, and I'll be here the whole time to answer questions, if you have questions.

One of the amendments that was approved by the council at the meeting in September was Amendment 54, which is the Comprehensive Electronic Logbook Amendment, and so this would create electronic reporting for snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagics in the South Atlantic. This is a joint amendment with the Gulf Council, and so now the amendment has to go over to the Gulf Council for their approval, before being submitted to the Secretary of Commerce.

Also, as you heard a little bit about from Bob and from Jimmy Hull, there's another amendment underway for black sea bass, and so it was Amendment 56, and it was the assessment response, and so SEDAR 76 indicates that black sea bass is overfished and undergoing overfishing. However, there is some additional modeling work needed for the SSC to develop the projections of future catch, and I believe that those won't be ready until early 2024, and so the actual work on this particular piece is kind of on hold, but you heard about the black sea bass pot on-demand gear that would limit vertical lines in the water.

Right now, that's not an allowable gear in the black sea bass fishery, and it's just the regular pots with the vertical lines, and so this gear has been tested, through a couple of different exempted fishing permits, and it seems to be working well, and so we are going to work on an amendment that's going to look at that gear, to make it an allowable gear in the fishery, and so that's in Regulatory Amendment 36.

In addition to the on-demand gear, there's also an item in there for gag and black grouper, and so you might remember that gag grouper is overfished, and undergoing overfishing, and the council

approved, a few meetings ago -- They took final action on this amendment to rebuild gag, and it had a number of different management measures in there, and so one of the management measures that was in there on the recreational side was a vessel limit, and so there was some confusion on the writing of the rule and the way that the amendment was structured, so that it appeared that you could have both two gag and two black grouper onboard, for a total of four fish.

Instead, it should somewhat match what the individual limit is, which it's one fish that's either gag or black, and so this vessel limit would instead be two total fish, and you could have two gags, two blacks, or one gag and one black, instead of four total fish, and so there was some confusion about what the council's intent was, and so this amendment is being started to go back and fix that piece, since it's already been approved by the Secretary, and so the council is working on both of those. I believe that's a framework amendment. Is that right, Mike? Okay.

I'm sure you guys are going to talk about it this week, but you might have heard about this MRIP-FES pilot study, and this was a short-term study that was released by NOAA earlier this year, and it indicates a potential overestimation of recreational effort and catch estimates, and it could be upwards of 40 percent, and so there's another pilot study that's underway, and it will take at least a year to complete, and then they will have to work on those analysis, and then it will have to come through the council's SSC, et cetera, and so it's probably about, I'm going to say, two years out, before it's actually ready for management, and it is trying to verify, and quantify, the results of that short-term study that was only done in a few states, trying to look at it in all coastal states, I believe, to see how big those estimates are, or what the difference is, and then what could be done, multipliers, scalers, et cetera, to try to fix this.

The council received a presentation, at their September meeting, and NOAA had actually announced this back in August, and, actually, the Gulf Council was the first council to really kind of talk about this new pilot study, but, at the South Atlantic meeting in September, the council decided to look at each amendment that was underway by the council, determine what percentage of that particular fishery was recreational, and then is that species under a deadline, like a two-year deadline, because it's overfished and undergoing overfishing and those types of things, and tried to determine, for each one of these amendments, whether the council wanted to move forward with those actions, and then, in the SEDAR Committee, which looks at the stock assessments, also considered the potential impact of that data and actually recommended pushing back a number of stock assessments that we felt really needed this updated information.

Then that kind of also factors into some of these amendments that were council discussions at that September meeting, and you guys are going to talk about Amendment 46, which is the recreational permit amendment, Amendment 48, wreckfish, Amendment 55, scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and, also, Amendment 44, yellowtail snapper. The council discussed yellowtail snapper, but, due to concerns about this potential bias in the MRIP data, and yellowtail is not overfished and not undergoing overfishing, the council wants to turn this back to the SSC and have them basically reconsider the ABC recommendation.

This would be because FWC is the one that actually runs this stock assessment, along with many other Florida-centric species, and so Florida has the State Reef Fish Survey, and so they have another source of data, in addition to the MRIP data, and so FWC is willing to rerun this stock assessment, and this affects Gulf yellowtail and South Atlantic yellowtail, and so the assessment would be rerun with the State Reef Fish Survey data, but both councils would have to turn this

back to the SSC, so that they can help determine a path forward, since they've already approved these ABC recommendations with the MRIP data.

We also had a very interesting and lengthy discussion and debate about Regulatory Amendment 35, which is the amendment dealing with red snapper and recreational discards. This amendment was approved back in March, but it hasn't been submitted to the Region, or the Secretary of Commerce, and this was an impromptu discussion, as part of other business under the Snapper Grouper Committee, and so it wasn't actually on the agenda, and so the council couldn't, you know, make a decision at the meeting about what to do with this amendment, and so the discussion centered around this FES pilot study information, how that affects pieces of this amendment, since the amendment was based on discards, and discards are definitely affected by this MRIP-FES information about the pilot study.

The council ultimately voted to reconsider Amendment 35 at their December meeting, and what means is there's a couple of different decisions that the council -- Also, Amendment 35, as a reminder, was a short-term action, and there's a mid-term action on red snapper, and that was the exempted fishing permits, or proposals, and then the long-term action was the management strategy evaluation, which you guys, I think, are going to talk about this week, and you guys have provided a lot of input on.

The council will look at Amendment 35 and try to decide, in light of this new FES information, does the council still want to submit Regulatory Amendment 35 as the short-term action, does the council want to consider a different short-term action, or not take a short-term action and instead kind of put it back to the Secretary of Commerce, and so these are some of the discussions that would likely and can occur at that meeting in December.

Also, back in June, the council had received a presentation from Space Florida, about current and future launch activities, and the council had requested some information about the frequency of these launches, and the size of the areas, how they communicate those launches, et cetera, and so they were waiting on this information from the Coast Guard, in order to quantify the effects of the launches, and the Coast Guard said that the council needed to make a formal request, and so a letter will be sent to the Coast Guard, in order to obtain the formal information, and that's it.

Do you guys have any questions for me at this point? I will be here all week, and so, if you get into some discussion on a particular issue, and you have questions about why is the council doing this, and what happened at the most recent meeting, what's the council thinking, I'm certainly here to help answer any of those questions, and I think that Kerry Marhefka, the Vice Chair -- I think she's going to be online as well, and so, between the two of us, we can hopefully get your questions answered.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jessica. Are there questions for Jessica? James, you're first.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and I appreciate the report, Jessica. I was curious, with the Florida Reef Fish Survey, and what might that look like? I mean, are we looking at a dramatic change to the overall stock assessment, or, I mean, is it something that's going to be, you know, worth having the new information, and how quickly might that information be available?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great questions, and so let's talk a little bit about how the State Reef Fish Survey has been used in the Gulf of Mexico, and so the recent Gulf gag assessment, and then the upcoming red grouper assessment, they're done without the MRIP data, and they're done primarily with the Florida State Reef Fish Survey data. There are some differences.

The mutton snapper stock assessment was recently started, and, at the data workshop, we were doing just a little bit of a calculation between the State Reef Fish Survey data and the MRIP numbers, and, believe it or not, the MRIP numbers were showing a 40 percent increase over what the State Reef Fish Survey data indicated, and so I would say, just from what I've seen in the Gulf with gag, and then what I saw with preliminary numbers with mutton, I think it will make a difference for yellowtail, and so I think it's a worthy exercise to go in there and consider this information and rerun the stock assessment, on both the Gulf and the Atlantic.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So, quite possibly, it could back up the MRIP data, as far as it goes with yellowtail, and it won't be up to a 40 percent, you know, difference in the two surveys?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's right, yes, and so the data has to be certified first by NOAA, and we're working on that certification right now, and I just mentioned that the mutton snapper stock assessment is underway, and we're trying to get some of our stock assessment analysts to also run the yellowtail assessment, or rerun this piece of it, at the same time that mutton is underway, and so we're talking about, I would say, early 2024, to get them both completed.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: What do we do if we do see something like a 40 percent difference between the two, you know, and then what do we do, from a fisheries management standpoint?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think we would have to look at the results, and kind of dive into that stock assessment, and try to kind of tease those things apart, and kind of figure out some differences there between MRIP and State Reef Fish Survey. The quota has been historically tracked in the MRIP numbers, but these are the types of things that had to happen in the Gulf, when some of the Gulf assessments were done with the State Reef Fish Survey, and so it's a process, I guess is what I would say, and I don't know exactly, you know, what it would look like in the end, but we feel, at least me, being from FWC, I feel more confident in the State Reef Fish Survey data, at this time, than the MRIP data. I'm not saying that it wouldn't be, you know, that way a couple of years from now, when the data is ready, but, if we want to try to get some better information on yellowtail in the short-term, then we can run that assessment with the State Reef Fish Survey, just like we're doing with mutton.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Jessica. I believe that fully answered my questions.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. A question?

DR. CARRUTHERS: This is Tom Carruthers from Blue Matter, and we're doing the MSE, and so this is really interesting for us. Two questions about this pilot study. Which species -- Can you clarify which species this overestimation could affect, and, also, the duration of years that it's expected to impact, and is it all years, or is it just recent years?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm going to look to Mike to help answer that question.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, Tom, this is something that we're going to need to, I guess, follow-up after this meeting, and kind of moving forward with you, as far as like how this can affect some of the information that goes into the MSE. Right now, being that it's kind of this short-term pilot study that we haven't gotten the final word on this is how it affects the landings streams, it's hard to answer that question at this point. What we'll go into, within the next couple of agenda items, are some resources that MRIP has put out and that the council is going to be having in the future that people can go to for some more information, but we also -- Like Chip will be following-up with you, to talk about how this affects the MSE moving forward.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Thank you very much, and just a note that, in any assessment model that's ever been made, if you reduce the size of the historical catches, and you keep all the other data the same, the stock is estimated to be smaller, in just about every one, and so it affects scale.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Any other questions for Jessica? Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. The gag season was -- It closes now in about two weeks, and did that go into other species, such as black or --

MS. MCCAWLEY: I believe that it just closes gag and not black, and is that right, Mike?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I think it's just gag. Let me double-check. I got the thumbs-up that it will just be gag, because black was not estimated to be overfished. It didn't have the same status, and only the ACL for gag grouper was changed. They changed the vessel limit and the bag limit measures, but not the -- It wasn't the overall annual catch limit.

MR. CONSTANT: So the bag is one, one, or two, per vessel, and then the season is the 23rd to basically May 1.

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

MR. PILAND: Thank you, Bob. If the MRIP is wrong on one species, would it assume that it's wrong on most of them, and don't that snatch the rug out of everything we've done in the last few years?

MS. MCCAWLEY: The short answer is, yes, it could, and so, yes, I would say that some things to think about are what percentage of a particular fishery is recreational, and so, the more of that particular fishery is allocated to recreational, the more that this could affect it, and so it could be wrong for multiple species, but I guess you have to partly think about how much it matters, how much of that fishery is recreational, and let me give an example.

Like wreckfish, there's not a big recreational component to wreckfish, and so I would say, and this partly the decision that the council made, is the council feels confident in moving forward with the wreckfish amendment, because that's primarily a commercial fishery, and so that's just a way to look at an example, but, yes, but NOAA Fisheries is also saying that it's still the best scientific information available, until this next study could be completed, and that information incorporated through the council's SSC and in stock assessments and in upcoming amendments. They're saying basically stay the course on these items. Is that the best way to explain it, Mike?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, I think that's fine, and I just wanted to add a clarification that the area where the bias was observed in this pilot study is specifically in the private recreational and not the for-hire component of the recreational estimates, and so that -- When you think about which species this would affect, it would have the strongest effect, potentially, and, you know, it depends on how respondents have answered questions over the years, but it would have the strongest effect, potentially, on species that have a heavy private recreational component, as opposed to a for-hire or a commercial.

MR. LORENZ: Andy Piland.

MR. PILAND: Yes, and, I mean, I agree with you that it would be a percentage basis, and, you know, like you said, with the wreckfish, and I 100 percent agree with that, but there's not many species that we work with in this room that is not heavy on the recreational side, and you're right that it's more -- There's fewer recreational, because the charter and headboat group are both required to submit catch reports, and so, you know, at some point, when somebody decides that we're going to use the headboat data, instead of just letting it sit, you'll have those numbers.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Any other questions or comments for Jessica? Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: This is -- I was asked this a couple of times about -- I'm going to go back to this grouper closure in October, and the -- When it shuts down, is it going to go all the way back to the beginning of the year, that that 88,000 is what the quota was, because we're about 50,000 over it now, and are they going to do some kind of average, and maybe just start the overages from October moving forward, which is going to make a big difference, and I don't know if that makes sense or not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It does make sense, and I don't know that I'm the expert to answer this, and, Mike, do you want to answer it?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So we've been trying to get clarification on that as well, and we're having conversations with Marine Fisheries Service, to understand what the action will be moving forward, as far as accountability measures, overages, paybacks, things of that nature, and we haven't gotten that clarification just yet, but those conversations are being had, to try to understand what will happen, moving forward, and some of the places where it's not clear is that it's been handled differently in different situations, and so sometimes it's taken in the sense of you just kind of start clean, with the first full year, and, other times, that overage is taken into account. I think it depends partially on the status of the stock, and it can depend on a variety of factors, on how that's weighed, but we are having the conversations, but I just don't have a final answer for you right now.

MR. MCKINLEY: Right, and that's pretty important. I mean, that's a big amount, and then you start throwing in the discards and stuff, and, I mean, I would hate to get in that loop, like with the red snapper, that we're not able to do it, and, I mean, it's just -- It's terrible, and so hopefully it's not going to be the worst-case scenario. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Anyone else? I just have one thing to add, because I was going to put this in at the end of the meeting, but I had gone to an ocean innovation conference, and it was run by the University of North Carolina in my town, Wilmington, and I got a chance to

meet a Coast Guard rear admiral there, and she was discussing fisheries, and so I think it sort of fits with our Snapper Grouper Committee Chair's remarks, the things that were said.

During that time, and there was a question-and-answer, and I was able to go approach her, and I was able to mention the situation that some of you have in Florida with the space launches and things, and she made note of that. It was not under her command, but I saw her write it down, and there was somebody that she was going to contact, and that was Rear Admiral Laura M. Dickey, and she's with Coast Guard Headquarters, and she's in charge of material readiness, all right, and she has had command of the 5th U.S. Coast Guard District, which I guess some of us call Sector North Carolina.

One interesting thing that came up, and it kind of fits with what Jessica presented, and, if we're talking about data, and I did not know this was going on, but she stated that the Coast Guard -- That one of their top items they're looking at right now of priority and enforcement is what she called illegal charters, and I know that's been mentioned by people in this committee, and not recently by some of you for-hire, but I remember when Robert Johnson was here, and he had a lot of situations with that, where he was angry with charters and all advertising on Facebook, and wondering if people had their permits, but I just wanted to let you know that she mentioned that, about illegal charters, which she called illegal, unreported, and unregulated, and the Coast Guard is wanting to put more effort on that.

I just thought I would offer that to you, that that's out there, and maybe you'll hear more, and I'm sure that some of you from the for-hire industry would like that, and if, you know, we're talking about what's the correct amount of -- What's the take from the recreational industry, and if it's true that there is any significant number of illegal charters, or people fishing without permits, that's going to be something interesting to know, and so thank you. Thank you, Jessica.

Just a small item to note here, and I noticed that two of our South Carolina representatives have shown up now, and one is new, an ex-council member, and so I would like the two of you to introduce yourselves for the record, and I will start with you, Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: Chris Conklin, and it's fall break, and I've got three kids that I had to leave at home, and I was certain that it was a 1:30 start time from Google calendar, but, low and behold, I was wrong. I'm Chris Conklin, and I'm a former council member from South Carolina, and I'm a seafood dealer, what's left of one, from Murrells Inlet and I have a retail market, a haggard fleet of commercial boats, and I serve some fine restaurants, and I look forward to working with everybody, and thanks for having me here.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Cameron Sebastian, operations manager with the Hurricane Fleet, Little River Fishing Fleet, Coastal Scuba, and we do headboats, charter boats, commercial boats, shrimp boats, pretty much -- We're all-in on the fish industry in that area.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, gentlemen. We'll move on to the updates that we have, and so it's Item 2 on our formal agenda, and the first is the Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey Pilot Study Informative Resources and Upcoming Presentations.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I will take that one. We recently added a document onto the advisory panel meeting page, and it's not a long document or anything, but it's just a list of links, and these are the pieces of information -- This is what we know concerning this MRIP pilot study, and so the actual pilot study report is available there, and this document is available under the recent documents on that AP webpage, and it's also in that Agenda Item Number 2, listed next to this update, and so here's the report. This is the full report, and so there's some -- It's pretty extensive here, and there was some description given by Jessica, and so I don't need to rehash all of it, but that is available for you to take a look at, when you get a chance.

NOAA Fisheries has also put some information on their webpage, and I'm just showing you kind of what that looks like. There's a webpage here, and this is kind of the bulleted version of this is what's going on with this pilot study at this point.

Then another reference for you is the presentation that was given to the council, to the South Atlantic Council, in September of 2023, and that PowerPoint is available here, and so the link here takes you to the council website, where we have it linked from the briefing book, from that meeting, and that was given by Richard Cody, and so he works for the Office of Science and Technology, and that's the division that runs the MRIP program.

Then, finally, some of you may recall that the South Atlantic Council holds a seminar series that is held in the afternoon on the second Tuesday of every month. That actually is today, and there's a seminar going right now, and kind of we're doing dualling webinars right now. Today's seminar features Laurilee Thompson, who is a council member, and she has worked for a long time in the rock shrimp fishery off of Florida, and she's giving kind of an oral history of the rock shrimp fishery.

All of these webinars for the seminar series are recorded and available online, under the council's science page, and so, if you have some time after today, take a look at that page, and you can watch the webinar from today. Laurilee, I'm sure, is doing a bang-up job right now in telling the story of the rock shrimp fishery off of Florida, but next month -- Next month, that seminar series is going to feature this MRIP-FES pilot study, and we will have somebody from the Office of Science and Technology, and so this will be an opportunity for the seminar series -- This is made for council members, for advisory panel members, Scientific and Statistical Committee members, for all the folks that are affiliated with the council especially, to hop on and learn about some of the new developments, the new science, or some of the stories of the fishery that happened here, and it's also an opportunity for some public engagement.

The public is definitely able to hop on, and there is a time, after the presentations that are given here, for some question-and-answer, so, if you have questions about the implications of this MRIP-FES study, that would be a good webinar to tune into. You could hear directly from the Office of Science and Technology about what this pilot study is and is not saying and what the plan forward is, and, if you have questions, there will be an opportunity to have some question-and-answer there, and so I would encourage you -- The link that's here will take you to the council's seminar series page.

It will be updated, within the next week or two, to have the top item be that November date. Right now, you see this is the webinar that's going on right now, and then, if you just scroll down there, you can see every seminar that the council has held, and so there's a wide variety of topics there.

It can be a great resource if you have some questions about one of the topics that's been covered here, to be able to just click on that and kind of watch the hour to hour-and-a-half session that happened there and be able to hear some of the question-and-answer that went along with it, and so that is what I have, as far as that FES update. We've had a little bit of discussion on that so far, and, right now, the information on that is limited, from my end, but providing you these resources, and does anybody have any questions related to the resources that we have, and the information that is put in front of you to this point?

MR. LORENZ: Questions or comments for Mike on what he just presented? It looks quiet, Mike. Good job. All right. The next item on our agenda is we'll be going through the various amendments, and so the Attachment 2a. Mike, are you handling that? All right. Thank you. Mike, let's go with it.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, within your briefing book, Attachment 2a is this snapper grouper amendments update, and this just runs through where we are on all of the amendments that have been going on under the Snapper Grouper FMP. I'm not going to dive deeply into each one of them, and this is more of an update on where each of these are in the steps of their processes, and some of these have already come before you, and gone before the council, and so they're in the midst of the approval process right now.

I will start off with Amendment 49 for greater amberjack, and that was approved by the council, and I would have to think back, and going back into last year, I believe, and so that has been approved by the Secretary, and that's scheduled for implementation in October, and I can get you a specific date if you follow-up with me at a break, but that has been approved by the Secretary, and so that has gone through, and that changes the annual catch limits and a few other measures related to -- Actually, it's listed here, and that changes the annual catch limits, the minimum size limit related to the commercial fishery, the seasonal commercial trip limit, the April spawning closure, and then the -- It removes the recreational annual catch targets for all of the species under the Snapper Grouper FMP, and so that has already gone through, and that's been approved.

We've gotten approval for Amendment 51 for snowy grouper, and you all looked through that, and that's been approved both from the council and from the NMFS end, and so that will be implemented in the coming weeks. For golden tilefish and blueline tilefish, Amendment 52, that amendment has been submitted, and, right now -- That was submitted around the same time as this kind of mass of amendments that was sent out to NMFS, and so they're working through that, and they're getting the approvals done for that, and so they're working through that approval process for Amendment 52.

Gag and black grouper, that was mentioned already, and that has been approved by NMFS, and so that is going to be scheduled for implementation. Regulatory Amendment 35, that was red snapper and the discard mortality reduction, the short-term action, and that was already talked about, and the council has kind of paused that, so they can have discussion about whether they will ultimately submit that amendment to National Marine Fisheries Service, and so the next item to pay attention to, related to that, will be a discussion at the December 2023 council meeting.

Amendment 48 is continuing to move along. We, most recently, had a meeting of the wreckfish advisory group and the subcommittee from the council that is putting in a bit direct work on this wreckfish amendment, and so that's continuing to move through its process, but the council, I

believe -- I would have to check back on the schedule, but the council has not considered it for approval for submission to the Secretary just yet, and so that should be coming up in a future meeting.

Amendment 46 is one that you all will be talking about today, and so I'm not going to dive into that, because Hadley will cover where you all are in the process and the upcoming steps. Amendment 44 was covered in Jessica's presentation, and, again, that one is paused right now, and we're kind of bouncing back and forth between our council and the Gulf Council, to figure out what that final path forward is, but we're looking at the Florida State Reef Fish Survey and seeing if the SSCs are onboard with that assessment being rerun with some different information.

Amendment 55 is one on your agenda for this meeting, and so I will let Allie cover where you are with that amendment, and Regulatory Amendment 36 is the amendment that's been just started, and that one is addressing the black sea bass on-demand pots, or ropeless pots, in order to make that an allowable gear. One note, for the whole ropeless pot discussion, is that Regulatory Amendment 36 is just addressing whether that gear would become a legal gear of harvest, and so it would not be subject to the marking requirements that are necessary for roped gear, and that's the main difference, is that there are marking and tracking requirements for roped gear that aren't practical for a non-roped gear, because it doesn't have a rope, and it doesn't have the vertical line going up to the surface that's staying there, and so that's the main change. The pot itself is the same pot, and so it's not really affecting the fish being caught as much.

Now, under the exempted fishing permit, there has been use of the ropeless, or on-demand, pots in the nearshore areas during the winter, and that area is closed to roped pots. This amendment does not consider opening the nearshore area for the ropeless pots, because that then affects the number of fish caught, and that's opening an area that's currently not available to the fishery, and that requires a bit more discussion, a bit more, you know, consideration of where the stock is and how it will affect the harvest, moving forward, and so that is not intended for this.

If that's going to be discussed, that would have to be a different amendment, possibly the assessment response amendment that's coming up, Amendment 56, but that's not what is under consideration for this Reg Amendment 36. Reg Amendment 36 is just saying this gear can be used under the same conditions that roped gear can currently be used, and so that's a distinction that I do want to point out of what is and isn't in that amendment, but you will hear more about that probably in the April meeting, as we get that process underway, and that was just initiated in September.

Then, moving to the ABC Control Rule Amendment, that has been submitted, and NMFS is working through their approval process, and I actually got a call this morning that they have kind of the scheduled ends of the comment periods that are coming up in November, and so we're looking at probably the beginning of next year when that would be -- When that process would be implemented, assuming there are no difficulties in between now and then, but the council is through with it, and it's on the NMFS end now, and they're working through their steps.

Then, finally, and I think this is the last one, the joint commercial logbook amendment, and, as Jessica mentioned, that was approved by the council in the September of 2023 meeting, and so now staff will be working to prepare that for formal submission to the Secretary, and so a lot of amendments have been going through affecting snapper grouper, and that kind of lays out the

timelines for each of the ones that aren't going to be discussed later on in this meeting, but I will pause here, to see if anybody has any questions about these amendments, the ones that are not on your agenda for later discussion.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. I would like to recognize anybody that has a question, or a comment, for Mike concerning the amendments he reviewed, the ones we are not discussing during this meeting. Okay. Andy Piland.

MR. PILAND: I know we're bound by best data, but the greater amberjack, in the north part of North Carolina, is pretty much decimated. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Andy. Anybody else? Did I see any other hands here? Mike, did anybody --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We do have a question online from Vincent, asking, for the golden tilefish amendment, if there will be an opening on January 15 or January 1 for 2024, and expecting the -- Whether we should expect the ACL to increase to be included into the current ACL, and so, as far as the difference of the opening date, that depends on how quickly we hear back from NMFS, working through the steps on their end. I can maybe follow-up more directly with Vincent, as far as the dates, because I wasn't the lead on that amendment, and so I can check-in with that amendment lead and see where it is in that process, but I don't have a direct answer to that, but I will follow-up with Vincent. Anybody else that wants to know, just shoot me an email, and I will send you that information as well.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Mike, and thank you, Vincent, for the question. Anyone else with any questions for Mike? All right. We have nobody online with a question, and so the next thing we will move into will be Item C, which is under Number 2 on our agenda, and that is Best Fishing Practices Outreach with Ashley Oliver, and another thing is we have some new -- One thing I would like to ask is Ashley is our next staff member, and we have some new folks on the AP, and one of the hardest things to do is to get to learn some of the acronyms, and I kind of noticed, going through for this meeting, some of the things -- I saw some new acronyms that were -- That I hadn't really realized, and I know they once published a list, but, if there's an acronym that you think is kind of new, and hasn't ever been used, could you state out what it is first for us, to start to learn? I don't know if that will occur with your presentation, Ashley, but I did see it in some others. Thank you.

MS. OLIVER: All right. Hi, everyone. Again, I'm Ashley Oliver, and I am the council's Best Fishing Practices Outreach Specialist. Christina Wiegand had given you guys a quick update about the program last April, and so I had transitioned into this council position, and I was previously the Sea Grant Reef Fish Fellow, and so that position was vacant, and we've now filled it, and so we've brought on David Hugo, who is sitting right over there, and he is a recent Duke grad, and he's been onboard now since May, and so he's been taking over the tackle shop outreach and media charter trips, and so, you know, this week, I definitely encourage you all to talk with him. He's been a great addition to our team.

For a little bit of time here, I'm going to give you guys a more in-depth best fishing practices outreach update, and so I've kind of got three main sections that I'm going to go over today, the first being this new project called What It Means to Me, and we'll have a couple of discussion

questions for you there, and then we'll get into another new project called the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program, and, again, a couple of discussion questions with that, and then, lastly, I will round-out with just some council staff and Sea Grant staff outreach activities and some of our future plans for the coming months.

Starting with the new project called What It Means to Me, we recently took this to the council, at their September meeting, and there was a lot of excitement surrounding this, and we ultimately got it approved, and so Nick Smillie here is the Digital Media and Communications Specialist, and so he is my partner-in-crime for this project, and we're really excited to bring it to you all today.

Just a little bit of background and kind of where this idea came about, and so I think something that we're all probably very familiar with is the fact that, you know, not only sustaining trust, but building -- Building trust, but sustaining trust, has been a long-time challenge, or a long-term challenge, for fisheries managers. Sorry, and that's a mouthful. Additionally, fostering those positive relationships takes a long time, and it requires regular interaction with the stakeholders, and so, because of these two things, the council has expanded its best fishing practices campaign, in which it is really, you know, trying to build that trust and continue just getting out there in the community, and so the What It Means to Me project really is just an additional outreach tool that we're hoping to achieve these goals.

The project itself is really aiming to help bridge that trust gap by capturing, in a participant's own words, what their fisheries mean to them and why best fishing practices are important to the long-term sustainability of South Atlantic fisheries.

Getting into the project goals, and I kind of just went over this, but we want to help bridge the trust gap between the council and fishermen, and we also want to encourage more fishermen to use best fishing practices in their everyday fishing activities and just get more involved in fisheries management, and so that might be by joining an advisory panel, or maybe attending a council meeting and making public comment, becoming an SAFMC Release participant, and also participating in the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program, which I will touch on here in a little bit.

Then our last goal here is we really just want to document the stories of those involved in South Atlantic Fisheries in a constructive manner, and so we not only want the participants to have a positive experience, but we really want those that are watching from the outside to take something constructive away from it, and so that leads me into really what this project is all about and what we're going to do with it.

We will be recording and editing informal, short conversations with fishermen and really creating this cohesive video, and some potential conversation topics that we may have would be how that participant began fishing, the importance of fishery preservation and how that fishery can be preserved, maybe even talking a little bit about perspectives of changes in the fishery over time, and, also, their involvement in fisheries management, and, you know, maybe they're an SAFMC Release participant, or have provided photos for FISHstory, or they sit on an advisory panel, and then, lastly, we could even get any, you know, advice to the participants' fellow fishermen.

Nick and I have talked about this a lot, and this is a list of potential platforms, and we're still sorting this out, and it will be one of the discussion questions that I will bring to you all here in a

few slides, but, of course, we want to share these videos, and get them out to the world, and so we've thought about sharing them on social media stories and YouTube, and we could create an ArcGIS StoryMap, and we can put them on the council's website, and also share them through other council outreach activities.

A little bit about the timeline and where we're at with this project. For the last few months, we've just been working to develop the proposal, and we practiced with staff. Most recently, we've presented the proposal to the council, in which it was approved, and so now Nick and I are moving into gathering b-roll content and trying to figure out and confirm participants, and so now we're ready to begin implementing the project, and, you know, we're presenting it to you all today, and, in the next slide, I'll kind of talk a little bit more about this, and so, if anybody would be interested in participating from this group, we would absolutely love to have you. We're also going to bring it to the Dolphin Wahoo and Mackerel Cobia AP meetings in November, and we'll also have, hopefully have, some filming sessions with council members in December.

Then, through the winter months, we'll just edit these videos, and we're really hoping to begin sharing some of them at the beginning of 2024, and so this timeline -- You know, it only goes to February, and it's not the end-all-be-all, and this is something we can hopefully expand on, because we have a March council meeting, and, as you all know, there's a lot of APs that meet in the spring as well.

With that, I would like to show you guys an example video, just to give you guys a little bit more of a visual of what we're looking to do with this project. We had the pleasure of working with David, David Hugo, for this, and I say it's an example video, but David is a very avid fisherman, and so these are very real perspectives into what his fisheries mean to him and why he thinks they should be preserved, and so just give me one second to pull that up.

(Whereupon a video was presented and not transcribed.)

MS. OLIVER: Well, I hope that you guys enjoyed that, as much as we enjoyed putting it together. We put that together pretty quickly, and we definitely learned how to make the next videos better. Some of the suggestions from the Outreach and Communications AP was to make it a little shorter, but, nonetheless, that's kind of what we're envisioning for the project, and so I have a few discussion points to bring up here, before I move on to the next project that I will talk about, and so are there any additional conversation topics that you think may fit into the scope of this project?

I had also given you guys a list of platforms that we're looking at potentially sharing these videos on from that list, and is there any that you think would be best? Is there any other suggestions that we don't have listed that you think would work well, and then, also, we're just looking for general interest. From this AP, is there anybody that would be interested in participating in the project? Nick and I were even ready to film today, or tomorrow, while you guys are here in Charleston, but we're also willing to work with you all, to either do like a Zoom or something like that, and we also travel, with a lot of the outreach as well, and we can meet you where you're at, and so I will leave it with that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Ashley, and so I will bring it to the AP. Is there anyone here that would have any suggestions on conversation topics, any suggestions for what's being done in outreach? You could do comments, or would you be interested in the project? I know,

today, and it looks like, in this meeting, we're represented three-to-one, and it's commercial, but some of you guys recreationally fish too, and so does anybody comment? I would like to recognize James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob. Something I wouldn't mind seeing -- You know, I did like some of the childhood photos, and some of the growing-up photos, and I thought that was really great, but incorporating some of the uses of the venting tools and the descending devices on a -- You know, on a more candid level, like those photos, and I think that would be really huge, to see regular fishermen using those devices, and some of them, you know, that may like to have cameras on the water, and stuff like that, show successful releases, show how it works, and kind of get that part involved, to where it's not -- You're not just asking somebody to have better practices, but showing them that it does work. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, James. Our headboat operator, Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: You know, I think two things you definitely want to drive in is the family aspect, and the multigenerational aspect of it, because that's something that probably everybody in this room can identify with, and newer people who are getting into the fisheries see it, and it gives them an incentive to follow the best practices and stuff like that.

The other thing is, you know, just hammering in that the future of the fishery depends on you, and so it's what you're doing, and things of that nature, and the length of it -- You know, trust me, and I'm not a web guy, or any of that stuff, but fast, and, I mean, really high-quality videos, water scenes, and you guys could come up with some really, really phenomenal stuff.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Anybody else want to comment? Tony. Thank you.

MR. CONSTANT: I agree with both of them, and, with the family in there, that's great, and especially the younger families, but education, back to that, and, you know, when James was talking about using the descending devices, and I think we need to incorporate the vent tool. It seems to be a struggle with most recreational anglers, and they -- I don't know, and they kind of -- The ones I've seen are a little scared of it. Make a quick -- You know, show them exactly, on the fish, where to put it, and that seems to be a big stumbling block.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else? I'm looking at a few of our recreational fishermen, including a new rep, and does anybody want to state anything? Anybody who has fished for a very long time, like maybe was captain of a headboat, have anything to say?

MR. SMILLIE: Thanks for all the really helpful feedback, you all. We are definitely trying to get as many different voices into this project as possible, and so, if any of you all maybe think that you're going to be interested down the line, reach out to us, and, like Ashley said, we're going to be doing a lot of outreach, and so we can come to you where you are. In response to kind of the fast, you know, we're seeing that a lot of people are -- I don't know how many of you guys are on TikTok, but a lot of -- You know, YouTube, and a lot of the young people just want this, you know, really quick kind of snapshot of information, and that's how a lot of us are receiving that information, and so definitely we're thinking about shortening these videos, and the benefit of being able to come meet you where you are, and say, if you have a fish house or something, we could actually get some, you know, personal footage to kind of incorporate those stories a little bit

more, and make it a little bit more personable as well, and so I just wanted to add that in there, and I think that was it.

One last thing too is another one of my favorite parts of this project is being able to keep these stories alive, because a lot of pretty amazing stories are kind of getting lost in the fray, and there are some incredible stories about, you know, the past of our fisheries, and I know that a lot of you guys have seen, in the past, things that would astound a lot of modern-day fishermen as well, and so trying to make sure that those stories are not lost is a huge part of this project too, and I just wanted to throw that in there.

MR. LORENZ: Joe Matthews.

MR. MATTHEWS: I just had one question, or comment, to add, and I know that my kids are big into some of these YouTube folks, like Catch 'Em All Fishing and Bluegape and those kinds of those guys, and, if you all haven't reached out to folks like that, and I think some of those guys would be willing to participate, and maybe have a big -- Be able to reach a big audience.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you. Anyone else? Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: There is definitely a benefit to -- I've got a guy coming down, and he's actually just coming down and making short videos of me cleaning fish and stuff, and he's taking the -- He's sort of like a little wholesaler, and he's got all the permits and stuff to take stuff back to Virginia, but it's pretty neat, and he's asked me some of those same questions, like when did you get into it, how did you get it, how long, and the change is something that is important, how it's changed from back then to now and how we want to preserve it for the future, but the videos are pretty neat that he's made so far, and some of that same stuff is incorporated, and he's doing it for marketing, but it still gets the exposure, and it's just pretty neat. A lot of people have no idea how the fish get to their plate and stuff, and so, anyway, that's good.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you for that, Randy, and, as I look around here, there's folks that have fished an awful long time, which include myself, and I think some of you -- I can think, in my head, about some wonderful stories of what you're doing now, and what you did, and so, if you think about it further, please give Ashley a call, and I always like seeing the young blood in a lot of this, but I think this would be -- With where our fisheries are going, this is a time where some of us that have been around a little bit longer to tell a story too would be interesting, and many of you are still doing it strongly right now. Anyone else wish to comment on this, to close this? Okay. None? Then, Ashley, back to you.

MS. OLIVER: All right. Well, thank you, guys, for those comments. Now we're going to transition into the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program, and I'm going to refer to this as the BFP MVP program throughout the rest of this, just because it's a very long name to continue saying, and so, when I was brought onto staff, this program was kind of -- It's kind of the meat of my job description now, is to develop this, and so this idea originally came from the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel, and it really stemmed from the Master Gardener Program, if any of you all are familiar with that.

As with the entire, you know, best fishing practices campaign, the main goal is to improve the survivorship of snapper grouper species, and so we've got some project-specific goals to really hit

on that, and Goal Number 1 is we're wanting to expand the reach, by empowering key members of the fishing community to spread the best fishing practices message and methods on the council's behalf.

The second goal gets at increasing awareness and use of all best practices, and that's really specific to snapper grouper species that are exhibiting signs of barotrauma and when they're needing to be released. Then our third goal is similar to the What It Means to Me project, but, again, we want to increase the council's regular interaction with the stakeholders, in the hopes that it will grow their involvement in fisheries management.

What is this program? We will be having regional in-person workshops that will train volunteers to become experts in best fishing practices, and also encourage them to train those in their fishing community as well, and so we envision this to be hosted quarterly in each state and last approximately an hour-and-a-half to two hours long. For example, we might -- You know, Florida is a really large state, and so we'll probably have to visit multiple times, and so we might take Quarter 1 and just spend our time in Florida in Quarter 1.

As for our target audience, the first group would be the key members of the fishing community. You know, we've learned, from many surveys, that one of the most effective information exchanges within the fishing community comes from word-of-mouth and local tackle shops, and so, by targeting this group, the hope is that the messaging, the BFP messaging, will be more positive throughout the community, as well as just general involvement in the council, and so this group includes -- This includes advisory panels like you all, and hopefully that picture on the bottom rings a bell, and that's from the April meeting, MREP graduates, SAFMC Release participants, and also federal for-hire permit holders, and council members as well.

Our next group would be the port samplers. Port samplers are the front face to those returning back to the docks, and they often get questions and complaints about fisheries management, and so the hope here is, you know, educating the port samplers could, in turn, educate and answer questions better when those people return back to the docks.

Then our next group would be just new people entering the fishery, and, as you see there, it's got "indirectly" in parentheses, and this group is absolutely welcome to come to the workshops, if they find out about it and sign up, but the hope really here is to capture this group through the key members, the port samplers, and then also the state and federal agency personnel. This group is just targeted due to their vast involvement in the public.

Getting into the workshop components, but the first thing that I really want to stress here is we want this to be very conversational throughout the entire workshop, and, you know, we don't want to just present all the time and just tell participants what to do, and we want to have, you know, this discussion back and forth, and learn from participants, and figure out how we can also help them.

The first major component would be the best fishing practices section, and so we'll talk about barotrauma, and maybe have discussions on, you know, what species participants see, where is barotrauma worse, time of year or depths, and we'll get into descending devices, and, Tony, some venting tool stuff as well, you know, what they are, how they work, and the regulations involved, and we can have discussions on, you know, just tips and tricks to making, you know, descending

device use better, and we'll go over some additional best practices as well, and these are kind of more general in nature, you know, how to handle fish properly, gear to use, limiting air exposure, avoiding non-target species, and, lastly, I would really like to create a descending device with this group as well.

Our second section of the workshop would be all about getting involved, and so, of course, that would include citizen science, specifically SAFMC Release and FISHstory. I would also like to have a section about the council itself, and I know there will be participants that are very well versed in the council's process and fishery management, but I think it would be good to just give a quick overview of like Magnuson, the council's jurisdiction and FMPs, just so that they have those main nuggets in their head that they can take back to their communities, and also have a little section on how they can get involved in those APs, the council, and public comment, and, again, discussion throughout all of this.

Another timeline here for you guys. Earlier this year, we're just trying to figure out what we wanted to do with the project and who would be best to target, and we're currently in Phase 2. I have been working on developing those workshop components, figuring out some evaluation methods and program branding, and, on the next slide, I will come to you guys with some more discussion on just potential locations that you think would be good to host this workshop at.

Over the winter months, this will just be all about solidifying the locations and dates, and also promoting the workshop itself, and the hope is to have this thing up and running in the spring of 2024, and so that leads me to the discussion questions, before I get into my last section, and just about exact locations that you guys think would be good for this workshop to be held in, and then, if there's anybody in this room that would be willing to attend and also spread the word in their community, and I will turn it back to you, Bob.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Ashley. I guess we'll go with Number 1 first, and so you're asking us to give locations, and I'm sure we can provide those, and then whether we're willing to attend. All right. Number 1, does anybody have any suggestions on the best locations where these workshops could be held?

I will start it off. I guess, in North Carolina, just looking as we go down the coast, we probably want to hold something in Dare County, North Carolina, and the Atlantic Beach/Morehead City area, and another potential, with the largest population, would be Wilmington, North Carolina. Does anybody wish to comment on South Carolina? That's just approaching the coast, and, I mean, we do have areas, and like we have Tim Griner over there, who actually lives in Charlotte, and is the commercial fishing industry, and so I don't know whether you want to go inland on some of these areas. Like, in North Carolina, there's a tremendous amount of people from the Piedmont area, and the Raleigh/Durham area and all, that do come to the coast, and so they're all part of this. Does anybody else want to comment? Tony, for South Carolina.

MR. CONSTANT: Especially in the Beaufort area. I know, once before, you came to the Port Royal Sound Foundation, and, by the way, I missed that one, because my son -- That was the day he decided to move to Jacksonville, but I am willing to do that again. Another one that may be good, and I could hook you up with, is the Beaufort Fishing Club. There is a guaranteed thirty seats or so, and they would probably love to hear it. There's a couple other locations in the area

that would be willing to hook-up with that as well, and, Harry, you may know somebody in the Hilton Head area.

MR. MORALES: Well, the boat house would -- You know, the north fleet would automatically be willing to host something like that. You know, then here in Charleston, and I would think Haddrell's, you know. Chris, I'm sure you've got places.

MR. CONKLIN: Sure, and so, from my neck of the woods, it would be the Murrells Inlet Outpost, Pawleys Island Outdoors, and Haddrell's has been taken care of, the Florence Blue Water Fishing Club, and there's also a Greenville saltwater club as well, but I'm not super familiar with where they meet, but I know enough people that I could try to figure it out.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you from South Carolina. I see that Richard Gomez, from Florida, has joined us here at the table. He would like to comment, and, Richard, for the record first, please introduce yourself and everything, and then go on with your comment.

MR. GOMEZ: Hi. Richard Gomez, charter boat/for-hire sector, from Key West, Florida, and, obviously, we should have one in Key West. There are so many places that it could be, but I could come up with a good place. As far as spreading the word, I, and Brice, the president of the Key West Charter Boat Association, could help with that. As far as participation, we'll see.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richard. Thank you to Chris and all, first, from South Carolina, who stated about a fishing club, but I could also add that for North Carolina, and there is a Raleigh fishing club, and it is rather large, and it has hundreds of people in it, and that's definitely a site to go. You will pick up the whole middle of the State of North Carolina that way. Chris.

MR. KIMREY: How many people locations are you thinking, Ashley? Like do you have an idea, or you just don't know yet, or --

MS. OLIVER: I don't have an exact number quite yet, and so, right now, our funds run out next December, and so we have less than a year to get this thing going, and so I'm trying to keep that in mind, and really just thinking about the hotspots right now, and so that's really helpful, and, again, it's really helpful to have just actual brick-and-mortar locations. Just thinking about size-wise too, I was thinking maybe around twenty-five, depending, but I know, Bob, with clubs -- I mean, there's clubs that have hundreds of people in it, and so that's also a consideration, to go to a specific club and just, you know, target them, and so sorry, and hopefully I can get more information as we develop it this winter.

MR. KIMREY: That's why I was asking, is because I'm sure -- You know, I know you're limited, no matter what, but, you know, the fishing clubs are a good idea. In the State of North Carolina, there's more saltwater fishing licenses, recreational fishing licenses, held in Wade County than there any other county in the state, and so that's obviously a great place. Something else I was thinking of, and I'm sure this is the case in other locations, but, in our state, we have several magazines that do really big fishing schools, and those are paid attendance, but, you know, I have a bit of an in with one or two of those guys, and, a lot of times, they'll have hundreds of people in attendance, and they divide their day up into certain areas, but it might be that, if you could get a spot in there, you could get a lot of, you know -- A lot of people that attend those schools are going to be the demographic that you're trying to reach. You know, a lot of them are seasoned, but a lot

of them aren't, and so, if you could get a spot in the school, and you could probably get that for free, it seems like that would be a great place as well, and I would be glad to point you in the right direction on that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris, and, just for the record, and I don't think you gave your name, but that was Chris Kimrey from North Carolina. Anyone else? Any comments from Georgia? We're shy on Georgia, but, yes, Captain Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: The tackle shops there in Morehead, EJW and Chasin Tails, would be good places, and they've got big parking lots, and, you know, could accommodate a number of fishermen, and there's a lot of boat traffic in and out of that Chasin Tails, because it's right there at my house, and there's quite a number of folks in there, and, also, I can't -- His name escapes me right now, but, in Greensboro, the Elec-tra-mate manufacturer, and they have a fishing club in Greensboro that has a big attendance, and I've been up there and spoke to them before.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. Joe Matthews.

MR. MATTHEWS: From Georgia, when you all are ready to start presenting in Georgia, or have a workshop in Georgia, I'm happy to help you find a location there. You know, I can't think, off the top of my head, where would be the perfect location, because we're kind of scattered there, and more inland, but I am sure that we can find a good spot.

MR. LORENZ: All right. I've got Paul Nelson.

MR. NELSON: Halifax Sport Fishing Club in our area. I've got a text into Robert Johnson for the Jacksonville area.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: West Palm Beach area, and we've been working a little bit together on some clubs and stuff down in the south Florida area, but maybe we can go to like Informa, or marine industries, doing all the boat shows, because usually all those guys have seminars there, and even if it's a one-day thing, or maybe it could be a half-hour every day or whatever, but we could look into that, too.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: At my age, it comes and goes, but Carl Huffman would be the Elec-tra-mate representative.

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

MR. CONSTANT: I was thinking about Georgia, and I fish there a lot, and, down in Darien, there's Two-Way Fish Camp that has a lot of charters, as well as just a lot of people who know that place, and, by the way, that's a great idea, Chris, about your boat shows, because those little ten or fifteen-minute seminars are fantastic.

MR. LORENZ: Good point, gentlemen. That's true, and I was thinking of also the Saltwater Sportsmen Seminar that George Poveromo holds, but you're probably a little late to get in on him, but, often, as you go into wherever they present at this large halls, there's an outside area that they might give you, but that might be something to look at also, where you will get true recreational - You'll get the recreational fishermen there en masse. Anyone else with any comments or suggestions or anything that you want to volunteer with Ashley? All right, Ashley. Thank you very much. She has a little more. All right. I am so sorry.

MS. OLIVER: I guess it's not part of the presentation, because this is new, but I wanted to respond to your George Poveromo, and we are going to participate in that, and we are just in the works with getting that set up with him, but we're excited to do that. We're not sure if we're going to all of them yet, and I think there are four in the South Atlantic. We've got a lot going on in the winter months, which I will get to in a little bit, but we are hoping to attend a few of them.

Just in the last few minutes here, I'm just going to give you guys a little bit of an update on some council staff and Sea Grant staff outreach efforts, and also some future plans for the coming months, but I do want to first point out that -- I introduced you guys to David, and we've been working with the Sea Grant Reef Fish Fellowship very closely, and we've also continued our relationship with the Citizen Science Program, Julia and Meg, and so we've grown our crew, and we've been able to go to a lot more events this year.

Earlier in this year, we went to the Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo in Charleston, and we also went to the SC DNR's open house, and we joined NC DMF for their 200-Year Jamboree up in Morehead City, and we also went to ICAST in Orlando. At all of these events, we had a booth that was focused on best fishing practices, specifically descending device use and citizen science, where they focused on SAFMC Release, which we also consider a best fishing practice.

We've also had a few seminars as well this year, and we had a couple at the Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo, where we teamed up with two local fishermen, Mark Phelps and Chuck Griffin, and we had a good turnout there. Cameron Sebastian got us to come up to Coastal Scuba, and so thank you for that, Cameron. Julia and Christina went up and talked to his crew, and then Meg and David gave a great presentation at the Jacksonville Offshore Fishing Club, and then, most recently, Meg and John Hadley went to SeaCoast Anglers in Little River, South Carolina.

At all of these seminars, there was a wonderful turnout, a lot of great questions and discussion, and so another thing to point out too is it seems like, just from last year, we have a lot more people approaching us and wanting us to come to their clubs and shops, and so that's great news. The message is getting out there, and so we're going to keep this ball rolling.

I wanted to touch on a little bit of the tackle shop outreach that's going on as well, and I started doing this earlier in the year, and I did some last year, and also a little bit this year, until I transitioned and handed it over to David, and so David and Meg have been doing a great job in traveling around the region, and so these are kind of just the general areas that we've been to this year, and so kind of the Morehead City, North Carolina area, the central and southern portion of South Carolina, most of Georgia, and bits and pieces of Florida, and so Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Daytona, Miami, and Key Largo.

Continuing on with some additional efforts, we have been working with Pittman Creek, and Pittman Creek is a distribution company based out of Kentucky, but they have been spreading into the saltwater world, and so we've been working specifically with John Johnson, and he gave us their entire distribution list, and we chose twenty-eight southeastern tackle shops from that list, and so what we are doing is we're stuffing these mailers, shown on the screen here, with best fishing practices and citizen science informational materials, and we're sending that to Pittman Creek, and then they put it in the gear orders for those twenty-eight tackle shops. We have sent this out four times this year, and we just sent out our last package in October, and so that's ongoing.

We've also increased our best fishing practices social media presence, and which wouldn't have been possible without some content creation trips offshore, and we also participate in the Descending Device Outreach Coordination Team, and so this team is spearheaded by FWC, and it includes us, it includes Return 'Em Right over in the Gulf, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, SC DNR, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and Sea Grant. There's a lot of folks involved, but that just shows you that we've all come together, and we're all trying to keep our messaging the same, and we also just discuss events going on in the region, and also just what we've learned from tackle shops and events.

Most recently, David put on a Sea Grant media charter trip out of Isle of Palms, South Carolina, and myself, David, a Sea Grant writer, and Julia went out with them, with Chuck Griffin, Captain Chuck Griffin, and, while the bottom fish decided not to bite that day really too much, we did catch a lot of cobia, but, you know, we were really able to still showcase our best fishing practices, you know, by holding, or handling, properly, and using dehooking tools, and so we're excited to get an article from South Carolina Sea Grant soon, I believe.

We also have some new best fishing practices materials, and we have a create your own descending device rack card, and also a using your best fishing practices brochure, which talks about best fishing practices-related regulations and barotrauma, and so I have all of these, plus some stickers as well, over there in the back corner, and I'll have them with me all week, if you guys would be interested at taking any of those home to your communities.

Then the last little bit here, I just want to kind of let you guys know what we've got going on for the rest of 2023, and a little bit of 2024, and so, on November 1, David will be traveling to the West Palm Beach Fishing Club and giving a little talk there with that group, and also just having some conversations before and after the main speaker, and we're also working with the South Dade Recreational Anglers Club, either an in-person, but more likely a virtual, seminar group with that group. Then, in October, David is traveling up to Morehead City, where he's going to have a Sea Grant media trip, and that's going to be with council member Tom Roller, and, on that trip, he is bringing on Frank Graff, who is the Executive Producer of NC PBS, and also the lead editor of *Carolina Sportsman*, Brian Cope, and just really capturing best fishing practices in action.

Then, in January, we have a big trip down to the Keys, where we are planning to do hopefully a seminar down there, and, also, we'll be going to the Florida Keys Seafood Festival, and David is working on a Sea Grant media trip out of there as well, and so we've got a big, busy trip in the Keys that week, and we will also be going to the Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo in Charleston again, and, as you see, we'll have some more tackle shop outreach in central North Carolina, and down in the Keys, and so a busy time, and then, in the spring, we're really hoping to get BFP MVP

up and going. With that, if there's any additional questions, I would be happy to take any, and I really appreciate you all's input for the new projects going on. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any questions for Ashley from the AP? Andrew.

MR. FISH: I would like to -- I see a lot of people doing horrible things wrong, and maybe that could also be something, like this is the main things not to do, other than besides what's best to do, and I see a lot of people -- Like they put it in the live well, and they think they're doing the fish a favor, like it's a recovery tank, and handling fish with a towel, and so maybe something like that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: I was just wondering what David you were talking about, and is that David Moss?

MS. OLIVER: So we actually just hired David Hugo. I think you came in after I introduced him, but David is over there, and so that's David Hugo, and we just hired him on as the Sea Grant Reef Fish Fellow, and he took my spot, and I have transitioned, and I'm a council staffer now, but I think actually David Moss is going to be working with David Hugo at the West Palm Beach Fishing Club, and so we work with David quite a bit on a lot of the best fishing practices outreach.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any other questions or comments from the AP for Ashley? All right. Thank you very much, Ashley, and I think this is excellent, what's being done, and this is a time that we all can be -- This is one of the things, other than always talking the regs, we can be a little more creative, and I'm sure any of us here can email you, et cetera, at your council position. I see Chris Conklin has a question.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and do you want me to say my name every time I speak? Is that --

MR. LORENZ: I think they're catching us without --

MR. CONKLIN: So one final thought, follow-up, is a thought that should be thought about, going into these meetings and stuff, and that's to explain to the participants, and the stakeholders, why - - You know, in-depth, why this will benefit them in the long run, and give them a little background of the regulations, and maybe even insinuate that, over time, with a measurable time series, we may be able to get more bang for our buck in the future out of it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Anyone else? All right. That gets us through the first two items on our agenda, and we're actually doing very well. We're going to take a break here, and I think, since this is our first day together, and we're doing pretty well with time, we'll take fifteen minutes. I would say ten, but we would stretch it to fifteen, but let's do fifteen, and it will be a hard fifteen minutes, and, when we return, we'll get into Item 3, which is Private Recreational Permitting, with John Hadley on-deck, and so thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: AP members, could everybody have their seat? It's 3:00, and we're going to get started with Item Number 3 on our agenda. Please find your seats, and let's get rolling.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you, everyone.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, everyone, and I'm going to introduce now John Hadley, who is going to discuss our private recreational permitting and educational requirement for Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, and so we've all warmed up a little, and now the rubber is going to start to hit the road, and we're going to move on with topics that are a little stronger for opinions. Thank you. John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. I appreciate that introduction, and, for those of you that I haven't had a chance to meet yet, my name is John Hadley, and I'm a staff member with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and I am the staff lead for Amendment 46, which I have up in front of you, and so, if you want to follow along on your own device, it's Attachment A3, and so that's what I am going to be going off of, is sort of a discussion document that's put together here.

I will start off with a little bit of background, go into some of the reasons that the council is moving forward with this, and then we'll go over some of the timeline and that sort of information, and then we'll jump into some of the actions and alternatives that are being developed in the amendment and to gather your feedback. Some of them will look familiar, and they will look similar to what you saw in the springtime, and some of them are new, or have changed quite a bit, and so we'll go over the existing AP feedback, and then, of course, there are some that do not have any AP feedback just yet.

Generally speaking, this action, you know, is an update to where we left off in the spring. The council has been developing this action, and it will focus on creating a permit for the private recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery, and, most notably, there is two real items here, and there is one creating a permit, and the other is an education requirement of some sort to go along with that, and I will note that private recreational reporting is not being considered in this amendment, and so I think that's important background information, and so it was removed from consideration at the council's December 2022 meeting, and so that's off the table for now. It could be brought back in a different amendment, but it is not in this amendment itself, and so, really, what's in this amendment is creating the permit and then establishing an education requirement to go along with that.

We'll go over six actions, and, generally speaking, they're split kind of right down the middle. The first looks at the permit itself, or relate to the permit itself, and the other relate to the education requirement that will go along with the permit, and, again, the objectives for this meeting are to get your feedback on the actions and alternatives. For some of them, you do have existing recommendations. For those existing recommendations, just making sure that you're still comfortable with those, and then, for the new actions, getting recommendations, or comments, from the AP on that.

Really, one of the important -- This is kind of an important time for the amendment, in that the council will be considering approving this for public hearings in December, and so, at this coming December meeting, the council is going to be going through each one of the actions, likely selecting preferred alternatives for each one of the actions, and could really use the AP's input at this point, and so this is kind of an important juncture for getting AP input on the amendment.

Assuming that the amendment moves forward, it will likely be up for a vote of final approval at the June 2024 meeting.

That's pretty much the background on the amendment, before I jump into kind of the purpose and need and some of the actions and alternatives, and are there any questions on the timing or any of the background pieces?

MR. LORENZ: I just want to bring everybody's attention that, remember at the last meeting, and we know the council took out the private recreational recording, and that was something that was important to many people that, you know, over the years have been talking about that, and that is out of this amendment, as a matter of moving forward, and I'm just bringing up to remind you that we did discuss this at the last Ap meeting, and, in general, the AP -- The opinion was to move forward with recording who the recreational fishermen are without necessarily them recording their catch, and so I just wanted to bring that up, but that's important, and, if you want something, then we would need another amendment, for sure, if we're going to get into things like reporting our catch. Any questions or comments for John Hadley so far on the timing of the amendment? All right. John, proceed.

MR. HADLEY: All right. I will take a minute to go over the purpose and need statement, and this is a little bit different than the last time you saw it. The council has sort of further revised the purpose and need statement for this amendment, and so the purpose of the amendment is to identify the universe of private recreational anglers or vessels targeting South Atlantic snapper grouper species and enhance the ability to collect recreational effort and catch data. Also work to promote best fishing practices through education.

The need is to improve the quality of catch and effort data for the private recreational component of the recreational sector, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects, and, also, improve education on best fishing practices, and so, really, those are the two kind of -- Those are the two statements of why the council is moving forward with this, and so really trying to identify the universe of anglers and then also enhance the ability to collect recreational effort and catch data, and the idea there is to improve the accuracy and precision of estimates of the private recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery.

With that, I'm going to jump into the first set of actions, and so these first three actions focus on the permit side of the amendment, and, really, Action 1 is a little bit different than you saw it last time, but it's been narrowed down quite a bit, and so this action is necessary to essentially establish the permit, and so that's the first thing it does. The other is it specifies what entity gets the permit, and so whether it is a vessel-based permit or an angler-based permit, and you can see Alternative 2 there is any vessel participating in the private angler component of the snapper grouper fishery would be permitted, and Alternative 3 is any angler would be permitted.

I'm going to go over a little bit of background on previous AP comments, and I actually meant to reintroduce this at the beginning, and I should have, but there have been two sets of feedback provided by APs on this amendment, and there's the Snapper Grouper AP, this body, and there's also a technical AP, that I will refer to as the Snapper Grouper Recreational Permitting and Reporting AP, and I will just call it the technical AP, for short, and, really, what this is is this is a group of AP members from state agencies, from MRIP, the Marine Recreational Information

Program, and from the SSC. This is a group that's been put together to provide sort of technical expertise on the permitting side and provide that sort of feedback to the council.

I will briefly go over some of their recommendations on this, and then go over the existing Snapper Grouper AP recommendations, and the technical AP has reviewed this action several times, and there are several items on there that I put up there for background, but, essentially, they have noted that either an angler or a vessel-based permit could be integrated into the existing, or potentially new, sampling and surveying of the Marine Recreational Information Program, and so MRIP.

There's not really a great difference in the improvements that would occur between the two permit types. However, there were noted advantages of a vessel-based permit over an angler-based permit, one of the main ones being that a vessel-based permit is easy to identify in the field. When sampling, you can look at the vessel ID, and you can see how that matches up with the permit database, and you don't have to go asking each angler in the group to see their private angler permit, and so it's easy to identify in the field, easy to identify for field samplers, and it was noted that, if there is a census-level reporting approach in the future, a vessel-based permit would be better than an angler-based permit.

With that said, the recommendation from the technical AP was that, on net, a vessel-based permit would be preferable, and they have recommended Alternative 2 in Action 1, which is establishing a private recreational permit that is vessel-based.

I will switch gears and go over some of the feedback that the Snapper Grouper AP, this body, provided in April, and you discussed this action and passed a motion that the Snapper Grouper AP recommends a vessel-based, rather than an individual-based, permit be required for the private component of the recreational sector in Amendment 46, and so, essentially, that is endorsing Alternative 2 in Action 1, that the council could consider that as potentially their preferred alternative in December.

Some of the general AP comments, you noted that a vessel-based permit would help identify the universe of participants and is consistent with existing federal permits in the Southeast. The vessel owner is typically the one taking people out fishing, and the responsible party for the trip, and the logistics of implementing a vessel-based permit program would likely be easier than implementing an angler-based permit, due to fewer permits that would need to be issued. I will take a break here and hand it over to the AP, but, really, what we're looking for, at this juncture, is is the AP still comfortable with your previous recommendations and comments on Action 1.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Just a quick -- Just a quick pulse check with the AP. We have a few new members, and no one, to this date, has been interested in status quo, and has that changed with anyone, which would be Alternative 1? Okay, and so that's no longer for any discussion. With respect to Alternative 2, Action 1, which is a vessel-based permit, let's speak to how comfortable we are. I guess, John, we wouldn't be making another motion again, and we're just going to carry on with what we did last time?

MR. HADLEY: Unless you want to change it, but, as long as you're okay with the existing motion, essentially that would be your motion, and it would be reiterated at this meeting, as far as the AP report, assuming that you're still comfortable with it.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Comments, or does anybody want to motion with respect to retaining what we did at the last meeting? John.

MR. POLSTON: I'm new, and my question is -- I wasn't involved before, but I'm not exactly sure that I understand, and, if you do the permits for the vessel, who will be responsible, and I heard you just say that, normally, the vessel owner is the captain of the boat, but, I mean, I kind of disagree with that, and so who is going to be responsible for doing the report, and will it be the captain, or will it be the owner?

MR. LORENZ: John, do you want to comment a little bit more on that? For us private -- This is towards the private recreational, but most of us do own our boats, but, John.

MR. HADLEY: So it would be the -- It would really be the -- In that case, it would be likely the vessel owner who is getting the permit, and that's who would go through the process. When you think about how -- Well, it would probably be -- Well, it would be a little bit different, but, essentially, now, when you have a for-hire permit, or a commercial permit, that is permitted to that vessel, and the entity, whether it's the owner, or possibly some business partner, that sort of thing, may differ, but it would likely function in a somewhat similar fashion to the existing program, permitting program.

MR. POLSTON: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. I would like to just take a minute here to give the council's Snapper Grouper Committee chair a chance to respond. Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob, and so a couple of things. The workgroup that John is reporting out on did not get into the educational requirement, because they ran out of time, or the law enforcement component, how it would be enforced, and so I would say, when this was discussed at the council meeting, even though the workgroup was really kind of honing-in on the vessel-based, it seemed like the committee was having some of these same discussions, like John just had the question of, and, you know, who is responsible, and, if we're going to do an educational course, which it seems like that was kind of where the committee was leaning, then is really only the captain the one that takes the educational course, and not all the individuals onboard, and like how would this be enforced?

Is it the owner of the vessel, or is it the captain of the vessel, and, you know, how would you do all of this, and so, because this workgroup wasn't able to get to some of these components, or logistics of it, it seemed like, when you bring in those other pieces, and consider it as a bigger package, that maybe angler-based, as you guys I think had recommended maybe before -- No, and you guys recommended vessel-based, but it seemed like angler-based might be easier, if you're bringing in these educational components and if you're thinking about how to enforce it.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Jessica. I see where it gets a little messier when you get into the educational part. I'm going to start to -- Keep your hands up, and I wanted to recognize some of the people who wanted to speak. I have Tony Constant first.

MR. CONSTANT: I agree with her, and one of the things that we said in that last meeting in April that I particularly noticed was the recreational side of this committee wanted it to go angler-based.

The commercial side voted vessel-based, and I'm trying to keep on focus, and it seems like -- To me, it seems the council is getting off-focus of what this permit was about. If driven by a vessel-based permit, and that's easy when you're in commercial, because you're reporting your fish, and you're making money, and so you're already reporting all your fish, because you're selling them. Well, that's not going to happen in the recreational side, and so, if you're going to -- What was the purpose of this permit in the first place? Was it to get these fisheries underhand, meaning we've had snapper closed for fourteen years, and we don't have the data why, and so we're trying to get the data of what these recreational people are catching, but now none of that is being gathered.

With the new vision that we read, that was at the top of the screen, and you all changed it briefly, and I don't see how we're getting there, from this vessel-based. I don't know if you all can go back and read that again, but, if you look at the new verbiage, I don't see how a vessel-based reporting, or a headcount, is going to get to what you're trying to get to here, your purpose and need.

The ability to collect recreational effort and catch data, it states there in the third sentence of the first paragraph, and how is this vessel-based permit going to get to that point, and the last question would be is it at all headed to opening red snapper? Is anything that we're going to do with a vessel-based permit going to open the snapper fishing season?

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. You make up some very good points, and, you know, one thing I can bring up, and this is back a few years ago, and I would like to hear, from anybody that is, you know, operating a charter boat, it was that, when I had spoken to people in the for-hire industry, there was a considerable number that said, you know, they didn't want to have to deal with that, and why don't the anglers do it, and like why don't we all, who are their customers, have the permit ourselves, and I think we do have a conundrum where we were originally looking to see who is out there fishing, and maybe reporting, and we added in an educational component, which kind of makes, what you said, an every-angler thing, and then, when we're getting into things like best fishing practices also, but I don't want to keep talking. Back to you, and then I have others to make a comment. Go ahead, Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Well, good point. If the captain takes this educational course, do the five people he's got onboard need to worry about it? I think we're missing the mark. I think we started in the right direction, but we veered off. You know, as long as the commercial people are taking tags and selling fish, that's going to be easy to track, but, once a vessel-based recreational boat goes out, the fish go home with Bill and Fred, and there's not -- You're not tracking anything anymore, but the purpose of this whole thing was to try to get these offshore fisheries in hand and have access. Like I said, red snapper has been closed for fourteen years, and this is not going to get us there, in my opinion.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. I want to recognize Richie Gomez.

MR. GOMEZ: David Moss, and myself, and another fisherman, out of Naples, I believe, were at a SEDAR for mutton snapper in St. Pete recently, and, not to get into that can of corn, and I might have comments on that later, but I brought up the subject because we're all looking at how to get better data from the fishermen, and I brought up the subject, that we've discussed more than once, about incentive, and, right away, you know, it was kind of knocked down, with the whole, well, we need money to take care of this incentive kind of thing.

Bearing that in mind, we will be creating money with these permits, if this goes through, and I don't know if it would be a good time to make a motion that we would use some of these monies for incentive programs, because that would possibly help in what Tony is talking about, you know, with better reporting. Give people a reason for better reporting, just like we've been discussing for probably the last two meetings, and so I just wanted to throw that in there.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Richie. Chris Conklin, I think you were in the queue.

MR. CONKLIN: I believe it was the original intent for it to be an individual-angler-based program. If I'm not mistaken, the State of Florida started it, and the original intent was to sort of follow suit on what they had done, to get a handle on the universe of individual recreational anglers, and I think that the question here is just should it be individual or vessel-based, but individual makes the most sense, and, I mean, it shouldn't matter how easy it is to issue. I mean, for god's sakes, there's a federal duck stamp that, you know, hunters across the country all have to have the same one, and they all have to answer the same survey, at the end of every season, and it's very doable, and so I don't see much of a difference on why we couldn't do it with the reef fish in our region.

MR. LORENZ: All right. I've been looking more to my right, and now to my left. Harry.

MR. MORALES: Given the fact that the council wanted to understand the universe, it makes far more sense to understand it via the fishermen, versus the boat, and, you know, you've got boats that never go offshore, and they probably could pick up the stamp, but, at the end of the day, given the fact that recreational has been the bad boy, and you don't know how many of us are out there, and you don't know what the fishing effort is, and you can't quantify it in any shape or form, and yet here you are setting up a system, and you're not going to ask me to register, and him to register, and right down the line, so you could actually count how many registrations you have, you know, and then, you know, I hear about this Fishing Effort Survey, and, in twenty years, you know, I haven't found anybody in Hilton Head that has ever received a call.

If you have me registered, you've got my email, and you've got probably my cell number, and, hell, you could just text everybody and say did you all go fishing today, and you would get an answer, and you would be able to quantify what was the effort, and so, yes, boat registration is easy on the commercial side, but, at the end of the day, if you want to know how many recreational fishermen are fishing for snapper grouper, have them issued a permit. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry, and I think, you know, where we are is a possibility for another motion, and, I mean, I don't know if we didn't quite pick this up in April, but, originally, when -- Before, the AP was mostly considering that you would register anglers, and there would be reporting, and I think, when you say reporting, it goes, well, who should do that, and, well, whoever the captain or the owner of the boat is, but, when they add the educational requirement, that sounds like something for everybody, and it looks like Alternative 3 fits much better, and then, when we get to reporting, worry about how we're going to do that in that amendment, and is it every person, or do we make somebody a responsible person, like a vessel owner or a captain, and I don't know, and do we want any discussion of that, or is there anybody here that wants to change what we're -- A question for our AP is are we comfortable with it, and it doesn't sound like we are, and so I will start the questions. Paul Nelson, first.

MR. NELSON: I don't have a question, but HMS is a vessel permit for recreational, and it's a start anyway. If we do get a vessel permit, then we can start from there and then move forward on reporting individuals, or stuff like that, but at least we have a headcount of how many boats are offshore and going fishing with a vessel permit. Now we don't have any of that, and there's no boat counts or nothing on who fishes offshore, but it would be a start anyway, but HMS is a vessel permit.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Paul, and so, essentially, you're stating, at this point, you're comfortable with Action 1.

MR. NELSON: I am good with the start of that, and at least we have a count of how many boats are going offshore. We don't even have a count of that, and that's what throws the snapper stuff off, is because we don't have a boat count on who is fishing offshore.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Next is Andy, Andy Piland.

MR. PILAND: The boat count would be easier to get started. I mean, you've got 2,000 permitted charter boats, and we're required to report every day we go fishing, or if we didn't go fishing, and, if you've got to get a permit to fish for snapper and grouper, and you've got to report, you know - In theory, you know what's happening, and if, at some point, you need to break it down to how many anglers you have, then you can do that later, but, to start, it seems to me that --

AP MEMBER: That could be a question when they report, is how many guys are in the boat.

MR. PILAND: It is a question on my report, how many anglers I had. If recreational vessels were permitted, and questioned, the same way that I am, it answers all your questions that have been voiced here. Thank you.

MR. KIMREY: I kind of want to circle back to when this started, since I've been on the AP, which is three-and-a-half years now. When we first started talking about this, it was about reporting, and I think that's the point that Tony was trying to make, is it originated with reporting, because everybody knows that the recreational side reporting isn't nearly as tight as the commercial side, and so, when the council came back to us, after we made the recommendation, and it caught a little ground, because it's my understanding that this recreational permit has been recommended over and over and over and over, for many, many years.

When the council came back to us, and it was catching a little traction, they said, okay, you know, we're going to do this and this, but we're not going to worry about reporting, and so I think that's -- We're kind of making a full circle back to what you started out with when we started fifteen minutes ago with this conversation, and we didn't agree about Alternative 2, Action 1. We were told that that's what they were willing to do, and I don't remember agreeing. Do you, Tony? No.

We didn't agree, and we were told that that's what was going to happen when the council came back to us, and so, at that point, I think maybe we said, okay, that's the best we're going to do, and we're going to start there, and it gives us the basis, or some groundwork, in the future to lean towards reporting, and so, if you take all of that and quantify it, and kick it out and lay it out, you know, in my opinion, Alternative 2, Action 1, as a start, is good, under the premise that we're

building toward reporting, and, if you're going to use Alternative 2, Action 1, it makes sense, circling back to Paul, to start out at the vessel level, because there's already the HMS permit.

You know, there's not a federal recreational fishing license, and the HMS is tied to the vessel, and so you're going to -- You know, if you did it by the individual, you're creating something that doesn't exist right now. There is not a federal Southeast Atlantic fishing license for recreational anglers, but there is for vessels, and so, under the premise that this is a building block towards recreational reporting, I think it's great, and I don't know how many people in here would agree with that, but, if it's the furthest it's ever going to go, then, no, I think we should seek for the angler-based permit. Does that make sense, anybody?

I mean, and, with that being said, as far as the educational component being tied to Alternative 2, Action 1, if the permit is tied to the vessel, it will be just like with the HMS, and it's whoever the HMS will be tied to, and that person should be responsible to pass that educational component on, as long as it's a vessel permit, in my opinion.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. That's pretty clear, and, coming from the charter industry, I find it interesting that you're kind of banking off of what Mr. Nelson had stated. I would like to have a few comments on here, and I have Cameron Sebastian, and so the headboats.

MR. SEBASTIAN: If I recall, at the last meeting, the whole -- One of the whole premises was what can we do to move the ball forward, and, you know, the discussion was that we can at least see what the universe is with the vessels, and it starts there, but then, you know, the die has been cast, and we have a permit, and we have something to work off going forward, and, you know, if the discussion was, hey, the vessel owner --

He goes through it and gets permitted, and he passes the information on, and can also give information out, and then it's a starting point to get rolling, because, if everybody recalls, we've been saying this for years and years and years, and we need to know what the universe holds out there, and so I'm more than willing to at least get the ball rolling and get something started than end up in a quagmire for the next five, six, seven, or eight years and nothing happens. You know, it's just my view on it, but I'm all for just going and getting something started with the vessel permitting and then let the cards fall, down the road, where they may.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Richie, did you have your hand up? All right. Then I'm looking to my left. Harry Morales and then John.

MR. MORALES: I have a question for Jessica. If we're getting the ball rolling, and that's the plan, does the roadmap include reporting, because, without reporting, then we're just wasting our time.

MR. LORENZ: Jessica, our council Snapper Grouper chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Bob, and so I think that the council's intent is to eventually get to the reporting, because we -- Like you guys, that is important to us, but we've been told that this amendment can move faster if the reporting requirement is not in there right now, and so that's why we were trying to get this established. Another way to think about this, and so let's talk about

the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, which is a state permit trying to get at the number of people going offshore to fish for reef fish.

The State Reef Fish Survey only covers thirteen species, and so this, and you guys will get to that point in the document, and you can comment on what species it should cover, and should it be all fifty-five species in the complex, or some subset, but I guess the thing that the council is working towards is trying to figure out the universe, and it's almost like the phone book, if you will, of people that are participating and going offshore with the intent to snapper grouper fish, because you can't tie that directly to a state fishing license, and there's no -- As you guys said, there's no federal offshore fishing permit that exists right now that people could sign up for, and so it's trying to get at that universe of anglers that are going offshore, so that we know more about the effort and the number of people that are fishing.

Then this is trying to get at do you do that by considering a vessel-based permit or an angler-based permit, and so what I was trying to say in the beginning is, if you think about what all you want this to encompass, meaning to you want an educational requirement, how would you enforce it, and, you know, what type of infraction is it if you don't have it, and who onboard gets the violation, and so that's where the council, in the discussion, seemed like we were kind of honing-in on more of an angler-based, because, if you want to do the education, which we thought was important, it seems like that would be per angler and not just for the boat captain, and then, also, what if you -- There is also you can rent a boat, and companies allow you to go rent a boat, and then is it really the rental company that takes the educational course, or is it the person that rented the boat, and, you know, how do you go about doing this, and so we were kind of getting hung up on some of these other components, if that helps.

MR. LORENZ: Well, all right. Thank you, Jessica, and I see a way of handling this in the future, since we are advisors, and I'm noticing they were asking if we're comfortable, and maybe we'll take a poll of that, but I still want to keep your comments going. I'm going to refer to my list here, which my co-chair here has made for me, and I would like to recognize John Polston. Do you have something you want to say, John?

MR. POLSTON: Yes, and what the guys are saying, and Jessica left the table, but my question, more or less, is I would agree that, as far as getting the ball rolling, there's no question, I don't think, that it would -- You would have to go with the vessel to get things rolling, but is it possible to incorporate, and it obviously can't happen overnight, but make every individual that wants to fish offshore take the educational course and then turn it over to either the vessel owner, the captain, however the verbiage you want to use on that, and, eventually, when this comes around - - I know there's not even a permit right now, but, when it did come around, then the captain, or the owner of the boat, would enforce it. Say if they wanted to charter a boat, or whatever the case may be, whoever was the management of the vessel, if it was individual or charter or whatever, and, if they didn't have the permit, they couldn't go.

The other question is, and the reason that I wanted to address Jessica, is, you know, I'm in the wreckfish industry, and you know what problems we talk about with just enforcement, and we have five participants, and now you're talking about hundreds of thousands of participants, and so I'm guessing, if you try to start off with individual, it's going to be a joke.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Jessica, would you like to answer that for John?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so just another thing to think about, and Tim and I were debating it over there, and I don't know how -- I don't know that it's impossible, but it could be challenging for the council to go down one road, like vessel-based, with the intent to switch to angler-based at a future date, or vice versa, either start with angler based, with the intent to do vessel-based in the future, without maybe just enacting a whole separate permit and then deleting the old one, and so let's say you started with angler-based, because we wanted to do this education requirement, like you're suggesting, and maybe that stays in place for X number of years, because we're very concerned about fish handling and descending devices, and then maybe we want to switch to vessel-based, because we think that each individual angler maybe doesn't need to take the educational course.

Then it seems that maybe the council could embark on the vessel-based permit and then do away with the angler-based permit, and that's the only way that we could kind of come up with how you would do this, and it seems too challenging to implement one and then just convert that to something else, and I think you would have to enact a separate permit and then kind of do away with the other one, and so just -- I don't know if that helps with some of your questions.

MR. POLSTON: Yes, it definitely helps, but I still think that, basically, enforcement is going to be impossible. It is possible with vessels, for sure, but, with the individual -- I mean, maybe I'm wrong, but, to me, it seems so.

MR. LORENZ: Go ahead, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, we have this in the State of Florida, and so we have this Florida State Reef Fish Survey that's intended for people that are going offshore with the intent to fish for these thirteen species, and we enforce it, and so it's been in place longer on the Gulf than it has on the Atlantic, but we definitely enforce it, and it's a misdemeanor. We took the approach of using education first, say for the first six months, including law enforcement boarding boats and saying, hey, you know, you don't seem to have this, and you haven't registered as a State Reef Fish angler on your fishing license, and let me show you on our app how you can add this to your fishing license.

That's the type of thing that they're doing, where they're showing people, but, if they stopped say the same boat, or the same crew, or the same angler more than once, and the person still didn't have it after the second or third time, then, yes, we are writing tickets for that, or law enforcement is, and so we have a ton of anglers in the State of Florida, and we are able to enforce it, and, also, just to add to that, on the Gulf side, each one of the Gulf states has something like Florida's State Reef Fish Survey, like the LA Creel. You know, you've heard about these different permits in the Gulf, and they are enforcing it. Their state law enforcement are enforcing those permits as well, and so I would say it's not impossible. It's doable.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you very much, Jessica, and that was a well-spoken, you know, statement for where an angler-based permit could work, but I would like to continue on, because there's a lot of comments here on the list, and we'll rotate back to anyone a second time, but I want to recognize Paul Nelson.

MR. NELSON: I was just going to say why don't we have the states handle the individual part of it, and that's what I was going to say before Jessica started speaking.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Randy, did you have a statement?

MR. MCKINLEY: Yes, and, I mean, I think we just need to move forward and go with the vessel first, and I'm in agreement with Chris and Cameron. You know, the education is fine and all, but, ultimately, what we want the quickest is so we can catch red snapper, and, if we can define how many is doing it, and maybe put some of that information into some of maybe, you know, the recreational effort that we're finding out could have been overstated, that's the most important thing, and the quickest thing. I mean, trying to get a federal permit, I guess, for each individual is going to take probably more years, and I thought that was in the discussion in April, and the whole thing was to get the ball rolling the quickest we could and let us fish quicker.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Tony, did you have a statement?

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Bob. I'm going to follow-up with you all. Randy, what you brought up was a good point, about being quicker, and, like Paul said, the quickest way that we're going about it is vessel. Now, that said, what would it take, on our timeframe, that we're currently looking at, for this body to get -- For the council to get a federal permit issued? Are we looking at two years, maybe, hopefully? That's why I think we're already in that quagmire.

Florida already has a successful reef program, based on their state licenses. I've got one in my pocket, and, when I go fishing in Florida, I've got a State Reef Fish permit, and I would say that, if we went this route -- I am pretty sure that South Carolina could have that by the end of the first session of the legislature this year, and it would -- If it would mean knowing -- We all know how many saltwater anglers we have with the licenses, and the South Carolina resident licenses are about 100,000, and we probably -- We simply have a reef program for them, and mimic Florida. We would be glad to take on Florida's.

Like Jessica was saying, every Gulf state already has it, and, if we could put that into place within a year, we're still going to be vessel reporting, and we're going to have something accurate, but, if we head down the wrong direction, and we wind up with vessel reporting, we're never going to get a fishery open, and it sure ain't going to open red snapper, and what is it about vessel reporting that would even lead towards opening red snapper, because, if we don't move the needle on mortality rates for red snapper, we're never going to open it. It's impossible to open, and we either have to change the ACL or we have to change the mortality rate, because, if not, we're always going to kill too many by releasing them, and so how is a vessel permit going to do that?

If we have individual reporting, we have something, and we can move both the mortality rate and the catches, if we actually know what anglers are catching, and I just don't see how a vessel -- Number one, I think the vessel permit is going to take longer than if we turn to a reef program for a state and let the state report like Florida does.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Tony. Some excellent points, and now I recognize Joe Matthews.

MR. MATTHEWS: I just wanted to follow-up on John's comment, because I think there's a difference between enforcement and compliance, and I think one of the things that is worth considering is the compliance component of it, because, you know, it's kind of harder to quantify how many people are actually going to be getting the permits, and, you know, we don't know how many people are out there fishing without them, because we only know when we stop them and catch them on the enforcement side.

I think that the duck stamp was a really good analogy, because, you know, the compliance is not a huge issue with something like that, because -- I think the Florida reef fish program follows kind of the same logic, and that is you get on your phone, on your app, to get your permit, and you click those boxes before you're allowed to buy it, and that's different than having to take a course, and so I think, when we're talking about everybody that fishes having to take an educational course, and I'm new to the panel, and so I'm not sure what's been discussed, in terms of what the education requirement would be, but I do think that, if we're looking at doing it on an individual angler basis, that that reporting requirement is probably going to be -- It makes more sense to focus on that than it does on forcing everybody to go through a class, like you would a hunter's safety class, but I do think that the duck stamp is a good analogy, because I would say that most of us sitting in this room, who gets the federal duck stamp every year, doesn't really think twice about it when we go to get our duck stamp. We know we've got to have it, and we know we've got to check those boxes in order to get it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Joe. I want to do a pulse check here in a minute, but I have one other person that I think was in the queue, and it was Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: Well, as I remember, where we started out on this venture is, each year, the South Atlantic fishery is giving how many fish the commercial boats can have and how many the recreational can have, and so my point is how do you know how many recreational fish are being caught if you don't know how many boats are out there and how frequent they're fishing, and I'm not talking about just the charter boats or whatever, but I see them there, where I live, back and forth multiple times a day, or, you know, a number of boats that are targeting out there, and, until we know how many are putting a hook down there, and I don't think we're going to manage the snapper grouper, and whatever it takes, whether it's an individual's count, or, if I look back in running charters, you know, I wouldn't want to deal with the paperwork of keeping up the six individuals every day and all that kind of stuff.

The guide behind the wheel should be responsible, whether he's the captain or the owner or whatever, and a lot of the rich folks hire a captain, and, well, somebody has got to be responsible, and that captain don't want to be the one that winds up with the bad reputation, or in jail, because he's not being in compliance or keeping up with the records, and so that's where the pressure needs to be.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. I would like to take a minute here to do a pulse check, because I'm going to address John Hadley. We've had a lot of comments on here, on what was the vessel-based and the angler-based permit, and that's the permit, and it seems like we get really hung up when we add the educational component, and so, John, I'm trying to think, and, when you're asking the question of the AP of are we comfortable with the previous recommendations and comments on Action 1, which stated the vessel permit, at this point, are you asking the question of are we comfortable on that and an educational requirement, or can we tell you what our comfort

level is with permits, vessel or individual, without considering an educational component at this time?

MR. HADLEY: Well, really, it's up to the AP, as far as what recommendation you would like to make, but the -- I guess the game has changed, in that there's an education requirement now, whereas, when you previously looked at this, that could have been mandatory or voluntary, and so it's -- This action itself just look at your comfort level with the permit itself, and so, if you were to just have just a sort of, with blinders on, do you create a permit, and how would you prefer that, angler or vessel-based, that could be the recommendation.

You could also have two recommendations. Given the education permit, this is our AP's recommendation, because, you know, we inevitably have to split them up, and you have to talk about the permit, and you have to talk about the education requirement, but they are linked, and so I think, you know, that's all to say that, given that there is now an education requirement, and knowing that we will get into that, you know, how does the AP feel about a permit, whether it is vessel or angler-based.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. John, for then clarity, okay, and so the question is education is linked to this, regardless of which way we go, and we are not getting a permit on either way, vessel or angler, if there is not an educational component, and is that correct?

MR. HADLEY: I would think of it as the other way around. It seems like there's a permit that's going to move forward, and the question is whether or not there will be an education requirement to go along with it. Does that make sense or help at all? I hope that it does, but the -- You know, I would be surprised if an education component moved forward without a permit, but I could see it going the other way around. There again, not speaking for the council, but just how this has been discussed, and I think the permit has been the crux of this amendment, and the focus of this amendment, and then the other part of the discussion is whether or not to have an education component to go along with the permit, or at least that's my take on how the council has discussed this so far.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Then, John and AP, I think what we'll do here is let's give a little menu of -- I will just call it -- It's like an opinion survey, and you've asked if we're comfortable with this, and so I would like to break this into four parts, and this is not a motion, and so I can lead this here. At any time, anyone may make a motion on what we're doing, and so I want to get like a show of hands, all right, and I'm going to focus on that question for the AP, and is the AP comfortable with previous recommendations and comments on Action 1, and so the first vote I would like to have is just as stated.

What is your opinion on supporting, and you can have multiple ones here, that original recommendation of a vessel-based permit, just a vessel -- Let's just do this with just a vessel-based permit, and who -- We're next going to go with an angler-based permit, and so we're going to try to break those two, and so who here prefers a vessel-based permit and thinks that's the way to go, and can we put the hands up? We have eleven of us that feel that's the way to go.

We'll do this, in case somebody wants to abstain out, and the next question is who here feels strongly that it should be an angler-based permit? Hands up. We have six, not counting the chair, and, if I may, I would like to put mine in there, on that bucket.

I am trying to think this through, and then how many would want to -- So this would be just getting a permit. The first two votes is just showing that we just want a permit, and that's a priority, and that's been stated by a lot of people here. Now we get the educational component, and how many feel, to get started, right out of the box, that we don't have a permit unless we also have the educational requirement in tandem, and how many would like a vessel-based permit also with a concurrent requirement of the educational component, right out of the bat? Go ahead. I'm going to recognize you, Chris.

MR. KIMREY: With the educational component -- I mean, everybody is always talking about red snapper, and, okay, and that's the discussion of fisheries management in all the Gulf and Atlantic forever, but, with the educational component, and I'm just going to use red snapper as an example, when it comes to release mortality and dead discards, the educational component is something that might could help to get that number down, and that's what it's about, and so, if we can't get reporting, let's at least try to get release mortality down, and so I don't know who has a problem with the educational component, but I would have a problem with somebody sticking a permit down my throat that's not giving me the benefit of reporting, whether the science is valid or not, without the educational component, because then you've really got a permit that is almost worth nothing.

I mean, if we're going to go with a vessel-based permit, I think that -- I'm asking that the AP really consider attaching education to that, at the vessel level, and so whoever is responsible for the vessel can be responsible for educating the people on the vessel, and that, in itself, might help a little bit with some of the mortality issues we're having, and so, yes, I don't know, and, I mean, I just felt like -- Bob, you kept mentioning education, but I think it needs to be elaborated what that education is, and maybe John could give us some ideas of what that educational component could be.

I know, for me, like for some of the other permits that I have, like the shark permit, it's a quick little test you take, and it's very useful, and it's helpful, and I'm assuming that it will be something like that, John, and do you know?

MR. HADLEY: So those details have yet to be worked out exactly what it's going to be, and the education-related actions were run by the council's Outreach and Communications AP, and, you know, based on their feedback, they were thinking something along the lines of a fifteen to twenty-minute course, and, you know, something along those lines upfront, and then maybe a shorter course after, and that was one of their recommendations, where it's sort of a re-up each year sort of thing, but specifically to your question, the exact contents of the education requirement haven't been worked out just yet, and those will be worked out, but, as far as what could be in there, that's actually some of the discussion questions at the end, once we get to the education-related items, what the AP may think, but I think, at this point, something along the lines of best fishing practices, and so fish handling, and, you know, those actions that would get at reducing release mortality, and that's the sort of content that would be part of that education requirement.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, John, and then I think, seeing what we stated with Chris, I think that we're okay, and we can take that last bullet out, that we simply are showing a preference of those here who would like a vessel-based permit, or an angler-based permit, and it's that simple, and we'll do that. I know there were some other people that wanted to comment, and I want to recognize Mel Bell, from South Carolina, and on the council, our director here in South Carolina. Mel.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the educational component -- I mean, originally, I brought that up in conjunction with Amendment 35, and the concept there was to try to do something to deal with dead discards, and also to educate folks, and so, if you have folks following better practices with descending devices, or best practices in general, in the snapper grouper fishery, you're going to make improvements, and you'll be able to take credit for those improvements eventually, once documented, but it could be as simple as what you were saying.

For instance, in South Carolina, if you get a commercial shellfish permit, you have to take a fairly simple video-type course, a web-based course, and boom. Then you get your permit, and so it could be that simple. It could be, you know, a little more elaborate. FWC does a really good job of putting out educational things already on their -- You know, on their sites, and so building on something like that. It could be that simple, and then the periodicity of it, and that's, you know, debatable. You know, once a year, every other year, three years, whatever, or as things change, and so it could be that simple.

The idea was not to make it burdensome at all, and the original concept was that I have this license, this permit, to allow me to participate in this fishery, but there's an endorsement or something on there that shows that I have -- That I have this mandatory educational course that I've taken, as simple as an online thing, I mean, and so that's where that came from, but, originally, the idea was to develop it as part of the red-snapper-related thing, to try to deal with dead discards, and, at the same time, you would identify a universe of people that wanted it, but, anyway, that ship sailed, and it's now part of this amendment, because it was deemed too complex there, and we moved it over to this, you know, current amendment, and so that's the history of that a little bit.

MR. KIMREY: That was the point that I was trying to make, and I don't think that I made it quite as well as you, is that -- You know, with everything that's going on, and everything we're trying to accomplish, especially with this recreational license, if we're going to end up with one, we should at least try to make sure we're implementing a little bit of education in with it, because there's -- I don't know, and, you know, I'm immersed in recreational fishing, and I make my living as a for-hire captain.

Because of that, I see many, many, many anglers, from all different levels, you know, to commercial guys that are really good at it to entry-level of, hey, I just bought my first ocean boat, and so I'm exposed to lots of different types of anglers, and there is such a lack of basic knowledge that we need to try to spread any way we can, and, if we can't get reporting out of this, we should at least teach people to how recognize barotrauma and properly handle fish, if we can't do anything else, and that's all I was trying to say.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris, and thank you, Mel. We had a few more comments here, I think, on the list. Randy McKinley, do you have something to say?

MR. MCKINLEY: Yes, and just a clarification. Is it -- It sounds like, to me, when you were saying it was back-and-forth, and so it could even be that education may not be attached to this, but then, previously, it sounded like it had to be, or the council already says it has to be.

MR. HADLEY: The way it's been discussed by the council, the council is discussing developing this permit, and then whether or not there would be an education component to go along with it,

and, you know, the final vote will tell whether or not that education component moves forward, and it seems like there is, you know, several people in favor of it, but, if it does move forward, it would be required, and so it wouldn't be some sort of option, you know, a voluntary program, and it would be envisioned as, to get your permit, you would have to have some sort of education requirement ahead of time.

MR. MCKINLEY: I mean, I don't have a problem with that, but I just -- I didn't want that to hold it up, because it sounds like there's a lot going in there, and it seems like the best thing to do is get the permits and then come right after that, if there's any kind of education thing, but tying all this stuff together -- It just seems like it's going to take longer and longer and longer, and just get the vessel permit, so they can define that universe first, and then worry about everything else, and, I mean, if it's as simple as some of that stuff they're saying, and it could be very easily done, but just go ahead and move forward with this permit stuff and not tie anything together, and that's just my thoughts.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and, kind of to tie-in on what Randy is trying to say here, it's that we kind of know what our universe is, and it's kind of broken down into three sections. When you really look at it, you have your commercial sector, your for-hire sector, and your private recreational sector, and so, knowing that we have those three different sectors, and knowing that two of them pretty well have reporting locked-down, and licensing locked-down, why couldn't we take a look at the private recreational sector as a whole, and knowing we're going to have overlap here, and so you're going to have your fishermen that don't want to participate in vessel ownership, and they don't want to participate in licensing, and they want to be able to hire a boat and go fishing, hire a captain with a boat and go fishing.

Those individuals should not have to obtain an individual license. I'm sure that a lot of charter/for-hire fishermen in this room would much prefer any individual, on any given day, call them up and be able to book, whether they have a license or not, and so, that being said, we're moving to the private recreational sector that does want to be engaged in vessel ownership and permitting and education, as we're discussing it, and so why can't we swing for the fences here and nail down that unknown and have this vessel permit, with the education component, and have our reporting requirement built in initially? That requirement could be -- It could look just like the for-hire section.

You have the boat, you have the permit, and you have to report. Done. You're going to have people that say, oh, well, you know, this is another layer, and, well, guess what? I have jumped through these layers, and you've jumped through these layers, and let's make it really clear that we're trying to manage a fishery, and we have big question-marks, and let's go get it all and be very clear about that, and let's do it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James, very much. Those are some very good points, and I'm going to want to probably move on a little shortly after here, but any more comment? Harry, would you like to make a comment now?

MR. MORALES: James, I totally agree with you, and I had said, at one of the previous meetings, that, you know, we're the advisory panel, and I guess I was questioning at what point are we going

to advise, and the cake is already baked. They want the permit, they want education, and, for political reasons I'm going to assume, they don't want reporting. It's going to be too hard, but, at the end of the day, if we're an advisory panel, and we know that you need that reporting, right, and you need that.

You need that last piece to make this whole damned thing work, and, as advisors, I make a motion that we tell the council that all three pieces have to be included, and that's what this advisory panel advises, and let the politics go where it goes, but, at the end of the day, we're not politicians here. You know, my people are asking me at what point is the red snapper going to open, and, from what I'm hearing, it will be another damned decade before it does, okay, if it at all, and so I say, and I hope that I get support, that all three pieces have to be included. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Harry. John, where we are right now, one of the things that you definitely have from us, right at this moment, is what you've stated above, which would be a permit with an educational requirement, and what we've simply given you, before working with Harry's motion, is there you just at least have a count that this AP is a little split, and so I think the council is going to be there too, but they definitely want the permit, but vessel or angler, and there is no unanimous opinion for what's best, and so let's keep it there, and I apologize for any confusion that I might have caused in that, but I think we had some really good discussions. At this point, I would like to recognize Harry to make a motion on his statements. You said you want a vote of support?

MR. MORALES: I just did. **I made the motion that this advisory panel advises the council that all three components should be included in an amendment, which includes reporting.** Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Harry, and so the motion, as we have it listed, is that -- To advise the council to include a reporting requirement in Amendment 46, in addition to -- Are you okay with that, as written, right there now? That's the wording? A comment, Joe?

MR. MATTHEWS: I just have one thing to add, and I would say, regardless of whether it's on an individual or a vessel-based permit, that we would want those three components, and I don't mean to jump in and take over your motion, and I second the motion.

MR. MORALES: **I accept his edit.**

MR. LORENZ: Harry, would you please restate what the edit -- Put it your words what that edit is, please.

MR. MORALES: **So, regardless of vessel or angler-based, the AP advises the council to include reporting, permit, and education.**

MR. HADLEY: Just to clarify, do you want to remove the first part, and so it would just say --

MR. MORALES: Yes.

MR. HADLEY: Or do you want to keep that in there?

MR. LORENZ: What John is getting at, Harry, is there's a little bit of redundancy there.

MR. MORALES: **I got it, and so remove it.**

MR. LORENZ: **All right, so the motion by Harry is, regardless of vessel or angler-based permit, the AP advises the council to include reporting, permitting, and education.** Is there anyone that wants to second that? Joe, are you going to keep your second? All right, and so Joe Matthews will second that. Then, by protocol, we do -- We've had a lot of comment, but we're open to comment right now. Andrew Fish.

MR. FISH: I would like to think that, at least in Florida, there's a charter permit that covers all the anglers on the boat for their saltwater, and would this be something where it would -- Like, if you were on a private boat, each individual would get their license, and then a charter boat could get an all-encompassing?

AP MEMBER: We already have that.

MR. FISH: Right, but -- Okay.

MR. LORENZ: You know, that's an interesting aspect, Andy, because, you know, I remember, years ago, with the striped bass in the Chesapeake, I was able to get a boat permit for a private vessel that covered every angler on there, including myself, if I wanted to shore-based fish, and so, if you wish to make a motion after this, we'll come to that. I would like to recognize Richie to comment on the motion as it sits.

MR. GOMEZ: I don't know if I feel good about leaving that "or angler-based", and I thought we had already decided on the vessel. You know, thinking about what James said, about the charter boat industry, I'm not comfortable with that "or angler-based" in there.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Richie. That's noted. I am going to recognize James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I mean, I feel like we're a little bit vague on what the action has specifically asked us to do here, and, you know, we've definitely identified some conflicts of opinion in the room, and then we're really trying to come back together and point out what it is that we are advising the council to do, and I think we're leaving it very vague still, because we're still leaving the option for one permit over the other. We don't know what the requirement is, whether it's going to be individual or vessel, and, I mean, before this goes to a vote, I feel very strongly that we should be more clear as to what we're advising, and just that's my opinion, at this moment.

MR. LORENZ: Chris Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: With my experience, if you don't, you know, task yourself with answering actual questions that are asked of you as the AP, then they're not really looked with quite as much weight, if you don't answer the specific questions that the council is asking us to do and a pecking order. We can still advise, but we've got to answer the questions that they're tasking us with.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Chris Kimrey.

MR. KIMREY: Chris Conklin makes a very valid point, and, you know, we can -- No offense, Harry, but all we're doing is circling back to where we were a year ago, and that's what we told them a year ago. We went to the council, and the council came back and said they're not going to do that, and so are we going to spin our wheels, or are we going to answer the questions that they were asking and try to move forward, because all this is is going back a year, and it's like we're in a time machine and going right back to where we were a year ago.

I mean, I'm not trying to be anything other than accurate, and, I mean, that's what is happening right here, and I think Chris said it best, and this is coming from somebody that spent a lot of time on the council, and he's been on the other side of this for a number of years, and I think we need to answer the questions, and, as an AP, come to an understanding, mostly in whole, and move forward, instead of going backwards.

MR. LORENZ: We have a little bit of a queue here. Thank you, Chris. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Chris, I do agree with you, and that's exactly what I felt, that it came around in a circle, but I also am going to -- Back a year ago, we still had that same vote, and it's the commercial guys that want the vessel and the recreational guys that see the need for recreational angler reporting, and I think the point here is that this only affects recreational anglers. Charter/for-hire, you all have said that this doesn't apply to you, and neither does the commercial, and so we're only dealing with recreational anglers here, but the vote is split commercial and rec.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Joe.

MR. MATTHEWS: Just a point of clarification, and I completely agree, and I think we need to answer the question that was asked of us, and I think my suggestion, in adding that this should apply to the vessel or angler-based permitting, is that we say -- We answer your question, and we decide either vessel or angler-based, but then it's in addition to that, regardless of which way the council votes on whether it's going to be an angler-based or a vessel-based permit, and we feel very strongly that it needs to have an educational component, and it needs to have a reporting component.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Joe, and so then you're actually supporting the motion as it's written up there right now?

MR. MATTHEWS: Well, I'm supporting the motion as it's written, but with the caveat that we still vote on whether it's going to be a vessel-based or an angler-based.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you. Chris Conklin, did you have a statement?

MR. CONKLIN: No. I'm good.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Harry.

MR. MORALES: So, for clarification, I did not suggest that we not answer the question, and so, of course, we can answer the question. However, I believe strongly that we do need to send a clear signal that, without reporting, which we had discussed a year ago as something that should be in

there, and for whatever reason came out, and we should be strongly sending a message that it needs to be included.

Again, there are fewer recreational fishermen here, and our vote is split between commercial and recreational, and I, for one, as a recreational fisherman, feel strongly that, yes, allow me to register, and, yes, on an individual basis, report what it is that I do, so that we eliminate this ambiguity as to, well, what is the fishing effort out there by this big unknown. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and thank you, Harry, for being a little bit more specific on your motion, because I think that that does carry a lot of weight. The only thing I would -- You know, in this context, the only thing I would be a little bit afraid of is what about those people who are not necessarily avid fishermen, or, you know, even -- It's on their radar, and their neighbor, you know, says, hey, let's go bottom fishing, and, you know, maybe I can hook you up with your first fish, or maybe go fishing once every five years, but those individuals, in order to be able to legally fish, would have to have, you know, this license, and the only thing I'm cautioning here is are we stripping somebody's right to the resource, by requiring everybody to have this permit on an individual level.

I don't know, and I'm not a lawyer, but, if it were me, and my neighbor offered me to go deep-dropping with them, and I'm like, oh, I can't go, because I don't have the license, and I think that that's a little bit weird, but, if he had it on his vessel, I could hop on, and that would be that, and that's kind of where I'm coming from, and not necessarily from a commercial fishing standpoint, and it's just like, hey, you know, if you want to go fishing with me, I've got all my stuff, and don't worry if you have the license, because I have it on my boat, on my vessel. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, James. You know, I think we should, as far as -- I think we're getting there with answering the questions that we were asked, and that was, you know, a permit system, and, you know, from this AP, regardless of the how it's made up, the recommendation last time went for the vessel-based permit, and the council has started to lean to an angler-based permit, and so we did make a vote there, and we're still basically answering that question of is the AP comfortable with the previous recommendation and comments on Action 1, and, in a way, yes, and eleven are, a majority.

At this point, I'm thinking we'll just take a clean vote of Harry's motion, which is another point of advising, is, regardless of vessel or angler-based permitting, the AP advises the council to include reporting, permitting, and education, and it's a motion. It's a recommendation. I will stop there, and, Chris, you have a comment?

MR. MILITELLO: So I guess we still need to answer Chris' question though, and did we vote on this last time, or did you guys make us do this?

MR. LORENZ: The question was from Chris Militello to John Hadley. John, answer.

MR. HADLEY: Sure, and so, last time, it was a motion made and passed by the AP itself, as far as --

MR. MILITELLO: It was all of us then?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and it was a motion made by the AP to select vessel-based.

MR. KIMREY: Yes, and, I mean, we voted several times, and I don't have them in front of me, and so I obviously can't quote that, but, at our previous meeting, the council came back to us and said -- It was one of the council members, and I don't know which one, and, you know, I'm fifty years old, and maybe I've lost the face, but, basically, stood here and said that reporting is not going to happen at this stage of the game, period. I mean --

MR. MILITELLO: But we all voted on vessel.

MR. KIMREY: I think that's when we --

MR. MILITELLO: So why are we talking about it?

MR. KIMREY: I think that's when we as a whole, in the AP, said, okay, and so maybe we, you know, mostly agree that we'll move forward without reporting, because this originally started around reporting, and that's what it started with, and I think that's why everybody is confused, and, Harry, we want reporting, and, you know, I'm a for-hire guy that makes my living taking people recreational fishing, and I do a little commercial fishing on the side, and so I sympathize with you, and trust me. It drives me crazy that the recreational reporting is as loose as it is, especially when it comes to the red snapper, but, you know -- But what Chris was saying is they pretty much told us that it wasn't going to happen, and I think that's why, previously, we mostly came to the conclusion that we were okay without the reporting, as long as, like Harry said, in the future maybe we'll get there one day. The question is, is the AP still comfortable with previous recommendations and comments on Action 1, and I don't -- Have we answered that question yet?

MR. LORENZ: Yes, I think we have, and it's up there, that, you know, we had the vessel-based permit, that, you know, we're comfortable with that. I think, in the motion then, it's added information that Harry brought up, and that Joe seconded, would be we can vote on that, that we're also giving additional information that, yes, we want permitting, and, yes, there will be an educational requirement, and all Harry is adding is that, well, the AP is still coming back that we want three components to it, and we would rather have permitting, the education, and include reporting, and I think we're kind of there, and, if we just take a vote, at least we'll have that as information we're giving back, and we could let John move on with the rest of the presentation. I will stop. Okay. I will take a few more comments. Chris.

MR. MILITELLO: So we already voted on we were going to do vessel, and so let's just get the individual out of it, because we did that last time. Done. Right?

MR. LORENZ: Okay, and so you're saying, as far as the vote for the angler-based permit, don't put that information in there?

MR. MILITELLO: No, don't put that in there, because we -- That was my question, is did we vote on this last time, to have a vessel-based? We did, and so it's done, and let's add those two other pieces in.

MR. LORENZ: I will challenge that with only one thing, and we were asked if we were comfortable, and I go back to some of the things that Tony said, that, among the private recreational people, there has been more of an interest in having it angler-based, and then we do have, almost three-to-one here, a commercial-based group that's voting, but remember there is other steps to this, and this will go through the council, which is made up of different stakeholders, and this goes out for public comment too, and I would presume that private recreational anglers are going to comment then, which could change everything, and so all we're doing is giving, I think, the council some information that, yes, we're in a for a permit, and, yes, there's a large majority here that is the vessel-based permit, but there is a nagging -- There's a pretty good-sized group that is saying make it angler-based, and then the third piece of information that we're putting in, again, just as advisors, is that we feel strongly that there ought to be reporting, and I think that's what we have here as a package. I would like to get -- I would like to at least get a vote on Harry's motion here, and maybe move on further with what John has, because we may have another chance to comment on all this.

MR. MILITELLO: I just don't know why we're voting on things twice, and I just don't get that. Maybe the "comfort" thing is what threw me off, but I think we're comfortable if we made a motion and we did it.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: You know, I think what we're also seeing here right now is that everybody in this room agrees that we need to have these components. The disagreement in this room is just vessel and angler. I think everything else is -- Personally, I would have a hard time voting against either one, and I think that's where we were last time with the vessel. I know, for one, I didn't want to vote vessel, but I'm pretty sure I did, and I don't think that I abstained, but, in this case, since we've got in this deep, I believe that I would never vote against a vessel permit, but I might not vote for it, because I'm going to vote for an angler permit, but I would never see this die on the hill by pushing no.

MR. LORENZ: There is a good point, Tony, and you mentioned that we came up with the vessel-based permit. It came out of this AP, and that's what was done, pretty unanimous, pretty strong, and yet the council changed it to angler and threw it back at us, and so things are changing, and then the council will do something that might be different from our recommendations, and so I would like to recognize Richie, Richie Gomez.

MR. GOMEZ: I am with Vincent, and he's having trouble with his mic and his hand-raising, but, man, I would love to vote yea on this, but, as long as that "or angler-based" is in there, I would have to vote nay, and I'm speaking for Vincent also, and we've already been through this. We had the majority vote for vessel, and now we stick this "or angler-based" back in there. I mean, it's a great motion besides that, and so, at the moment, like that, I would have to vote nay, and everything else works real well.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thanks, Richie. Joe, I'm going to make you the last commenter, and I do want to bring this to a vote.

MR. MATTHEWS: I'm going to make a suggestion that might make you a little more comfortable with it, and it's just, regardless of which direction the council goes on how to do the permitting,

that education and reporting be a component of it, because I haven't heard anybody yet speak against the reporting or the education component, and so, if you're more comfortable with it that way, I think we're accomplishing the same thing, and that is, you know, we've decided on -- In previous meetings, we've made the recommendation that it be a vessel-based permit, and the room is still split on it, but the room is not split on these other two, the education and reporting being a part of that, and I think that's the point that everybody is trying to get at in this.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Joe. I will bring this to a vote, and the information will go forth to the council, and we'll do numbers on this, so they do get the idea, rather than just approved or unapproved motion, and we'll give them what the vote was, with respect to yea and nay and abstain.

The motion by Harry Morales, and seconded by Joe Matthews, was that, regardless of vessel or angler-based permitting, the AP advises the council to include reporting, permitting, and education. Who all, and raise your hand, would be in favor of this motion, as stated? We have twelve that voted yes. Votes for no. One no, or nay. Abstain. Richard Gomez. Okay. We have one abstaining, or two. Thank you. Vincent Bonura wanted to be in favor, and he's online, and so we have thirteen in favor, one opposed, and two are abstaining. Vincent, will you unmute and speak your vote? Mike has told us that it's a process issue, that we need to have you --

MR. BONURA: Can you hear me now? I would say -- I mean, I'm for having it on the fishing vessel itself, but, all in all, the reporting, and/or the going to the class and everything, I would agree with all that, and so I would go with yes on this motion, even though I do not -- You know, I'm not for the individual permitting, and that should be with the states, on your individual fishing license.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Vincent. I understand that Jack Cox is now online, and he's a member of our AP, and Jack wishes to vote on this motion, and so we would like to recognize Jack to speak his vote. Jack Cox, are you there? Jack, you seem to be muted on your side, and could you unmute and speak?

MR. COX: Good afternoon. Thank you. I just wanted to support Harry's motion, and I am definitely supporting vessel-based, and, with the other components that go with it, I think it would be perfect. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack, and so our motion is passed, and it will go on as information to the council, with fourteen in favor, one opposed, two abstain, and the chair didn't vote. Thank you. All right. I would like to give it back to John. Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: Okay. Thank you, and I just wanted to point out -- I mean, it's been stated several times in this discussion, but, when this moves forward in the report, it will note that there was unanimous support for developing a permit of some kind, and that seems to be, around the room, everybody is in favor of that, and so I will add that to the report itself.

We'll move along to the next action, and so this is Action 2, and this action covers which species will be covered by the permit, by the private recreational permit, and this is a much narrowed-down list, compared to what you saw last time. Last time, there were several different alternatives

that were included, and the council has since narrowed-down this list quite a bit, and so there are essentially three action alternatives, if you will.

Alternative 2 would clarify that any species within the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit would fall under the permit, and Alternative 3 would match the species covered by the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, and Alternative 4 would include any species in the deepwater complex. One thing I do want to mention is that there is the option to sort of stack alternatives in this case, and so say the council wanted to choose the deepwater complex and the Florida State Reef Fish Survey species, and they could choose Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 as preferred, and so that would sort of stack all of those species together.

Then, to see how those different species play out, there is a table here with all of the species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit, and then there are marks next to those that fall within the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, and so FL SRFS, or the deepwater complex, and DW complex there shows the deepwater complex.

One thing that I did want to bring up is that, you know, the deepwater complex is a complex within the fishery management unit. When the council did discuss this, at their meeting in September, it was noted that some deepwater species, like golden tilefish and blueline tilefish, are not included in that complex, the reason being is that those are assessed species, and so they were moved out of the complex and have their own ACL, and so that's why they don't necessarily fall into the deepwater complex itself.

Moving down, I will give just a brief synopsis of the technical AP. When they reviewed this, it was noted that the Florida State Reef Fish Survey efforts would not be compromised by choosing a larger or a different group of species, as long as those Florida SRFS species are included in whatever list the council chooses. It was noted that there are down sides to being less inclusive upfront of species, and, generally speaking, it narrows the utility of the permit, and it's difficult to add new species down the road, and so the recommendation there was to try to get all of the species that you may want to have now, and in the future, when establishing what species fall under the permit, rather than trying to go small at first and expand it down the road.

That AP recommended Alternative 2, which is all species within the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit, and it was noted that there is little to no downside of being more inclusive, but there are costs if species need to be added down the road, and so they suggest initially capturing all species that need -- That may be needed currently and in the future.

When the Snapper Grouper AP last discussed this, you recommended Alternative 2 as well, and so all species within the snapper grouper complex, and you can see the motion there, and it was noted that, while it would help to match the Florida State Reef Fish Survey species, for consistency, some important snapper grouper species are not included in that list, and so, most notably, say black sea bass, species such as black sea bass, and some of the deepwater species, such as the tilefish species, are not in there. They are important in Florida, as well as further up the coast, and so it would be advisable to go with all species within the complex, to be more comprehensive regionally.

It was noted that choosing all species in the complex could make it easier for permit holders to comply with the permit requirement, rather than needing to know which species fall under the

permit and which do not within the snapper grouper complex, and so that's sort of a summary of the AP's previous discussion of this, and, again, this has been narrowed down quite a bit, and so turning it back to the AP. If you're still good with the recommendations, comfortable with the recommendations, that you made last time, and if there's any other comments, or items, that you want to bring forth to the council.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Let's start this one a little bit simpler. Is there anybody that is not comfortable with the previous recommendations, which was that all species in the snapper grouper complex would be in the permit? Any comments on that? So that's stating that we're basically -
- That we're comfortable with this, all the species. All right.

I will just bring up one question, and it may be more with my state, and that would be for John, and this would -- Would this requirement be for basically the EEZ, for three miles out, because, when you get into something like black sea bass in North Carolina, which there are state regulations, a lot of it's caught within three miles of the shore, including people from jetties, and so that could make it a little complex. Any thoughts on that?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and so that was a specific point of conversation by the council, and some legal guidance that they received, at one of their meetings, is that, essentially, they cannot require this permit for state waters, and so the focus is specifically on the EEZ, and so anglers, or vessels, fishing in the EEZ itself, and that can't really be extended into state waters.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. That's great, and that makes it simple. Anybody else with a comment on this for John? All right, John. Go on.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Those will be the standing recommendations for Action 2, to include all snapper grouper species within the permit. Action 3, this is the last action related to permits specifically, but this is something that the council has developed, and it kind of came up as other topics last time, other potential topics, the last time that the Snapper Grouper AP reviewed this, but it has since been developed into an action, and the council is considering it, is establishing a mechanism that would allow a state to opt-out of a federal permit requirement, provided that they implement the same measures as the permit requirement.

You know, thinking about the landscape right now in the South Atlantic, Florida does have the Florida reef fish angler designation in place, and that's a state requirement, whereas the other states do not have a similar requirement for the snapper grouper fishery specifically, and so, you know, I think those are some of the moving parts that the council is considering in developing this action, but, essentially, this action would establish that mechanism to allow states to opt-out of the federal permit requirement, and then provided that they had the same provisions, and that's what those different subalternatives are in there, and so provided that they would have the same permit type, and the same species would be covered under the state provision, and the same permitting timeframe, likely on an annual basis, would be part of that provision, and then the same education requirements, and that's a new one, given that the council did specify that the education component would be required, and it wouldn't be a voluntary measure.

I will go over, briefly, some of the AP comments. It was noted, by the technical AP, that there weren't necessarily compatibility concerns, since there's only a permit being required -- Since a permitting requirement is being considered without reporting, and any permit would cover the

Exclusive Economic Zone, regardless of whether it was a federal requirement or a state-implemented provision.

It was noted that having some states rely on a federal permit, while others develop a state-based equivalent permit, would create a potential issue if there is mandatory reporting in the future, and that AP recommended Alternative 2, and so that essentially -- And all of its subalternatives, and so the council could move forward, or potentially move forward, with the state opt-out provision, provided that all of those other measures are met that provide a sort of a mirror, so to speak, of the federal requirement.

You know, we're looking for recommendations, or comments, on this action, and you haven't -- This AP has not had the chance to discuss this really in detail, and do you have any recommendations on preferred alternatives for the council to consider?

MR. LORENZ: All right, John, and I'm looking -- Could you go up to -- I wanted to see what those three buckets are that we have, and so this technical AP mentioned this is a way for the states to not have to use a federal permit, provided they require an equivalent, which is type, species, and timeframe. Okay. All right. Thank you. I just wanted clarity on that. Any comments from our AP here on this aspect for allowing the states to have an out for the permit, as long as they have an equivalent permit? Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: I think this is a faster way to the end result, but one thing that -- The reason I say that is Florida has a working model in place, and I think the other three states could adopt something similar, in a more -- In a quicker manner, but the issue we're going to run across is funding to the states, and so if we could see a way, if the council could see a way, to fund the states with the ability to do the collection, I believe it could go into place in a quicker manner than what we would have to go through in the council to create a federal permit. I believe it already would exist on the state level, and it would be quicker to exist.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else have comments or recommendations? James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would be curious to what a federal-implemented program would look like to the State of Florida, when they already have a program that, you know, that is in place and working, and would that -- You know, would that program have to opt-in to, you know, the federal requirements, and would there be some -- You know, some feedback there that wasn't all that positive?

MR. LORENZ: You bring up an interesting point, James, and I know, in the whole world, even the political world and the economic world, you sometimes get into this not-invented-here syndrome, but, in my own state, I would be -- I think Florida has got a great model, and I don't know why, as Tony said, we just don't make it simple and go forward with something like that, but, you know, I have the same concerns with the state. I come from North Carolina, and I worry how fast we could get something implemented on our basis from our state, and it's going to be tough. Anyone else have a statement? It looks like we're pretty quiet on this, John.

MR. HADLEY: If I could, you know, some of the background to this is that I think you have -- There is different barriers by state, as far as implementing this sort of requirement, and so I think that's one of the reasons that -- Not to speak for the council, but one of the reasons that this is

being discussed, I think, is that you have different appetites, I guess, from state legislatures to implement this sort of thing, and so, you know, there is kind of the overarching potential federal requirement, if this permit does move forward, but then there is the option -- If a state does want to take it up on their own, there is the option for that state to do so, and so it adds a little bit of flexibility in there, and I don't know if that helps with some of the background.

MR. LORENZ: No, it does, but, I mean, one of the things that I learned at the council meeting, and I guess we have Mel sitting here, but, from what I understand, if you get anything with the state -- In South Carolina, they go through their legislature, and I heard, from Carolyn Belcher, that they would have to do something similar to that, and, in my doggone state, we don't even have anything like the agreement for, you know, funding for enforcement and all, and so it could get really sticky, if it's just left with the states. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Along those lines, if NOAA knows what it would take to do what we're talking about, then there would be a dollar figure involved, and, obviously, you would have to deal with Florida would get the biggest pot, because they've got the most anglers, and the most water, and then break it down, and I imagine that your state would be probably second, but then you would have to figure out how much money more would it take to run it, and then that's where a permit cost would have to come into it, similar to the duck stamp or a turkey tag, because those are both federal as well. You know, that might be the whole glitch here, is simply funding. Florida has got a great model, that we could all adopt, but then we would have to all pay for it, but, with help from the feds, maybe it would work.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else? Okay, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Well, thank you. That covers the permit-related actions specifically, and we're going to switch gears here a little bit and go into the education-related actions, and so there's three actions that would essentially establish and specify the provisions of an education requirement to go along with the permit. The first is sort of a -- It's kind of a do-it-or-don't-do-it choice, as far as establishing the education requirement, and that's Alternative 4, and Alternative 2 would be the alternative that would establish that education requirement.

Closely related is Action 5, which would specify the implementation of an education requirement, and so the education requirement could be implemented at the same time that the private recreational snapper grouper permit is established, or there could be some sort of delayed implementation, where the permit would go into place first, and then the education requirement would come in at a later date. As far as if Alternative 3 there does move forward, the council would need to specify the length of that delay.

Then the third action deals with the effective term, and so essentially how often anglers, or vessels, vessel owners, or permit holders, essentially, would need to go through the education requirement, and there are several alternatives there. Alternative 2 is upon each issuance, essentially, and so every year, since the permit would likely be renewed on an annual basis, and, in the case of Alternative 2, the education requirement would need to be renewed on an annual basis as well.

Alternative 3 would be every-other year, and Alternative 4 would be sort of a one-time issuance, upon obtaining the first snapper grouper permit, and then it would be good indefinitely, and then Alternative 5 is sort of a hybrid provision, where the education requirement would need to be

fulfilled upon initial issuance of the snapper grouper permit, and then, if there was any sort of update to the education module, and so say a major change in regulations, a major change to the education materials, then the education requirement would need to be reupped at that time in the future, and so it's sort of a hybrid approach to that.

As far as the AP's recommendations, we had the technical AP that did review this, sort of at a high level, and they noted that an education requirement is not necessarily a great substitute for a permit, but it would pair well with a permit, and it provides a good opportunity to educate anglers on information, such as best fishing practices. Species within the snapper grouper complex, if there are any common species ID, or misidentification, it could address that requirement for having descending devices onboard, and that sort of information is what could be relayed to permit holders.

Education could include information on why the permit exists and the importance of the data, and it was also noted that an education requirement could help deter oversubscription, since it would take a certain amount of time to move forward, or to procure, and that last point is something that -- This is a question that will be posed to the Snapper Grouper AP, and it's already come up in discussion, but, if the permit is a vessel-based permit, it would need to be specified who needs to obtain the education certificate, or go through the education requirement, and would it be the vessel owner, or would it be the vessel operator, at least one person onboard a permitted vessel, and those are just examples, but I know the AP caught onto this right away, when we were discussing Action 1, but that would be a point that needs to be specified moving forward.

When the Snapper Grouper AP discussed this, it was noted that there was strong support for developing an education component as soon as possible, and so there should be no delayed implementation, or anything along those lines, and it was noted that it could be modeled along the lines of what HMS requires for sharks. In the education materials, links to encourage anglers to use existing reporting and regulation apps could be included, and consider implementing an education requirement that is valid for as long as the permit is maintained or up-to-date. If there's a lapse in the permit, or a new permit is issued, the permit holder would need to go through the education requirement again.

You did have a recommendation for considering implementing an education requirement that is valid for as long as a permit is maintained and up-to-date. If a permit lapses, or a new permit is issued, the permit holder would need to go through the education requirement again, and so that's sort of your standing recommendation. Again, you know, this is from a previous version of these actions, and they've been developed a little bit more since then.

With that, we're really looking -- There is a series of questions here, but we're really looking for your feedback, and you've already started providing feedback on the education side, but looking if you have any recommendations for the education-related actions for the council to consider, and that sort of -- If it is a vessel-based permit, who should need to have satisfied the education requirement?

Then if you have any comments on the content and structure, and I will capture some of the previous comments on that, but what should be included, and what should be brought forth to the permit holders, and if there are any existing education programs out there that you're aware of that

the council maybe could borrow some of the information from to help implement their own education requirement.

Then last, but not least, that consideration of delayed implementation. If that is considered, how long of a delay should the council consider, or should the council not consider a delayed implementation at all of the education requirement? With that, I'm happy to answer any questions, and I will turn it over to the AP.

MR. LORENZ: All right. That's actually a lot there, John, and I'm picking up one new thing, and that is on the refresher course, so to speak, but, as you stated, any comments, or questions, on what John just presented? All right, and so we'll go with Item 1, and are we comfortable with our previous recommendation and comments, and any additional items? Does anybody have anything they want to state? James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I did just want to reiterate what the panel had felt strongly about, is really having an educational component in place, as soon as possible, and even if it's not a requirement to be viewed, or to, you know, pass any sort of test, and I really think that the educational component should be being worked on now, and that we should -- You know, we should be getting that information out there, and it should be streamlined, and we should have something that's working when we implement the educational requirement to whatever permit we come up with. We can't be left flailing and, oh, well, what do we do, and how do we educate people, and that should be happening now. That should be available. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James, and so I see this went through an AP, just like us, and, in fact, you were on that AP, and so that's good. John, I'm having a little difficulty of where to take this, and so the only thing I see that's a little different from any comment from us was that re-upping on the educational requirement, and, I mean, what I saw was more something pretty obvious, and, if it lapses or something, you would have to redo it, but there were other timings there, and I'm just wondering if anybody wanted to comment on that, and it sounds like it's a good thing initially, and probably a good thing to do if you lapse, and, other than that, I'm wondering if anybody has any comments.

MR. HADLEY: So perhaps -- I brought up the different alternatives that are in relation to that comment, the alternatives that are being considered in Action 6, and so, essentially, how often the education requirement would need to be reissued, or upon initial issuance and then whether or not it would need to be reissued, and what sort of interval that would be.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: It's stated that we recommended that, as long as you take the educational component, and then, as long as you keep your permit current, you're all right. If you let it lapse, you had to redo it, and I think that's a pretty good stance. That's already up there, isn't it?

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Tony. It looks like we're not getting a lot of feedback on this, and this was done by the technical AP, and so it's looking like the Snapper Grouper AP kind of agrees with everything they're doing, and we're right onboard with it, and is that true? I am not seeing any -- Everybody is shaking their head. Thank you, John.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and I will just note that, you know, it sounds like there is still very strong support for moving forward with the education requirement. I think we're good on that end, and that's all that I have for Amendment 46, and I know that was a very lengthy discussion, and, you know, I appreciate everyone's comments and spending a good chunk of your meeting time on this, and so thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John, and so that kind of concludes what we're able to talk about until tomorrow, and we'll start with -- We were thinking that maybe we could get scamp and yellowmouth grouper, Amendment 55, in today, and so it looks like we'll be adjourning at this point.

Just for some of the folks that are new here, and if you've never looked at what our meeting minutes are, our meeting minutes are now an entire transcript of what we're saying, and so, even when a guy like me stumbles along, they record the stumble, and so I just signed off on page number 200 of the last AP, and so, if you're worried about your point of view getting in there, it is there for people to read, with your name and what you said, and there is hundreds of pages, word-for-word, whatever we said, and so the information gets through, no matter how we're presenting it. If you made a comment, it passed on through. I see Tom Carruthers, and you sat down, and did you want to make a statement to us?

DR. CARRUTHERS: I need just thirty seconds right at the very end, if that's where we're at.

MR. LORENZ: That's where we're at, and I'll give you the floor.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Thank you, Chair. Tomorrow, we're going to be talking about the management strategy evaluation, and, if you remember, that's just basically a calculator that we're going to use for testing ideas about how to manage the fishery, and so you might think, okay, well, what would this impact of descending devices be, what would this spatial closure do, and so forth and so on, and the test bed for those ideas are models, just like your stock assessment models, right, but here's what I want everyone to think about ahead of tomorrow.

The basic setup is it's going to use the stock assessments, and it will be fair to say there is a sense that not everyone is 100 percent confident in that representation, necessarily, and so you might say we don't -- For example, Andrew, you mentioned, you know, maybe a different interpretation of the surveys, for example, and so we could do the same modeling, but down-weight the surveys. The point is that we can make adjustments to what we think is really happening and try and find a management approach that's robust to all of those ideas.

We don't need to know the truth, but we just need to know that what we're proposing will be effective, and so what I would really like for people to think about, ahead of tomorrow, is what do you think is happening in these fisheries, and this is red snapper and gag grouper, to start with, but what do you think is happening in these fisheries that may not be represented in the stock assessments that you would want a management system to be robust to.

If you can think about that, what that change would look like, we can create a model for that, and you can have confidence that whatever people are testing will work for your interpretation, and it could be an overage in the catch, the way the catches have been calculated, and it could be offshore depth distribution, or it could be a weighting of the indices, but just think about it, because, before

tomorrow, if you've got suggestions formalized, we can move -- We can be a lot more effective. That was it.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Tom. Okay. That concludes the Snapper Grouper AP meeting for today, except for Mike wanting to make a last comment. Mike Schmidtke.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Sorry. On the things to think about in between today and tomorrow, the fishery performance report questions for golden tilefish and blueline tilefish -- That document was updated today, and what I did is I added the notes from the last fishery performance report, and so, if you read the whole fishery performance report, then kudos, and you get the gold star, but, if you haven't, then there is bulleted notes in that document now that you can review, and what we'll do is, just like the last few fishery performance reports, we'll go through, and I will show you that this is what you said last time around, and do you still agree with it or not, and so just kind of take a look at that. That way, we can move through that process a bit more quickly.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Mike. The meeting is adjourned. We have an 8:30 start time tomorrow. 8:30 in the morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 10, 2023.)

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OCTOBER 11, 2023

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on October 11, 2023, and was called to order by Mr. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: All right. We'll call the meeting to order of the Snapper Grouper AP. We will call to order, and, I guess, this morning, we'll get started -- Let's see, and we finished the permitting and education requirements yesterday, and so, today, we're going to start off with the scamp and yellowtail grouper, the Snapper Grouper Amendment Number 55, and we're going to begin with the overview by Allie Iberle, and she's online, correct?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Allie. Speak.

MS. IBERLE: Thanks, Bob. I will wait until we get the presenter switched over, really quick. All right, and let me get this in slide view. All right. Thank you so much, Bob, and I apologize that I'm not in-person. I hope that everyone can tune into the December meeting, and, if you get the chance to go, I will be proudly sitting at the table with all the snacks, and so I would love to see you guys there.

I'm going to jump right into Snapper Grouper Amendment 55, which deals with scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and so we're pretty early on in the process for this amendment. The council received the results of the assessment for scamp and yellowmouth in March. Then, in June, they saw the first preliminary document, and we made some modifications, in between June and September, and we also took this amendment out for scoping, and we didn't receive any comments specific to scamp and yellowmouth.

It's a pretty specialized stock, and I don't think anybody is -- Or I don't think many are specifically targeting scamp, and so we predicted that that's most likely why, and so, in September, we got some additional direction from the council, and we'll be coming back to them in December with a little bit more information, some analysis, and the start of a draft document, and so that's kind of where we are in the process.

Then, as far as what the AP has seen thus far, so I reviewed, before the council saw this amendment, with you guys in April, kind of the complex steps that need to be taken in this amendment, just due to the nature of having to reorganize these complexes, and so, currently, the way that scamp and yellowmouth are set up, as of right now, is both are subject to a spawning season closure that runs from January 1 to April 30, and so this spawning season closure is applied to what we think of as the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper, and so that includes everything from scamp, black grouper, gag, even the -- What I think of as like the smaller shallow-water grouper, and so coney, graysby, the hinds, yellowmouth, everything. Everything is subject to the spawning season closure.

However, yellowmouth is part of a kind of subset complex, which we mentioned acronyms yesterday, and I'm going to try to make sure that I'm super clear with these acronyms, because it can get a little confusing, and so yellowmouth is part of this subset complex referred to in the regs as the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex, and so that's that OSASWG acronym. During the council meetings, we've kind of lovingly referred to this as the OSASWG, which isn't really the way I think you would pronounce this acronym, but it stuck, and I think it helps people remember, and so, if you see this acronym, and you hear me say "OSASWG", that's what I'm referring to as the subset.

That group consists of only coney, graysby, the hinds, and so rock hind and red hind, yellowmouth, currently, and yellowfin grouper. This group of grouper have their complex-wide ACL and accountability measures. On the flip side, scamp has an individual ACL and accountability measure tied to that scamp stock, and both scamp and yellowmouth, where they currently sit, both have a twenty-inch total minimum size limit for both sectors, and they don't have a trip limit, and they have a three-fish aggregate bag limit.

When we received the results of the assessment, these two species, scamp and yellowmouth grouper, were assessed kind of as a single species, due to identification issues, and so those assessment results that I mentioned at the top, SEDAR 68, when we reviewed those in March, those were for scamp and yellowmouth, and so the catch levels that the SSC recommended, based on SEDAR 68, are for scamp and yellowmouth and not just scamp, and so we need to do a little bit of extra work on this amendment that will involve reorganizing those complexes and taking yellowmouth out of that OSASWG, or other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper, complex and kind of establishing this new scamp and yellowmouth complex.

The other thing that came out of the assessment was the stock status, and so SEDAR 68 indicated that the stock of scamp and yellowmouth is overfished, but not experiencing overfishing, and so, when the SSC reviewed this assessment, there was discussion, and there's been discussion at the council meetings, of a possible regime shift for this stock. The SSC reviewed a peer-reviewed article and went through the steps and indicated that the stock of scamp did not meet the criteria of a regime shift, and that's kind of where the regime shift discussion has ended.

With that, I'm going to kind of jump right into the actions, and hopefully it shouldn't take too long, and then I will pause for some questions, some specific questions, that the council has for you guys, and then just any other feedback on this stock and, you know, fishing activities for scamp and the other shallow-water grouper.

I mentioned having to reorganize the complex, which makes this amendment a little unique compared to some of the ones we've seen, and so that Alternative 1, and so that top section of that table, is how things are currently, right, and so scamp is just scamp, and it has its own ACL and AM, and then you have those other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper, or the OSASWGs, and that includes all the species that I listed off earlier.

Then Alternative 2 would be that reorganization alternative, and so you would end up with the new scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex, and then you would have that modified OSASWG complex, and so you would be left with graysby, coney, the hinds, and then yellowfin grouper. We had a really great question, at the last AP meeting, on how you would account for the yellowmouth landings, and so the catch level that you were provided from -- Or the catch level recommendation from the SSC, from SEDAR 68, already includes yellowmouth landings, and so that catch level is ready to go right out of the gate.

You will have -- The council will have to modify the OSASWG ACL, but we'll talk about that in a couple more slides, and so the next couple of actions will deal with just the scamp and yellowmouth complex, and so this complex doesn't yet exist. We just created it in Action 1, and so we'll have to take some extra steps, and then no action alternative will look a little different, because, normally, what we're seeing is the status quo, but, right now, there's no status quo, because the complex doesn't exist, and so that's why you will be seeing a lot of "none" for Alternative 1.

The first thing that we have to do for the scamp and yellowmouth complex is establish stock determination criteria, and so this kind of just bounds your stock, and that includes levels like the maximum sustainable yield, or MSY, the maximum fishing mortality, or MFMT, your minimum stock size, or MSST, and then your equilibrium OY. I'm going to tackle these one-by-one, so it's not just everything all at once.

The first is your MSY, or maximum sustainable yield, and, usually, like I mentioned, we have status quo is Alternative 1. However, this one is a little funky, and so Alternative 2 is what I like to think of as status quo, and so this is the current MSY for both scamp and yellowmouth grouper, as they currently sit, and so the MSY is equal to a proxy of the fishing mortality at 30 percent of the spawning potential ratio, or F 30 percent SPR.

Alternative 3 is a slightly different proxy of F 40 percent SPR, and so, in March, the Center sent a letter recommending that the scamp and yellowmouth complex adopt an MSY proxy of F 40

percent SPR, and indicating that the F 30 percent SPR would not be consistent with BSIA. We kept Alternative 2 in there, because it's the status quo for what exists currently, but that was the recommendation.

Sub-Action 2b deals with that maximum fishing mortality threshold, or MFMT, and so, again, Alternative 1 is nothing, because nothing exists, and then the same thing with Alternative 2, and this is the current MFMT for scamp and yellowmouth, as they currently stand. Then Alternative 3 kind of is in line with your previous Alternative 3, and it sets the FMSY, or proxy, at F 40 percent SPR.

Next is the minimum stock size threshold, and, again, Alternative 2 is your status quo for scamp and yellowmouth currently, and so that is the spawning stock biomass at MSY, which is one minus M, and M is natural mortality, or 0.5, whichever is greater, and then, in SEDAR 68, we had the recommendation of 75 percent of the spawning stock biomass at MSY, and so, again, status quo for scamp and yellowmouth and then what was recommended for the scamp and yellowmouth complex.

Then, finally, we have equilibrium OY. Typically, the council has been utilizing an annual OY, which is allowed under Magnuson, but we've had discussions about possibly implementing an equilibrium OY. At the September meeting, the council was a little bit more in favor of the equilibrium OY, and so the annual OY was taken out of the ACL option, or the ACL action, which is where you would usually see it, and so Alternatives 2 through 4 will be -- They're the alternatives for the equilibrium OY, and this will be dependent on Sub-Action 2a, and so, essentially, they have to pick that MSY to be able to set this equilibrium OY.

Action 3 deals with the scamp and yellowmouth rebuilding plan, and so we had to go back and get some different guidance, and make sure it was clear, because of the nature of this new complex, but I want to just start with Alternative 3, and so we're bound -- The council is bound by T_{max} equals ten years, and so, under Magnuson, if the stock can rebuild in under ten years, then that is the upper bound for the rebuilding plan, and so the rebuilding plan will end in 2035, with year-one as 2025. The council did receive the overfishing letter for this stock, and so the clock has kind of started ticking, and so this amendment needs to get done in September, I believe, of 2024. Then Alternative 2, and so that's that kind of lower bound on the rebuilding plan, and so that would be five years, ending in 2030, with year-one as 2025.

Action 4 deals with the ABCs and ACLs, and I did want to make a note that, when this document is presented in December to the council, the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper ACL and ABC -- This is going to be pulled out into a separate action. We're doing the same thing, but we think it would be cleaner to have it as its own action, deal with scamp and yellowmouth first, and then address this, but I'm just going to go over it together here, as kind of just nuanced formatting things, but I'm going to start with scamp and yellowmouth.

We have three viable alternatives for setting the ABC and ACL for this new complex. Again, Alternative 1 is nothing, because it doesn't have any catch levels, and Alternative 2 would set the ACL equal to the ABC, and, again, from the recommendation from SEDAR 68, and then Alternative 3 and 4 will include a 5 and 10 percent buffer in between ACL and ABC, and so the bottom chart deals with that OSASWG ACL, and I wanted to note that the catch levels for scamp and yellowmouth, because we just got them out of the assessment, those will be inclusive of

recreational estimates from the MRIP-FES survey, and so we'll be essentially instituting an ACL that is based on what is -- On the best available science.

However, the OSASWG ACL and ABC is inclusive of recreational estimates from the MRIP-CHTS survey, and so I'm sure you remember hearing this term in kind of updating all of these ABC and ACLs to include this MRIP-FES survey, which, in light of the pilot study, we've been informed is still considered best available science, and so that's where we kind of ran into a little bit of a snag and had to talk with the council about what method they wanted to use to update this ACL.

All of the species in this complex are unassessed, and so the SSC would have to come together and formulate a way to develop the ABC and ACL for these species, and so this was done, I believe, in 2020. However, the SSC used the third-highest and the ORCS method, which is no longer considered BSIA, and so those values wouldn't be able to be implemented, because they're not consistent with BSIA.

At the last meeting, we had a lot of discussion, and the council decided that the method they would like to take is to modify the OSASWG ACL by removing the portion of the ACL that was essentially allocated for yellowmouth grouper, in those same CHTS units, and then update this ACL to include MRIP-FES in the unassessed species amendment.

The first line of this bottom table shows you that the ACL is set equal to the ABC, and it's at 104,190 pounds, and then you have your commercial and recreational allocation percentages, and I put those in there just to note that the council is not intending on changing these, and then you have your commercial and recreational ACL, in pounds, and so the alternative that the council will be moving -- Or that they proposed in September would be removing the around four-thousand-and-change pounds allocated for yellowmouth grouper, and that would only modify the total ACL, and not the ABC. Again, your allocation percentages wouldn't change, and you would just take 53.30 percent of that one-hundred-thousand-and-change, and that would get you your updated commercial and recreational ACLs, and so, again, you're just doing a simple subtraction of those yellowmouth -- The yellowmouth portion of the ACL, leaving everything in what we've been thinking of as CHTS units.

Then we have the scamp and yellowmouth allocations, and I apologize, because this table had to be a little small, and, at this point in time, we don't really have percentages for these allocations yet, and the plan team is kind of working on this behind the scenes for the December meeting, and so Alternative 1, again, is essentially nothing, and I included the percentage allocations for both the OSASWGs and scamp, and so you can kind of look at those, and then, on the far-right, there is the formulas for how we got to those percentages.

Then Alternatives 2 through 5 are what the council has recommended the plan team develop, and so Alternatives 2 and 3 are what we've kind of termed the split reduction method, and so, if you remember back to gag, Amendment 53, this allocation method was used in that amendment, and, essentially, what it is does is you have a reduction in catch levels, and you are essentially reducing each sector's ACL proportional to the landings in a certain timeframe, and so they have two different options for timeframes here, 2018 to 2022 and then 2013 to 2022, and so they're looking at a shorter and a longer timeframe, and so you will reduce -- In year-one, you will reduce each sector's ACL proportional to their landings, in whatever timeframe we're looking at, and then, as

the ACL increases, each year thereafter, each sector will get an equal increase in their ACL, in pounds. As we move through this amendment, I will be showing you guys a little bit more detailed walk-through of this method and the percentages, as we calculate them.

Then Alternatives 4 and 5 are using the same date ranges, but we're just doing a distribution of landings, and so the reason we don't have these values yet is the plan team has run into some issues with confidentiality, and so we're kind of working through those. Yellowmouth landings are confidential, for a decent amount of years, for both the recreational and commercial sectors, and so we're just kind of working on how to display those, for both the council and the AP.

Then, finally, Actions 6 and 7 deal with accountability measures for both sectors, and so, again, we don't have any accountability measures for this brand-new complex, and so Alternative 1 is essentially nothing. Alternative 2 is what you have as the status quo for both scamp and yellowmouth, and so you have an in-season closure, and then you also have a post-season AM. However, this post-season AM is tied to both the total ACL and the stock status, and so all of the triggers, and so the commercial ACL needs to be exceeded, the total ACL needs to be exceeded, and the stock needs to be overfished to trigger the post-season AM.

Alternative 3 is slightly different. You still have the in-season accountability measure. However, the commercial, or the post-season commercial, AM is no longer tied to total ACL or stock status, and so the post-season AM will be triggered only if the commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL, and then, similarly, Action 7 deals with the recreational AMs, and so, again, Alternative 2 matches the current AM for scamp and yellowmouth, and so the same thing. We have that in-season AM, and then the post-season AM that's tied to the rec landings exceeding the rec ACL, the total ACL being exceeded, and the stock status.

Then Alternatives 3 and 4 -- You've been seeing these kind of around the block, with some of the recent snapper grouper amendments, and so Alternative 3 removes the in-season AM and essentially uncouples with how we've been terming this. It uncouples that post-season AM, and so it's triggered only if the recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, and then Alternative 4 is what you saw in the commercial action, and so it retains the current in-season closure, and then it uncouples the post-season, and so the recreational landings exceeding the -- Sorry, and we've got a "commercial" snuck in there, and so the recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, and so that would be the only thing that would trigger the post-season in that Alternative 4.

That's currently all the actions that we had, and it's a lot, for Amendment 55, and so, during the September meeting, the council had a little bit of discussion about management measures for both scamp and yellowmouth, and they wanted to come to the AP and ask if more restrictive management measures are needed for this fishery, and then is there anything else that the council should consider with this amendment, and so any feedback that you think would be helpful for the council to have moving forward on this amendment, and then any questions that you have for me, and I know this was a little bit of a complicated one, and so, with that, I can turn it back over.

MR. LORENZ: All right, Allie. Thank you. I may ask you again, more precisely, what you want from us. When we go into these various Alternative 1s, where it mentions status quo, sort of not doing anything, and, I mean, we need a rebuilding plan, and so is that to do nothing, meaning keep the two species separate, or as they are, and is that what we're leaning to?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and so, essentially, when you're looking at those status quo for that complex that doesn't exist, we could put in there the status quo, that, you know, scamp isn't under a rebuilding plan, and yellowmouth is also not under a rebuilding plan, and, essentially, there's just nothing that exists, and so that's why you're seeing, you know, none. At this point, because we were given catch level recommendations that include both scamp and yellowmouth, although they're under here as alternatives, the council is -- I guess, you know, I would need someone to make sure I'm saying this correctly, but the council would be required to reorganize this complex, because of the way that the catch levels were provided.

If you didn't reorganize the complex, you would have a catch level for scamp and yellowmouth, and so you were allowed to catch yellowmouth under that catch level, but then you would still have an apportionment of that OSASWG complex that was allotted for yellowtail, and so you would kind of be doubling that catch level, if that makes sense.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Allie. Now I'll address the AP. First, any questions for Allie specifically that came in your minds during the presentations? Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: Is the yellowmouth the same as I guess what we call a yellowedge, or is that two different species?

MS. IBERLE: I believe that yellowedge is a deeper-water species. Mike, can you confirm that for me?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: There is a -- Granted, there are local names for different things, but there are two separate species, and like yellowedge grouper is a deeper-water grouper species, and yellowmouth grouper would be kind of in a similar area as scamp, more in that shallow-water grouper type of area, and that's what we would think of those two.

MR. MCKINLEY: Okay. I mean, generally, I mean, in North Carolina, we fish, for these scamp and stuff, thirty to fifty miles, and we don't encounter hardly any of the yellowmouth, and it's always usually thrown in with the scamp, and so I don't know where they -- I guess, when they determined this was overfished, maybe in other states, and maybe it's different. It's something we don't see that much.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Anyone else have a question? John? No? John is okay?

MR. POLSTON: I'm fine, and I was just going to verify that -- Like, when we golden tile fish, a lot of times, we'll catch a yellowedge grouper along with them, and it's a much different fish.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, John. All right. If there's no other questions, then we'll move to the basic thing that Allie started to ask us, and that is what does the AP feel, and are there additional management measures that are needed for this fishery? Does anyone want to speak on that? Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I do again, and, I mean, I can't imagine that any of these grouper, with the problems that we've had, that they wouldn't have a trip limit, on especially scamp and stuff, I mean, more in line with the gag and red grouper, and that would alleviate a lot of all this stuff, I mean, but I think the scamp are not where they used to be, and it's not -- It's not hook-and-line

pressure, and I don't think it's fishing pressure. I mean, they don't bite a hook very often, and you don't usually get a lot, unless they're really feeding good, and so -- But a trip limit, in accordance, you know, with the scamp and gags, I think would be appropriate, definitely.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Andy.

MR. IBERLE: Bob, if I may --

MR. LORENZ: Yes, and go ahead, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: Would there be a specific trip limit that the AP would recommend? I know you said maybe matching gag.

MR. LORENZ: Did you want to take a shot at that, Randy?

MR. MCKINLEY: Yes, and somewhere around there.

MR. LORENZ: Chris, answering that question?

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and, I mean, it's kind of hard to set a trip limit when we don't even have like an ACL for the separated complex, and, I mean, if we're going to get like crumbs, then it's going to have to be really low. If it's going to be somewhat liberal, then, you know, we could be more liberal, but I don't see how you can set a trip limit without any numbers. I mean, even to throw anything against the wall for ideas. I mean, otherwise, we're just putting ourselves in a corner before the fight even starts.

MR. LORENZ: James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Just for clarification's sake, Allie, it sounds like the council is moving in a direction that we do need a new complex that is scamp and yellowmouth, and I just kind of wanted to look around to the AP here, because this isn't really my area of harvest, but is that something that is attractive, and is that necessary, and is the production of yellowmouth similar enough to the scamp, and can it be lumped together? Thanks.

MS. IBERLE: I think this is something that is going to need to be required to be done, simply because of those catch levels. I will note that I've heard that, when you're dealing with the commercial end of it, and fish are coming into fish houses, and, again, I'm not at the fish houses, but that, when you're dealing with scamp and yellowmouth, it tends to just get lumped in as scamp, and that there was, obviously, enough concern over identification between the two species for them to lump together in the assessment.

Going forward, there wouldn't need to be an identification between the two species, for either sector, and you would just be catching scamp and yellowmouth, and so it wouldn't matter which species it is, and it would be just all adding to that same catch level, and then the other thing that I did want to note was I do have ACL numbers here that I can kind of go over, really quickly, and so, if the council set -- To give you an idea of the reduction, and, Chris, I think this kind of goes to what you were saying with the trip limit, and so, if the ACL was set equal to the ABC for the scamp and yellowmouth complex, in year-one, the total ACL would be 67,450 pounds, increasing

to 79,800 pounds in the last year, and that would be -- It would remain set until modified, just to give you an idea of the reduction.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Allie. I had another question, or a hand that was up, from Andrew Fish.

MR. FISH: Good morning. I'm in Wilmington, Frying Pan Shoals, and, in our area, I shoot maybe twenty scamps from May 15 to October, and every one of those is written down as a scamp, and not by my choice, but just by the nature of all these fish houses. Trying to separate them I think would be a lot of not real data going upwards, but I just wanted to say that, and even a lot of good fishermen have trouble telling these fish apart. They're just like a mutated scamp, and they're not as long tassels, and they're a little smoother, and I just wanted to say that. I think that separating them would be hard to do.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andrew. Just a quick question, and do you feel that you can identify them pretty closely easily? You're saying the practice at the fish houses is they lump them together anyway, and so it doesn't matter.

MR. FISH: They've got the same shape, and they're a little spottier, but they don't have the tassels, but they're close enough, and I'm sure they eat the same, I would guess, and they just get thrown in the same basket.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. John, a question?

MR. POLSTON: Being a fish house dealer for close to forty years, in Daytona now, and I've seen the yellowmouth, now that you mention it and all, but kind of what you said, and I more or less just thought it was a little difference in the species, and I have never -- Where I'm going with this is I have never separated a yellowmouth and a scamp, when we've weighed them in together, and we don't have as many hook-and-liners as we used to, but we used to have guys that fished on the rocks, and they would produce quite a few scamp and stuff, but my question actually I guess would be to Allie.

How can they say that there's any type of overfishing, or they said it's, I think, overfished, but overfishing is not occurring, when we don't even really have the identification between the two, and what is -- We don't have that much that we pack, and so I can't speak for the other dealers, but where does that stand, as far as the identification of them? Where do they come up with one of them or both of them being overfished?

MS. IBERLE: I might need Mike's help a little bit on this, as I'm still kind of getting better, as I go in this position, on the assessment side of things, and so, when they performed the assessment, what they normally would have done was just include any landings data on scamp, and then run the assessment that way, and what they did, in SEDAR 68, was they included all of that information for scamp, but then they also included any information that they had on yellowmouth, and so, if there was, you know, any recreational landings of yellowmouth, and then any commercial -- You know, if there was people separating them out, they included that in there.

What they did was they said, okay, we have this information on yellowmouth, and this information on scamp, and they put those together and then ran the assessment that way, and so that stock

status is kind of lumped together, treating them as a single species, and that's kind of how we're moving forward with it, and, Mike, I don't know if you have anything to add there, or if I said that correctly.

MR. LORENZ: Mike, go ahead.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Allie kind of hit it, and the assessment was conducted for -- It was basically treating two species as a single stock, and they included everything from both of those, and so there would be a level of production. You know, theoretically, if you took two stock assessments, one of yellowmouth and one of scamp, they would have, you know, their separate levels of production, and how much you could fish each of the two of them, but, if you add them together, then you kind of have that cumulative level.

So, basically, what they did is they took the information from both and combined them, because there was such -- That difficulty of separating out scamp from yellowmouth, one versus the other, and so we kind of have an overfished status for this grouping of both of these stocks. It may not get down to the specific stock level, although, from my understanding, the majority of the information, and the fish identified within that assessment, were scamp, but it may not get down to the stock level, but, somewhere within the scamp and the yellowmouth that are being caught, there is -- Between the two of them, there is -- Those stocks are not reaching levels of production that would be expected for those species right now.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Mike. I know that made it a little clearer for me, because I was sitting here getting a little lost and wondering did the yellowmouth cause the scamp to look overfished, and so thank you. Anybody else with this first item? Any additional management measures needed for this fishery? All right, Allie. That's it from the AP on your first line of question.

Then the second line of question is is there anything else that the council should consider in this amendment, and so anything that anybody is uncomfortable with that you want to mention here for the council to consider? Allie, no one has raised their hands, and so I'm giving this back to you.

MS. IBERLE: All right. I think that will wrap it up for Amendment 55, and I believe that we'll probably come back to you guys in April, with this one just trudging ahead, and so, Mike, I will pass it back to you, and you can grab control.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Allie. All right. We're on to Agenda Item Number 5 for the Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Update and Input, and, Dr. Carruthers, are you ready, or we could take five minutes? Okay. Then we'll go into it right now. Okay. I will introduce Dr. Tom Carruthers. Take it away, Tom.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Hi, everyone. I think it was -- Was it a year ago that we came and introduced this concept of management strategy evaluation, and so maybe we'll go back over some of the basics right now. I'm from up in Canada, Blue Matter Science, and we've been contracted to do this work, which is really a direction that a lot of fisheries are now going in.

Let's take your example for red snapper and gag grouper, the two species I'm going to present on today, and the conventional approach to fishery management is the one that you guys are all used to. We're going to do a stock assessment, and we're going to work out where our stock is, and we're going to make some kind of management recommendation based on that, and that stock assessment represents our best available science. It's very much a process of saying we think this is what's going on.

There's a problem with that, and that is that, in many cases, in many different fisheries around the world, we have a high degree of uncertainty about what's really happening that is not necessarily represented in those stock assessments. People in this room, for example, may have a very different view of what is happening in the snapper fishery, or the grouper fishery, and you may, for example, think that the surveys might not be representative, and you might think that there's been catch that has been not reported correctly, and you might have a lot of different viewpoints that are, and it's not easy to say we think it's this exactly, and that is, I think, the case in this example.

The other problem is, even if you did know, and had a high confidence in your statement of we think the stock is this, from the stock assessment, it's very difficult, in that framework, to test and examine alternative management options, particularly those that are responsive, and so, for example, you might want to set a regulation that changes as a stock declines, and you can't easily test that using a stock assessment model.

The management strategy evaluation is not a we-think exercise. It is a what-if exercise, and it basically builds a calculator where all the different viewpoints and uncertainties about what's happening in a fishery can be represented, and then we test management rules against all of those, to make sure that they work, or are robust, regardless, and so it's not a we think this is happening, and, therefore, we're going to set our management option like this, or our management advice like this, and it could be any of these scenarios, and this rule, this set of management actions that we want to propose, works for all of those, and, if it doesn't, we know what things we need to know about now, and so it's a very different process, and it involves building a framework that has the uncertainties about what's really happening in the system in it, and it also involves coming up with all the ideas that you, and others, have on how to manage the fishery and testing them all against all of those scenarios.

Today, probably in about twenty minutes, I'm going to tell you where we're at with the project, and I'll tell you a little bit about the model structure, how it's configured right now, and hopefully I will inspire you guys to think about management questions, or management options, that you have for these fisheries, and I will show you some example results, really just to demonstrate the thing is working, and I will list some of the outstanding challenges we have, where we're going next, and I will show you where to go for extra information.

There is basically five steps here, and we have to take any data that we have available for these fisheries, and we have to come up with a plausible fit to those, a plausible model, and that's called the operating model here. It's different from a stock assessment model, in that there can be many of them, and so we can have ten different operating models, one, for example, that has interactions between species, one where there is offshore movement, one where there is catch underreporting, another where release mortality is lower, and so on.

We then test management scenarios, and that's Step 3, against all of those. In Step 4, we measure how well they did, with performance metrics, and we present you the results, and so we had to develop -- Just on the technical front, we had to develop a framework that could let us have multiple different species together in the same calculator, these multispecies operating models, and we had to make sure that this framework could include all the different management levers that you might want in your various regulations and other possible regulations, and we had to demonstrate that we can produce results that are useful to you on how you would decide between those, and we have to be able to extend this to include other species.

The take-home message that I want to give you today -- The bottom line is the top thing here is that this framework, as a first pass, has been done. It's been programmed, and it works. This is a major methodological step forward, because it demonstrates that we technically can do it. Now what we've got to do is get all of your feedback and start building it out. The thing is done, the car is built, but we need to give you guys the controls to drive it, and you sort of need -- We've got to try and flesh it out, so that it's functioning in a way that's useful to the group.

In particular, we need feedback on what else could be happening with -- In this case, it's going to be gag and red, gag grouper and red snapper, in this first demonstration, but what else could be happening with those, and already I've had feedback from members in this room about things they would be interested in seeing, or interested in alternative hypotheses, to make sure that management is robust to those things, and say, well, what if this, and I want to know if -- Before I can feel confident, I want to know that this management that we're going to propose is going to be robust to this thing that I don't necessarily think is in the stock assessment, but could be important, and we had two or three suggestions on things to include.

Also, I want to know what kind of management levers are on the table here, spatial closures, temporal closures, size limits, descending devices, you name it, all the things that you're thinking about, or could even theoretically implement, and it would be very useful to get feedback on that here, because that's going to be what we are testing with these different models, and I'm only going to brush on it, because performance metrics, how you measure success, is something that's iterative, and I think, to be honest with you, until you've seen it working, it's very difficult to provide lots of feedback on that, and so I really want to focus on these first two things, what else could be happening in these fisheries, and what management levers we have to pull, and I would like to look at those.

Right now, the way it's structured is we have gone with -- Excuse me if you're involved in the assessment of these, but we've gone with the better-the-devil-you-know, and we've taken the two assessment models, which have been peer-reviewed and documented, which you've all got some understanding of, and they have been the starting point, and I full recognize there are people in this room, and there are viewpoints in this room, that do not necessarily 100 percent support the assumptions and things of those models, and that's not the point. The point is there are starting points from which people can make suggested changes, and so someone can say we want to put less weight on the survey, or we want to have catch underages, and these are a starting point, which we can modify to represent people's view, but they come, and originate, from something that peer-reviewed, and it's documented.

Right now, these are combined. The most recent stock assessments are combined in a multispecies operating model, and an operating model is just a testbed for management options. We can add

other species later, and we've built the tools to do it here, and so, if someone says, for example, we think red snapper eat black sea bass, then we can put the black sea bass in there, and we can put the black sea bass in there, and we can put the linkage, the predation linkage, and we can show robustness or not to that dynamic, but we have built the tools to do all this stuff now, is the message, and we're going to demonstrate it here with just these two species, but we can add more.

Remember that what we're trying to do, instead of spending a process going what if we did this, and what if we did that, and maybe these data could be valuable, or maybe these data could be valuable, the idea here is that, instead of just talking about it, they should be used as a centralized calculator, something that a group can get behind and propose ideas and get actual quantitative results from, and so, for example, how useful actually are descending devices relative to something else, in terms of our performance metrics, and like what should we be investing in, in terms of data collection and enforcement and other things?

The idea here is to create a calculator for doing that, and it's to take the emphasis away from expert judgment in the results and put the expert judgment into the shape of the problem, and like what are the different operating models, and what are the different management levers, and then we get the actual results out of it, and it's take the guesswork out of it, basically, and give you a tool that can help you guide your advice and data collection and other things, and maybe then you could see why this is becoming so attractive to fisheries around the world, because -- Did anyone watch the movie Moneyball?

Do you remember that movie where, essentially, in professional sports, expert judgment was used, up until very recently, to make decisions about selecting sports teams, and managing sports teams, and they knew what they wanted to achieve, and they wanted to win games, but, to do it, they would use expert judgment, but they moved to algorithms that helped them guide their judgment, and this is very much the case for fisheries. It's moving toward a more structured and representative and quantitative way of making decisions. There's lots of expert judgment in it, but it just happens in a different place, and the idea is that you get the kind of results you need, the kind of information you need, to make those decisions.

Fisheries are moving this way, and it's a revolution, and it's moving in that direction, and it's for this reason that only fisheries that have management procedures tested by MSE can reach now the highest standard of the Marine Stewardship Council certification. This is really the direction that a lot of fisheries are moving in.

The way we did this was we had to break down these assessments into landings and discards fleets, and I will show you how we did this in a minute, and these really represent the on and off-season fishing activities for these two different stocks, and they have their own selectivity and retention curves, and so, for red snapper for example, the assessment has got a commercial handline, a recreational headboat, and a general recreational fleet. Well, those are mapped across into the operating model, into on and off-seasons, which means that we can theoretically alter season length and other things, and we can see what the impact of that will be, and so we very much follow the assessment fleet structure, and that gives us back control of on and off-season measures that will affect these different versions, essentially, of the various fleets, and so we have that kind of fleet structure that we can use to examine management options.

If you look at a graph of here the landings and discards for those, and it's quite hard to read off that slide, but, in the left-hand column, we've got the commercial handline, and the middle is the recreational headboat, and the general recreational is on the right, and, at the top, we've got the on-season and the off-season, and, for red snapper, we can see that the discarding phenomenon is more recent in this assessment, and it essentially happens here after 2010, and you can see it's on the basis of these types of removals that we can start to model those on and off-season effects of various regulations that you might be interested in, and so that's the breakdown, in terms of landings and discards for red snapper.

For gag grouper, it's a very comparable fleet structure, and, again, we've got our commercial handline, recreational headboat, and general recreational, but we also have a commercial dive fishery, and, again, they are mapped from the assessment into the operating model and assumed to represent on and off-season dynamics, and, now, we can change any of this. We can change any of this, but this is the first pass on how we did it, and the same breakdown here in landings and discards.

Left to right is commercial handline, commercial dive, recreational headboat, and general recreational, and, at the top, we've got the on-season, and, at the bottom, we've got the off-season, and they're seeing all the discards occurring essentially -- The vast majority are in the off-season for gag grouper.

If we look at the overall removals, they look like this, and so these are just total removals, since the model spools up in about 1950, and, in terms of landings, it's broken down like this, and, again, this is just what you've seen in the assessments. On the left-hand panel, you've got red snapper. The right-hand column is gag grouper, and you can see it top to bottom for the handline, recreational headboat, then the general recreational, and then the commercial dive, and so this how landings are broken down by these fleets historically, and, lastly, we can see how this is reflected in the discards by each of those fleet types and species, with red snapper on the left and gag grouper on the right.

The point being is that things that you've seen previously in the assessment are represented here in the operating models, and those assessments can be rerun subject to fleet structure and other ideas you have for biology, exploitation, spatial distribution, whatever you like, and we can rerun these things and create an alternative operating model, and it's relatively quick to do so, now that the structure of this thing has been built.

Now, the overall biomass trends you probably recognize from the stock assessments, and it's kind of interesting, because you've got a situation with two species where they're both below the minimum stock size threshold, but the trajectory is different, and so we have an increasing and upward trajectory in red snapper and a declining, gradually declining, one in gag grouper, and so we have -- Just looking at this, we have a management problem in which we are concerned with trajectory in one of the stocks, but status in both, if you were to use this as an operating model, and there are other operating models that you could design with, for example, greater dome-shaped selectivity that might look quite different from this, for example, and they might pose a different challenge for a management option, for a proposed management action.

We don't have any spatial structure in this model currently, but we can easily impose it if people can suggest such a structure, and one of them that's been suggested so far is three large-scale

alongshore areas. The idea behind these, by the way, is to represent the -- It reflects the ability to partition data, basically, and it's not so much a biological phenomenon as much as it is about how data are collected and parsed out, but there are three alongshore areas that we could consider, and you can see those in the colored shapes here, but, also, alongshore, nearshore, and offshore separation as well, and so we could have six areas that we impose. For example, using that, we could consider hypotheses for offshore movement of larger grouper, which we know occurs, and so on, and we haven't done this yet, but it's something we can add.

The whole idea about doing this explicitly is if we think there's what we call viscosity, and we think that fish exist and remain in areas, which we know they do, a lot of these reef fish, and then it will model regional depletions and that impact on data, and it also means that we can consider regulations by depth and by space, if we wanted to.

Now, management strategy evaluation, as I've described it, and historically, has been all about testing these things called management procedures, usually dynamic rules, like rules that adapt and change according to data, so that you can sort of, in theory, set these things and let them go, because we know they will adapt, as data come in, to changing fisheries, and so, for example, when things are good, they fish more, and, when things are bad, they fish less, but, in principle, once you've built one, you can use it to address a whole bunch of other concerns that you might have, and, for example, can we trust our assessment? Is it too complicated? Is the model structure appropriate? You can use this framework to do that.

We can -- Once you've got an assessment tested, we can work out which data stream is the most important, and, yesterday, there was quite a bit of discussion about incentivizing data collection through permitting and other things, and, well, what's the expected benefit of that? What if I could tell you what that was, in terms of access and tonnage, for the next twenty years, based on your proposed management system, and phrase data collection in a way that makes sense, and why do we want to collect these data, and like what's the expected benefit?

Also, on what frequency should we do our assessments or use a management procedure, and, also, are our reference points, the way that we assess data, are those appropriate, or should they be something else, and there are other questions that can be used for an answer to this framework, although they're not typically -- Although that's not typically done, they can.

The things that are typically addressed are things like this, like how long should our season be open for, should we have licenses, should they affect the number of boat days per license, should we have spatial or temporal closures, size limits, catch limits, or can we take measures to affect gear selectivity in a way that would be helpful, and can we impose bag limits, and how effective would they be, or what about release gear, things like descending devices and so on, and any combination thereof of those things.

The idea being is, the next time you have to make a proposal for a management change, you would run it through here, and maybe it works great, and it works better than all the other proposed management options, across all your operating models, and maybe it does, or maybe it has a weakness to one of those operating models, and at least you know now that this is the right action to take for all the operating models, except the one with the catch underreporting, or the catch overreporting, but the idea is you run them through this calculator and take a look at what you expect to get out of it. It's supposed to be helpful.

I can show you some example results, and, really, these are just to demonstrate the system working, and so, for example, take a look at this plot. What we're looking at right now, and I know it's hard to read on this screen, but what we're looking at is a status quo management option. On the left-hand side, and at the top, we've got red snapper, and so anything you see in the top row is red snapper, and so what you're seeing now on the left is the biomass, and so it's the landings, projected with the status quo fishing rate, and so as they're fishing it today, the current exploitation rate, and, if you see there's some dashed lines on there, they represent the gap between the history and the projections, and so, after that dotted line into the future, these are the projected landings with current fishing mortality rate.

The red line is the discards, and the landings is the blue line. On the right-hand side, we can see what's happening with the spawning stock biomass, and so you can see a gradual decline with current F_s for red snapper, and here's what this looks like if we were to fish at the target fishing rate, and what actually you can see -- I wonder if I can get my pointer going.

What you can actually see is that they look -- The end of this projected period for landings between the status quo and the target actually end up in roughly the same place, and the only major difference is in the short-term, where there is a major reduction in the short-term in the discards and landings here, but you can see, in the long run, you get a substantially higher biomass, and then, for the most part, it ends up above your minimum stock size threshold.

The reason why you're getting the same landings, in the long run, is because you're exploiting, at a lower rate, a larger stock, and so these kind of projections can show you the tradeoff, in the near and short-term, between the various management options you might make, and, here, it's just a simple current exploitation rate versus the target exploitation rate, and, in this case, for red snapper, it's this F_{30} percent, which is the fishing mortality rate that gets you essentially 30 percent of the unfished spawning biomass, essentially, but we could do the same thing exactly for gag grouper, and the status quo is showing an increase in landings and stable discards and then a slight rebuilding of the stock, under status quo.

If we look at the F target, we see, again, a near-term impact on landings, but a long-term, longer-term, better biomass outcome, and, now, this is baked into the model, and these target F_s are designed, and defined, in such a way that they would rebuild the stock, but this is just to show you it working as it should, to show you that the dynamics are operating as they should.

What other things could we do? We could reduce recreational effort by 20 percent, and here are the same plots. Status quo, once again, is the one you see here on the left for both, and the reduction in recreational effort is these two panels on the right, and you can see very little impact, some impact, but not a very strong one, in the biomass, and it has some impact. It's somewhat higher, side-by-side, to reduce it, but not that dramatic, and it doesn't do a great deal to the long-term landings, but it does affect the short-term landings somewhat, and it's hard to see here.

We can do the same thing for gag grouper, and we see almost identical landings, and very similar biomass trends, and so it's an interesting case, these two fisheries, because the way they respond to these regulations is quite different, if you could impose them.

We could set a minimum size limit, and, here, it's just completely imaginary, and it's just for demonstration purposes, but you can see moving to a sixty-centimeter size limit for snapper makes very little difference, but, for the movement to an eighty-centimeter size limit, minimum size limit, for grouper, it would have a biological impact, if not a very strong impact on long-term catches, and, in fact, I think the long-term catches, landings, are actually higher. These are the type of experiments we can do, and we can do them across multiple species, and this is just to demonstrate that they work.

One of the big challenges we have is making sure that, when we place a regulation on one species, it is correctly reflected in the other one, and so we need to make sure we get the data to inform this. We've got to make sure that, when regulations are imposed, they have a representative and realistic impact on another species, and so that's one challenge we have, and it would be nice to get spatial stock structure in here in some level, even if you were just to sketch it, to show robustness.

One of the most powerful things about MSE is you don't need to have a peer-reviewed, signed-off, perfect model, when all you're interested in is knowing robustness. We could say, well, our spatial stock structure operating model is not perfect, but we can see that our management option still works for it. We have still considered it, and we can show performance impacts or not, for some hypothetical stock structure, and so that would be useful to have, I think, and so that would be another challenge that we have.

The deal, the big deal, in this process is getting feedback from folks like you, because, you know, how much experience do I have in this fishery, right, and like I've read a lot of the documentation, and Adrian has read an absolute ton of it, but a lot of it is away from the table, and a lot of it is reflected in expert judgment amongst members and groups like this, and, in order for you to have confidence in this approach, it's important that we have your perspectives and understanding and knowledge reflected in those operating models, and so the third point here, and it's really probably the number-one objective that I would have for the next hour or so, would be to get people here to think about what they want to be reflected in these models for testing management options, and like what would need to be in there for you to have confidence in the proposed management option.

Then, you know, to make sure that, when we do test management options, they are at least realistic and sensible. We don't want to turn up to a meeting and embarrass ourselves by proposing things that aren't possible, and it would be nice to know what things you think are realistic, that could actually be implemented, and those can include things that are just curiosities, and you could be like, well, we don't think that it would ever happen, but we would love to know what would happen if we had, for example, a descending device that gave 90 percent survival, and like would that be an important technological advice, and, sure, and ask those questions, if you want to.

The next steps for us are to present the same kind of material to the SSC, and so we're this first meeting on here, and we've got our last final progress report in November, and then the council meeting on the update later, and so this is just to say that this is part of the process, and we are in communication with the SSC as well, and so, I mean, this is the deal today, is these issues that I've already mentioned.

Just to let you know that none of this is happening behind closed doors, and all of it is publicly available. I don't expect that everybody here would want to get into coding and stuff, but this is

just to reassure you that, if you did, or you wanted to hire a consultant on your behalf, all of this stuff is accessible to you. It's all opensource, and it's all available on a repository, and it's all documented.

This is probably one of the most important documents, and it's called a trial specifications document, and we have a splash page, which you can get the link to, but it has this document on it, and the trial specifications document is the thing that explains how we got to where we got to with the MSE, and the idea is that, if I or Adrian gets hit by a bus, someone else knows why we did what we did, and they can reproduce it, and so the trial specifications document is just to provide transparency in the decisions that were made, but also to provide reproducibility, if someone like one of the technical teams just can't work on it anymore, but it documents all those decisions that were made.

There may well be a table in there, based on the feedback we get from meetings like this, and the group thought that it was important to include this. The group thought that it was important for us to test this management option and so on. That's the final slide, and I think this is a bit of a team effort, and a lot of people have had their input in this, in one way or another, and so a big thanks to everybody who turned up to the technical meetings to get us this far, and I think we'll go back to this slide now, because I think that's really the focus of this meeting. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Tom, and I will bring this forward to the AP. I have a question, and something that I can state, but I don't want to get ahead of anybody else on the AP that may want to state something, and just, in all honesty, this gets, to me personally, at almost a limit of understanding of exactly what's being done, and I've had experience in things near this, and we call it process control, statistical process control, in manufacturing things, and so, in that world, and bringing this more to a fisheries-based management, and I'm hoping that most people have an understanding of this, but maybe I'm a little bit of an outlier, and so, to start, is there anybody here that would have a question for Tom, because I do want to state a few things, also. Chris.

MR. MILITELLO: I guess I have two questions here, and my first question is have you taken anything that we've done in the past and run it, to see if what happened in real life happened when you ran it on the model?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Well, we can do that, but, when you say what happened in real life, can you give me an example?

MR. MILITELLO: Let's say, if we closed gag for two years, the stock is going to go up.

DR. CARRUTHERS: And that's what happened?

MR. MILITELLO: Let's say it happened, and you run the same thing in your model, and does your model match it?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, sure we can do that.

MR. MILITELLO: My other question is, is there -- When you put all these metrics in there, is there some big computer that you have to have, or can you do it right there?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Well, that's interesting, and so --

MR. MILITELLO: Like do we need an IBM whatever that thing is called?

DR. CARRUTHERS: No, and we're not quite at that level, and it's all -- The results that I just showed you there, for example, took like three minutes to calculate, and so you can imagine, if we added more species, and we had more management options, it would expand out, but the calculations required to get the actual -- To do the projections is not too bad now. It used to be --

MR. MILITELLO: Do you have to make the code before you can do it? Do you have to rewrite the code before you can do it?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Well, we would, but what we can do, however, and one of the objectives we have, is to make these results accessible to -- We've done it in every MSE we've been in, and we've created an app that you can go to, and you can play around with toggles, and you can do the calculations to show what would happen, and so we can make this really accessible, and, I mean, I won't do it here, but I can show you the MSE apps that we've made, where you can set regulations and press "calculate", and, yes, it will take a little time, but then it will show you the output, and so this doesn't have to be inaccessible, and so we can make those -- We can make those tools, and we have.

We have done it previously, but, to answer your question, if you said to me, in a meeting like this, we want to test A, B, and C, what I would do is I would code them on my computer, and I would upload them in the repository, and I would do the calculations, and I would present it to you the next day, or in the afternoon, what the results were, and so it can be done on that kind of time period.

MR. MILITELLO: Right, and so, if we're talking about we can only use one hook, instead of three, and, if we all vote on it, and you just run it, and it says, well, no, that's a bunch of bullcrap, and you can't --

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and we can do exactly --

MR. MILITELLO: That it's not going to happen, or it won't matter.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, we can do that.

MR. MILITELLO: Like right away?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, we could do that. Yes, we could do that.

MR. MILITELLO: Okay.

DR. CARRUTHERS: But the idea -- I mean, I don't know whether we have that -- This is exactly the kind of feedback we need, right, because I need to have the ability to --

MR. MILITELLO: Well, it would help us in decisions, and we're guessing, but let's just say you can't use a deep-drop rod, because it brings them up too fast, and they get barotrauma, and you could plug it in and go, no, it's wrong?

DR. CARRUTHERS: That's the idea, and that's the goal. To get there, I've got to get exactly the feedback that I just go from you. You mentioned two types of regulations, but I've got to make sure that we can easily code up and implement -- This is exactly why I'm here. You just mentioned two things that I would like you to repeat, or explain to me, so that I can understand how to implement them, so that, if you were to ask for those things, we can do that testing.

MR. MILITELLO: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris, for kicking us off. Now our Vice Chair, James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and I think that maybe I talked about this a little bit, how MSE really relates to this panel currently, and our management structure, and the timeframe in which it takes for things to happen. The car has been built, and we're trying to understand how the levers of management in this car will work, but I feel like a fourteen-year-old that is waiting to be old enough to drive the car. It's built, and it's bought, and it's paid for, and when -- Maybe somebody in the room can answer this, but when might we be able to drive this car, and when might we be able to test what it can do?

DR. CARRUTHERS: I mean, the guys to talk to about timelines is probably -- The best guy to talk to is Chip. What I will tell you is that, if you have a scientist who reasonably understood the language that we've written this in, they can drive it now. What we've done right now, they can download it, and they can drive it now. The framework in which it's programmed -- Like think of like a spreadsheet or whatever, and that is fully documented. Like openMSE is not hidden. It's a public piece of software, and it's fully documented with tutorials. The question you probably want answered is how easily, and how soon, could a group like this feel comfortable driving it, right?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Not exactly. What my question is, it's when will we actually be able to change management policies based on what this car can do, and like so, for now, you know, if we decide that, okay, we want to form an amendment to make a change, like we're talking about with the scamp and yellowmouth, and so we want to include those two species together, because they're kind of caught side-by-side, and it just looks easier to do that, and we're not going to be complete with that new complex for upwards of eighteen months to twenty-four months.

What I'm wondering is when will MSE, and the input that they spit out to us -- How quickly will that information be able to mandate actual change in fisheries management, and like, okay, everybody is onboard, and we're all comfortable, and are we sure that the federal government is comfortable with MSE taking the reins of fisheries management, and, those guidelines therein which they produce, when are we going to adopt that as actual change, I mean, because it seems like you're still pitching the product, and, like, you know, we're seeing commercials for the car, you know, but is that on this panel to accept MSE as -- You know, as the main body to trust? I mean, like I'm a little unclear of what our charge is. I mean, I know that you've asked very direct questions, and I think that Chris has added some very good feedback, but what does this mean to actual change in management?

DR. CARRUTHERS: I will answer the first part of it, because I can't answer the second one, about how this would affect your management process, over what timelines, but, in terms of when this thing is supposed to be available, this contract we have, current contract, ends in June of next year, and the idea was that it would be a useful, drivable car its first iteration by June of next year, which means that it could be peer reviewed, and it could be defended, and then used to provide management advice in its first iteration, and that was the objective of this contract, but whether it's finalized, whether everyone feels comfortable with it, whether you have a management framework in which its inserted, which is the second part of the question, I can't comment on that.

MR. LORENZ: Just for the AP here, Tom mentioned the term "peer-reviewed", and I just want to make sure everybody is familiar with what that term might mean. In academia, and the scientific areas, when people do a research, and say I've discovered, or found, this, and this is now a truth, and it goes through a process of other equivalent people, outside that organization, reviewing what went up, to say this makes sense, from a scientific point of view, and we kind of agree with that, and I just wanted to make sure that everybody knows that, when you're saying "peer-reviewed", you're talking of our Science and Statistical Committee and it being able to hold up under the scrutiny of a bunch of other PhD scientists in fisheries. I didn't misstate that, did I? Thank you, and I just wanted to make sure that everybody is clear on that, when we use that term, because that is a big process with the SSC. I want to discuss a little bit -- I'm going to go more on the lines of what James did, but, Joe, you had your hand up, and I will put you ahead.

MR. MATTHEWS: I just want to follow-on what Chris said, and I think it would be really interesting, and helpful, to see an example, like a real-life example, of how this works, in a fishery where we know what has happened with the fishery, and we can go back and look and kind of verify that, if we change this, this parameter, then this is what would happen to a fishery, you know, and an extreme example would be North Atlantic cod.

You know, we know a lot about that, and we know that fishery crashed, and we might be able to plug some parameters in and see how that affected it, but if there's others out there, that we have that kind of data on, to look back and verify -- You know, verifiable data, and we know this fishery went here, over this period of time, and we know enough about what was going on to change those parameters and see how it affected it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Joe. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: For Tom, so this system is up and running in other parts of the world already, correct, or incorrect? Fully operational systems, that are already in place, already set, and everything has already been vetted, and it's ongoing, and is that --

DR. CARRUTHERS: The only multispecies one that I know of is in South Africa for sardines and -- I think for anchovies down there, but, yes, we just did this for bluefin in the last six years, and so they have a management procedure up and running, and it's happened in California state fisheries, and they've got some of their nearshore fisheries, sand bass and others, and the invertebrates, and so writing these rules that have been tested using their system, and Atlantic swordfish is now going through with this software, and so, yes, this has been applied, yes, and it's already -- The codes, and the calculations, the software, has already been peer-reviewed, and so it makes it a lot easier for us to get through this phase where, if I stood up in front of -- Because Adrian and I would have to stand there with a bunch of experts and say can you defend these

equations, can you defend this calculator, and, yes, it already has been, and so, you know, bring it on, and so that part of it is fine.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So sort of the question was is -- Just to make the terms, and so the car is built, but it's just not in this country right now, and, when you bring it to this country, for this application, we're going to add turbos to it and make it different.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, that's right, and, I mean, one of thinking about it is -- A better way of describing it is we've actually built the factory to make the car, but you guys haven't chosen the color, the engine, the -- I would say we've built the structure to manufacturer it on, and we just do it now, but what we need to know is the specs. We need to know what you want from it, and that's probably a better analogy, and we need to know what controls you need in that car, and we need to know what dials you need to see to drive it, but we've built -- The hard part, in a large way, has been done, and that part used to take years and years, but it's been done now, because we built the software to do it, and so, anyone, I think a better analogy would be that we've built this production line factory.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Chris Kimrey.

MR. KIMREY: So does it -- Does the forecast model -- Does it have any elements of like weather or, you know, financial parts? An example is so, when the pandemic hit, there was a lot more people fishing, which, in turn, recreational -- It was, you know, everywhere, and everybody on the AP has talked about it, and so that increased the amount of pressure on the fishery, and so, when you're forecasting, you know, a stock, and you're allowed to take this amount, and then, all of a sudden, there's an exponentially higher amount of pressure, does this -- Can you put that into the model?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Insofar as you can describe that scenario, and so you're talking about a scenario with COVID where there was an increase in fishing pressure?

MR. KIMREY: In fishing pressure, an increase, I mean big time, and another example is our little short -- I always hate to go to snapper, but, during snapper season, so, you know, we have two days that we can snapper fish in the South Atlantic. If the weather is really good, the amount of fish that are going to be caught is going to be way higher than if the weather is really bad, and so can you forecast each scenario?

DR. CARRUTHERS: The way we would do it, for both scenarios, would be to look at some historical data on how that's been affected and produce scenarios, and it's the same thing as these ideas of different operating models, but one could be an inclement weather scenario, and another one could be the way the frequency of those two days that you get right now, or per day, and the frequency of bad weather events has a certain likelihood, and another has a lower, and, yes, you can see how that would impact your performance. I mean, what we need to do is have a model, or some idea, about how weather impacts fishing pressure, and we can get that historically, and I'm absolutely certain that we can do such a thing.

MR. KIMREY: Another thing is, for management plans, like a five and ten-year plan that was presented for scamps, and, you know, I know it's a very uncertain thing, just like counting fish, but, you know, with the economy -- I mean, you know, our economy is up and down. You know,

during my fishing career, we've been through a recession, and then things were good, and now things are down a little bit, and so, recreationally especially, when the economy is strong, that pressure is increased, and so, if you're looking at a ten-year management plan, could you say, okay, under this scenario, things are good, and plug that in, and, under a different scenario, things aren't good, and plug that scenario in? You know, from an economic standpoint.

Back to the weather, and, you know, for the South Atlantic, spatial would be good, because, again, with red snapper, there is times, when we get our little snapper season, it's beautiful in Florida, and, in North Carolina, where we're at, if you're going, you had better tighten your chin strap, and so, spatially, you could say, okay, you know, Florida has got this, and North Carolina and South Carolina have got that, and can you plug those certain things in?

DR. CARRUTHERS: I don't see why not. I mean, what you're talking about is -- The way these models work is that they will project out, assuming the same amount of kind of capacity to fish, and like I don't know whether you use "capacity" as a term here, but like latent capacity, and basically potential angler days will be kept the same, right, and then, if you set size limits, or any spatial closures, that level of latent effort will be forced into that new management system, but what you're describing is a scenario where, in the future, there could be changes in that latent effort, that capacity, and, if there are, you want to make sure that your regulation that you look at is robust to that, and so you could have, after ten years, like a 20 percent increase, and you could have variability between years.

Certainly you can do it, and that's totally doable, and, in fact, that suggestion is something you can sketch, or implement for fun, quite quickly. The issue really is how you defend, or how you could defend, the exact decision you make, and so you would say we want to see a 10 percent increase, because we saw a 10 percent increase during the COVID pandemic, which represents the maximum increase in latent effort that we could possibly have, but you see what I mean.

For each one of these things, it's less the doing, and it's actually more the defending, and it's like where did you get the data to suggest that was the right idea, but, if you can point me in the direction of an example, like COVID, and then provide me with the effort data that show -- That demonstrate what you're saying, then, yes, this can be done. Sure.

MR. KIMREY: Unfortunately, I don't have that in my back pocket.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, but like --

MR. KIMREY: You know, it's intriguing that the potential is there. You know, there are so many things that have changed in fishing, very quickly. You know, for all the bottom guys, trolling motors, and all you have to do is say "trolling motors", and, you know, that has changed bottom fishing forever, or, you know, quad engine boats, and it hasn't been that long. Ten or fifteen years ago, neither one of those things were ever mentioned in fisheries management, but now they are making a huge impact on our fisheries, and so those things, you know, are ease and accessibility pieces that could also be figured into management, because, ten or fifteen years ago, they weren't, and they need to be, because it's changing fishing, which is changing the amount of pressure, which is changing our stock of everything.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and so the way this has worked in other examples is that you've made the suggestion to like look at the impacts of weather or future capacity, and, you know, five years down the line, someone says, oh, we're looking at having this particular gear regulation, or we're thinking about having -- You say, well, I want to see it from my -- I want to see this against my effort capacity operating model, and let me see it, and just show me that it works for that, or, also, does it work if we have -- What about in the inclement weather operating model, and does it work for that, and, as you become more and more versed with it, you become more understanding of the various questions, and concerns, that people have, and you can just see it laid out there, what the impact --

If there wasn't any, you can just relax and move on to something else, but you see what the idea here is, that we put all this stuff into central place, where everyone is familiar with the test beds, and we test it based on these ideas, but, you know, for every piece of expert judgment there in the world, there is almost certainly some kind of observation to back it up, and the question -- That can be represented by data. When you saw an effort increase, the question is what did you see, and how did you see it, and how can we get those data, because they're real, and they're not imaginary, and you saw something, or observed something.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. We have a queue building with further input, and there are four in line. Up next, you had your hand up, Joe Matthews. Then James Paskiewicz.

MR. MATTHEWS: I think my question has been answered. Thank you though.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. For other fisheries that you're already running these models in, and having projections, how many of them are hook-and-line fisheries, and is that component of harvest an obstacle when you're running the numbers? You know, I will kind of go along the line with what Chris is saying, you know, with capacity and different advances in technology, and I know you did mention the bluefin and Atlantic swordfish, you know, but are the ones that you're seeing successes in -- Are they hook-and-line fisheries?

DR. CARRUTHERS: When you say "successes", do you mean --

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Where you're being paid to perform a job.

DR. CARRUTHERS: So you're saying our successes? Okay. That's a good question, in a sense, because -- So, for me, one of the closest ones would be California halibut, where they have partyboats, and it's a pole-and-line fishery, and they're looking at lots of the same kinds of questions that you guys are, actually, for their halibut fishery, and that might actually be one of the most comparable ones, and your question is whether or not our success in implementing it is related to that gear type, and like you're trying to understand the projected success rate of this process or something?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Well, you had mentioned, in south Africa, I believe, sardines and anchovies, which that's a net-boat-type fishery, you know, and some of your controls may be very straightforward in a fishery like that, without a whole lot of, you know, different factors and consumer groups and all of that.

DR. CARRUTHERS: I see your point. I see your point.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So, I mean, that's kind of where my question was with that. You know, this fishery, this complex, doesn't seem to be as cut-and-dried, and we all see things. I mean, because our region is so large, and we do have, you know, seasons to consider in, you know, some parts of our region, and, you know, down in Florida, we have a lot more fishable days, and so, when you see the spatial segments mapped out, you know, it's a little bit better, in my opinion, and I think that that's, you know, very relevant to this, and we seem to be very multilayered here, not only in our representation of the fishery, but the fishery itself, and we're -- You know, we're relying on a lot of different things, you know, current movements and weather patterns, you know, and to make this -- To make this really work for us, you know, the questions are almost, you know, unlimited, and the variables are almost unlimited, and we would love to be able to tell you, you know, what different guidelines, you know, different levers, different barometers, for all different sorts of things, you know, but you're going to end up with a spaceship that, you know, you have all these controls for, and, you know, who is going to be qualified to operate that?

DR. CARRUTHERS: You know, basically, you're alluding to a very complicated and nuanced management system that you think might be exceptional compared to implementations elsewhere, and I think that's probably right. I think you're probably right, and I think this is a very challenging case, and I don't think it's impossible. I am willing to travel for hopefully, but I think some realism is required there, and I'm happy to hear you say it, because it's not -- Everything we hear about these case studies is complicated and multilayered.

I do think there's challenges, but I would say the issues are probably not technical. I can probably make -- If you can explain all the different phenomenon that affect the way you fish, and the regulations you could implement, and I can formalize those, and I don't have any reason to suspect that I can't, I can make you an app that would make this seem quite straightforward. Like you could play with these things and look at -- I just -- Skepticism is totally warranted, and I think you're probably right that this is more complicated than other cases studies we've dealt with, but I think we're more than up to the challenge. I'm willing to travel hopefully.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, James and Tom, for that exchange. We still have a queue of people that want to ask questions, and Cameron is next.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So, you know, my view on it is like the system we have now sucks and is totally broken, and so what the hell do we have to lose if we try something different and new? I mean, if we keep doing the same old thing, we're banging our heads on the wall, and you're going to get the same exact results, unless you make a change, and, now, as far as getting into the details of this immense project that you're trying to overcome, and whatever you come up with is going to be better than what we have now, I feel anyway, and one of the key lynchpins of it is going to be the ginormous elephant in the room of getting vessels permitted, because, without recreational permits, and everybody in here always says it, and we don't know what it is going on, period. We have no earthly idea how many boats go out of what inlet on what day when, and how many guys are going fishing, how many fish they catch, whatever.

We don't even know the boats and the amount of pressure, and so, you know, if this moves forward, then the licensing that we're proposing now of vessels or people or whatever, and, I mean, for what Chris said, and this goes right to vessels. I mean, if you can have how many vessels, over X number of feet, you can calculate and extrapolate that, well, a twenty-five-foot vessel ain't going

out in six-foot seas, where a forty-five-footer might, and so you can run different calculations, if you have the information, which goes back to the licensing, just the licensing for a vessel.

People are great, but then you still don't have the information on the vessel. You know, I like the way it's going, and I see the future of it working, and there are tons of things that we ultimately have to flesh out, but, damn, man, it's way better than what we've got going on now.

DR. CARRUTHERS: So I think we -- The general point you're making is -- Like there's two parts of this, and so the one -- You know, if you have a specific management question like that, like what is the -- We want to know what the expected benefit of permitting our recreational vessels are, and ask it, because maybe I can provide you with a basis for answering that question, and like that's a more accurate -- Let's say that controls effort, but it also gives you better reporting of landings, for example.

If you get those things, I can show you what the marginal benefit would be to your stock assessment, like how much more precise or whatever it is, but how much better the advice would be, and like what your expected benefit in the long-run would be, but like, if you've got a question like that, you should definitely -- I am definitely going to write them down.

On the issue of whether or not it's better than what you currently do, the one thing I will tell you is that, everywhere you go, where you propose anything new, and you've all done it once, whether it's domestically in your house, or you've suggested doing something different, and you always get a degree of totally justified, and it's really important, skepticism. That's the right way to approach it, and everyone here should be skeptical, and I'm totally okay with that, but ask yourself the point that Cameron has made, is that how are you doing it now?

Like, if, at the end of this, you've got a calculator, and you've decided what goes into it, and you've decided how to measure how good or bad things are, and like that's at least transparent, and it's at least you can point to it, and it's documented. The important question is, if you've got problems with that, tell me what it is you're doing now that's better, and that's the issue, and so the point that Cameron is making is like be skeptical, but don't forget what you're coming from.

In the bluefin MSE, we had skepticism from start to finish, and we should have had someone hired, in the corner of the room, just to say, every five minutes, your stock assessments would not pass peer review, and like your current management system is broken, broken for bluefin, just to remind everyone that there are challenges in the MSE, but we now have a management procedure in place, a rule for setting catch advice, that is robust to all of the different ideas that people had in the room about what could happen with the fishery, and no one knows what to argue about any more, and that's what they used to do, is just to spend the whole time arguing, and they don't know any more in bluefin. They've got the rule, and it's in place, and it works for all the ideas, and what we needed was all the skepticism, but we also needed someone to do what Cameron has done and say, well, where are we now, and so it's always worth thinking about like that, whether or not it's a positive, a net positive, or not.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. We're going to take just a minute break from the AP comments to let Mike Schmidtke from the council state something.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just wanted to -- Within the context of the feedback that Tom is looking for, just kind of a way that it came up in conversation after yesterday's meeting, just kind of talking about what you all would be doing today, I remember, the last round of Reg 35 public hearings, and I went out and, you know, talked to people in the public, and I talked to -- You know, several of you showed up for those hearings, and there were a lot of comments about how the assessment -- People said the assessment was wrong, and people said the data is wrong, and what we're trying to get at here is we're trying to get to kind of that next-level question of, okay, how was it wrong? What parts of the assessment, what parts of the data, do you all think are not being accurately represented?

Is it, you know, that the catch in the assessment is more than what it actually is, from your perspective, or is the discard mortality -- You know, is the mortality rate too high, or are they saying that there are more discards than there actually are, and those are the kind of questions. We're trying to get past the it's bad to how and what are the ways that you all think that the system is not being accurately represented, and then those are the things that can be plugged into this type of model and tested and seen through simulation, like does this make a difference in the overall outcome. That might be a way to kind of reframe the thoughts related to the feedback that we're looking for at this point, but I just wanted to offer that, so people can kind of organize their thoughts, maybe, in that manner.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Mike, and, as we continue on with the AP questions and comments, Harry.

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, if I heard you correctly, you want calculator ideas, and, several months ago, I wrote something. Prior to the snapper closure, I could take my boat out at seven o'clock in the morning, and come back at twelve to one o'clock, with a few red snapper, or maybe a grouper or two, and a few triggers, and a few vermilion, and they were like the secondary fish, and head back.

With the closure, recently, I take my boat out at seven o'clock, and the fishing effort goes from seven now to four or five, and not one o'clock, right, and so fishermen, recreational fishermen, we go grocery shopping, and so, ergo, everybody has got a fish box. When your fish box is relatively full, it's time to head back, right, and so now I'm catching only -- I am targeting trigger, and I'm targeting vermilion, and there are very few black sea bass, and so we're targeting them, and we're catching six to ten red snappers during that extended effort, and, of course, we're releasing all of them, and I have always argued that, if a boat, or a fisherman, whatever, were allowed to keep one red snapper, whose guts are hanging out of their mouths, that -- Yes, we can vent them, and we can, you know, send them down for fish food, but, if you stuck them in the box, the fishing effort would then get reduced, and we would not continue catching red snapper, and so, therefore, the discard rate of red snapper would be approved, and so I think this is the kind of scenario that you're wanting, so that you can model that, and am I correct?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, but the issue is how much, right, and so like how much does retention affect effort? You know, you're proposing something totally sensible, and you see it in just about every recreational fishery, where there is catch-and-release, and it's that the degree of effort on a particular species depends on how much you're allowed to retain, and this is how much you have to release, and I build the most horrific model in BC for a thousand trout lakes that have exactly this in it, this issue of the dynamics you're talking about, and it's like incentivizing people's effort,

based on how much they could retain, and they have hard data on that, because they can actually -- They can regulate on a lake-by-lake basis, and they can look at what you're saying.

It's how much effort was placed, when they were allowed to just retain one of them, versus if they didn't, and so the question is where does the data come from to inform that. Yes, we can do it. We can certainly do it, and the first pass at it might just be a demonstration, and you could see how it behaves, but the question is can you sketch, draw, or provide information to help understand what that could look like, basically is my question, but, I mean, just knowing it's something to look for, it means that I can pursue it, but, if you can think about where I would go to try to and inform that, that would be even more useful.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you. We have a queue of five, and it's going to be six. I am pushing myself as number five, but next in the queue is Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: Recreational is 125,000 pounds, more or less, and commercial I think is the same, 125,000, and that's the speed of our car right now, is 250,000. If you've got all these parameters, and this computer and everything, can't we plug in if we want to go to 500,000, and work it backwards, and work all those parameters down to what will make us be able to go 500,000 miles an hour, so to speak?

DR. CARRUTHERS: That's one thing you could do. That's called cheating, and so what you do is you pick your management scenario, and let's say you've got two or three levers in it that you can pull, and you tune those to reach a certain outcome, and you just do it. We can just do it. That's one of the things you can do. You can say we want to achieve this performance outcome, and what kind of management system do we need to do that, and, yes, you could do that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I'm good.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Chris. Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: Just to Chris's point, I'm in the marine insurance business, and so all that data about when COVID hit and what kind of boats are out there, we go over, every year with the companies, all that stuff, and we know how many quad-engine boats there are, and we know how many sportfish boats there are, and we know all that data is out there, and probably pretty easily attainable, you know, for the whole country, really, because there is probably twenty insurance companies in the U.S., and they have all that stuff, what's a fishing boat, what's a center console, what's a -- You know, no one is going to take a Regal or whatever, and all that stuff is out there, and probably pretty easily available for anyone to grab.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. You know, that's interesting, in a way, because we always talk about who is out there recreational fishing, and that would be an interesting approach, to find out what there are, in those numbers, when we say, on a weekend, all these boats leave an inlet, and what they might be. Okay. I would like to recognize our vice chair next, James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. As far as the calculator is concerned, how much of a -- How much of an impact is being calculated by coastal development, and is that something that can be

plugged into models that could tell us how we got to where we're at, alongside of fishing pressure and actual landings and discards, and can we use that component, moving forward, you know, with turbidity levels, you know, just overall disturbances near the coast, and what it would look like for our shallow-water estuaries? You know, is there a manmade component that can be factored into why some of our species may not be as prolific as they once were?

DR. CARRUTHERS: One of the most important aspects of MSE -- Really, MSE was not necessarily designed for saying, if we just have this management action forever, and what it was really designed for was making and designing management systems that were adaptable. As you gather data, they would make adjustments, so that you could -- I wouldn't say set and forget it, but, every year, you have an algorithm, and it would say this is what your ACL should be, or this is what your size limit should be, or this is what your spatial closure should be, and one of the most important aspects of that is the thing that you alluded to, which is changes in productivity.

What you really want to know is can a thing adapt, and like, if you subject it to changes in the future, and how productive the fishery is, or, for example, how much latent effort there is, or any of those things, those changes, does your management system adapt that, and now some of these measures that you have automatically adapt.

Something like a spatial closure protects let's say, or provides a limit, on exploitation rate, and that's scale-independent, and it doesn't matter if there's a million fish or a thousand fish, and it protects the same fraction, and it scales up and down, and so some of these things have that kind of resilience built into them, but other things don't, and it's very important then that you have the kind of scenarios that you're talking about, which are plausible future scenarios for productivity in the stocks, fishing pressure, which we have as latent fishing, and those are really important, because they test whether your system is responsive enough, and can deal with those things, and so it's probably less of a want, and more of a need, in this scenario, is to come up with those scenarios in something like this.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tom. Next is Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. First, I wanted to say, Chris, that's some great data that could be available, and I don't know exactly how we would harness that, because you don't know which guy's boat sits in the driveway and which one gets used every week, but, golly, that's a mountain of information that you just spoke about. I have a question of a couple of variables that would be good for you to write down, and I'm just basing it on we've heard that our numbers could possibly be skewed as much as 40 percent.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes.

MR. CONSTANT: Let's run a scenario with 40 percent less mortality rate off of our current data, and that would be one variable, and then, based on what that variable says, what about plugging in a one-month season on each side of the spawning season, and this has come up before, over the years, and put a thirty-day window, in say the month of December, and then a month of June, or May, May 1, and so you would open a snapper season from December 1 to December 31, and you would open a snapper season from May 1 to May 31, using 40 percent less effort from the recreational side.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, we can do it, and we can certainly refit the models with the lower catches. It came up yesterday, that pilot study and the overestimation, and I think something along those lines is important to do. You're describing a temporal closure for snapper?

MR. CONSTANT: A temporal opening, a month opening, when the -- No, and currently it's closed, and so I'm suggesting that, using the current data, first off, and you have a variable with 40 percent less mortality rate, and I don't know what that equals.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes.

MR. CONSTANT: But then, based on that outcome, then put a two-month season in on each side of the spawning season.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Okay.

MR. CONSTANT: An open season, and based on using 40 percent less anglers than is currently used, and I don't know what that number is either.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and I hear you.

MR. CONSTANT: That's using current regs, using descending devices, and so forth.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes. Thanks. One second, and so you said -- You mentioned two gear changes and one descending --

MR. CONSTANT: No, and I was just saying that the descending devices are currently required.

DR. CARRUTHERS: You mentioned another piece of gear though before that. Did you say --

MR. CONSTANT: No, and I might have said "and so forth", but whatever the current code, you know, circle hooks, and not changing anything.

DR. CARRUTHERS: So just -- I know there is people queued up, but, yesterday, we had comments from other people in the group about various other aspects, and I know that John and Ben brought up the issue of, in other fisheries, there's been -- The models have considered what's called dome-shaped selectivity, which is where the larger individuals are not vulnerable to gear, and there's a few different reasons for that.

One can be that they avoid the gear, like in trawl fisheries, and other one is they just go to deep water when they're older, which we certainly see in some grouper, and maybe it's true for snapper, and so there was an idea that maybe one thing we could do is -- I will let you comment on it, but it was to consider redoing the assessment where there was more done in the assessment model, as an alternative scenario, and that was another one we had, and I will let you comment on it in just a second, at the discretion of the chair, but there was another one about generally whether or not there's a high degree of the trust in the survey, and so I think, Andrew, you mentioned that yesterday, and it was like, well, maybe we trust the survey, and maybe we don't, and one option would be to downweight the survey in the stock assessment and see whether or not we get a

different picture of stock dynamics, and fishing dynamics, and that could be another operating model.

We had another concern that there was multispecies interactions with things like black sea bass, and so they would be like a predation effect of red snapper, and so I've got those listed, and I just put them in blue, that they're left over from yesterday.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Tom. I'm going to take this just a little bit different, and I have a thought, and I want to bring it to a little more practicality, maybe, with our marquee species, and see if we can hit something with this, but to use like a car analysis, like James did, and, right now, probably with the red snapper, many of us are probably thinking of it that, if you were driving a car, we're going along, and it looks like, at some point, to reopen the red snapper season, it's almost like we're going to slam on the brakes, and that will mean the stock is up, and so now we can fish, versus gliding into it, you know, a more gentle way of managing our fisheries, which now is very restrictive.

What we ran into, I believe, with the red snapper, was the biomass and the numbers together were considered way too low and triggered a fisheries rebuilding plan. Now, what you're getting from the fishermen out there is thinking the red snapper are recovered. When I talk to our fisheries managers, they say, okay, yes, the numbers have recovered, but biomass has not, and so what the fishermen are seeing is numbers, and so those small fish, which we all think there are enough of them, have to grow, be left alone long enough to grow, to increase that biomass, or we need more of them.

One of the things that I'm thinking that we could end up doing is, with these very restrictive regulations we have on red snapper with this large number, while we're trying to let them grow, is the fact that, at some point, when we get near recovery, we could blast past that endpoint, and so one of the things we never understand is what is the endpoint in a fisheries management scenario and that endpoint tracking, and how are we getting there, and how close are we, and we, as fishermen, would expect to, let's say, let off the gas, and let's be a little more liberal, as we get towards the end.

What I'm looking at is can you have a model where -- Like I would throw to you those red snappers are out there, and we're not fishing on them, and they're going to grow. That biomass has to be growing, but, rather than stay so restrictive now to the very end, which could be many more years, can some things be loosened up, so that we harvest some of those red snapper, still knowing the numbers are going to be maintained, but the biomass is going to continue to grow, as so many snappers we let alone continue to grow and gain weight.

DR. CARRUTHERS: So exactly this problem we're facing in BC with a bunch of our invertebrates, actually, and they're recovering, and they need phase-in rules for increasing fishing mortality rate, in response to available fish, in this case fish, and they want to test those phase-in rules. They want to know how much they can increase effort, or permitting, or in such a way that won't necessarily hurt the long-term, but will provide you with a more gradual, you know, resumption of fishing at, you know, previous pressure.

I think those things are totally things that we could examine, but you need to propose what they would look like, right, like what the phase-in would look like, and, also, what it would respond to,

and so more powerful, probably, would be to link it to some data stream that you have and say, as we see this data stream increasing -- So, for example, the fraction of large fish versus small fish, and, as we see that increasing, we allow our ACL to come up, or something similar.

Those things we can test. They're better, because they're not hardwired, which means that, under a range of different projections, effort, and whatever we come up with, they're more likely to be robust, because they will adapt, based on how quickly things recover or not, and so -- But we can certainly do it, and it's definitely a focal point of some fisheries' MSEs, is to get those opening rules, opening and closing rules, sorted out to be as efficient as possible and not be punitive for too long unnecessarily.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Tom. Next a comment from Chris Conklin. You were in our queue.

MR. CONKLIN: Sure, and so like you could plug into this, if we changed how we managed red snapper primarily, like completely, if we allocated discards to like the private recreational sector and allowed them to catch their discards and then, obviously, close the fishery when they're projected to be met?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. I'm going to recognize James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I had kind of question to go with what Chris is saying, and I actually was on the same pathway. Could we take a look at, if we did add the discards to our ACL, and like straight up, okay, these are going to die anyway, and let's retain our discards, and then let's see what the fishery opening would look like, you know, and how many days would the fishery be open for that sector, and then, beyond that, when it's closed, what the impact of the discards would be on the stock as a whole, and so you have -- You're going to have a longer period, and you're going to retain dead discards, or your discards, and the fishery is going to be open longer, and, in the closed season, you're going to have discards still, but is that an appropriate ramp-up in effort for the fishery? Like could that be sustained? Could the red snapper stock sustain that sort of increase in harvest? I mean, I feel like that's kind of what you were asking, but I had the same exact question, but maybe it was different, and I don't know.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, James. Tom, did you want to have a response?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and I'm not sure that I 100 percent get it. Sorry. I don't know if you guys can rephrase. I'm a bit dense this morning.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So we have a lot of discards in red snapper, and I believe that there are graphs to show the number of discards. What if that -- If that amount of fish was automatically allowed to be kept, you know, retained, and so, essentially, they were going -- Let's assume that they were going to die.

Now we're allowed to keep those dead discards, and the timeframe in which we're able to fish for red snapper would probably be longer, since we are allowed to keep more fish, and let's just say hypothetically. In the closed season, how many of those discards -- Because you're still going to

have discards in the closed season, because everybody is fishing for other species. Could -- In your calculator, could you tell us whether or not taking discards and, you know, and so basically taking more fish, and could you tell us if that would have -- If that would change the trajectory of the stock?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes. Yes, absolutely. You need to know what your post-release mortality is, and, obviously, that's the crucial difference. They all die, whether you keep them or not, and it's the same thing to the model, right, and so -- But, yes, I mean, in principle, we can do that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. John Polston.

MR. POLSTON: Yes, sir. Thank you. I've got a question, and it's kind of similar to what Tony was saying, but my question is, in the four years that I've been buying fresh fish and stuff, June, July, and August are the only years that I have ever seen what we call bonanzas, or huge catches over the years, of red snapper, and I never have understood, and now I'm asking the question, now that I can be heard, of why did we pick July to let everybody go catch red snapper, and, if I'm correct, we're trying to grow the biomass, and we're actually killing off -- I know why we're doing this, because of the that's when the weather is nice, and I know, but are we interested in the weather, or are we interested in the biomass of the fish?

Now going to Tom, and, if we didn't fish in June, July, or August, and they could have their babies, have their eggs, and everything reproduced, how much more would that help, and open it up for - I'm not against opening it up, but just not during the spawning time, which is basically June, July, and August, and why not have a closure during the spawning time, like we do in wreckfish and a bunch of other different species and stuff, but I'm probably not making any friends suggesting this, but, anyhow, that's, I think, a legitimate question.

DR. CARRUTHERS: So it's really interesting, because conservationists love the idea of closing spawning seasons, but it's not -- It's not always obvious whether it's going to work out. There is two ways in which you can overfish a stock, and you can overfish them before they grow big enough to reproduce and produce a lot of biomass, or you can fish the big ones, and then they can't reproduce. The first one is called growth overfishing, and they didn't grow big enough, and the other one is called recruitment overfishing, which is where you catch all the big ones and they can't spawn.

It really depends on which one you're doing. If you're growth overfishing, you're catching too many little fish, and then a spawning opening might be quite good, because you'll catch only large ones, and no problem, and, in fact, you will only be catching fish that probably had the chance to spawn once already, because you're not catching all of them, and so sometimes there's no way to predict it, is my point, and I think it's a totally valid question, and it comes down to that dynamic, and it's what size of fish are dying in this fishery, and is it a growth overfishing or a recruitment overfishing problem, and, if we can figure that out, yes, this model, and, in fact, the stock assessment right now, should be able to tell you -- If you believe the stock assessment, it should be able to tell you, right now, which scenario it is. I couldn't tell you, but -- It could be good, and it might not be, and I couldn't tell you.

MR. POLSTON: Well, my only thing is I'm just saying that I have never known of anything that, if you don't let it reproduce -- I get what you're saying that, if it's dead, it's dead, no matter when

you killed it, but, if you don't let something reproduce its offspring, you're definitely taking away from the stock, or the biomass, as you're saying.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and so imagine you're catching 10 percent, and one in ten fish you're catching, and you catch them on a spawning season. That means, in all likelihood, most of the fish there have spawned once already, right, and so you're now fishing the spawn, but imagine you don't have that spawning opening, and you're letting people fish smaller fish before that date, and it may be that -- Exactly the point you're making might be true if you catch them too small, and they may never get to the spawning phase, and so you can never know, not very clearly, until you've done the actual calculation, but what you're saying is totally reasonable, and it's a very valid question, and it's something that should be evaluated, but I just couldn't tell you which way it's going to go, but yes.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you. Good conversation. We're getting just about everybody with a comment here. Next is Paul Nelson.

MR. NELSON: I've been part of the snapper science since the closure, and the main reason that the Atlantic is closed is because we're under a flat-topped selectivity, instead of a dome-shaped selectivity, and that's why the Gulf is open. They're under a domed-shaped selectivity, and the Atlantic is on a flat-top. Dome-shaped means that they have a longline survey, and they've had a continuing longline survey for the last -- Ever since the snapper regulations have started, and the Atlantic has only run one since the beginning of the snapper closure, and so they've had a constant area they've fished that is deep water, where most people don't fish, and they have the bigger fish that lay eggs constantly, and they lay a lot of eggs.

Ours is never being tested, and so I didn't know if you could add that into a model, and like throw the dome-shaped model in there and see how it would show up on the Atlantic side. According to the scientists, they say that the Atlantic would be open very soon if they did a dome-shaped selectivity.

DR. CARRUTHERS: So whether it's flat or not is a qualitative statement, and anything that really has it so that -- What they mean is that one or more fisheries has got a selectivity that runs flat, i.e., you're as likely to catch an older, larger fish as you are a smaller one, and it doesn't decline. If you don't have that, then it's a quantitative problem. It's domed, but how domed is it, and like how much cryptic biomass is out there which you don't catch, and how much -- How much less, and like it matters how much after that.

MR. NELSON: But we never will know, because there's not a longline survey.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Well, so what they do -- What they're assuming for the longline survey is that it has flat-topped, and that means that all the other selectivities, the age and size distribution, has to come from a dome-shaped selectivity, because they're looking at the difference. The model just says, okay, the longline one is flat-topped, and, if we're getting a truncated age distribution, or we're not seeing as many older and larger, it must be dome-shaped, and that's where it's getting the information from.

In this current assessment, and I will go back through the document and work out what assumption they've made, but clearly they've made some assumption where they don't have that reference,

and one of the commercial fisheries is assumed to be flat-topped, and that means that it doesn't have that doming in the actual fishery, the commercial or recreational, and that's what is happening, and so I will go back through and have a look, and I can get back to you on it, but we can, in principle, unlock that assumption, or change it, and we can actually specify that parameter to be dome-shaped, and then we create the scenario which you're alluding to, which is where the model would assume that fish are not going to be exploited as hard as they grow larger, and, in some models, that means that you would see this thing like a cryptic spawning biomass.

MR. NELSON: Because, off of here, we have current and stuff, where we can't fish the deep water, and there's plenty of big fish out there, because the people that do fish out there catch the ones during the recreational opening, and we do bring them in, and they do get sampled.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Where does that make it into the assessment though?

MR. NELSON: It never does. The only one that handles it is the Florida handles it all, and they take the ear bones out of them, and they're at the boat dock when we get home, get in, and they take the ear samples, and they're at the fish houses taking the ear samples, and the age differences, and we've been fighting this longline survey forever. We've been trying to get one. We got one year, and we got funding for one year, and then we didn't get any more funding for a longline survey.

DR. CARRUTHERS: I will let you go, Chip, but just one thing. In principle, if you have data from a fleet, and it doesn't have to catch very much, and it can just be treated like a survey, and it has those compositions in that you're describing, that we think are more representative of the actual vulnerable biomass that's out there, and you just put it into the assessment model as another fleet, and then it informs the dome-shaped and everything else. Everything else must be more dome-shaped, because it's not seeing the large fish that are seen in -- So there are ways to do it formally. There are probably some reasons why they didn't do it in the stock assessment, if those data are available.

MR. NELSON: Money. Money. They said they didn't have the funding to do the longline survey.

DR. CARRUTHERS: But there is data, and you're saying there are data though.

MR. NELSON: Well, they took it off the recreational fishermen. There were the charter boat captains that went out in the deep water and caught the fish.

DR. CARRUTHERS: The reason I'm bringing it up is, if you can get those data to us, we'll just refit the model with them in there.

MR. NELSON: You can contact Florida Fish and Wildlife. They have all the data.

DR. CARRUTHERS: But you can see why that's attractive to us, because I don't have to make it up then.

MR. NELSON: No, you don't make it up.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Just this is the sensitivity to another data stream, and that's a heck of a lot easier to defend.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul and Tom. Chip Collier.

DR. COLLIER: Just to let you know, there is a South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey. It started in 2020, and so, in the next red snapper stock assessment, that data will be available, and it goes from basically the boundary for the South Atlantic at Key West all the way up to the North Carolina/Virginia border, and it's going to go beyond that, and we're trying to get some more information on blueline tilefish above the North Carolina/Virginia border, probably going up past Delaware, or around that area. I'm not exactly certain where it is, but it's definitely going to be further up, and so we're going to have new data streams coming in. It's a longline survey run by commercial fishermen. They're assigned certain areas to go fishing, and so that data is going to be available coming up, and so we're excited.

What it has in there -- They are seeing some red snapper in the deeper water, and they're also getting a lot of information on blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, and snowy grouper, and so, a lot of the species we've been having troubles with in the past, we are going to have some new information.

MR. LORENZ: Very good, Chip. Thank you. I guess next in the queue is Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Bob. Something I was -- On that 40 percent reduction, and it actually falls in a lot with what James and Chris had brought up as well, but I noticed that it was wrote up as a catch overestimating, and I was more talking about the mortality rate. If you take 40 percent off of the mortality rate, I think it will change the outcome even more.

DR. CARRUTHERS: No, and I hear you, but the way the models work is, unfortunately, if you think you're missing 40 percent -- You've got too high of a catch historically, of 40 percent, let's just say, and you should refit the model, which would then make your current catches -- You wouldn't have a reduction anymore, and do you see what I mean? Like either the truth is that the stock -- So the way that all these models work, and this is a nice, simple rule to stick to, but they're all scaled by the catches, right, and so, if I provide you the same assessment, but I put the catches in grams, all of your results and ACLs will suddenly have a grams on them, and it will scale the whole thing, and so, if there was 40 percent less, the whole thing would go down lower, and your catches today would also go down lower, but they would be the same exploitation rate, and so you see what I mean?

MR. CONSTANT: All right, and is 100 percent of the catches mortality?

DR. CARRUTHERS: That's a good question.

MR. CONSTANT: I didn't think it was, and so that's why I was saying that you're dealing with 100 percent of the catches, and I'm just dealing with the ones that die.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes.

MR. CONSTANT: So, if that's a variable, you take 40 percent less of the mortality rate, and then, if you open a season, you then change that mortality needle, and see that needle that's pointing at this mortality rate is what is keeping this thing closed.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes.

MR. CONSTANT: If you then allow two months on each side of the spawning season as being turned to harvest, we now have a harvest and a lesser mortality rate.

DR. COLLIER: So what's done currently in the stock assessment is it looks at the number of fish that are reported through MRIP and discarded, and then it applies a discard mortality rate to that, and that number goes in as the number of mortalities associated with the recreational fishery, combined with the landings.

So what we would end up doing, in this example, is we would reduce that number of fish that are released in the recreational fishery by 40 percent and then apply the discard mortality rate to that, and then combine it with landings, to get the overall mortality rate associated with the recreational fishery, and so, once again, it's scaling the discard estimate, or the catch estimate, as opposed to trying to scale the overall fishing mortality rate.

MR. CONSTANT: I do realize that 40 percent isn't the gospel here, and it's just a number, and we had to start somewhere, and that was brought up, and so, if we throw that number at it, then we can see kind of where we're at, or where we hope to be.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Looking at some of the modeling you did earlier, I noticed that you've broken down commercial and recreational headboat and then general recreational, and so are those numbers and information that you're going to be utilizing in the MSE, whereas they're not utilizing like the actual headboat numbers and stuff like that? I mean, it seems like, with what you're proposing, you would have a very, very good handle on the commercial, because they report everything, and you would have an exceedingly good handle on the recreational charter and headboat, because we report everything, and then those two categories, at least -- Anything that you tweaked in there, you could really see the results pretty clearly, because you've got the correct information in your system, because we have to report, and then, if you tweak something in there, you know, as we're going to discuss tomorrow, moratoriums on any more permitting for headboats and stuff, you could see how that would affect it down the road, and is that correct?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you. Randy, you were in the queue.

MR. MCKINLEY: I just wanted to make some comments, and I know it doesn't have a lot to do with the MSE, but just in response to John down there about the opening in the spawning season, and we voted, as the AP, I think, two years ago, to have a split season, and I think it was a unanimous vote to have part of it in May and part of it in July, but my understanding was that Florida overruled that, and that never was part of it. That's the first thing that I wanted to say, and

we did want a split season, especially for May 1, when our grouper season opens and we catch a lot of them.

Then the second thing was Robert following up about the biomass, about the red snapper, and the reason it's not open is the numbers are there, but the biomass isn't there. These small red snapper are coming in everywhere, and we're catching them in way closer than we ever have before. I mean, everywhere, and it's like, if you want to get big brim in a pond, you get rid of the small ones, and my fear is that the fish are never going to -- The reefs can't support so many big fish, and I feel like those fish are never going to get big enough to reach what they want, and so that ratio is never going to get there.

Then the last thing is that Chris's response to weather, and I think the hurricanes make a big impact. For some reason now, our gags have shown up better than they've ever set up in about eight years, in the last probably two months, and small ones, all the way up, you know, to the legal size, and they're really showing up hard, and so some of this could be cyclical, or it could be changes from hurricanes or whatever, but there's a lot going on, and it's more than just like one weather pattern, and these hurricanes could impact it, and I don't know if that's the reason, but there's a lot going on. Anyway, I just wanted to respond to those three different things.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. In following the council for a number of years, like fifteen years, that had been noted before, hurricanes in Florida, and like one on the east coast, and there was a commercial fisherman down there, and they were stating that, after the hurricanes, all of a sudden, things like red grouper showed up in greater numbers than they had seen for a long time, and so there seems to be something connected there that nobody has ever written about, scientifically that the fishermen still notice, like yourself. Next in the queue is Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: I guess what I'm asking for, as AP members, is who is seeing the juvenile red snapper? This most recent opening, and I work with a guy commercial fishing some. Out of probably thirty fish, five or six pounds was the smallest fish, and up to twenty-two pounds, but seeing no juveniles, and the red snapper, in my experience, has been a very aggressive fish, and so are the big ones eating all the little ones, or are we going to have a failure of a year class in the future because we're leaving all those big sow snapper out there? Is that what you're seeing, as you run your trips? Is anybody seeing the one, two, and three-pound snapper?

MR. LORENZ: Just by a show of hands, there are. Chip, could I ask you just to -- Is there anything to say with respect to that? I mean, Robert is making his observation in North Carolina, which I remember, as we started talking about, you know, so many red snapper, that there was a period, three, four, or maybe five years ago, where we weren't seeing what went on in Florida or Georgia, and is there something with respect to where Captain Freeman was that you might naturally expect it to be slower for us to have recruitment of these smaller snappers, versus south of us, since we're at the northern end of the range in North Carolina? Is there anything there?

DR. COLLIER: I mean, it definitely makes sense, if you think about where the red snapper fishery started, and it started off of Florida, and it didn't start off the Carolinas, and so the abundance off Florida has always been a little bit higher, and so you would expect that, as the population expands from its central area of abundance, such as central Florida, or northern Florida, it's going to start reaching the other areas, like North Carolina, a little bit later, but it seems like people are starting to see them.

We're seeing pictures of juvenile red snapper, not only in the South Atlantic region, but there was -- At the last council meeting, there was the image of a red snapper, with a dot on its side, caught all the way up in Rhode Island, and so maybe they're making the journey up there, and I wish them the best if they are.

MR. LORENZ: Very good. Then I guess some of us can go to New England for red snapper, since I don't see them controlling, or managing, the species under the New England Council. Thanks, Chip. Sorry to be silly. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and so I'm kind of going to go to what Cameron was saying about two of the three main sectors and their accountability and reporting. From my understanding, as far as an assessment goes, those -- You know, the reporting data isn't really a main factor in the assessment, and so, in the calculator, could we -- Could we weight actual reported data a little bit heavier, and see what that looks like for -- You know, for some of these model runs? I'm not saying that the data collected isn't used at all, and I'm just saying that, you know, I would like to see it with a little bit more weight. Thanks.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and definitely data weighting is a useful thing to do. Can you describe a bit more the data sources that you would upweight?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Specifically landings from logbooks on the commercial side and the for-hire side.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, we could do that. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you. Paul Nelson.

MR. NELSON: These black sea bass predation on -- There's been some studies that show that the red snapper do eat a lot of juvenile sea bass, and we used to use sea bass for bait, back in the earlier days, for the bigger red snapper, and is that going to be -- I see you've got it written down, but is that going to be part of the model on why the sea bass are being depleted in the south part of the Atlantic?

DR. CARRUTHERS: Well, at some point, this demonstration will start to get expanded out, and we'll get additional -- If we work on this more, and there's an interest, we can add species. Right now, it seems useful to stick to two, just because they're high profile, and they're of interest, and we can start getting our head around multispecies kind of models, but we have to prioritize, and, if the group -- I think there's been at least you and somebody else that mentioned that it's BSB that comes up a lot, and, if it's decided that that's a species of priority, and that it has ties, and links, to these other species, like you've described, then, yes, it could be one of the next, if not the next, species to get rolled in. I don't really decide those things, but, you know, you could make a case for it.

MR. NELSON: Because I believe the science shows that the baby sea bass start in Florida, and they swim north, the older they get, to North Carolina, and that would affect their sea bass fishery up there, even though they don't have as many red snapper as we do, because we used to catch a

lot of sea bass off of Florida, back in 2010 or 2011, and then, when the snapper took off, they disappeared.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Paul. AP, I think at this point -- There's no one in the queue, and we're going to take a minute or so to reorganize, as we go into the last hour or so before lunch, and so let's take -- Let's reconvene at 11:05, and so take a bio break, a refreshment break, and that's roughly about an eight-minute break. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: All right. I would like to bring us back to the snapper grouper management strategy evaluation and see where we were. I did a little talking with some sidebars here, and one of the things that seemed to become obvious, and thank you to the AP for all the input, and Tom had mentioned that we're just getting a tremendous amount of input from you all, which is more than he's used to getting from a user group that's going on public record with what they are stating, and so thank you very much, and that should be important to the council, and I guess hopefully important to us, as the stakeholders.

Looking at the feedback needed, it looked like we covered the uncertainties for the management system, and that seemed to be where a lot of the input was, things we liked and that we thought were quirky. Looking at that second bullet, I don't know if anybody has any comments on that, and that, to me, looks like something more for an SSC panel than those of us that are stakeholders, and basically consumptive users of the resource, and then we covered, in that list, the management options, and combinations of management options, that we would like to see evaluated.

What it looks like we have is we now have this list that Tom would put into, or consider, for building this matrix for evaluating fisheries that are under a fisheries management plan for recovery. One other thing that might be important, and, you know, I had a sidebar, and Tim was there, and Myra spoke to me, was what's all important, and I think it might be good if, among ourselves, we could think a little bit, and, as we run up to lunch, just spend a little time -- This may be difficult, but what, of all the things that we all pushed out to Tom, as far as information, what do we think are the most important ones to start with, and, Tom, I might look like to you on how we do this.

You know, the hard thing is going to be how we execute this with so many folks, and I could see numbering things from one to ten, and that would be tedious, or do we just want to do a first priority and later priority, where we would only have two buckets, the most important ones and then the less important, and maybe you could, as our consultant, help me manage how we get this information to you of what is most important to us.

DR. CARRUTHERS: What I'm going to do is I'm going to try and get them all on one slide, the things that people have talked about, and then what I'm going to do is I will go through, and I will say "important", and if you just stick up your hand, and I'm just going to take a rough poll, if you think it's an important thing, and, basically, totally based on my judgment, I will just rank what I think are the importance, and, if anyone disagrees at the end, we'll stop there, but that should be quite quick. I'm just going to try and get them all on the same slide though. I've got two sets of feedback slides, and so let me copy-and-paste these back in. This one here is actually -- Just bear with me for one second, guys.

Okay, and we had a recommendation, or some feedback, that future recreational capacity could change, and I'm just going to run through these before I ask you whether you think they're important. Future recreational capacity may change, i.e., due to economic factors, more people may be able to hit the water fishing than previously, and an example was given with COVID and things to that effect, and so that would be modeling some future change in how much recreational capacity there could be.

Another was to consider that we might have inclement weather, which would affect our fishery pressure, and our performance, basically, and so that was another one. People wanted to see -- It's more like an additional analysis, but I'm going to probably take it out and put it in the other slide, and this isn't really an operating model, and this is more like an evaluation of management options.

There was a suggestion, and I think, again, it's about a bag limit, and so the idea is that we could basically allow fishers to retain a fish, when they would otherwise be 100 percent discarding, and that might impact effort, and so that would be another dynamic. A very general, but important, comment was made that there could be future productivity changes, and they could be in response to coastal development and things like that. We've got the catch overestimation, according to MRIP, and we've got potential dome-shaped selectivity informed by data that tells us that there are larger fish offshore.

The BSB is going to have to wait for another operating model, I think, and so I think that's for when we actually have that species available to us, and so I'm going to just cut that and stick that in a slide for other species. There's an interest in maybe reducing the information of the survey and the stock assessment, so that the operating models reflect other data, and, similarly, and I guess I could put it right next to it, there was an idea that we might want to upweight the model fit to certain landings data and data originating from logbooks for the commercial and the for-hire fleet.

We had a sort of -- I think it fits under the whimsical category, but nonetheless of interest, but the ideas that hurricanes might impact availability, and there was some concern that juvenile mortality might be affected by the -- I think this was the point, that it might have been affected by the numbers, or the biomass, of mature, or large, biomass, and so we need to go back through that one right now, because I want to make sure that's the hypothesis, but was somebody -- I'm trying to think of who it was, but you were alluding to that as a phenomenon?

MR. MCKINLEY: Not really that, but it was the fact that these fish may never get big, because there's not enough food on these reefs and stuff, and there's just too many of them, and they're spreading out so much that -- You know, they're wanting -- I mean, that's the whole thing, is they want to see a bigger larger fish ratio, versus small ones, but that may never happen if there's just too many of them, and that's not really what you're saying up there.

DR. CARRUTHERS: No, and that's fine. That's probably what people will call density-dependent growth, something like that.

MR. MCKINLEY: That sounds like a good word.

DR. CARRUTHERS: You will discover that a large part of the fisheries scientist's job is making things sound complicated and smart. So density-dependent growth, and so I think that's what

people would call that. Then there was an idea that you might get slower recruitment in northern regions, that there might be some kind of lag, and so, if we had a model that had spatial structure, maybe there would be -- We would see younger fish later in the more northern regions.

I don't know about you guys, but this is -- You know, having looked at this, I would say any single thing that has a change in productivity would be a priority, because those are the things that are going to affect performance probably, arguably, the most, and so, you know, from my perspective, anything like this future productivity with respect to -- Let's see if I can color-code this.

That one would be a big one, and I think there was a prevailing concern about the catch, and I think that's an important one, for me. The issue of dome-shaped selectivity is something that can be informed by other data, and has a strong impact on the amount of -- So these are my proposals for things that would be priorities, but you can disagree. The downweighting of a survey is easy, and the upweighting, and these are simple things to do, relatively speaking, and so they're almost priorities by convenience, and we can do those quite quickly.

I would say, again, this latent effort is something which is a future impact, and I don't know how to get weather in there, and I'm not -- By the way, when we say "priority", we're talking about we'll try and do all of them, but it's just the ones that you will see in the next round, as it were, and I don't know about the weather effect and how to quantify that. That would depend on data, and my sense is that I would make that like a secondary thing.

The bag limit model depends on having additional data as well, and so that might come afterwards, and I don't know about the hurricane, and I don't know how we would parametrize density-dependent growth yet, although we can do it, and so, anyway, my first proposal would be this. It would be to try to do all, but do the red ones first, would be my -- That would be my first proposal, and the simplest thing to do here would be to say, you know -- Any strong objection that, I suppose?

MR. LORENZ: No, there doesn't seem to be, Tom. I know we may have had a question, and, Harry, did you have a question? Were you raising your hand to comment at some point?

MR. MORALES: Yes, and, Andrew, I thought you brought up that future recreational capacity, but, from the recreational standpoint, there is definitely an increase in technology, and, you know, with the virtual anchoring now, with the capability that goes along with the economic factors, and so, you know, these guys will tell you that the recreational fishermen now are getting bigger boats, more engines, and, you know, they've got better sonars, the virtual anchoring and so on, that just is going to increase the pressure on the fishery. Thank you.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and I think that comes under the first one, but it needs expansion, but, yes, it's this idea that the recreational capacity is essentially going up, due to efficiency changes, and that's another factor. It's not economic in this sense, and it's more like capacity, but I think it fits under that heading. I think it's the second model though, and so what I will do is I will just make a note that there is two variants of this. Again, we call this technology creep, and I don't know what you call it, but that's the fancy-sounding version of it.

MR. LORENZ: Tom, could I break in for a minute? I have a statement or two. One of the things that I was thinking about is what can we most easily do, and where can we pull out data that we

have by the current way that we perform our assessments, and I'm looking at what the Science Center and the SSC does, and so I was wondering, with some of these models -- Like future recreational capacity, and that's almost in the realm of somebody doing more of an economic analysis and prediction of the future on the money and the cycles that recreational fishing goes through, at least with respect to the economy, and so I see that maybe in sort of the economic area.

Future productivity changes due to climate, people are doing that, I think, on the whole east coast right now, and there are initiatives to see -- That's a separate kind of a study, on how the climate is affecting how species move. Then you have MRIP, your selectivity, downweight survey, and that's all being done, and so that's pretty good. Effect of weather on fishing pressure, that's almost like a survey, and that would be easy to do, but that would be almost like a little special project, because -- Again, it's almost been -- In the economic realm, it's just a different kind of a survey, and, you know, then it's more statistical, the bag limits, the hurricane effect, and cyclical regional availability, and there's no way to predict when that opportunity will occur, and so it's almost an excellent thing for some of these PhD theses in fisheries management, and then feed that in.

Density-dependent growth, again, I would like to comment, and I'm just surprised that isn't something we look at more in assessments, and I would think, the more concentrated the fish get, it does control how the population grows, and I would think that's -- The lower recruitment response in the northern regions, and, I mean, that's something we should also already know, and we should know that from our surveys, of how that has occurred in many species.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and I think it's worth reiterating, and I think we should try and get to all of these. There is a very important distinction between things which you can change an assessment model, for example, like the dome-shaped selectivity, and, as you're rightly pointed out, projections, which are very much more hypothetical, and so, normally, the way these things work is that the -- What's called a reference set of operating models, which is the ones that we use principally to select a management procedure, are different from what we call robustness set operating models, which are more like whimsy.

They would be closer to what if hurricanes did this, what if future -- What if there was density-dependent growth, and they are more like -- They just don't have data to necessarily support them, but they could be used for discriminating between management options. One thing you could say is, well, you like these five management options, but this one also survives all these whimsical tests, and why would we not also pick this one, and do you -- Like we didn't necessarily believe there was going to be a hurricane effect, but, with our regular set of operating models, our reference set, and we've got these five management things we're considering, and one of them though really does well in the hurricane.

The great thing about MSE is we don't need hard-and-fast evidence for the hurricane effect, and we're just picking something that we would have picked anyway, that happens to be robust to it, and so we would normally, at some point, distinguish between reference set and things which are more kind of whimsical, but we're not doing that yet though.

I think I've put a line here, and it's that, in most stock assessments, they have a -- Maybe I will just color this black, as a different color, but, in most stock assessments, they do a set of sensitivity analyses, and so what they've already done, what the technical team has done, is they have identified key things they don't know, and they have pre-calculated the results for those.

Those are pretty easy things to add as operating models, and the reason why you want to add them is not necessarily for you folks, that may not be 100 percent enthusiastic about the stock assessment, but what it does is it satisfies the technical teams involved in that that they've got those represented in this set of operating models, and so I've put them in here not because they necessarily interest you, but because they are cheap and easy things to add, which are consistent with things that have been documented in the stock assessment.

Anyway, if you guys look at this right now, and think, for any reason, that you would disagree with me prioritizing these first six, or, in fact, there's seven, or some version of those, and then including the stock assessment sensitivity analyses, do let us know now. I would recommend that, and then, once we have those, to then move on to the blue things that have been highlighted here.

The bottom line is -- Let's just say you buy -- Not buy-in, but you suspend your disbelief for a bit, and you want to look at how this calculator works, right, and let's say we get that far, and does this represent enough things that you would have confidence that a management option is robust? That's the whole question here, and like is it missing something? Is there something that should be in this list that would make you feel more comfortable in accepting a proposed management option? That's the real question here, because, if there's something in there that's like a pet idea, that would just -- If you go, well, I can't trust these results, because it doesn't have hurricane-induced reproductive success or something, and I don't know, but say now, you know.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Any commentary here from the AP on Tom's challenge to us on how we're endorsing the prioritization he has put forth? Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thanks, Bob. I think we're -- Overall, we're probably trusting, but we're also waiting for the results, and it probably will create its own questions.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Yes, and I think it's really worth pointing out that this process is highly iterative, and like you haven't seen this thing run through, and I've shown you a few figures, and, you know, you haven't told me what you're interested in, and there's no setting, where this has ever been done, where it just goes from start to finish through and everyone goes, great. There will be times where you're like, actually, we should have had this in there, and, actually, that's totally fine. This is not the end of things. This is the start, and it's just to get us going.

MR. LORENZ: Harry.

MR. MORALES: So, as I'm looking at that list, of course, the MRIP, the dome-shaped, and the commercial and for-hire logbooks, those are the three most significant things, and, in my mind, perhaps the most accurate, that would drive my thinking, as compared to everything else.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. Anyone else wish to comment? Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: I think the bag limit retention needs to have more importance there. That's the one tool that we consistently see thrown at us to reduce our catch and save the biomass that's out there, and definitely the weather. Even though a hurricane is a short-term incident, it certainly

keeps you from fishing, or, if you go shortly thereafter, it impacts how well the bite is, because of the turbulent water.

MR. LORENZ: I think someone agrees with you.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Absolutely. I think it's -- I mean, I think it's very important. You know, if we're really managing things, it's got to be a high importance.

DR. CARRUTHERS: Just a note on bag limits, right, and, basically, right now, doing the theory and the model for this in California halibut, and they actually have a multispecies fishery there, where the bag limits in one species affect the way that they fish, and it affects the catch in another, and the thing about bag limits that's interesting is that, if you have a lot of fish out there, and you have high catch rates, you hit your bag limit all the time, right, because you're catching tons of fish, and it's like, oh crap, I have to throw these back, right, but, when stock sizes are low, you're less likely to hit your bag limit, and so the interesting thing about bag limits is that they don't behave necessarily how you would expect a management system to behave.

They are most punitive when everything is going great, and they are most permissive when things are going badly, and so it's often really good to show people the impact of bag limits, because it's often not actually what fishery managers want, and, despite the fact that the thing I just said to you sounds very obvious, in retrospect, I'm not sure it's that obvious to managers in California, that, if they make a bag limit, it's punitive when things are going well and permissive when things are going badly, but, for these reasons, and the point that you gentlemen have made, I will add it to the red list.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Tom. Anyone else? Tom, it looks like we're kind of at the bottom of what this AP can give you at this point, with what we know.

DR. CARRUTHERS: No, and this has been really good. Thank you, guys.

MR. LORENZ: All right. With that announcement from Tom, I would like to thank him very much for speaking to us and presenting this to us today, and we could be at a stopping point here, and start for an early lunch, and I guess I will reference to Mike, and the next item we could do is the AP updates, but there's twenty-five minutes, and I'm just wondering whether we should just come back early from lunch or what. Okay, everyone. We're going to adjourn and pick this up sharply at 1:15.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: All right. We'll reconvene the AP, and the next item on our agenda is Item Number 6 on the agenda sheet, and this is going to be our updates to the golden tilefish and blueline tilefish fishery performance reports, I guess new information. I will hand it over to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, Bob, and so, for the fishery performance reports, I'm going to start with the Shiny application. If you go into Attachment -- I believe it's Attachment 6, and there's a link there at the top for -- It's says, "the council's FPR application", and that's the one you can click on. I'm going to actually present and run this from my computer, and so I will

expand this here, just so that I'm not running it from the web, and we don't have -- If you all want to get on the website, it doesn't slow down the presentation of this material for you.

First, I'm going to show the golden tilefish information. If you go into the application here, you can see this drop-down menu, and it goes through the fishery performance reports for all of the species that we've completed them for, and so you'll see golden tilefish there, and blueline tilefish is higher up in the list, and that was completed in 2019, and we'll start with golden tilefish first, and there is information for the Snapper Grouper AP denoted here, and that's what we'll address in this meeting, but you can also look at the data for past fishery performance reports. That's just in the next tab over.

Looking at the information for golden tilefish, we'll start off with the life history information, and the maximum observed age for golden tilefish is fifty-four years. You can see that growth pattern there. The growth gets to be asymptotic at about -- Just under thirty-five inches, and so that's kind of roughly the maximum size that we're looking at for most golden tilefish, is they will peak at, you know, probably about close to three feet.

You have a figure here describing the length and weight relationship. As far as maturity goes, that's always one of the topic questions that comes up. Females mature at about -- About 50 percent of them are mature at age-three, and that's at about seventeen inches, and 100 percent are mature by age-four, and that's about twenty inches, and all of this information comes from the last stock assessment for golden tilefish.

Next, looking at the index data that was included in the last assessment, one thing you will notice here is that it's very sporadic. It's not continuous. There's not much overlap between these. On the left, you see the commercial logbook index, and, on the right, you see the MARMAP index, and part of that comes from just MARMAP doesn't always sample in the areas where they would be encountering golden tilefish at a very high rate, and so that's why there is -- That's why there is some years where they found them, and some years they didn't, but we don't really have a very strong continuous index for golden tilefish, and one of the things that this highlights is really the need that is hopefully going to be met, moving forward, of the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey, or the SADLS survey, and that was started with a pilot program in 2019, and we did a few years, 2019, 2020, and 2021, kind of pilot testing, so that they would know how to sample appropriately with that survey.

Starting in 2022, and that was the first year where they have kind of the full sampling design, the randomized sampling implemented for that, and so the expectation is -- After a review of that survey and its design, the expectation is for that to be kind of online and usable by 2025, once they get the data from 2025, and that's when they have enough years to start to see the trend in the information, and so it would not be in this next stock assessment of golden tilefish, but it would be in the assessments in future years, and not just golden tilefish, but also the other species that would be encountered by that longline survey, and red snapper was mentioned, a little bit earlier in the meeting, as one that could potentially look at that survey, and it will come up for blueline tilefish as well, but the index data from the last assessment really highlights the need that is hopefully going to be addressed by that survey coming online.

Next, looking into the annual landings, the numbers that you see here -- First, we're looking at the commercial landings, and this data goes through the present year, and you can see that landings

had a drop when the ACL dropped, but they've been catching the ACL pretty tightly for the last several years. Most of the commercial landings are coming from the Georgia/Florida portion of the South Atlantic region, and there hasn't been a huge change in that over the long time series. There's some fluctuations in the mid-term, but, overall, it's kind of held similar proportions for most of that time series, and then we don't have any information discussing commercial releases for golden tilefish.

Looking next at the recreational information, one thing to remember, for golden tile, is that the annual catch limit is allocated mostly to the commercial side, and it's a -- We just passed an amendment that slightly tweaks this, but, in essence, it's a 97 to 3 split, 97 percent commercial and 3 percent recreational, and the new amendment changes that allocation to 96.7 and 3.3, and so not a huge shift in percentage points, but it is a technical shift to note, but that's why you see kind of the lower level of ACL, and the other thing to note is the scale that's shown here. The golden tilefish recreational side is measured in number of fish, rather than poundage, and so that's one thing to keep in mind as you look at this, but it still stands out.

You can see that the recreational landings of golden tilefish are well above the annual catch limit, for several years within this time series, and one thing that is especially noted for golden tilefish, with it being a deeper-water species that's not often intercepted by MRIP, is that there is a lot of uncertainty with the recreational estimates, and that is highlighted within the MRIP data, on MRIP's website, and it doesn't meet that criteria for it to be, I guess, considered the most reliable of estimates, and it has a very high percentage standard error, and so, although these estimates are -- You know, these are the data that we have, but there is notable uncertainty in these catch estimates, and that stems from just a lack of intercepts, a lack of the dockside folks coming into contact with many people that are catching golden tilefish.

Looking next at the recreational landings and how they come out by portions of the South Atlantic region, most of them are coming from the southern portion of the region, Georgia and Florida, with very small amounts coming from the Carolinas, and then, concerning recreational releases, there really aren't a whole lot of data on recreational releases, and, coming from the last fishery performance report, they're expected to be pretty minimal on both the commercial and recreational side.

Next, looking at the monthly and wave trends for the fishery, and I will go to commercial first, for the commercial side, the fishery starts at the beginning of the year, and, typically, the annual catch limit is caught probably by end of April, and typically -- The season for commercial typically closes somewhere between March and April, most often, and so that's why you see most of the landings coming in that portion of the year, when you look at it along the long time series, from 2000 to 2022, and, on the recreational side, most of the landings are coming during Waves 3 and 4, and those are your summer months, where recreational boats are more able to get out to the deeper water for golden tilefish.

For the economic information, going to the commercial side, and so our economic data starts in 2018, and there's not really enough years to see a really consistent trend in the total ex-vessel value associated with golden tilefish, and there doesn't seem to be a huge fluctuation, but you can kind of see where -- About the scale of the ex-vessel value that's associated with golden tilefish, and it sits around the one-and-a-half-million-dollar range, and, as far as the price per pound, you can see

fluctuations in the price per pound, ranging from about \$4.40 up to just above \$5.00, and that happened across that five-year scale.

Next, looking at the economic impacts data, the sales show a similar trend to the total ex-vessel price, and the income levels -- The same type of trend, but just a different scale, and then, finally, the estimated number of jobs associated, and a similar type of trend, but you just note a different scale, and so jobs are sitting just above -- On average, across those five years, just above 200 jobs associated, and the income is sitting about \$5.7 million, and the sales associated with commercial golden tilefish are about fifteen-and-a-half million across those years.

Then, for recreational economic impacts, one thing you see here is there's a noticeable drop, and that is very likely COVID-related, I would guess, from 2020 to 2021, but you observe the drop in the sales associated with recreational fishing activity, as well as the income there and the jobs. Associated jobs seem to be ranging between fifteen and thirty-five jobs associated with the recreational side, with income ranging from a little bit over \$800,000 to \$1.8 million, and then sales ranging from just under \$3 million to just over \$6 million associated with the recreational fishing activity.

That's the kind of preliminary information for golden tilefish, and I will pause here and see if there are any questions, before I move to blueline tilefish, and, I guess, before questions, kind of the format that we're thinking is, because these are both deepwater species, there's probably going to be some similar overlap in comments for these two, and so the plan is to kind of go through both at the same time, and so I will do golden tilefish data, take questions, and I'll do the blueline tilefish data, take questions, and then we'll go through the series of fishery performance report category questions and see, you know, do you have comments that are specific to golden, specific to blueline, or some comments that may be applicable for both, and so I will pause here and see if there are any golden tilefish data questions.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Are there questions for Mike? I will start with Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I see golden tile, and are you only calling out the longline, or is that the hook-and-line as well, because hook-and-line is still open, and I'm just --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: For -- You're thinking of the annual landings, as far as the --

MR. FISH: You had the economic impacts, and you had it closing in -- You said that it usually closes in April, and I just wonder if you take into account the hook-and-line vertical.

MR. POLSTON: Hook-and-line is 25 percent of the entire quota, but it's not broken out.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: No, it's not broken out, and that's total commercial, which is also why you see -- I mean, it doesn't go to zero in the later months, and it's just the majority, the bulk, of the harvest is going to happen in the earlier months of the year, because that's when -- That's when the longline is operating.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. John, you had your hand up, or was that your statement right there?

MR. POLSTON: I'm sorry, and I shouldn't have spoke earlier, but that was one of the questions that I was wondering about, is would it be beneficial to break them out separately, hook-and-line versus commercial, and just track it like that, because there's other questions that I have about too, like, for example, and that might be for later, but like if -- As far as I know, it's the only fishery that, if you have one endorsement, you're not allowed to get into there, and like, for example, I have four longline endorsements, and I have -- None of my boats are allowed to participate in the hook-and-line golden tile fishery, because I have longline endorsements, but I also have a black sea bass endorsement that I can hook-and-line all the black sea bass I want to, and so my question being, and it has been for years, and it was always directed to Ben, but why can't we do that, and then he said something ridiculous like, oh, you guys are highliners, whatever that means, but, I mean, literally I don't think it's fair, but that might be for a question for later on or whatever, but that's why I asked if it would be beneficial to show -- You know, break out hook-and-line versus longline.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I think that comment is something that we can put in. One of the sections of the fishery performance reports is management recommendations, and so that's a good comment for the management recommendations portion, when we get to that part of it. As far as breaking out the data, we're capable of breaking out the data, but we just don't have it done right here, but, if that's something that you would like to see, we can follow-up after the meeting, and we can provide you the information that you're looking for.

MR. LORENZ: Myra, you're recognized to speak.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Bob, and I just wanted to clarify a little bit more about that, and so, if you guys wanted to recommend to the council that the total ACL be broken by longline and hook-and-line gear, then that would mean that that total ACL would have to be monitored separately for each of the gear types. Right now, I think it's a gear allocation, but both sectors are fishing I think on the total ACL, or am I misremembering? Okay, and black sea bass is like that, and so, for black sea bass, you have the endorsements for the pots, and then you have the hook-and-line component for black sea bass, and those guys are fishing on one ACL, whereas the golden tilefish guys are fishing on two separate ACLs.

There is a little bit of a difference there, but, yes, like Mike said, I think that would be a recommendation that you guys could make to the council, and then they would give direction to, you know, work on an amendment, or put an action in an amendment, to look into that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Myra. Any other questions for Mike at this time for golden tilefish and the data he's presented so far? All right, Mike. It's quiet. Move on.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so, next, I will move on to blueline tilefish. Blueline tilefish, right here, we will go back and start with the beginning, with the life history information, and one thing to note, for this life history information, is that I believe this is -- This information is specifically for the south of Hatteras portion of the stock.

One thing to note, related to the blueline tilefish assessment, the last time around, is they determined that there was a single stock of blueline tilefish throughout the Atlantic region, and so that includes up into the Mid-Atlantic. It's all one continuous stock, but, because of the data that were available at that time, they had to model the south of Hatteras portion of the stock separately

from the north of Hatteras portion of the stock. Basically, there was an index that could inform the south model, to represent the south of Hatteras portion, but there wasn't a similar type of data that were available north of Cape Hatteras, and so that's why you'll see some pieces of this data, and I will try to point it out when I notice it, but some pieces of the information that are here or just for the south of Hatteras portion, because the north of Hatteras portion ended up being run with a data-limited model, and that didn't incorporate all of the information that necessarily is available in that area.

Like this growth figure that you see right here, this would be more for the south of Hatteras portion of the stock, and that would be primarily where these data came from, and so then, scrolling down, looking at the maturity information, what we have on maturity here is we have females being -- Basically going to maturity by six years, and at about twenty-one inches. In earlier portions, they have lower portions mature.

Again, this is information from the last stock assessment, and I know, since then, there's been some work done, especially in the Mid-Atlantic region. There was a PhD project that was completed, very recently, that may provide some more information on female maturity, especially for those smaller fish, and they were geared towards trying to look at some of those smaller fish and getting some maturity estimates there, and so the stock assessment team will take a look at some of that life history information, but that's what we have from the last stock assessment.

Next, moving into the index data, and so we have -- Again, these are going to be for that south of Hatteras portion, and we had indices looking at the commercial handline, commercial longline, and headboat. One thing to note is that these are all fishery-dependent indices, and there were no fishery-independent indices that were used in the last stock assessment, and, again, that was another one of the real reasons for the SADLS survey, the deepwater longline survey, to come online, and we're hoping to get information on blueline tilefish from that survey in future assessments, but that is also going to need to wait until after we have enough years of that survey, and so remember that probably isn't going to be usable in an assessment until we get the 2025 data, but it is running, and it's been running for several years now.

Next, looking at the annual landings of blueline tilefish, and so the landings take a bit of a shift from the data that I was showing before, in terms of the index and the life history. The landings are going to be for the entire South Atlantic region, and so that's the Virginia/North Carolina border south, and one of the things that came up with blueline tilefish is there is this portion of the stock in between Cape Hatteras and the Virginia/North Carolina border that is within the South Atlantic's jurisdiction, but there's a large portion of the landings that seem to come from that piece of the region, and so that's just one of the intricacies of this stock and how this fishery is prosecuted in this region.

We have the commercial landings that are shown here, and the landings have tracked, on the commercial side, pretty closely with the annual catch limit, especially in recent years. Looking at the composition of those commercial landings, a large majority of those are coming from the Carolinas, and a good chunk of that is probably coming from that region between Cape Hatteras and the Virginia/North Carolina border, that northern portion of North Carolina. There is limited information on commercial releases, but most of what we do have indicates that there are few commercial releases of blueline tilefish, and not very many of those.

Next, looking at the recreational sector, the recreational sector -- There has been some effect of very large fluctuations in landings. For blueline tilefish, especially looking in recent years, in 2020, there was a large jump in the recreational catch estimates, and blueline tilefish, similar to golden, does have some uncertainty issues with the recreational estimates at times, with high percent standard errors, and so sometimes those jumps in recreational landings can be -- I guess they need to be looked at accounting, or considering, that uncertainty associated with them.

Looking regionally, most of the recreational landings are coming from the Carolinas, and there's a larger portion coming from the southern end than what you have on the commercial sector, but there's still a pretty significant majority, especially in recent years, coming from the Carolinas, and then, for the recreational releases, there are a couple of spikes in the data, but, generally, the recreational releases of blueline tilefish are fairly low.

Next, looking at the monthly and wave landings, on the commercial side, you're going to get most of your commercial landings occurring in May through August, and that's what we see reflected here in the data. Then, on the recreational side, Wave 4, which is the July and August wave, that's really the significant point within the season, and we have had -- At least once within the last few years, there's been, you know, kind of that big Wave 4 jump, or, you know, kind of a high Wave 3, and there has been a recreational closure of the fishery mid-season, and so there has been some effects of that Wave 3, and if there's a large Wave 4 at times within the management recently.

Next, looking at commercial revenue and price, and so the ex-vessel value, in total dollars, that seems to be on an increase for blueline tilefish, and we kind of -- In contrast to golden, and golden seem to have a bit more fluctuation up and down. Blueline seems to be a bit more directional in its trend. For the ex-vessel price, in terms of price per pound, we see some fluctuation, and so that kind of indicates that there is, you know, increasing, or more sales potentially, of blueline tilefish, if the price is remaining about the same, but the value is going up.

Then, looking at the economic impacts on the commercial side, a similar type of trend. Commercial sales, they started in 2018 with this time series, and 2018 was at about two-and-a-half million dollars sales, and, in 2022, that was at about four-and-a-half million, and so an increasing trend there. Income associated with commercial blueline tilefish harvest was at about \$1 million in 2018, and increased to about one-and-a-half million by 2022, and associated commercial jobs have also increased, from about thirty-five to about fifty-seven, or fifty-eight, within that same timeframe.

Finally, the recreational economic impacts, and so sales associated with recreational fishing, and we did see another drop in that 2020 to 2021 timeframe. Otherwise, it does look like there is some decrease in the recreational sales associated with blueline tilefish, and that's reflected also in the income there and the jobs associated with recreational blueline fishing as well. That's the information we have for blueline, and I will pause here, to see if there are any questions on it.

MR. LORENZ: All right. We'll start with questions, and Robert Freeman had his hand up first.

MR. FREEMAN: Not so much a question, but a comment. When the catch limits on the snowies dropped so much, then who in their right mind is going to be out there trying to catch the tilefish, when you can't have any of them either, and so I think, if you compare the recreational grouper, or the snowy grouper, catches, and see how that compares with what you're seeing in the decline

in the tilefish, and I don't think it's the fact that the fish aren't there, but it's just the fishermen aren't there.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. Andy.

MR. PILAND: Your slide had the monthly recreational catches, and you had quite a big catch when the season is closed, before May and after September 1.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: One thing to note here is that this is the average from 2000 to 2022, and so it's going to have something outside of that, like from before that season was established, and that's where those landings are likely coming from, but that's likely what those are. If we shorten the timeframe there, I would imagine it's closer, but we would have to look at the data to be sure.

MR. PILAND: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any other questions for Mike on the data for golden tilefish? Okay, Mike. The next phase.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so I'm going to shift the presenting computer over, and, that way, we can start going through the fishery performance report questions and discussions. All right, and so, similar to previous fishery performance reports, we're going to go through this series of questions, and there is one that was noted by the analysts, and kind of added to this standard set of questions, but we'll go through each of these, and we'll see if there are any notes, or discussion, that you all would like to put down. I do have notes, within this document, that I will take time to pause on, so you can take a look at them and consider them and see has anything changed from your comments that you gave for golden tilefish in 2018, or blueline tilefish, and that was discussed in 2019, and, if it's been the same, then we can keep the information there. If it's changed, then let me know what to change there.

First, we're going to look specifically in kind of the more recent timeframe, and so the first question here would be have there been substantial changes to -- We'll go golden tile and blueline tile. We'll separate them out, and, if there are comments for both, then please say that, but have there been substantial changes in the golden tilefish fishery since 2018? If so, describe the timing, location, and potential causes of those changes.

MR. LORENZ: Andy.

MR. PILAND: Do you want answers to that now? Everything has changed. Accessibility from all the boats, the electronics, and all the gear has changed that's available to the fishermen, the braided line, accurate GPS, versus loran, the trolling motors holding the outboards in place, and what else, guys? Everything has changed.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else with some input there? Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: Not that the golden tile has changed, but I think it's been discussed that that's the only thing where they can go and catch something and keep it, because of the red snappers and the sharks, and everybody is going deeper, to get away from all that stuff and to get something they can keep, and I don't know if that was discussed in the past.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: In our area, you know, I'm seeing a lot more guys doing the ball drops, for sure, and that's -- That has increased, definitely. An increase in the ball drops, buoy gear.

MR. LORENZ: Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: Something else to add to Andy's is, you know, like the bathymetry maps that are available to fishermen now, and they've really taken a lot of the guesswork out of where to catch both species here, and all species in the complex, paired with the trolling motors, which take away all the expertise needed, just about, and then you couple that with smart electric reels, and, you know, just there's been a lot more pressure put on both of these species from the recreational sector, because there's just been a lot more awareness of it, through like magazine articles and Facebook posts and all that kind of stuff, and so definitely a lot more effort.

MR. LORENZ: Andy.

MR. PILAND: You could write "popularity and publicity".

MR. LORENZ: We have Vincent Bonura, and he hears us, but he has difficulty communicating with us on his mic, and he apparently wants to send comments in in writing for this, and he will have some for you.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Vincent, I see that you're online, and, if you want to contribute, then feel free to raise your hand. I will have you unmuted on our end, so that, if you're able to jump in, that you can.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else with comments here for the golden tilefish? We seem to be focused on that it has increased with the ability to go get after them, and that seems to be important. All right, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So I guess the same question related to blueline tilefish, and I would imagine that -- A lot of this stuff is not specific to golden tilefish, necessarily, and so would it generally be these similar types of bullets, or anything different that is specific to blueline tilefish?

MR. LORENZ: Andy.

MR. PILAND: Copy everything you just did.

MR. LORENZ: Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thanks, Bob. On blueline specifically, I think the rec sector, at least in South Carolina, it hits them a little better, and what Andy said was exactly true. A lot of it's due to snapper, and they just run deeper, and, because of the motors, they can. We don't see -- At least I don't see the rec sector, and, according to your scales, I don't see the rec sector catching as many goldens, but they're doing well on tile, blue tile.

MR. LORENZ: I haven't fished for these, or know anybody that is specifically going out for blueline tilefish in my area, but, to fall behind what Chris Conklin said, I have definitely seen, in sporting magazines, that there are articles written on blueline tilefish fishing, and particularly in Florida, and I think -- Though I don't get that many of them, but I will tell you that, in the past three months, there was a good article written in *Saltwater Sportsman* about blueline tile fishing and how good it is off of Miami and that sort of thing, and so it's definitely getting that media coverage.

MR. LORENZ: All right, and so we'll keep on moving down next to the behavior of the fishery, and so these questions don't need to all be answered necessarily in a point-by-point manner, and they're more here for discussion, and some of these are answered within the comments that you provided in your last performance report, and so if it's -- Again, if things are the same as what you reported last time we discussed these species, then we can note the changes, and we can also -- But, just concerning effort and gear, and I think some of that was touched on in the previous bullet point, and so there are some points there, but, any additional points on effort shifts to or from golden tilefish or blueline tilefish, and we can note those, and if there's any information on the timeframe, approximately, of when those shifts would have occurred, then that could be helpful.

Next is, you know, thinking of those changes that were just described before, if there's a rough timeline on about when some of these things became more popular, or came online, that can be helpful as well. Any changes, or information, on day versus night fishing for these species, any avoidance of golden or blueline tilefish to avoid catch species, and I know we heard a comment, before, about snowy grouper regulations changing, and so -- But any other species associated with that.

Then any information in terms of discards, and is there information that you all have on discards that wasn't necessarily covered in the reported information on discards, what was in the Shiny app, and, from the assessment analysts specifically, and this is something that they're trying to capture more and more in the stock assessments across the Southeast Science Center, is kind of what is the usage rate of discard mortality mitigation techniques, things like venting or descender devices, and are they used for blueline or golden tilefish, and, if so, how often are they used for these species.

There are notes that are shown here from golden tilefish, and we'll address these first. I'll zoom out, so we can try to see a little bit more of this, and so, from the 2018 fishery performance report, there was discussion about increased effort on the commercial hook-and-line component, and some new entrants to the fishery, new permits being acquired, some inactivity of the longline endorsement holders at that time, and then discussions of the timing of the longline season, when the closures were going into place, some historical information concerning the hook-and-line commercial component, some market information about different sizes entering the market for golden tilefish, and then getting into some recreational information, different regional portions there, and then some discussion of shark depredation at the time, and so, just looking at these comments, do these all still kind of fit?

Is there additional information for golden tilefish that should be added, or should any of this be changed, leading into the upcoming stock assessment, and this is looking specifically at the behavior of fishermen, and the fishery itself, and we'll get into some other components of it, the management, the biology, the ecology, of the stock, and this is more looking at how fishermen are acting in relation to golden tilefish right now.

MR. LORENZ: All right. For Mike, is there any input on the pursuing and the handling of the fish for the golden tilefish, in addition to what he has posted up there, or what's already been printed, or any changes that might have occurred, one way or another? James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Bob, thanks. Along with what you said a little bit about some of the articles, you know, about the blueline tile fishing, and, you know, kind of with the State of Florida, I think everybody here needs to kind of remember that, even in state waters in Florida, there's bluelines being harvested, and so, I mean, there is some take there as well, and none of that data would be exactly reflected in anything that we're seeing. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, James. Anyone else? All right, Mike. We're ready for blueline.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so similar types of questions here. Those same questions, as applicable to blueline tilefish, or, actually, before we move off of golden, just so that I can make sure we can address the question that the analysts gave, is there any use of descending devices, venting, anything like that, related to golden tilefish, or just no discarding really associated with that fishery at all? I'm seeing shaking heads, and so no discards, and so need for the mitigation techniques, really. I will make sure that I note that. All right.

Then, scrolling down to blueline tilefish, and so some of the comments -- I will just try to run through these really quickly, but, last time you all filled out this report, you reported that, especially off of Cape Hatteras, that there has been little change to the blueline fishery for the last twenty years, at that time, that blueline tilefish are a popular thing when dolphin are not available, for the charter industry especially, and there were reported abundances off of areas outside of the South Atlantic, further north up into New Jersey, and then comments about the popularity, especially off of Hatteras, North Carolina, and in that region between Hatteras and the Virginia/North Carolina border.

Off of Morehead City, we had reports of that region, for blueline tilefish, being primarily a bycatch of the snowy grouper fishery, and then similar areas of abundance off of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, and, again, in that area, it was reported that there was some shift from snowy grouper being in that area to now being more prominent with blueline tilefish. There was discussion, off of Florida, of blueline tilefish having availability similar to historical levels, being caught with snowy grouper as bycatch in that area as well, and then, for the Florida Keys, blueline tilefish were discussed as not having much attention from the commercial industry at that time, but having some abundance in the area, and then some effort increase in south Florida, and a note about discards being minimal for both sectors at that time. We'll see if there is any changes that weren't noted within those comments, or additions.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Andy.

MR. PILAND: Up at the top, where it says they're caught in thirty to forty fathoms off of Ocracoke, I think that should be Oregon Inlet, or I know it should be Oregon Inlet.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andy.

MR. PILAND: A second comment is the juveniles cohabitate with the adults.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We've got that a little bit later down in the report.

MR. LORENZ: Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I have seen, in South Carolina, an increase, and especially I've seen it over the last three years, or maybe four, and a lot of guys are going deeper for swords, and this is while they're out there, but they're headed -- What drove them that way was between snapper and sharks. As Andy mentioned, the sharks incredibly thick, and it turns out that we have -- In South Carolina, we have both a good swordfish and a blue tile, and so that's kind of where a lot of the bigger, faster boats have migrated towards.

MR. LORENZ: Tony, I think that's good, and it probably looks like -- We keep hearing, and reading, about things like blueline tilefish, and so I think, compared to the last time we talked about it, back five years ago, the boats have only gotten better in performance, and safety, and the gear, and the sonar, and everything else, the auxiliary gear on the boat to be able to pursue this fishery, and it looks like everything above is holding up, and probably is true today, other than the fact there will be more and more people in the recreational sector that could safely access that fishery, should they desire. Is there anyone else that had any comments? Okay, Mike, and it looks like steady as it goes on the blueline.

MR. CONSTANT: Just a mention, tied back to the shark population, is, you know, they've been protected to the point where it's really -- In my opinion, they need some harvest, but just one trip of mine a month ago, and we either caught a shark or everything we got was eaten by a shark, and it was that bad, including six grouper, and it was a pretty messy day for sharks. Finally, we decided to, you know, just go ahead and land a few, and they were seven to nine feet long. It was a very aggressive day.

MR. LORENZ: Wow. Out of interest, what kind of sharks?

MR. CONSTANT: (Mr. Constant's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Anyone else? Are we ready to move on to socioeconomic influences? Okay, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, next, looking at the social and economic influences, some of the questions that are here to kind of motivate discussion on this topic are, for the commercial sector, how has price and demand changed? Is there any increase in the specific size? How has demand changed on the recreational side for charter and headboat trips for either of these species? How important are golden or blueline tilefish to those that operate businesses associated with those species? Are there specific communities that are dependent on either of these fisheries, and how have changes to the coastal infrastructure affected the fishing opportunities for these species, and then how have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in these fisheries?

Some of the comments from the last fishery performance report related to this for golden tilefish, it was noted, at the time, that there's a limited number of species that longline gear, on the commercial side, can be used to harvest, and so, given that limited number of species, and kind of

the short time that the longline fishery is open before it hits its ACL, there is definitely the need, for those who harvest golden tilefish with longlines, to have other species in their portfolio, or use other methods of fishing, in order to maintain their businesses.

There was some reliance noted, by Florida dealers, on the longline fleet during the time that that harvest is available, and it was noted, at the time, south of St. Lucie, with the bottom longline prohibition, the hook-and-line component has kind of more area from which they can harvest golden tilefish, and there was discussion, at the time, of increasing price and demand for golden tilefish. There were an alternative to -- You know, a white-meat alternative to some of the shallow-water grouper that are not available during the shallow-water grouper closure that happens at the beginning of the year, and so they are easily sold, when they're available, especially if grouper are not available, and so that's what we have for the golden tile fishery, and we're looking to see if these things are still holding right now or if any changes to the report should be made.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any input on the commercial fishery, I guess, there for golden tilefish? Any additions? Any information? John.

MR. POLSTON: Once again, I'm not sure if this is the time to ask the question or whatever, but, as the industry, commercial golden tile, we've asked for an opening either like the 15th of January, rather than the first, or even as much as February the 1st, and the reasoning is economic, because - - Well, there's a couple of things. If you're in the wreckfish fishery, it gives you another week, or ten days, to fish in that fishery before you have to start golden tile fishing, and the second thing, for economics, is the golden tile -- The grouper that comes from Mexico, I believe it closes on the 15th of January, or something like that, and so it gets you away from the imported grouper, to where it gives you a much better handle to be able to get the boats a better vessel price, because you're getting further away from imported fish, and, as it says up there, you've basically got one of the only white-meat fish on the market.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thanks, John, and, actually, that action, or that management part, was changed, and I'm still trying to figure out if it's going into effect for 2024, but, in an amendment that was passed earlier this year, Amendment 52, the council did modify the start of the longline fishing season to begin on January 15. I don't know, Myra, if you have any note on the implementation date for that amendment, if it's going to be able to get in by the 2024 season, or if it would be 2025.

MS. BROUWER: That's what NMFS has told me they're trying really hard to do, and so they are working to have those catch levels in place for the start of the year, and, yes, the January 15 would be the start, and so the fishing year is still the calendar year, but there was -- We're delaying the onset of fishing with longline gear, for all the reasons that you all provided to the council.

MR. POLSTON: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Randy, did you have a question, or a statement?

MR. MCKINLEY: Yes, and I just had a statement about the importance -- From my standpoint as a retail seafood dealer, it is so important, and it's going to get more so, the availability of having

that white fish, and I have made a stand that I just don't want to carry any imported reef fish, and so it is very important, and, a few years ago, you know, when you were trying to encourage people to try it, they didn't know anything about it, but, each year, more and more people are asking for it, and trying it, and so the demand is going to get more and more for it.

MR. LORENZ: I can endorse that, Randy. I started to buy tilefish, and I love it, when I purchase fish. Thank you, thank you. Anyone else have a comment? Okay, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Next, moving to blueline tilefish, in 2019, comments noted that the demand, at that time, for blueline tilefish had been increasing for both sectors, and then some comments related to North Carolina fishing. For Atlantic Beach, it was becoming more popular as a request for charter clients. North of Wilmington, in North Carolina, blueline tilefish were a small portion of the commercial catch, but they had been showing increases, or had been showing a steady price per pound, and so, even though they are not as desirable as golden tilefish, they have kind of held their price per pound, at that time.

There was more recognition of tilefish, and so blueline tilefish also seems to be a little bit more in demand, and that was noted in a few different areas. It was pointed out, a couple of times, that golden tilefish is the more desirable of the two, and blueline isn't necessarily a substitute for golden, but there is still kind of that general recognition of tilefish, and it's associated with blueline as well, and that seems to be the case in several different areas, or some price information that was put out at the time, that we can kind of compare to what we saw more recently, and then, finally, it was noted that blueline tilefish are very important, especially in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, for the for-hire industry, as an alternative fish to go after if dolphin are not available. These are the notes that we have from the last performance report related to the social and economic factors, and we can make changes as you all request.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any input for Mike on changes to the socioeconomic aspects of this? I do see numbers in there, which, obviously, must have changed. If anybody is knowledgeable perhaps on those prices that you're getting, there's quite a bit about that, and it seems like the information on demand, and the desirability, hasn't changed, but I don't know, and do we want to update any of those figures that are in there, particularly with the prices for the fish? Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I can tell you that I've paid a lot more than that for it, but I may be -- I'm getting it delivered to my front door, and so that makes a big difference, but they're fresh, and I know the guy is probably making quite a bit doing it, but I would almost double those prices, from what I'm paying.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Anybody else? Okay. I know that I, at retail, can pay \$28 to \$30 a pound, but I don't know what the dealer is paying for it. That is totally filleted in a retail shop near the beach. All right. Anyone else? I think, Mike, we're going to be waiting for some input that James will be getting from someone. Andy.

MR. PILAND: The Oregon Inlet group relies on the tilefish pretty heavy, and the shark population is so large up there that they're not able to land the tunas that they hook. Catching one out of ten is a good day for those guys on yellowfin, and some days it's zero landing, versus hooked fish. There are so many sharks.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The sharks -- The issues with the sharks are coming with the blueline tilefish fishery or the further inshore fisheries or both?

MR. PILAND: The sharks are not bad on the tilefish, and it's on the other fish, and they have to rely on -- They have to satisfy the customers with bluelines, because they can't land the other fishes.

MR. LORENZ: Robert.

MR. FREEMAN: The last experience, this past week, we saw a seven-foot hammerhead, and, the previous trip, they wound up with probably a fifteen-pound grouper head that had been shark eaten, and so they're out there, and we also saw one of those elusive sea turtles, and he came up and waved at us and swam off.

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

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, next moving down to management measures, some of the comments that were related to last time around for golden tilefish, and there was a suggestion, or there was a comment, that lowering the commercial longline trip limit would not be an effective measure to extend the season, but it would hurt profits in the interim, and so there was a recommendation against considering lowering that trip limit.

There were some mixed opinions on raising the commercial hook-and-line trip limit, which is at 500 pounds. Some of the comments surrounding that discussion is there was a note that the hook-and-line component was harvesting its ACL, and so a higher trip limit would reduce the need for back-to-back trips. However, if the higher trip limit went into place, and that caused the closure - - If that caused the closure of the fishery earlier in the year, then that would leave dealers, and consumers, without some products that they depend on from golden tilefish.

There could also be some flooding of the market, with faster harvests, if there's an increased trip limit, and then there was a comment that hook-and-line fishermen often catch golden tilefish with other species, such as snowy grouper and blueline, depending on the area that they're fishing in, and so, if there's a closure on golden when those other species are open, then that could become problematic, in terms of discards, and then a trip limit could also incentivize new entrants into the fishery, but, at the time, and I guess also kind of through the present, the ACL is being harvested by the current fleet, and so this could crowd the fishery and reduce profits for those that are already participating.

There was a suggestion -- Separate from that discussion, there was a suggestion of permit stacking that could be considered to make the trips more efficient, while not specifically increasing the trip limit across-the-board, and then, finally, there was a comment of buoy gear being used regularly to fish for golden tile off the Florida Keys and the Carolinas, and so, any comments related to management measures, we can take those down, and I think we heard one earlier, if you can just remind me of it.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any input, or changes, with respect to the management efforts? It looks like all of this above had been with respect to commercial fishing, the gears and the amounts you can take, and I'm wondering if anybody will -- I noticed that there's nothing mentioned on the

recreational fishing, with respect to management measures, and so, if anybody has anything to say on that, that would probably be appreciated. With that, I will go to Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: Is that an actual rule, the ten pounds on buoy gear, or that was just somebody's comment, if I may ask that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: That came from a comment, and I think somebody was describing what buoy gear was, and that was part of their description.

MR. LORENZ: Joe.

MR. MATTHEWS: This is just a question, and is buoy gear regulated as a hook-and-line gear for the commercial, or is it treated as a -- Do you fish with it under a longline permit? Just hook-and-line?

MR. LORENZ: John.

MR. POLSTON: To answer your question, they may consider it a hook-and-line, but, if you're sword fishing, in order to be able to buoy gear fish, you have to have either a hand-gear permit or you have the directed swordfish permit, and so, on the golden tile, if it's hook-and-line -- Did you say it's hook-and-line? Is that what somebody said? I guess it's hook-and-line, but it's different, I know, in the swordfish. Is this -- Sorry, Mike, but is the time that you want me to bring what I said before? Okay.

What I would like to be able to do, myself personally, or my boats, is I would like for them to be able to -- Because I have longline endorsements, I would still like to be able to participate in the hook-and-line golden tile fishery, because, once our quota is met, for us, it could help us to still be able to continue to fish, when a lot of the other quotas are already closed off at that time, and sometimes it's snowy, and it just depends, but it could help us a lot, and not only myself, but I know Vincent -- He sent me a text, and he's interested in that as well, and I'm sure any of the guys that are participating in the longline industry would be interested in being able to do it as well. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Go ahead, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just to kind of clarify the recommendation here, would this be something where there would be, I guess, co-participation in both the longline and hook-and-line at the same time, or you're able to use the same vessel, but it's just on -- You know, when it's longline season, this vessel is a longline vessel. When it's only hook-and-line season is open at that time, this vessel is now eligible to be a hook-and-line vessel as well, at that time, but not both at the same time, and is that kind of what you're thinking?

MR. POLSTON: Yes, sir. That's correct.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, John. James, did you have a comment?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: More of a clarification question, and Mike did ask a question that I was curious about, and would those vessels then have to remove any of the longline equipment that, you know, they would normally carry on that boat, and is that even possible? Thanks.

MR. POLSTON: Yes, and what you would have to do is disable the longline, and there's a few ways you can do that. You can take the level line off, and you can take the motor off the longline spool, and it's considered disabled, and so, yes, without moving the longline spool itself, and so it is possible, in case you wanted to go back to sharks or whatever you wanted to do where you needed the spool, and you could connect it back up and go back to a different fishery.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, John. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't -- I have hook-and-line buddies that -- I don't know how far back the history goes, but, at one time, it was all one golden longline ACL, and then they got the longline endorsement, and so would the longline endorsement guys -- Or would the -- If you're saying it's not fair that you can't go hook-and-lining, can the hook-and-line guys go longline? I know they have to have their longline endorsement, but there's not some fairness in this ask, is what I'm getting at.

MR. LORENZ: All right. James wants to respond first.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I think that's an excellent point, and maybe -- The way that it is now, maybe that endorsement becomes something that is transferable, and there might be some monetary value attached to that endorsement, you know, and it's not open for new entrants, necessarily, and maybe you have to buy somebody out to have access to that. I don't know, and it's a really good question, I mean, because historical gear practices -- You know, they are meaningful, and people build businesses around them. Thank you.

MR. POLSTON: The answer to that is, if any of your guys -- Or not your guys, but friends that want to go longlining, all they have to do is just exactly like I do, and is just buy a permit, and they're only a hundred-grand, and so that's all you've got to do. Buy as many as you want to that are available out there, but it's not a cheap thing to do, and I'm not making fun of it, but the point is it's not unfair.

I mean, I wanted more permits, and so I bought more, and it was a business decision, and I -- As well as I think, because I have four grouper snapper endorsements, I should be able to participate in the hook-and-line, as well as the other people should be able to. I have longline endorsements, and I agree with that, but there's no unfair there. They could get into it too, if they wanted to.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, John. Andrew.

MR. FISH: I completely understand all of that, but I think the large base of the my peer group, and the guys my age, they didn't buy into this fishery, and they've been in it their whole life, and, for those guys to go buy a \$100,000 permit, it really isn't in their means, or in their historical makeup of who they are as fishermen as well, and I just wanted to say that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andy. Myra would like to speak. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just a little bit of history, for those of you who may be new on the AP, on this issue of the endorsements for the longline fishery, and so the council, when they first put in the endorsement program, that was in -- I don't know, and it was a lot of years ago, and Amendment 18B I think it was, and there was a whole process for eligibility, since it's a limited-entry type of thing, and there's only twenty-two, I think, endorsements for longline vessels in the South Atlantic, or twenty-three, and then, subsequently, after that endorsement program went into place, there was still some -- There was not enough clarity as to what the council had initially intended when they put in that endorsement program, and it was not to do what John is suggesting.

You know, initially, it was like, well, you know, if we have the endorsement, can we still participate in the hook-and-line fishery, and we did an amendment, and we went through, and we did public hearings, to clarify that that was not the council's original intent. That's not to say that they can't go back and reconsider the same thing, but I just wanted to make it clear that that has been considered in the past.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Myra. John, do you have a response?

MR. POLSTON: Yes, I do. I went to every meeting, and I was fighting that the whole way, when it was being -- Because it was creating a boutique fishery for somebody that was very powerful, and actually on the council, and they were in that fishery, which I think they should have had to exclude themselves from talking about that, but, anyhow, that was the person that told me that we didn't belong in their fishery, and it got passed, and they also went from, historically, at one time, producing 10 percent of the fishery, and they also got it passed where they get 25 percent of the fishery, which is another very big move, as far as the financial part of it, when you take 25 percent away from the longline, or it's not 25, and I'm sorry, and it would have been 15 percent difference taken away from the longline and put over to the hook-and-line. That's another big financial thing.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, John. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I am speaking with buddies, via text, and it has come to my attention that they said that there was a discussion that they were supposed to have a hook-and-line endorsement, and it was talked about in several meetings, and then it got jerked away from them, but my buddy is upset at this, and, unfortunately, I'm not savvy enough on the whole thing, but there is a lot of discussion, and there is a lot of hook-and-line fishermen that don't think there's enough fish to have the longline guys and the -- Working throughout the whole year, and I'm sorry that I can't speak better on that, but I'm learning more, but respectfully.

MR. LORENZ: No, and that's great, Andy, and thank you to everyone else, and to Myra, for the conversation, and this is the kind of tough stuff that we and the council get into when we get into aspects where people are looking for better economic opportunity, and on a limited supply of the fish, and so none probably at all. Thank you very much. Anyone else have a comment? John, you're looking at me. Did you want to say something again?

MR. POLSTON: Yes, and I was just going to say it's very simple, and all the council has to do is raise the quota, and then there will be plenty for everyone.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, John.

MR. POLSTON: And it's not being overfished, or overfishing is not occurring, but we've been cut from a million pounds down to I think it's 400,000 or something like that.

MR. LORENZ: Mike, are you going to note that, that all the council has to do is increase the quota, as an option? Maybe just record it as an opinion or something. Okay, Mike. Where we are we next?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, next, we'll slide down to blueline tilefish, and I guess, kind of along the lines of the last comment, like the last blueline tilefish performance report, and the AP reported that the ACL for blueline tilefish is too low, and so, if that's a comment that you want to make related to golden tilefish, then feel free to do so, but any other management suggestions that you all have for blueline tilefish would be welcome at this time.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Any comments on blueline tilefish that would mirror, or parallel, the thoughts that we had with the goldens? Myra, I saw you sat down, and I will recognize you, and you can speak.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you. Just to remind you of what is going into place with this amendment that we were just talking about, and so, for golden tilefish, the catch levels are going up, slightly, but they're going up, and so that's good. There is an action in there to revise the accountability measure for golden tilefish for the recreational sector, and also for blueline, and so I wanted to bring that up, and so, for blueline, there is even more changes.

The bag limit is being reduced to two per person per day, and there is no retention that is going to be allowed for captain and crew, and so that's different than how it is now, and the accountability measure for the recreational sector is also going to change, and so the way the council has requested that the agency put that into place is the agency is going to predict the length of the season based on the historical information, or the previous year's catch rates.

Then they're going to let the public know that, this year, the season is going to last starting May 1 through whatever it is, and so that's a little bit different than it is happening right now, and so I just wanted to make sure everybody knew what's coming with this amendment that we were just talking about a bit ago.

MR. LORENZ: So, Myra, as you mentioned, the accountability measures for the recreational component, does that then mean that the recreational component is going above the ACL?

MS. BROUWER: The concern was that there were some overages, yes. In recent years, there were overages of the recreational ACL, and there was some concern that the agency didn't have enough information to be able to close the fishery in-season, because the season is so short, right, and it starts on May 1 and ends at the end of August, and, for that reason, the council said, well, you know, let's review how this is done, you know, what information NMFS is using to project those catch rates and tell fishermen this is how long you have to fish, and let's just make it so that, you know, each year, you guys can tell us, you know, how long we have, and so that we're not going to be going over every year, and so that was the intent of the council.

Of course, there are stock assessments for both of these species coming up, and that's why we're talking about them now, and so, you know, we'll see how things change in the future, and I believe

those are scheduled to begin in 2024, for blueline and for golden, somewhere in there, and so they are coming up.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Myra. Tony, did you have a comment?

MR. CONSTANT: Yes, and this might be for Myra. How are the rec guys going to report?

MS. BROUWER: The same way -- I mean, nothing is changing regarding reporting for private recreational.

MR. CONSTANT: I mean, I don't disagree, and it's just those numbers are hard to grasp.

MR. LORENZ: Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: I would suggest that we be very careful what we do in the tile fishery. That is definitely going to have an impact on discards in the snowies if you don't change that. They just cohabitate. I've been fishing out there since 1972, and we used to go when all we had was a compass to get us there and get us back, and we would do things like make a homemade rig to put us back to where we just caught a fish, a cane pole with jugs on it and a bunch of line and some weight. No GPS, and no loran and all that kind of stuff, and so these fisheries are tied together, and I think we jeopardize one fishery to liberalize the other, and so I just caution what we do here.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. That's excellent input. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just a clarification, because this has come up in several assessments now, and it comes up a bunch related to blueline tilefish and snowy grouper and the cohabitation, and so my impression, from everything that I've heard, is that the two are found together, generally south of Hatteras, but the Hatteras to Virginia/North Carolina portion -- They're a bit more separated, and can anybody inform -- Is that kind of the case, or are they overlapping everywhere?

MR. LORENZ: Andy.

MR. PILAND: That's true.

MR. LORENZ: Go ahead, Andy. Continue on.

MR. PILAND: Especially the further north you go.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Mike. Does anyone else have any comments, or notes, for the blueline tilefish fishery performance report, or, Mike, do you want to take it from here?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. If there are no other comments related to management at this time, next, we're looking at kind of the biological, ecological, and environmental aspects of the population, and so have there been any perceived changes in the abundance of golden or blueline tilefish? Are you having any harder time catching them, or are they located in any different area than where you caught them in previous times? Has the size of fish that you have encountered changed at all? Have there been any kind of environmental conditions or things that have happened

that have affected your ability to catch golden or blueline tilefish or the types of fish you're catching?

Any observations on the spawning season? Anything you're seeing in terms of recruitment of small fish? I know we heard some comments related to that, and I will get to those in the previous report notes. Any changes on bottom type or the number of fishable days that are available to you over the course of the year? Then any change in the species that are caught with golden or blueline tile?

For golden tilefish, some of the notes from the last time are that they were available year-round off the Florida Keys, with different sizes of fish found at different depths, and there have been some shifts in effort, in response to closures of other south Florida species, like yellowtail snapper, spiny lobster, or jacks. For cohabitating species off the Florida Keys, there were noted blackbelly rosefish, some deepwater snappers, and other deepwater-associated species.

With the introduction of that peewee category, and that seemed to be a fairly recent phenomenon at the last fishery performance report, but it was noted that there were more small fish being caught because of that, although the size range of the fish didn't seem to have shifted all that much, and so that was the shift in the composition of the catch and not necessarily in the size range of the population, composition of the population, itself, because the commercial sector had changed their behavior to target smaller fish.

There was discussion, last time, about how the implementation of the Oculina Bank HAPC affected golden tilefish off of Canaveral, with different sizes at different depths, and this affected the size of fish that were being harvested in that area, and then there were comments, last time, about, I guess, a lack of impact of hurricanes, but more impact, potentially, of freshwater releases off of Florida from Lake Okeechobee, with some observances of deepwater fish being less likely to bite, and there being some reduced fish bites in the nearshore areas when those freshwater releases occurred, and so I will pause here and see if there are any changes, or additional comments, for golden tilefish and what you all are seeing for their biology or environments.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any input for Mike? I guess these could be additions or changes or anything you noted. It is interesting that the hurricanes, with that impact of freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee -- From what I have observed from up here, Florida had definitely a lot of Lake Okeechobee water polluting their coastline, and so I was wondering if that question was answered by now, but does anybody have any input for Mike? Robert.

MR. FREEMAN: Just some historical input, and the area about twenty or twenty-five miles northeast of the Big Rock, there's some thirty-five to forty-five-fathom water there that we'll be targeting triggerfish, but we'll catch the juvenile golden tile, twelve to fifteen-inch fish, and sometimes you may catch a half-a-dozen of them in a day, you know, fishing that area, and so they're scattered out. It's always the juveniles, and never a big one caught.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. Anyone else have any input? Chris.

MR. MILITELLO: I just don't think that Lake Okeechobee is going to affect 500 to 700-foot water. I just don't think that's the case.

MR. LORENZ: Well, that was a thought. I saw that on there, and I was thinking, like, if it was 2018, we didn't experience what had happened the past few years down in Florida, and so I'm sure they answered that question. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I would disagree. You know, if there is the rip charts and stuff like that, you can see that, yes, the fresh water is on the surface, but that water is usually Gulf Stream blue, and the tilefish fishery is generally a daylight fishery, and, if there is twenty feet of murky, green water on the surface, I think it is impacting the deepwater species. Just saying.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Then noted, and the only reason that I wanted to bring it up, you know, living in North Carolina, but I know, to give people in south Florida some help, I mean, there's been a lot of angst between, you know, the sugar barons and what goes on near Lake Okeechobee, and that water goes out and pollutes both coasts, and you get everything else, from blue-green algae, and, boy, if it was affecting deepwater species, then wow.

MR. FISH: I think there is some cases where the spawn actually comes to the surface and travels with the Gulf Stream, and I know that wreckfish are -- I think they're on the surface when they're small, and, actually, there's a lot of unknowns there and stuff to think about.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Anyone else? Okay, Mike. We're at the bottom on that one.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Next to blueline tilefish, and so there was a description of their range, from New York through the Keys, and this was noted, and I think Todd may have brought this up last time around, but that there wasn't currently a regional, or cross-regional, survey that tracked abundance for blueline tilefish, and that's something that we're hoping to address through the SADLS survey, and so I will go ahead and note "SADLS" right there, just as something that's going to change in the future for that regard, but, off of Cape Hatteras, it was noted that small blueline tilefish coexist with larger fish. However, the hook size was limiting in the catch for small blueline tilefish, and switching hooks could increase the catches for the small individuals.

There was also a note that small fish may be a bit deeper than the areas where there is kind of a more mixed bag, and there was some depth profiles that were put out there, and so the biggest blueline are being found around 110 fathoms, and, between eighty and a hundred fathoms, there was a mixture of medium-sized and small blueline tilefish, and this was noted off of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

For spawning, it was noted that that would occur throughout the fishing season, which is May through August. From St. Augustine to Ponce Inlet, blueline tilefish juveniles seem to be -- They were coexisting with small snowy grouper. Off of South Carolina, blueline tilefish were noted as being caught with larger snowy grouper. Medium-sized blueline tilefish were noted to be caught on the same hooks used for small to medium and large snowy grouper.

Off of the Florida Keys and south Florida, there was a mixture of small blueline tilefish with larger blueline tilefish, but there was some hook restriction there in getting the catch. When smaller hooks are used to target species like porgy, that's when you catch the small blueline tilefish. There was a comment off of Morehead City, about rougher seas being observed more frequently at that time, than had been seen back to the 1980s. Also, with -- There was an increase to the commercial

snowy grouper ACL in 2015, and so, at that time, commercial fishermen were interacting more with blueline tilefish, because they were targeting snowy grouper.

Off of east Florida, there were noted cold-water events that can impact fishing, by forcing the fishing further offshore, towards the western edge of the Gulf Stream, where there is warmer water. There was some concern expressed, at that time, about melting polar ice and effects on ocean currents and traditional fishing areas, as well as observations of algae in rock shrimp nets in areas that didn't previously have this issue. There was some more discussion of the Oculina Bank closed area and how there is the anchoring restriction there, and so fishermen had been adapting practices to catch blueline tilefish and snowy grouper in that region.

There was some more discussion about the Lake Okeechobee freshwater releases, causing fishermen to move further offshore, and then discussion about shark depredation at that time, notably by hammerheads, and how increasing shark populations can continue, or expand, this effect, and so that's what we had last time around for blueline tilefish biology and environment and ecology. If you have any changes, or additions, please let me know.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Comments from the AP on changes or additions? What it looks like, from what list was, if that was true then, I see nothing that has probably changed any of what was listed above, to be any different. If anything else, it has just, you know, moved on, but anybody with any comments or additions or anything they think may be incorrect? Andy.

MR. PILAND: What I've found so far, in studying the small blueline tilefish, is, anywhere there's a big one, the little ones are there too, and it don't matter what the depth is. If you find them in thirty fathoms, it's babies with the big ones. If you're fishing in 130 fathoms, the babies are right there with them in the same area.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. John.

MR. POLSTON: I was just going to bring up something that I was talking to one of the fishermen about, and it was probably two or three years ago, and, even then, the -- I believe he said that he had seen like three sandbar sharks out there, and we've always had bad interaction with sharks, but it was always normally always hammerheads, or, every now and again, a Cuban night or something to that effect, but, actually, the sandbars have gotten so bad, as far as they're after the tilefish, they're all the way out in the 600 to 700 foot area, and that's how bad it's getting.

MR. LORENZ: So, if anything shark predation has probably just increased, and is that your statement? Okay. Sandbars now. Different species. Anyone else have any further comments? Okay, Mike. There's your update.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Then, finally, this is kind of our catchall question, and is there anything else important for the council, and I guess, also, we can add in there the assessment team, to know about golden tilefish or blueline tilefish? For golden tilefish, at the time of the last FPR, there was some eagerness to participate in cooperative research. Since then, there actually has been some cooperative efforts, and that's what got the SADLS off the ground, and so that is -- That's been initiated, and it's continuing moving forward, and so we're looking forward to the data that that will provide, but that was all that was there at that time, and is there any extra notes for golden tilefish that need to be noted and conveyed to the council and an assessment team?

MR. LORENZ: John, an answer?

MR. POLSTON: I would just -- Well, actually, it's not just golden tile, and the question is also for the red snapper, what Paul had brought up earlier, and if, at any time, there is interest for boats to -- Or I have interest anyhow, or my boats, to do other golden tile surveys, if need be, or, as far as that, some longline research on the red snapper too, because we did one, and we were asked to do it, and we did it, and it was only done one time, and, as far as I know, but I guess it was dropped because of money, but, if the money were there to do the deepwater fishery, we would be happy to go out and do it as a longliner boat.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, John. Anyone else have notes for the golden tilefish, or the blueline, and they're in there, also. Chris Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and I would welcome the opportunity for someone to start like a study on the effects of barotrauma on these deepwater fish and contract commercial fishermen to do the work, like take them out and use descending devices and tags to try and get some recoveries down the road.

MR. LORENZ: Chris, is that just for the goldens, as noted, or the bluelines, also?

MR. CONKLIN: Both.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Mike, did you have a question?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Chris, are you thinking of looking at possibly the survivability after release using a descending device, something like that, for some of these deeper-water species?

MR. CONKLIN: Sure, and especially to the comments earlier, when we were going through the simulation or whatever, that the information could be incorporated in the future and used.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Chris. Anyone else have comments? I'm looking around. Did I miss anybody? All right, Mike. That was it from the AP here.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and then, moving to blueline tilefish, the comments, kind of the last catchall comments that were there, there was some discussion about the longline survey and its development at that time. There were comments that more information is needed on recruitment and the lack of fishery-independent studies currently investigating that recruitment, and we may have filled some data gaps, but there is certainly more work to be done in that regard, and then a comment that vertical gear would be most appropriate, rather than longline gear, to try to sample juvenile fish, but I will pause here to see if there's any additional kind of end comments related to blueline tilefish specifically. I will note the barotrauma suggestion for both species, but anything related to blueline tilefish that the council, or the assessment team, needs to know.

MR. LORENZ: Andy.

MR. FISH: I've not done much longlining, but I would think that, with a longline, you would be able to, most likely, control your ascent rate easier than most would on your vertical gear, as far as

looking for barotrauma and stuff like that, maybe, but I guess you could slow it down too on your vertical as well, but you would want to simulate what your recreational and your commercial guys are going to do, if you're talking barotrauma.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Anyone else have a comment? All right. Robert Freeman.

MR. FREEMAN: In regard to barotrauma on the tilefish, a certain percentage of them come up with their intestines out their rectum. Now, I don't think you're going to send that fish back down there and do him any good.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. Okay, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and then kind of a final note, and so this is something that got brought up with red grouper, and I'm still working through getting the necessary apps updated for the stock risk rating, and we're okay, timing-wise, because the acceptable biological catch control rule amendment hasn't fully been implemented yet, and that is expected to finish up and be in place at the beginning of 2024, but, once that gets underway, what we're going to do, and this is something that we talked about a few meetings back, when that was under development, but the advisory panel is going to be advising the council on the appropriate risk level for each of the stocks that are being managed and going through assessment advice, and so characterizing that stock as having a high risk, a medium risk, or a low risk of overfishing, based on the characteristics of how the fishery catches that fish, how its biology works, the area, you know, it's desirability, different factors that are all in this consideration.

In a future meeting, I will come back with some more information on blueline and golden tilefish, and we'll go through the questionnaire there for you, to just give it a rating of high, medium, or low, and that will advise the council on whether they can be a bit more risk-prone or risk-averse, whether they should be a bit more conservative or more risky relating to some of the decisions that they make for managing these species, especially as it pertains to the acceptable biological catch, the overall annual catch that would be allowed, and so that's something that's just a note for the future, that we'll come back with that, but we're working on that, since the ABC Control Rule has been revised, and that new control rule is going to be going into place next year, and so, with that, that's all I have for the fishery performance report update, and I will pass it back to the Chair. Thank you, all, for all of your input.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Mike, and, in closing for that agenda item, any last open comments that anybody wants to make with respect to that fishery performance report? Okay. What we'll do is we'll take about a ten-minute break. When we get back, I will have Julia Byrd discuss the citizen science to us, and then we should have time to at least be able to begin the overview for the discussion of the limited entry for for-hire. All right, and so ten minutes, and that's about 3:12. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: All right. We will reconvene the AP meeting, and just a little swap-out in the schedule. We're going to get the citizen science update from Julia Byrd, and we'll have some requests for all of us, and so, Julia, it's yours.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, Bob, and good afternoon, everyone. Before getting started, I just wanted to give a shoutout to Meg Withers, who works on the Citizen Science Program with me, and she helped me kind of pull together our slides, and what we just wanted to really do was give you guys an update on what's been happening in the Citizen Science Program, and, as Bob mentioned, we're asking for some input on a few of our projects from you guys, and then, as I mentioned earlier yesterday, we have some citizen science advisory groups, and I would love to see if any of you guys are interested in participating in those.

First off, I will talk a little bit about our citizen science advisory groups, and so, to be a member of one of our citizen science advisory panels, you either have to be a member of a council AP, like you guys are, or you have to be a member of our Citizen Science Pool, and so we kind of have three different types of advisory panels. The first one is our operations committee, and this is a kind of smaller group that provides kind of big-picture programmatic guidance, and we've been really lucky to have Bob serving on this group since it was created back in 2017, or 2018, and this is a group that meets twice per year.

Typically, they have three to five-year appointments, and kind of our Operations Committee was created when we created the program, and so this is the first time that new appointments, or reappointments, will be made, and they will be made by the council in December of 2023, and so, if you're interested in getting involved in the program in kind of a big-picture way, this is a great group to apply for.

Then the group I really wanted to talk a little bit more about today with you guys is what we call our Projects Advisory Committee, and so this is the group that's made up of members of our different advisory panels, and one of their main responsibilities is helping us identify research needs that citizen science could help with over all of our different fishery management plans, and so this group has a big role in helping us figure out what types of projects we're going to develop, or support, within our program.

The term for this committee is dependent on kind of an individual's AP tenure, and this group normally meets one time a year, per webinar, and so it's not a really heavy lift, but it's really important that we get participation from folks across all of the different fishery management plans, because you guys are the ones who know your fishery well and what data gaps need to be filled and which ones you may be able to help fill through citizen science.

Then the last type of advisory panel we have -- The third type of advisory group we have, we have these things called ad hoc committees, and this is a short-term committee where you get together, and normally it's for typically around a year, and you basically help kind of review a certain component of the project, and so I know there are some kind of new faces around the table, but we had some of these ad hoc committees that we called action teams that helped us develop our program and came up with kind of the policies and procedures we follow, and so we currently don't have any active ad hoc committees, but I anticipate us needing some over the next kind of two or three years, and so what I really wanted to emphasize today, and see if we can have -- If there are any folks around the table who may be interested in participating in our Projects Advisory Committee.

Right now, Bob has been doing double-duty, serving on the Operations Committee as well as the Projects Advisory Committee, and Jimmy Hull was also on the Projects Advisory Committee, but,

as he kind of rotated off the AP, he's no longer serving on this committee, and so we're really interested in seeing if there are any other members of the Snapper Grouper AP who may be willing to serve on this group. Again, it's not a heavy lift, and it's participating in normally one meeting a year, but it's really important that we get folks from this group involved in this committee, so that we can ensure that some of our research priorities are going to meet the needs from the snapper grouper fishery.

MR. GOMEZ: Julia, that one meeting a year, is that at a location, or is that online?

MS. BYRD: It's online.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. I could do that.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, Richie.

MR. LORENZ: Richie, for the advisory, the projects advisory?

MS. BYRD: Yes, for the projects advisory.

MR. LORENZ: Very good, and do you want one or more?

MS. BYRD: We can have two.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Well, and I do want to mention to folks that it's very critical. As she said, you have to be on an AP, and so I'm on there now, but I will not be on this AP. I will have my nine years in in June, and so I have to vacate at that point, and so I'll be out of the way, and we need somebody else.

MS. BYRD: All right. I think I might have seen Andy raise his hand. All right. Great. Andy and Richie, thank you so much. I will send you all some additional information about that, and you wouldn't -- Your duties on this wouldn't start until 2024, and so you have a few months before kind of things would kick-off.

All right, and the next thing I wanted to update you guys on is a new kind of online tool that the Citizen Science Program is going to be launching later this year, and so this tool is basically an online form that can be used to gather kind of citizen science project ideas from stakeholders, and so, when we were developing the Citizen Science Program, this was one of the recommendations that was given to us. Folks who were on the water, fishermen or researchers within the fisheries community, have a lot of great ideas, and so we wanted to figure out a way that they could help contribute to kind of the ideas that our program would try to develop and pursue.

We've developed kind of an online form that's very simple, and it probably would take you less than ten minutes to fill out, just kind of describing kind of what the project would do, what type of volunteers would be needed for the project, and we're really hoping to use this information in a couple of ways, and so any ideas that were submitted would be reviewed by the Citizen Science Program twice a year, in May and October, and the ideas would be compiled and considered when we're updating our citizen science research priorities, which is every two years, and so, if ideas

come in that don't fit within our current research priorities, we could kind of update them, to kind of fill that idea that came in.

Then the other thing that we're really hoping that this online kind of project idea portal will do is help us connect fishermen and scientists that may have similar research interests, and so one of the things, when we started the program back in 2016, is, when we were talking about what we wanted the program to do, we kind of said it would be great to be like a matchmaking service for fishermen and scientists that may have similar research ideas, and so we're hoping that, by having kind of folks submit their ideas through this portal, that we can figure out if there are scientists and fishermen that are interested in the same thing, and help match them up, so they can kind of develop and work on a project together.

Then the next kind of -- I'm going to switch a little bit and update you guys on some of the projects we have going on, and then we'll ask for your input on a couple of the projects later in the presentation, and so, at your last meeting, I provided a quick update to you guys on some of this program evaluation work that we're doing, and, through this project, what we're really trying to do is to kind of get baseline information from fishermen and scientists and managers about how -
- Kind of what their opinions are about and their competence in using citizen science data in kind of a fishery management context.

The first step in this was conducting interviews with a really small group of fishermen, scientists, and managers, some of which served on this AP, and I shared information from that work with you guys at a past meeting, and so now we're in the next stage, where we're trying to gather information from a much larger group of fishermen, scientists, and managers.

We're doing that in two ways, and the first one is gather information from a broader group of scientists and managers, and we're working with a researcher, Rick Bonney, who is kind of our citizen science Yoda, or guru, that we've been working with, and he's doing an online survey with them, and it will be put out later this year, and then, to get information from a broader group of fishermen, we're working with a research team, led by Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, and she's doing interviews with a broader group of fishermen, and, because there are so many fishermen in our region, to kind of try to kind of make the pool of folks smaller, she's really focusing on folks who are in the snapper grouper fishery and the mackerel fishery, and they are going to be interviewing people in four geographic areas, and so they've already done interviews in two geographic areas, kind of the Keys area and the kind of central Florida area, and they'll be moving up into the Carolinas and Georgia in the upcoming months.

I mention this again just to let you know that, if you're contacted by Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, Brian Fluech, or Tracy Yandle, I would really encourage you to do an interview with one of them, and we're really interested in your feedback, and so, if one of them reaches out to you, please consider doing an interview, and then we'll be able to present results of this to you guys next fall, and this project will wrap-up next summer.

The next project that I wanted to provide a quick update to you guys on is our SMILE project, and this is the project where we're working with recreational divers to collect length information from some of our data-limited species, using kind of underwater stereo cameras, and so the REEF group is leading these efforts, and so the main part of this project is developing kind of this underwater camera that a diver could very easily use, and then testing it in the field in the Florida Keys, and

so they have developed this underwater kind of camera, and it's based on -- They are using an Olympus TG underwater camera, that a lot of divers already have and use, and they're building a mount on top of it with a laser, so that we're able to gather kind of video and images and then get length information from that video.

The camera was pilot tested in the Keys, in August and September of this year, and they'll be doing a little bit more testing this month, and so things are going really well with that project, and we're excited to see it moving forward.

Then now I'm going to switch to the FISHstory project, and you guys know that I've been kind of sitting in the corner and trying to scan-in photos, or gather photos, from you guys, and I want to give a special shoutout to a number of folks around the table who have provided photos for FISHstory. As you guys know, we're trying to expand this project, and one of the most important things we can do to expand the project is get photos from across the South Atlantic region, from the 1940s to 1980s, and so I know there are several people around the table who provided me with kind of digitized photos already, or have said that they have photos, and I'm going to coordinate and work with them to get photos, and so I wanted to give just a big thank you to all of you guys.

We're doing kind of these scanning nights at all of the upcoming AP meetings, and we did one at the September council meeting, and we'll be doing another one at the December council meeting, as a way to try to gather photos, and I know, again, a number of you have kind of talked with me, and provided photos, but I know there are a few new folks around the table too, and so I just wanted to give a quick reminder of kind of the types of photos we're looking for and what we need in order to analyze them as part of this FISHstory project.

As far as kind of what we need for analysis, we really need photos that are taken at the end of fishing trips, where kind of the harvested catch is displayed and the anglers who caught those fish are in the picture. We also have to have a little bit of information on date, and we need a year, and the assessment analysts that we're working with said, if you can't get an exact year, if you can give a five-year range, that's fine. For location, we need at least the state that it was caught in, and then we really want to try to make sure we're getting the photo provider kind of name and contact information, and that's more because we want to make sure the photos that we're using are getting credited to the right person, and then we're able to share kind of what's happening with the project back with the folks who provided photos.

What makes a photo even better is if the fish are hanging up on a leaderboard that they're displayed. If they're hanging on the leaderboard, we can estimate the size of the fish, using the lumber as kind of a scale, and so those are kind of even better pictures, if the fish are displayed hanging on a leaderboard. If you have more specific date information -- If we have month, we can get kind of seasonality, or, if you have more specific location information, things like the city or the dock that it was caught, or the vessel name or the captain name, that's really awesome too. That's even better information, and so I just wanted to share that with you all again. If you have any other ideas of people who may have photos, and I thought it may be helpful just to kind of talk about that a little bit longer, or one more time.

Then we started to explore some other avenues to gather historic photos too, and so there's some historical societies here in Charleston, and museums, that we've reached out to, and we've also started to get some contacts at libraries that may have collections, and then some folks have started

to suggest restaurants that we go to that may have old photos hanging on the wall, and so we're trying lots of different ways to try and gather these photos, because, if we don't have the photos, then we really can't expand the project.

I want to pause here for a second, before I give you an update on our last project, to get a little bit of feedback from you all, and, specifically, we're trying to think of other ways that we can gather photos, and so we're thinking about potentially holding kind of scanning events, or something like that, outside of these council-related meetings, and so I guess my first question is, do you think those would work? Would people come out to scanning event? It may be tough sell. If you think they would work in your community, we would love to know kind of how and where we could hold them.

If that wouldn't work, do you guys have other suggestions, or avenues, that we could pursue to gather additional historic photos, and then the third question is about if you know specific individuals or organizations that may be good contacts for us, and I know -- I looked back at what you all provided last time, and I know you all provided some good suggestions, and I know like Captain Bobby said to get up with Sunny Davis on the Captain Stacy and some other areas, and so I've been kind of keeping a running list of things, of the contacts and suggestions that you guys have given, but I was trying to get some additional information, in particular about would a scanning event work in your area, and do you think that people would come out for it? If not, do you have other suggestions of ways that we may be able to get photos from folks who aren't necessarily kind of in our council network, if that makes sense?

MR. LORENZ: All right. James, do you want to be the first one to try to answer the questions?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Sure. About the additional locations to have a scanning event, I would imagine that Bass Pro Shops would love an opportunity to give a 10 percent discount to somebody that came and scanned a photo that qualified, and, I mean, they love running promotions at Bass Pro, and so, I mean, I feel like that could get a great number of people to share.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Anyone else want to put through any ideas? Joe.

MR. MATTHEWS: I know a lot of the old marinas and tackle shops that you stop by on the Georgia coast, that have been there for a longer period of time, are going to have a handful of pictures hanging on the wall, and so just heading down the coast and stopping into those marinas and asking to scan their pictures would -- That could possibly work.

MS. BYRD: So I might follow-up with you afterwards, to get suggestions on what some of those might be, if you don't mind.

MR. MATTHEWS: Absolutely.

MS. BYRD: Do you all think that people would come, would bring photos to an event like that, and you can be honest.

MR. LORENZ: Julia, I think the thing you might have to do is the publicity, or how we organize for that event, and, for instance, if we had one in my town, we would have to figure out where it would be and how to get the information out to enough groups, significant marinas, any fishing

associations, or maybe the university, and I don't know, but to tell them that that event is going to be there, and then try to coordinate everybody coming in at that one time, but I think -- I think the biggest hurdle you will have would almost be like what I would call promotion for it, for planning and promotion, where we actually, and individuals like us, go out to people, or groups, and say -- And invite them to come, and then do it that way, like if you wanted to do it in a region or a town.

MS. BYRD: Yes, and I think we're learning, along the way, kind of what works and what doesn't. We did some kind of local tackle shop kind of outreach, and worked with South Carolina DNR to spread the word about kind of our Charleston meeting, and we're talking about doing some kind of scanning events down in the Keys, and I've talked to some Sea Grant folks about ways we could promote it, to get people to come out, that sort of thing, and so I think that's exactly right. The marketing and publicity of these things is going to be key, and we're trying to work on plans to do that and figure -- While we're also learning kind of what works and what doesn't work.

MR. LORENZ: Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: Julia, give them something, and they will come.

MS. BYRD: I know, and the council has limitations on providing incentives for things, and so that gets a little tricky for us, but perhaps exploring some partnerships, or other things, could make that a doable suggestion, and so I guess, moving on from there, you guys have kind of heard what we're doing to try to find photos, and are there other avenues that you guys can think of? I know we heard old marinas and things like that too, but are there any other kind of targets that we should be going for that we haven't kind of listed or talked about?

MR. LORENZ: Julia, just a question for you would have been have you approached, or tried, any of the very large like fishing clubs that we know, like the West Palm Beach offshore group, and I know there's the Raleigh saltwater fishing group, and these are all going to be recreational, where I have a funny feeling is where you're going to get most of your pictures, and it doesn't seem like the commercial guys were as oriented on hanging a fish and getting a picture of themselves before they sell it, whereas that recreational component always does it, but have you tried any of those and seen what their participation rate is?

MS. BYRD: West Palm Beach has -- Many members have generously offered to kind of look into -- Chris being one of them, but to look into kind of their photo collection, and I know that -- I have heard that it's a pretty incredible kind of historic photo collection, and we haven't reached out to fishing clubs specifically about this yet, and we were first starting with kind of scanning at kind of AP meetings, and seeing how that's going, and so I think fishing clubs are kind of a great next step.

MR. LORENZ: Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: Julia, there's a place in Stock Island, just outside of Key West, called Hurricane Hole, and it has a small charter boat area and restaurant, or two restaurants, one downstairs and one up. The one upstairs is air conditioned, and it's not used as much, and a lot of people hold events there. It is a very good gathering hole for local fishermen to hang out and tell fish stories and see the mostly light-tackle boats coming in from fishing, and so Hurricane Hole is a good spot.

MR. LORENZ: John, you had your hand up?

MR. POLSTON: I heard you say that you had been talking to the bait and tackle stores, but maybe concentrate on some of the like real older ones, because that's what you're looking for, is old photos, right, and then there's -- Down in Daytona, you've got the Halifax Sportfishing Club, which has been around a long time, and the club itself has been, and it's maybe not as big as some of the ones that you guys are talking about, but I know it's been around for a long time, and I have some contact information with those guys, if we could direct you in the right direction.

MS. BYRD: That would be awesome. I will talk to you maybe offline, to figure out who we should reach out to there.

MR. FISH: Maybe like the fishing tournaments, and, I mean, there's always somebody selling something, or something, you know, like the FSFA, the Florida Sport Fishing Association, and that's out of Cape Canaveral, and they have a huge tournament, you know, like 300 boats, and they could always make that an actual, you know, best photo or something, and make it a part of the tournament itself, maybe, and I don't know.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Also, I know Ashley and them were having their educational tour up and down the coast, and you all might be able to benefit off of each other, and you might already be doing that, but, if you promoted it, I bet that people that came would bring some photos.

MR. LORENZ: Robert.

MR. FREEMAN: One place that comes to mind is the entry, or the exit, from the Sanitary Seafood Market. Anybody that's been there realizes that they've probably got pictures fifty years old from various catches, and a lot of it I think is geared toward the marlin fishermen.

MR. LORENZ: Julia, another question is have you contacted the International Gamefish Association, and they have headquarters in Dania, and that might be a place -- I know they will have photos of the biggest fish ever caught, but, you know, I don't know if they would hold an event for you there, or you could gather people.

MS. BYRD: Someone suggested that to me last week for the first time.

MR. KIMREY: Julia, have you been to the Sanitary in Morehead?

MS. BYRD: When I was probably eight.

MR. KIMREY: It's a wealth of photos.

MS. BYRD: That's what -- Jeff Buckel suggested that. He was here for the council meeting, and so Meg and David are actually going up to Morehead to do tackle shop tours, amongst kind of media charter trips and other things, and so Meg is actually going to go by and talk to them, to see if they would be okay with us coming to scan photos, because a couple of folks have mentioned that that would be a great place to go.

MR. KIMREY: Well, if they hit a snag, have them call me. We know everybody, between me and Bobby.

MS. BYRD: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Have you been to the Reel Bar here in Mount Pleasant?

MS. BYRD: No.

MR. CONSTANT: They have a showcase full of old trolling reels, and the whole wall, if I'm not mistaken, behind it is covered in photos, and it's right at Charleston Harbor Resort, down by the water, by the beach, and it's the bar that serves the restaurant. It's a great bar, by the way, and the food there is as good as the restaurant, but I'm pretty sure there's a good many in that place.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Chris Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: When fish houses used to be a thing, you know, a lot of owners -- That are still alive, they probably have, you know, tons of pictures from back in the day that they could share, and I'm not sure how you could go about, you know, trying to figure out who those people are, but I could probably help you a little bit, but that would be a great way.

MS. BYRD: I think that would be great, if you, or others, know who some of these people are or could help -- If you know them, help connect me, so I'm just not cold-calling someone and asking for their old photos, and, you know, they don't really know me, and so any kind of suggestions you have like that, and if you know specific people, and could help introduce me to them, and I think that goes a long way into getting -- Into having folks be willing to kind of share their photos with us, if there's like a known -- A person they know and trust helping kind of make that introduction.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: So, you know, if you could somehow make a connection with -- I'm not in the social media world, but if you could make connections with some of the guys who have the most followers in the region, and see if you could get them onboard, and then, by having them come onboard for something for the greater good, then they can reach tens of thousands of people in one fell swoop, you know, and so you could -- If you could make the contacts, then that might be a good way to get the information out, and then what you do with the information is on you, but, you know, some of these guys have hundreds of thousands of followers, and who follow them? Fishermen follow them, and, you know, what I've seen, from my captains, is, you know, they follow these guys, and they always are going back and forth with comments and stuff like that, on a continual basis, and then you can sort of work your way down the line, to some of the older generations that still have some of those photos.

MS. BYRD: That's a great idea, and then another thing I will mention too is some -- I'm not very social media savvy, but some of our staff are, and they found some old historic fishing photo like

Facebook groups, and things like that, where people will post photos, and so that may be kind of another avenue that we can explore, or I know, sometimes, when we do FISHstory kind of social media posts, we've had a couple of people reply with photos that they have, saying, oh my gosh, my granddad went with that person, and here's the photo from that trip, or things like that, and so, yes, I think there are lots of -- You all have provided lots of great suggestions, and we have one more.

AP MEMBER: The Whole Truth is a fishing blog, and there's a ton of guys on that that may -- You may get crickets, but you may get some response from them as well. You will probably get a comment about red snapper too, but --

MS. BYRD: Okay. That's great for FISHstory, and then I just have a few more slides, and then we'll be done. The next project that I just wanted to give you guys a quick update on, and get some feedback, is our SAFMC Release project, and I know that many of you guys have heard us talk about it a lot, but, for some of the newer folks around the table, this is a project where we're partnering with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen to collect information on released shallow-water grouper and red snapper, using an app called SciFish, and we're really focusing on trying to get information on the size of the fish that are released and then information that helps us better understand how many of those released fish survive. Did you descend the fish, did you vent the fish, or was there shark predation when you released the fish? What depth did you catch the fish? Those sorts of things.

We're continuing to work with our participants to collect information via the SciFish app, and I know there are a couple of folks around the table who participate in the project, and we really appreciate you all participating, and, if anyone isn't participating, but wants to, come see me afterwards, and I can hook you up with an account and give you kind of a quick intro to the project.

We've been continuing to do outreach, in particular in collaboration with our best fishing practices initiative, and so Ashley gave you a great rundown on what's been going on, and so I'm not going to go into that in detail, but it's been a really wonderful partnership, and it's helping us kind of amplify the word about our projects, while also sharing information about kind of best fishing practices.

This year, we launched our participant recognition program, which I will talk a little bit more about, and then we put together an annual data summary at the end of every year, and we're starting to think about our 2023 data summary, and so we want to get some information about the types of data that we include in that, and I will give a shoutout for a second to Meg Withers, who is out of town right now, and who is really leading the charge on Release, and so, for a lot of the work that I'm presenting on, Meg has been doing the heavy lifting for it.

As far as outreach goes, we've really, again, been working on partnerships to help us kind of recruit folks and promote the project. We were really excited to be able to do an email with FWC this year, that went to their State Reef Fish designees, to try to recruit folks for the program, and it was very successful, and we got a lot of folks participating in the project, and we've been really lucky to work with some other folks to do articles, and I know some of our other AP members have relationships with magazines, and they've been nice enough to write about kind of best fishing practices and our Release project.

Again, you guys have heard us talk about this, and we've been doing tackle shop visits, and it's really David and Meg and Ashley that have been doing the bulk of that work. We're sharing information about Release via social media, and I know that one of the things where we've gotten some feedback that's really helpful is on folks seeing small gag, particularly last year, but also seeing some small gag inshore this year, and we've finding out about that through social media.

Then we've also been able to do some seminars and events, and a shoutout to Cameron, who helped us do one up at Coastal Scuba, and that was great, and so, if any of you guys are parts of fishing clubs, and want our kind of crew to come share information about Release and best fishing practices, just let us know, and we would be happy to do it.

The way we communicate with our Release participants is in multiple ways. We kind of have a monthly newsletter that comes out, where we give highlights of what's going on with the project, and we share some information on best fishing practices, and we also share some information on other things that may be of interest through our Citizen Science Program, and so like our FISHstory project and trying to gather photos is one thing that we've shared. We send thank you emails to folks, as they kind of log information. If folks -- Some of our kind of best participants, who log a ton, we're not sending them thank you emails all the time, but just every so often, to make sure they know how much we appreciate them participating in the program, and then, again, at the end of each year, we put together a data summary that gets sent to our participants first. They get a couple of weeks to look at it, and then we'll post it online.

This is the first year where we've done a participant recognition program. Again, the council is pretty limited in kind of being able to use incentives for the program, but we wanted to come up with a way to really kind of highlight the valuable contributions that our participants are making, and so we kind of have a list of milestones that we used for 2023.

People get recognized on their first submission, their first five submissions, and then, at the end of the year, we'll be giving kind of milestone awards for kind of folks who logged the smallest and largest fish, the person who logs the most number of species, and so diversity in what they're logging, and we have a best photo, and then a most submissions, and so those are kind of our milestones and way we recognize folks. If you guys have feedback on any milestones that you think would be good for us to include for 2024, we're all ears, but the thing that I really wanted to get input from you guys on was our data summary.

In here, we've kind of included our 2022 data summary. It includes information on the Release submissions by state and fishing sector, the species that were submitted through the app, and we do length compositions for species, for some of our most-logged species, and we look at release treatment by depth, shark depredation, and hook type and location, and so, if you're interested in digging into the 2022 summary in more detail, there's a link at the bottom of the PDF that's on the website, and so you can click on that.

Just a few examples of the types of data we get, and this is looking at the percent of submissions that either descended or vented the fish by depth caught, and you can see that the folks participating in the program -- As the depth increases, they are more likely to descend or vent a fish, which is exactly what we would want to see, as barotrauma is increasing the deeper the depths go, and then this is just an example of some of the length information that we provide, and we added red snapper

into the app last year, and so we can give a length frequency, and then we give kind of the smallest, largest, and the average size of those fish as well.

Then another example of the type of information we include are kind of hook types that are used, and, again, we're really excited to see that over kind of 60 percent are using non-offset circle hooks on the releases that they're logging in the app, and so what we really wanted to get feedback from you guys on is we're already starting to think about our 2023 data summary, and so we wanted to hear from you guys about which data features do you think are most important to share in the annual summary, or are there any specific data features that we had last year that you would remove, or that we didn't have last year that you would like us to add, and we're already starting to kind of outline what it will look like for next year, and so, if you have any feedback on that, we would be all ears.

MR. LORENZ: Would you like some now, to see if anybody has any now, Julia? All right. I don't need to reread it, the discussion questions, and does anybody want to provide any input on either of the two discussion questions, with respect to the data for this year? Harry.

MR. MORALES: Julia, you know, we've been talking about barotrauma, and I think, when we bring up a fish that we know is going to be dead, and its guts are hanging out, you've got the length, but the scientists keep telling us that, you know, we're catching young fish, and some of my fishermen are saying, no, they're older, and the scientists have said it's the girth, right, and so, if the fish is --

If you know that fish is going to be dead, you can not only measure the length, but you can also take time to measure the girth and give you that information, right, and so, if we collect more of that data, I think it's going to be more valuable. If you can save the fish, you vent them, or you do whatever, and you send them down, and you don't have to do it there, but, if you know that fish is going to be dead, you know, fish bait, then you might as well collect the additional information, is all I'm saying.

MS. BYRD: I think, you know, we're -- For this project, people are releasing fish for a variety of reasons, and we're trying to kind of encourage best fishing practices and to kind of release the fish back into the water as quickly as you can, and so length is an easier measurement to get than girth, and so that's why we went with length for this project, and so I'm not sure that we'll be able to change things, to add girth, because we really want to encourage people to get fish back in the water as soon as we can, with the understanding that, you know, sometimes fish may not survive.

MR. LORENZ: Anyone else with any input? All right, Julia. That looks like it for right now, and, I guess, if anybody has any thoughts, they can call or email you at your desk.

MS. BYRD: That sounds great, and, afterwards, if you liked kind of how we did things last year, that's always good for us to hear too, so we can do something similar this year, and so I appreciate you guys listening to me at the end of the day, and I will be around, if you have any questions.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Julia. We're ahead of schedule for right now, and so we might as well continue on. We'll have a little turnover, and so maybe about two or three minutes, and, if you want to get a drink or take a bio break, Mike can get ready, and we will go into what was probably one of our more important topics for this entire meeting, and that will be the

discussion of limited entry in the for-hire component for snapper grouper, and I think, today, we should be able to at least get through the overview with Mike, and the rubber will hit the road tomorrow morning, as far as our comments and suggestions and any motions, and so, Mike, I'll leave it to you on how much time you need.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I can have it pulled up in a minute or two.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: AP, we will begin to discuss the Agenda Item Number 8, which is Limited Entry for the For-Hire Component of the Snapper Grouper Fishery, and we'll begin the overview with Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Bob. This overview is going to be fairly short, and there's a document there, and I will kind of go over the different pieces of that document, but, really, it's just pulling up old documents, because this conversation has been had some time ago, and so this is something that got brought up again fairly recently.

It got brought up in June of 2023, at the council meeting, and there was a request there to have some discussion about limited entry at the advisory panel, and this is for the recreational for-hire component, and this request came in response to some public comments that were provided at that meeting, as well as some that came up at earlier council meetings, as well as some of the discussions about the need to reduce recreational effort for snapper grouper species, in an effort to reduce dead discards and landings, with several of these stocks being overfished, and then there were also some stated compliance difficulties with the SEFHIER program.

For all of those reasons, it came up, and there was the request to have the AP have this discussion. The council did previously consider limited entry. Some of you that have been on the AP for longer than I've been here at the council may remember this, but there were discussions previously, and that was brought up -- Those were brought up through Snapper Grouper Amendment 47. That amendment got to the scoping stage, and scoping hearings were held to gather kind of that initial public input that we get when we go through an amendment process, and, after scoping, the council decided to discontinue work on that amendment.

The materials that I provided in this document, and, really, there's not a whole lot else, because it's not like the council has initiated any type of amendment or anything, and I think they're just trying to see -- It's almost like a pulse check of the AP, of how you all would feel about considering this, should it be on the table as one of the items that they would be considering moving forward and trying to address some of the effort increases that have been talked about on the recreational side.

The materials that are provided below are from that old amendment process, from Amendment 47, and I have in there the scoping document, and it provides information on what this amendment -- What the nature of this amendment was for, and then it gives some background there on the for-hire section. I'm not going to go through all of those older materials at this point, and they were provided, you know, kind of in the briefing book, just so you could scan them, and maybe take a look at some of those old comments that people had related to this action, but, at this stage, we're kind of looking at, okay, with the current fishery, and, you know, this is when this discussion got

brought up before, but, with the current fishery, things that may have changed since 2018, when this was brought up before, and is this something that should be on the table for discussion in the current fishery, and so that kind of sets the stage of where this discussion is.

I mean, it's kind of a single, fairly open-ended question, but, also, it's kind of a closed question, in terms of should the council consider limited entry for the recreational for-hire component of the snapper grouper fishery, seeing if the AP would say yes or no or maybe to that. If so, if it should be at least on the table for consideration, how high of a priority is this for the council? Is this something that they need to be acting on in a soon fashion or in an it's not an immediate need type of fashion, and so that's the question that the council has posed to the AP, and I will take notes on, you know, whatever your discussion is at this point.

MR. LORENZ: Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: Well, we've been wanting this for a long time in the Lower Keys, because of, you know, anybody that brings a boat down to Key West, and they get their license, and, all of a sudden, they're taking some of our business from us, and, with so many people moving into the Keys and doing that, you know, limited entry would be something that all the Lower Keys fishermen would endorse, for sure, in the charter boat industry, for that simple reason, among others.

MR. LORENZ: Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I remember the 2018 discussion, and, you know, with the way that fisheries are changing now, and the limitations that are coming, two crew per boat, and stuff like that, I mean, it's an absolute imperative for the survival of charter/headboat fisheries, for sure. I mean, just like Richie said, and our area is like number two in growth in the entire country, and, you know, the same thing is happening.

We've got guys coming down, and they're not doing it to make a living, and they're basically doing it to pay for their boats, and to write off stuff and to escape some taxes and stuff like that, a lot of them, and, you know, it's a big deal. It's not as much for the headboats, because they're not going to invest that kind of money, but the six-pack boats, you know, who get their snapper grouper federal -- You know, they start -- I've been doing this stuff for thirty years, and this is like the first year that we didn't have like triple stacked every day, and like our boats weren't chartered every day, three times a day every day, and that's -- I mean, we see these little guys coming out there all the time, and so I think it's definitely time to make a move for limited entry for charter/headboat, since the product is getting so limited.

MR. LORENZ: May I ask you a question then, Cameron, since you're here, and I know that Robert Freeman is a retired captain from headboats, and one of the things that I had thought of, and I've seen as a recreational fisher, is the decline of headboats, and the opportunities for people to fish on them, and there's just less and less, seemingly, every year, or certainly every decade, and this is the first outlet, for people of modest means, to be able to go out fishing for the species we talk about, and I don't need to have too much thrown at me, but I wondered, in my mind, and are you okay with being, when you're operating headboats, to be lumped in with the six-pack for-hire, as far as any allocations would come, or, not to make this any more complex, but are we at a point where maybe there might be also some desire for the headboats to have some type of preservation of effort they could have for the future, because, as they decline, then I guess the six-

packs can come up and take in whatever allocation there is, and that ran through my mind, as a matter of fairness, and so how would you feel about that?

MR. SEBASTIAN: Well, I believe I made a statement, at the last meeting, that I do believe it's time to cut out a section specifically for headboats, and the reason I say this is because the six-packs have the ability to do other things. They can shark fish, or they can troll, or they can do spade fishing, but you can't do that when you have twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred people on a boat, and the only thing the headboats really can do, realistically, is only bottom fish snapper grouper, and that's it.

I mean, we're 100 percent limited to that aspect, and so, you know, like I said in the last meeting, it is definitely time to explore a special niche for the headboats, just to keep them available, and I think I said it last time, but, you know, if the headboats aren't available, then you have gentrification of the ocean, which is only the guys who own their own boats. You know, they're going to pay premium prices to go out, and so we offer an outlet for basically the blue-collar guys, the lower-income guys, to get out and go enjoy what all of us have had the privilege to do all of our lives.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Does anybody else want to comment with that? It was just a thought I had.

MR. PILAND: One of the Morehead headboats was fishing the tournament, the ladies tournament, one of the Hatteras boats, and, 40 percent of the time, he's trolling. We all fish together. I mean, I ain't pointing nobody out, but, if you've got a boat, you can troll, if you choose to troll. It would be a difficult task for any group to set aside a portion for a user group, wouldn't it? That's a statement and a comment at the same time.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Yes. Noted. Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: Cameron, I don't know, and, Richie, maybe you can answer this too, but does a six-pack guy need a special Coast Guard designation?

MR. SEBASTIAN: No, and six-packs are uninspected vessels, and so the entry to get into a six-pack is much less than an inspected vessel.

MR. MILITELLO: Someone mentioned, and I don't remember, and I think was yesterday, or was yesterday, for sure, that the Coast Guard is clamping down on illegal charters.

MR. LORENZ: Yes, and that was me, and I forgot the woman's name, but, yes, it was a Rear Admiral at an Ocean Innovation Conference hosted by the University of North Carolina in Wilmington, and she said the biggest new initiative they will be on, and she's more of I think from Coast Guard headquarters, was what she calls illegal charters, which, to her, is IUU fishing.

MR. MILITELLO: Because I want to say that -- Probably not even 10 percent, but of the personal policies that I can write, we can have an endorsement added to that policy that is an occasional charter, and they can use their personal boat to -- Usually it's like twenty a year, but there's no log, you know, if you don't write a log, and so it's out there, and there's guys that are -- Whether it be a skiff or a forty-foot HCB, or even just not even a fishing cruise, but a sightseeing kind of thing,

and that's available for private guy. They can just -- As long as there's -- You're supposed to be a licensed captain, if you're taking money, but if not -- I mean, no one is checking that, but it's out there in the private sector, and they can get insurance policies that allows them to do what a full-time charter guy can do.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Randy, you had your hand up?

MR. MCKINLEY: Yes, and I was just going to say that I think it's probably time to look into that, but maybe not setting the control date so far back, and I've got a guy at my dock, and he snapper grouper fished for many, many years, but now he's shifted over to charter, and so I would hope that people like that would -- You know, that would count, and they could be able to go into that. Anyway, that's it.

MR. LORENZ: Mike, may I ask a question on this? We are talking about limited entry for the for-hire component, and, now, within the recreational sector, we share ACLs and all with the for-hire, the private fishermen, and will that continue, and so would there be a limited entry for the for-hire, but they would still share their allocation with the rest of us that are private anglers?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: As far as I understand the question that the council asked, and this is me trying to translate the council asking the question, but, as far as I understand it, yes, there wouldn't be -- It's not like it's a discussion, at this point, of separation of that recreational ACL into for-hire and private, and this is asking the question of specifically, for the for-hire, if there should be a limited entry there.

MR. LORENZ: Myra.

MS. BROUWER: One thing I wanted to bring up for you guys to consider, and maybe just to remind you, is the council did set a control date of June 15, 2016 for the for-hire sector, and so a control date means that, you know, if the council were to consider a limited-entry program, people that were fishing in that fishery as of that date would be considered for eligibility, and so this is done to sort of prevent speculative entry into the fishery, and so I don't know if you guys want to talk about whether that date is still appropriate, or suggest that the council revisit that, or, anyway, just an additional piece of information that is included in that paper that Mike presented, but I just wanted to make sure that you guys were aware of that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Okay. I will take Mike, and then I will get into the queue of the questions.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I'm just making sure I can record the notes accurately, and so that date of June 15, 2016, that the council considered limiting for-hire in the current -- You know, without changing the date, and, if the council doesn't change the date, and considers limiting for-hire, then those that enter the fishery after that date would be subject to the limitation? Is that --

MS. BROUWER: It simply means that, after that date, there is no guarantee, or that the council could use that data, and, for example, I think the paper talks about making things transferable using, you know, the distribution of permits as of that date, and so there are several ways that the council could use that information, and it simply just puts the public on notice that, after that date, there is no guarantee that they would be included in the limited-entry program, if that makes sense.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Myra. In the queue is Chris.

MR. KIMREY: Myra, do you have any idea where that date was originating from?

MS. BROUWER: A council member at the June meeting in 2016 suggested it, and the motion was passed.

MR. KIMREY: So this is the previous date? So, even though the amendment was put on hold for X number of years, they're going to use the previously-set date?

MS. BROUWER: That's what is in the books right now, and the council could change it anytime they want.

MR. KIMREY: Well, if we don't do anything else, we need to explore that date, because -- I mean, I've been charter fishing much longer than that, but, since 2016, there's been lots of things happen in the for-hire world to develop accountability, you know, like the reporting and all that kind of stuff, and so I think that date has to be revisited. For that reason, if for no other reason, and the fact that the date was set in 2018, when the amendment was first pushed through, and so, you know, we definitely need to revisit that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I would approach it, personally, like it's almost like the fishery is the economy there to sustain the amount of charter boats that are in an area, because it's -- You know, when the economy is not as good, there is less people there to buy the charters, and then you have the -- I guess I would say the guys that are on the lower end, that are just trying to pay for their boats and stuff, and those guys really affect the prices of legitimate -- I say "legitimate", but the bigger boats that have been doing it on the real, you know, and that's the way I would see to approach it, and is that up to the fishery to determine? I don't know if that's fair, but that's all.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andy. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I would also want to know, and does the council, or does anybody, have any idea on the number of spaces we're talking about? You know, I mean, let's say we set a control date of January 1, 2021, and, you know, maybe figure out how many current permits there are and kind of get an idea of how many we're looking at, and, you know, how much less do we actually want, I mean, and how many permits are we talking about existing currently, and I think that, if we had some of that information, it would -- We would be able to do a better job of what it is that we really -- We can tell you what we want, if we had the information of how it stands now. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Randy McKinley.

MR. MCKINLEY: That's the reason that I said what I said, because of that, and I saw that, and they only went back two years from 2018, and, I mean, I agree with Chris, and it's got to be revisited, and there's a lot of people retired. I mean, there's just a lot, and our whole snapper

grouper fleet is aging out, and, you know, the same with that, and so I think that would be really knocking it in the head a lot to do that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: Myra, I'm not sure if you have the answer to this yet, but Brice proposed it, the charter boat president, and I'm curious too, because he has a boat, and here's a for-instance, that he doesn't use anymore, but it used to be a charter boat, and he couldn't find a good captain to run it all the time, and so it's still with him, and he had his charter license for that boat in 2016, and would he be able to now get into the limited entry, even though his license has expired?

MS. BROUWER: I think, if he's kept it valid over the years. If he's renewed it, then yes.

MS. GOMEZ: Yes, but that's the thing. I don't think he has renewed it, which would -- I don't know. You tell me.

MS. BROUWER: I guess I wouldn't get hung up on the details. You know, I think that -- My feeling is that the council is just sort of wanting to bring the topic back up, kind of feel the pulse of what people are thinking now. As you've mentioned, things have changed a lot since 2016, and so, basically, they're just wanting to see how you all are feeling about that, and, you know, tell them does this need to come up for discussion at the council table, and, as James said, you know, if there's specific information that you guys feel would be useful for you guys to give better recommendations to the council, then please let us know what that information might be, and we can gather that together for the next meeting.

MR. GOMEZ: Just one more thing. I mean, personally, I would like 2016, or even before, because that would kind of push some of those newcomers away.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Myra and Richie. Next is Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: You know, you guys that are doing it currently are going to have a lot better feel for this, but I do see a lot of what Chris talked about, and a lot of -- I don't know if you want to say illegal charters, but they're definitely fly-by-night, and this town alone here, Charleston, is full of them. There's a lot of them through social media, and I'm pretty sure that most that I've seen do that -- If they have a captain's license, I would be shocked, but, if they're permitted, I doubt it very seriously.

I know, when I was still chartering in Beaufort, there was only three of us that had a permit, and there was at least a dozen. I know we've got everything from gigging charters to all types of charters these days, and I know a lot of those guys aren't legal, and maybe it's the time to address those. I don't even know how you would go about that, I mean, because it sounds like it would almost be a siege on social media accounts. I don't know how to do it, but I think there's a lot of people taking money from the other legitimate charter/for-hires by fly-by-night ads.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Chris Kimrey.

MR. KIMREY: I'm not real sure how this would work, and I don't know -- You know, the original control date was set by a motion from the council, and somebody at the council in 2016 set that

control date? Okay, and so -- You know, if we don't talk about anything else, I feel like we need to pin down something to send back to the council on this control date thing. It definitely doesn't need to be before 2016. I think most of our group would probably agree with that.

For me, it's about the amount of accountability that has been put on the for-hire industry the past few years, with electronic reporting and all that, and some of us go back a long ways, and, like myself, I piloted the original for-hire reporting software, and, I mean, I was part of the original group, when they were coming up with that, but, since the accountability is a little higher, I don't think you would need to go back much past that point, electronic reporting, and, if the amendment was originally made in 2018, and they set the control date at 2016, they were only going back two years then, and so, since it's being revisited, after being put on hold for all those years, it would make sense, to me, to go with that two years back, or so, which kind of corresponds with the for-hire reporting, and so, you know, that's my recommendation, if anybody wants to elaborate on that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Cameron, you're in the queue.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Yes, and so, you know, I think it's really important that, at this juncture where we are, that we just stay on point with what the council is looking for, and the simple question is whether we want them to explore this, and then everything else will vet out, and flesh out, over the next several years. My viewpoint is very, very clear and concise. We have a limited resource that we're dealing with. Therefore, we should have a limited-entry program for the people who make a living doing it, until that point it's deemed that the stocks are rebuilt, the fishery is healthy, and then they can look at opening it back up again, but the question is, is it time for the council to revisit this, and I say that, yes, it is.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Joe and then Andy.

MR. MATTHEWS: I don't disagree with what you said, Cameron, and I think the short answer is, yes, that it needs to be revisited, but I also don't think that it's a simple question, because I think, you know, we're looking at a range of charter fisheries from the Florida Keys all the way up through North Carolina, and those operate very differently, and, also, the headboats operate differently than other charter boats, and so I think you've got to -- Again, I know our directive is should we explore this, but I think it's important to relay back to the council that you should explore it, but you also need to explore how to approach it, because it may not be a one-size-fits-all thing.

You know, just to comment on the how far we go back, I mean, you think about how much money you can put into setting up a charter business in seven years, and we're talking about potentially taking that away from somebody, and, you know, it may be -- You're looking at snatching an established business out from under somebody, and so maybe the way we do it -- You know, I texted a really good friend of mine, who is a charter captain in the Middle Keys, and his family has been running a charter fleet down there for years and years, and I said, what do you think about this, and his immediate response was the full-time guys make it really hard on the -- I mean the part-time guys make it really hard on the full-time guys, and so maybe you look at how you decide the entry, based on how many days a year the charter captains are fishing, instead of just drawing a date, and so, you know, that's a lot of explanation for a short answer of, yes, I think the council needs to look into it again.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you very much, Joe, and I'm going to follow-up a little later, and I just had a thought on what you said, and it was almost like the part-timers, but, at this point, Andy P.

MR. PILAND: Cameron is absolutely right, and it's a limited -- We are working to manage a limited resource, and it makes commonsense to limit the number of users. In 2022, there was 1,930 permits, and, obviously, we are enough of an impact that the council sees fit to disallow the captain and mates' creel limit on the tilefish, and so we've got to rebuild it. We're looking to rebuild the tilefish stock, and not limiting the number of people that can participate in it. Without limitation of participants, the creel limit has to go down to continue a healthy stock, and so I am also in favor of limited entry. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Chris Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Thanks, and so there's three permits that charter boats have to have, a coastal migratory pelagic, a dolphin wahoo, or a snapper grouper, and this question is only pertaining to snapper grouper, which, like Cameron said, I want to echo is an extremely limited resource, and all sectors are closing sooner, and there's not enough fish to go around for the accountable people in the fishery, and everyone, I believe, agrees that we have to limit the effort, and the only two sectors that we can really limit would be the commercial and the charter/for-hire.

We made the charter/for-hire a lot more accountable in recent years, and I'm in full support of doing that with just the snapper grouper permit, and then we also have another problem in our Spanish mackerel fishery, and it's not a charter permit, but I don't see why we should have any limited entry -- Or any open-access permits in any of our fisheries in the South Atlantic.

The Spanish mackerel is closing earlier and earlier every year, due to overcapacity in that fishery as well, and, when I sat on the council, those guys really begged for us to do something about it, and it never really gained a whole lot of traction, even though it's still on the docket, but it keeps getting pushed to the bottom, and so I'm in full support. As far as a control date, I believe that the council would be sensible in probably setting a control date as current to the meeting that they're in, I would hope, and that's all I have to say about that, just like Forest Gump.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: I am going to read something from Brice in a second, but, Matt, just to with that idea that you had, I'm not sure how that would work, because, you know, if I'm a backyard fisherman, and I see the criteria that I have to meet to get that limited-entry permit, I'm going to make that happen. Know what I mean? If I have to fish a certain amount of days, I will say I fished a certain amount of days.

MR. MATTHEWS: Just to clarify, I was talking about in terms of drawing the line of how far we go back, and so it would be something where we say -- Where you would look at deciding how many folks to let into the fishery, how many permits to issue, based on the number of folks who fished X number of days, versus Y number of days, but, I mean, I guess the moral of the story, or what I'm getting at, is that it doesn't -- It's that it's not a one-size-fits-all kind of solution, and, if

we're talking about going back in time and drawing that line, you know, it's -- Maybe you look at the part-time guys and the full-time guys as two different groups.

MR. GOMEZ: I don't know, and maybe someone could help me with this, because he's kind of writing short, and so let's see what he's saying here. As far as that -- He says they've created an issue with that in Florida waters. Red snapper charter guys were cancelling their permits to keep red snapper and then reapplying to mahi fish or whatever. Guys are coming in and out of that fishery for whatever is legal in certain waters. I don't know if anybody understands that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie. Andy, you had a comment, Andy Fish? Go ahead, Paul.

MR. NELSON: If you have a federal permit, you can't catch red snapper in state waters, and so they are -- They are cancelling their federal permits to be able to catch red snapper year-round in state waters, is why they're doing it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul, for the clarification. Andy.

MR. FISH: They did this in the Gulf, right, and they have control dates in the Gulf, and there's a historical captain's license, or something like that, and I think these were going for \$20,000 at one time, and, I mean, but they saw it necessary, and they needed it to protect their charter guys, and I just wonder if we could learn some lessons from that and see how that went.

MR. LORENZ: I will put you on in a minute, Harry, and, actually, the Vice Chair here was wanting to make a motion, but I wanted to bring just one idea in, just to put as a bullet point, and I guess we'll back off and continue the conversation as it is, but hearing the statements on things like fairness, and how we haven't evolved, even since 2016, for the for-hire industry, the professionals, and you now are into your logbooks and things, and so there is true documentation.

This is a little more out-of-the-box, and I know it would probably be a little complex, but look forward another decade, and are we getting to a point where we may want to actually define, with respect to a snapper -- If we're going to have snapper grouper limited entry on the permits, as one way of limiting entry, or shall I say limiting for-hire participation, and do we have a need, or would you ever want, to actually define what a professional for-hire boat and captain is, and so a professional for-hire captain and boat -- That would come with various criteria, like a logbook, and maybe fishing so much and that sort of a thing, and so you would eliminate the wealthy guy that buys a big boat and wants to find a way on the side to help pay for it, and, you know, therefore does a couple charters a year, and he is for-hire, but he would not be a professional for-hire, and so I know that opens a very big aura, but I just wanted to put that on the table with a dot, and I don't want to get everybody off-track yet, because that's going to be a lot more complex, and probably for some good, spirited discussion, but it's something to think about. Harry.

MR. MORALES: For me, it's more of a question, and I think I hear that the charter captain economics -- You have pressure from part-time entry, illegal entry, and you're getting that kind of competition that is unfair, and I have been told, for years, that, as far as headboats, they're like disappearing, and so are you getting a lot of pressure, with new entrants in the headboat market? Are you seeing that same economic pressure?

MR. SEBASTIAN: Not no, but hell no, because nobody wants to set foot in my shoes and take over all this shit.

MR. MORALES: So, you know, for me, there's a difference here. You know, lumping them together, and creating a limitation, it does help the whole market, I guess, from the unlimited snapper license that you guys talk about, that goes for like \$100,000, the commercial license, and so, you know, there might be an economic benefit, but I don't really see -- I agree with you, and I went on the headboats up in Jersey, to go tuna fishing, okay, and there was forty or fifty guys on that boat.

It would be a shame for that to go away, because that is a specific market, and that's different than charter, in my mind, okay, and so, for me, you know, a limitation here? Sure, and it makes sense. A limitation there? No, because you don't have that same economic pressure, and so that's my thinking. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. Paul Nelson.

MR. NELSON: In the Gulf, they have two permits, two different kinds of permits, or several different kinds of permits, for how many people they can carry, and so they have the six-passenger and under, and then they have the over six-passenger, and they have permits for boats that carry twenty, and they have permits for boats that carry a hundred, and so there's different sets of permits over there on a multi-passenger boat, besides a six-passenger boat, and so you could probably work out something that way, like they did in the Gulf.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Are you ready to do some typing?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Sure.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Okay. **At this point, I would like to make a motion, and I'm going to go kind of slow with this, but, initially, I want it to read that this panel would like the council to officially review the charter/for-hire limited entry.** With that, I want to put a list of information that we need the next time that we have to talk about this. I can just make some bullet points, or you can put "with the following requested" -- You know, with information on the following items.

Number of permits to be considered. You know, we saw some really cool areas shaded, and, you know, would we do this by state, or would we do it by region, and I don't know, but at least the number of permits to be considered. Will there be a distinction between six or under or over six?

Control date, and, beyond that, I think that we have discussed a lot of different components to this. Will there be pressure for, you know, other permits, like the dolphin wahoo, and will that be contingent to follow, you know, or is that something that these other -- You know, these other designations are going to have to follow, and so, I mean, if you have to have one for snapper grouper, will you have to have it for dolphin wahoo, and are they going to be synonymous with each other? I guess, if I'm allowed to do so -- Actually, you know what, I will stop there, and, in discussion, I will say that I would be open to other criteria.

MR. LORENZ: So, James, do you want to have discussion of your motion now, or I think our procedure would be to see if we get a second on this, or are you looking for additional things?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I will leave it as that for now, so we can follow the procedure.

MR. LORENZ: Then I will ask you to read your motion. I could do it, but why don't you read your motion, and then I'll be looking for a second.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: **The motion is to have the advisory panel recommend the council consider charter/for-hire limited entry, with information on the following items: number of permits to be considered; will there be a distinction between fewer than six or over six passengers; the control date; and will this apply to other fisheries outside of snapper grouper.**

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James.

MR. GOMEZ: I will second that.

MR. LORENZ: I had a second from Richie Gomez. Mike, I will let you --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just clarifying, for the record, in stating this as the council would consider charter/for-hire, that would not include headboats in the consideration, and is that correct, or is that not what you're intending?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I believe, as it stands now, charter/for-hire does include headboats in this realm, does it not?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: **Yes, and we can state it as recreational for-hire, and that might be clearer.**

MR. PASKIEWICZ: **Okay.**

MR. LORENZ: I am letting Mike catch up with the motion, and then we'll go to discussion. Okay, and so the motion, as presented by James, was seconded by Richie, and so we have a motion up with a second, and now we can move forward with discussion, and so hands raised for discussion. Chris.

MR. KIMREY: I would like to ask James to clarify the control date. You know, it's very important, to me, that we make clear to the council that we need that control date moved forward a lot from 2016.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Okay, and my intent was for them to come back to us with a control date.

MR. KIMREY: Right, but I can't speak for the whole AP, but, for me, I don't want them to send back a control date, and I think we should recommend a control date, and that's what I'm asking you to do, and it doesn't have to be a specific date, but it should be a newer date. That's my recommendation, to give them something to think about. Do you see what I'm saying?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Absolutely. I will take a minute to listen to further discussion, and then I'll consider that, absolutely.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Harry had -- Robert.

MR. FREEMAN: I guess the thing that bothers me is we're now limiting a group that can't get in, but the guy that goes down to the boat shop and buys him a quarter-million-dollar outfit and takes off fishing, catching the same snapper grouper that we have just eliminated a group from being able to catch, and how are you going to defend the lawsuit that's going to come out of that, and it will put boat dealers out of business, and a lot of ramifications.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Robert. We'll note that as a comment. John Polston, did you have your hand up?

MR. POLSTON: Yes, sir. I think, somewhere in here, because I know this came up in commercial before, and I know that we're not talking about commercial, other than for-hire, but we're going to probably have to address some verbiage, as far as who actually qualifies for the permit, the guy that ran the boat for ten years and now is running another boat, or is it the boat itself, and it better be put in there somewhere, or there's going to be a lot of confusion later on.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, John. Richie, who had seconded this motion.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. I just want to triple-clarify something here. Chris, we're not talking about the charter/for-hire license that we have to get every year, that costs like \$404, and you go down to the city, and that's not even here, and would that be able to be added into this motion? Okay. Then Vince wanted me to read something, and I think we covered it a little bit, and it will just take a second, and I guess he's got his hand up, maybe, and he says what about a separate ACL for charter/headboats?

MR. LORENZ: Okay, and that would go outside of this motion, but I believe that would be up in those other bullets points that we talked about previously, and it's, you know, where I asked the question of if Cameron wanted a separate grouping, or maybe even a separate ACL. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: This is just going back to the response that Harry -- So he was clear on it. When you were asking me the difference between like a for-hire charter, like a six-pack, or the headboat, and which one should be open or limited, the reason that I feel they should all be limited is because, as you were up in New Jersey, if you went on a boat, you would have much less incentive if they have say the whole boat, with forty passengers, can only keep two grouper, and you might not go on that trip, period, at all, and so that's the reason that I feel that, you know, for this part, to keep it simple, just we'll start with a limited entry, have them look at it, and, if they want to move it forward, they'll move it forward, and then we can -- You know, the rest of it, all the other discussions, are going to come way down the road on that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any other comments with the motion on the table? Chris.

MR. KIMREY: Just a real quick comment, and this applies to me personally, and it's something I would like to clarify to the AP, and it's kind of a follow-up on what Joe was saying, and I know that it's discussion that is kind of ahead of what we're trying to do here, by sending this back to

the council, but, for me -- I've been a full-time charter operator for sixteen years. I've been running charters, in some fashion, for twenty-five years.

I run center-console boats, and I have two of them. One of them, I have a full, long list of federal permits on, and so I can do everything, including all the open-entry commercial permits, and the other boat that I run doesn't have any federal permits, because I mainly use it inshore and nearshore, and so I'm never keeping anything in federal waters, and I do it that way so I don't have to report on both boats, but what that means is, going back to those days fished, as far as reporting on federal stuff, is, some years, I may only have twenty-five, thirty, or forty days that I'm reporting on my federal permits, because that's all the trips that I do on that boat in the ocean, but I'm fishing 200 days a year, and so the number of days, like Joe was talking about, as far as being deemed professional, it's something for the AP to think about in the future. It can't just be based on the number of days, because somebody like myself -- I'm fishing 200 days a year, but not all of them are under the snapper grouper permit that could potentially be limited entry, and do you see what I mean? It doesn't mean that I'm not a full-time fisherman.

MR. SEBASTIAN: If I could ask a question on that, and wouldn't you be exempt on that other vessel, if you were only really participating in state waters and not only -- You wouldn't have to carry that permit on that boat.

MR. KIMREY: Exactly, but, if they were going to make the snapper grouper permit limited entry, based on history, and I'm only showing thirty or forty days a year, it would make me look like a part-timer, and I'm not. I'm just only using that permit thirty or forty days a year. Do you see what I'm saying? I don't have the permits on the other boat, because they're not required, and they're not necessary.

MR. LORENZ: I would like to recognize Chris Conklin. I'm sorry that I missed you earlier.

MR. CONKLIN: Mike, is this going to be discussed at the December council meeting?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Right now, I think the December council meeting is pretty well set on its agenda, but what would happen is Bob will be there to give the AP's report to the council, and inform them that, if you all pass this motion, that this is something that you are interested in the council pursuing, and so the council would then probably direct staff, direct us, to put this item on the March council meeting agenda. That would be the most likely course of action there.

MR. CONKLIN: So, I mean, I would recommend that the council set a control date for the Friday, which would be the last day of the March council meeting, whatever date that would be, and I was thinking it might be December, which would be December 8, but that would be the most logical.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Paul Nelson, you had your hand in the air?

MR. NELSON: The history, when they have issued permits in the past, they have picked a date, and they've said, if you had 600 pounds of bottom fish before this date, you got issued a snapper grouper permit, back when they issued them, and the same thing with the sea bass pot permits. If you caught sea bass, a certain amount of sea bass, before this certain date, and they never had --

Like, when we issued the charter boat permits, there was no history that was needed at the time, when they issued the permits, but I think, if they put a control date, they're not going to sit there and say that you had to run 200 trips, or fifty trips, on this date, or before, and they may take a -- Like say they put a date, like 2016, and they may say you may have to run 200 trips before 2016, and they would take all of them trips that you ran before 2016 and issue the permit, and I don't think it will be 2016, but I'm just using that for an example. They never just said, all right, in 1999, you ran -- You have to run 200 trips in that year, or you're not going to get a permit, and they have never issued permits before like that, that I remember.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Paul, and, for clarity, Chris Conklin, you did state that -- You were putting a suggestion for a control date, if this goes through, that that be the March council meeting, and so just linking that to what Paul said, because that date will be 2024, probably, by your suggestion.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and March of 2024, sometime in March of 2024.

MR. LORENZ: All right. I guess I will take us back to James, based on the input -- Sorry, Cameron. I didn't look to my right. Go ahead. You're recognized.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Chris, just to play devil's advocate, to me, if we put a control date in the future on it -- I mean, I'm a businessman, and I'm speculator, and so that gives me incentive, and it gives me information to buy boats, and get as many goddang permits as I can on as many boats, and so, I mean, I'm just telling you, and I'm just letting you know that, as a business-minded individual, if you were going forward with it, I'm going to buy boats, and put permits on them, and just sit and wait, you know, and so that's where, I think, the control date, in hindsight, and it's something -- You know, once again, so that things stay on point, all of this is going to have to get fleshed out, and you're going to have historic captains who can have access to it, and all of this is going to have to get fleshed out, but I'm just saying, if I hear the date is in the future, then I'm going to start putting money into permits.

MR. LORENZ: Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: I'm just going off of what happened before, was the council wanted to put people on notice, and give them a chance to get legal, because, back then, there was a lot more people that had --

MR. KIMREY: There used to be no incentive to have them.

MR. CONKLIN: Right. There was no incentive, but, now that we have reporting, if it was brought up, and the public was put on notice, with the notification of the briefing book being -- The agenda being published, and somebody saw it in there, a few weeks before the meeting, and the council got together, ideally -- In all fairness, maybe not like last time, but, in other scenarios, they would set a control date for that week, and that's all I'm saying. I'm not saying we're going to set it right now, and that's what it should be, and there's no telling what they will actually pick, if they even, you know, pursue this, but, you know, ideally, it should be at the last minute, in all fairness, for them, but, I mean, I'm not opposed to, you know, when reporting started.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Chris. The motion is up, with a second by Richie, and I will reference to James. James, considering all the input that we've had with respect to your motion and your bullet points, are there any edits, additions, deletions, that you want to complete?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and, yes. **In the spirit of what we were asked to do, and under the guidelines of which this amendment was already under, I would like to, on the control date line, suggest a time on or around the implementation of the reporting requirement for the recreational charter/headboat.** That moves us away from the 2016, and it kind of gives -- It asks the information that we really want to know, and like when are we going to get it?

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, James, and so that is a little additional input on your motion. Richie, are you still the second on that? Do you agree with the added verbiage?

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, I will still second that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Because it was changed, I have to open it again to any comment with respect to that small change, and does anybody wish to comment again on that control date, on or around the time of implementation of the for-hire reporting requirement? All right. No one wants to comment, and so we'll take a vote here on this motion. **All those in favor of the motion, raise your hand, fourteen yea; anyone with a nay for the motion, raise your hand, zero.**

MR. BONURA: I vote yes to this motion as well.

MR. LORENZ: All right. **With Vincent, we have fifteen yea. I saw no nays, and anybody abstaining? One.** All right. Thank you. **The motion passes, and it will be passed on to the council at the December meeting in Beaufort, North Carolina.**

Miraculously, it is five o'clock, and not just five o'clock somewhere, but it's five o'clock right here, and so this is just a great stopping point, and so this meeting, based on all the pressure I'm receiving, is adjourned. Tomorrow morning, at 8:30, we reconvene.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 11, 2023.)

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OCTOBER 12, 2023

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on October 12, 2023, and was called to order by Mr. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Welcome back, AP, to the last couple of items on our agenda for this meeting, and thank you so much. We have kept right on time this time around, and so this is very

good. What we're going to do is we will return back for a little bit more on the discussion of limited entry with respect to the snapper grouper fishery for the for-hire industry. Mike wanted us to pick, out of that list of things we talked about, to set up what we think are the priorities. We made a motion, and so that's good, and so that will be the announcement to the council that we're interested in this limited entry, and then there will be just a prioritization, if we can give him some advice on some of the points that we did make.

For this morning, and then we'll -- We still have SEDAR to cover, and then we'll have some of our Other Business, and I think there's been a lot of -- There's been some chatter on the two-for-one, and so maybe you all want to bring that up a little bit, if we want to talk about that, some things that have been circulating around in the group on that, and so we'll move on to what is Agenda Item 8, and we'll push that in, because we have guests here from outside of the AP to present to us, and it will be the discussion on offshore wind activities in the Southeast, and we're going to have, I guess, two presenters, Lela Schlenker from Avangrid Renewables, and, from my knowledge, I believe that Avangrid is a New England utility, and I guess there's a wind energy component, and we have Nathan Craig here with us, from Duke Energy, and I know that Duke services me, in North Carolina, and I believe they have activities in Florida also there, and so I would like to pass it on to Mike to introduce and coordinate who the speakers are and their order.

DR. SCHMITKE: Thank you, and so I'm going to get presenters switched over to Lela, and we do actually also have a couple of other folks that are going to be chiming-in online, and we've got Katherine McGlade and John Harker, and so I will pass it on to you, Lela, and go ahead and take it away.

MS. SCHLENKER: Great. I will get started. Good morning, everyone. My name is Lela Schlenker, and I am the Fisheries Liaison for the Kitty Hawk Wind project, which is part of Avangrid Renewables. John Harker is also here online, and he's the Fisheries Lead for Avangrid, and this is kind of a joint presentation that we've worked on together as a group, and so the three different developers in North Carolina, and so Nathan Craig and Katherine McGlade are here from Duke Energy, and the Carolina Long Bay project, and then Jen Banks I don't believe is here, but she was a big part of putting it together, this presentation, and she's with TotalEnergies and the Carolina Long Bay project.

Just to kind of get started, and this is intended to be sort of both an overview of offshore wind in general and in North Carolina, and with updates specifically on the Kitty Hawk Wind and Carolina Long Bay projects, and so, although the Kitty Hawk Wind and the Carolina Long Bay projects are completely separate projects, because we are part of North Carolina waters, or, well, federal waters, but off the coast of North Carolina, and part of the South Atlantic region, we work together when we can, including kind of, you know, here on this presentation, basically to streamline information for the council. I do want to thank the AP group for having us today. This is a great avenue for us to kind of share some information, and so I will jump right in.

Just sort of an overview of what we'll do today, and so I will start with a brief introduction to offshore wind, and then I will move specifically into talking about the Kitty Hawk Wind project, and, at that point, I will hand over the reins to Nathan, from the Carolina Long Bay project and Duke Energy, and he'll give an overview of that project, and then we'll conclude with some sort of regional strategies and ways that we're working together as a group, and then we will have plenty of time for questions at the end, and, because there are several of us, when we get to the

question stage, involved in this presentation, it would probably -- It will be helpful for folks to specify if this is a general question or one specific to a particular project.

In general, some of the advantages of offshore wind is that it is a renewable and domestic energy source right off our coast. We have wind speeds, off of our coast, as many of you are very familiar, that are much greater, and more consistent, than onshore wind, and so this is kind of an important resource, in terms of meeting state and federal renewable and domestic energy goals. This is a good way for different states, that have set ambitious goals in terms of renewable energy, to meet those goals, as well as having a source of energy that is locally important, right, and so it's the wind right off your coast that's coming into the grid.

This is fairly new in the U.S., and we are now just building the very first commercial-scale windfarm in the United States, and that's happening up off of Massachusetts right now, but federal and state governments have worked together for years to determine locations for offshore wind energy areas and the various criteria that need to be met for these areas to be developed.

I won't read through all of these various green shapes, but, just to give you a sense of how different areas were evaluated for their development as offshore wind areas, of course, the number-one criteria is that there needs to be sufficient wind, but then there are a variety of other things that you can see, everything from archeological resources, evaluating essential fish habitat, navigation and vessel traffic, tourism, commercial and recreational fisheries, and so all of these things have to be considered, and were considered, by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, or BOEM.

In addition, the Magnuson-Stevens Act needed to be consulted, as well as the Endangered Species Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act, and so, in terms of determining where these wind energy areas exist, this is basically, you know, the sort of criteria. We need to make sure that wind energy is optimized, while also making sure that there are not any issues with regard to any of these particular items.

In North Carolina, to give you all a sense of how this works, basically, on the left, you can see these sort of green blobs are the areas that were initially considered, and so these were areas sort of set and evaluated by BOEM, as well as state stakeholders, and so they started as these larger areas, and, after taking into consideration those various considerations, and those green shapes on the previous slide, they got cut down and cut down and cut down, and so that is why, on the right, you end up with these perhaps little strangely-shaped wind energy call areas, and so, in the north here, close to the Virginia border, this is the Kitty Hawk lease area, which was won in a competitive auction by Avangrid in 2017, and then, to the south, the Carolina Long Bay area, which was won in an auction by the Duke Energy and TotalEnergies groups back in 2022. Nathan, I don't know if you want to chime-in here and say anything specific about the Carolina Long Bay lease area.

MR. CRAIG: Just real quick, and so, originally, you know, the Carolina Long Bay was referred to as Wilmington East, and there is also that Wilmington West block. When BOEM came back and reevaluated those two lease areas, they removed Wilmington West from consideration, and then, as Lela stated, they also kind of reconfigured the Wilmington East, which is now Carolina Long Bay, to account for some DOD issues, Coast Guard, as well as North Atlantic right whale critical habitat, and so that's kind of how that, the Carolina Long Bay, kind of evolved to what it looks like today.

MS. SCHLENKER: Yes, and so the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is responsible for working with the states to select these offshore wind areas, and, as I've been mentioning, they're really required to consider all of the existing ocean uses and environmental factors, and so these selected areas have to basically maximize the resource potential for offshore wind production, while minimizing conflicts, and then, as I alluded to, once these areas are kind of finalized, that's when a competitive auction is held, where the developers bid for the right to submit a project plan to BOEM and potentially develop an area, and so, similarly to the Carolina Long Bay area, the Kitty Hawk lease area also had certain, you know, restrictions and how it ended up in this particular shape.

The idea is you end up with a lease area that's relatively deconflicted, as well as well suited to produce a lot of energy, and so this -- To give you a sense of what the approval process looks like, this is -- It's a long process, and so there are many different stages, but, basically, developers that win lease areas -- The next step is to conduct surveys and studies to learn more about the lease area, and so that includes both biological and geophysical resources.

Developers will then draw up project plans, which are called construction and operations plans, or a COP, for offshore wind development and submit those plans to BOEM for approval, and so, at that point, BOEM will then conduct extensive environmental and technical reviews to determine possible impacts, and how to mitigate them, before either approving, modifying, or disapproving the plan, and so, you know, the typical timeline is often about ten years from when a lease is awarded to when construction begins, to get all these various steps done.

Just to give you a sense of the two different projects, Carolina Long Bay -- This lease was awarded in 2022, and so they are here at the submitting the SAP, or the site assessment plan. Kitty Hawk, this lease area was awarded in 2017, and so we are a little further along in the process. We are, as I will mention in our project-specific overview, we are in the process of revising our COP.

Another really important part of assessing these sites is, of course, the fishery resources, and so developers are required by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to work with independent researchers to conduct fisheries monitoring plans that will survey impacts to commercially and ecologically-important species, and so we're required to get two years of data before any construction occurs, collect data during that construction, and then for several years after construction, to get a good picture of all of the potential impacts to fishery resources, and so these are -- This is not us doing this work, right, and this is -- The fishery management plan is sort of designed in collaboration with fishermen, with research institutes, and with managing agencies, and there is not --

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach for this, and so this is an image, on the right, from the Block Island Windfarm, which is a small, five-turbine windfarm that powers Block Island in Rhode Island, and so here, of course, you know, lobster traps, and lobster surveys, are a big part of that fishery monitoring plan. That will not be the case in North Carolina, right, and so we adapt these research strategies based on the specific species makeup of an area, as well as the sort of depth and temperature. We know, just speaking with researchers, what we're likely to find and what are going to be the best gears to assess that, as well as working with commercial and recreational fishermen to kind of determine that, and so these are very adaptable for the region.

Okay, and now I'm going to move into talking specifically about the Kitty Hawk wind area, and so this is where I'm transitioning away from kind of our group introduction and moving to the project-specific information for Kitty Hawk, and then I will transfer it over, when I'm done with that, to Nathan, to talk about Carolina Long Bay.

Just to give you some basic facts about the Kitty Hawk wind energy area, it is twenty-seven miles offshore of Corolla, North Carolina, in the Outer Banks, and it's about thirty-six miles southeast from Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach, and about the same distance to Oregon Inlet in North Carolina. The lease area is about 122,000 acres, and it has -- It's approved for 3,500 megawatts, which is about enough energy to power a million homes, when it's operational.

It's a fairly sandy bottom area, and it's about thirty to fifty meters in depth, and wind speeds are around eight to nine-meters-per-second, and we have also divided the project, just for sort of some simplicity in permitting, into what we call Kitty Hawk North and Kitty Hawk South, and so Kitty Hawk North is about 40 percent of the area in this pink color, and then Kitty Hawk South is 60 percent of the lease area in the green color.

Just to give you a few specifics about Kitty Hawk North, here again shaded in that pink area, and so that's, again, 40 percent of the total lease area, and it will contain about sixty-nine wind turbine positions and one electrical service platform, and so, right now, we have submitted our construction and operation plan, or COP, to BOEM in 2020, for the first time, and we submitted an updated version in 2022, and we are, again, working on some updates to that construction and operation plan now that will be submitted by the end of the year, and construction is not scheduled to begin any earlier than 2026.

Here, you can see this pink line is indicating where the cables are going to go, and so we are going to make landfall at Sandbridge in Virginia, although it is still -- We're still working on determining exactly who will purchase the energy that is produced, but we are going to make landfall at Sandbridge, and this will be AC current.

For Kitty Hawk South, this is 60 percent of the lease area, and about 121 wind turbine positions, with two electrical service platforms, and so you will notice, right away, that there is a variety of lines emanating out of the Kitty Hawk South area, and so we are still determining exactly where those cables will make landfall for Kitty Hawk South. There are a couple of different possibilities. If we're bringing the power to North Carolina, it's going to come to Havelock, and there is a variety of routes that you can see that are still potential possibilities for that cable. Another possibility is for that power, and that cable, to go to Sandbridge as well, which does have the advantage of being a relatively shorter path.

For Kitty Hawk South, the construction and operations plan was first submitted in 2022, and the state permitting process is not yet initiated, and so this part of the project is just slightly further behind Kitty Hawk North, and, here, construction is not going to begin any earlier than 2028.

As you can imagine, with these variety of potential cable routes, there is a lot of route planning and constraints analysis that is ongoing, and so we're basically working to make sure that, wherever the cables go, we can minimize the environmental impact of that. Because we are looking at some relatively longer cable routes, the current will need to be converted to DC and then back to AC again, and that is to minimize loss of power.

Okay, and so, to give you some sense of some of the work that we have done so far, from the beginning, when this lease was awarded to Avangrid in 2017, we really made an effort to utilize historical fisheries knowledge and experience, and so some of you may know Rick Robbins, who is my predecessor in this role, and he sent quite a bit of time conducting extensive interviews with local captains, to determine use of the lease area, and we've also done sort of extensive data analysis of the landings, vessel trip reports, and transits through the lease area, and all of that information has essentially said the same thing, that there is relatively low levels of commercial and recreational fishing in the lease area.

In the figure on the right, you can see these modeled in blue, and actual in red, of vessel trip reports, and so these are essentially the landings, in pounds, on the Y-axis, starting in 2007 up through 2019, and, basically, you can see the same trend with both the modeled and the actual data, where there is sort of this decreasing trend in landings over time, and really quite low levels of fishing in the last ten years in the lease area.

Another thing that came out from some of those interviews with local captains is, you know, there is some commercial trawling in this area, and not a lot, but there is some, and these captains talked to Rick, and basically he was interviewing them about their trawl tow patterns, and, taking that information, we were able to sort of draft the turbine layout of the lease area, so that those historical trawl tow patterns could remain, and so, essentially, that means that, for folks that do commercial trawl in the area, they will be able to continue trawling in those same patterns, using that same orientation that they have.

This also allowed us basically to allow sort of direct transit routes from both Oregon Inlet and Rudee Inlet to the shelf, and so folks can set their course and head straight out to the shelf, without needing to necessarily make too many adjustments through the turbine field. Of course, when the area is constructed, the marking lighting and the AIS will all comply with the U.S. Coast Guard guidance. You will certainly not come upon this area unexpectedly.

As you may have gathered, that means that the lease area, when it's constructed, will be completely open to commercial and recreational fishing, and these turbines are going to be spaced far enough apart that it will be pretty easy for folks to navigate through the turbines, and so they have a bit of a rectangular orientation, and so, in one direction, it's 0.75 between each of the turbines, and so, in this figure, these corner points represent the turbines, and so we have 0.75 nautical miles here, and then just over one nautical mile in this direction, and so this is a figure that -- It does look a lot better blown-up on a posterboard, which is how we tend to display it, at fishing tournaments and things like that, but you can kind of get the sense of it here, where this is a scale drawing, and so, in this orange circle, and this is a cargo vessel, and so this is all to scale, and then, here in the blue, this is a forty-foot fishing boat, and, in the green, an eighty-foot fishing boat, and so you can get the sense here of how much room there actually is between these turbines and how it will be fairly easy for folks to navigate in and around the turbines.

Additionally, the cables will be buried five to eight feet in the stable seafloor, and so that allows for things like trawling, and, of course, you know, we don't want these -- You know, we want these cables to be safe below the seafloor, and so that's -- You know, we're not worried here about folks putting an anchor down or trawling in the area.

The only times where any kind of fishing will be restricted will be during sort of construction and maintenance periods, and we will communicate those on our website and through notices to mariners and to fishers, and, of course, as many of you might be familiar with the artificial reef effect, we expect that these turbines will act as artificial reefs, and our hope is that this will be a bonus for fishers in the area, to sort of hopefully increase their catches.

Back in -- A couple of other things that we've done, in terms of fisheries engagement, back in 2020, we put out our first meteorological buoy in the area, and that was basically to give us a sense of wind speeds, currents, water temperature, salinity, all that kind of stuff, and so we had two different buoys out between 2020 and 2022, and some of you may be familiar with this, and we had all that information available in real-time on our website for fishers, and a lot of folks contacted us to tell us how much they liked this, and they hoped we would keep them up.

So, unfortunately, the buoys have done their job, and, fortunately for us, we've gotten good information from them, but this information -- Because the buoys are no longer out there, this information is not available on our website any longer, but I think it was useful to folks while it was out there, and it gave us a really good characterization of the site, you know, primarily in terms of wind speeds, but also these other really important components, the tide, directional waves, all of that.

We have also worked with the Maritime Academy Institute in Norfolk to develop a really cool tool that I hope that people will take advantage of in the future, and it's an offshore vessel simulator, to be used as a tool for navigating and acclimating to transiting around the wind turbine areas, and so it's almost like a large video game, and you can go in, and you can -- There is options for different types of vessels, and there is options for different weather conditions, and you can basically get familiar, get comfortable, with navigating around the turbines.

This is something that, right now, we can offer scheduled trainings for, and so you can't just walk up and do it at any point, but we are working, right now, on getting a training scheduled for January or February of this coming year, and we will definitely be advertising that on our website, through social media, and through our listserv. This is an option that trainings will continue as well, and we'll be hopefully scheduling these regularly.

We continue -- You know, we've done this since the lease was acquired, to engage with fishers, and this is something that we did from the beginning, and we're continuing to do that, moving forward. This year, in 2023, we sponsored five different fishing tournaments, and so you may have seen us, potentially, with our booth. We were at Big Rock Tournament, the Virginia Beach Tuna Tournament, the Alice Kelley and Pirates Cove Tournaments in the Outer Banks, and then the Virginia Beach Billfish Tournament.

The purpose of doing that is basically to meet fishermen where they are, be available to answer questions, pass out information, and, if you do see us, typically we have some freebies as well to hand out, and we can get you signed up for our listserv, if you're interested.

We also have three different fisheries representatives, and so, in North Carolina, we have Dewey Hemilright and Hank Beasley, who are both on the commercial and also the rec and charter side, and, in Virginia Beach, Daniel LaGrande, on the rec and charter side, and so these guys were basically, you know, long-standing in the fishery, with lots of experience, and they are contractors

with us, but they are not -- They are not required to say anything in particular, you know, and they're not -- We don't require them to say nice things about us, necessarily, and they're just -- Their role is basically to provide us with information and connect us to folks that might have concerns or questions, to basically be sort of a just source of information for us.

If they're saying, you know, folks on the dock are saying X, and, you know, it might be helpful to kind of highlight that in your presentation, or meet with this group in particular, and so these guys are incredibly useful, and helpful, for us, in understanding kind of potential concerns or questions from the fisheries side.

In the future, we will be working with folks as scout and contractor vessels, both for survey and safety work, as we move forward in doing some -- As we get closer to the construction phase of things, and we will continue, of course, to do community outreach events, and so we're looking into -- As well as doing the fishing tournaments, potentially you may see us at seafood festivals next year, and also thinking about joint developer initiatives, and so, as we're highlighting here, by doing this presentation jointly, and, you know, we work with the Carolina Long Bay folks, as well as the Dominion folks, where possible, and so, where it makes sense to kind of work together as a team, we want to do that.

I will also just highlight our website here, and that is where we will be posting things like notices to mariners, fisheries notices, and frequently asked questions, and so please do check that out, if you have follow-up questions, and it's kittyhawkoffshore.com.

Then, finally, just to kind of sum up here the Kitty Hawk side of the presentation, just to summarize what we have completed in terms of research and what is upcoming, on the completed side, we have our wind, current, and wave data gathered from those meteorological buoys that I mentioned, and we have also completed our geophysical surveys, which is essentially sonar, to map the seafloor, and geotechnical surveys, which is essentially sediment cores, to pull up some -- Just to get a sense of, when we do put in those turbines, what type of sediment we're going to be putting them into.

Then the big thing that we have upcoming is our fisheries monitoring plan, and so we are currently in talks with academic researchers, as well as managers and local fishermen, to kind of figure out the best way to assess the site, in terms of the fisheries resources, and those will be kind of large-scale projects that will be, you know, six to eight-year research commitments, and we envision, you know, collaborating with a lot of the local fleet to get that work done. With that, I will say thank you, and I will turn it over to Nathan for the Carolina Long Bay slides, and I will be available at the end of the presentation for questions, of course.

MR. CRAIG: Thanks, everyone. I am Nathan Craig, with Duke Energy, and I'm out of our Charlotte, North Carolina office. I am kind of the environmental permitting director for the Duke Energy Carolina Long Bay lease, which is 0546.

Just to give you a quick overview, and we've kind of already gone through this, but, when BOEM auctioned off the Carolina Long Bay site, they split it into two separate leases. Duke Energy, you know, won the 0546, and TotalEnergies won the 0545. You will see that it says "Cinergy Corp" up there, and that's a subsidiary of Duke Energy. This offshore wind lease is held by a non-regulated entity of Duke Energy, meaning it's not regulated by the North Carolina or South

Carolina Utilities Commission, and it's a non-regulated asset. Then so that was transferred over in July of this past year.

Also, just to let you know that Duke Energy, and Total, have been coordinating and collaborating on a lot of these early development activities. That's really, you know, for two reasons. One is it allows, you know, Duke to kind of benefit from the experience that TotalEnergies has in the offshore space, and then it allows Total to kind of benefit from the resources that Duke Energy has in the Carolinas.

It also is a benefit to the regulatory agencies and other stakeholders, and so we've been holding joint meetings, submitting joint applications, and so, instead of getting two 300-page documents, we're getting one 300-page document, and, instead of getting, you know, two half-day meetings, it's one half-day meeting, and so we're looking to try to lessen the burden on the regulatory agencies as well as we go through this development process. Here, I'm going this over to Katherine McGlade, and she's our Fisheries Liaison, and I will allow Katherine to introduce herself and talk about our fisheries outreach.

MS. MCGLADE: Good morning, everybody. Thank you for having us for this presentation. Our approach to the fisheries liaison, here at Carolina Long Bay, is we started out reaching out to the fishing associations, specifically the North Carolina For-Hire Captains Association, and we've been working with them closely to connect with the recreational and for-hire group of captains in the Carolina Long Bay area. Then, on the commercial side, the North Carolina Fisheries Association and the North Carolina Watermen's Association.

Through those contacts and interactions, we've been able to identify individual fishers in the area who use the lease area for both recreational and commercial purposes. Using those contacts, and those interviews, and, obviously, memorializing them and keeping them as part of the public information for the project, we have tried to drill down and understand exactly how these fishermen are using the lease area and what parts and components of the lease areas they may be using more heavily than others, as well as what kind of gear types they're using and what kind of species they're targeting.

After the individual fishermen, we've also reached out to seafood markets and buyers, and most of the commercial catch down there is purchased by local seafood markets and seafood buyers, and so they've been a great source of information for us on a lot of levels, and then we've also reached out to the universities and the researchers and other agencies who have had information about the lease area, and so we have interacted with Duke University, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington, to understand, you know, whale activity, dolphin activity, marine mammals, and other things that are outside of the fisheries, but relative to the fisheries engagement and the lease area.

Then, also, with marine fisheries and with NOAA, to -- We've gotten the raw data from the use of the lease area, which we're now trying to drill down to be quite specific to the lease area, so that we can get a better understanding of what historically has been caught in the lease area and reported.

We've also reached out to some other folks connected to fisheries, and, specifically, I spoke with somebody who some of you may know, Jess Hawkins, and he did the stakeholder outreach for

BOEM, when they were originally establishing the lease areas, and so he's been a valuable asset, in terms of tracking the historical fisheries outreach since the inception of the lease areas, and then, also, coordinating with Avangrid and Dominion on the fisheries liaison level, because it's -- I think it's quite helpful to be speaking to the other fisheries liaisons, learning from their experiences, sharing our experiences, and having that exchange of information. I will turn it back over to you, Nathan.

MR. CRAIG: Thanks, Katherine. The first step we have in kind of like the development of the lease area is really assessing what the wind resource is for the lease area, as well as understanding other ocean parameters that will kind of weigh-in, or help, the design of the system, and so our first step is really to get buoys out in the water to collect some of these measurements. In order for us to put buoys in the water, we have to do surveys of the seabed, to verify that there's nothing there that would be impacted by, you know, a mooring, or a buoy moored to the seabed floor, and that's really looking at any environmentally sensitive habitats, historical shipwrecks, other cultural resources, or any other hazards, like unexploded ordinances or any of that.

The process that we took, and, you know, when I say "we", it's both Duke Energy collaborating and coordinating with TotalEnergies, is we went out and looked at -- We identified five locations where we potentially would put met ocean buoys within the lease area, and then we did a desktop survey, a study really, based on available information, and so there were some surveys conducted in the 2014-2015 timeframe of this area, and we got the company that did those surveys to kind of evaluate these locations, see if there's any red flags with placing buoys out there, and then the next step was us to go out there and actually do the survey work, actually do the geophysical work, to see what's actually there.

Again, our plan, right now, is to put one meteorological buoy within the TotalEnergies lease, one within the Duke Energy lease, and then one centrally located. That will primarily be an environmental buoy that will collect additional information on the presence and localization of marine mammals, and so that's kind of what our plan is going forward.

What we did this past August is the survey contractor, Geodynamics, and they're out of Morehead City, and they went out and conducted that initial geophysical survey work. As part of that effort, you know, we had protected species onboard, as well as offshore fisheries liaison onboard, and those two roles -- The protected species really is there to have a watch for any type of marine mammal, sea turtle, or anything that could be impacted by the work activities, and then, if they do spot it, they have to -- We have to take action, based on what that is, whether it's to stop work, steer away from the animal, depending on what it is, but that's the role of the protected species observer.

The role of the fisheries liaison is really there to communicate with any fishermen that are using the area while the survey is occurring, and so they are there mainly to kind of be that interaction and point of contact for any fishermen in the area there, and so we did use the R/V Shackleford, and it came out of Morehead City, and then it was like ported -- Their port, during the work, was at Southport.

These are some of the equipment that was used, and so we did a sidescan sonar, and that kind of gives you the bathymetry of the seabed, a multibeam echosounder, and we also did the sub-bottom profiler, and that looks underneath the seabed, to see if anything of relevance is buried within the

seabed that we need to be aware of. We also collected sediment samples, really to see what type of fauna, or anything else, from a biological perspective, may be in the sediment, and then we did a video transect of the area, and so you can see one of the still shots of the video transects of Site A here.

Pretty much the areas that we surveyed were kind of similar to this, and they're mostly sandy, muddy sediment, and we didn't identify any hardbottom habitat in these kind of what we're calling the postage-stamp surveys for where we're going to plan to put these buoys out there.

You know, we did come -- As we've been communicating, or engaging, with stakeholders, we did speak with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Habitat Advisory Panel, and they gave us some good advice with regard to what type of equipment to use, with regard to the sediment samples, as well as, you know, make sure that we got good video, clear video, of the area before we collected that sediment sample, before we did anything to disturb the seafloor, or the seabed, with that video, and so we were able to confirm that. You know, we also had people onboard to do the review of the geophysical data, high-resolution data, to see if there's anything in there, before we kind of dropped the sediment samplers down.

Now this is just some images that were developed for the survey, and so each one of these shows the different equipment, you know, the multibeam, sidescan sonar, as well as magnetometer, and, really, what they're showing is that there's little to no kind of what they call anomalies in the areas we're proposing the buoys, and like there's no metal content that would signify a historic shipwreck, and the bathymetry is pretty stable within these areas, and there is really kind of no indication of hardbottom habitat, is what these kind of diagrams are showing us, and so it's basically indicating that these areas are kind of environmentally suitable to deploying that ocean buoy.

Here is just some of the actions we took with regard to the protected species observer, and, really, there was no protected species observed, other than dolphin, and so no whales were sighted, and no sea turtles. We did impose speed restrictions on the vessels, and this was really out of an abundance of caution with regard to North Atlantic right whales, and we kind of kept our speeds, or the vessel kept its speeds, at below ten knots, while transiting back and forth to the port, as well as, when we were doing the surveys, it was at four knots, and so we kind of voluntarily committed to that, and that was kind of working with the National Resource Defense Council and SCLC, just to kind of -- You know, basically an abundance of caution that we wouldn't have any impact on any marine mammals or sea turtles while we're doing these surveys.

Here you see what we did see, and, you know, we basically just saw the common bottlenose dolphin, and so there wasn't any sea turtles or any other visual sightings of whales, and, basically, this just required us to maintain our course and direction and speed there.

We went out and did that work so that we could actually go in and put in, or propose to have, buoys placed on the lease area, and so what the process is, it's we'll take that survey data that was collected in August, put those reports together, develop -- Then put our plan together on how these buoys will be deployed, how they will be moored to the seabed, how they will be decommissioned, and then that all goes to BOEM for review and approval, and so what we're looking at doing is, again, having a met ocean buoy in the Total lease area, a met ocean buoy in the Duke Energy lease

area, and the primary purpose of those buoys are to measure wind speed, current, and wave height, and so that will go into -- That will parameters that go into the design of the site.

We'll also be collecting environmental data, and so we're looking at collecting -- You know, at the request of the state agencies, we'll have the fish acoustic tag receivers there, and so we'll be picking up any tagged fish that are within the area, and we're also required to have what is called a MODIS tracking system antenna, and that's with Fish and Wildlife, and that will detect any migratory tags, migratory birds, in the area, and that will connect to the Fish and Wildlife's MODIS network system, and we're also looking to have passive acoustic monitors on these buoys, primarily looking at any North Atlantic right whale that may be transiting the area back and forth, and those will be installed as well. Then we'll have wave sensors, tide and water levels, and then your meteorological buoys.

This is what we're looking to do for our environmental buoy, and so this buoy is really being installed mainly to get triangulation for the passive acoustic monitoring system, and this will also be equipped with bird and bat detection, acoustic detection, and so we'll have recorders out there listening to any bat calls, as well as any songbirds, song migratory birds, that may be using or transiting the area as well, and then we'll also have water quality parameters on here, on this buoy also, where it will be dissolved oxygen, pH, chlorophyll-A, surface sea temperature, and some other water quality parameters that we'll be measuring, and recording as well, and those are the ones that we'll be looking to have real-time data available. You know, there is a NOAA buoy within the lease area, but we'll be looking at options to -- For real-time available data for the public and fishermen to use that will complement that NOAA buoy when we're out there.

This kind of just lays out our upcoming activities, and so we're looking to submit our site assessment plan to BOEM later this month, early next month, and that will detail, you know, how these buoys will be deployed, moored, maintained, decommissioned, what equipment will be installed on the buoys, and that will go through BOEM's review process, and they will coordinate with Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries.

We'll also be doing the mooring design, and that will be reviewed by the Coast Guard, and kind of signed-off, before any buoy is moored out there, and then we'll do the coordination with the MODIS system, with the Fish and Wildlife, and that's really just to make sure that the MODIS antenna on the buoys are installed correctly, that they're able to communicate with the Fish and Wildlife's MODIS network, and then that will require the coordination with them.

We are, you know, in the process of selecting our buoy vendor, and we'll probably have that announced, you know, in the late October or November timeframe, when our SAP goes in, and we're reviewing the proposals now, and I will turn it over to Katherine to kind of discuss upcoming fisheries outreach activities.

MS. MCCGLADE: I don't think I have anything that's dramatically different than what I've presented, and I think the main thing is to continue to explore, in detail with the individual fishers, how the lease area potentially is used for fishing, so that we really have accurate data about where there is hard bottom, where there is productive bottom, and areas that potentially we might want to work around when we're doing the layout for the turbines, and so it will be more of the same for the immediate future.

I think, you know, what can be helpful for the AP committee is to see how Avangrid and Duke Energy and Total are at very different places in their process, and so we're still at the very beginning, and there's a lot of outreach and data that still needs to be gathered, and pondered, if you will, and we'll be continuing to do that, prior to doing the kind of outreach that Avangrid has been doing now, such as fishing tournaments and that sort of thing. That's really going to be more down the line for us on the timeline.

MR. CRAIG: Thanks, Katherine, and so, for us, we have not really identified the transmission landing spot for the cables, and, you know, that will be kind of conducted kind of in close coordination with the regulatory utilities, basically where do they want, or need, the power, and that's still ongoing discussions, and we don't know if we'll be doing the full lease geophysical surveys next year, and that's still being evaluated, and so that's another decision point that is to be determined here in the next couple of months, but our initial plan will be to submit the SAP. Once that's approved by BOEM, we'll deploy the buoys, and that will probably be more in the second quarter of next year.

MS. SCHLENKER: Nathan, I can take back over, if you want.

MR. CRAIG: That will be great, Lela. Thanks.

MS. SCHLENKER: Okay. Just to kind of summarize, basically, you know, we've shared some information and updates from two different projects, but I do want to just kind of stress, as Katherine has done a great job of, just sort of our commitment to working together and addressing regional issues as a group, where we can, and also to sort of say that we include Dominion in that. You know, Ron Larson is the fisheries liaison for that group, and so representatives from Dominion, Avangrid, Duke, and TotalEnergies -- Typically, we meet biweekly, and we discuss things like regional fisheries issues, information about upcoming survey work, and joint commitment to the councils, and so, again, I do want to thank the council for giving us this time this morning to speak with you all and do this jointly as a group.

That's how we are going to continue into the future, as sort of independent projects, but communication and cooperation, where possible and appropriate. We will also be sharing information next month with the Mackerel Cobia AP group, as well as in December, at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting. I will certainly be in-person at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting, and potentially also at the November meeting, and so I look forward to meeting some of you in-person, and, with that, I think we would all be very happy to answer questions, and I did want to make sure that you all have our contact information, and I know that all of us would be more than happy to have conversations with folks, to follow-up on questions, and I have also included Ron Larsen here as well, for Dominion, and so you have his contact information as well. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you to our presenters for this presentation. I kind of wanted to take questions from our AP here for our presenters, and it looks like, from what's been presented to us, there's not a lot that have an interest in the northern area, but I think the Carolina Long Branch affects probably more of us.

I know I went and sat in on a couple of these things with the Mid-Atlantic states, which having some friends up in New Jersey, up in that area, and so they were people that were involved in

trawling and all that were interested, and I don't seem to think that we have much of that, but there are longliners, and so you may want to think about that, with respect to your questions and the spacings of these facilities, and so I have a few comments, but I will open it up to the AP, if anybody has any questions. We'll start with Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I guess my question is are these fields -- The size, is that the way it's always going to be, or is it these just to start, that they could come on down and add more different fields, or is this all that there will ever be?

MR. CRAIG: You're talking about the lease areas?

MR. MCKINLEY: The lease areas. That's correct.

MR. CRAIG: I can't directly answer that question, because kind of BOEM decides that, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, but I'm not aware of any plans for additional lease areas around Carolina Long Bay or the south. There has been plans, in the past, where they had call areas off the coast of South Carolina, and I'm not aware of what BOEM's plans are to lease, or develop, any of those areas at this time.

MS. SCHLENKER: If I can chime-in, Nathan, and so we do -- There are three areas in the Mid-Atlantic region that have recently been released by BOEM, and so the furthest south is called Area C, and that is adjacent to Dominion's current wind energy area, and so the other two are off of Maryland and Delaware, and my understanding is that those three areas are thought to be the last fixed-bottom lease areas that will be released, but, of course, that's my understanding, and I will stop there.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Next is John Polston from Florida.

MR. POLSTON: A question, and are there any running turbines now, if you will, and my concern is I've heard, in the news, I don't know, a few months ago or so, and time goes by, but that there was some whales that were found washed up onshore, and stuff like that, and there wasn't really anything that they could find, that I heard anyways, that was wrong with them, and some people were saying something to the effect of it was throwing like their sonars off or whatever, coming from different wind turbines, and it had an effect on them. I guess my question would be is there any truth to any of that, and has anybody -- If there are some, I think they're in the north, or the northeast, and do they have the same equipment, and like so was there any interaction with the ones, maybe a whale that came by that was tagged or something, to where -- You know, that they know it was close to there at one time, or something like that, and could it have been one of those, or possibly any interaction with wind turbines, is the question.

MS. SCHLENKER: John, did you want to chime-in on that?

MR. HARKER: Yes, and I will kick it off. Good morning. My name is John Harker, and, again, I'm with Avangrid, and so I also manage the New England projects as well, and so, to answer your question, sir, currently, for turbines in the water that are working, there's only seven, actually, on the east coast, five of them off of Block Island, that have been there for about eight years, and then the two off of CVOW. Construction is underway for the first commercial offshore wind area, and that's going to be Vineyard Wind, which we're actually 50 percent owner of, and those are -- Then

there is, subsequently, some other leases that are under construction in the Northeast as well, called Southfork, and a smaller one just northwest, kind off of the Rhode Island area.

To your question about whales, whale mortality, it's a very sensitive topic, and it's something that we look at very closely, and we monitor, and we advocate for additional research and science, but, moreover, we have to look historically at what the actual habitat has been -- How it's been affected, and, actually, since 2016, if you look on NOAA's website, and BOEM as well, and they have provided information, and it shows that whale mortality has actually increased since 2016.

Looking at the mortality rate, there is no direct correlation to offshore wind, and, actually, 40 percent of the whale mortality that they're finding now is attributed to different factors involving human activity, such as gear entanglement and vessel strikes, and so some of the questions to the research, or, moreover, the geophysical and geotechnical work that is done by offshore wind, is sometimes compared to the same as oil and gas, which is incorrect, and we do not use the same techniques, nor the velocity or intensity that you would see in those industries for our geophysical, and this is kind of that use of mapping the bottom of the floor.

We do not have to penetrate as deep as oil and gas, and we're just looking at the surface, for the most part, and then the geotechnical is where we actually take the samples, and this is almost stationary kind of research, where we're just taking core samples of the bottom, in simple terms, and so, at this point, through the federal government's investigation, and then correlating with offshore wind's work, and, more acutely, the permitting process that we have to go through for impacts, there isn't any direct correlation to the activity of offshore wind development and the whale mortality, and I hope that answers your question, sir.

MR. POLSTON: Yes, I think so. There was a lot of answer there. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

MR. HARKER: It's well scripted, and we answer this very often.

MS. SCHLENKER: I will just briefing add, as well, that one of the bits of misinformation floating around is that the survey work -- Again, the misinformation is that it might interfere with whales' ability to echolocate, and this is actually very easily disproven, because -- (Part of Ms. Schlenker's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. LORENZ: To the presenter who was just speaking, could you bring more clarity with your input, and we have some people here that would like to hear you repeat what you just said. You've been cutting out and everything else.

MS. SCHLENKER: I'm so sorry. I hope that I am being heard clearly now, but just to make the point that the humpback whales, which are the ones having the mortality event, don't actually use echolocation, and so that's a bit of misinformation that's easily dispelled, just that there is no possibility that sonar would interfere with their echolocation, because they don't in fact use it.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you very much. We have that, on the fact that the humpback whales do not use echolocation. We have a question coming in from online, and she's a council member, Kerry Marhefka from South Carolina. Kerry, you are recognized to speak. Thank you.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Bob. I have two questions, and the first one is probably generally, and any of you all can answer, and the second one may be more appropriate for the Kitty Hawk folks, since they're further along.

My first question is I understand that there's a NOAA Fisheries and BOEM federal survey mitigation implementation strategy, and I'm curious -- I am asking this because we have two fisheries-independent surveys, our SERFS survey, which is deploying trap gear mostly, and then the South Atlantic Deepwater Bottom Longline Survey, and I'm a little worried that, at least during construction, those surveys may overlap with that area and may be disrupted, and so I guess my question is do you all automatically participate in that federal survey mitigation implementation strategy, or is that something we sort of need to pursue and make sure that, you know, any interruptions to our fisheries-independent surveys will be mitigated, and then I have another question after that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Kerry. Will that be Lela or Nathan that's going to answer?

MR. CRAIG: Well, I will let Lela chime-in, since they are much further along, but, as we go through what's called the NEPA process, all the mitigation will be addressed as part of that, and, you know, the survey mitigation is one part of that, and I would suspect that we would participate and be engaged with that process, if and when we determine that, you know, the Carolina Long Bay would affect any survey activities.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Nathan.

MS. SCHLENKER: We are -- (Part of Ms. Schlenker's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. LORENZ: Lela, you're now cutting out also, and could you please start over?

MS. SCHLENKER: We're working with NOAA actively on questions of survey mitigation, and that's something that all the developers will be sort of required to -- I'm so sorry, and, yes, we are actively working with NOAA on survey mitigation questions, and that is something that all of the developers will be required to submit a plan to them for, and so that is something.

MR. LORENZ: All right.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think I got that, Bob, but can I ask --

MR. LORENZ: Kerry, I believe you had a second part, or a second question?

MS. MARHEFKA: Just one, and I believe -- Unfortunately, this is for probably Lela, because they're further along, and so, Lela, if you can hear me, and I'm curious about how many gallons of heated water will be taken in and discharged through the turbines, and my understanding is it sort of depends on -- Forgive me, because I am not an electrical engineer, by any stretch, but whether you're using AC or AC/DC, and, if it's one of those, then you can be talking about, you know, millions of gallons of water being taken in and heated up and then discharged, and the concern there is that sort of whatever is in the water, especially say larvae, can also get, you know,

pulled in with that, and would, obviously, get fried, and I'm curious if there's going to be happening at any of the platforms.

MS. SCHLENKER: I hope that I am coming through okay, but --

MR. LORENZ: Yes, Lela, and we heard you somewhat. Continue. Thank you.

MS. SCHLENKER: I heard John chime-in as well, and he's welcome to answer this, in case I'm breaking up, but I do not -- I'm not aware that -- I don't believe that the turbines take in any water. That would be news to me, and it's possible that that might occur at the electrical service platforms, and I'm not sure on that. This is a question that I haven't gotten before, and it's not something that I have heard mentioned by any of our engineers, and so my instinct is that that is not occurring, but I will check with our engineer and get back to you, but I know that that does not happen at the turbine. They are air-cooled, and the speed is controlled, so that they do not overheat. They don't get going too fast so that they can't be air-cooled, but I will get back to you on whether that could occur at the electrical service platform, and I'm not 100 percent sure on that.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, and you are Katherine, Katherine McGlade?

MS. MCGLADE: No, and that was Lela speaking.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. I just wanted that for our record here on our transcript.

MR. CRAIG: Just real quick, some of the cooling does occur on the cable, but it depends on what type of cable is used, and like AC doesn't require any cooling, and AC/DC may, and the cooling that would be needed is fairly minimal, and so you're looking at very localized cooling, just around the cable, and, you know, before that's done, there is a process you have to go through to assess what those impacts are, but it's fairly local and minimized, about how that cooling is done for that AC/DC cable.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you. Our next question is going to be from Randy McKinley from North Carolina.

MR. MCKINLEY: One last question, and I noticed that the Kitty Hawk farm may come -- The cables may come around in Onslow Bay, in our area, and to come into the Havelock area, and I don't know anything about the cables and stuff, but do they emit any kind of magnetic field or anything, with the current going through them, that could disrupt, or change, the fisheries where these cables are going to be laid across?

MR. CRAIG: Not at the depth they will be -- These will be buried about, you know, at least six to eight feet, and probably more, in some locations, and so, once you get down to that depth, there wouldn't be any magnetic field or heat or electromagnetic frequency that would be emitted from the cable that would have any impact.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, and that was Nathan Craig. I would just like to ask all our folks that are presenting to us, and answering the questions, and would you please identify yourself when you give you answer? We're making -- We make a public record of these proceedings, and so we need your name, so we can attach what is said to a name. I would like to recognize someone who

is online again, who is on our AP, and he's a scientific member and with the NOAA Beaufort Lab, in I think North Carolina, and I would like recognize Dr. Todd Kellison to ask your questions.

DR. KELLISON: Thanks, Bob, and good morning, everyone. I wanted to address Kerry's question about the impact of wind energy development on our fishery-independent surveys, and she mentioned that the Northeast had developed a survey mitigation strategy, in coordination with BOEM, and I just wanted to note that the Southeast is finalizing three documents, a science implementation plan related to wind energy development, a survey mitigation strategy, and that sort of is analogous to the one that the Northeast developed, and a survey mitigation program, which is a compilation of survey-specific mitigation plans.

It's basically just thinking about how we might adapt our surveys if there is overlap in the survey areas and the areas where wind energy is being developed offshore. Those three documents are in the process of being finalized, and I think will be published as NOAA tech memos in the very near future, and, Kerry, I would envision that we would probably -- The Southeast Center will communicate that information to the council as well. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Todd. Kerry, if you're online, if you had, I guess, a question, or if you wanted to respond to Todd, and I will give you a moment to get back. Otherwise, I'll get to the next question.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks for that information, Todd. That's helpful, and I appreciate it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Kerry. Next to recognize will be Cameron Sebastian from South Carolina.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I heard, during the briefing, everybody talking about the North Carolina, and I don't know if anybody has contacted me, or my fleets, down where we are, but we fish that area a lot, and we have definitely a concern with what's going on out there, and so one of my questions is, during the construction process, what is the timeframe, and what time of perimeter do you set around your areas during construction to shut down to traffic, and so that would be question one.

MR. CRAIG: We haven't gotten to that point yet. You know, we're several years away from construction, but, really, what -- It's really kind of just the localized area, where the construction actually is occurring, and, typically, there will be kind of like scout vessels that will kind of, you know, just inform other mariners that this going on, and try to keep a distance, and there will be mitigation measures with regard to sound, during pile driving, and it wouldn't be like the whole area would be off-limits, and it would be within where the actual construction is occurring at that time.

The timeframe would be -- You know, again, this is -- The timeframe is going to be dependent on seasonal restrictions, and we haven't gotten there yet, and it's also going to be, you know, based on how many turbines and where the port, at least the port that they're coming from, is going to be, but I would expect that it would be two to three seasons, kind of at the most, and, again, it depends on how much of it is actually built-out, how many turbines you're actually installing, and I suspect that most of that would occur during the late spring to early fall timeframe.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Okay, and then the second question would be, once the turbines are completed, and it's absolutely the whole entire area is unrestricted for any type of use?

MR. CRAIG: Yes, and we expect, you know, the area to be open. There will be some areas within the turbine footprint, and we're not looking to allow, you know, any tie-ups to the turbine foundation or anything like that, and so it would be localized just to where the turbine is, and that would be kind of off-limits, and everything else is expected to be open, and you can expect these turbines to be roughly a mile apart.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Okay, and so you tie a -- I mean, can you drop somebody underwater on it?

MR. CRAIG: I mean, there will be ways that we would be able to have crew access the turbine, and kind of -- Then there is ships, or there will be boats, or vessels, that will be constructed that will be specifically to kind of pull into kind of the bay of the turbine and be able to access, or crawl up onto the turbine, but those would be the ones that would just have access to that area.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I guess my question was -- I'm a diver, and so are we going to be able to dive on it? Is there bottom restrictions? Is the material in the water off-limits or anything, and so not tying up to it, but I'm saying am I going to be able to basically spearfish around it, because it's going to be an attraction for all kinds of fish.

MR. CRAIG: Yes, and I don't expect that we would be restricting that. I think we'll just primarily just restrict, you know, access to the turbine itself.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, gentleman. The answers to Mr. Sebastian were, just for the record, provided by Mr. Nathan Craig from Duke Energy. Mike, did you say we have someone online? I understand there is a Ron Larsen online that wants to respond with respect to the conversation that just went on. Ron, you're recognized.

MR. LARSEN: Thank you very much. This is Ron Larsen, and I'm the fisheries liaison with Dominion Energy. Dominion Energy does have two existing pilot turbines off the coast of Virginia Beach that have been operating since 2019. To respond to questions about access, there is fishing access that is allowed, as long as there is no maintenance operations that are taking place there. You just can't tie-up to the turbine. You know, you don't want to touch the turbines, but, you know, people fish right up to the turbines, to take advantage of that vertical structure, as well as the scour protection on the seabed, and so there is recreational fishing that takes place there, and there is scuba diving that takes place there, and there is free diving that takes place there, to spearfish and harvest the fish there.

The only restriction, again, would be no touching, you know, the turbine, and treat it as kind of private property, and, if there's a maintenance vessel that comes along that needs to conduct operations on the vessel, then the expectation would be that there is -- That folks would clear out and leave a zone for that vessel to safely work and for the safety of the fishermen there as well, and I'm happy to answer any other questions that you might have about the existing turbines up in Virginia. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Mr. Ron Larsen from Dominion Energy Virginia. The next question from our AP is from Mr. Joe Matthews from Georgia.

MR. MATTHEWS: I see one illustration here on what kind of the footprint of the turbine is going to look like, and is that what all of them are expected to look like, on pylons, or do you have any better description of what the final wind turbine underwater footprint is going to look like?

MR. CRAIG: For the Carolina Long Bay site, you know, there's different types of foundations that can be installed. We haven't done the geophysical, or geotechnical, work to determine which foundation is going to be best for that site. I will defer to Ron, or Lela, on what they're looking at for Kitty Hawk and Dominion.

MR. MATTHEWS: I guess, just to follow on that, and just to give you an idea of where I'm going, is that a different type of foundation could have a drastic effect on currents and larval dispersal, if we're talking about something that solid, versus something that the water flows through, and so, you know, if we had a big field of solid foundations out there, it could disrupt the current, and that's kind of where I'm going with that.

MS. SCHLENKER: Just to chime-in, we are planning to use a monopile foundation, which is essentially a steel tube that is driven into the seafloor, and so they will be solid and made of steel and have, as Ron indicated, some scour protection at the bottom.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you. Looking at my queue here, the next question will be from the co-chairman, James Paskiewicz from Florida. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and, before I ask my question, you know, I really want to state that I think it's super important that we are harnessing our renewable resources, but, just as a general question, you know, how long before a wind field, such as any one of these projects, becomes environmentally profitable, meaning, you know, how long before it overcomes all the research expense and planning and construction and all that? Do you have any idea before they overcome all of those expenses, and, you know, traditional energy costs?

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Does anyone want to reply? I have a few figures on what it costs right now, but I will let the others on the future reply.

MR. CRAIG: I will just reply quickly, and, you know -- I mean, the cost is kind of going to be varied, and, obviously, you know, inflation pressures that we're feeling now, or the industry is feeling now, are definitely different than what was estimated previously, but, as far as like the rate of return, or break even, I don't have that information. Obviously, every area is going to be different, because, you know, the power sector, and the utility, and how the utility and the grid operates, is kind of different within each area, but I think -- You know, I think each developer kind of has that idea of like what is going to be -- You know, what is kind of the break point, and what is the revenue needed, in order to make it economically viable, and it's probably more of a site-specific decision on that.

I mean, as far as Duke goes, you know, we're still, again, in the early phases, and so we still have to do some assessments, to really get a better understanding of the capacity and wind resource of the area, as well as what the layout would look like, given some of the potential environmental constraints. Then, you know, that will kind of lead us into a cost modeling effort, and then, obviously, that will be compared to other generation technology out there.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, and thank you to James, and, just to our presenters, of course, that will be of interest to most of the people here, because fishing -- As you bring power generation, or something, into the ocean environment, they can only fish -- They can only procure their trade via the water, and so that's why there's going to be an interest and a watch on this, and, while we support good things like clean energy and all, hopefully it's going to be profitable, because, to some of us -- As I, as an investor in Dominion know, there's a big problem right now with the cost, and all you have to do is look at your stock prices in the past month, what they've done, and I know Dominion has been absolutely plastered, because they can't get, from the State of Virginia, the power rates that they need in order to make that operation profitable, where they pay for leases, and, in fact, I have -- From *The Economist*, they had leases in -- Over in England, just less than a month ago, and nobody even bid, and even our own regional director said he was very disappointed with the bids that went on in the Gulf states, and so, though we hope this goes through, we just want to remember, to the power companies, that fishermen can only fish in the ocean, and power can be generated from other sources, if need be.

Just to answer James' questions, reported in *The Economist*, September 23, 2023, which is kind of an esteemed journal for economics and finance, and there are some costs, and power companies use megawatts of power, and, basically, what it costs to generate is nuclear, which Dominion has a plant in South Carolina, and it's \$91 per megawatt hour. Natural gas, which you can do inland, and you can do in ground fields and things, with a small generator, is \$43 per megawatt hour. Believe it or not, I was surprised to see that solar is \$23 per megawatt hour, and so it's gaining in its ability.

The truth is, for most of these projects, most of the people, it seems like are -- You know, in order to really guarantee a profit, you want about a hundred dollars a megawatt hour, and so, you know, the CEOs, you know, Lynn Good, and Bob Blue in Dominion, and Lynn Good in Duke, they have some work to do with their areas, in order to at least tell us that it's cost-effective. Thank you. Anyone else with any questions or comments?

I just had one for the folks here, for our presenters, and that is you mentioned that there would be no restrictions on fishing, and so fishing will be allowed in these areas, and I know, for recreational fishermen, and, as Cameron mentioned, for divers, structure is very exciting, and maybe for longliners and trawlers not as much, but we understand that we can fish in the areas, but one problem that could come up, and just keep your eye on it, and take it back to your shops, would be what your security aspects are going to be, because those would be unknown to us, when you may have to engage, and you don't know for what reason, and it could be let's say what happened now over in Israel, if there were to be some sort of a, you know, a national thing to protect offshore assets, and that's going to affect our fishermen.

Some of these fishermen from Florida have been surprised with some things that happened with - - You know, just at SpaceX, and that's developing almost astronomically, what's going on, and shutting down areas for, quote, security, and we might want to worry that that could happen here, and your assets will be fixed, and so I think you could make some estimations of how often you may have a security event, or something like that, in addition to the closures, which you've said would be for construction and maintenance, and so I think that would be of interest to these people, because that sometimes can come in, like SpaceX did, as almost a sucker punch in security, and then you close areas down for the purpose of your asset security, or our national security, and so I

would just like to make that comment at this time. Thank you. Does anyone want to respond, and, if not, I will close this area for the agenda.

MR. LARSEN: I think I just want to respond to the security aspect, quickly, and point out that the oil and gas infrastructure that has existed in this country for decades has provided fishing opportunities for recreational and commercial fishermen alike, and it has not experienced the issue, at least to my knowledge, that was just referenced, and so I believe we would fall into that same category. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Ron. Anyone else?

MS. SCHLENKER: Just to say thank you for the opportunity to present, and, as Ron mentioned, I don't think that will pose an issue for recreational or commercial access, but I can certainly get more information in the future about that. I mean, I think, as we get closer to construction, we have, you know, clear communication on that, in terms of, you know, tie-ups and that sort of thing, but, as Ron mentioned, I think the approach will mostly likely be to approach and use the area, but don't touch the turbines, but I think we will communicate on that issue, much more clearly, as we actually have turbines in the water, but thank you again to the committee.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Katherine, and that kind of information would make us -- We'll certainly feel a lot better and help to ensure our support in the future. We have another question from the AP from Andrew Fish from Florida.

MR. FISH: I saw that these leases -- Who receives the monies on these leases? Are these leases purchased, or are they rented, and who is the -- Is it the U.S. government? Where does that money go?

MR. CRAIG: Right now, and anybody on the phone can correct me, but I believe it goes to the Department of the Treasury, as part of the U.S. government.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, and I recognize Andy Piland from North Carolina.

MR. PILAND: The Kitty Hawk area, and I know you said it would be open to fishing and commercial travel, and there is seven boats headed for that area right now, on the AIS system, and, you know, they run into the Navy towers up there, and is there a thought on what's going to happen when a ship strike -- It's going to happen. The law of averages says it will, with all the vessel traffic, and the big -- You know, I understand a forty-foot commercial boat, or charter boat, is not going to affect it, but, you know, with all that commercial ship traffic in the area, and, you know, you've got to plan for it, or have a plan for it. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy.

MS. SCHLENKER: Thank you for that question. You know, everything will be compliant with, you know, Coast Guard regulations, in terms of lighting and et cetera. These turbines will be about a thousand feet tall, and so, you know, certainly weather conditions might make that a little tricky at times, but I don't think anyone is going to accidentally discover that they're right next to a turbine, but this is something that, again, as we get closer to construction, we will certainly be ramping up our trainings, in that simulator that I mentioned, and increasing communications, in

terms of notice to mariners and to fishers, and so we're going to do everything we can to make sure that nobody does run into one of these, and they will be fully Coast Guard compliant, in terms of the AIS and lighting.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. We have another question from Tony Constant from South Carolina.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Bob. I just heard that these leases -- You're saying they go to the U.S. Treasury, and so I'm assuming that means that these funds are going to the general funds of the U.S. Treasury? Wow.

MR. CRAIG: Yes, and that's how I understand it.

MR. CONSTANT: That's a big slush fund, and it seems like that should be adopted to some sort of environmental protection, or at least protecting the Atlantic that you're putting it in, and I know this isn't your doings, and it's the federal government's doings, but a slush fund for that kind of money is a lot, when a lot needs to be done right here where it's being used.

DR. CRAIG: I think there's legislation out there that would kind of divert some of these funds, and I don't exactly have all the details of what that is and the likelihood of it being implemented and passed.

MR. CONSTANT: As a recreational fisherman, I see these things being real good for the fishermen. I'm not so sure they're real good for the fishery, but, with what I'm hearing with the funds, we could sure use it.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, Tony. Anyone else? All right. Then we'll close this discussion on offshore wind activities, which was Agenda Item Number 7, and a special thanks to all of our presenters, and thank you for informing us. I guess we're ahead of the council again on this one, as far as the presentations that are to us, and the folks that we essentially are consulting for will hear this in December, and so thank you to Duke Energy, TotalEnergies, Kitty Hawk Wind, and Dominion for speaking to us and presenting to us and allowing us to ask you questions, no matter how hard they may be, and, respectfully, I thank you for your answers. Thank you.

For the committee here, you know, we had a couple of logistical issues here with breakfast and all, and so why don't we take a fifteen-minute break, and I know a lot of us have to check-out and that sort of a thing, and I think we can finish on time, and we have -- When we return, we will just go over the SEDAR presentation of events, and we'll have just a little more discussion on the limited entry for the for-hire component, okay, and so we are adjourned until 10:25.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. LORENZ: All right. What we have to do is still finish up the discussion on the for-hire limited entry permit, which will be more discussion of what's the most important things, and we do have the SEDAR review, and then I forgot to mention that there is the Other Business, if there's anything anybody wants to bring to the party, and this is most likely things to be talked about in the future, or I could bring up to the council that you want to talk about, at maybe our next meeting, and so, in a minute, I will hand it off to Mike to have us finish up the discussion on limited entry.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yesterday, you all gave -- You all passed a motion that kind of answers the first question of the limited for-hire discussion of whether the council should consider it, and your motion indicates that, yes, there should be consideration for the council, coming up in a future meeting, and this second portion is kind of what I wanted to come back to, is how high of a priority should this consideration have?

Just thinking about the other projects that the council has running right now, especially one that's going to be affecting, you know, the recreational fishery, is Amendment 46, and so where would you all recommend the priority of a limited for-hire consideration, versus some of the other projects that the council has going on right now?

MR. LORENZ: All right. Any answers, or suggestions, to Mike on where this would fit with all the other things the council is considering, or doing, for us? Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: For us in the -- For our companies, this is like the utmost importance, and it's definitely a massive priority to stem the tide of new participants coming into the area, because of the restrictions that I see coming down the pipeline. I mean, when you're talking -- It's a blanket thing, and so two grouper per vessel, and, you know, our smaller vessels carry up to twenty, and our bigger vessels carry up to a hundred, and so it's going to be a really, really -- It's tough sell, as the fish start coming off the market, as far as being able to take them out for them and to not limit the participation in the industry, you know, because it's regulated, and there's a limited product, and there should be -- In my view, there should be a limited number of individuals who can go out and participate in that product. When the product is plentiful, that's a different story, and so, for us in South Carolina, it's an utmost priority to get a handle on this.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Online, we have Jack Cox, on our committee, and I will recognize you, Jack. You're welcome to speak.

MR. COX: Good morning. I would rate this as a very high, top priority. It's less than 40 percent of the for-hire folks are reporting, and, you know, we looked at this back about eight years ago, this same type of limited entry for the for-hire, and it's something that's got to be done as soon as possible.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jack. Anyone else with a comment, or a comment on the priority, or you're satisfied with what we have from our two members? All right, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess, just kind of pitting the one against the other, would anybody say that this is a higher priority than a recreational private permit, or that they are both on equal footing?

MR. LORENZ: Does anybody wish to comment? Go ahead, Andy.

MR. PILAND: Could you repeat that again, please?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thinking about the recreational permit that's being considered through Amendment 46, if you had to pick one, which one of these, a limited for-hire consideration or recreational permit, or are they both on equal footing, as far as how they should be prioritized by the council?

MR. LORENZ: Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you, Bob. That's kind of, to me, an unfair question and comparison. The recreational permitting is directly related to the survival of the fishery. This is a charter/for-hire situation, but I don't see this charter/for-hire closing snapper, and the other has. Our data for recreational reporting has physically closed this fishery, and it affects commercial and rec, as well as charter/for-hire.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Andy.

MR. PILAND: I feel like the recreational reporting, reporting and not necessarily licensing or permitting, but getting to recreational reporting is more important to fisheries management. In my opinion, the number of permitted charter boats is not going to expand significantly until we announce that we're looking at it. Last time that we visited limiting that, I mean, limiting the charter/for-hire, there was a big jump that year, because everybody was rushing to get one, but, as far as management, I don't know how we can pretend to manage, not knowing what probably 80 percent of the population is doing, but it's got to be recreational reporting. I know the permitting is part of it, but getting to reporting is the highest priority, as far as -- In my opinion, as far as being able to manage the stock. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. All right. Chris Conklin, you're the first of the Chris's.

MR. CONKLIN: Getting a handle on the universe of recreational anglers going out into the EEZ to catch snapper grouper is of the utmost priority. We already have a number, or a handle, on how many legitimate charter operations are running, and I believe that we are, you know, years behind on this pursuit of finding out how many people are actually going out after snapper grouper in the South Atlantic, and so I would rank that much higher.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Chris Kimrey.

MR. KIMREY: Along the lines of what Chris Conklin said, I think, in my opinion, as an AP, to answer Mike's question of which is a higher priority, we should maybe look at which one is most beneficial in the short-term, which is kind of what Chris is getting at, and I don't know that I agree or disagree with him, but, to answer the question, I think that we, as an AP, need to bounce a few ideas off of each other, as to which one, in the short-term, is going to be more important.

Knowing the number of recreational anglers that are going to legally pursue snapper groupers offshore, or weigh the benefit of having the charter/for-hire, that are properly permitted and already reporting, you know, and which of those two, in the short-term, is going to be better, and so, as an AP, maybe we should kick that around for a minute, taking into account what Chris said as one very valid point.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Chris, thank you. We'll make note of that and circle back, and we'll continue on with the simple question now to Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thanks, Bob. My previous comment wasn't meant to demean anything from the charters, and I agree with exactly what both Chris's over here just said, and, also, the timeframe that we're looking at for recreational reporting is probably going to be -- What I'm seeing as two

to four years out, and the charter fishing issue can be handled surely within a year or a year-and-a-half.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: You know, if we're looking for information gathering, we've already been told, flat out, that there's going to be zero information gathering from recreational permitting, and that's been absolutely laid out, period. That's what the council said to us at our last meeting, and so, for me, the issue becomes, you know, they're both very important, but, like was just stated from Tony, what can be done quicker, and what's going to have a benefit? I mean, of course, I'm definitely slighted towards the charter/headboats, because, I mean, that's how we make a living. We employ sixty people, and run ten boats, and have two marina operations, and millions of dollars in debt, and so, you know, we've invested for the long-term, and so it gives us the ability to manage our companies, going forward, when we have something that's certain.

We don't know when the fish are going to shut down, and we don't know what's going to be shut down, and, thus far, we've been able to adapt and overcome and work within those parameters, but, if we continue to let people into the industry, that gets harder and harder every year, and I can only get so creative with so much stuff and have people pay me to go out fishing and go out and do stuff on the water.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. I saw a councilman, and he is in commercial fishing here, and Tim Griner has sat down, and he wants to mention something to us. Tim, go ahead and give us some guidance.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to clarify that the council did not say that there would be no information gathered from the recreational permit. There will be information gathered, very important information, and that information is your name and your address, right, and so, right now, all of our surveys are done by mail, and they're random. At least, with a permit, we will have a name and address tied to somebody that actually goes fishing, and so, yes, there will be information gathered. It may be limited to that, or it may be more, but you will at least have a name and an address and the contact information of somebody who purchased a permit to go offshore fishing recreationally. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tim. All right. Do you have a comment?

MR. MORALES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would say to you that, having sat on this committee for three years, and hearing everything about how undisciplined the recreational fishing fleet is, and how do you quantify it, everything else like that, and I would always put that ahead of everything else, because it's the biggest unknown. Now, whether or not this permit gets the teeth that it needs, which is reporting, possibly reporting similar to what the commercial fishermen have to do, so that we can truly quantify what it is that my people do, that's -- That's the utmost importance.

In the short-term, limiting the for-hire fleet is, in my opinion, easier to do, and, ergo, can be done faster than the recreational, which has been talked about, I'm told, for like over a decade, and it could very well go another five years before it ever gets implemented, and, when it does, it may be stripped down to almost nothing, except an email and a phone number. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. I think, on this, to answer, Mike, maybe we'll do something that will be fairly simple, and I think what I'll just ask for is just for a vote, just for Mike to send on to the council, and we have three council members here, and we have two staff members very intimately involved with us, that they can speak about this in Beaufort, but just to give them some thought of our top-of-our mind priorities right now. I might want to be taking a vote on who thinks the for-hire, and just put your hand up, that the for-hire would be the most important, and then we'll do the recreational permitting, and then let's just tell them that I really can't decide, rather than abstain, and so maybe I would like to do that, but, before I go to that, I would like to let any other comments get -- It seems like we continued on with -- We started the discussion with people of you're putting your word in for what you do think is the most important, and so let's continue that right now. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just want to clarify, because, right now, this is not -- This is not something that is like -- The council hasn't initiated any action related to for-hire limited entry. Right now, I'm -- Just as a staff person, and I'm not trying to be divisive just for controversy's sake, but I'm trying to ask so that I can bring information to the council of this is what the AP, you know, thinks, and what I'm hearing so far is both are very high-priority things.

Recreational reporting, and, you know, permitting being the first step of getting to recreational reporting, is the desired destination, but that's likely a longer-term endeavor than this limited for-hire consideration, and so that's what I'm hearing here, and it's not necessarily that both can't operate, but, if they get to a point where they're allocating people resources, because we have, you know the staff people that we have, and, if they get to the point where they have to make a decision on this, that they have information and input from you all that can be considered in that decision-making process.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Mike. Now to continue on our discussion. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. Just to kind of reiterate what Mike said here, I mean, I think that we all feel pretty strongly about both pathways here, that they lead to further conservation potential and more understanding of the universe of, you know, of our fishery, and I think everybody sitting around these tables here -- I think we can all agree that, you know, it's probably really important for both of these things to happen, you know, and, if I were to have to pick one over the other, it would be really difficult, but I would like to know our universe a little bit better, when it comes to the recreational angler and what their intent is, and really possible lead to some -- You know, some reporting in the future, and some real data that we're not getting at this moment.

To speak to the other side, and how important, you know, the limitation would be on the for-hire sector, we're not in an economic situation where people have run out of money yet. Coastal development, coastal participation, fishing participation, at least in my area, is very high. The demand is very high, and so everybody who wants to, or has the qualifications to be on the water, to charge for their services, they're getting paid.

As soon as that changes, you're going to have a very cutthroat scenario, and you're going to have people taking \$1,500 a day clients for \$500, and you're going to see best fishing practices go out the window, and you're going to see a lot of the things that our elite captains do go out the window, and so, you know, we have to be conscious of the effects of all of this all at once, you know, and

whether we say both carry equal weight, or choose one over the other, they're both very, very important. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, James. Andy.

MR. PILAND: He answered my question.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. That's good. Joe.

MR. MATTHEWS: I just have a question for Mike. In selecting one over the other, are we moving -- Obviously, we're not selecting, but, if one gets prioritized over the other, are we moving resources from you guys from one to another, and maybe we would be kicking the can even further down the road on the recreational reporting than we already are?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So I don't think that's the message that I'm hearing coming out of the AP. That's not the recommendation, and I can't speak on how the council reacts to the information, but I can speak on at least what I'm hearing here, and what's being conveyed to the council members that are here, and it doesn't sound like there's a desire to allocate resources away from either one of these, and it's -- You know, it's only in this like last-ditch situation, and, if there has to be a decision made, this is the direction, but, I mean, what I'm hearing around the table is, yes, do both, if you can, as soon as possible.

MR. MATTHEWS: Right, and I get that. I guess what I'm saying is I want to make sure, in thinking through this, that there aren't any unintended consequences, and so, if we put the -- If we shift our focus over to -- Or we even bring the limited entry for-hire recreational into the picture, then are we going to unintentionally make that timeline on something that we've been wanting for a while longer, and, you know, the practical reality of it is kind of what I'm getting at.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Joe. We have Jack Cox wishing to talk to us, and he's remote, and so, Jack, you're recognized.

MR. COX: Thank you. I just wanted to say that I think they're equally as important, and the discussion has been going on for a long time about the for-hire, and there's already a lot of work that's been done by the council, and they've spent many hours looking at it, and that could be used to move it along a lot faster than this recreational amendment that we're looking at. In speaking with folks in the Morehead/Hatteras area, this is a very high priority for them, and I know there's been a control date already set for this particular permit, and I would like to ask you, and can you remind me how many for-hire permits there are out there now?

MR. LORENZ: Mike is looking that up for you right now, Jack, and Myra has stepped up, also, and we'll get an answer.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: It's about 2,000, Jack.

MR. COX: Okay. Mike. Well, thank you, and that seems to increase pretty much -- It seems like it's increased a whole lot since last time, and I think there was -- When I was on the council, we were having that discussion, and there was about 600, and so it's moving along pretty fast, and so I think it should be a high priority. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Next in the queue is John.

MR. POLSTON: It seems like we're at a point here where everybody is a little bit split, between everybody thinks they're both very, very important, but, I mean, how do you look at this? Is it better, since everybody keeps saying it's going to take longer to get the private recreational thing done, and is it better to put the one -- I don't even know who I'm asking this to, but is it better to put the for-hire in place, because they say they can get it done faster, or is it actually better to put the private first in place, because, if it's going to take longer, it needs to get started sometime, and so, I mean, that's a question to everybody, I guess, of which is actually -- I mean, if they're both equally important, do you want to put off the private recreational, because you can get the other one done faster, or do you want to get started on the private and -- So, I mean, that's why I'm torn, personally, about it.

MR. LORENZ: That's why -- If everyone would agree, and that's why I would just like, for information purposes, just a quick here's how we feel today, just a little poll of where we are, because this is going to continue on, but we'll continue on with comments from Richie next.

MR. GOMEZ: I want to read something from someone in the charter boat association, and I know this to be true, and, I mean, I don't know if Key West is the last of the rebels, or the ones still holding on, but we've always had trouble with the whole electronic reporting, and, now that it's with us, there isn't a lot of accurate reporting done within the fishery.

You know, the fuel and gallons used and all that stuff, and you're probably getting some better honest answers, but here's what is happening in Key West, and I'm just curious if this is happening maybe in the middle to upper Keys, but, in Key West, no one actually says what they catch or where they catch it. Some people have kids filling out random information just to report and get it done. No one wants to do it. Most of the time, I just say that I didn't fish, or I mark a few cudas or something, and it's all just crap to us, and there's that.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Richie. Thank you. Chris Conklin, you had a comment?

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and I can't remember what it was though. Hang on.

MR. LORENZ: I can come back to you. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I agree with Jack, and so both of them are exceedingly, exceedingly important, and, you know, Jack brought up a very good point that most of the legwork is already -- A lot of the legwork has already been done on the for-hire permitting, because we visited this in 2018, and then set a control date in 2016, and so, you know, I mean, I would step out on a limb and say that everybody in the room right now says they are both equally important, and maybe that should be the message we send to the council.

We shouldn't have to choose one over the other. One has already been in the works and done, and one we've been trying to get into the works for friggin ten or twelve years now, and so they both need to be moved along at equal paces, and whichever one gets finished first is the one that gets finished first, and I think everybody could agree on that, and that might move everything forward.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Cameron. Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: Isn't there already an amendment underway to start recreational reporting, or has it move to the bottom of the list?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So that's Amendment 46, and that is -- The reporting aspect, that's one of the things that has kind of gone back and forth, and, ultimately, the reporting part of that was taken out, and it's initially the permitting aspect. I think the eventual long-term goal of that is, after the permit is established, is looking at some form of recreational reporting, and so that's kind of the initial step towards reporting, but, yes, 46 is -- That's moving forward, and that one I believe is getting considered for public comment at the council's next meeting, and so it's getting towards, hopefully, its later stages of development, and, yes, that's underway right now though.

MR. CONKLIN: So the question we were tasked with on Wednesday, when we discussed Amendment 46, was should there be a permit or not, is there support for it, and the overall consensus, between everyone in this room, was yes, okay, and that was just for a permit, not with any reporting or anything else tied to it, but just to get a handle on the universe of anglers, and so that's in the works.

There is overwhelming support from both sides of the table, and very powerful groups on both sides, commercial and recreational, that agree that this is something that needs to get done, and it seems more of a, let's say, bipartisan low-hanging fruit that could get done faster. If I remember, back when we tried to do this limited-access for the snapper grouper fishery, there was extreme pushback amongst some -- I will go ahead and say it, but some radical recreational groups spreading mass disinformation and stuff like that, and that's what I foresee happening, if this comes back around, and so, with that in mind, I would -- It seems like an easy task, but, when you get a bunch of noisemakers on the microphone, and a bunch of BS emails coming through, and a bunch of ill-informed people, that aren't even hardly fishermen showing up and raising hell at a meeting, it's not going to get done, and so the dire need -- What I know, from my experience, is that getting a handle on the universe of recreational anglers going out for snapper grouper is the low-hanging fruit, and it has support from both sides.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob, and, kind of to address what Richie was putting out there and asking, and I think I'm really happy that you're representing the people in your area, Richie, and I think that -- Forgive me, but I think the ignorance is everywhere, but it's not a predominant, you know, factor in most of the people that I talk to. Most of the people that I'm talking to -- They want to report, and this is charter boat captains specifically, because commercial fishermen have come to terms with this reporting a long time ago.

We've always been concerned about what future allocations might look like for us, and so we want to be accurate, but, moving towards that, you know, I'm getting much more information, and like, you know, I wish there was somewhere on my reporting that I could put the number of fish that were eaten by sharks, you know, to kind of getting a little bit more information out there, and so I think that that user group that just pencil-whips it is probably pretty small, and I think that what we're getting from that sector is, overall, pretty good. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Harry, you had a comment?

MR. MORALES: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I just reject the notion that we have to choose one over the other. I mean, at the end of the day, they're both equally important, for different reasons, and maybe one can get done faster than the other, and so be it, but, at the end of the day, you're talking about Priority 1 and Priority 1A, and, you know, if we -- We don't have this kind of discussion if we're talking about SEDARs, or we're talking about amendments, and, you know, this committee doesn't do one amendment at a time. It does multiple things all at the same time, and so it's the same thing here, and you have two critical priorities.

These guys need to protect their space in business, which makes sense, and you don't know the universe on the recreational side, both of which you need to know if you want to manage this fishery properly, and so there is no split. There is no pick one over the other. You walk and you chew gum at the same time, and that's what you do. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Harry. Noted, and noted from the conversation here, and I think, Mike, the way it's coming across, like almost in bold, that you're getting, from this committee, that they're both important, and no one really wants to select, and so they're both important, and we have three voting council members here, and they're listening to us. I will be able to go to Beaufort, North Carolina and state that there was passionate discussion on this that we want both.

The only thing I thought of, if we're looking at what we've gone through, if we watch our federal government, and, you know, we had almost a budget shutdown, and, right before Thanksgiving, we're going to get another one, and, well, why are they doing that? They're arguing over money, and money limits resources, and resources are people and equipment and to pay people for the time to do things, and so, in my thought, I guess I went -- Maybe I'm too far out there, but it would be that maybe it would be interesting if we did -- If they were given half-a-million dollars to get one of these projects done, and that was all they had to do, and I'm thinking of, if you had your last ten dollars, and you're either going to have lunch or buy gas, and what are you going to do, and what would we do?

Being that we're -- It's well noted that it's extremely -- That they're both important to us, and would you go along with just the polling of, if our back was against the wall, which one should they complete next year, or work as much as they can next year, and would that be reasonable? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, Bob, and just, I guess, given the discussion that I've heard so far here at the table, I think, at this point, the messaging is clear to the council of the high equal priority of the two, and we don't -- I know that I initially posed this question, but I think, at this point, what we can do is we can bring this message to the council, and the council can go with it, and, if the council needs that question answered, then they can come back to the AP with it, but, at this point, just because we've heard discussions both ways, and it's kind of settled on this they're both high priority, that might be the best path forward for us to be able to have a conclusion to this discussion. Then, you know, the other one, that back-against-the-wall question, may not be needed, if the council can allocate their resources, if they're able to do that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Mike. That's the answer I wanted, and I didn't really want to beat a dead horse, and, yes, we have plenty here. There's been plenty -- There will be plenty of

documentation of how we all feel on that. I will move it back to you, Mike, on anything else you need.

All right, and we have just completed the -- I'm sorry. Is there anybody that wants any last-minute comments on this issue? Okay. Thank you. Okay, and so it's closed. Agenda Item 8 is completed, and I guess the next we have is our SEDAR update, and that's Judd Curtis.

DR. CURTIS: Good morning. I'm just going to give you guys a quick verbal update of the SEDAR updates, for some ongoing and upcoming stock assessments, and then there's one action item that we need from the advisory panel, and that is to get some participants for the Florida hogfish and then also South Atlantic red snapper data workshops that will be coming up, and so I'll go into more detail as we get to them, and so the updates first.

You heard a little bit about the kind of MRIP-FES changes, and I just wanted to discuss this a little bit, and so, at the September council meeting, the SEDAR Committee recommended delaying any assessments with a high percentage of recreational landings, because of the pilot study results from any private recreational vessels, with the exception of the dolphinfish and assessments being conducted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The delay in these assessments is going to allow any bias in recreational estimates to be incorporated in the recreational catch streams. The Florida FWC assessments are currently developing a method to calibrate their State Reef Fish Survey to the MRIP-FES, and then that can provide a time series for this recreational data that's going to be used in the SEDAR 79 mutton snapper assessment and any subsequent Florida assessments that are upcoming, including the hogfish and yellowtail snapper.

Vermilion snapper, we're getting what the Science Center is referring to as an interim analysis, and so this is kind of external to the SEDAR process. The Center is providing an update on the interim analysis for vermilion snapper to the SSC at our October meeting in a couple of weeks, and this is the first time this approach is being used in the South Atlantic, and it has been used a couple of times in the Gulf of Mexico, for a couple of their species, and so the SSC is going to deliberate whether this interim analysis approach is sufficient, and appropriate, to provide any sort of ABC recommendations or if it's merely going to serve as a health check for fishery status relative to benchmarks.

The next stock is the gray triggerfish, and this is a research track assessment, and so indicating that there's not going to be any management advice coming out of this assessment. This has been extended for several months, because we needed to postpone the review workshop, and it will be reviewed at the SSC's April meeting. The operational assessment, which is the assessment type that will provide the management advice, will then be conducted in 2027.

Red grouper, the Center had sent a memo to the council, and council staff, that they've been doing some work in looking at gaps in the data, and they indicated that their current assessment model structure, which was a one area for the entire South Atlantic, did not appear to be appropriate, and it could not provide effective management advice, and it would not be considered the best scientific information available. This meant that they recommended using a two-area model, which would be broken down to kind of a Florida and then -- Or a southern and two northern regions, and so

Florida and Georgia and then a South Carolina and North Carolina, just kind of crude boundaries between those.

This was reviewed by the SSC, and it was agreed upon, and so they recommended that, instead of just an extension of the operational model, this really required a benchmark-assessment-type approach, where you're incorporating the multiple data streams from different regions and getting feedback from the entire SEDAR process, and so this got put back on the SEDAR schedule for 2026.

Black sea bass is nearing completion, and the SSC is going to review this assessment in October, and then make some catch level recommendations to the council in a January webinar, and that will be reviewed at the March meeting by the council, and then any amendments that follow, based out of the results from that assessment, will be forthcoming after the March meeting.

The mutton snapper benchmark assessment, which is being conducted by Florida FWC, the data workshop for that was in August of this past year, and it went really well, and I was down there personally, actually, and there was good debate, and this was right after the kind of MRIP-FES pilot studies had been completed and relayed to the public, and so, in kind of response to that, there was kind of a desire to push back the mutton snapper assessment a few months, again to allow for that calibration of the Florida State Reef Fish Survey with the recreational time series, and so that is being delayed by about three months, but it should be coming forth once the full year of 2023 data from the Florida State Reef Fish Survey is completed and analyzed.

The tilefish and blueline tilefish operational assessments, which we got some feedback from you all this week, those were originally scheduled for 2024. However, there is a potential postponement, because of this incorporation of the SADLS, the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey, data, and the Center has indicated, and the SSC review group has indicated, that five years of data needs to become available before you can include that as a valid index into your assessment, and so, depending on -- This is going to be brought to the SSC for the first time in October, and they're going to discuss how that data availability and inclusion as an index into the assessments would affect the scheduling and moving forward with these two tilefish and blueline tilefish assessments.

That's kind of an update of the current ongoing and upcoming assessments, and now just what I need from you all is the next one is the Florida hogfish, which is going to be a benchmark assessment conducted by Florida Fish and Wildlife. That's been pushed back a few months, because of the MRIP-FES data concerns and the calibration with the State Reef Fish Survey, but it's approximately -- We're aiming to have a data workshop for that in the second quarter of 2024, and so we're looking for any AP participants that are willing to serve as AP representatives for that data workshop.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Anybody want to volunteer with Judd for this hogfish assessment, AP? Richie Gomez. Judd, do you need more than one?

DR. CURTIS: Two spots, I think, would be preferable.

MR. LORENZ: Two spots. Anybody else?

DR. CURTIS: The data workshops for the SEDAR process are -- It's going to be a week-long process, where people get together, and they're kind of vetting the different data streams, and they will, for the most part, go into workgroups, and kind of do the crunching of the numbers and things, but then they will have plenary sessions, where -- That's where the input from AP members, and other participants, are extremely valuable, and they kind of serve as, you know, a ground-check, to make sure like these numbers are making sense, right, for what you guys are seeing on the water, and so, you know, it wouldn't be -- It's not like a full week's worth of work, necessarily, and there is the breakout groups that you don't typically participate in, and you're welcome to, if you want, but it's really these plenary sessions, where everyone kind of comes together and gives a report, maybe daily, that the input is very important.

MR. FISH: I will attempt it.

DR. CURTIS: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Andrew Fish. Richie Gomez, you had a question for Judd?

MR. GOMEZ: Judd, I was wondering if you could help me out a little with this, and I was at a SEDAR for mutton snapper in St. Pete recently, and there was myself and David Moss and another fisherman from the Fort Myers area, and I can't recall his name, but we broke off into little groups, and, you know, we were looking at all the graphs, and all the reporting, and the one thing that stuck out, in my mind, is what all the fishermen have been thinking for years, that the reporting, and all these graphs, and the scientists sitting around the table with the statistical analysts, and they were working on data that wasn't always correct, and, in fact, some of it was far off, and I'm going to give you an example in a minute, but, you know, even the scientists were in agreement that this could not be real data, but, yet, based on that, it seems like there will be rules put into place some day on data that everyone around the little workgroup that I was sitting at understood to be incorrect.

For instance, I think it was 2011, and there was 1,200 reported releases of mutton snapper on the bridges throughout the Keys, compared to the rest of the years, which, you know, just a small handful of fish, and, now, being from Key West, I could tell you that I don't think there's ever been 1,200 mutton snapper caught on any bridge, and we all agreed that, more than likely, a lot of these mutton snapper were actually lane snapper, you know, with the dot on the tail, and the fishermen were thinking maybe they were juvenile mutttons. As a fisherman, I just came away a little frightened of exactly what I have been feeling for a long time.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie. John.

MR. POLSTON: This is not about this, but I do have a question, and I promised Jimmy that I would ask. Earlier, when we went over the black sea bass ropeless sea bass pots, were we being asked by the council what we thought about that, and were they looking for any type of recommendation that we were okay with it, or -- Because I don't remember ever asking that question, or you asking that question, and I don't remember us talking about that.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thanks, John, and that would be mostly for -- We pick something like that usually up in Other Business, but Mike has asked to comment, and so Mike is going to answer your question.

MR. POLSTON: Okay. Thank you.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: This will be a two-parter, and I will go with John's question first. For that amendment, that's going to be Regulatory Amendment 36. The council just directed the beginning of that in September, and so that's why we didn't have anything to ask the AP at this point, because we're just starting to work on it, and so that will come in front of you guys in April, at your April meeting, and so, if you can just wait on that one, that will come back in April. The council will be considering that one for scoping, and so there will be a scoping process at the beginning of the year.

As a reminder, scoping is the beginning process of an amendment, where we go out to the public, and we get public input on what are the options that the council should be considering for this, and then, from there, that's when we kind of nail down these are the options that the council is choosing between, and then we go through further steps of the amendment, but scoping is expected to happen in the beginning of 2024, and your next meeting would be April of 2024, and that's when we would get -- When we would have a full discussion at the AP about that amendment.

In relation to what Richie's comments were, for the mutton snapper stock assessment, things like that are one of -- That's a prime example of a reason why we need you all at these assessments, why your roles at the assessments are very important, because -- I know, the ones that I have participated in, I have had the pleasure of having some very vocal fishermen that were there, and they identified pieces that weren't -- You know, weren't making sense to them, and there were things that were discussed there, and, number one, all of that information is on the record, and so, if there is uncertainty about a data point, then it's there, and it's on the record, and it's included as part of that assessment.

Number two, what typically happens, in response to something like that, is it can be a variety of things, and that's something that gets discussed at that plenary table by the analysts of how they're going to handle an uncertain data point. They may run -- In response to something like you were talking about, Richie, there may be a removal, or an adjustment, of the data point, or what they may do is they may do a sensitivity run of that model, to see does this data point, where it's located -- Does this one piece of information make a difference in the overall outcome, and, if it does, then there --

You know, there would be discussion of are there adjustments that need to be made, and, if that data point is way off, with whatever uncertainty is associated with it, and, if it doesn't make a huge difference, then that would be recorded as we ran this uncertainty, we looked at this, and it doesn't make a huge difference in the overall results, but being able to have fishermen in the room, to point that information out, is vital, so that those runs can be completed, and so the uncertainties associated with an assessment can be analyzed, and all of that information can be included in the report.

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, they were doing all those runs at the table, and that's about when I started getting lost.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you. I will hand it back to Judd, for the next thing you need from us.

DR. CURTIS: Thanks, Richie, and Mike's comments hit the nail right on the head too, and just your participation is vital, just as a ground-check for these data points, to make sure that these are actually making sense, and so the next one, the assessment, is going to be South Atlantic red snapper. This is a little bit early in the process still to get participants. The data workshop for this is going to be held in Charleston in April of 2025, but, because this is a very long and extended research track process, we're beginning this early.

Data scoping is going to start towards the end of next year, and that's going to include just the preliminary data streams, as well as talks on how to integrate the South Atlantic red snapper count into the assessment framework, but, as far as participation from the AP members, trying to -- If there is interest right now, we can jot your names down, and there will be some other times to volunteer your time to participate in the data workshop in April of 2025, if you don't feel like you can commit to something like that right now, and so I will open it up, if there's any volunteers that want to help out for the South Atlantic red snapper data workshop in April of 2025.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Volunteers? Harry Morales, you raised your hand to volunteer. Anyone else? You've got one.

DR. CURTIS: Okay. Well, thank about it, and, again, we'll come back to you when it gets a little bit closer to the actual start of that data workshop, to get some more participants, and that concludes the SEDAR report. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you very much, Judd. Then I guess we'll just move to our final item, and that will be Other Business, and what these usually are is these would be items that we did not discuss, or were not on the agenda today, and so, typically, what they are would be are there any future agenda items that we may want for an AP meeting, and it can also include anything that we should bring to the council, maybe at their meeting, which is important, or something we think should start to be developed or to think about, and I guess we have to temper that with some of the discussions we've had that everything needs prioritization lately, and then open any other comments that you may have on anything that's of particular concern, and so I will open up the floor to anybody who wants to start speaking with other agendas. Chris Conklin, did you raise your hand? Okay. Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: I did. Would you prefer me to make a motion and then we have discussion?

MR. LORENZ: That sounds good.

MR. CONKLIN: Great. That's the way we're supposed to do it, I think, but okay. **I would like to make a motion to increase the commercial trip limit on vermilion snapper to 1,500 pounds gutted weight in the South Atlantic.**

MR. LORENZ: Okay, Chris. Your motion is on the table, and we will have discussion, but is there anybody that wants to second that? All right. We have Andrew Fish that has seconded that motion. That leads us to discussion. Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes, and so we haven't hit -- The commercial fishery hasn't hit, or even really come very close to catching the quota, since 2016, and, with respect to that, the quota has been

shrinking about every year, and there's a lot less effort on the water in the commercial fishery, and, with the oncoming regulations with gag grouper and scamp grouper and red porgy, and they have certainly stepped down quite a bit, and that's just kind of really caused some extreme economic hardship on what's left of the participants in the snapper grouper fishery up in the Carolinas and Georgia, and also northern Florida. With respect to that, I believe that's the only way to perpetuate what's left of the little bit of this joke of a fishery we have in the South Atlantic. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Andy.

MR. FISH: I would also want to know, just on discussion basically, and, if you're moving up with the vermilion, the triggerfish seem to go hand-in-hand with the vermilion, as far as those type of boats, and if that should be maybe lumped-in with this, possibly.

MR. CONKLIN: I didn't look at the triggerfish, and I do know that, or I believe it has closed a time or two, and so I think that the trip limit is probably about right for that. I mean, we could certainly go back and look at it, but, right now, the dire, low-hanging fruit seems to be -- We've already had this trip limit before, and it stepped down, and it's now at 1,000 pounds, and I believe there's been analysis done in the past, and so we could probably just plug-and-play some numbers, but it's something that is very important. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Mike, did you have anything you wanted to comment with respect to what Andy had said? Okay. Randy wants to answer? Okay. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: Okay, and I agree with Chris somewhat, but there would be something to go with it. I remember, very strongly, back when we had closures on triggers and beeliners, and that was devastating, and it would be even more devastating now, if we had those closures, you know, given the Americans and the grouper, and so the only way I would agree with it is to go back and to have a step-down, and then I would be concerned that -- It looks like they're doing a -- SEDAR is doing another mid-term stock assessment or something, and what if that comes out real bad, and these levels are brought way down, and so I would be -- I would be -- I would approve of it only if it went back to having the step-down when a certain amount is made, and that's my comment.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Randy. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: **Just a suggested edit, just to make sure that the motion is accurately reflecting what the AP is doing, you all may consider changing the motion to be recommend that the council discuss increasing the commercial trip limit.** Okay. Then I will make that change.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Mike is changing just the language of the motion. Any more discussion? Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. Do we -- What is the current limit for commercial, as well as recreational?

AP MEMBER: It's 1,000 commercial.

MR. CONSTANT: 1,000 pounds?

MR. LORENZ: Mike is looking it up, and there's a lot of word around here that it's a thousand.

MR. CONSTANT: While that's happening, I would like to mention that here we are again, and we're having to look at other species, because of the regulations, and we've overregulated red snapper, and we're having to deal with other species, and trigger, in particular, has been hit pretty hard, to the point where it's had closures.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Tony. Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: So maybe we could change it again to with options up to 1,500 pounds, because I know how it goes, and so we should maybe be specific to like 1,250 to 1,500 pounds, something like that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The current trip limit is 1,000 pounds gutted weight.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. We'll continue discussion, and I will reread the motion, and I will check on the second again, but, James Paskiewicz, you wanted to make a comment?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I just wanted to kind of ask Chris, and I totally understand the why, you know, being a commercial fisherman, you know, for efficiency's sake, to make a trip, you know, to where you're not cutting a trip short because you've hit a wall on one of your species, or really having to go catch something that you can't catch, and I totally understand. You know, out of how many trips would you say that the fishermen are hitting that thousand-pound mark and are cutting it short because of that, you know, just out of ten trips that they're targeting vermilion?

MR. CONKLIN: Out of ten trips, I would say 70 percent of the time we're getting close to it, you know, without trying to go over, and I ran off all the outlaws, and my guys follow the rules, and so we get close.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So, in short, efficiency goes way up if they can add, you know, another \$2,500 worth of product or so?

MR. CONKLIN: Sure, and it costs a couple thousand dollars to send my boats out on a trip, and, you know, taking \$6,000 or \$7,000 off the table in grouper is, you know, a big deal, and so I would imagine there might be some more effort on vermilion, but it's still not looking like we would, even at a thousand pounds, catch the quota. I know that Randy mentioned step-downs, and, when I was on the council, I know that NOAA's Office of Fisheries, whatever, they hated those, and they said it was too much work, and it didn't work, and it didn't last long, and so that's why we got away from those, and the overall consensus was to fish up until the very, you know, end, and keep it without stepping it down, because it just didn't last much longer, but I respect your comments.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Chris. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I understand where he's coming from, and I'm trying to get a feel of what the playing field looks like, and how is the recreational sector doing on their quota? My understanding is we're not meeting it. I'm assuming it's a yearly poundage.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So I'm just pulling up last year's recreational landings, just for reference, but, for vermilion, their annual catch limit, recreational, was 435,840, and this is noted in CHTS units, and the harvest was 304,000, and so 304,000 out of 435,000.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Anyone else with a comment, before we reread the motion, check up on the second, and then vote? None? Okay. I will read the motion, as printed. **Recommend the council discuss increasing the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper with options up to 1,500 pounds in the South Atlantic.** Andrew Fish, do you agree with that, as the second for Chris's motion, as he changed it? All right. Let's take the vote on that now. **All in favor of this motion, raise your hand, thirteen yea; anyone opposed; anyone abstaining. One abstention. The motion passes.** A comment from Chris?

MR. CONKLIN: I was just going to ask that you put, on the first bullet point, 2016, instead of "recently", or you could put seven years as well, just to be more explicit. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. The motion passed. Vincent Bonura is online, and, Vincent, are you voting for this motion, and, if you are, would you want to state yea or nay or abstaining?

MR. BONURA: Yes, I am, and I'm voting yes for that.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. I have been reminded by the Vice Chair, and is Jack Cox online and wishes to vote on this?

MR. COX: Yes, and that would be yes vote.

MR. LORENZ: **Yes, and that gives us fifteen yes and one abstention and nobody not supporting the motion.** Thank you. It looks like I have a question list here, or the new business list, and the next item on new business is James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Bob. I just -- Since there's been some sidebar discussion about the two-for-one, you know, I wouldn't mind a brief discussion of where we think that we're at with that, you know, if we should put an end to it, or should all permits be transferable, you know, freely, and I know it would have some economic impact, and would it have impacts on leasing versus selling, and some of those things I think are really important, when we're talking about potential new entrants into the fishery.

You know, someone may be apt to sell their permit, rather than lease it for, you know, up to ten years, to recoup the value, if somebody had cash in hand and could transfer one for one, and I really don't intend to like have a motion, or make a vote, or anything like that, but I just kind of would like to see where we're at amongst our peers. Thanks.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, James, and we will discuss it, and I guess the best thing for me to do right now is just continue on, and, to get at our list up there, it seems like what's coming in are the items that somebody would want to discuss in Other Business, and, Andrew Fish, you had your hand up, and did you want to speak -- Did you have something else, or go to this?

MR. FISH: Other business.

MR. LORENZ: Please speak it, what you want as a topic.

MR. FISH: I have concerns, as a spear fisherman, a long-time spear fisherman, and I see -- Like, in the previous days, I've seen graphs that calls out only spear fishermen's landings, or only spear fishermen's discards, and it's been informally discussed in the past, but I have concerns and was wondering about a spearfishing endorsement, just like everything else, where they protect themselves, and I was just wondering, for discussion purposes, what we would think about that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy, for that item. Randy, did you have an item?

MR. MCKINLEY: Yes, and I wanted to comment on what James said about the two-for-one, and I've brought it up many a time. I mean, in my area, and I know Jack is going to disagree up in his area, but the pool of people that I have to buy fish from, for my retail market, is shrinking, and it's getting less and less, and it seems like what's happening is, when the people are aging out, which most of our fleet is, these permits are going to brokers in Florida or Texas, and they're not coming back to North Carolina, and so this pool is shrinking, and so what I have asked the council before is just -- Even when we talk about this for-hire, you know, limited entry, there's going to be a number, and all I ask is that they come up with a date or number to where this would end. There is just no end game right now, and I would just ask that they look at that. I think it's way past time that that's done.

I know Jack is going to say that there's a lot of people, that some of the younger guys, but there's a whole industry, and there's not a lot of young people getting into it, and it's not just a matter of a captain jumping on a boat with the permits, but the amount of people that actually go out and make a profit and be profitable in that business is very much shrinking, and it's because I guess a lot of the mates and stuff -- They know they can never get into it, and so there's no encouragement for them to ever get into it, knowing they can never find two permits, and so I'm just asking that they try to define a number, a target number, and set a date. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: That's a very reasonable request, Randy. Thank you. Since there was a mention of Jack Cox, Jack, if you're online, do you wish to make a statement of any kind on the commercial two-for-one policy?

MR. COX: I do, and I would support that we are at a time, in this fishery, that it's time to remove that two-for-one policy, and I would support that, by saying that, over time, our ACLs have gotten to a point that we're pretty sustainable, you know, I think with the exception of some fisheries, like triggerfish or some other things, but, you know, it is important that we -- That the access is easier for the younger folks, and there is just so many reasons, on so many levels, that we should probably go ahead and say this is it, this is the number that we need to be at, and let's do away with the two-for-one. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you, and so Jack Cox mentioned that it is time to end that two-for-one policy. We're going to move in just a minute, if we had another agenda item just to put on the list, but Richie.

MR. GOMEZ: I just want to read one more statement from another charter boat association member, and he says that it's a burden, and no one is truthful. You can't say what you catch, because it gets multiplied out into the rec sector, and they shut it down. You can't say you don't catch anything, because they think there is no fish, and they shut it down, and I just wanted to say this is the kind of thing that I'm up against, and, if I try to convince people that reporting is good, I become the enemy in Key West, and I don't think there's a possibility to ever get offshore fishermen honestly involved in reporting honestly.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Richie. Let's see where we'll take this. The commercial two-for-one policy, it looks like, from two of our AP members, there is a definite endorsement to end this two-for-one policy, and so I'm thinking it has more power to put it in a motion, and would you like to -- James is going to make a comment on this one.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: For discussion, and maybe we can get some clarification on the council on what the intent is of the leasing situation, and, long-term speaking, are we going to continue to allow individuals to have their vessels leased by permit holders, which, if you've ever been in that scenario, and you've ever put your vessel up for lease, there's a whole bunch of legal concerns that I'm aware of, and, moving forward with this, I would like to know what the intent is, you know, of National Marine Fisheries Service, whoever the overall governing body, whether it be NOAA or whatever, but what the intent is, long-term, on the lease structure of this.

I know that it's been very common, and it's been very easy, not complicated, but, you know, I would like some feedback on what that looks like long-term, because, if we did put some lease restrictions in place, you know, we might be able to encourage younger participants in the fishery, that aren't paying old guys to stay in, you know, or to stay viable, and I just want to know. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: I know there have been a lot of the older folks that they do look upon their permits as kind of their retirement plan, and so that has some interesting discussion, and I've heard that before. Randy.

MR. MCKINLEY: I did fail to mention that 225 permit, and I think it's long past time to address that, and that thing was put in place a long time ago, and it was supposed to never be transferred, and they're being transferred all over the place. Somehow they incorporated and did it, but that was not the intent, and I just -- That permit should -- They should maybe stop it where it is, and not allow any more transfers, the way it was originally planned to be. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: So your statement, Randy, is the 225 commercial permit transfers, whatever that all is, should be retired and not exist?

MR. MCKINLEY: Well, it was done, and it was supposed to never be transferred, when it was originally done, but they're transferring them, and that needs to disappear.

MR. LORENZ: The transfers disappear.

MR. MCKINLEY: For the 225.

MR. LORENZ: For the 225.

MR. MCKINLEY: They're supposed to die out, the way they should have, and they should have all been dead a long time ago.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, and so I think a good bullet point would be to disappear, and that will also remind me, when I'm presenting to the council, because I don't want to get too turned around on some of the commercial permitting things, and I'm not any expert on that, and so I will call some of you, prior to that day. All right. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I would -- I kind of feel, as being in the industry, that, besides the red snapper, which is -- We could go catch, but we can't, but that it's really beeliners is the only one that is really sustainable, or that seems to not be hurting, and, if we -- I am just not sure, on the two-for-one, if the fishery can sustain the amount of fishermen that are out there. I mean, there's a fine line between the fish aren't being caught because they're not there or the fish not being caught because there's not enough fishermen to catch them, and I think that's a fine line, and balancing act, to figure that out.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Andy. Andy, your item is up again, if you want to speak it now, as we're going through, the spearfishing endorsement, and anything further to say on that, or any more color to put under that, any bullet points?

MR. FISH: I just was -- I am worried that it's always called out, and I just wanted to know what people thought about, or if it's discussion worthy.

MR. LORENZ: All right. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Bob. Andy, I mean, I feel like, if you're brave enough to get in the water and go after these fish with a speargun, more power to you, first of all, and I think that the gear type is recognized as, you know, a viable harvest method. I don't necessarily like that you would be singled out in any way for harvesting with that gear method, and I would also like to note that, you know, it's a very clean method, you know, and you get to pick the fish that you catch, or that dies, really, and, I mean, you're the judge and jury, and, if you're any good at it, you know, you're going to return a very high-quality product.

I mean, for me, I think it needs to remain a viable gear option, and I just think it would be difficult to have that as an endorsement and then talk about a specific ACL for that, you know, for any one species to be considered, you know, under a gear endorsement. I think that would be very difficult, and until I, you know, really got to see how many people were fishing what species, it would, you know, really be hard to me. I figure hogfish, and many grouper species, are very accessible by spear, and I don't know. I think it's a great point, and a great question, and I think that, you know, good on you for getting in there and getting after it.

MR. LORENZ: Andy, just for myself, and maybe a couple others, and a lot of us are from the recreational side over here, and may not understand everything, and this spearfishing endorsement you want is for the snapper grouper permit, an endorsement with that?

MR. FISH: Just for -- Yes, in the snapper grouper industry, yes. I am not saying I'm pushing it, but just for discussion.

MR. LORENZ: Consideration for discussion. Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to be clear on that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just a question, and so, when you were saying like the spearfishing data is kind of being, you know, singled-out in certain instances, are you talking in like assessments, with the presentation of data there, or where are you thinking?

MR. FISH: I don't remember where I saw it, but I just remember seeing the spearfishing landings, in previous meetings as well, but there was one graph in this meeting where it had the spearfishing singled out, and I know it is a bigger producer of the gag grouper, which was in question. I think the spear fishermen have the advantage, because of the red snapper. There might be two or three groupers there, but there's 500 red snappers, and you can't get past the red snappers to catch the grouper, but you can surely swim past the red snappers to attempt to shoot the grouper.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I was asking more -- I was asking mostly from the assessment perspective, because I know, for stocks that have a significant -- You know, a notable component that their harvest is going to be coming from spear fishing, that kind of needs to end up being its own thing, from a modeling standpoint, because it's going to have a different discard mortality than other methods of fishing, and there's going to be different -- That fishery is executed in a different way than other methods, and so, when you put that into an assessment model, it has to be modeled differently, and that's why you single out the landings, and you single that out in that aspect, and that's so that you can put it into the model and take into account the differences of that fishery versus others.

MR. FISH: Yes, and I'm not so sure that we want to look too much at it, and I was just curious.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. James, did you want to provide some comment?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: For discussion's sake, and I think Andy might be -- You know, this kind of might be where he might be going, maybe or maybe not, but just a guess, but, you know, maybe some sort of historical landing provision, you know, to kind of secure the historical value of that permit and what that permit has been used for in the industry, and I think that's kind of like where you're going, and not necessarily create an entire ACL, you know, and it's like, hey, this permit is always harvested this way, and could it continue that way and have a poundage landing, you know, consistent to what is harvested.

MR. FISH: Right, or some kind of control date landings, and it's all along the same things. You know, why can't we go get red snapper, with our zero discards, and if, all of a sudden, something like that comes through, then now everybody is going to want to go spearfishing, and I'm sure there's going to be a huge upset there, but I don't know, and, like I said, it's just a discussion.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Andy. Cameron, you had your hand up?

MR. SEBASTIAN: Yes, and so, I mean, I'm a spear fisherman as well, and I don't do it commercially, because I just don't have the time, but the -- You know, the reality of what good spear fishermen can do is pretty damned amazing, and, you know, I mean, you're opening up this discussion for a what does that look like down the road, and should there be maybe a control date on it, and, you know, from my experience, you know, if you limit that, then, you know, you definitely limit the individuals who can get into it and really, I mean, decimate it. I mean, if I wanted to decimate it, I could decimate it, but I don't, but I know a lot of the new guys that have hit a spot, and they will run that reef, and there's not a damned thing left, whereas I will go out and hit a spot, and I might not go back for three or four years, and so that's something to look at.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Thank you. Good point, Cameron. Okay. At this point, under Other Business, anything else anyone wants to bring up? All right. Then it looks like we've completed everything, all the agenda items, and everything discretionary that we wish, and so, with that said, the meeting is --

UNIDENTIFIED: Wait. We have public comment.

MR. LORENZ: I didn't realize we had a public comment. Sorry that I missed the public comment. It's written right there in front of me. Anybody online who wishes to make a public comment? Please speak now, and give your name. Jeff Oden, you're recognized to speak. You're on our list.

MR. ODEN: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity, and I've heard a lot of talk the last couple or three days, and I missed a lot of it, but I've heard a lot of it, and I've got an awful lot to say, and so I hope you're not hungry, because you're going to miss lunch, if you give me time anyway, but, anyhow, I'm going to start with, for instance, the two-for-one, which we just got through talking about.

Interestingly enough, you know, we've been discussing the for-hire, and the possibility of enacting a control date, enacting the control date, as well you should, which was 2016, and why do I say that? Well, I will give you a for instance. You know, I got put out of the business with 13C, because my focus was deep water, and I watched charter boats fill that void. When I was cut back to a hundred pounds, they were allowed one fish per person, as well as captain and crew, which, ideally, I could have gone out and caught 400 pounds with a charter, and that went on for four or five years, and so, needless to say, it didn't take long for, you know, the word to get around and the escalation to start.

When I was doing it, there were two or three boats that would do it, occasionally, out of Hatteras, and now there are forty-four permits, and I don't know how many of them get used, but it's a lot more than a few, and it's an awful lot more.

Speaking of tilefish, which was on the agenda, there was discussion, in the discussion topic, and it mentioned that it's about the same as it's been for twenty years, and, well, I've got news for you. That's bogus. When I got put out of it, I never had a problem -- I would have never had a problem catching a limit of tilefish out of Hatteras. Never. Now, I don't believe that I caught a limit all year, and fishing the first two or three months and trying to catch the snowies. Anyhow, it's been hammered, and that's all there is to it.

In fairness, part of it may be climate change, and I will not -- You know, I will not argue that point, and, you know, I know fisheries are evolving and changing, but there's no sea bass out there, and the tilefish are 10 to 15 percent of what they used to be. Snowies, they're about the same, and, interestingly enough -- You know, speaking of tilefish, I just noticed the landings through June, and you've got a 112,000-pound quota, and they already caught 116,000 pounds, not counting July and August, and so a fishery that has been allowed, and, primarily, in our area, it is charters, and they've been allowed, for seven years out of the past eight, to go over their ACL, and let's make it eight out of nine now, because I can promise you there an awful lot more tilefish caught in the last two months, and so it's probably going to be well over 200 percent.

Again, that is primarily from for-hire, and so here we are talking about the two-for-one in our industry, and we've been plowed under. We went from 1,900 -- No. We went from 2,800 permits, prior to 1999, and they took it down to 1,100 in 1999, with the latent effort clause, and then we're down to about 550, or 560, if the facts are right, and, of those, a good portion have been bought by the wealthy to sponsor their sport. Not only do you need to get rid of that two-for-one clause, but you need to put an income qualifier on it, for the simple fact of the speculators getting in and taking the commercial permits and putting them to pasture.

You know, the consumer is being left out of this equation, and this is not just charter, sport, commercial, you know, and our industry is being plowed under with the two-for-one, with no sunset clause. It's got to end, folks, and, I mean, who gave you the privilege to daggone assign privilege? You know, we were a small business, no different than the charter guys that are now complaining if they're going to get rationalized out, as well they should.

From 2016 on, they should be disallowed that permit, you know, and why? You see it, the overages every year, seven years in a row, or eight now, eight out of nine, and, anyhow, and, I mean, I have nothing against anybody out there, a charter guy or whatever, but I have watched my industry be plowed under, and I see no end in sight, and nobody on the council, it seems like, and even the commercial guys, and, hey, it's more for me. I mean, nobody seems interested in ending it. You know, there is working waterfronts, and they're being rationalized out of this, and, pretty soon, the charter guys aren't even going to have a place to go get ice, and, I mean, that's what I have watched, and it hurts my feelings to see my industry plowed under. Anyway, I thank you for --

MR. LORENZ: Jeff, we noted that, and you get support here for people wishing to sunset that two-for-one, and thank you very much for that comment. One thing I missed also was -- It sounds like you're from North Carolina, and would you give us your port from where you are?

MR. ODEN: I live in Hatteras, and I'm -- You know, I can throw a rock to Andy Piland's house. We're that close together, and that's where I keep my boat, and so, anyhow, Andy is a friend, and, again, I have nothing against anybody in that industry at all, but I am just tired of seeing our industry rationalized out of business while we sit on the sidelines and, well, are we going to finally get around to doing something on the for-hire, and let me just finish with this.

The for-hire industry will thank us when they finally get this rationalization, because their permit will be -- There will be an assigned value, and I'm not sure if I'm right in that, but I think they're \$40,000 now in the Gulf, and, I mean, not only will you have something to pass along, but one other thing. I mean, as I mentioned, you need the income qualifier for the speculators in our

industry, because I know -- I know I can't count the people, truthfully, you know, that are just doing it for that reason.

I mean, the poor working Joe can't afford a \$100,000 permit anymore, you know, and, I mean, our industry is being assigned to the upper-crust. I mean, it doesn't -- I am also a POL fisherman, and it's the same there, and so, when I hear about this environmental equity, you know, how much equity can you afford anymore, and that's what it's coming down to, is our industry can't afford to lose anymore. You know, our working waterfronts -- They're on life support, just like we are with half our trip limits, and so, anyway, I do thank you again, and I appreciate your time.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Jeff, for your comments, and I can assure you that all those points, including your social and economic justice issues, are very strongly talked about in the council, and with this AP, and so, again, thank you for calling in. Next, I would like to recognize Alana Harrison. Alana, if you would state your hometown, or your homeport, and you're recognized now.

MS. HARRISON: Thank you. I'm Alana, and I'm in Hatteras, North Carolina, and I wanted to touch -- I think it's great that you all are looking to professionalize the for-hire fleet, because, just while you all were talking about it, I went on Facebook Marketplace, and almost every charter boat for sale had a reduction of \$50,000 to \$100,000, and that's just within my area, and so it seems like, to me, they're having trouble selling a 1968 blah-blah-blah boat, and so to have a permit tied to that boat would make that an attractive buy for an up-and-coming fisherman.

In the Gulf, it's like a six-pack all the way up to a headboat permit, and you look at the current prices, and I was blown away, when I met people from the Gulf at MREP, and they told me that we would not be in the industry if it was not a buy-in, because you have so many people who just come here, and they think it's going to be fun, and they have the money to buy a boat, and then they act foolish, and they give everybody in the port a bad name, and so I really think that it would be a great way to go, and give you all a retirement option.

Then, for two-for-one, for us, the environmental justice aspect of it, and like getting into the fishery, I think is really a good conversation to have, because like my personal situation is my dad had the permit, and he gave it to my brother, and my brother took the fishing business like out of our family's seafood business, and so now we no longer have a snapper grouper boat, and so I would have to go out and, man, I would have to invest hundreds of thousands into it, and I just can't.

I mean, I'm twenty-nine, and I'm still paying off my student loans, and I have a seafood market that I have to give my like money to right now, and so how -- But then, at the same time, I'm like, well, if I spend the next ten years saving my money to buy the permit, they're all going to be gone, and there's not going to be one for me to buy, and then, okay, well, I could go get a loan, but what bank is going to give me money to buy a permit in an industry that's failing? It's like a lot of these questions need to be asked, and the two-for-one going away -- I mean, I could buy a permit cash, if it was one-for-one, because I have enough money saved, and I could just set it on the shelf, but, anyway, that's a sidebar.

What else should I talk about? I think that's really it, and I would like to see, when they talk about the recreational for-hire, to look at the age distribution of charter boat captains, and see if there's

a graying-of-the-fleet trend happening in the for-hire industry, as there is in the commercial industry, because, if you have a large group coming to sell the boats right now, they might want to wait, and so that would be interesting to see that as well, and that is all I have for you all. I appreciate your time.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Alana. You made some good points, very well articulated, and I might, from here, from the Chair, encourage you to keep an eye on us, and I have noted that you have commented on frequent occasions here to our AP, and to the council, and someday, if you see an opening for this AP, for a North Carolina representative, I would like to encourage you to apply. You're very well-spoken, and thank you very much. Any other online comments, Mike? Then it looks like we've completed the agenda, and public comment is completed, and I would like to call this meeting as adjourned. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 12, 2023.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
November 15, 2023

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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Attendee Report: SAFMC Oct. 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Meeting

Report Generated:

10/18/2023 12:47 PM EDT

Webinar ID

844-130-699

Actual Start Date/Time

10/10/2023 12:05 PM EDT

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4 hours 56 minutes

Registered

43

Attended

36

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Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

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October
11, 2023

Attendee Report: SAFMC Oct. 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Meeting

Report Generated:

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Webinar ID

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Actual Start Date/Time

10/11/2023 07:46 AM EDT

Duration

9 hours 15 minutes

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Report Generated:

10/18/2023 12:51 PM EDT

Webinar ID

844-130-699

Actual Start Date/Time

10/12/2023 07:23 AM EDT

Duration

4 hours 36 minutes

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