

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE

**World Golf Village Renaissance
St. Augustine, Florida**

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Transcript

Snapper Grouper Committee

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Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the World Golf Village Renaissance, St. Augustine, Florida, on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're going to get going into the Snapper Grouper Committee, and so the first order of business is approval of the agenda, and we're going to be -- Since we're a little bit behind, we're going to be reordering the agenda today. Instead of going into a red snapper update, after approval of the minutes, we will be diving into wreckfish, and then we'll come back with the red snapper update. Also, are there any items that people are aware of at this point that they would like to bring up under Other Business on the Snapper Grouper Committee? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I would like to bring up, under Other Business, about taking the recreational discards and commercial discards off of each sector's ACL, and so both sides are accounting for their own discards and not one paying for the other, and vice versa.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dewey. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I am not ready to talk about it right now, but I do want to talk about how -- With the golden tilefish reporting numbers, and how is it possible that, two months after the longline season has ended, another 6,000 pounds has been added to the commercial longline numbers? Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Got it, Laurilee. Any other items that people are aware of to come under Other Business? All right. With all of these changes, are there any objections to approval of the agenda? All right. Seeing none, the next order of business is Approval of the March 2023 Minutes. Any discussion of those minutes? Any objection to approval of those minutes? All right. Seeing none, those minutes are approved.

Next up, we will go right into wreckfish, which is Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, and the first order of business is Bob Lorenz is going to talk to us about the Snapper Grouper AP's recommendations, and so we have your slides there on the screen, Bob, and I'm going to turn it over to you.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you very much, Jessica. The first thing we discussed with the wreckfish was the motion that the AP recommends that Alternative 1, no action, be considered the preferred alternative, addressing the sector allocations. Basically, the AP is pretty much in agreement that, at this time, this is mainly a commercial fish, and leave the 95 percent commercial and 5 percent recreational sector allocations the way they are.

It has been noted that, the way boats and gear are evolving, that there may be more of an increase in recreational catches in the future, but the one item is the distance that these things are, when you look at them from, you know, a textbook case, and they're basically found in 600 feet of water, but you find the commercial guys are basically going for these from 900 feet to about 1,600 feet of water, and so they're out on the edge of the continental shelf, which, for the great majority of us from Georgia north, maybe with the exception of Hatteras and extreme south Florida -- I mean, you're talking sixty or ninety-mile runs for these things, if you go out to a place like the Charleston Hump looking for these, and so the AP says retain the current allocation the way it is.

Then a second thing, and this comes up throughout the entire Snapper Grouper AP for most things, and we continue to talk about, with at least everybody that is on the AP, and so this is the recreational folks, are pretty much in agreement for various permits for the snapper grouper species, and so here it comes again with wreckfish, and so there may be limited fishing for wreckfish, but there is a small open season, and there is some concern about one MRIP intercept possibly taking up the entire ACL, and that sort of a thing, and so the AP passed a motion to recommend the council require, for the private recreational sector, the private sector, a wreckfish permit and reporting requirement, using the existing recreational reporting apps, such as the citizen science app for SciFish.

We hear increasing feedback from the AP, and I hear it, for the fact of, when we get recreational reporting, some of the work would already be done, by the fact of what citizen science has basically done for getting the rec fishermen to report their catches anyway, just out of general matters for information, and, you know, we have some fairly forward-feeling, or looking, recreational fishermen on the AP, which is why we always seem to get, you know, the feedback for the recreational licenses and reporting, and I think maybe the entire recreational community may be a little different on that, and you may get a little bit of pushback from time to time, but you never will anymore from the AP, and just about anybody that's ever on there is always in agreement with reporting and with a permit, and so that's the recommendation that was made, and you could probably use something like the citizen science app, and you don't have to reinvent the wheel in order to get recreational reporting.

There are so few people, probably, doing wreckfish recreational fishing that you are in a very small pool of people, and certainly, unless they're in Hatteras, or they're in extreme south Florida, they're actually well-heeled, because they have good-sized, big, fast boats that, if they even want to try for these species, to get out the distances that they need it.

Again, the thought was to use that as a pilot for recreational reporting in the future, and a lot of that recommendation -- Actually, I can give the names out, but Tony Constant, from South Carolina, has been big on this, and he comes up with a lot of those good ideas for the fact of recreational reporting.

Getting to Amendment 48 on wreckfish, the Motion 3 recommends that you, the council, select Alternative 4 as preferred under Action 3, addressing modification of the commercial permit requirements for wreckfish, and what we have now is, you know, wreckfish is under and ITQ, and, from what I understand, there are only five people with the ITQ, and so to allow greater participation in the fishery, instead of those folks swapping around among themselves, and you could open this up maybe for someone else to be able to enter the fishery, by being able to lease those shares, and so thereby providing an opportunity for the current ITQ holders, but also a chance for someone else to participate in the fishery, should they want, and so that's why we would say this would allow the greatest participation in the commercial fishery, by facilitating the leasing from the folks that currently have the ITQ, and this would not require to try to get a new entrant to actually purchase those shares, and they could lease them.

Then the recommendation came up that there be a requirement, and just the requirement would generally be for the SG 1 permit, and will be you will definitely have accountability for the fish, and this is the thing that allows a new entrant, and somebody else could try it, by leasing that quota from someone else.

I will move to Motion 4, and Motion 4 is -- This came under sort of kind of a safety requirement and just, actually, at this point, it's commonsense, and Motion 4 is remove the 8:00 to 5:00 offloading time requirements for wreckfish fishermen and let that be consistent with other snapper grouper species. That is Action 5, Alternative 4.

Again, this offloading, due to safety and all, for most species, takes place off normal hours of 9:00 to 5:00, or daylight hours, and, for basically anybody in Georgia, South Carolina, and even the southern part of North Carolina, besides the safety factor, you also have -- There could be extreme difficulty getting the boats in at a low tide in the middle of the day, and so, you know, folks would be having to wait offshore, and it just doesn't seem to make a lot of sense, in today's world, to have only that species, and, I guess, at this point, there's only five quota holders, to be having to be under that requirement for that short period of time. That would essentially integrate it within what you're currently doing for all the snapper grouper species. If there is any questions, or any comments, Madam Chair, I would be happy to answer what I can remember.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. Any questions for Bob about the AP meeting? Chester and then Andy.

MR. BREWER: Thank you for the report. I'm not going to claim any, any, level of expertise with regard to wreckfish. I know that there's a fishery out there, and I know that, but, as I was reading through on this preferences with regard to alternatives, I see that the preferred is Alternative 4, and I just wanted to give you a word of caution with regard to facilitating leasing.

Leasing can get out of control. It happened in the Gulf, and now they're having to go back and to redo amendments, and it's going to be a true -- What words can I use in polite company? It's not going to be pretty, because what has happened is, in an attempt to, quote, bring in new entrants, they allowed people without a permit to obtain shares, which the people without the permit could then lease, and they did, and now over 30 percent of the -- At last count, over 30 percent of the shares are held by people who don't have a permit and who don't step foot on a boat. That was never the intention, but that's what has happened. I'm a little leery with regard to facilitating leasing and trying to get new entrants, you know, through leasing, and, eventually, what happens is you create a sharecropper situation, and so I just wanted to throw in that word of caution, and that's it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chester. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Two points, and so, just to what Chester commented, I mean, I don't disagree with Chester's comments, and I think we have to be thoughtful with regard to provisions for leasing allocation, and certainly we've encountered some challenges in the Gulf, which aren't necessarily outlined here.

I just wanted to clarify, and so, Bob, thanks for the presentation. When you were talking about Motion 4, you made the comment about a boat not being able to come in because of sea conditions, tides, whatever, but the requirement would be that you couldn't offload between those hours, and you could land at any time of day, and so I just wanted to clarify that, because we're be discussing this provision later.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions for Bob? All right. I am going to turn it back to Christina to start going through the document.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, diving right in, if you guys will remember, we're not going to go through the full document today, and we're meeting today to talk about sort of two very specific issues, first monitoring of the wreckfish fishery and then second eligibility and participation within the fishery, in terms of moving it from a paper-based system to the electronic system.

Again, I've gone over this sort of every time we've met, and this amendment stems from that ITQ review that was completed in 2019, and so one of the things it considers are modifications to offloading site and time requirements in the fishery, and so we've heard frustrations from shareholders stating that these hours can be overly burdensome, especially if they land and then have to wait to offload before they can then turn around and head back out, and they have noted that they rarely, if ever, encounter law enforcement officials when they offload at the dock, and so they feel like sort of the purpose of those hours is not being met.

I will say, in talking with law enforcement, one of the things that they have noted is that, without VMS, or some sort of other system to let them know when wreckfish fishermen are going to be landing and offloading, then it's hard to then, of course, meet them at the dock, when they don't have that information.

So, to provide some context for what originally was going on at the time the offloading site and time requirements were implemented, that was back during Amendment 5 to the Snapper Grouper FMP, which was in 1991, and the wreckfish fishery was quite a lot bigger then. There were about forty-nine participants in the fishery, and the rationale was to sort of help NMFS Law Enforcement in monitoring offloading of wreckfish, by requiring those offloads to occur during hours when, one, officers were typically working and, two, it was safe to be monitoring offloading, and so between daylight hours.

They were also required to take place at a specific location, to ensure that those locations were monitored regularly to deter fishermen from landing fish in excess of their quota, and so that's sort of the rationale for why these offloading site and time requirements were originally put into place, and the full rationale is in Appendix A of this document, but that sort of sums up the council's reasoning at the time.

This has been discussed a couple of times at the table, and one of the things that you asked us to bring you was options for a possible hail-in or hail-out system for wreckfish, and I will go over that in a second, and then, in addition to monitoring needs, one of the things that we're going to be talking about today is participation and eligibility within the fishery. As we've talked about before, moving from the paper-based system into an electronic system requires a pretty substantial review and overhaul of the federal regulations, and, in doing so, it's become clear that there are some decision points that need to be made by this council in order to move forward, and we can't just sort of move straight from status quo and put it into an electronic system without making a few decisions, and I will go over what those are a little bit later on, but the purpose of that is, again, to move from that paper-based program to the electronic program.

Those are the things that we need to get done today. I will say that there's likely going to need to be some additional actions added to this amendment to address those participation eligibility decisions that I just spoke about, and it's possible that we will need to delay this amendment until December of 2023, but, again, I will get more into those details when we go through that presentation.

To start with monitoring of the wreckfish ITQ fishery, you've got your status quo right now, where they have to offload at a fixed dealer facility, and they have to offload between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., which would be sort of the minimum daylight hours in a year. You do have other alternatives in the amendment, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., which would match the Gulf IFQ regulations, 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., which would be sort of the opposite of the status quo, and it would be the maximum number of daylight hours that you could possibly see in a year, and then, also, just removing the offloading hour requirements entirely.

There are a couple of different options for a hail-in and hail-out system, and there is a declaration to NMFS prior to departure, which would be hailing-out, and you've got your pre-landing notification, which would be the hail-in, and then your sort of third option is an offload notification, which is a notification to NMFS prior to offloading.

There is a presentation to go over this, but, before we sort of dive into that, in talking outside of the meeting, we felt that it might be helpful to have the council discuss the extent that you feel this fishery -- The extent of the monitoring you feel this fishery needs, noting that moving away from the status quo, to one of those hail-in/hail-out options, would likely require possibly VMS, which is something this council has noted that they are not interested in pursuing for the wreckfish fishery, or some kinds of NMFS-developed app, which would, of course, take more time and more money to implement, and so, before we sort of dive into the nitty-gritty of all these different options, we thought that it might be nice for the council to have a bigger discussion about monitoring needs of the wreckfish fishery currently.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Christina. I appreciate it. This is something that I feel very strongly about, a hill that I'm willing to climb and fight and possibly die on, and I don't believe that we have any indication that this very small fishery is any more prone to violations, quota overruns, any other sort of nefarious deeds than any other fishery we have, and I understand that it has been traditional that, for an ITQ fishery, that there have been more stringent monitoring, whether it's VMS or hail-in/hail-out, but I don't think that necessarily means there has to be.

It's an incredibly small fishery, and if it, for some weird reason, grows in the future, we can revisit this, but, at this time, it seems like a lot of effort to go through to impose stricter monitoring standards on them than we have on any other fishery, I guess with the exception of rock shrimp, which has VMS, but that's for a different reason, and so, at this time, I feel pretty strongly that I would like to remove -- Simply just remove any requirements for offloading, no hail-in/no hail-out, and I absolutely do not want to consider VMS at this time. We have been there with this amendment, and we need to get this amendment done, and we do not need to do it again, and I just don't believe there is evidence that requires them to live up to a higher standard than the rest of us at this time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I'm looking around the table, and I guess one of my questions would be, before I go to Tom, maybe looking to the NOAA folks, and I can't remember all the specifics for IFQ fisheries, and is there a specific requirement for IFQ fisheries, that they have to have these offloading sites and times and more stringent monitoring than other fisheries, because these participants are getting a share of the fishery? I don't know.

MR. STRELCHECK: Not to that level of specificity, and so the Magnuson Act has a section with regard to limited access privilege programs, and, in that section, it says to include an effective system for enforcement, monitoring, and management of the program, including the use of observers or electronic monitoring systems, right, and so that's pretty generic and high-level.

I think my point here would be, if we're not going to have these tools, which I'm concerned about removing, or not adding, right, then how are we demonstrating that this is an effective system for management, and I hear statements about it's a small fishery, or the maybe level of compliance is no different than the broader snapper grouper fishery, but, with catch share systems, we are providing a privilege for them to go out and harvest a proportion of the quota, right, and so with that comes greater accountability with that limited access privilege program.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Tom and then Laurilee.

MR. ROLLER: So, you know, I understand that monitoring isn't necessarily because there is nefarious behavior within a fishery, right, but my understanding is the wreckfish fishery has less than ten participants, and I can't remember the exact number, whether it's five or six or seven or - - It's less than ten, and it's very, very small, but, essentially, in an ITQ fishery like this, we've given exclusive economic access to a very small group of people, and so I really don't think it's too much to ask them to do a little bit more, in terms of reporting.

We're having this big debate over whether you hail-in or hail-out, and specific dock and unloading times, when VMS would probably take care of that, and, quite frankly, it's really not that expensive, nor is it too much to ask, and, if we're going to give this sort of exclusive economic access to a small group of people, I don't think it's too much to ask for a little bit more from them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom, are you suggesting that we go back to the VMS requirement, or you're suggesting, since we're not using VMS, to put one of these add-ons on there? Help me understand.

MR. ROLLER: I mean, I'm looking around for suggestions, but, for such a small fishery like this, I think VMS is a really good solution, which has been brought up before, and I can't -- I've been trying to think why the council went away from that in the past, in our past discussions, but I would suggest that we would consider it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tom. Laurilee and then Kerry.

MS. THOMPSON: This is a question for Andy, and so, in the Gulf, where they have the catch shares, are the people that are doing snapper grouper trips in the Gulf, and I guess you've got golden tilefish too, I think, that's under IFQ, and are they required to do a hail-in and hail-out, and are they required to have VMS in the Gulf?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry and then back to Tom.

MS. MARHEFKA: I should have made it clear that I actually don't have any problem with having a hail-in and hail-out requirement, and my understanding was that that was going to be technically very challenging for the agency, and so that would be my preferred alternative, were there not hurdles to overcome there.

At this point, with the VMS, what gives me heartburn is we have been working on this amendment for an incredibly long time, and VMS will stop it dead in its tracks for a really long time, and we've had that discussion, and we've taken it out, and I remember some of it, and I don't remember all of it, but I'm sure we could revisit what that discussion was, and so that's a timing issue. The hail-in and hail-out is a technical issue, and the hill that I will die on is the offloading site and times, because it will absolutely make it so that people cannot conduct business, and I don't think people understand how dire it's getting for us, and so I'm not opposed to extra monitoring, but I'm just finding the most efficient way to let them conduct business.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me ask a question, and I know that Andy had his hand up, and so before we go to Tom, and so I think that what Kerry is asking is I think we were told before that you could only use hail-in and hail-out if you had a VMS, and I thought that there was also a way to do a phone-in hail-in and hail-out, and so could you speak to that as well?

MR. STRELCHECK: I probably would look to Jessica Stephen. What I was going to comment is we kind of jumped into some discussion about monitoring options, and I know that Jessica spent quite a bit of time working with council staff, to prepare a presentation, and my recommendation would be to go through that presentation and have this discussion as part of that presentation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just a quick add-on to my last comment, which part of it was due to Chester's comments, and he brought up that leasing can become an issue, right, that we've seen in the Gulf. Well, if we had a monitoring requirement, like VMS, that would probably curtail the potential problem if we went to leasing, only because it's just another thing that you have to require in order to be able to qualify for that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, they have VMS in the Gulf, and that's not stopping the leasing, and I'm just saying.

MS. BROUWER: I just wanted to remind the council, and those of you who have not been around the table very long, that the council did go through and develop an amendment, Snapper Grouper Amendment 30, all the way through to the end, and it was to outfit snapper grouper vessels with VMS, and it was like fishery-wide, and we went through and developed that amendment, all the way to the end, and we had public hearings, and there was quite a bit of opposition from stakeholders, and, in the end, like right when we were supposed to approve it, the council said we don't want it, and so I just wanted to make sure that you all were aware of that, those of you who weren't around back then.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Bob, you had something else to offer from the AP?

MR. LORENZ: Well, yes, and, just listening to the comments as they came from Chester and Tom and Kerry and Andy, just that I would offer, and it isn't pertinent to this fishery, but, since some of the folks in the AP, with the chatter of it, if you get this right, they're watching this. There is apparently some fishermen watching this from the golden tile longline community, and I think there's like twenty-some fishermen, that, you know, you can get this right, with the electronic reporting and this sort of thing, and you might even hear can we have an ITQ on these fish, to eliminate derby fishing and this sort of a thing, and so I just wanted to bring that up, since it kind of fits in with the conversation, and you may see this again from some people with the AP on another fishery, and so time spent here could lead to better things over there with another fishery, with the golden tiles.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Bob. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I'm just thinking about efficiency of our time too, and, you know, what would it mean if, at this point, we even entertain the discussion of VMS, based on what we have in this document that is closing towards the end? Is that a realistic thing that we're going to even consider? We need to really think about that, because, if we do that, we're about to go headfirst into a really long discussion, that I personally, based on what I have heard from this exact council in the past two years, is not somewhere we want to go, and we need to be efficient with our time with wreckfish.

We've been stringing these guys along forever, and we need to be efficient with our time in this committee, because we have a lot of other things to do, and so I would just be interested to ask the other members of the committee, and, one, ask first Christina what that would mean for timing, because I think that's going to really impact how people think about it, and, two, is this something that you would seriously consider at this point in this amendment?

MS. WIEGAND: In terms of timing, adding VMS back into this amendment would delay it quite a bit, and there would be a number of decision points that this council would have to make, in terms of VMS, and so we would be looking at -- I don't want to put a number on how long it would take, but it would be another several meetings before we could get anywhere close to sort of closing out this amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just real quick, and to that point, just everyone remember that another several meetings, or subsequent meetings, because we only take this up, because of our timing, every other, and so we're talking about years, possibly.

MS. WIEGAND: While we discuss timing, just another thing to consider is that the wreckfish ITQ program is supposed to be reviewed every five years, and we just completed one in 2019, which means the next review is coming up quickly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Andy and then Tom.

MR. STRELCHECK: I am going to make this statement not supporting or opposing VMS, but I think our discussions, going back to 2016 and prior, when that decision was made with the prior

amendment, will be very different than discussions we could have today, just because of the evolution of vessel monitoring systems that have occurred over that timeframe. I would be interested in at least having a discussion around that, from the standpoint of burden on fishermen, burden on the government, cost effectiveness, or cost burden, relative to some of these other options, right, and I think that's important to inform us, and then we could decide, ultimately, is it worth pursuing or not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I just want to add that, you know, I am sensitive to the timing of this as well, and I believe we need to finish it, and my comments on VMS were not necessarily understanding how much it could potentially delay this process, right, but I do offer them in terms of discussion for the future and how we look at managing these small ITQ fisheries.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I also wonder what's the -- If you have VMS, what are the specs for the VMS? I mean, I guess there are certain things that you're going to be asking that VMS to do, whether it's reporting or location and time and stuff like that, and my next question is what happens when that VMS goes out, and it will happen, and do you not go fishing until it's replaced, or how does that work, and there are some times, as I discussed the other day, where you're tying VMS, or electronic monitoring, to your fishery, and your system breaks, and you can't go fishing, and so technology has come a long way, but it's what you're going to ask of that VMS, and is there a backup protocol of something, because I'm just curious about that, given the experience that I've had with VMS.

MS. WIEGAND: I mean, I'm sure there are protocols like that for various different VMS fisheries, and I think a lot of that stuff is something the council would need to discuss, if you all want to move forward with VMS, and some of those would be council discussions and council decision points to have in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so I think the question is, on the hail-in and hail-out, do we want to move forward with a hail-in or hail-out provision, because it seems like we need the VMS in order to do that, and, if the answer is yes, then Jessica can give us some more information, or is the answer, no, that we don't want to do hail-in and hail-out, and, instead, we're going to do offloading sites and times, or something other than hail-in and hail-out, and so I think we're kind of at a decision point right now so that we know how to move forward here, and so do we want to consider hail-in and hail-out, and we're being told that that can only be done via VMS, or some other NMFS application.

MS. MARHEFKA: The devil in the details for me to know that answer, right, and, if it requires something that is going to delay this, and be really long, in VMS, then no. If there is other methods that are existing and efficient, personally, for me --

MS. WIEGAND: I mean, I guess I will look to Andy, if you want to sort of provide a quick answer to that, to help facilitate discussion, or we can move into Jessica's presentation.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I'm going to ask maybe Jessica to sit down and answer this question, and she can talk about it from like our SEFHIER program experience in the Gulf of Mexico, but, yes, it's absolutely possible to do this outside of VMS.

DR. STEPHEN: Just to add a little bit more detail, there are programs that do different types of notifications that are in the presentation outside of VMS. There is an additional cost to the agency, because you're maintaining a separate system, and you will need to develop that system and keep it up-to-date as technology changes, and so, if you think of your cellphone, you replace your cellphone every three years, right, and software would need to be updated. When we look at it going through the VMS, that's a national program that kind of encompasses the cost throughout the entire agency, and it's typically a more cost-effective way for the agency, at least to maintain it, because we have different standards that are set nationally that go through in with that.

That said, you know, the units as well, we've had some experience with how the units work, both within the Gulf IFQ program and the Gulf SEFHIER program. On the satellite units, we tend to see about 1 percent failure, and so very little. If your unit is not working right to submit the declaration, there's an alternative phone line, as long as it's still recording your position. In the SEFHIER program, we did have the cellular units, and they kind of store the data and then forward it later, and so it doesn't sometimes hit the needs, if you want at-sea transmission of information, and those units did end up having a higher failure rate than the vendors had anticipated through the testing that they had done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: For the non-VMS options, can that be -- Can the cost recovery money that is part of this plan be used to help alleviate some of those financial burdens for the agency?

DR. STEPHEN: I'm sorry, but I didn't hear the very beginning of what you said.

MS. MARHEFKA: Since it's an ITQ, part of this plan is implementing the cost recovery, the 2 or 3 percent, and I forget where we're at, and can those funds be used for the non-VMS that you said would be a little more expensive?

DR. STEPHEN: The cost recovery can be used to do anything that would support the program, and so the development of the database, if we did an application -- I just want to caution you that we're capped at 3 percent, and that's the maximum, and it is a small fishery, and so I'm not sure we would be generating a lot of money from cost recovery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other questions? All right, and so what do we want to do about the hail-in and hail-out? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I will make a motion, -- Just for the sake of discussion and moving this along, I will make a motion that we adopt a hail-in/hail-out provision utilizing technology that is not VMS for this fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. As Christina gets that on the board, Andy, was that a second? Okay. Mel, was that a second? All right. It's seconded by Mel. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I am going to go back to my earlier statement. Is the materials that Jessica put together just for our background, or are we intending for her to present that information? I feel like we're putting the cart before the horse here.

MS. WIEGAND: I was going to say that, if the council's intent is to be interested in moving forward with something like that, as opposed to sticking with status quo, then certainly we would go through Jessica's presentation to provide more information, so that we can get an idea of what the council would like to see, so we can structure the additional actions and alternatives that are going to be needed for this amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Great. Let's leave this motion here and see the presentation and then come back to this.

DR. STEPHEN: All right, and so I'm going to go through this presentation. There's a lot of information in here, and we've had a lot of discussion, and so, on some of these slides, I'm going to try and be brief, and feel free to ask a question if I miss something that you really want to have more information on.

Just the first part that I want to talk about is how a trip declaration -- A pre-landing notification, approved landing locations, and offloading notices, these are all different tools, and, a lot of times, they are used together, in order to help with the enforcement and monitoring of the program, which, of course, helps the scientific integrity of the data that we're collecting.

Just to go over, briefly, the trip declaration, for those that are not familiar, and you might also hear it called a hail-out, or a start-hail, depending on what you're in, and it's used both by enforcement as well as management, although this is traditionally more of a management-heavy aspect to the trip declaration, so that we can do trip accounting, and maybe it's going to be the trigger for other reports, or if you're using some of those other features, an offloading notice or a hail-in.

Typically, when you think about how we do that, a trip declaration starts when you're at the dock, and so it's less important for a hail-out to have that at-sea transmission, unless you would like someone to be able to change their trip's declaration while they're out at-sea, and so I'm just going to skip to the next slide here, and, typically, a trip declaration is done prior to leaving the trip. If you look agency-wide, across all the different fisheries, some of them are very strict, and it has to be submitted within an hour of leaving on your trip, and others are very broad. I will mention that, in SEFHIER, we were very broad in the Gulf, and it was problematic, because we had trouble matching that trip declaration later on to a logbook record.

Your information there is pretty typical, and a lot of it can be pre-filled on whatever unit you're using, whether it's a VMS unit or an application, and we like to know what the vessel is, the permit, maybe the shareholder name in a catch share program, and we also typically ask them to tell us what sector they're in, commercial versus a recreational trip, what type of fishery, and maybe what gear. Some of these may not be as applicable for the wreckfish. The different types of information also correlate to how often you want that submitted trip declaration, every trip, every time you leave the dock, only within your fishery, and some of the information might change based on those decisions.

It also allows two very needed fields that we've seen, one called out-of-fishery, if you're just going to move your boat to get gas or something like that, if you just want to declare it that way, and the other one is if you are also participating in research, and you're out there harvesting federal species under either an EFP or some other research permit, and you can declare a research trip.

Then the final type of information that's typically in a trip declaration is your departure date and time, and, again, a lot of those, depending on how you build it, can be automated, and so there's very little burden in the entering of the information in the trip declaration. When we looked at different mechanisms that are out there within the fisheries, we have a couple that are kind of non-VMS trip declarations, and there's the Northeast Pre-Trip Notification System, called PTNS, and they actually request that fishermen report that they're going out on a trip a couple of days in advance. That is because they are using it for the observers to be on the boat, and so they need the knowledge in advance to get an observer there and make sure that they're on the boat.

In this case, if you're not concerned with putting observers on the boat, you probably want to think of a shorter timeframe for when it has to be submitted, and the other application that I had a chance to look over was the West Coast OLE declaration, and so that's a fully-built app, and I am exploring with them what the costs are with that, but it is, again, the costs of just that region to maintain, and so one of the things in the pros and cons, when you look at the agency burden here, would be the costs between the two. You also need to look at the burden on the fishermen, VMS unit versus making sure you have a phone that has capability, and you have locations where that phone could use the app to submit the data.

Again, here, we've already discussed this, and there's really two main options when you're looking at a declaration. You're either looking at a VMS or you're looking at a NMFS-built application. There are pros and cons both ways. When it comes to the VMS, it's already built as a system, and we already have connections to the different databases, particularly the catch share database, to VMS, and all we would be doing is modifying probably an existing form for the required information.

When you're looking at a NMFS-built application, you're probably going to be restricted by internet, as I mentioned before, and so you need some kind of internet, or data plan, on a cellphone to submit, and you would need to think about the one-time cost to build it as well as all the maintenance costs, to ensure that it keeps working.

For both systems, you could consider an alternative phone service, or call service, to help out, and VMS already has one, nationally, that we could use with no additional cost. If we were building one in, we would probably have to build-in a contract with a company to handle it for an application.

Some of the things that I had mentioned before is determining when you would want a declaration, and so thoughts, again, are just a wreckfish trip, any snapper grouper trip, anytime at all, and then thinking about what kind of submission timeline would be appropriate for this fishery, one hour before, five hours before, anytime in advance, and, in thinking about those, we can, as the agency, help flesh out what some of the pros and cons are of different approaches, if the council is interested in that.

All right. I'm going to switch here to the pre-landing notification, and you will also hear these called a hail-in or an end-hail, depending on what part of the country you're in. This one is a little bit more required for compliance as well as for management, and so, when you're thinking about this, that advanced notice that you're coming in allows law enforcement to come meet you at the dock, and it also allows port sampling for biological collection of information, and then it's also used, from the managers, sort of to do the post-trip tracking and to make sure all the information is coming together how we want it, to make sure we have all the pieces needed.

Really, the key part in here is when people get that notification of when you're coming in, and so how do we distribute it, and how do we ensure that there's a sufficient time period for that notification of coming in to be effective for its purpose. Again, when you think about this, it's typically done at-sea, and so, if you're at-sea, you're talking generally a satellite needed to transmit, and, while the satellite field is growing, that's typically going to be a VMS. Your other way that you're thinking is, if you're at-sea, you might be sitting out in the harbor and not docked-up while you wait for your notification to come through, and I think, on the next slide, I will go through some of what the Gulf IFQ does.

Again, for both, no matter which way you go, we would need to build an email distribution list, and that's something we already have, and so we would just need to modify it for the South Atlantic side, and to make sure that information goes through our system.

Again, information on the pre-landing notification is somewhat similar to what you've seen before, and you're going to have automatic information that identifies the vessel, shareholder, or permit, and we also probably would want in there -- We use these a lot of times of what dealer are you landing with, and that also helps, or what location you're going to, and so notification is only as good as the ability to actually meet the vessel, and so that would go back into kind of this idea of offloading sites, or where you can land.

We also normally expect an estimate of the date and time, and you can also require an estimate of the catch share species onboard. How much wreckfish do you think you have onboard, and it doesn't have to be exact, because you're out at-sea, but some kind of estimate to ensure that you actually have the amount of allocation in order to land that species.

There are quite a few examples of the pre-landing notifications out there, and I mentioned the Gulf program, and they have a three to twenty-four-hour notice, and, even though we have some fishermen that are day-trippers, they will actually submit their pre-landing notification when they're leaving and then update it with a correct estimate as they're coming in, so that they can encounter that three-hour minimum amount.

We also had a Headboat Collaborative Program that we did a catch share program for, and we used a pre-landing notification. Now, they only had an hour, because they are typically half-day, or three-quarters-day, or full-day fishing, but it was used in conjunction with their declaration, and so the declaration was the first notice to law enforcement and port agents, and the hail-in was kind of confirmation, in case anything had changed.

In SEFHIER, we decided to combine these two together, to make the declaration also a pre-landing notification. We did run into some problems, as we were looking through it, to make sure that -- If the information changed, and you were out at-sea, it was very hard, with a cellular VMS unit, to

submit that information back, and it wasn't working quite as well as we thought, and I think we just need to dig into what was going on with that one, to see if you could effectively have a joint declaration with a pre-landing notification.

Then the last point is that, up in the Northeast, their multispecies fishery does require a pre-landing notification. It requires it under very certain circumstances, crossing a certain demarcation line and being six hours prior to landing, and so they have a longer timeframe than we have used in the Gulf, or, on the last haul, if you're going to have greater than a six-hour timeframe.

Again, looking over these, this slide is going to be very similar, and this is the declaration slide, and you have two options at this point, the VMS option, which is already pre-built, and we would need little modification, and then the NMFS-built application, and all the same kind of information applies. We would need to build it, maintain it, et cetera. When you're thinking about this, you might want to think about when you're requiring a pre-landing notification, just when you have wreckfish onboard, and this might also play in to how you define your declaration. If you define that you're doing a wreckfish trip, versus a regular snapper grouper trip, you might change your options there, and then, again, of course, timing of when this occurs, to make sure that you have sufficient timing for it to meet the needs and have enforcement or biological agents meet the vessel.

All right, and I'm going to switch now to offloading notification, and so I don't think we've talked about that much at this meeting. This is a different way of thinking about things, and so, a lot of times, with the tides, it might be problematic to actually time when you can get in, or you might get in and the dealer is not ready to offload your fish, and so the solution to that could be using an offload notification.

This would be where you would notify, in advance, and again by a certain time period, that you expect to offload your fish from your vessel at that point in time, and you could have offloading declarations, and you could have landing location lists, and this is where some of this information combines together these different ideas, and you could also think about broadening when your offloading restrictions are, if you have a notification of when that was going to occur.

I want to be clear that landing, versus offload, are two different things, and so, if you have an offload notification, that still means that you can tie the vessel up to a dock, but you just cannot remove the fish from it, and I say this because this is one that is frequently confused in the Gulf, and we spent a lot of time explaining to them that, yes, you can tie up your boat with your pre-landing notification, but you just cannot remove your fish.

Just doing a quick comparison here, I pulled up what we have for the Gulf IFQ, versus what we currently kind of have as offloading regulations within wreckfish, and so wreckfish currently requires offloading at a fixed dealer facility. If you are not choosing a fixed dealer facility, you need to call in to OLE in advance, provide twenty-four hours' notice, and then your offloading restriction time is between 8:00 to 5:00 p.m.

In the Gulf, while we don't have an offloading notification, and it was considered at one point, and we had kind of a mixed result for it, and so we ended up not using the offloading notification, but you do have to have your pre-landing three to twenty-four hours in advance, and you must land at any approved landing locations. The only criteria for the approved landing locations is they must

be public, they must not have dogs or chains or anything that would involve safety to someone coming to meet that vessel.

When you're thinking about the offloads here in the Gulf, they do 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. as their timeframe, and that's because, you know, with daylight savings, your daylight hours kind of change throughout the year, and so that was the time period suggested. They also added a stipulation, later in the program, that, if an officer is present, and agrees to it, offload can continue past 6:00 p.m.

The other requirement we have is that the offload must occur within ninety-six hours of that pre-landing notification. We made it a broad time period, because you have some times where you're going to come in and land on a Friday or Saturday, maybe late at night, and the dealer might not be open to the next week, or, if there's a holiday on Monday, you have some time, and so, for offload, you must do your landing transaction or it must be done within that ninety-six hours of the notification, and, again, that helps the agency track and manage and make sure all the reports are coming in accurately.

The dealer typically does the landing transaction, but it is also authorized by the captain of the vessel, and the catch share program has a way to authorize that by the captain if the captain is not the shareholder, and, in this case, there is no requirement to be at a fixed dealer facility, and you can create landing locations elsewhere, and a dealer can send a truck down to you, meet you, and complete that landing transaction and then bring the fish back, and so it does provide a wider flexibility, using those options, and I just wanted to present them to you for consideration.

Again, with an offload declaration, you have the same two options. In this case, there is nothing already pre-built into VMS, and so we don't have that advantage that you have for the other two types of notifications, but we could easily build-in the offload declaration into an existing IFQ system, and so it would be internet-access-based.

When we're thinking about what needs to be submitted, you would definitely want to be able to identify not on the vessel and the shareholder, but also the dealer, to make sure that they're a dealer that has an account in the system to accept those wreckfish, and, again, submission timing, the same kind of concept, and what's an appropriate time to allow time for an officer or an agent to meet that vessel when they're offloading.

The other large thing that I did think about, when dealing with this, is who would make that offload notification, and so I think it is a concern. In my way, way, way back days with MARMAP, sometimes the fishermen don't know when the offload occurs, and sometimes it's the dealer that is going to know, and so we would want to think about who should be submitting it, either the dealer or the fishermen, or allow either one of them to submit, which leads into the last topic here, which is offload location and times.

As in the case of when you're doing this, either the offload locations or landing locations, if you're using that in the pre-landing notification, you would want to have a set list that you could use, that someone knows where to find it. We can adapt things that we already have in the Gulf IFQ program in order to do that and look at the different types of locations, and so it would need to be preapproved, but it gives more flexibility than just the fixed dealer facility that is currently in the wreckfish program. Another option would be to use generic ports, but I caution against that,

because a generic port might mean that they had would have trouble finding it, depending on how large a marina might be.

Similarly, when you're thinking about the offload times, and this is in the amendment, and I just wanted to kind of point out -- I looked roughly at what sort of sunrise and sunset is on the east coast, over a variety of times throughout the year, and so you can have sunrise as early as 6:15 a.m. in portions of the year and as late as 7:30 a.m., and then, if you look at sunset, we can have sunset, in the winter months, as early as 5:15 or as late as 8:40 at night. Thinking about the wreckfish program that you could land throughout the year, you would want to think about your alternatives that kind of still create the daylight, so you can see what's being offloaded, and then the safety of officers, or port agents, that are coming there. That was my last slide, and so I will take any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Jessica, and so a couple of questions, and others can think about what they want to ask, and I feel like I have so many, and so it seems like the whole hail-in and hail-out, the offload site and times, and the offload locations, are all tied together, and like you can't just select hail-in and hail-out declarations and not also figure out these offload times and the offload sites, and is that true, or can you have some of these pieces and not the others?

DR. STEPHEN: You can mix and match among them, and so it doesn't have to be all of them together, but you just have to think about what your purpose is, and what the need is for it, and then figure out which ones work together. I would say that any one, just as a single stand-alone, probably isn't going to give you enough information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. If I don't see other hands, I'm going to keep asking questions. What is the smallest IFQ in the nation, meaning the smallest number of participants? Is the wreckfish the smallest IFQ?

DR. STEPHEN: I think it is.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What's the next-largest, and how many participants are in there? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I might be mistaken, and I would have to confirm, but the Northeast has a tilefish ITQ program that I believe is no more than a dozen participants.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey is shaking his head. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It's less than a dozen participants, and it doesn't have no vessel monitoring or nothing. They have to have 100 percent keep of everything they catch.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Could you repeat that, please, Dewey?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It's less than twelve vessels, and they do not have no vessel monitoring system or nothing like that, as far as that, but they have to keep 100 percent of the tilefish they catch. They can discard other things that they catch, like spiny dogfish, and they have --

Particularly given that there's less than twelve vessels, there is basically about four specific states specific locations, where they're out of.

MR. GRINER: But they don't have any hail-in and hail-out and no offloading requirements, other than --

MR. HEMILRIGHT: As far as I know, I do not believe so, and I have never heard that, or anything like that, to my knowledge, and I don't believe so.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The reason I was asking those questions is I don't want to overkill this whole plan for wreckfish, and, as Kerry mentioned, I really don't want to slow down this entire amendment, and we've been working on it for so long, and, as Christina mentioned, we're about to come to the next review, and I'm wondering if there's some things that we could select, and continue to make a decision say by December, and then do another review -- Figure out what gaps still remain with the next review, and kind of go from there, and it's just a thought, and I don't know what selecting some things looks like here, but I am just concerned about throwing everything at this very small fishery. Thoughts? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Do we have a sense, right now, of how -- Under the current guidelines, which is the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., what percentage of trips are being met by law enforcement, of wreckfish trips, currently? What percentage of wreckfish trips, with the current requirements of the offloading sites and offloading times, are being met by law enforcement?

DR. STEPHEN: I am going to probably pass that to law enforcement, who is sitting here, but one of the problems with meeting is they don't know when the vessels are coming in to meet them, and so, if you don't have the information of when they're coming, how can you then meet those vessels?

MS. MARHEFKA: Absolutely, and so this was back to sort of what I was saying at the last meeting, and it hasn't been demonstrated, to me, that there's a problem, and so I'm not quite sure what we're trying to fix, and that's -- We're going to slow down an entire amendment, or very adversely affect these people's business, and my husband regularly unloads at midnight or 1:00 a.m., and it is because it's the only time it can happen, and so we're either going to -- We're going to negatively affect their business or try to solve a problem that it has not been demonstrated to me that we have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: While they're debating up here, I mean, I'm in agreement with you as well, and so I guess I would look to someone from NOAA, and what is the middle ground? You know, can we stay with small modifications to this offload site and times, and not go so far as to having to put in some type of system for a hail-in and hail-out, or are you -- Is the agency saying, because this is a limited access privilege program, it needs to have more, you know, and, now that we're under this review, now we need to come in, and we essentially are required to put this in, but it doesn't sound like all ITQ fisheries have this, and so I guess I'm just seeking some guidance from someone at the agency about whether or not we really have to do all of these extra things. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I will weigh-in, and certainly if Shep wants to add anything from a legal standpoint, and, you know, I read, earlier, that we have to demonstrate that there is effective enforcement of the program, as it meets the standards of Magnuson under the limited access privilege programs section, and so, you know, I think the burden there is on the council, in developing the record, and what do we determine is effective enforcement, you know with enforcement weighing-in and agreeing to that.

What I want to, obviously, be cautious and thoughtful about is the burden, both on the industry as well as the agency, right, because this is a small fishery, and, as Jessica has noted, we're not going to recoup a lot of cost recovery from it, and so, in order to implement a lot of this, it could be a major expense to the agency that may not be worth the corresponding benefit, and so I don't have necessarily, you know, all the answers, in terms of how we should proceed, but I do think that we have to demonstrate, you know, and justify that effective enforcement provision.

I am going to say something a little bit provocative here, and hopefully not get too negative of a reaction, but, the way the discussion is going, I almost get the sense that we're trying to turn this just into a general snapper grouper fishery, and the question might be should we be talking about not having this as an ITQ program, right, and so I do want to throw that out, because I'm a little concerned with the conversation, and the way it was heading, because it did sound very much like this is just going to be another snapper grouper species, and it's going to be monitored and managed the same way as everything else, and so I don't necessarily agree with that statement, but I did want to say it, and I did put the caveat, and so, when I'm quoted on it, everyone knows what I said.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. My mind is blown. Questions or comments or thoughts around the table? I guess I could try to weigh-in. I don't know that I would want to go away from the ITQ fishery, which makes me think that we do need some extra things in here to ensure that we have adequate enforcement for it, but I guess what is the proper balance between enough, a little bit more, not too much, so that we're doing all of these things for this very small fishery. Kerry and then Mel.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry. I know I'm talking a lot, and I apologize, but I may have a way forward that helps us out of this. Some of these new sort of catches, if you will, of removing the offloading requirements and potentially having to look at this application-based hail-in and hail-out and VMS are newish discussion points since we've talked to our wreckfish members, and so I am happy to make the suggestion -- Not to truncate the conversation, but that maybe we set this aside, and I have a motion on the floor, and I'm happy to do whatever is appropriate to make that go away for a minute, and some time is given that I can make phone calls, and anyone else can make phone calls.

These guys very well may say, well, if we have to go through VMS, and we have to go through hail-in and hail-out, we would rather have the hours, and I don't want to make that -- That's a very big decision to make on their behalf, and I'm not saying it's their decision only, and, obviously, as Andy has stated, we have legal obligations as well, but they have not met since this has been in there, and I would very much like to talk to a person or two before we made a final decision, and I am going to have a lot of fun getting on the phone and going, guess what Andy said about not making it an ITQ. No, I'm just kidding, and so that's just a suggestion for a path forward, because I would -- They just don't know that this is in there right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before we go to Mel, I just wanted to kind of explore that and ask Christina some questions, and so my mind is blown also with what Kerry is suggesting, and I think it's a great idea, but I would -- Instead of just doing these one-off phone calls, and Kerry collects all the data, I would rather have a meeting, maybe of the shareholders, and could we do that before September, or, actually, that's a bad idea, and they would have to be done between September and December, and like what would the timing be, because she's right, and this is thrown out there, and I don't know if we're all the experts around the table on this, and what are your thoughts on this?

MS. WIEGAND: So one thing you have to consider is that you just make a Wreckfish AP, and we haven't appointed anyone to that AP formally. We've certainly outlined the type of people, and now this gets into a process question, and so we've got the new Wreckfish AP, and we said we would like the shareholders to be on that AP, along with a couple of other seats, and could we go ahead and call that before we've gone through the formal appointment process, since the seats are more clearly identified than they are traditionally for an AP?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so thank goodness that Kelly back there is holding up a card that says Monica would like to weigh-in here, and let's see if we can make sure that Monica is unmuted and that she can talk to us.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you. Christina, in answer to your question, if you're talking about appointments that were made in a closed session, but they haven't been completely identified in an open session, I think you're fine, in terms of the council going ahead and saying, hey, we think we're going to have a Wreckfish AP, and we want to convene that this summer, or as soon as possible, whatever, and so I think you're fine to talk about that. Does that answer your question?

MS. WIEGAND: Kind of sort of, and so the issue is that the council, in closed session, identified that they would like to have a formal Wreckfish AP, and they identified the seats they would like to have on that AP, but we haven't solicited applications for those seats and appointed them through the normal AP process. It's a little bit different, because the seats are specific that we want the shareholders, the people that currently own shares in the fishery, to have those seats, and so it's a bit of a different process, and so I guess maybe the question is, regardless of the AP, could we bring the shareholders together for a meeting, just the shareholders?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Why couldn't you say, as soon as the Wreckfish AP becomes a standing AP, we would like to convene that AP?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would add because I think it's going to take too long, because we were trying to finalize this document in December.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, I think you're going to have potential timing issues anyway, when we get into the ideas of who -- The other kinds of actions I think that will become clear when Jessica makes her other presentation, which are the changes that are needed to update the wreckfish program into an electronic program, and so, in terms of timing, that may delay -- I think it will delay the amendment, and so, if you want to convene a meeting of the shareholders, I guess that's what you're going to do. Let me think of a way to do that that fits under the Magnuson Act, and so give me a few minutes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Monica. All right, and so I have other hands up, and I have Mel and then Laurilee.

MR. BELL: I guess I'm grossly -- My concept seems way too complicated, and I understand that it's an IFQ system, and so there needs to be an additional degree of accountability, the ability for law enforcement to track and hold them accountable and that sort of thing, and I appreciate that, and that's what Magnuson says, but -- And I also appreciate that VMS is kind of like -- That's the deluxe version of doing this, but I think, if we go down that VMS road, we're going to have the problems that we know we're going to have, and it will delay it, but I don't understand why it can't be something as simple as I'm offshore, I'm way offshore, and I'm heading to the hill, and I know what my -- I know where I'm going, and I know what my ETA is, and I'm either -- I, at that point, communicate directly, via sat phone or some means, to a number on the hill and tell them this is where I'm going, this is who I am, this is my ETA, and that could be done through a dealer, or it could be done directly or something, but a simple communication ashore that I'm going to be coming into this place at the time, and, if that changes, you adjust that, and then law enforcement can be made aware that that's their intent.

If they have assets to meet them, great. If they need help from another agency to meet them, or somebody meets them, but I just -- It just seems like it's way too complicated, and it's not that difficult. I mean, I used to come in from the middle of the Atlantic, talking to people on HF radio, and we would tell them this is where we're coming, this our ETA, when we would come through the jetty, that's when we're coming through the jetty, and I don't know, but it just seems like there's a simpler way of doing this, and it's not that difficult, but I must be missing something of why it seems to be so difficult, and I understand that VMS is the -- You know, that's the deluxe version, but I don't think we want to go with the deluxe version right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mel. Before we go back to our list, Monica, I see you have your hand up again.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you. I think the committee could make a motion to make the wreckfish shareholders an ad hoc AP, for the purposes of looking at these specific issues for Amendment 48, and convene those as soon as you would like, and then, once the other AP process that the council is discussing, in terms of wreckfish shareholders -- That could kind of take the place of this ad hoc AP. If the committee makes that motion, then, at Full Council, we would have to approve it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Monica. I'm going to go back to my list, to think about what Monica just said. Laurilee and then back to Kerry.

MS. THOMPSON: When we were talking about the golden tilefish, we talked about having a golden tilefish workgroup, and so why couldn't you make the wreckfish people a wreckfish workgroup, and then not have to go through the administrative hoops that you've got to go through to make them an AP?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good question. Monica, do you want to respond to that?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: If you want to call them a workgroup, that's fine. It's the same kind of so-called administrative hoops, and so we just want to make sure that they're a part of the -- That

they're covered under the council process under the Magnuson Act, and so, if you want to call them a workgroup, that's fine, too.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm not sure if my question is for Andy or Monica, but, Andy, when you were reading the information from Magnuson about LAPPs, or ITQs or whatever, based on what you read there, if we did not remove the offloading site requirements, and either did status quo or just chose broader hours, you would consider that a high enough level of monitoring and responsibility, because, if I recall, this provision isn't in this document based on guidance from the agency that we needed to do it, and it came from just fishermen looking for more flexibility, and so, had we never brought this up, we would have been fine, but, since we've brought it up, we have to be at a higher level of responsibility?

MR. STRELCHECK: To be honest with you, with the conversation we've kind of had around this, I kind of question whether or not we have an effective system for enforcement currently for the program, in all honesty, right, and we don't know when boats are coming in, and it's difficult, obviously, to know when to check those vessels, and I think we do check a very small fraction of the overall fleet right now, and so I don't -- You know, I don't think it's necessarily an agency call, and, obviously, we do have to approve whatever action is submitted to us, but that would be contingent on the record that's built and what we determine is kind of effective for enforcement and monitoring.

That's kind of a non-answer, and I apologize, but I think that's kind of the reality, and I keep going back to -- I mean, I hear concerns about VMS, and so, if we set aside VMS, right, what's kind of the intended purpose of this information, right, and it's to enhance dockside presence for trip validation, right, and ensuring that those boats are reporting what they say they're reporting and that we could also do biological sampling in tandem with that, and so, to me, I think there's a number of avenues that we could pursue to kind of accomplish that, if that's truly kind of the broader purpose and need, and we just need to then think through what's the most cost-effective approach to doing it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think Andy addressed it adequately earlier, when -- Are we saying what's in place now is effective for enforcement, monitoring, and management? I am not sure that, during the last review of this program, whether that was an issue that was brought up, whether we needed additional or a more effective system, and so I think that, if we can demonstrate it's effective, that's fine, and Andy brought up some very good points, as Mel did too, in terms of maybe a simpler way to go, and I have no idea whether that's possible, but I think it's incumbent then upon us to talk about, probably in the document, whether we have an effective system, now that it's on the table.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. I'm going to suggest a five-minute break, and we can come back and be ready to figure out what we want to do here. We're still in the first part of the document, and we technically have kind of two big chunks here, and one more presentation from Jessica to go on the monitoring of this, but we do need to figure out a path forward, preferably today, and so a five-minute break.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Come on back to the table. All right. We had what I would like to call a short discussion during the break, but we had a discussion during the break that the agency folks are going to look up some of the questions that we were asking, and they might have that ready by tomorrow afternoon. Otherwise, it might be Full Council, but I suggest that we discontinue this discussion on wreckfish at this time, and we'll pick it back up, maybe as soon as tomorrow afternoon or as late as Full Council this week. With that said, I would like to jump into SAFE reports and pass it over to Chip.

DR. COLLIER: If you go to the meeting page, and go into Snapper Grouper, there is a link for the SAFE reports, and these are just draft SAFE reports for right now, and I was hoping to be a little bit further along when it came to this meeting. However, as you see, we have a full agenda, and so I didn't have time to finish all the species in there, but this gives a highlight of what's included.

We do have a summary part of this, and this is meant to be kind of like an executive summary, right in the beginning, and we have it color-coded. For stocks that are doing well, that's going to be a green, a darker green, with a large arrow going up. A fish that's doing not as good is going to have a lighter green, with a smaller arrow, and then this pinkish color means it's a negative trend, and then a larger arrow going down for a species that's really doing poorly, and then we also have a black question-mark.

Hopefully these are a little bit easier to read. The previous version that we had shown to the SSC had smaller icons, and so we enlarged these icons, based on the recommendations, and it's a searchable table, and so, if there's a certain species that you want to see, that should be easy to find, and then we also have the ratings for the different items that we have up top, and those are provided for you, how we came up with the score, or the symbol for it.

What we want to do, in the future, is actually look at these different metrics that we have, the rating metrics, and actually go into stock assessments and see how well they perform. That will give us some information on whether or not we're providing you trends in the fishery that actually mean anything, and hopefully we're going to get to some trends that are meaningful for the species that you're looking at, and then the next figure down is looking at overall landings and discards from 1990 all the way up through 2020.

In red, we have landings, and then, in blue, we have number of releases. Landings are in pounds, and releases are in numbers of fish, and so they're not directly comparable, but what you can see is the trends. The landings, for the most part, since the 1990s, about 1996, they've been fairly stable through time. There's been some highs and some lows. However, the number of releases, over time, have been increasing since the 1990s, and there seems to be a few stanzas in there, and so the lowest time period was from the 1990s, and so the 1996, and then it increased around 1998 or 1999, and it stayed fairly -- Well, it was volatile, but it stayed within a range all the way up through 2012, and then, since 2013, it's been in another range. I just wanted to point that out for you.

Then we also have the top species. We identified the top species for the past five years, and I only have -- It's from 2016 to 2020, to make it comparable between the recreational and the commercial fisheries. We don't have data for the commercial fisheries, or I don't have available data for the commercial fisheries right now, in the ALS dataset.

When you're looking at this, the top one is directed recreational trips, and what that means is, for something like snappers, that is the snappers complex that you have, and the snapper complex includes lane snapper, gray snapper, cubera snapper, and so you can see the top five species along the South Atlantic coast, and this is going to vary a bit from if you were just to extract it from the MRIP database, because we do include Monroe County in our species that we're counting here.

Going down to the next one, part of the summary is looking at the commercial ex-vessel value from 2016 to 2020, and this is a lot more stable than the recreational dataset. The number-one species in the snapper grouper fishery is yellowtail snapper, followed by vermilion snapper, and then tilefish and gray triggerfish, and tilefish is golden tilefish there, and gray triggerfish are either three or four over this time series, and then greater amberjack is five.

Then, once we get into the introduction, that just describes a bit more information of where all the data is coming from, and then you can look at the data by species, and we have information for each of the species, and some of them are data-rich, and some are data-poor, but, just to give you a couple of the highlights, in general, we have the CHTS, the landings combined with CHTS and commercial data, in most of the figures, because that's where we're tracking the ACL. Usually, in a graph to the right, we also have the FES numbers, combined with the commercial landings, in order to provide an understanding of how the scale changed with that change in the estimate of the recreational landings.

We provide the fishing level criteria, overfishing evaluation and overfished evaluation, SSB MSY, optimum yield, and all those values are in there. We also have a table for catch level projections. If there's no projections, we'll just provide a single year there, and then we provide information on upcoming and management changes. Not all species have upcoming management changes, but, if there are any, those are included.

Then, once again, we go back to the overall fishery landings and try to figure out what the trends are doing. The SSC had recommended, for some of the long-lived species, that we go beyond the five-year trend, and that's what we had included in the original document, and so I'm going to be continuing to work on that for some of the long-lived species, and that hasn't been updated.

We also provide the information on releases, again, trying to look at the trends in the number of releases over time, and we provide indices of abundance. Generally, when we're looking at the index of abundance, we're trying to pull it from the recent stock assessment, but we're also pulling information from the trends report that you guys received, and the SSC received, from South Carolina DNR.

We have information on sector trends, and so we break it out by recreational and commercial, where we have recreational landings and commercial landings, and we have economic trends, looking at directed trips for the recreational fishery, and then ex-vessel value for the commercial fishery, and then we also have some of the social trends, and the social trends will include updates

on the fishery performance report as well as information on whether or not a closure has been reached.

That's just a highlight, going through black grouper, and many of the other species are the exact same. Some of the text is probably wrong in there right now, just because I was trying to go as fast as I could to get a draft product to you all, but we will have a final product that we're going to posting on our website before the September meeting, and so all this information will be available to you, and we'll be updating it every two years for the Snapper Grouper FMP, and then we're going to work on getting the SAFE reports for the other fisheries, hopefully next year, and so, if there's any suggestions about any of the information, any additional information, that you would like to include in this, that's easy to get, please let me know.

I'm trying to make this as efficient as possible, trying to get a bunch of information in there at once, but there's other products, like the overview, that is going to have some of the life history information, and I'm just trying to keep these things a little bit separate from each other, but providing you as much information as possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Any questions or comments?

DR. BELCHER: Chip, I just want to thank you again for putting the effort into doing this, because, obviously, it's something that we've been wanting to see for a long time, and it really does mean a lot that you put the effort into it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Carolyn. Anything else? All right. Thank you, Chip. I am going to turn it back to our chairman.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so we will start back up in the morning at 8:30 with the Snapper Grouper Committee. As we said earlier, we are going to go into closed session here in a few minutes, and just, again, folks that are voting members on the council are asked to stay, and everybody else is excused, and we will start back here in the next five minutes, and so 8:30 tomorrow.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 13, 2023.)

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JUNE 14, 2023

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the World Golf Village Renaissance, St. Augustine, Florida, on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get started in the Snapper Grouper Committee, and the first thing we're going to do here is we're going to go back to the status of amendments table

that's in the overview document, and I'm going to turn it over to Mike. He's going to put it up on the screen, and he's going to talk a little bit about the setup of the table, and then we're going to run through that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, Jessica. This is something, I guess, new that SERO staff and council staff are going to be kind of doing moving forward, and, instead of having Rick come up and give a short talk about status of amendments, what we've done is, within the agenda overview, we are including a table now that kind of gives a bit more detail on what the status of each of the recently-submitted amendments, or recently-completed amendments, is, and so you can see that, here, we're got a variety of amendments that have been submitted within the last meeting.

I think we've got five that have been submitted between last meeting and this meeting, and so the one that hasn't been submitted yet is Reg 35, and we are finishing that up, and that should be going out definitely this summer, and so we're finishing up the final reviews for that following this meeting, but, there, you can see kind of a status and what the dates are that we know of at this point, and we will continue to include this and update this as we go through future meetings, but I will pause here, to see if anyone has any questions.

Sorry. Before we go to questions, there is, below it, just kind of a short bit of notes concerning framework amendments and the timing associated with those, as well as plan amendments and the timing associated with those. That way, you can kind of gauge the dates that we don't have, at least with some approximation of what's typical of these processes, and now I can take questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. For Amendment 53, has that not been published for public comment yet?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Rick is coming to the table.

MR. DEVICTOR: That NOA published two days ago, and we sent out a Fishery Bulletin, and that starts that comment period, and then there will be a proposed rule comment period.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I really like this. I think this is great to see it all in one place, and, as things sort of progress and go to kind of like implementation date, I still think that it would be great to keep an overall table somewhere, so that we historically have it, because we find ourselves referencing that a lot, and so, you know, don't let things fall off, and not necessarily in every briefing book, but keep them compiled somewhere, but I really like this view of this a lot.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Me too. I like that idea. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think this is very helpful. For snowy grouper, you have two dates there, and what is the second date of 7/21 of 2023?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The first date is the date the NOA published, and the second date, in parentheses, is when the comments are due, and that's when that comment period ends, from the NOAA Fisheries side.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I understood that there were some comments due on 6/29 of 2023, and do I have something mixed up?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Rick, the comments are due 6/29 for the proposed rule, and is that correct? He's checking.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: While I have the microphone, a couple of things. With gag, Amendment 53, obviously, if the agency approves that amendment, we are looking very carefully at the recreational landings and whether or not the catch limit will have been met for 2023 by the time that goes into place, and so we'll try to notify the council as soon as possible, and others, if we have to close the fishery due to accountability measures this year, and so I just wanted to give you a heads-up on that.

Golden tilefish, we've gotten a lot of calls from the longline industry, and, right now, we're at 99 percent of the quota, and we now have the tilefish amendment, and, once again, if approved and implemented -- Right now, we're hoping that that can go into effect later this year, and I recognize it's not going to be the best fishing conditions, because it will be in the late fall, into early winter, months, but we should be able to authorize and allow an additional quota increase and some additional fishing opportunities for the tail-end of the year, assuming we remain on track with implementation of that rulemaking.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions? Okay. Rick has an answer.

MR. DEVICTOR: That's the proposed rule comment period, and so that's when that ends. That published on May 30, and that ends on June 29, and so what happens is, when you have a plan amendment, you have two comment periods that actually go on, one on the amendment, right, that normally starts first, and then you have the proposed rule that publishes, and so you really have two comment periods for plan amendments going on at the same time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Rick. All right, and so next up we're going to move into the yellowtail snapper amendment, and I believe that Allie is going to come up here.

MS. IBERLE: All right. I want to start, before I move into this document, and we made some last-minute edits to this, and we'll be making sure that a copy of this is distributed and posted, just some last-minute things for the council to consider, making sure that you have the numbers and the projections to maybe make some additional considerations, and so I will start with going over some background.

I'm not going to dig too much into this information right now, but, essentially, we have updated catch levels from the SEDAR 68 interim assessment, or interim analysis, sorry, and so we're trying

to update catch levels and the jurisdictional allocation based on results of that assessment. Some current reg -- The current regs that are in place, just to give you guys a refresher, and it's the same in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and the season runs from August 1 to August 31, and there is a recreational and commercial twelve-inch total minimum size limit, and there is a ten-fish bag limit, and there is currently no trip limit, and so just some background information for you guys there.

Table 1 kind of gives you an overview of the assessment history and some of the kind of major milestones, and so, obviously, the stock status that came out of that most recent assessment was that the stock was neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

In this amendment, we're going to be looking at modifying the stock OFL and ABC and then jurisdictionally allocating that stock ABC between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and then we're going to be looking at the South Atlantic ACL and OY. The Gulf will be setting their regional ACL, and then we'll be looking at sector allocations, and so, because we're changing from MRFSS to incorporating the MRIP-FES recreational estimates, we need to update those allocations as well.

The objectives for this meeting, the Gulf discussed this at their meeting last week, and the South Atlantic is the administrative lead, and so what we want you guys to do is look over some of the actions, and, if we can, and I'm not sure if that's going to be something that we can do, but, if we can, maybe select a preferred or discuss, at least, what the council would maybe select moving forward, and so just kind of considering that first action of jurisdictionally allocating what the South Atlantic prefers, and then that will get taken back to the Gulf, and, again, we need to make a joint decision on this, and so the preferred alternative needs to be agreed upon by both councils.

For some tentative timing, in August, the Gulf will review this again, or I'm sorry, and let me get myself oriented here. Going over this now, kind of we were thinking that we were definitely going to be able to pick preferreds for that first alternative, and I'm not exactly sure that we will be able to do that today, and hopefully yes, and then, in September and October, both councils will review actions and alternatives and then hopefully approve for public hearings. We're hoping to have public hearings in the fall, and then, in December, we'll have South Atlantic final approval and January for Gulf final approval. Table 2 shows you your OFL and ABC in millions of pounds whole weight, and, again, these came out of the SEDAR 64 interim analysis.

The one thing I will note is that we were given calendar years for these levels. Because of the way that the fishing year runs for yellowtail, the IPT discussed this, and you will see this moving forward as 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and so, as we've been labeling this, it will go through, and you will see it as the fishing year and not a calendar year, because that's how the fishing season runs.

We have a pretty extensive purpose and need, just because of the nature of this amendment, and so the purpose of this fishery management plan amendment is to revise the overfishing limit, the acceptable biological catch, the jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils, the South Atlantic annual optimum yield, the South Atlantic and Gulf catch limits, the South Atlantic sector allocations for southeastern yellowtail, based on the results of the SEDAR 64 interim analysis. I felt like that was just the bulleted list of items in one long sentence.

Then the need for this fishery management plan amendment is to update existing catch limits and allocations for yellowtail, to be consistent with the best scientific information available and achieve optimum yield, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic

effects. I will pause here and see if the committee has any comments or edits for the purpose and need.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's back up, and let's go to Bob Lorenz to give us the AP comments, and then Allie can pull up his presentation, and so we just jumped right over that, and we were so excited about yellowtail, and so now back to Bob to talk to us about the AP comments. Sorry about that, Bob.

MR. LORENZ: Nothing wrong with somebody being excited about her job. Thank you, Allie. I'm going to talk about yellowtail too, because what we were asked with the AP was that this amendment was going to modify the catch levels for the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico yellowtail snapper, and then you were going to update the jurisdictional allocation, and so that's what we mainly focused on.

Our AP, at least for the South Atlantic, which there are a number of members from south Florida, where this is important, and understand, for the North Carolina folks and all, they usually sit back and listen, but, as far as anybody wanting to find further information on this, if you really want to know about the commercial fishery, our Vice Chairman, James Paskiewicz, this is his bread-and-butter fish down there, and, in addition, we had a charter captain on our AP, for years, that is now more with owning boats for the recreational fishery, that comments well on that side.

Basically, what came up in the AP discussion was this is very valuable to both those sectors. You know, with the commercial sector, it gets a pretty nice, high price. It's a valuable food fish. For the recreational fishermen, it's great family fishing and tourist fishing, and it's easy to chum them up and get them, from time to time, depending on the -- I know there are certain conditions for that, and so these fish are liked by both sides, and so they're saying, you know, go easy with the South Atlantic on anything towards improvements, because, basically, the folks giving the information from there, down in south Florida and the Keys, to our AP is everything is going pretty well, as far as that goes.

The main thing that came up, and I guess it was presented to us that there are maybe a few more questions, or issues, from some of the folks that fish in the Gulf, but, on our AP, the one thing they were in total agreement for was please prioritize a year-round open season, and it's valuable for the providing of, you know, food for the table on the commercial side, and this fish's value to tourism, as a fairly easy to catch fish and, you know, take home and cook your own type of thing, and so that's what is coming from the AP, is prioritize the year-round open season.

With that, they recommended to go with Action 1, to keep that jurisdictional allocation at 80 percent South Atlantic and 20 percent Gulf of Mexico. Then, for Sub-Action 2, it would be Alternative 5, which keeps the ACL over the OY equal to the lowest acceptable biological catch. In Action 3, they liked Option 1, to retain the current sector allocations, and everybody likes pretty much what there is, and just apply that to the updated ABC agreement, and that came with agreement from both sectors, understanding that, when we vote on this, we may have three that sit out and say, well, you know -- I think that's what came up, and we had maybe three members say, hey, I'm going to abstain on this one, rather than get involved, but, basically, we have I think fourteen people behind this on our AP, to retain the current sector allocations.

The recreational sector does not want to lose any of its allocation, and that was interesting, and I'm sure that's very much expected, what you would expect to hear, but what's kind of fascinating is the way the commercial sector feels. The commercial sector in south Florida, one of their biggest points is they're losing working waterfront, and, apparently, for the commercial operation, this is a little bit dirtier, or stinkier, kind of thing. You chum this fish, et cetera, and so losing their working waterfront is what they figure is one of their biggest enemies for maintaining their fishing, and their livelihood, and providing the product at a reasonable price.

Basically, the group says that, even if they got more allocation in the South Atlantic, they're not sure they could get enough boats, and enough places, to land them and be able to operate enough to make it feasible for them to harvest any large increase in an allocation to them, and so I found that interesting. That concludes what we discussed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob, and I'm sorry we skipped you. Are there any questions for Bob, before we jump back into the document? There are heads shaking no, people shaking their heads no. Back to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: All right. I guess I kind of have the same question, and so are there any -- Apologies, Bob. I'm so sorry for bulldozing right into this, and so are there any questions or edits or comments on the purpose and need, before we kind of launch into the actions? Okay. All right. Jessica, I'm going to throw it you, to kind of give us a little bit of preface for Action 1, and then I will take it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so this was discussed, if you happen to have been at the Gulf Council meeting last week, or if you listened to that, and this was discussed last week, and so now we're going to discuss it over here on this side. It was determined, after the Comprehensive ACL Amendment, that FWC made a coding error in the landings around the Tortugas, and so there were landings around the Tortugas that should have been coded to the South Atlantic side, but they were coded to the Gulf side, and this was figured out a number of years after the passage of this ACL Amendment.

When we discussed it, a number of years ago, around the table, we talked about how, when we came back to yellowtail, we would fix it, and the council was working on a south Florida committee that was looking at giving yellowtail management over to the FWC, and so it was discussed then, and that would have been one ACL, and it's one stock, one biological stock, and so the allocation between the Gulf and the South Atlantic is split between the two councils, and that's why we have a joint amendment with them.

The management didn't go to the FWC, and so that wouldn't have mattered, you know, what the ACL split is. This landings discrepancy wouldn't have mattered, but the landings in question are in the time series, if you look at this Alternative 1, no action, and 1993 to 2008. There were some landings within this time series that were part of the issue.

Here we are raising this again, and we said that we would bring it back up during the appropriate time period, even though that was many years ago, and here we are now, and so a couple of things. I don't know that we could pick preferreds today, and let me also say that there is nothing wrong with the stock assessment, and so the coding error was fixed, and the stock assessment is fine. It doesn't affect the stock assessment itself. It was fixed after it was identified here into the future,

and so the Tortugas landings are now properly split for all species, and so this was not just a yellowtail issue, and black grouper and other species, et cetera.

It is now fixed, but it does affect this original 75/25 split, and so a couple of things. One, the years where the error occurred, the IPT can go back and look at this 75/25 split and figure out if this original percent should have been different in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment, whether it should have been like 80/20 or whatever it should have been, and then the other alternatives that you see on the board here -- Those would need to be fixed relative to this no-action alternative that's really looking at what the original split should have been.

Also, you heard from Bob that the AP is suggesting 80/20, and the Gulf Council talked a little bit about 80/20 as well, and so just straight up selecting 80/20 is another way to fix this problem, but I believe that staff are going to go back and look at some of these years and just see what should the original split have been, and then there would be options that would use that original percentage, and there's this new alternative that Allie has highlighted here of the 80/20 percent split, and that's 80 percent to the South Atlantic and 20 percent to the Gulf, and that's another way to fix it, and so there's multiple ways to look at this.

Unfortunately, we don't have the final percentages ready here, and so I'm not sure that we can select percentages, but I just wanted to bring this up about this coding issue that really affected these average landings in these years between 1993 and 2008. It was some of the later years that were used in this original calculation, and so let me try to answer questions on that.

The Gulf did not select preferreds, and they just discussed this a little bit, and, as Allie mentioned, the South Atlantic is the administrative lead, and so they kicked it back over here. I think that, in the timeline, this might delay the finalization of this amendment, maybe by one meeting each, one South Atlantic meeting and one Gulf Council meeting, and so I know that we want to move faster, or as fast as we can on this, before the assessment is outdated again, because FWRI reran the stock assessment to add some additional years, and you might remember that Dale, who was the Gulf Council rep at the last meeting, mentioned that we want to move as fast as we can, so that the data is not stale again. Any questions about this? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Given this is a joint amendment with the Gulf, would that data be available for the August council meeting for the Gulf, and then come back in September to us?

MS. IBERLE: I think that we can make that work, and, at this point, this issue is affecting Alternative 1, and so, essentially, the method that we used to get to 75/25 used incorrect landings to calculate that formula, and so the other alternative that may cause some pause is Alternative 2, because what you're doing in that alternative is taking those percentages, assuming that they were calculated with landings that didn't have the coding issue, and reapplying it to your new ABC.

We do have some other -- What you will see is that 80/20 -- That is -- Those are percentages that are picked because of how the season projections look, and then the distribution of landings from 2012 to 2021, that alternative, the 84/16, that does not have those issues, and so those are alternatives that could be considered, but I think we can go back and kind of investigate that issue and how it looks with Alternative 1 and 2 by the next meeting. I think that's feasible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I think, given that, before we made preferred selections, we would want that information, and today we could just discuss whether the range of alternatives is appropriate and any changes. The other thing that I will mention, because it came up during the Gulf Council meeting. Like the AP comments, the Gulf Council is very interested in choosing an allocation that doesn't result in closures. Obviously, everyone wants to avoid closures, if possible, and so looking at alternatives that balance that between the Gulf and South Atlantic would be good.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I agree with all of those things that you said, but maybe, based on what we heard from the AP, and based on the limited discussion from the Gulf Council, maybe we can also provide direction to staff to add an alternative here that would do 80 percent/20 percent.

MS. IBERLE: We actually have that alternative mocked-up for you, and so that's what we added into this decision document at the last minute, and so, if you want, I can kind of just start going through it from the top, but we have your ACL and ABC values and season projections for an 80/20, if you want to see it.

Table 3 was the original table suite of alternatives for this amendment, and so, again, we talked, and Alternative 1 is a true no action, and it's non-viable. It applies the current percentages to the current ABC, stock ABC, and so non-viable. The other thing that I will note is that I tried to color-code here, and hopefully it's helpful as you follow through the tiering of this amendment, and so each of these jurisdictional allocations will keep the same color as you move through, so we can kind of keep track of it.

Alternative 2, again, applies those current jurisdictional allocation percentages to your new stock ABC. Alternative 3 is where we had a little bit of an issue, and so we -- The last time this amendment was worked on, they used this formula, and they -- This is what was used to get to the 75/25. They recalculated this and got 81/19. The values in your decision document were the values that, if you applied 81/19 to the updated stock ABC, and so, when you actually recalculated those percentages using the landings that we were provided this time, the percentage actually shifts a little bit, and so that's why we have this here highlighted as no longer correct.

Draft Alternative 4 is something that you have not seen yet. The IPT discussed this, and it was a request from the Gulf to see how that percentage would shake out if you used the distribution of landings for the most recent ten years, and that resulted in a 16 percent Gulf and 84 percent South Atlantic jurisdictional allocation.

For Alternative 3, we went back and recalculated those percentages, and they ended up coming up to 84/16, and so, obviously, we don't want two alternatives that have the same percentages, and, when we were looking at how the 81/19 option functioned, there wasn't projected to be closures for either region, and so we thought that that was a viable alternative. However, the rationale behind it would change, and you wouldn't be using that formula any longer. You would be saying, okay, we want to select 80/20 because it doesn't result in a closure for either sector, and so that's kind of how this is -- How we're flowing through this action, if that makes sense.

Table 4 gives you your actual regional, and so Gulf and South Atlantic, ABC values, and, again, these values are crossed out, and so it's easy to follow, and so this first chunk here is your non-viable, and this is your current levels. Alternative 2 is applying those current percentages to your

updated stock ABC, that 84/16 option, and then I added this kind of question-mark Alternative 3 replacement of 80/20 here, and so you have those stock values.

I am not going to go over our AP feedback, and Bob did a great job, but we have some bullet points, if you want to review them. The other thing is I talked with our colleagues at the Gulf and kind of just summarized what their Reef Fish AP has discussed, and I think the highest priority in the Gulf is going to be that they don't want a closure. The Gulf fishermen like how the fishery is operating now, and there is a question in there that was raised that, since yellowtail snapper is a Florida species, they asked if SRFS can be applied in the future analysis. They don't want to see sector allocations or trip limits, and so that's kind of a very brief overview of the Gulf reef fish feedback.

With that, I will turn it over, and, again, the 80/20, that rationale is separate from the issue of the current percentage allocations, and so, if that's something -- Also, if you want me to flip to the projections, I have those later down in the document, kind of more applicable to each region's ACL, and so we can kind of wait until we get there, and I'll turn it over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so, just to try to explain this a little bit more, and Allie did a great job, and let me just try to reiterate some of the points. The 80/20 split is there, and it's not dependent upon whatever this original allocation percentage should have been, and, once again, this is the allocation between the Gulf and the South Atlantic and not allocation between rec and commercial.

The 80/20 alternative is up there, but, also, what would happen is the Alternative 1, no action, might change to whatever the original percentage should be, and then Alternative 2, this 25/75, is probably not going to remain in the document, because it wasn't the correct initial split, and so this table is going to change, moving forward, as we see this at the future meeting. Are there questions, or concerns, about that? Are we good here? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, just to be clear, the 75/25 is status quo, and so it will remain, but we will clarify what it should have been calculated at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so this table -- Allie is making more good points over here, and so then the table is going to change no matter what, but the Alternative 1, no action, is the 75/25, and then it seems like there would be a couple more alternatives there about maybe what the original split should have been and then if we want to keep that, retain, those original percentages. All right. More questions? All right. At this point, do we think that we have a good range of alternatives here, even though this is not confusing at all? All right. I'm going to pass it back to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: I apologize about all the last-minute edits, but I just wanted to make sure that you guys had as much information as we could bring to you, and so all right. Moving on to Action 2, and so Action 2 is split into two sub-actions, the first one being the South Atlantic ACL and OY, and then the second one is the Gulf.

I've the Gulf's full alternative language, just so I'm not messing anything up, and I'm not going to spend a ton of time on their ACL actions, and, obviously, you know, we're not going to be picking preferreds for their ACL, and so we're going to dig into ours.

We've got a decent suite of alternatives for this, and so Alternative 1 is a no true no action, and it's retaining the current ACL based on the current stock ABC, and so it's non-viable. Alternative 2 would set the ACL and OY equal to the updated South Atlantic ABC, and, again, this is tiering, and so everything is going to be based off what the South Atlantic -- The apportionment of that stock ABC that goes to the South Atlantic.

Alternatives 3 and 4 give you a 10 and 5 percent buffer between the ACL and OY and the updated South Atlantic ABC, and then the last two are kind of different versions of a constant catch. Alternative 5 is the lowest ABC value is put in place, and it's not changed until you guys alter it again, and then Alternative 6 is a true constant catch, and so that F 30 percent SPR at equilibrium, and so both of these alternatives give you one value that doesn't change until modified, and it's just whether or not you're using the lowest ABC value or the true constant catch.

Again, the colors go through the document, and this shows you each jurisdictional allocation for each ACL option, and so, again, the tiering is strong with this one, and so here are your current conditions, and we have all alternatives for Alternative 2, and we didn't put, you know, much for Alternative 1, because it's non-viable, and so you have here are your ACLs and OYs, and then this is what we have added, and so this is based on that 80/20, and so these are your ACLs and OYs, based on that additional option, and so I will hand it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so this is tiering off Action 1, but is everyone okay? These are the typical kind of range of alternatives we have here in this type of action, and is everybody okay with that? All right. I see heads nodding yes. I'm going to pass it back to you.

MS. IBERLE: Okay. All right. Wait. Sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess this is maybe a timing issue, but I did want to ask John Carmichael or John Walter, and so we get into this issue with the lowest ABC, and so we have a declining -- Or lowest ACL, and so we have a declining catch series to get back to biomass at MSY, right, and, if we select that, right, it's more conservative on the frontend, right, and so we're maintaining the biomass at a higher level, presumably, and not overfishing, but, if you calculate it out over a five-year average, we could actually get a higher catch limit, right, and so I thought, when we were getting advice from the SSC at one point, we were going to ask for both this time series of catch levels as well as a multiyear average, and am I mistaken about that?

MR. CARMICHAEL: We have talked quite a bit, at times, about getting these multiyear averages, and I want to think that it might have been something that was clarified more in the ABC Control Rule that we just did, and, Mike, is that -- I see Mike Schmidtke is shaking his head, because that was one of the challenges that we had before, was just having the process and the description described as how that would be done, because we ran into the thing where, if the SSC gave you a series of ABCs, and then you averaged them, the average would be higher than the lowest, and so that created a problem, and so the new ABC Control Rule clarifies that and allows them to give an average over time, without running into that problem. Good point. I see Nik raising his hand over there too, the other guy heavily involved in the ABC Control Rule Amendment.

MR. MEHTA: Good morning. When Shanae, from FWC, gave a presentation for the yellowtail snapper stock assessment, she did show, in a table, with the three-year average and the five-year average and what happens with the landings, and it was coming very close to the OFL, if you went with the five-year and three-year average, and, for this species, they recommended that it would be better to go with a different approach than the average.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, you guys, and so, Bob, maybe this is a question for you, and I think that the AP wanted Alternative 5 here, and can you tell us why, and I'm not sure that I even understand ACL equals lowest updated ABC value, and is that the same thing as constant catch, and are we just selecting the lowest value for the future time series? Okay, and so Allie says yes, but, Bob, do you remember why the AP selected Alternative 5?

MR. LORENZ: Let me take a look at my notes here. I'm not remembering off the top of my head here. Honestly, I'm having difficulty with that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I will lend a hand. If I'm remembering correctly, the AP recommended that level because they wanted a more consistent fishery, and they didn't want the declining catch stream that would be produced if you used just the ABCs as produced, and there was also some recognition, from the yellowtail commercial side especially, that they weren't catching -- In the most recent years, that they weren't catching their ACL at that time, and so they didn't need to take advantage of every fish in those early years, and they would rather be a little bit more conservative, but have that consistent fishery, more so than having the declining catch stream and more ACL in the early years.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mike. Are there other questions on this? All right. I'm going to put it back to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: Sure. All right. That brings us to 2b, and, again, this is the Gulf ACL sub-action, and so I'm not going to spend too, too much time, and I did want to go over what their kind of suite of actions is. They have their alternative language there, but I'm going to use Table 7, and so Alternative 1 would set their ACL at 81 percent of the current ABC. Alternative 2 would set it at 92 percent of the ABC, and then Alternative 3 would set it equal to their ABC.

Table 8 is where I think we might want to take a look, again, just being conscious of those closures. This is the projections for each one of their ACL alternatives, and so, again, we have the 81/19 option crossed out, and, if you want to look at their projections for that 80/20, I added a Table 8a, and so the most important thing, when looking at this table, is that, for all of their alternatives, for all years, the ACL is not projected to be met.

The dates that you see there are if landings are in the upper 95th percentile, and so, if landings are higher than they have been, then the ACL could be met on the dates that are provided, and, again, the season runs August 1 to July 31, and so July 17 is going to be your longest, and, again, that's only if landings are in that 95th percentile, and so there's your projection for that one, and Alternative 2 is no closures, and then, again, you're looking at the upper 95th percentile for their ACL alternatives. Any questions on the Gulf ACL action? I will go ahead and keep on moving then.

This is currently our final action in this amendment, and it revises the South Atlantic sector allocations, or sector annual catch limits, and, right now, we've been keeping it pretty simple. Alternative 1 takes your current percentages and applies them to the updated ACL, and Alternative 2 just recalculates them including those FES recreational estimates, and so it uses that same formula and recalculates your percentages. When we do that recalculation, we get a little bit more over on the recreational side.

The one thing I will say about this action is that, if the council does want to retain the current percentages applied to the updated South Atlantic ACL, that would be Alternative 1, and so this can be for later, but we would add a true no action alternative, so you weren't selecting Alternative 1, but that's very easy, a very easy addition, and not anything to be concerned about, but I did want to note that, and then here are your sector ACLs, and, again, I took out the 81/19 and added in your sector ACLs, based on that 80 percent jurisdictional allocation, and then this is the projections for the South Atlantic.

Our analysts separated it into commercial and recreational for your projections, and, if you wanted to look at that 80/20, we included that, and so Table 13 is if the ACL is set equal to the ABC and the current sector allocations are retained, and so I'll set up the scenario here, because there's a lot going on, and that's this first chunk. The other chunks are the AP's recommendation of the lowest ABC, and then this final chunk is the true constant catch ACL alternative, and so, if you're wanting to look at the season projections for the ACL equal to the ABC in those current sector allocations, it's this top chunk. Again, the ACL is not projected to be met unless landings are in that 95th percentile, and then it coordinates with the date listed in the table, and I will turn it over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I have a couple of questions for you, since you have that table pulled up, and can you scroll down? You said that 2a, Action 2a there, Alternative 5, and so that's the AP's preferred, but that's different than constant catch, and so can you explain what the difference is between those two particular alternatives? I'm not sure that I understand. I mean, I see that the South Atlantic total ACL is different, but what else is different between those two?

MS. IBERLE: The lowest ABC value is just taking that -- So this table here, and it takes the lowest value, and that's just what your ACL is, until it's modified, and the constant catch -- I am looking to Chip, because I feel like I'm going to explain this incorrectly, uses the -- Let me get back down here. It uses the F 30 percent SPR at equilibrium, and so that was provided through the interim analysis, and it's just essentially a different value that's remaining constant.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and then one more question. When you showed us the original table, and I believe it's Table 9, that just has two alternatives in it, when we see this the next time, do you mind adding that additional alternative that would basically retain that percentage with the FES numbers?

MS. IBERLE: Yes. I can do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other questions? All right. Back to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That's about all I had for yellowtail. Again, I'll make sure that this document is available, and sorry about last-minute changes, and I guess my only question would be if the council -- Do we need a formal motion to adopt the 80/20? I am looking to those that

know more than I know. Okay. Then, if the council feels comfortable selecting a preferred, and, if not, we can kind of just move forward, and the IPT can get working on those things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm looking around the table with some faces that are like what are we doing right now, and so I am thinking that, instead of selecting preferreds, we're going to want to look at this the next time, and maybe select the preferreds the next time, even though where we might be going might be this 80/20, which looks like it has no closures, or very few closures, on both the South Atlantic and the Gulf side, and so are we good with not selecting preferreds? Okay. I see heads nodding yes. Mel, did you have a question?

MR. BELL: I was going to say that it just makes sense to me, because I think we're used to having things more finite, in terms of what we're looking at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so I think that that concludes -- Any other questions on yellowtail, before we leave this? All right. Thank you, Allie. Let's take a five-minute break while we switch over into the next species, and so a five-minute break.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going here again, and so one more thing that we're going to look at here, and it is related to yellowtail, but we're not going to be using it to make decisions today, and this is staff have done some work on this decision tool, and is that the best thing to call it? A decision tool on looking at allocations, and so yellowtail is the example in here, and so staff is going to walk through this, show it to you, show you how it works, so that we can hopefully use it in the future, but we are not using it today, because we're not really ready. We're not going to use it today to make decisions on yellowtail, but the example is for yellowtail, and so I'm going to turn it over to Mike, so he can walk us through this.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Jessica, and so just -- I'm going to navigate straight to it from the agenda. That way, you all can see how to access this, but it's also listed in the -- When you bring it up, it looks like this, and, just before we dive in, I do want to just remind the council of what this tool is. This is something that we've been working on for some time, and you all have reviewed it at several stages.

The purpose of this tool is to help you all develop and to organize your rationale for your allocation decisions, and it's not something that is going to spit out magic percentages of allocation that are perfect, and it's more of you go through this process and you then can make your decisions, and it looks like people are signing on, because it's trying to kick me off. Shiny is crashing on me. Shiny has never gotten this much attention on the allocation decision tool, and so bear with me for one second.

Okay, and so, when you actually get into it -- We'll go through some of the different point and show some of the different information that has been added to this tool since the last time you looked at it, and so -- If these are not your decisions, if you don't want to make final decisions in this way today, then that's fine, but this first question, regarding landings and discards, is a question that you all would need to collectively answer of whether future allocations should be based on previous harvests.

Assuming an answer of yes, you would then have information pulled up, and these are what the recent harvests are, from the last few fishing years, and you can see the landings relative to the ACLs for each of the sectors, and then there is a question there asking whether both, only one, or neither sector has met or exceeded the ACLs, or experienced closures due to the ACLs being met in any of the past five fishing years, and what we can see highlighted here are the two years when there was an overage for yellowtail on the commercial side, and so we would say one, and then that's kind of your piece of advice coming out of that, considering potential reallocation in the commercial direction.

However, I do want to point out that, when looking at these landings, these are in, I believe, the MRFSS currency for the recreational side, and so the landing, relative to an ACL that was in place within that currency, but this is not an FES equivalent, and what we've seen for most species is that the recreational landings are higher using the FES currency, and so that kind of dampens any potential reallocation that would be moving to the commercial side, but, if all things were equal, then that's kind of what the advice would be out of that piece of information.

Then, looking next at discard mortality, we have a comparison here of dead discards in each sector relative to the landings, and, for transparency, I included the poundage landings and then the conversion to thousands of fish, and we pulled an average weight from the TIP data information, in order to get that number in thousands of fish, and so you can see that comparison. There are a higher percentage of the removals coming from dead discards in the recreational sector.

However, looking at these, relative to some of our other snapper grouper species, and something in the tens percentages is not nearly as high as some of our other species, and so I'm not sure that that would be a huge portion, relative to what we've seen in other places, and so you would make your decision based on your judgement of those numbers, yes or no, and I'm going to click "no" for now, just as the example, and then you have the piece of information that pops up there for discards.

Similar, stock status, and this is kind of what you've seen last time, and there's not really a whole lot of in-depth information, because we have a stock assessment for that, and the status is not overfished and not overfishing, and so you have that piece of information, and I would point you here, before Hadley goes through the economic and social information, but all these pieces of advice are being gathered in the summary tab, and so you click on the summary once you get through all of those different sections, and so now I will move over to Hadley, for him to talk through the economic, and Christina will do the social section.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you, Mike. We have three economic questions, sort of discussion topics, to work through, and the first one is looking at the relative economic importance to each sector, and, really, here, you're looking at the trends in the relative economic importance, and so, on the left there, you have the relative economic importance to the commercial sector, and, really, this is a comparison of the revenue generated from yellowtail snapper landings compared to total revenue for those vessels.

You can see that yellowtail snapper does make up a noteworthy portion of revenue for those vessels, but, when you sort of fit a trend line through that, there is a declining trend, and then, over to the right, the right graph is looking at the relative economic importance to the recreational sector, and so what this is, this is a comparison of directed trips, and so looking at trips that either targeted

or harvested yellowtail snapper and comparing that to the total directed trips for South-Atlantic-Council-managed species in the region.

What you can see here is you have declining trends for both the commercial and recreational sectors for relative economic importance, and so you have similar trends, would the outcome, or the answer, here, and so, clicking that, the advice, based on this, is to consider maintaining current allocations or basing changes on sector allocations or on other factors.

The next question looks at whether -- It looks at demand for the species itself, and so are there any indications in change in demand, or the trends in demand, for yellowtail snapper, and the top two graphs look at the commercial sector, and so, on the left, you have the trend in price, which is sort of a slightly-upward trend, but then, when you look at landings, commercial landings, on the right, you see a declining trend in landings, and so, really, you know, I think the net outcome here is fairly inconclusive, and so, if the landings are going down, and you see the price going up, it's hard to make inferences there on demand.

Moving down to the next set of graphs, you're looking at demand for yellowtail snapper from the recreational perspective, and, on the left, you have a graph of total directed trips for yellowtail snapper, and it's really flat, slightly downward, but not a huge trend there, and then, on the right, you have the trend in landings for the recreational sector is downward.

Given that outcome, it's really fairly inconclusive here, and so it seems like that would be a similar trend for both sectors, and, again, the suggested advice here is consider maintaining current allocations or basing changes in allocations on other factors, and then the last question here looks at the demand for quota, and, you know, this is a little different here, since we -- As Mike mentioned, for the recreational sector, we are basically in a new set of units, and so the information that's going to be provided to you here incorporates what would be the new ACL, and there are a few assumptions there. We kind of used status quo across-the-board, and so we incorporated the new ACL, with some assumptions that the total ACL would equal the total ABC, and I used the current jurisdictional allocations between the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, and so a 75/25 split there, and so that's some of the basic assumptions within that.

Then application of the current existing sector allocations to that new total ACL for the South Atlantic region, and so the current allocations are 52.56 commercial and 47.44 recreational, and so, if you did that, and you overlaid that over the -- So it's using the new ACL and overlaying that how the fishery has performed over the past five years, and so the graphs in front of you look at the commercial sector, and so, on the left, you have commercial landings, and the dashed line there is what would be the new commercial sector ACL under status quo assumptions across-the-board. The point being there is that you have pretty high utilization, either full, or nearly full, utilization of what would be the new status quo sector ACL for the commercial sector.

The bottom set of graphs does the same thing, and, again, this is looking at landings in FES units, and so we're moving out of MRFSS, and we're using FES units, and so the new currency, if you will, for the new ACL, and so, assuming that the fishery had -- Or the current ACL had been in place under FES units, using status quo assumptions, the recreational sector will be utilizing all, or almost all, of its ACL, and so that kind of gives you an idea of how the fishery, if you use -- How the fishery has performed, and, if you kind of took status quo assumptions across the board, what sort of utilization you would have, at least given fishing activity over the most recent five

years, the kind of take-home point being that both sectors would have fully harvested, or nearly fully harvested, what would be the status quo ACL. Really, the advice there, from a quota demand perspective, would be consider maintaining current allocations or basing changes to allocations on other factors. With that, again, the advice here is being captured in the summary, but I'm going to turn it over to Christina to go over the social questions.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, moving on from economic factors, we're going to talk a little bit about community dependence for the social questions, and so the first question is, you know, among the top-ten counties with the highest proportion of -- In this case, we used landings in the region, and are most of them engaged in commercial, recreational fishing, or both, and, when we're talking about engagement, these are engagement indices prepared by social scientists in the agency, and they're not fishery-specific, and so the counties are being pulled because they have the highest landings, comparatively, along the coast, and then we're looking at whether or not they're highly engaged in commercial fishing or recreational fishing, generally.

Yellowtail is a little bit of a different example, and it's a highly localized fishery, and so you're only seeing five counties here, because we excluded any counties that only landed a thousand pounds or less of yellowtail, and so, looking here, you can see all of these counties have sort of relatively low engagement in commercial and recreational fishing, with the exception of Monroe County, which has both medium engagement in commercial and recreational fishing, and so what this ultimately shows is that counties that are landing a lot of yellowtail snapper are sort of equally engaged in commercial and recreational fishing, and so that would give you the advice to consider either removing sector allocations or allocating equally between the sectors. For yellowtail, they're not exactly equal, but it's very close to equal, and so this is similar to what you've heard from the other trees about maintaining current allocations or basing it on something else.

Then we move into some of the more qualitative questions, like do fishing activities play an important role in the history of fishery communities, and you're going to use information from your fishery performance reports, as well as sort of your own knowledge of the fishery, to answer these questions.

For yellowtail, the fishery performance report was conducted in 2018, which was before this tool was sort of even an idea for council staff, and so we don't have as much information as we hope to have in the future from stakeholders. In addition to the fishery performance reports, if you all will remember, we talked about the public information tool that we were going to develop, similar to the Gulf's Fishermen's Feedback tool, and we have developed that, and you all approved it, and we've been going through the process to get Paperwork Reduction Act approval, and I'm happy to say that we're working through that process with NMFS, and we've been given clearance to go ahead and start using it, and so, while we don't have that information for yellowtail, we are hoping to finally use that tool for the first time this fall, in conjunction with the Snapper Grouper AP meeting.

For yellowtail, there was not a lot in the fishery performance report specific to the history of the fishery, and so we would be looking to you all to provide your own insight into that, but assuming that say, yes, it does play an important role in the history of fishing communities, we move on to talk about does the species play an important role in community cultural tradition, and so this gets at, you know, sort of its current role, whether or not yellowtail is perhaps, you know, an iconic species within communities, and is it something that is used to market to tourists, or that idea that

you guys talked a lot about during the development of this tool, is wanting to have somewhere where you could account for the power of a species in local events and bringing people in, the tourism, and think of, you know, restaurants, with images up on the wall, and is yellowtail something that you're seeing quite a bit?

Assuming the answer to that is yes, then the big question is have changes in the regulatory environment that have affected the role this species plays in communities, and the fishery performance report spoke a little bit to the challenges that yellowtail fishermen are having, particularly in terms of access to infrastructure and housing costs, particularly in the Keys, and the ability to get crew.

Those are not sort of regulatory issues that the council can address, and so, if those are the issues that are affecting the role that species plays in the community, ultimately, it's not something that this council has the ability to affect, and so, if the answer to that is no, then it pops up to tell you to consider allocations that prioritize the economic, biological, or ecosystem needs. With that, I will sort of pull back up the summary, and, as you can see, like Mike said, it has now populated the advice from all of those different trees into one area for you all to look at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: It's kind of a question, maybe for Christina, but the way -- I know setting all this up started years ago, and, lately, it seems we've been -- You know, we're focusing on more of like EEJ stuff, or impacts on particular communities, and does that -- Does this necessarily capture the granularity of information that we might need to address things like that as we move forward, given certain -- You know, the priorities that we seem to have now, and what do you think?

MS. WIEGAND: So this is something that we talked to our Socioeconomic Panel about. Way back, when we originally started to develop this, we did have a set of trees in here that looked at vulnerability indices, to look at how vulnerable these communities were, and there were some concerns that the vulnerability indices are based on census data, and so it's broadly how vulnerable is the City of Miami, and not necessarily how vulnerable are the fishing communities within Miami, and so that's certainly something we could add in. My recommendation would be to sort of pair the vulnerability indices that we have available with some more qualitative information, to try to get at how fishing communities specifically are vulnerable.

MR. BELL: I know that's kind of hard to tease out, but it just seems like that's going to be something we're going to be asked about, or directed, or something, as we move on here.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just to kind of wrap up the discussion of the tool, when we get to the summary page, and it's all filled in, you see a lot of these are saying to consider maintaining the current allocation or, you know, basing it on other factors, and all the other factors are saying to consider maintaining the current allocation, and so I just wanted to point out that this is a case where -- What this is telling you is that, based on these different lines of thinking, thinking in terms of landings, in terms of status, economic aspects, social aspects, this is what your evidence is pointing you to.

It's not going to line up this way every single time, and it depends on what the input information is, but, in this case, it lines up, you know, kind of all together, and it really lines up a bit with what

the AP has suggested as well of maintaining current allocations for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic, and so I just wanted to point that out, that this isn't -- It almost feels like it's not working, because everything is saying the same thing, and it's the information that's going into it, and it is aligning at least with, you know, the perspective of the fishermen as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I see hands going up. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, guys. I think this is great. This is better than I anticipated, and I am excited about it, and I was thinking that, if it had popped out with say shift more allocation to one sector rather than the other, it's not giving you an amount, right, and so then that's where the council's informed judgment can start to come into play, because it's not saying shift -- You know, make it 80/20, or whatever, and I assume then we have conversations about what the appropriate amount of that shift is, and we can use our own more qualitative, or our own informed judgment.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, exactly, and that's kind of what you all had asked for, and not as much something that would tie you to a number, or a percentage, but at least provide a direction of, you know, maybe the baseline is your current allocation, and, if you have any reason to deviate from it, then what directionality should that potentially have, but the directionality would be -- The amount would be determined by you all in your discussions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mike. This is a really cool example, and I agree with Kerry, and it really worked better than I had imagined that it would, and not just because they all lined up, but I just think that the tool seems really useful. Then, moving forward, in the future, is this something that staff would set up for every species, or does the council need to say, hey, as we look at Species X, we want to have an example here in the decision tool, and like is it something that you all would prepare automatically or that we have to ask for?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess I will go ahead and throw something out there, and I don't like speaking for other staff, but my impression was that, when you all direct an amendment to be developed that includes allocation discussions, and so that would be pretty much anything that falls under our allocation review trigger policy, that's when we would populate this, and so that's kind of how that would all tie together, but if there is, you know, some other reason that you would need possibly to consider it outside of an amendment process, then you all could direct us in that way.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. Any other questions or discussion on this? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I just wanted to comment, and the places where the fishermen can tie-up and unload and conduct business are disappearing all along the coast, but it's really bad down in the Keys, and so NOAA has this document about how to improve fisheries, and does NOAA -- I don't know of any other -- Unless Monroe County recognized the problem, but does NOAA have any plans to step in and try to establish some places, up and down the coast, that can be maintained as commercial fishing places?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I guess the answer is, no, nothing that I'm aware of, and I'm not sure what authority we would have to do that, or ability to do that, and, I mean, certainly I recognize

this is a growing issue, and concern, for the commercial industry, but there's no easy answers, given the real estate market and the buying-up of property along the coastline.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Looking at this allocation decision tool here, the state of the commercial industry couldn't be no worse today than it's ever been. The dockage issue, of having to find places to dock, and looking at this landings and discards for the last twenty years, and we've been taking the discards off the top in an assessment, and, when you go to look at the numbers, and it's self-reported, both in MRIP and also in the logbooks, in the red snapper, from 1999, when the two-for-one permits went into effect, until 2022, if you took the commercial 28.07 percent, and you also took it from the commercial side, it has cost -- The dead discards from the recreational industry has cost the commercial industry \$29 million ex-vessel.

In 1999, this council, and not the members around here, and there might have been a few, but I doubt it, decided that we needed to reduce the snapper grouper fleet, and so you reduced it from over 2,500 to a thousand, and it's now less today, probably 535 active permits, and a hundred of the SG 2, the 225, and so we continue to look at this allocation tool, and I know everybody wants the most that they can get, but, until you start some equity in the commercial having to pay for recreational discards -- If you look at Spanish mackerel, you have the commercial side, from 2015 to 2020, it's got 700,000 pounds, and the recreational side has got 3.5 million pounds. When you go to look at the allocation, it's 55/45, and how much have the commercial been paying for the recs discards?

If you go look at black sea bass, you have it at 477,000 pounds, from 1999 to 2021, and you've got the recreational discards are 10.5 million pounds, and you have an allocation split, and it might be off a little bit, but you have an allocation split of 43 recreational and 57 commercial, and, again, the commercial industry, given these thousand people we have left, or less than that with the permits, would love some future things, and, as we're continuing on with EEJ and different scenarios of equality, it's past time for this council to look at something that is fair and equitable of taking dead discards off the top, and, until then, the commercial industry is further demising, and will continue to demise, and it's almost like I asked HMS, and how many boats do you all want left, because this is serious.

You all have decided that the best scientific information available is what you've documented here, through stock assessments and the SSC's approval, and the council's approval, and so, when we look at this allocation tree, you can get the allocation here, and an allocation here, but how about the dead discard allocation tree? Why don't we have one of those? I apologize, or I don't apologize, and it's the fact of the matter is that we need equality, and we're looking at it, and equality would be both sides accounting for their dead discards, and then that would help tune people up to reduce their dead discards, and I'm sure that everyone around here, states included, are looking for that fair and equitable distribution in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, and thank you for that, Dewey. I also wanted to go back to the decision, the economic portion of the decision tool, and, you know, we always seem to get hung up, whenever we're talking about commercial economics, and we get hung up on this ex-vessel

price, which I'm not even sure where you get an accurate ex-vessel price from, because, as a dealer, I don't have to give a price, and I can put zero in, and so I don't know if -- I don't know where these prices actually come from, but NOAA put forth an interesting document this year about the state of U.S. seafood, right, and so they said that the U.S. harvest is ten-billion pounds of seafood, and it's worth \$6.3 billion.

That \$6.3 billion was the ex-vessel price, but what they turned around and said was it generates \$165 billion to the economy, right, and so it's a big driver, and it's not just ex-vessel price, and so I don't think it's fair, when we're going to look at the economics in a decision allocation tool, to not use some type of multiplier, other than just ex-vessel price, and so I would like to see us change this and use the exact same multiplier that NOAA just came out and published. Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: I will try to respond to the price question, the ex-vessel price question, where that comes from, and that information, depending on the species at-hand, either comes from the ACCSP or the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and the origination of it is typically seafood dealers, and so it's the price -- It's the exchange price from essentially the fishermen to the dealer, and so it's dealer originated and then collected by -- Depending on the species, either the ACCSP or the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and so it's reported by seafood dealers.

Then the question about which price, or, if you want to apply an economic multiplier or which price, I don't think -- We're not looking at total values here, and we're looking at trends, and so, if you -- The numbers will change, but the trends should not, and so if you have -- Say it's one-dollar per pound, and you had a multiplier of two, and so the multiplier would be two dollars, and you're still going to have the same trend there, and does that make sense? I know that the total values will shift, but, really, the way the tool is geared, it's geared to look at trends and not necessarily the numerical figures there, and so you'll see a larger numerical figure, but your trend should, in theory, be the same, or very similar, and so hopefully that addresses some of that concern.

MS. THOMPSON: I've been complaining about this ex-vessel mess for twenty years now, and it is -- You know, it's used as a weapon against us, because the recreational industry -- They get to add multipliers and elevate their impact, and so I'm looking at this shark thing that was sent to us last night, and ASA is saying that the anglers have a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy. Well, Tim just said that commercial fishing has a \$165 billion impact, and so that -- You know, that tomato they keep throwing at us, saying that the recreational industry produces way more income than the commercial fishing industry is simply not true, and it's not fair that the commercial fishing industry doesn't get the credit that it deserves by using analyses that have the economic multipliers included.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: John Hadley, I was wondering -- I think, when you were going through your presentation, you mentioned that you used directed trips, and I was wondering if there was a difference between using directed trips versus targeted trips.

MR. HADLEY: There is a difference in -- Absolutely there's a difference. I would have to look at the trends, maybe, but, there again, we're looking at trends, and we're not necessarily looking at the numerical figures themselves, and so the difference across -- We're looking at the trend in

the difference across years, and so I would have to go back and look at the difference in trends for targeted, versus how we were defining directed trips, but the -- It's essentially a different metric, and so, if you use targeted, you're using either Primary 1 or Primary 2 targeted species on a trip.

With directed, we included those two, but we also included trips that harvested yellowtail snapper, and so that is to say trips that only discarded yellowtail snapper, and so they were likely an incidental catch on that trip, and they were thrown back, and those are not included in this tool, and so there is some sort of -- The idea there, in including directed trips, is there is some sort of benefit to the angler. They either were targeting them or those fish ended up in the cooler, so that there was some sort of benefit to the angler on that fishing trip.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy. Well, first Mel, and then Andy.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say that I have always struggled with the same thing that Tim and Laurilee are talking about, in that, when I look at our fisheries in South Carolina, and, for commercial, I use ex-vessel value, because that's what we've got, and that's the easiest data we have, but, of course, then, when we look at the recreational side, we're using something with multipliers and a much larger number, but, you know, in reality, the ex-vessel value -- You're right about the trends, and tracking the trends, but, beyond trends, when you're kind of weighing the value of the fisheries to the overall good of the country and all, and your optimum sustainable yield and all that, it really would be fairer, or helpful, if there were some way of applying the multiplier, to show the true value of the commercial landings, you know, beyond just the ex-vessel value, and we just don't have access ourselves to those data, but, yes, I've always struggled with that.

The other thing about the tracking ex-vessel value, just as a trend, is the ex-vessel value is influenced by a lot of things that are outside the control sometimes of the fishery, and, in other words, let's say a product like shrimp, the ex-vessel value for shrimp at a certain time of the year, and, well, it's very dependent upon what goes into the markets, and, if the markets then -- For any fishery, if the market is being -- I won't say flooded, but if it's being also heavily supplemented by other sources, like imports, foreign imports, or from -- You know, we talk about wild-caught fisheries here, but, if there's also a heavy aquaculture component coming in there, that can influence the overall value that a wild-caught person can get, you know, because the market let's say is flooded, and we've talked about that a little bit recently with what's going on maybe with shrimp.

Even your trend could appear to -- Your trend, in terms of ex-vessel value, could go down, but it's not that they're not trying to catch or catching the product, but it's just they can't get the money for the product, because the particular fishery might be flooded, and so -- But I have always struggled with the same points that they're making, is, you know, how can we kind of give a more fair picture, I guess, in terms of the value of these fisheries, you know, because they're both valuable, but we always -- I guess I'm guilty of this, just from the state perspective, of just being able to fully explain the true value to the state, or to the country, of our commercial fisheries, you know, without some type of multipliers, and I know they're out there.

I mean, you know, like you said, you could use times-two, or I've seen papers and things done, and we've done some of that, but that is -- I think that's what they're getting at, is it just needs to be kind of a fair comparison of, you know, full value and full value, just in terms of our assessing the value of the fisheries, and that's just my point. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I'm having some PTSD right now. This is a discussion that seems to come around at the councils quite frequently, and there's a lot of confusion with regard to how economic data is used or not used for allocation, and the allocation decision tree does not necessarily align one-to-one with how we are then analyzing and evaluating allocations in amendments. As a suggestion, since we have yellowtail snapper kind of on the table, it would be, I think, beneficial, in September maybe, to have just a short discussion around the economics related to allocation decisions and how information from the recreational and commercial sectors essentially is evaluated against one another and that kind of apples-to-apples comparison. I still think there will be some confusion and frustration and questions around that, but it hopefully will provide at least a little more clarity with regard to the economic data and how it's used for allocation decisions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. Kerry and then John and then Laurilee.

MS. MARHEFKA: Andy, I would love that. I mean, I feel like that would be a great educational opportunity for myself, and I don't want to beat a dead horse, but just going back to sort of -- I understand what you're saying about trends, and I agree in that situation, and I just wanted to point out that there are times that -- We're harping on this right now, but, you know, ex-vessel value say of an amberjack and grouper are not the same.

They will have their own individual trends for ex-vessel value, but, when you go to a restaurant in Charleston, you're going to pay the exact same price for both, and so therefore, you know, you're not capturing that in the ex-vessel trend, because it will look like the amberjack ex-vessel trend is always staying the same, but the increase in value is happening after it leaves the boat, and so I really look forward to learning more about the process, and I know this is something we've talked about a lot.

I also think that maybe, again, after we go through the allocation decision tool on a certain species, that's when we can provide our informed judgment to say, hey, you know, I know this looks one way, based on this information, but here is our -- You know, here's what we experience out in the real world, and hopefully have those discussions, and so it's a fascinating topic for me, and I look forward to learning more about it, actually.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. John.

MR. HADLEY: Sure, and I appreciate the earlier comments. A couple of things that I wanted to mention, just to kind of bring where we are right now and sort of where the allocation tool fits in, or at least where it's intended to fit in, is it's very early in the process, and so it's right at the kick-off of an amendment, and, really, the idea here was to try to get what sort of information is readily available that we can show to the council, to start to get an idea of, as Mike mentioned, maybe directionality of allocations, and not necessarily how much to go one way or another, and so, with that being said, we don't really have -- We don't have the time, or we haven't had the time yet, to really dig in and provide a really in-depth analysis.

That comes later on in the amendment process, once the council has specified the actions that are in the amendment, the alternatives, sort of how much you do want to consider reallocating one way or another, and that sort of information is provided to the council, through looking at the potential changes in net value, and net benefit, the changes in net benefits. Those sort of analyses are provided, but just later on in the process, and it's just that information isn't available right at the kick-off.

The other point in the discussion of the various economic impacts of the fishery, from a total perspective, and so looking at the total estimated economic impacts of the fishery, and so moving from value over to impacts, because that was brought up, and that information for the economic impact of the recreational fishery, economic impact of the commercial fishery for each species, is provided in the economic environment section, and so Chapter 3 has that information.

There again, we just don't have it yet, because we don't have that amendment document put together, and so that information is very important, obviously, in the council's decision-making process, but it will come later on, as this amendment is further developed and as the IPT has really had a chance to crunch the numbers, put together the amendment document, and get that information available to the council, and so I just wanted to kind of put that out there.

This is intended to be put in front of the council early in the process, when we don't have the full suite of analyses available just yet, but we do have some information to start to decide the directionality and get the allocations and sort of start that discussion. It's really the kick-off, if you will, and the council will have additional information, certainly, throughout an amendment development process. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, John. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I'm sorry, and my comments weren't like pointed at this yellowtail snapper thing, but it's all about the optics and the perception that the public has of the commercial fishing industry, and, like Kerry said, you know, there's going to be a difference in the ex-vessel value of amberjack versus red snapper, but you go to the restaurant, and they're still really, really expensive.

Well, you know, there's some kind of multiplier that gets applied to the recreational fishing industry, but, you know, there's the same things too, and, you know, like they buy a second house by the coast, so they can go fishing, and that kind of gets counted, and some guy might pay way more for his house than the other house, or they go stay in a hotel, and one guy might stay in the Days Inn, and the other guy might stay in a five-star resort, but there is a multiplier that is applied to the recreational industry, and so, when you look at some of the graphs on the NOAA website, it's got -- You know, it clearly says ex-value price for the commercial industry, and then it's got, on the other side, the recreational dollars that have had a multiplier applied.

Why can't we have a multiplier, some kind of, you know, average multiplier applied to the commercial fishing numbers, so that the comparison between commercial and recreational is comparing apples to apples, because it's really hard to explain to someone, you know, that -- Well, yes, you're looking at that number, but, really, the commercial value of the fish is a lot higher than what you're seeing in that table, and there's not a good comparison, and it's not a fair comparison between the two industries, and so like, maybe with this seafood strategy thing -- I know the comment period is over, but that could be -- That could be another strategy, is for NOAA to start

applying a multiplier to the commercial industry, our fish and our shrimp, so that it has the true impact on the nation's economy, you know, rather than just, oh, here's the ex-vessel price, and it's not being compared the same, and it's really hard to -- It's hard to explain to people, and we have a much higher impact on the nation's economy than what these numbers are showing.

You know, until that is done, it's going to be hard, you know, because the recreational industry looks at their numbers, and then they look at our ex-vessel numbers, and they say, oh, well, we are way more valuable to the nation's economy than the commercial fishing industry is, and, without an apples-to-apples comparison, it's hard to defend that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim and then Dewey.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that, Laurilee, and, John, I understand that we're trying to get at the trend, but I don't want to lose the fact that you're missing the steepness of a trend, and so there's a big difference in something slightly trending upward or slightly trending downward than steeply trending upward or steeply trending downward, and Kerry's example with the amberjack is a perfect example, because the ex-vessel price of amberjack hasn't changed dramatically, because they're such a cheap fish to begin with, but its value has changed dramatically. When grouper became harder and harder to buy, amberjack became more and more expensive at the retail end, at the restaurant level, and so what you're missing is the steepness of a trend. Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: Really quickly, to that point, and I appreciate that, that's basically the other prices and other value that is added down the supply chain, and it's, obviously, an important aspect, and I hear those concerns loud and clear. A couple of -- One comment on that and a suggestion. One is that we -- One of the reasons that we show ex-vessel price is because that's the information that we have, and it's reported by dealers, and we don't have the ex-vessel price as it's sold to say another dealer, or a distributor, and then to a restaurant or seafood market and then to the consumer, and so that's why -- Those, obviously, are very important, real numbers there, and it's just we don't have that information on-hand, and so that's why it isn't incorporated into this tool.

One suggestion, and sort of another comment, is that this will come up, I believe, tomorrow or Friday, but you're going to be -- The council and staff will be developing an allocation review policy that sort of packages this tool, your allocation trigger policy, and sort of the process that you intend to go through to examine allocation, sort of in one place, because those are in bits and pieces, different places, and the idea is to package those in one place, and so, in that discussion, and at the September and December meeting, we can always come back to this question, and it's really the council's tool.

If the council -- If you're saying that this is not a good indication, and we shouldn't be examining this for allocations, we can take that question out, you know, and that's always an option too, if you think that that's, you know, not showing the information that is useful to you for allocation decisions, and so maybe we can have that discussion, either at the September or December meeting, and, if you want to take the question out, we can certainly do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: There is no doubt that the recreational industry is worth more than the commercial industry. You can go buy a \$10 million boat to go catch a sea bass, and I guess you

could say that \$10 million boat is there to catch sea bass, and that's just the fact of the matter, is you can take a couple of boats in Wanchese Harbor and pay for the whole commercial fleet, but Magnuson says that economics alone does not dictate the fishery. If you want to change that, go get Magnuson changed and say who has the most money gets the resource, and that probably don't sound too good though, does it?

When you look at these allocation trees, and you start to do the dollar value, and you start to look at the historical allocation, the fact of the matter is that the dead discards by the recreational industry is part of their catch, and so, actually, when you look at this catch over time, and what the breakdown is, they're landing way more fish, and annual catch limits don't say annual landing limits, and it says annual catch limits, and so, until we look at that, and I'm hoping that we're going to look at that under Other Business, and it will be interesting to see what this council feels like should be done about that into the future, and not starting in the past, but into the future, of looking at the dead discards, and this economic number is one boat, and looking at the other boat, and you don't need a \$10 million boat to catch a sea bass, and one person chooses that, and so that's able to be thrown in by different groups, and I understand that it's perfectly legitimate, and that's the way it works, but that ain't what the law says, as far as fishing.

Until we start looking at that stuff, which is pertinent, and what's left of the commercial industry, this inequality, and injustice, is going to continue on, and hopefully that can be changed, here in the near future, while there is some commercial fishing industries left that are feeding the public. We're not non-profits. We have to produce fish to feed the public for us to make a living, and that's just a simple fact.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Any other comments or questions? John.

DR. WALTER: So one thing that I just wanted to note is I'm actually the Southeast Center representative on the National Seafood Strategy Implementation Team, and so I'm listening with a lot of interest to some of these comments, particularly in being able to obtain the information that can quantify the economic values of fisheries, and that's something which our Social Sciences Research Group is actively trying to do, and so, when we ask for some economic information on data forms, and on logbooks, there's a reason for that, in fact, and that's for us to be able to quantify that information, to be able to bring that information to the table.

It doesn't always get there, and I think the concern about ex-vessel price being the sort of quick and easy and dirty measure of economic value, which certainly doesn't reflect all of the value added to society, but I think, as I think about how to bring some of these concepts back to the National Seafood Strategy, getting better data for what the value of our commercial fisheries are, and being able to demonstrate that value to society, is I think one of the things that could be incorporated in that, and so thanks for bringing that to the table, and, if you've got further things on that, I'm happy to take those comments offline. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey, let's go back to you, and then we'll go over to Tim.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was thinking there's a way for the commercial industry, and I know I would do that, to give you a payout settlement of the dollar value for the species, and not the amount of fish that I caught, given that I'm recording, and you can go look that up in the logbooks, and so it would show a species dollar value of blueline tilefish, of getting paid \$4.50 a pound for

it, and it would show snowy grouper ex-vessel at \$7.25, in my particular fish house, and it would show different things like that, if that would help you.

The logbook part of it is kind of a real cluster, a mess, when you go looking at something, and so I would think that, if there's some way that you could get, up and down the coast, fishermen who are willing to give the dollar value, or the price per pound, of what that fish is worth, and you all can go do the calculations, back-of-the-envelope or further, I would be willing to supply that to you, and I will talk more about it offline.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I don't want to belabor the point, and I think, maybe under Other Business -- Didn't someone bring up that we wanted to talk about discards and how we were doing landings and discards for the SEDAR process, but, if you look at economic numbers, commercially and recreationally, and, when you're looking at recreationally, you're using this overall big number, instead of just an ex-vessel number, or a number per pounds of fish, and so I think it is important to make a distinction, because, when you really look at that -- If you look at recreational economics, and then you look at a fishery like red snapper, where the entire fishery is discards, what you're really saying is there is economic value to dead discards, that recreational fishing is generating a whole lot of money by going out and discarding all the fish, because that's really the only economic engine that is driving red snapper, is the discards, and so, really and truly, you're putting an economic driver, a number, on dead fish. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I think there's a lot of confusion about value versus impacts on the economic side, and I go back to my earlier comment, and I think this would be a good discussion to come back to. I mean, we're going around in circles, at this point, in my view, and I think framing the discussion better, and having directed questions at a future meeting, will be really helpful to address this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Once again, we appreciate the decision tool discussion, and thank you, guys, very much. We look forward to further discussions on the tool and then what's come out of this discussion, as Andy mentioned. I think that we are going to go ahead and move into scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and so first up on that is going to be Bob, with the AP's recommendations, and, if you will just give us a second, we'll get your presentation pulled up.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the Snapper Grouper AP discussion of Amendment 55 and the scamp and yellowmouth grouper, the conversation was mostly -- There was not a lot of hard output from this. This was mostly soft output, and, basically, everybody put their amateur scientist, or environmental activist, hat on, because a lot of the discussion was more, well, what could fishermen do, and it was like there seemed -- Basically, the -- What do I want to say? The pulse of the discussion was more like there's so much against some of these fisheries that it isn't just about fishermen and fishing, and so that's how you're going to see this slide in this presentation go.

As you've all talked about here just in the past conversations, the thing that came up that many are feeling, and, again, this was all opinion, and they have their amateur scientist and environmental activist hats on, was habitat loss, and they feel that, along with recruitment, and they're thought to be the major issue for the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth fishery, and that was brought up in many ways, meaning the thinking that these fish, when they spawn, there is a point when the juveniles come more inshore, and that inshore water quality they feel is affecting this.

It came from all the states, and the input came anywhere from central North Carolina down into the Keys, and one AP member spoke of, you know, there's this loss of the various shallow-water corals in the Keys, and is that having an effect, and water degradation came up, and the pitiful shape of some of the water in the Keys in south Florida, more inshore in some areas, and that came up for discussion, and they talked about that, and brought that up, and the same thing is going on in North Carolina.

I brought up that they feel that the grouper species -- That they're spawning and recruiting in the winter, and planktonic food sources are lacking, and so scientific research into that area, and is that something dependent on the fishery, or is this something else in the environment that is going on, and we also had one member -- Just to always bring it back, we always want to throw red snapper into something, and one of the fishermen did bring up, and this is from up at Hatteras, and this was the third week in April, who theorized, or was pontificating, that is it possible that the red snapper are eating a percentage of the juvenile grouper, and his thing was, in taking out some recreational fishermen, that they were catching a number of red snapper in April, and they were regurgitating five-inch black sea bass, and not grouper, but doggone close. There again, what do you do about that?

The view among the fishermen is that the commercial scamp industry, or fishery, has already been decimated, and, again, when you get into our AP, you often get this -- We often laugh about it, and you get this kind of split between the representatives that are from Georgia north, and then you get down into south Florida, and into the Keys, where the Keys guys and the south Florida guys, people, kind of back off a little bit, because they're mostly into the blacks and the gags, versus the scamp and the yellowmouth, in their shallow-water grouper fishery.

Again, as you keep speaking, they all feel that a contributing factor is a loss of working waterfront, and the sometimes larger boats, in most of their states, because of the distance that people are going for this, and that working waterfront is being constantly loss, and, you know, it came up in with the yellowtail snapper, and it also exists, and this was mentioned, in Monroe County, and it's virtually gone, even to the point of people not wanting kind of the messiness around of commercial fishing, but, even in the other states --

In my own South Carolina and North Carolina, you have where there are -- There were waterfronts, or there were dockage areas, that were able to be utilized for commercial fishermen, and they were able to afford it, and those areas, those facilities, are being sold out, and they are being sold out to condominium complexes and homeowners associations for the purpose of homes and condominiums, not even necessarily near the water, but to have an area so they can launch their boats or have the recreational boats come there, and so, again, a big thought of theirs is whether we do, as far as the commercial fishing goes and the landing of this -- Where do we get to work, and, if we do get an area, can we afford to even be there, if we're allowed to be there, and the pressure of the other people don't want us out there, due to maybe the messiness of our operation.

It was brought up by commercial folks that the commercial catches have decreased, from 130 to 600 pounds per trip, over the years, about twenty years, or more than that, and in the 1980s, to twenty to thirty pounds per day, and even one thing is some of the decrease in catches and all, due to -- You know, we now have, since then, spawning season closures, and North Carolina even had another month, and is this having some effect.

Folks talked about the weather, and this year, particularly, is going to be another one of those tough years, where, you know, we keep getting those backdoor cold fronts, with those north flows that keep producing those eleven to nineteen-foot seas, and the warnings, and so it might not be the greatest year again coming up.

There was talk about consider some of the options for the gags, and these might be useful, and a lot of back and forth, and there was no great agreement among this, with some saying that a trip limit may be needed for the scamp, and, you know, others saying it's kind of more an incidental catch when fishing for the other grouper. The one thing, the only hard recommendation we have, is there is an agreement to retain the spawning season closure, and most agree that, logically, that would work. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. Are there any questions for Bob? Okay. I see heads nodding no. All right. Next up, let's go over to our SSC Chair, Dr. Jeff Buckel, to give us the SSC recommendations, and Allie is going to get that presentation pulled up.

DR. BUCKEL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Allie. Where we are with scamp is, at the SSC, in April, we were provided several projections and timelines from Center staff, and Kyle Shertz in particular, and we thank them for humoring all of our projection requests, and so the conclusion from the first bullet to review additional requested rebuilding projections and timelines is that the Tmax, which, as a reminder, that's the maximum time to rebuild, but Tmax was unable to be determined, because all the long-term scenarios had equal merit, and so we were provided multiple projections with different recruitment scenarios and different probabilities of rebuilding.

The bottom line is that all those are equally possible, and so, if recruitment returns to the long-term average, the scamp population would rebuild within ten years, that that's a possibility. However, if recruitment stays low, then rebuilding will never happen, based on the projections, and just to let you know that these concerns are -- We'll also see those with black sea bass, and so Tmax is unable to be determined.

We were also asked to complete the fishing level recommendations table for you, and so the ABC -- We decided on using Scenario 7, Table 6 from the document that was provided to us by the Center in April of 2023, and that ABC is based on the projection using 75 percent of the F 40 percent, with recent average recruitment, and that's where we are in that low recruitment level, and that's based on the catch level projections working group document that the SSC members worked on, and that is based on work in the primary literature showing that, for ABC setting, that the recent recruitment is the best to use. However, for the OFL, that same workgroup recommended, when you're setting an OFL, that the long-term average recruitment be used, and we used the F 40 percent SPR, with long-term average recruitment, for OFL.

Here is the table with both the OFL recommendation and the ABC recommendation. The ABC recommendation is in the bottom-left, and that's that 75 percent of F 40 percent, and then we asked for multiple projections, and one that we forgot to ask for was the F 40 percent SPR, and so that's being worked on, and it will be provided at a later date, to fill in that lower-left OFL recommendation and ABC for 2025 to 2029.

Before I leave that slide, this is --The OFL is going to be based on this long-term average recruitment, whereas the ABC is going to be based on the recent low recruitment, and so these are going to be very different numbers, compared to what you're seeing for other species, where the ABC is a slight reduction off of the OFL. In this case, when those numbers are filled in for the OFL, they're going to be quite a bit higher, compared to the ABC, in this situation for scamp, because of those different recruitment series being used for OFL versus ABC.

The other bullet we were asked to address was to describe potential methods to develop an ABC for the shallow-water grouper complex that can be developed in the timeline associated with the amendment, and so the SSC had discussion on this and recommended removing the yellowmouth ABC from the shallow-water grouper complex total ABC, retain the MRIP-CHTS units for remaining species in the complex, until the unassessed stocks workgroup convenes to come up with new ABCs, using the MRIP-FES units, and I think that's my last slide, and so I'm happy to answer any questions related to scamp and yellowmouth.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Questions? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Thanks for that, Jeff, and so, when you look at recruitment for the scamp and yellowmouth, and you listen to the comments from the Snapper Grouper AP, it seems that degradation to habitat in the coastal waters and estuaries is a problem, and, when you look at the recruitment for scamp and yellowmouth, it started going down before overfishing occurred, and I don't think we fished them down, and I think that you're just not getting the recruitment that the fishery needs to stay good, and those recruitments started going down, you know, at the same time that we've had these major problems with the Indian River Lagoon estuary, and I don't know how -- You know, what kind of shape the estuaries are in further north, but I would imagine, since it covers a third of the coast of Florida, that the Indian River is a source, and a home, for baby fish.

Do you guys look at that? I kind of feel like we're like fiddling while Rome is burning here, because we're trying to do all these management things, and we're looking at all these numbers and everything, yet the habitat that these fish need continues to degrade, you know, while we're doing this, and so what's the opinion of the SSC on habitat degradation and how it's impacting the biomass and recruitment?

DR. BUCKEL: That's a great question, Laurilee, and there's -- In terms of scamp, that hasn't been discussed by the SSC, the scamp habitat degradation question, and it has been for gag, where the gag juveniles are in the estuary. At least in our area, and I don't know about in Florida, but the scamp juveniles aren't found, to my knowledge, in the North Carolina estuaries, for example, and so that estuary degradation -- A hypothesis wouldn't be an issue there, but others at the table that may know about other regions of the South Atlantic -- I would be happy for them to chime-in, and so that has not been discussed, to get to your question, by the SSC, from the scamp and yellowmouth perspective.

MS. THOMPSON: So whether the scamp are in the North Carolina estuaries -- If they're not, that may not be relevant, you know, because those grouper, those shallow-water grouper, they move south in the wintertime, and they spawn off of the east central Florida coast, and they're spawning out in the Oculina Reef, and then, you know, come May, they start moving north again, back up towards the Carolinas, and so the condition of the estuaries in North Carolina may not be as impactful as the condition of the estuaries in Florida, because they're spawning offshore in east-central Florida, and it makes sense that those babies are going to go into the east Florida estuaries. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Laurilee.

DR. BUCKEL: Thank you. That's certainly something that we could add to the research recommendations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess I would also ask, and what is the status of that? Is it a sub-team, a sub-group, that's looking at the regime shifts, because it seems like what we have here, with this recruitment, is a regime shift, and I'm just trying to figure out, as the council tries to figure out what to do next, how we could consider that in management, because, I mean, there's a statement up there that, if recruitment stays low, then rebuilding will never happen, and so, to me, that says that there's not much that we can do on the fishing side and that what we have here might truly be one of these regime shifts, and so I guess those are my questions.

DR. CURTIS: To that point, Jessica, we formulated a regime shift workgroup at the SSC meeting in April, and that should be convening sometime this summer. They will meet first, and then we'll be discussing not only this concept of regime shifts and this idea of low recruitments, and the Science Center is also working on some of these low-recruitments issues as well, as one of their workgroups, and so the plan is to convene the SSC workgroup, with some input from the Science Center and what they've been discovering, as far as their low-recruitment research, as well, and so stay tuned for that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do we have a timeline on when that work would be completed? Is it six months, or is it a year?

DR. CURTIS: We don't have a timeline for right now, and I guess that's maybe something that's up to the purview of the council, if they want to expedite some of that work from a workgroup, and we can get that ball rolling sooner rather than later.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I've got a list of hands going up here, and I certainly would like for that to be done sooner rather than later, but maybe the rest of the committee can weigh-in. Chester and then Kerry.

MR. BREWER: Just some thoughts that are kicking around in my head, and hopefully I'll be able to express them somewhat intelligently. From what we're seeing here, it looks like the problem with the declines may not be really related to fishing activities, and, in other words, extraction, but rather it's a recruitment and habitat problem. This may have been done, and I just don't know about it, but I would be very curious to know where these different species actually do spawn, and then where do the fry go?

In other words, right now, we're putting in -- In south Florida, we're putting in some fairly massive infrastructure that are designed for spawning activities, and we call it the reef dart program, and it appears -- I mean, we know that they do -- That there is spawning activity that's going on around those structures. I have a question then not only what type of species are aggregating, or growing up, or spawning in those infrastructures, and then where do the fry go? Do the fry take off, and do they go, you know, directly north, or do they migrate in and go into the Indian River Lagoon, and grow up a little bit, and then come out of the lagoon and head north?

Eventually, everything there, pretty much everything, will be headed north, because you can't fight the stream for very long, and so those are issues that I think would be certainly within the purview of the council to take a look at, and maybe spend a little time on, because, if these infrastructures are placed properly, and they're working, that's great. If they need to be moved to shallower water -- Right now, we're putting them in about 450 to 500 feet, and we're doing that so that people can't mess with them. It's too deep to fish, and, if you're going to be diving on them, it's got to be technical diving, and so the whole idea is the fish could be there unmolested, as much as possible.

Anyway, those structures are in federal waters, and so, you know, the feds do have some jurisdiction in this, and, you know, I'm just thinking that we're maybe approaching the problem from the wrong direction, and should we tune up, or see what can be done, to increase potential recruitment, increase potential spawning, give them better areas, and then what areas are these newly-spawned little bitty things -- Where are they going? I would love to know that, I really would, because you've got folks, like associated with Laurilee, that they're spending their life's blood trying to get the Indian River Lagoon straightened out, and, until it gets straightened out, I think you're throwing away a ton, a ton, of habitat that could be very, very useful for some of these species. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Judd.

DR. CURTIS: That's something we could definitely consider with that workgroup as well too, and so, you know, there is a question of what's the source of this recruitment limitation, and, you know, is it a lack of habitat for this kind of post-settlement, or is it these environmental conditions, wind currents and temperatures and things, that's the source of this limitation, and so, either way you slice it, right, there is a recruitment issue, and, what the mechanism of that is, we're not sure yet, and so that's something that we could delve into with the workgroup, for sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. Allie, can you pull up the table with the OFL and ABC recommendations from the SSC, please? Thanks. Okay. We've had this discussion several times already today, and we've had this discussion in the past, and I'm not ready to let it go, and I'm wondering if we could request that we get the OFL and ABC recommendations without the dead discards, and we then take the dead discards off the top proportional to each sector, with this rebuilding plan for scamp, and, I mean, can we not do that? I know that, you know, there's questions about the accuracy of the discards, but they're good enough for the assessments, and why aren't they good enough for management?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see heads nodding from staff that I think it can be done. Go ahead, John, John Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thank you, and I'm glad to see the regime shift working group being started, and I think that that's something that we've been seeing in so many of our stocks, where we've got fairly lengthy declines in recruitment that are definitely concerning. The challenging being, and as I presented in some of the published research that's gone on, that it's actually seeing correlations in recruitment, and so there's something that's probably going on across species, and then we're seeing that some of the recruitment, for a number of our key species, is coming from other areas, and so it's being affected by sources in the Gulf.

The challenge being I'm not sure we're going to get at the mechanisms in the time that we need to make management decisions, and so I think, while it would be nice to be able to find the smoking gun, this council has to make management decisions, and we've got to put management in place, with or without the mechanism, and I think finding those on ramps for providing good advice, when there is uncertainty, is going to be the key, and if that group could be kind of also focused on how do we manage our way through this uncertainty, when we're going to probably be in situations of non-stationarity, going into the future, where, if the environment is changing, we aren't going to necessarily be able to estimate benchmarks that are going to be constant, because, if the environment is changing, that's the definition of a changing benchmark.

We're not, right now, for scamp, sure that we can provide a single rebuilding trajectory, as was noted, because of the fact that it's going to have to make a really strong assumption about when recruitment returns to some sort of average, and so we're going to be working, between now and I think the next SSC meeting, to try to put a path forward for how we could give advice in those situations and give this council useful advice, and so I think that's something we can work with the regime shift working group to flesh out a strategy there, and so I like that we're moving forward on that, but it's unfortunate that we're sort of faced with events that we don't seem to have a lot of control over. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I guess I would just ask -- I would love to see how fast that group can move and still produce a quality product for us. I mean, did you guys have an idea of if we were thinking that group would meet three times, or four times, or six times, and did you all have any ideas like that, and then it would go back to the overall SSC, and then is it iterative, and, I mean, how were you thinking that this would work?

DR. CURTIS: I will speak, I guess, to the catch level projections workgroup, kind of as a model for how we did that, and so, you know, that subgroup met monthly, or every six weeks, just as a group of about five or six SSC members and myself and Chip, and Erik Williams from the Science Center as well, and, after about a six-month period, I think, generated a report that was presented to the full SSC and reviewed, and kind of vetted, and that's how we came up with some of these catch level projections that Jeff stated, or how we developed ABC and OFL recommendations, and so I would assume that would be kind of a similar timeline for this new workgroup for regime shifts and low recruitment, and so, maybe by April of next year, we could have a report that is reviewed at the SSC level.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and then, after it's reviewed by the SSC, then, maybe at the council's June meeting of next year, that you would have some sort of results to present?

DR. CURTIS: I think that's a fair timeline, and, again, you know, as John mentioned, we may not be able to find that mechanism, and that smoking gun, but at least some pathway forward for, you know, how to get good management advice from these low-recruitment scenarios and the problems that we're facing for these particular fisheries.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that discussion. Andy and then Tim.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, so we're certainly in some uncharted territory here, and I think it's great, obviously, that we'll have this regime shift working group. We're going to have to move forward and do something with scamp, obviously, sooner than that. One of the things that I'll be working on is talking with our Office of Sustainable Fisheries in Headquarters, to see if there's any analogous situations of species around the country where they've encountered this issue.

You know, the true challenge is, whether you call it a regime shift, or a change in the reproductive potential of the stock, right, but, in order for us to rebuild this fishery, we need to know what we're rebuilding to, and I'm really concerned about assuming that recruitment is going to come right back up to these high levels that we've seen historically, I think like the rest of you, but, without a determination that there's been some sort of environmental or ecosystem shift, right, we can't just simply go in and change the status determination criteria, and so we'll work on some advice, both on the science end as well as the management end, to provide some clarity, in terms of kind of the obligation of the council in this situation, but I think we will have to decide, at some point, how are we going to rebuild this stock, and what is the rebuilding level that we're going to achieve in the long-term.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I go to the rest of the hands here, I guess I would say that I know that, in one of the last bills that was looking at the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act, there was a definition in there of "depleted", and defining a stock as depleted versus overfishing, and so I know that that ultimately didn't come to pass, but is there a way, and maybe this is a Monica question, but is there a way that the council can define a stock as depleted, as opposed to undergoing overfishing? Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm the lead on this, and so you don't have to go to Monica, but, no, not in the statute right now, and I think it comes down, ultimately, to the question of, you know, like where is that rebuilding target, right, and I have listened to all of the SSC discussions of this, and I have suggested -- I mean, does it require declaring a regime shift, and, you know, that seems to kind of be like waving the wand and saying things are all different now, or is it a matter of just changed productivity in the stock, for whatever reason, right, and analyzing it that way, and, anyway, I won't say anything else now, and some of these things we are going to revisit when we're discussing the amendment, because we have -- You know, as we translate advice into management, we need to clarify some of these things, and we'll revisit them in that context. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I heard something in what you said that maybe what we're rebuilding to is just possibly a different lower level, instead of maybe a historic level, and is that kind of what you're saying?

MR. GRIMES: Well, I am certainly not the one to make that advice, or that determination, but what I was envisioning is, I mean, yes, you would look at, if recruitment is down, and recruitment

has been at these very low levels for a decade or more, right, then why would you, you know, in your long-term projections, expect that it would return to normal, and why would you expect that it would ever rebuild to a higher level that's estimated at a time when recruitment was different, right, or environmental conditions were different, and I think these are all things that there are very competent scientists analyzing, and they will provide you guidance on, but, you know, those were just kind of my thoughts, because I would say the discussion has all focused on regime shift, and your SSC has repeatedly looked at a single publication, and a single approach, for evaluating whether that regime shift has occurred, right, and it seems, to me, given that you have a single source of information for it, that you don't really need to be wedded to that single approach.

I understand it ends up being -- The argument ends up being circular, and, well, it's the only peer-reviewed literature we have, and so we have to follow it, and it's like, well, do you, or does that mean there just isn't a lot of literature out there on it, and maybe you should be looking at other approaches that have yet to rise to the level of, you know, being in the peer-reviewed literature and the stuff to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. That was helpful. Tim and then back to Jeff.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, and I guess this is a question for Jeff, and so, as I see the OFL increasing from 2025 to 2029, but I don't see the ABC recommendations increasing proportionally, and why is that?

DR. BUCKEL: This table doesn't have the OFL on it yet, and so it's just the ABC.

MR. GRINER: It's further down in the document, I guess, or it's in our decision document, I guess.

DR. BUCKEL: Go ahead, Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Well, I think you already answered that in your earlier presentation, in that there would be a large gap between the OFL and the ABC values, because the OFLs were derived using long-term recruitment, whereas the ABCs are short-term recruitment, and there is a big difference.

MR. GRINER: Well, maybe I'm getting confused then, because it says here that the ABC is on the recent low recruitment.

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, the ABC is based on recent low recruitment, and the OFL is based on the long-term average, and that's why there is the large discrepancy.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jeff, did you have --

DR. BUCKEL: I just wanted to remind folks, on the -- To the regime change point, that that was looked at by the Center, as Shep mentioned, and so just to, you know -- That's what I wanted to bring up, that they did look at that, and, at this point, there's no evidence for it, but this working group will look into it more, but, to John's point, at this point, we need to -- We need to protect what spawning stock is out there, in case we do get the conditions for a good recruitment, and so

I just wanted to make that point that others have already made, that we still need to move forward and protect the spawning stock that's out there.

To the point about the calling it depleted or overfished, the SSC did -- That is captured in our notes about that, that the low recruitment has led to the low biomass, and it's not the fishing, and so that point is captured in our SSC notes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Jeff, just off the top of my head, did you all look at the OFL if you were applying the F 40 percent based on current as well, and what's the difference between the two OFL values, because it seems like, in one situation, if you're doing the overfishing under a rosy condition, that the -- That that gap looks like -- You know, if you were setting an ABC, there's more slot for an ABC, but, yet, if the OFL, based on current recruitment, is much lower than that, your potential to be overfishing is still there, because you're just -- You're not dealing with the same currency. One is saying that we're okay, and we're expecting it to rebound, and so we don't want to penalize the OFL, but, at the same time, if recruitment doesn't rebound, there's a good chance that you're going to be overfishing, even though the ABC looks like it's fine relative to the OFL.

DR. BUCKEL: This is -- You know, it's really the long-term versus the short-term perspective, right, and so the long-term perspective -- The folks from the catch levels projection workgroup felt that the OFL is -- In the evidence from the peer-reviewed literature, when you're thinking about the OFL, that's the longer-term perspective, and so that should be that longer-term recruitment, and so it shouldn't be followed up for the short-term recruitment, and so whereas the ABC, right, that's going to be happening over the three to five years, be applied to three to five years, you're not expecting things to jump back up to that long-term average recruitment, but what the literature shows on that is that using the recent recruitment is the best way to move forward for sustainable fisheries.

DR. BELCHER: I still feel like there's a little bit of we're being a little more liberal, because, if there is a regime shift, saying that the OFL is based on when there isn't one kind of puts you at jeopardy, I think, of, again, there's an OFL that is not realized, that we could technically be exceeding, like that ABC relative -- Again, I just -- How close is that ABC to an OFL based on the regime shift of a lower recruitment?

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, and I see your point. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: So, while we're talking about regime shifts, you know, we've got the degradation of coastal waters and the estuaries, but the other maybe as big of a thing that has happened, within the same ten years, is this explosion of the red snapper population, and so, as the successful recruitment and new age classes entering the fishery is going down for multiple species now, only one species is having record abundance, and that's the red snapper, and they just keep getting more and more, and they are eating the other cooccurring reef fish out of house and home, and so, if they're not actually eating the reef fish themselves, they're eating the things that the reef fish eat, and so, in my opinion, you know, one of the best management measures we could use

would be to open up the red snapper fishery and thin out the population and let some people take some fish home.

You wouldn't even have to open it -- You know, for the recs, you could say let's take July and August, and pick those two months, and let them fish, and keep some fish, you know, only on the weekends, during July and August, just to, you know, try to get a handle on reducing the amount of red snapper that are out there, because it's not getting better. It seems like, the more the red snapper increase, the struggle is increasing for the other cooccurring species, and so keeping the red snapper fishery closed, the way we're doing, and having all these, you know, dead discards, it doesn't make sense. We've got to figure out a way to get the red snapper fishery opened back up again, so that some harvesting can happen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I am going to -- Not that Mel can 100 percent address this, but the Science Center might be able to, and is there any current gut content analysis work that's being done on red snapper coming out of MARMAP or any of that, to see if this something that is substantiated or not?

MR. BELL: I can't speak to the details, but I know they've published some stuff, and produced red snapper gut analysis, and I think the predominant -- If I'm remembering correctly, the predominant group of food items was basically shrimp, or crustaceans, I believe, and I can find the paper, but some of it has been done, and I'm not sure the range of where that's been done, or the timeframe, but, yes, they've been looking at red snapper stomachs for a while.

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and I knew there was a rotation on it, but my thought was if there's the potential of that going on, and just because, again, you've got enough fish out there, and they're shifting in diet for what's available and swims into their mouth, and is there a chance that, wherever they are in the rotation, and is that something that's been picked up in the last four to five years or so, and I was just curious if we knew what that rotation was.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Back to kind of what Carolyn was touching on there, Jeff, and so would it be fair to assume then, if the OFL for the year 2025 is at the 88,000 pounds, that, by setting the ABC with the average low recruitment, in 2029, it's still below the 88,000, and so would that be fair to assume, that, even if the OFL was based on average low recruitment, that we would still be under the OFL in 2029?

DR. BUCKEL: I am not sure that I understood. I think what you're saying is, if the OFL is based on the same recruitment time series as the ABC, would the ABC still be under the OFL, and is that what you're --

MR. GRINER: Well, what I'm asking is so the OFL was based on your average long-term recruitment, right, and so, based on that, in the year 2025, your total removals were 88,000 pounds, but, based on the average low recruitment, the ABC for 2029 is only 84,000 pounds, and so, even though you've got two different bases of recruitment for the OFL and the ABC, is it fair to assume

that, in 2029, regardless that you're using two different recruitments, that you're still underneath the OFL, even if the OFL was based on low recruitment?

DR. BUCKEL: I think we would have to see what running that OFL time series with the low recruitment -- It's hard to know, comparing the 2029 ABC with low recruitment to the 2025 OFL with the long-term average recruitment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jeff, did you have more on the question about the gut contents?

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, and just to remind folks that that Ecopath modeling group had looked at some questions related to red snapper impacts, and, at that point, they hadn't seen evidence for red snapper impacts, and I don't remember if they looked at all the serranids, but they did look at some, and they found no evidence for that red snapper hypothesis, but I'm not sure if they looked at scamp in particular, and so that would be something for that group to check out, and I think the recent gut contents, right, that, if they're using something from fifteen or twenty years ago, that updating that would be appropriate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: I would going to ask staff, and I thought -- Didn't we do -- There was a council lunch-and-learn, or one of these presentation-type things, where this was covered, and they showed exactly what Mel Bell said, that it was shrimp and crustaceans, primarily.

DR. COLLIER: There was a seminar series for red snapper, looking at their gut contents, and it was a master's thesis that Kevin Spanik had worked on, and he found that the major diet of red snapper was invertebrates, and, in order to accurately identify those, they needed to do some DNA barcoding. The samples were primarily from up off of North Carolina and South Carolina, and they were hoping to get additional funding to continue the work down into Florida. They're still working on trying to get some of the funding to do that analysis, because the DNA barcoding is a little bit more expensive than just looking at what's available in the guts of the fish, and so they're working on that. They have a grant in for it, and they haven't heard from the grant, but, you know, that's one project that they are working on, and I believe they are taking samples, but they just haven't been able to analyze those samples.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Any more discussion or questions? John.

DR. WALTER: I think there was an Ecopath with Ecosim modeling presentation also that looked at that, and looked at sensitivity to different diet compositions, and I think it showed some minor negative impacts on scamp, is the take-home from what I see, and so it's unlikely to be the smoking gun that would cause this like twelve-year decline in recruitment in scamp, and I think it looked at some of the other serranids as well, but those are probably valuable exercises to be able to scope how big of an impact is this particular event likely to be, or this increasing red snapper population is likely to be, and the take-home that I took from it was that's probably not the smoking gun, and we're probably not at the point where we're going to be able to manage one species to recover another species, either because the data is just not there or the impact is not that great, and there's probably something else going on. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Other questions or comments? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just wanted to double-check, and so, Tim, what you had requested was a run of OFL, and so being the F 40 percent level with the low-recruitment scenario, and is that correct?

MR. GRINER: Well, I don't think that we need to run that, and Carolyn was asking that, and I was just asking if you could -- If it was fair to imply, using the two different runs, that, in 2029, you would still be -- You would not be approaching an overfishing limit in a scenario of low recruitment.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So there was nothing additional requested, and the reason why I was trying to clarify that is because, if you put the low-recruitment scenario in as an OFL, we are going to run into issues, and we still need to -- You know, the council will need to address this anyway, but the low-recruitment scenario never rebuilds, and we need to come up with a rebuilding plan, and how to come up with a rebuilding plan for a stock using a projection that projects it to never rebuild is a hurdle, to say the least.

MR. GRINER: No, that's not what we were -- I think the only thing that we were asking, in addition to what we already have -- I think Kerry was asking for the removals to be -- To not include landings and dead discards, so that we could look at the discards separately.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: So, yes, and I get that it doesn't rebuild in either situation, but the question is what's the shortfall? If the OFL is unattainable, because you're never going to go back to that old recruitment, there's a chance that you're asymptoting for something that you would never realize, because that recruitment is not a real number anymore. The new recruitment would put you lower, and so that how low are you under OFL, as you're trying to rebuild, and is it still potentially increasing, and it could cross that line or not, and that's the only thing that I was thinking about, is that we've raised that ceiling high enough, with a recruitment that is no longer realized, and we're never going to hit it, just because it doesn't exist.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see other folks with their hands up. Come on up to the table.

UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Madam Chair. When Kyle gave his presentation about the stock assessment, he expressly mentioned that the landings and discards could not be separated for this species, and they were so negligible, according to Kyle, the discards, and that's why it's combined. They already tried to tease those out, but they couldn't.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and the question, I think, for me right now is what is our future reference point, and is that more going to be -- Look like more like a dynamic reference point, or could we look at more of a dynamic reference point with the rebuilding, right, and, if we reduce mortality by some amount, to try to achieve at least rebuilding, based on the lower recruitment, right, and then come back and reevaluate this in a number of years, and say did the stock respond, is recruitment kicking up, is it changing, is it remaining at that low level, and we at least would have an indication signal of, obviously, kind of how the fishery is trending and changing, but the

kind of question still becomes whether or not we could change that reference point and then what does that rebuilding scenario look like, given that officially we haven't determined a true regime shift has occurred, or definitely said a regime shift has occurred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more questions or discussion, before we dive into the document? Yes, Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Just a follow-up on what Mel was saying about the gut study contents, and did they study the contents of other fish, or just red snapper, and so, if they looked at other fish, did they confirm that the other fish are also eating the same crustaceans and things like that that the red snapper are eating?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel, Andy has his hand up, and would you like for Andy to respond?

MR. BELL: I was just going to say they've been looking at stomach contents of all kinds of fish for a long time, but I would have to -- I mean, Andy might have a bigger-picture perspective.

MR. STRELCHECK: My memory is a little fuzzy, but I would want to reach out to, I think, the University of Florida and Dave Chagaris. A number of years ago, for the Gulf of Mexico, they ran an Ecopath with Ecosim kind of model, and it was looking at kind of the competitive interactions between a variety of reef fish species. Similar comments were being made, at that time, with regard to red snapper abundance increasing and how was that negatively or positively affecting other species that may compete for the same prey and habitat, and so I don't recall the details and results of that, but maybe we can do some research and share around any sort of manuscripts, or papers, that were produced from that work, and it's not, obviously, directly analogous to the South Atlantic, but it would give some indication of what they saw, in terms of trends based on red snapper population abundance increasing in the Gulf.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: In the Ecopath and Ecosim, John had mentioned that there is a dietary overlap analysis that is done, and it was provided to the council as well, and I think that was through the seminar series, and so I will have to dig that back up and pull out the slide looking at the dietary overlap among different species. We also have a diet expert of red snapper in the room, and it's been a while since she looked at it, but she could probably speak to some of this as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and my master's research was on red snapper diets on Alabama artificial reefs, and that was a long time ago, in the 1990s, but, yes, they were eating primarily crustaceans, and they also ate zooplankton and fish, but the fish -- It wasn't a lot of -- It was kind of medium-sized fish, but they're primarily foraging in sand and mud on their transit in between reefs, and so it wasn't like they're out there taking all the juvenile of other red snapper or other species, and I did not see cannibalism or anything like that, but that was a while ago. Any more discussion on this? All right. I am going to pass it back to Allie, and I think we're going to dive into the document.

MS. IBERLE: Before we do that, I'm going to kind of switch directions a little bit, and I felt like this graphic was appropriate, because I'm going to go over what kind of logistically needs to get done, as far as the shallow-water grouper and scamp, so that we understand the requirements of

this amendment moving forward, and it's kind of been a little bit of a chicken-and-egg situation of creating this new complex, removing yellowmouth from the old complex, and so I'm going to kind of walk through it step-by-step, and then we'll get into the decision document.

All of the species in this dark-blue rectangle are what we consider shallow-water grouper, and so you have the hinds, gag, black, and what the CFR terms as shallow-water grouper -- That term is only attached to, when I think of management-wise, to the spawning season closure, and so, when the CFR is referring to shallow-water grouper, it's only indicating which ones have the applicable spawning season closure, and so that's all of the species that you see here. Red grouper gets an asterisk, because it's a little different, but that's not a road that we're going to go down.

When we think about catch levels though, they're separated into two separate camps, and so you have the hinds, coney, graysby, yellowmouth, and yellowfin, which are under this complex ACL, and that complex also has an AM attached to it, whereas gag, scamp, red grouper, and black grouper have individual ACLs and individual AMs, and so what we're interested in is the species in this complex, and so those species are technically called the other shallow-water grouper, and so that's how we'll be referring to it as we move through Amendment 55.

Our goal, in response to the assessment, which assessed scamp and yellowmouth as one species, is to remove yellowmouth from this complex and then establish a new complex that includes scamp and yellowmouth.

We had a really great question, at the AP, on whether or not we need to account for yellowmouth landings when we're creating this new complex, and the answer to that is no, because the assessment that you were provided gives you catch levels that includes both of those species, and so, going forward, we're thinking of it as scamp yellowmouth and not scamp and yellowmouth. They're kind of getting lumped together.

What I wanted to walk through is essentially the flow chart of what we need to do through Amendment 55, and so your status quo is you have a scamp ACL that is based on recreational estimates from CHTS, and then you have the same thing for that other shallow-water grouper complex, and so our first step is going to be to reorganize that other shallow-water grouper complex and estimate your new scamp yellowmouth complex.

In doing that, you're going to need to modify the other shallow-water grouper ACL, and so you're removing that yellowmouth portion out, and then that also leaves the question of, okay, if you're simply removing the yellowmouth portion, eventually you're going to have to update that shallow-water grouper, other shallow-water grouper, ACL to include FES recreational estimates, and so we've been modernizing, or I guess you could call it modernizing, incorporating FES. For all of these species, it needs to get done for them as well. We have heard some mention of this being done in unassessed stocks, and we'll be looking for some more discussion on when and where this gets done further on.

Step two is essentially we're thinking of the scamp yellowmouth complex as this clean slate. You've established it in step one, and nothing exists at this point, and so we need to establish stock status criteria for this complex, and I have an equilibrium OY question-mark here, and I have some more discussion points that I'm going to look to Shep, when we get to the decision document, and there is kind of two sections in the CFR that discuss OY, and I'm not going to read these verbatim,

but one of them kind of just talks about how OY is a long-term average, and then the second essentially says that an annual OY does suffice, and so we do need to get a little bit of discussion on whether or not equilibrium OY is needed for this new complex.

Then step three will be you will need to establish a rebuilding plan for the new scamp yellowmouth complex, and so the stock status was that scamp is overfished, but not currently experiencing overfishing. As of right now, we do not have an official overfished letter for the stock yet.

You have done steps one through three, and we've completed those things, and so next we need to move to ACLs, and so this is where this other shallow-water grouper complex comes up again, and so, in step one, we just reorganized -- It didn't involve any numbers, and we just took yellowmouth out and established the scamp yellowmouth. Here, we're going to establish ABC, ACL, and annual OY for scamp yellowmouth, but, in step four, we're also going to be removing this yellowmouth portion from the shallow-water grouper ACL, and that will make a little bit more sense when you see the numbers. Then, in step five, we're going to establish allocations and sector ACLs for scamp, and then, finally, we're going to establish commercial and recreational AMs for scamp.

This amendment is slowly becoming very beefy, and, for lack of better terms, and, right now, we don't have actions in here to address management. Right now, I think it would just be a good time to consider whether or not you want to change management for scamp yellowmouth. It's very similar in how yellowmouth -- They have the same regulations, yellowmouth in the complex and scamp out of the complex, and so keep that in mind as we you move forward.

As a review of what we need to do for this new scamp yellowmouth, we need to establish the complex, define the stock status criteria, and then we need to establish, from scratch, the rebuilding plan, catch levels, sector allocations, and those AMs. Then what's needed for these -- I hope that everyone appreciates this long acronym, but the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper is -- Eventually, we will need to update that ACL to include those MRIP-FES estimates, and so kind of a question-mark on where that's going to be done, and we'll need to update, or modify, the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper allocation percentages, right, and so, once you update that ACL, you'll need to think about allocations, and then these last two are optional, and so, while you're doing that, you could update commercial or recreational AMs or any management measures, and so just some things to consider in thinking about what needs to get done, logistically, for this one, and there's a lot of moving parts and steps that need to be completed for this. Any questions, before I move to the decision document?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for the presentation. Are there questions from folks about this? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Actually, no, and it's not a question or a complaint, and I want to say something nice for a change. The quality of the presentations that staff is giving to us is off the charts. When you think back to what we were seeing ten or fifteen years ago, versus this, it's just amazing, and so thank you very much, and you guys are doing an awesome job.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I had a similar thought, and so I will emphasize that point from Laurilee as well. CHTS, versus FES, I mean, I know we have this unassessed stock amendment, but, given that FES is now considered the best scientific information available, and we're pulling out yellowmouth scamp, I would like to, I guess, get some legal advice here as to whether we can proceed with just keeping it in CHTS, and it seems like we would be obligated, since we're changing the complex, at that point to go ahead and update it into FES units, and I don't know, Shep, if you have thoughts.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I was going to bring that up in the context of the decision document, as we walked through that, but, yes, and so what we would be doing, right, with the old complex, or the remaining critters in the complex -- If we left those in, and we left those specified in CHTS units, we're still going to have to do a rulemaking to change those values, right, because what's in the Code of Federal Regulations today is different than it will be afterwards.

That means that a rulemaking to implement catch limits that are based on CHTS. I see that as a huge red flag. We have repeatedly said, not necessarily in the South Atlantic, but this has been an issue with Gulf red snapper, I think for some time, that CHTS is no longer best available scientific information, and we need the FES estimates, and moving forward with a rule is going to force the agency then, or the Secretary, as delegated to the agency, to make a determination about whether any rule to change those, based on CHTS, would be consistent with the best available scientific information, and I don't see that going well for a CHTS-based catch limit. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Chip and then Dewey.

DR. COLLIER: One of the reasons for the staff suggesting to keep it in CHTS units is because these are -- The other shallow-water -- The South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex species are rare-event species, and we do not have a catch stream for that. If we are to use MRIP alone, the FES numbers currently, I think only graysby has one year, since 2000, where it has an acceptable PSE, and so below the 30 percent cutoff.

There is nine years for graysby that have caution, and all the rest are red-flagged, meaning that they should not be used for management, and so we would need a catch stream for these species somehow to aggregate them, and we don't have that catch stream yet, and then the SSC would need to come up with a method to redo the ABC, and they have recommended that it is going to take quite a bit of time in order to do that, and they discussed different methods to develop an ABC for data-limited species, and they said it's going to take a couple of years, and we're under statutory requirements for scamp, correct, and so that's a concern in trying to go that route and having this statutory requirement. That's why staff recommended going with the CHTS units for now, and then, in the unassessed species, which is an upcoming amendment, we would address them at that point.

MR. GRIMES: Well, from my perspective, that's great feedback, and great commentary, and it definitely should be considered in determining what best available scientific information is, but I guess my response would be to encourage council staff, and the council, to work with the agency, or with the Regional Office and the Center, in deciding, right, I mean, whether everyone shares

that view and ultimately how we might put all that information together to support our rationale for determining that, in this instance, for these species, CHTS may well be best available, even though FES numbers exist for them. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy and then Carolyn.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I was going to say something similar to Shep, in that, you know, certainly I think we need to discuss the rationale behind this, and, if there's justification to proceed just with CHTS -- I would say, with what Chip just said, the problems with FES and the PSEs and uncertainty around it, likely they're plaguing the estimates for CHTS as well, right, and so they're just more apparent now to us, given the FES changes and how we're presenting the data and information, and so, with that said, yes, we should talk offline and further discuss this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: So I would also think about, for the amount of time that we've talked about those species that haven't been assessed, and make up less than 10 percent of the catches, is it time to talk about ecosystem-based species and see if there's a way that somehow these other shallow-water groupers can be looked at from that standpoint, which kind of gets to the whole -- Again, the idea of I don't know where they would fall, and what the conversations would be like, but it seems like, if that's really what the problem is, is they're so rarely encountered, then maybe they need to be put into that bin.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Any more questions? I'm sorry. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I had a question for Chip, when he said that seven or nine years -- It was something to the fact that it couldn't be used for management, and I was curious as to why that was that it couldn't be used for management purposes and if it had to do with the PSE evaluation of why it couldn't be used for management, and then I had a question for Shep there.

DR. COLLIER: As MRIP is displaying their information differently now, they are red-flagging some of the PSEs, and so, when a PSE is over 50 percent, that's a red flag, and it's saying that it should not be used for management. If it's between 30 and 50 percent, it's indicating to use that with caution, and then less than 30 percent they're saying that it's -- Those are good numbers to use.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So, basically, if you were over 50 percent, and the agency, or the council, chooses to use it, that would probably be arbitrarily -- The arbitrary use of it, given that a lot of the numbers are over 50 percent, and it's being chosen for management, and how does that -- Is this one particular species, or is this for all species, that that terminology of over 50 percent shouldn't be used for management?

DR. COLLIER: So it depends on how it's being used. So, if you're just using the landings, that should be caution. When it's used in something like a stock assessment, there's a ton of information that's associated with it, and it's not only the landings that are driving things. It is the age structure, and it's the index of abundance, and so that's the other thing to consider, is how you're using this information, and so does that help answer your question?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My next question was for Shep, when he got discussing about the difference between the change of C and F and the landings streams, and is that change in C and F going to also affect the discards, the proportion of dead discards, in the future, given that change, and it's presently red snapper, in the last SEDAR 73 assessment, and what change was that in, C or F, when it was converted?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: You lost me on that, but let me ask -- I wanted to go back to what you were -- To your question to Chip, because I wanted to weigh-in on that, before you ask -- I was just going to add that his point about how you're using the information I would say is critical, right, and let's say, if we're monitoring a catch limit, and the PSE value is over 50 percent, and MRIP's website says you shouldn't use this for management, and there is absolutely nothing else available, and we don't use it, and you go over your catch limit, based on that, I think we're on very, very shaky ground. The legal standard is best available.

If it's the only thing available, it doesn't matter if it's terrible data, and I think, legally, we could be forced, I would say, in the context of litigation -- You couldn't just turn a blind eye to it, but I think, you know, if you're going through the rulemaking process, and you have incorporated that information in some way, you know, the agency, or the Secretary, would have to make a decision, in the end, whether the use of that information in whatever management decisions was consistent with the best available, and now please go back -- C and F, that's CHTS and FES?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I was just doing that short, so I could remember it better, C and F, and so that question is you said -- You were talking about how, going from C and F and the difference in best available and stuff like that, and my question was, and I haven't looked it in depth, but the part about the red snapper and the discards of the recreational industry, and how is that changing from C and F, and with SEDAR 73 all in F and not no C, and the C part.

MR. GRIMES: So, the way I understand it, and Andy and Jack, who I'm sure are way more familiar with this than I am, but I think the issue in the Gulf was that the Gulf wanted to move forward with some actions, right, and take some new actions and set new catch limits, but not deal with some of the other issues, and they wanted to move forward with those catch limits in CHTS units, even though they had old units, and the Gulf is greatly complicated by multiple state surveys and trying to compare, you know, various currencies from different programs, and so it's much more complicated, but the underlying issue, going forward, is could they specify catch limits in CHTS units, when FES units were available, and my understanding is the answer to that was unequivocally no, that FES is considered best available, and there is a robust agency record, over years of considering this and supporting FES, which makes it challenging to use CHTS instead.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So that's the Gulf. On the eastern side, in the Atlantic, is it still that complicated as what you're describing in the Gulf?

MR. GRIMES: Well, you don't have the competing state survey issue across states, and I know Florida still has the state survey, and I'm not the one that is knowledgeable enough in how all this goes to know, but it's the same basic issue with CHTS versus FES that I would say would exist in the Atlantic as well as the Gulf, and I would say it exists everywhere we have recreational catch estimates in CHTS units versus FES.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I misspoke a little bit earlier, when I said it shouldn't be used in management, and it's just highly imprecise values, and then that's for the red, and then, for the yellow, it does say should be used with caution, and so it's not necessarily that they shouldn't be used, but they're just highly imprecise, and it could indicate that the numbers aren't significantly different from zero.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, I have found, in numerous occasions on the council, or not the council, but NOAA's website, that you were correct to begin with, and they shouldn't be used for management, and so I've already seen that, even though it might not be on there today, with this new terminology, and so you were right to begin with, and it's just a further correction of updating it, and so I appreciate that. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. If we can, go ahead, Andy, and then I would like to try to move into the document.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I'm not going to belabor the point much further, but Chip said nicely that, obviously, there is differences in how data can be treated, or used, in an assessment, versus the management aspects of it, right, and there's more information that, obviously, goes into an assessment, and, you know, we have the system of catch limits and accountability measures. In some instances, you know, if there is authority given that the best available science indicates, you know, for whatever reason, that something has changed, right, and we wouldn't necessarily trigger an accountability measure.

In the Gulf of Mexico now, we're going down a path of looking at a recreational fisheries initiative, and we just had discussions about multiyear average catch limits and accountability measures, as well as other mechanisms, right, and so I think there's ways of potentially dealing with some of this uncertainty in the system, especially when you have species that have high PSEs, and I think we probably need to consider that and think about that further as we go forward with a lot of the species we manage, and we're going to encounter these PSE challenges.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think that we're going to go ahead and take a lunchbreak, and I will look to our chair to determine when we should come back, and I think we're still going to take an hour-and-a-half lunchbreak, and, when we come back, we're going to dive into this decision document.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I am going to recommend that we try to be back here for quarter after one. I know that, you know, it does take us a little bit of time, but I know that a lot of us were back here with probably about twenty minutes or so to spare, and so let's see if we can get here for quarter after, and we'll jump in at that point.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going again. We're going to dive into this decision document for Amendment 55, and so one thing to remember, as we're moving through here, and I'm sure Allie is going to get into it, is our ultimate goal here is to approve this for scoping, and so keep that in mind as you see the document. I am going to pass it over to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: Sure, and I will go ahead and get us started, and so I'm not going to spend too much background, and I think we've gone over a lot of the background for scamp and yellowmouth in our previous discussion, and I do just want to highlight the bold sentence there, and so SEDAR 68 is the assessment that this amendment is in response to, and the stock status from that assessment indicated that scamp are overfished and that overfishing is not occurring.

We have a little bit of information in here, including the citation for the literature that discussed the regime shift, and Figure 1 shows you the SSB and F graph from the assessment, and, again, so the objectives for this meeting are going to be -- We already reviewed kind of what needs to happen, with the complex shuffling, and we discussed the SSC's feedback, and now we're just going to go through the actions that are going to be needed, and, again, this is the first time that you guys are seeing this, and so things might change. I don't think that's critical for scoping, and I think we should probably focus on scoping on the grander scale, but we're looking to approve for scoping.

This document is a little bit more fleshed-out than something you would normally be seeing for the first time, because of the amount of actions needed, and that's why we kind of did a little bit more work on the backend ahead of time, and so the tentative timing, and so, if we approve for scoping now, hopefully we can conduct scoping this summer, and then, when you see it again in September, we'll review those scoping comments, finalize some things, and then we can select preferred alternatives, and then we have this scheduled for final approval in September of 2024.

All right, and so you have your ABCs in Table 2, and Table 1 is the SSC's recommended stock determination criteria. I will note that your ABCs, again, are based off of Scenario 7, from that presentation that's linked there from the SSC, and they're based off of 75 percent F 40 percent SPR, and the kind of status quo, for both scamp and the shallow-water grouper complex, is F 40 percent.

Obviously, Table 2 is going to look a little bit different than the SSC report, and I put this document together after -- Before the OFL was kind of in limbo, but, at this point, because we're unsure on T_{min} and T_{max}, the OFL still needs some work from the SSC's end.

We've got a purpose and need drafted here, and so the purpose of this fishery management plan is to remove yellowmouth grouper from the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex and establish a new South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex. For the new complex, we'll establish a rebuilding plan, specify catch levels, sector allocations, and accountability measures, based on the results of SEDAR 68, and the need for this fishery management plan amendment is to rebuild the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex and achieve optimum yield, while minimizing to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects. Before I dive into the actions, any questions or comments on the draft purpose and need?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Anyone? All right. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to mention that it doesn't address the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper, right, those ACLs, if we could work that into it. Your new acronym, OSASWG or whatever.

MS. IBERLE: Essentially, the purpose and need will change if the council decides that they are modifying the other shallow-water grouper complex ACL within this amendment, and so I don't think we're at the point where we would edit that right now, but if that does -- If we move towards that, we can -- The IPT can edit this and bring you back changes.

All right, and so I will go ahead and move into the actions, and so Action 1 will be to reorganize the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex and establish a new South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper. The way I've kind of been conceptualizing this action is that we're just moving the pieces in this action, and we're not dealing with the numbers, and so Table 3 kind of walks you through your options, or what we consider would be viable options at this point, and so the status quo is that you have scamp, and scamp has its own ACL and AMs, and then you have the other shallow-water grouper complex, which has the species that are listed there.

Option 2 would be the scamp and yellow-mouth grouper complex, obviously establishing that complex, and then the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex -- Just all of those species without yellowmouth, and so a pretty simple action there, and, again, it's just moving the complexes around.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 give you an idea of the status quo for both scamp and yellowmouth grouper, as far as catch levels go, and then Table 6 shows you regulations, and I apologize, and there was a copy-and-paste error there, and there is only thirty days in April, and so, earlier, I mentioned that the management measures for scamp and yellowmouth grouper are the same, and you can see that here, and so both of them are subject to that spawning season closure. Both of them have a twenty-inch total length minimum size, and then they both have no trip limit and a three-fish-per-person aggregate bag limit, and so that's just some background on those complexes, and that's kind of where I will leave that one for right now. I guess is that an appropriate suite of options for this action, and then any other discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What are the thoughts of the committee here on this? Is this suite of actions here good on this one? It seems like people are nodding yes.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That brings us to Action 2, and this will define the equilibrium optimum yield, maximum sustainable yield, minimum stock size threshold, and maximum fishing mortality threshold for the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth complex, and so this is where you're going to start to see, because this complex is brand new, all of your no action alternatives are going to be none, because nothing exists for the complex, and so it's a little different than you're used to seeing, and you're used to seeing something there for the status quo.

How I set up Table 7 is it just goes by each criteria, and so we have equilibrium OY in the first column, MSY, MSST, and MFMT. I think a little more discussion, maybe Shep-led discussion, on equilibrium OY is needed, and the IPT wanted the council to have discussion before providing a suite of options for this one. As far as MSY goes, obviously, we have no MSY, and the current

MSY proxy for scamp, and for South Atlantic shallow-water groupers, is F 30 percent SPR. However, in March, the council received a letter recommending the MSY proxy be F 40 percent SPR, and so that's included there.

Then, for MSST, we have Option 2, which is the current status quo for scamp and yellowmouth, and that's SSB MSY one minus M, or 0.5, whichever is greater, and then Option 3, which came out of the assessment, which was 75 percent SSB MSY. Then finally, MFMT, and, again, Option 2 is the status quo for scamp and the other shallow-water groupers and then that recommendation of 40 percent. I will stop here for this one, and, again, any additional options, and maybe some discussion on the equilibrium OY, and then any edits or changes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will address the equilibrium OY issue, and so the National Standard Guidelines define optimum yield as a long-term average. It's a long-term average catch, and it's actually the ultimate target of your management in the Magnuson Act. You're supposed to achieve optimum yield, some level below, or not to exceed, maximum sustainable yield, but, despite the fact that it is described as a long-term average, the guidelines also state that a council can choose to specify optimum yield as an annual value, right, and the council has done that associated most clearly with annual catch limits, at least in our management.

In all the instances where we've specified annual catch limits, and the council has decided to make that the annual OY, it's for a stock. In the plan that you already have, a long-term OY, or what we're calling, in this context, equilibrium OY, and so you actually have both.

I would say the guidelines are not clear. The language of the guidelines are not clear that both are required, that they could easily be read to be one or the other, but there is some internal disagreement about what was intended and what's required with it, but, either way, optimum yield is a long-term average, the long-term average yield, and I strongly advise that, in specifying that, even if you want to do an annual OY as well, that you put it in as a long-term average.

If you get away from the long-term average spot, and you're just putting it in as your catch limit every year, as I just mentioned, the statute requires that optimum yield is really your ultimate target, and it says that you shall achieve optimum yield. If you only specify it annually, and you start not achieving your annual catch limits, then you're opening yourself up to the argument that you're not achieving your statutory harvest targets, right, and that's probably the most compelling reason to make sure that you specify it as a long-term average, as intended in the guidelines, or as defined in the guidelines. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, to some of Shep's points there, are we wanting to consider an annual OY, because, if so, then that's something that the IPT can work on.

MS. IBERLE: I guess the question would be would you like to direct the IPT to give you maybe one or two options for an equilibrium OY? Would that be preferable? Again, these wouldn't be set in stone, and so you would see these at the next meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. It looks like people are nodding yes. Are we good with that? Okay. All right.

MS. IBERLE: If I may, a question for Shep, and I guess then what would that mean for your annual OY? Would we still be setting an annual OY?

MR. GRIMES: I would say that's a decision for the council. They have chosen to do that, and we've been doing that when we set the ACLs, and, really, we should take the opportunity, in doing this, to connect up how optimum yield relates to annual catch limit, and, in my opinion, get away from the annual OY concept, and I don't think that it adds anything really, and then we just explain, you know, the connection between the long-term OY and annual catch limits that are specified each year, or in groups of years. Thank you.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That brings us to Action 3, and that's to establish a rebuilding plan for the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper. Right now, we kind of -- We don't have that many fleshed-out options, because, obviously, we need some more guidance on both T_{min} and T_{max}, and, again, the bullets in the discussion just kind of rehash what we've already discussed, that rebuilding in ten years is possible, but it's based on long-term average recruitment, which is higher than recent recruitment and involves the assumption that recruitment will recover to previous levels. The SSC noted that T_{max} cannot be determined, because of all the long-term scenarios have equal merit.

I will also note that the ABC values provided through Scenario 7, and so that was the basis for the ABC values, do result in a zero percent chance of rebuilding, and so I guess this will be the point for additional discussion about rebuilding timeframes, and so I will turn it over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you once again, Madam Chair. This is a little confusing, and it's, you know, different than a lot of what we've seen, but the way it was presented to the SSC, and the way it's written up in this document, is that T_{min} is less than ten years, but T_{max} is unknown, isn't consistent with the guidelines and the statute, right, and the way it's set up is, if you can rebuild the stock within ten years, then ten years is all you get, right, and only once you're over ten years do you have questions about different approaches in calculating what T_{max} is.

If we can calculate T_{min}, we being the royal we, and it's under ten years, then T_{max} is ten years, right, and so there's no calculation involved in it. If we're going back and looking at T_{min} and saying that our calculation -- Well, let me back up. We seem to have been saying that, because of uncertainty, and, as I understand it, primarily uncertainty in projecting recruitment, but, because of that uncertainty, we couldn't project a timeline, you know, for overall rebuilding, right, and then -- But we didn't have that same problem when we're selecting the ABC, right, and now it just seems that what -- There is some disconnect in there, right, and, I mean, we can -- How can we use recruitment and model it and determine that, yes, it's possible to rebuild within ten years, yet we can't use that same recruitment out past ten years to determine how long T_{max} really is?

Anyway, this is not the kind of thing that we're going to resolve at this meeting, and I think, in terms of a council decision, it's moving forward, and we within the agency, with NMFS and the Science Center, are going to get together and look at what's been done with this assessment, and we'll work with council staff, I think, and it may end up having to go back before the SSC, if

there's any change in guidance, but I think that's -- I think that's where I would land on it. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Chip and then John Walter.

DR. COLLIER: I just want to point out there were two different T_{min} values that were developed, depending on the recruitment scenario that was there, and both of them were set at F equals zero, and one of them showed that it could rebuild in ten years, and one of them showed that it could not rebuild in ten years, and they had no scientific guidance on whether or not -- On which of those scenarios was more likely to occur, and so, to me, those are the exact same T_{min} runs, but it's just your recruitment scenario, which one is more likely to occur, and they could not provide -- The Science Center indicated that they could not provide any information on which one is more likely to occur.

When they setting the ABCs, they feel a little bit more comfortable in going through and setting that for five years. If you look at some of the literature that has come out, and you look at the projections workgroup that came out, and they looked at all kinds of papers, and they went through several different iterations on what to come up, and they landed on the last five years, or recent recruitment, being most resembling what's going to be happening over the next five years, and that's why they feel comfortable doing the ABC, but it's a struggle doing the OFL and figuring out the rebuilding timeframe, and, Jeff, if I'm misspeaking, just let me know, and so I just wanted to clarify that a little bit, and hopefully that helps.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep, can I go to John first, since he had his hand up? Okay. John and then Shep.

DR. WALTER: I was going to agree with Shep, that I think that the logic for not being able to provide a T_{max} is probably the same logic that we would say that maybe we want to reevaluate whether the T_{min} is reliable, because the T_{min} of ten years is based on assuming that recruitment goes up to the long-term average, and I think that's something that is probably an assumption that's a pretty strong one, and it's certainly not one that we want to make for our ABC advice, which is using recent recruitment, and so I think maybe that one might need to be, as we work this through the working group, and maybe as the SSC takes another -- As we give some guidance to the SSC for what might be an effective management way forward, and we might look at both the T_{min} -- Whether the T_{min} is reliable and that we would stand behind it. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's great input from both of them, and, just to respond to Chip directly, that's great, because it sounds like we may not really have, at this point, at least not a solid identification of what T_{min} is, but, you know, me being the lawyer, and looking at the written record that I'm going to have to put in front of a judge, if that's where we land, it looks like ten years now, and so, just based on the discussion at the meeting, and going forward, we'll work on cleaning up our written record for it and deciding what our most defensible T_{min} position is. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I guess, in thinking about what goes out in the scoping document, or how it's explained, what are you going to put in there, and how are you going to explain that?

MS. IBERLE: That's a very good question. I guess the way I had thought about it was that we could use scoping less to go through this amendment action-by-action and more to gather input from the fishermen of how -- What they're seeing on the water, how the fishery has been operating, and along that line, more of a higher-level of feedback, versus action-by-action, and, I mean, I don't know that the status criteria would be something that would be something that we would, you know, walk through each one of them with the public, and so I think maybe just a general feedback would be better, but, Chip, I don't know if you have anything to add to that.

DR. COLLIER: No, and I was going to say the exact same thing, to basically keep this at a high level and just indicate to the public that there is a problem with the scamp yellowmouth stock, that catch levels are going to be changing, and let them know the timeframe that it's going to occur, and if they have any recommendations on how we should manage the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I see more hands going up. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was going to make two points, and, first, it's scoping, and so know that you certainly don't need to have a settled position on it, but, if asked, and if you get into it, I would just characterize that it's undetermined at this point. If T_{min} comes out to be less than ten years, then we have to rebuild within ten years, based on the statutory requirements, and explain it to people that way and get their input. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on this one? Okay.

MS. IBERLE: All right. The next three actions, or four actions, are going to be more of a kind of general overview, and we can't really make any definitive conclusions from these actions, because we'll be waiting on the OFL and the ABC, and so these should go fairly quickly, and it's essentially just looking at the suite of options and seeing if it's appropriate moving forward. Thinking about scoping, if you want to get any specific -- Send any specific questions to scoping, and so Action 4 establishes the acceptable biological catch, the ACL, and OY for South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper and revise the total ACL, OY, and sector annual catch limits for the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex.

That was a little bit of a mouthful, and so, in this, we've got two sub-actions, and so, if you think back to that slideshow, we were at like step four, and that's when we dealt with the ACLs, and so we're establishing them for scamp and yellowmouth, and then we're removing yellowmouth, and this is where we're doing it with the numbers for that other shallow-water grouper complex, and so 4a deals with scamp yellowmouth, and so, again, in Option 1, we have no ACL and OY. Option 2 would set your ACL and OY equal to ABC, and then, right now, we just have one additional option of setting a 10 percent buffer.

Sub-Action 4b deals with the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper, and so, for this, we would be revising the ACL and OY. I will note, if you're looking at Table 10, we would not be modifying -- If we did not switch the ACL for this complex from CHTS to FES units in this amendment, the way it's currently laid out, we would not be adjusting the ABC for the other shallow-water grouper complex, and it would be essentially a simple subtraction of the yellowmouth portion of the complex ACL.

Option 1, that current complex ACL is 104,190 pounds, and the yellowmouth portion is right around 4,000 pounds, and so you're about 100,000 pounds and change for the ACL for the complex, if you're doing it through a simple subtraction. Here, we would be just retaining the sector allocation percentages and just redistributing the 101,151-pound lowered ACL, and we would just be redistributing that between the sectors based on the current percentages.

In your discussion section, we have given you the landings for both scamp and the other shallow-water groupers and their ACL usage, and Figure 2 shows you commercial scamp, commercial other shallow-water grouper, including yellowmouth, recreational scamp, and then recreational shallow-water grouper, and then, if you're wanting to look at the breakdown of the current other shallow-water grouper complex ACL, that's Figure 3, and so you can kind of see how that 104,190 pounds whole weight is divvied up between all the species in the complex, and so yellowmouth grouper is about 4 percent of that total, and, currently, the ACL is equal to the ABC for this complex as well.

Again, so I went through kind of what happens when you reorganize the complex in that slideshow, and so I'm not going to go through all these bullets, but it's essentially the same information and so we have that issue of whether or not we are adjusting the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex ABC, or ACL, now, within this amendment, and then, if you do want to do that, then this action will change slightly, and it will just be -- Instead of that simple subtraction, we would be modifying that, and we would need ABCs from the SSC, and so, with that, I will turn it over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Are there questions or comments on this one? Okay. I see hands going up. Kerry and then Tim and then Carolyn.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, maybe this is what you were going to say, and I'm not sure, and I'm going back to Carolyn's comment from earlier, before lunch, about breaking the OSASWG out into its own -- To ecosystem component species, and would this be vehicle to do that? If this was the vehicle to do that, would we then need to set an ACL?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra is coming to the -- While we're debating that up here, Myra is coming to the table.

MS. BROUWER: Just a reminder that there were, I believe, nine snapper grouper species that the Scientific and Statistical Committee had already recommended be considered for ecosystem component species, and this was a couple of years ago, and we went through the process of gathering information, and we created I think some kind of Shiny tool to go through it, and, at the time, the council's guidance was to kind of hold off on that and include that action for reconsideration during the unassessed species amendment, which is part of your workplan, and so the plan is to already reconsider designation of ecosystem component species, and I believe a couple of the nine may have been shallow-water grouper species, and so just a reminder about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mike has something to offer here, too.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just adding on that the two species that were part of the OSASWG complex were yellowfin grouper and coney.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. So it's up to the committee if you want to try to work on those actions, and so think about that, and we'll come back. Tim and then Carolyn.

MR. GRINER: Not getting into the OSASWG, but are we -- Can we -- Are we not going to have actions here that look at -- Regardless of that, look at the allocations between sectors?

MS. IBERLE: For scamp and yellowmouth?

MR. GRINER: For scamp.

MS. IBERLE: So there is an action that would establish sector allocations for scamp and yellowmouth, and so, because we're creating this new complex, and we did that in Action 1, and the catch levels are combined, and so, essentially, the catch levels that we have to make the ACL and your sector allocations are for scamp yellowmouth, and so it's a good point though, because, if you feel that the scamp allocations are applicable to this new complex, then that's, you know, an option that you could consider, and so it's not that we're completely disregarding scamp, but it's just we have to go through the formality of creating a new complex, but, yes, we do have an action in there.

MR. GRINER: So, either way you look at it, are we not going to have options to address changing the allocations, whether it's scamp, or yellowmouth and scamp, or whatever the combination is?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and so there will be an action for that, and, if I remember correctly, and there's a lot of actions in this one, the scamp percentages are an option for that, and so -- This is where the chicken-and-the-egg comes in, and it's kind of confusing, for scamp yellowmouth, scamp, and the other shallow water groupers.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Over to Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry did basically say a part of what I was thinking, but I guess that's the question then, and looking to Mike. If two of those species are on the unassessed, I guess the question becomes what about the other species, because I still think it's worth a discussion, since we're worried about the CHTS and FES aspects of that, you know, and I guess that's the timeline of that, because, if we're still going to have to do something here, right, somewhat, because you're taking things out, and I'm kind of in that same thing, and I guess the question is does it serve us better to have those discussions relative to it here, because it's shallow-water grouper, versus waiting for the unassessed stocks, which don't necessarily right now encompass more than two of those?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Lots of people wanting to chime-in. Let's go to Mike, and then we'll go back around.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, kind of pointing out those two species, those are the ones that you've already looked at, and so, if you'll remember, going back maybe like two or three years, and it was around the time that I started at the council, but we had kind of a Shiny app where we went through a group of nine snapper grouper species, and they were being evaluated, at the time, for whether they would become ecosystem component species.

Of those nine, two of them were in the other shallow-water grouper complex, and those were the two that I mentioned. Now, those nine aren't the only stocks that are going to be in the unassessed stocks amendment, because we're going to have to go through a group of unassessed stocks, and we would probably -- Given the timing and the statutory deadline associated with scamp, we would probably need to prioritize the other shallow-water grouper complex to be part of that unassessed stocks amendment, and you will see this when we get to Friday.

Right now, you're -- Kind of your timeline for these different amendments, and the unassessed stocks amendment is scheduled to get underway later this year, and so it could run pretty closely with this, with the scamp yellowmouth amendment, and that might be one where there would be a cleaner look at potential ecosystem component species, along with setting ABCs for the unassessed snapper grouper stocks, and that might be beyond the other shallow-water groupers, but it would certainly include those, if that helps.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Maybe that was my bad, thinking that -- My concern was us doing all this work to set OFLs and ABCs, and potentially even have to have a discussion about allocation, for these species that we were going to rename as ecosystem components, and like to do all that work, but I wasn't aware that, as ecosystem component, each -- Whatever complex we form within that would still need to have an ABC anyway, and so we would just be -- We're doing that work no matter what, and does that make sense?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I think one way that you can think about it is, within the unassessed stocks amendment, there could be a group of snapper grouper stocks that have not been assessed for which you will need to develop ABCs, and some of these will -- Many of these will likely be in complexes, because other shallow-water grouper isn't the only unassessed complex within snapper grouper, but you could also, in that amendment, probably pull out some of those species, as you see fit, if some of them are ecosystem component species, and you could say, in that amendment, this group is going to be the ecosystem component species, and they don't -- Ecosystem component species don't need an ABC, and so we're going to pull those out, and then we're going to have an ABC for, you know, this group of species, or ABCs for this group of species, that still needs them and is need of that form of management.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I feel like I'm missing something, because I can't -- It seems like you all are saying don't do that now, because it's going to slow down this amendment, and it's hard for me to -- I mean, I see the timeline there, but I just can't figure out why we wouldn't do it in this document.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Because, right now, the SSC has not -- The SSC, and we're going to be collaborating with the Science Center in doing this, but there hasn't been an ABC developed for the other shallow-water grouper complex, and that's one of the things kind of coming out of the ABC Control Rule Amendment, was that the SSC would be tasked with going through the unassessed stocks and developing ABCs, based on the FES recreational metrics, and we don't have that right now, and that will be developed as we move along.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to go to Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I think where it's kind of getting hung up is the fact that we're acknowledging, based on Chip's comments earlier, that some of these species -- That the estimates are highly uncertain, and so the question becomes, rather than go through and try to set an ABC for something that we can't set an ABC for, wouldn't now be the time, in looking at these remaining species, to say ecosystem or not, and, if we think they need to be considered, they're still going into your pot, or however we make the timing of this, but, somehow in there, I think that's the thing, is that we need to be able to make that call, because, otherwise, we're waiting to find out that there's -- We're looking at ABCs for species that we may not set ABCs for.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was trying to -- We were having a side discussion here. Andy, I saw you had your hand up, and is it on this topic?

MR. STRELCHECK: I think so. I guess a couple of thoughts, and I am kind of more along your line of thinking, Jessica, and I feel like we should just deal with this now, right, and, if we're opening the books on it, and we're modifying the complex, let's go ahead and make the changes. I recognize that we still need to figure out the currency, CHTS versus FES, but then, if we're going to pull stocks out of the complex, including yellowmouth, right, I think, at minimum, we need to discuss the allocation and make a determination that we're not going to change it, and make sure that's reflected in the document, and justify it, right, and I think we can't just automatically, right now, say we're not going to consider reallocation, or any sort of change of the allocation, because pulling out species could modify that allocation, and so we need to at least take a look at that, first and foremost, and then make some decisions about how to address that in the amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. While Allie is scrolling through the document, I want to try to restate what I think we're saying here, so that people can weigh-in on that. It seems like we're saying, because we're redoing the complex, we are suggesting, in this amendment, in this vehicle, to look at the remaining species in the complex in some way, whether it's they become ecosystem components or we look at what their overall ABC, et cetera, is, and so we're saying use this document as the vehicle to do that, and so I'm looking -- I see heads nodding yes. Are people in agreement on that? Okay. Allie is typing up some notes here.

Okay. Let me see here. All right, and so the bullets say examine the remaining other shallow-water grouper species and consider designating them as ecosystem component species within Amendment 55, and, if the species in the other shallow-water grouper complex are not ecosystem component species, then the ABC will be updated to include FES recreational estimates within Amendment 55. Does that capture -- Okay. I see heads nodding yes. Okay. Got it. Designated as ecosystem component. Okay.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so, the next time that you see this amendment, obviously, Action 4b will change. The IPT will look into that and then provide you with some options to consider these actions.

That brings us to Action 5, and this will establish the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex, sector allocations, and sector annual catch limits, and so, again, we have to -- We're establishing the ACL for this new complex, based off of the catch levels provided by the assessment, and so now we have to establish the allocations, and so Option 1 shows you the status, and so, essentially, Option 1 is there is no allocations, but the way I showed it here was just to provide you with the status quo, and so one column -- Your first column is the other shallow-water

grouper allocations, including yellowmouth, and then your second column is the current allocations for just scamp. In the explanation column, you have the formulas that were used to get to those allocation percentages for both the complex and scamp.

Option 2 and 3 are obviously placeholders, and we can't really give you -- We can't recalculate things until we have some more information about both your OFL and ABC and the rebuilding timeframe, but I think this would be a good time to come back and think about whether or not you think that the scamp -- That the current scamp allocations are applicable for this fishery, and if there's additional options that you want to consider, additional years, and, again, this is another good opportunity if you would like to ask specific questions of the public, when this goes out to scoping, and that could be something that you could do as well, and so, with that, I will turn it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Tim, I think you were asking about this a minute ago.

MR. GRINER: Yes, exactly, and so I would like to look at a couple of alternatives to go out to scoping, just to try to get some feedback, and one of the alternatives I would like to look at would be changing the commercial scamp allocation from the 65.34 to 73 percent, and the recreational to 27 percent, and I will give you some rationale of why.

I think it's really important for both sectors right now to maintain the fishing levels that we're currently fishing on, and so, when I go back and I start looking at the recreational effort on scamp, and I look at where they've been for the last four or five years, their average probably is going to be right around, I don't know, and I think I figured it up, but they're averaging right around 16,800 pounds, if you throw in 2022, but 2022 had incorrect numbers in there, and it wasn't complete, and so, if you get rid of that year, and just do the four years previous to that, then they're around 19,200 pounds.

If you look at the commercial sector, and you do the exact same thing, they were averaging, I don't know, maybe forty-something -- Let's see. So, if you look at where we would be with this new ABC, starting with the 71,000 pounds, and you applied the 73 percent commercial and the 27, then you would end up right at about where you're fishing at now. The commercial would come in at 51,000 pounds, and last year they caught 44,000 pounds, and so it's about 18 or so percent above what they caught that year, and the same for the recreational. If you put them at 27 percent, it would be about 19,000 pounds, which would be about, I don't know, 15 or 16 percent above what they caught that year. They were at 17,000 pounds, and so it really gives both sectors an equal chance to stay exactly where they are and give them a little bit of a buffer to even actually go above where they were, and so, to me, you know, that's going to be about the fairest way to do this, and to keep everybody at their current fishing levels with the least risk of a closure.

MS. IBERLE: I may be understanding this incorrectly, but so the -- What you're looking at, the landings -- I want to make sure that I say this correctly. The landings that we're seeing are CHTS-based landings for the recreational sector, because the ACL that we're comparing it to right now is a CHTS-based scamp ACL, and so I think we want to make sure that, when we're looking at keeping things proportional, and kind of like what we do with gag, and we wanted to make sure that it was an apples-to-apples comparison, which I think is something that we can definitely do, and I just wanted to make sure that I capture that down correctly. Essentially, we're wanting percentages that maintain the current catch proportion? Okay.

MR. GRINER: That's correct, yes, and this is the difficult part, is we keep flip-flopping back and forth with these currencies, right, whether it be at the assessment level or whether we're trying to do these, you know, management decisions, and it's making it very difficult, but I think the goal here is to keep both sectors at their current fishing levels, so that, you know, as the stock -- In case the stock doesn't get any better, and at least we can stay where we are, and, at the end of this rebuilding, then we can revisit it and see kind of where we are again, but, you know, I think it's really important for the recreational sector, and the commercial sector, to have the best chance at staying at the current fishing levels.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me go to Tom first, and then we'll go back to Allie.

MR. ROLLER: I am just going to echo Tim's frustration about the fact that we're just always bouncing between the CHTS and the FES in these documents, and it just makes it so confusing and hard to follow, and I do also echo the fact that, you know, if we are going to rebuild this fishery, we do need to probably stay at our current fishing levels, right, but I think, doing that, we're going to need to see those FES numbers updated for us to consider any sort of like allocation changes, or current fishing level changes, and it's going to be important for us to see those numbers to make that decision.

MS. IBERLE: So I anticipate this looking very similar to gag, because I think that was the method that we used for gag, was we had this reduction, and each sector took the reduction proportional to what was landed, and then we kind of went from there, and so I think, if that's something that - - In that calculation, we made sure to use FES, because I know it differed a little bit when we first were tossing the idea around, because we had originally looked at it as the landings that you see say like when you're on ACL monitoring, and so, again, like comparing it to the current ACL.

That's where it gets hard, because, you know, when you're looking at the current ACL, you have to be comparing landings back to that ACL, and so I think that's definitely something that we can do, and we already have kind of a mechanism in place that we developed for gag, and so I think that can be put in place here, and we just have to kind of make sure that we get those catch levels and that that method operates smoothly for these catch levels, but I think that's definitely feasible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I guess, to add on to Tim, you know, he was very kind of descriptive with regard to certain sets of years, and kind of his way of thinking, and I certainly appreciate that. I think, for now, if staff is okay with it, I think the direction would be focusing on, you know, looking at the current status quo allocation, looking at more recent years of landings, like we've done, as well as kind of the share-the-pain-share-the-gain approach that Tim has characterized, right, but let's maybe not be as prescriptive, with regard to the years at this point, and allow staff to kind of look at that information and bring it back to us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That was helpful. Anything else on this topic?

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so that brings us to Action 6 and Action 7, and so these are your accountability measures, starting with commercial and then recreational, for the scamp yellowmouth grouper complex. Before I get into these actions for scamp yellowmouth, I posed

the question to the IPT, and we talked about this during our meetings, about how to deal with the accountability measures for the other shallow-water grouper complex.

At this point, the discussion, during the IPT, mentioned that the yellowmouth could be removed from this AMs without modifying them in the codified text, and, again, you have the option to modify those, if you choose, and you can do it here, or you can do it down the road, but if, at this point in time, you just want to remove yellowmouth from that other shallow-water grouper AM, that can be done simply without an action, and so that's why you're not seeing it.

I prefer to use these tables for AMs, because I think it's complicated, and so, again, Option 1 is we don't have an AM. The full AM language, for both scamp and the other shallow-water groupers, is included in an appendix in this document, but, essentially, Option 2 is showing you your status quo commercial AM for both scamp and the other shallow-water grouper, and so you have a commercial in-season closure, and then you have a post-season AM, where the commercial ACL is reduced the following year, but to have that reduced season -- Say the commercial landings need to exceed the ACL, the total ACL needs to be exceeded, and the stock needs to be overfished, and so you have those three triggers in place.

Those are the only options that we put on the table at this point, and I don't know if you guys would prefer to stop on this one or jump and look at recreational AMs and then discuss them as a whole, whichever you guys prefer.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's stop and talk about commercial. Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: When we did this for our most recent species, snowy and gag, I don't believe, for commercial, that we -- I don't remember what the status quo was before we changed it, but, I believe, at this point, assuming those are going to be approved, the way the commercial accountability measures are in there, it's that just the commercial ACL and not the total ACL has to be exceeded, and is that correct?

MS. IBERLE: So, for snowy and gag, and I believe tilefish, you only modified the recreational AMs, and you actually left the commercial AMs as-is, and so that's why we only came to the table -- Again, it's early, but that's why we only gave you these two options for the commercial, because, as of right now, you guys have mainly been modifying the recreational AMs, and leaving the commercial AMs as-is.

MS. MARHEFKA: May I? Am I correct though that, for the recreational AMs, that we did say though that it was -- We removed the total and said the sector ACL, and so, philosophically speaking, I personally feel that's the way it should be done, you know, and I feel like you should be dependent on being held to your own ACL, and so, if the commercial people exceed their ACL, it shouldn't matter if the total ACL is met, and that's me personally, and so I might want to see an option in there just to have that go out to scoping and hear what others think of that.

MS. IBERLE: Sorry, and so I pulled up Table 15, and so this is actually your suite of actions for the rec AMs, and so Options 3 and 4 -- I feel like you guys have seen these before, and they will look familiar, and so, essentially, you're dealing with in two parts, either retaining or doing away with the in-season AM, and then uncoupling, is the verbiage that I've been using, the post-season trigger, and so you would only have a reduction if that sector's ACL is exceeded, and so these are

those options that either retain or remove the in-season and uncouple the post. If we did want to see these for commercial, we can add those, for sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Anything else? Maybe we go to the -- Well, these are the recreational. Is there anything else that you want to do here on this?

MS. IBERLE: Right now, you've only got --

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so then one of the questions is those recreational AMs, and do we want one of those types of options pulled into the commercial AMs?

MR. GRINER: No, and I think we're good here.

MS. IBERLE: It's early in the game, and this is what we need. This is what the IPT needs, is to know if our suite of actions is appropriate, and so any other questions on commercial AMs, before I jump to the recreational AMs table? No? Okay.

All right, and so, coming back to Table 15, in the past several amendments, the council has been modifying recreational AMs for several snapper grouper species, and so what we did was we based these options on things that you've done recently, and so, again, Option 1, we don't have any AMs for this complex. Option 2 is the kind of season announcement option, and so the spawning season closure is in place, and so that will remain in place, and so the season will open annually on May 1, and then NMFS will annually announce the season end date, and so that's how that announcement will work. Again, this is very similar to gag.

Then, in Option 3, there would be no in-season recreational AM, and then you would uncouple the post-season, and so, if recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, regardless of stock status or total ACL, the recreational season for the following year would be reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded, and then Option 4 retains the current in-season closure and then uncouples that post-season closure, and so, again, the same question. Do we want to add or remove or modify any of the alternatives?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It looks like people are shaking their heads no, that we're good with this. Wait. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I wasn't shaking my head. A couple of thoughts. I am not a huge fan of Option 2, and it really puts the burden on the Fisheries Service, and, from a recreational angler standpoint, it infuses a lot of uncertainty, obviously, with regard to when seasons are opening or closing, and so I just wanted to note that, and then I guess the other thing, and I guess we've probably done this with other species, and I'm just now kind of seeing it, but, with commercial, we're saying that the accountability measures for post-season are tied to total ACL being exceeded as well as the stock being overfished, but we're not doing the same for recreational, and so I think there's inconsistencies there that we probably would want to at least have an option that would tie it to both the total ACL and the stock status.

MS. IBERLE: I guess my question to you would be Option 3 or 4 would you like brought over to the commercial action?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, that's one way of doing it, where you move Option 3 or 4 to the commercial, or you can take Option 2 from the commercial and make another option for the recreational.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What do people want to do here? Trish. Sorry. I thought you had your hand up.

MS. MURPHEY: How I'm understanding Kerry, what Kerry is suggesting, it looks like Option 4 in the rec, if you moved that to make it Option 3 in the commercial, that would get at what she was discussing and what Andy is talking about, right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MR. MARHEFKA: I think that Andy and I are trying to say the same thing, but then Tim said something that got me confused, and so, basically, what I was trying to -- I think it should be equitable, and what's good for one is good for the other, is what I'm trying to say, and they should -- But, as Tim reminded me, our accountability measures happen in-season, right, and we hit our ACL, and we shut down, and so the post-season accountability measures for the commercial sector would then be, if we somehow went over -- The monitoring was wrong, and we somehow went over our ACL, and then that trigger would kick in, and it's the whole in-season and post-season thing I think is what is messing me up.

Our commercial accountability measures mostly take place in-season, because our ACL is monitored, and it, in theory, gets shut down when we've hit it, and so there won't -- It's not very often that post-season accountability measures kick in, and that would kick in if there was some kind of mistake or, I don't know, some guy, on the last day, went way over, or something like that, right, which is why probably we didn't mess with them in the other things, but, if I hear what Andy is saying, you know, that it should -- It should at least be laid out to be equitable, how we handle it between the commercial and recreational sector, which I totally agree with, and that's what I was trying to say in the first place, and maybe it's just confusing because the chances of it ever happening are really low, but, Andy, am I following what you were -- Are we on the same page?

MR. STRELCHECK: We are on the same page. Yes, it's all about the issue of equity here, and how the AM would be treated, and so the stock status is kind of a non-issue, because the stock would be overfished, and so everyone is kind of having to abide by the same thing, right now at least, right, and the total ACL -- Not tying it for the recreational means that we're tying it only to whether they exceed the recreational ACL or not, right, whereas the commercial -- You would have to exceed the commercial ACL and the total ACL to be exceeded, and so I think we need some consistency with approaching both with that total ACL language.

MS. IBERLE: So I think this might be a perfect time to utilize Full Council, to bring you back both of these tables, because I feel like I'm like move Option 4 to this one, and so what I'm understanding is we need a status quo option, like we have in the commercial, for the recreational, and then maybe we need Option 4 to go the other way, and, you know, give a similar option to Option 4 that it was for rec for commercial, and just kind of make everything match a little bit more.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. IBERLE: So I will bring those back to you cleaned up at Full Council, because I know AMs are a lot, and I feel like I will say it over and over again and it will just get more confusing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think that we're good on that. All right, and so that brings us to the end of this document. I'm assuming that we're good to make this motion to approve this amendment for scoping without seeing all those changes on the AMs, but, if the committee would rather wait until Full Council, that's fine too, but is someone ready to make this motion to approve this amendment for scoping? Mel.

MR. BELL: With the understanding that we've probably got what we've got, and I don't think anything is going to change it -- **I would move that we would approve this document for scoping.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Mel and seconded by Carolyn. Any further discussion? **Any objection?** Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Not objecting, and so one of the things that Tim mentioned earlier has really stuck with me here, and he was talking about allocation and about setting the allocation so that each sector could kind of harvest what they've been currently landing, right, and I recognize that overfishing is not occurring, but the stock is overfished, right, and, if we do that, and landings remain low, we really haven't changed fishing mortality at all, right, and so one of the things that I feel like might be still missing from this is whether we want to include any additional commercial or recreational management measures, right, and so I just wanted to add that, and maybe we can think about it further for Full Council, in terms of options there, but it's a hard one, because we've had landings declining, and we could very well be within the catch limits that we're setting, you know to be determined, but, if we truly want to affect fishing mortality, we really need to do more than what is currently included in the amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I appreciate that, and I have struggled with that too, Andy, but, you know, part of me is hearing a lot of discussion from the science side in saying that this is not a fishing mortality issue, and it's a recruitment issue, and so that's why I kept coming back to, well, if we keep fishing at our current levels, that will certainly tell us whether it's a fishing mortality issue or a recruitment issue, because we can't affect the recruitment, and so, if we stay status quo on what we're doing fishing-wise, and this fish does not rebound, then I think it's a clear indication that, you know, it's definitely a recruitment issue, but, if we continue at these low fishing levels, and this stock starts rebounding, then I think we have a better chance at rebuilding the stock by staying at these low fishing levels, but I don't know that additionally trying to reduce fishing mortality is going to really and truly solve or help us get an idea of what's happening with recruitment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just related to that, I mean, we, right now, have our ABC set at 75 percent of FMSY, but that might not correspond to F rebuild, if we have a rebuilding plan, or guidance,

right, and so that's why I'm suggesting the potential for future management measures, depending on whether we need to reduce fishing mortality further relative to the ABC advice we've been given.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Then just a question, so I'm understanding. Andy, would we do that following scoping, or are you saying down the road in a future amendment? That's unclear to me.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I think we should be discussing management measures during scoping and get input on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. That's helpful.

MS. IBERLE: If you wanted to pop back to management measures and review those, the current management measures, Tables 4 through 6 kind of give you an idea of what you have in place currently, and so, if you did want to have staff -- Again, I don't know that we would even need to add like bonified actions in here, to be able to take some of these questions to scoping, and it could be as simple as, you know, formulating some questions, such as do the current management measures -- Are they sufficient for this fishery, would they still be sufficient, you know, considering the new complex, stuff like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm okay with that. Are others okay with that, that staff prepare questions for scoping? Okay. All right, and so one more time on that motion to approve Amendment 55 for scoping. Any more discussion? We just talked about adding some questions relative to management measures, and any more discussion on this? **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** All right. Let's take a ten-minute break before we dive into black sea bass. Mel.

MR. BELL: I was going to point out that I did a little research, and the proper pronunciation is OSASWG, and it's an old Gaelic term meaning a confusing assemblage of fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Got it. All right. Ten-minute break.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going again, and, first up, we're going to be talking about black sea bass, and we have Shannon Cass-Calay, who I believe is going to give us this presentation that's already on the screen.

DR. BELCHER: Just a reminder that we do have a hard stop at 3:45 for public comment today.

DR. CALAY: Thank you very much. I am Shannon Calay, and I am at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. I'm the Director of the Sustainable Fisheries Division. I am giving this presentation on behalf of our assessment team in the Atlantic Fisheries Branch. Matt Vincent is the lead of this assessment, and he is online to address any particularly technical questions that might arise, and so, with that, I will begin.

This slide shows a screenshot of the terms of reference. This was an operational assessment, SEDAR 76, and you don't need to read these, because I'm going to go through the relevant ones

in detail. There are two that I won't discuss, and they are simply convene a working group of SSC representatives to review the assessment, Number 5, and Number 6 is to write a stock assessment report, but I will go through the four relevant ones in more detail.

The first term of reference was to update the SEDAR 56 stock assessment model of black sea bass, actually with data through 2020, and we did actually -- We were able to update this assessment with data through 2021, which is hopefully beneficial in producing timely management advice, and also to apply approved improvements to the BAM model, the Beaufort Assessment Model. I want to just go briefly through the stock assessment history for black sea bass that is shown in the column on the left-hand side.

Prior to SEDAR 25, this assessment was assessed several times, and so, in the early history, this was a stock assessed with using tuned VPAs, and those tuned VPAs did indicate that overfishing was occurring since 1980 and that overfishing was actually increasing during the 1990s. The first stock assessment of black sea bass conducted through the SEDAR process occurred in 2002, and that was SEDAR 2, and that did bring this into the Beaufort Assessment Model framework, and, at that time, it was still estimated that the rate of overfishing continued to increase and that the stock was overfished, and that result also occurred in the update assessment that took place in 2005.

Now, the more recent history begins in 2011, with SEDAR 25, and SEDAR 25 included several notable improvements to the data, including improved estimates of fecundity, total discards, discard mortality, as well as age composition data for the landings and surveys, and we reexamined natural mortality during SEDAR 25 and found it to be higher than previously thought, and also dependent on age, but the SEDAR 25 assessment found that the stock remained below BMSY, but above the minimum stock size threshold, so that it was not overfished at that time, but it was still undergoing overfishing.

An update assessment was conducted in 2013 that used the SEDAR 25 framework, and it just added two years of additional data, but it otherwise maintained that assessment structure and the decisions made, and those results were that the stock was no longer overfished, and, in fact, overfishing was not occurring in 2013.

The assessment immediately previous to this one is SEDAR 56, and that used BAM, with data through 2016, and it continued to improve the data, and so, in the SEDAR 56 assessment, we were able to include the SERFS video index as well as new studies to improve discard mortality. That SEDAR 56 assessment showed that the stock was not undergoing overfishing, but the stock was below SSB at MSY, and so it was below the level that would support MSY in the long-term, and it was not considered overfished, because it was above MSST.

That brings us to the current stock assessment, which is SEDAR 76, and, as I said, this is an operational assessment that used data through 2021. The elements of the assessment process are indicated in the right-hand column, and so there was one data scoping call that began in September of 2022, and there were five assessment webinars that occurred from September of 2022 to February of 2023, and there were panel inputs and approval of all decisions made through assessment panel, and an SSC review was conducted in April of 2023. As I said, this assessment does include updated data through a terminal year of 2021.

This schematic shows you -- I will start with the right-hand schematic, which shows you the data availability for this assessment, and so you can see the years, on the bottom axis, from 1975 through 2021, and the colored dots just indicate that data was available in that year, and so the landings data comes from three commercial gears, the lines, pots, and trawl, and also from headboat and general recreational landings, and we have discard estimates from the commercial sector, the headboat sector, and the general rec.

We have abundance indices available from the MARMAP trap, a combined video survey, commercial lines and headboat, two fishery-dependent indices, and we have length composition data for most of those fleets and surveys as well.

The age composition data is available in the recent years, and, when age composition data were available, we used them preferentially, and so, when we had both age and length, we used age. We used the length data when no age was available, and so now I would just like to show, or talk about, the figure that's on the left-hand side, and that shows the indices of abundance.

The time series begin just before 1980 and continue through 2021, and you see that there is a very steep decline that occurs after that 2011, in fact, and there are three series represented in that steep decline, and so you have a video survey in orange there, and you have a chevron trap survey that's actually in purple, and it is underneath the combined survey, which is in the dark-blue shading. Those surveys had slightly different selectivity, and so there were sensitivity runs used to examine how they should be combined, but, because they had a very similar trend, they were combined, and so what was actually used in the stock assessment model was a combined video survey index.

I will also point out that the fishery-dependent surveys from the headboat and from the commercial are truncated in the most recent years, and they were not used, because of the extensive number and complexity of fishery management regulations, and that decision was, I believe, also a SEDAR 56 decision as well.

Term of Reference 2 is to include any newly available information on steepness for black sea bass or for similar stocks, and there was no new information on steepness presented in this process, and, furthermore, in our attempts to determine whether steepness was estimable by the model, there was no evidence that it was estimable, and we had -- Likelihood profiles were done that didn't support any particular value of steepness. When we did allow the model to estimate it, it produced steepnesses that were very low, around 0.4, which didn't seem -- There was no defense for that scientifically, and there was also concern expressed by the assessment panels that that very low steepness value may have been driven by the low recent recruitments.

We did make a change, which is that we used a mean recruitment model for SEDAR -- For this SEDAR assessment, and the mean recruitment model is essentially a default assumption that one makes when there is little evidence of a stock-recruitment relationship, and so it basically implies that recruitment, in the future, will be like it has been in some time period that is defined, the recent year, and this actual assumption was evaluated, and it did not change the current stock status conclusion substantially.

We also had a Term of Reference 2b to include any new or updated information on discard mortality and life history, and there were a few new studies presented in this process that showed higher discard mortality rates, are they are Schweitzer et al. 2020 and Zemeckis 2020, and these

studies were actually made outside of the Southeast Region, and so they were essentially studies off of the Mid-Atlantic, and they were Maryland and Delaware.

While they did suggest higher discard mortality rates, some of the assessment panel and industry experts that participated in this process had concerns that these studies were conducted outside of the region, and also under different fishing conditions than occur within the Southeast Region, particularly that the depth and the exposure time -- In one study, the depth was deeper, and the exposure time was longer, than is expected in the Southeast Region, and so the assessment panel actually decided to retain the estimates of discard mortality that had been used in the previous assessment, SEDAR 56, but they did use the new information to expand the bounds of scientific uncertainty that were used in the Monte Carlo Bootstrap Ensemble, the MCBE, and they looked at uncertainties from 50 percent to three-times the current discard mortality estimate, and I will show you that that expansion did not really influence the biomass status determination criteria, but it did have an impact on the overfishing status.

We also examined new information on growth and mortality, and so there was a lot of new age and length composition data available for this stock assessment, or there was some, and a new growth curve was estimated. They are very similar, and you see the purple line is SEDAR 76, and the dotted-pink line, or magenta, is the SEDAR 56 growth.

There was a change made in the estimation of natural mortality, and so, for this assessment, we looked at two different point estimates of the natural mortality, one from a Hamel and Cope estimator, which produced an M of 0.49, and also BAM, when you estimate M within the BAM framework, it produced an estimated of 0.26, and so the group decided to use the average of those two to inform the scaling of a Lorenzen M equation, and the result is an M value of 0.375, which, in this case, is shown in purple. The purple is SEDAR 76, which just so happens to be quite similar to the previous natural mortality estimate from the SEDAR 56 model, which is shown in the blue color just beneath the purple, and then the two extremes are the estimates that are produced either by the BAM model itself, in orange, or the Hamel and Cope estimate in green.

Another term of reference was to calculate, or to evaluate, different F metrics to address shifts that were observed in selectivity, and so what you're looking at here, on the far-left-hand side, is the proportion of F by age over time, and so on the bottom of the axis is 1980 through 2020, and this is cumulative proportion of F , shown on the Y axis, and so you see each color here represents a different age class, and the discontinuities that you see in this figure are the different size limits that come into place, and so, as these size limits come into place, it changes the selectivity pattern, and it actually makes a higher amount of fishing mortality on the older age classes, and you can see that here too in the central panel, which shows you the fishing mortality by age over time. That fishing mortality has increased over time, and the fishing mortality on the older ages has also increased over time.

Now, finally, the panel that's farthest on your right-hand side shows you the fishing mortality rate by the different fleet components, and one thing that I think is very important to note here is the increasing proportion of F that is due to the MRIP, the general rec, and you see here the discards in that pink color at the top and the landings in the blue color, and so an increasing fraction of the fishing mortality is caused by the recreational sector.

This slide shows you the results of a selectivity analysis, essentially the sensitivity analyses conducted to examine the different selectivities that would occur with different decisions made about the chevron traps and the cameras used to create the combined video index, and so, essentially, they explored a number of different options that addressed the differences in selectivity, and what they found was that it's relatively insensitive, and so on your left-hand side is the trend in fishing mortality relative to FMSY, and on your right-hand side is the spawning stock biomass relative to MSST, and so all of the trajectories that you see are quite similar to one another, showing you that the way the selectivity was handled isn't a terribly sensitive issue in this stock assessment, and so the base decision was retained, which is actually shown in the solid-black line, and that base decision is that the combined video and trap surveys are combined using a Kahn methodology.

Term of Reference 3 was to document any changes or corrections made to the SEDAR 56 model and input datasets and to provide commercial and recreational landings in both discards and pounds, and so first I will go through a summary of the important changes that were made to the stock assessment.

One is really a change in the data itself, and so we now see that 70 percent of the commercial logbooks indicate no discards of any species, resulting in lower estimates of commercial discards than what we had in SEDAR 56. However, it is very important to note that, for this assessment model, the commercial discards are a minor component of fishing mortality. The recreational discards and landings are much higher than the commercial discards.

We estimated, in this model, a dome-shaped selectivity for the SERFS survey, and that dome-shaped selectivity was chosen because it fit the data better in the assessment model, but it didn't - - It made very little difference in a sensitivity analysis. We also chose to fix the last two years of recruitment at the mean value from the recent period, and so that recent period chosen was based on a change point analysis, and it was 2014 through 2019, and that was done because the recruitment in the last two years of the stock assessment model are very poorly informed by the data, and so they were considered to be rather unreliable. Any other changes to the assessment were considered relatively insignificant and are documented in the stock assessment report.

These panels show you the recreational landings and discards in both pounds and numbers, and so, on this slide, you're looking at just the absolute landings and discards, and so the total removals over time, broken out by the fleet components, first in weight, on the left-hand side, and then in numbers, on the right-hand side, and so, again, what you're seeing here is that the discards from the MRIP, from the recreational fishery, are shown in the pink on the top, and they have increased substantially over time, both in numbers and in weight.

The next slide is a very similar one, which just shows you the proportion as a cumulative statistic, and so this is essentially the same information, but how you read this one -- You know, it basically shows you that, at the end of the time series, near 2000, for example, that over 40 percent of the total removals are from the discards from the recreational sector, in numbers and in weight, or sorry. In weight, it's about 40 percent, and, in numbers, it's an even larger fraction of the numbers of fish removed from the population, over 60 percent.

Term of Reference 4 is to update the model parameter estimates, to update the model uncertainties, stock status, management benchmarks, and provide a probability of overfishing, and so this is a

metric that you're probably quite familiar with. On the bottom, it shows you the F relative to F_{MSY} , and that F is the current F value computed from 2019 to 2021, and then, on the Y-axis, it shows you the spawning stock biomass relative to $MSST$, or minimum stock size threshold.

The horizontal line is your overfished threshold, and the vertical line is your overfishing threshold, and you see that about 84 percent of the MCBE estimates, the bootstrap estimates of stock status, indicate that the stock is both overfished and undergoing overfishing, and all 100 percent of the model runs show that the stock is overfished.

The next slide shows you the stock status trajectory, and first, on the top-left-hand side is the stock status relative to the minimum stock size threshold, which shows you that the stock was above that threshold until, you know, about 2014, and it has since rather rapidly declined and is now in overfished condition, and, in fact, it's been below the level that produces MSY for an even longer period of time.

There is more uncertainty in the estimate of F over F_{MSY} , that various model ensemble estimates have a higher degree of uncertainty, but the result is, at the end of the day, that fishing mortality, in general, has increased since 2000 and that, essentially, in every year since 2000, with few exceptions, overfishing has occurred.

Just a summary of our stock assessment results for black sea bass, and black sea bass is considered, according to this stock assessment, to be overfished, and it is all 100 percent of the MCBE model ensemble estimates showed that the stock was in fact overfished, and overfishing is also thought to be occurring in the terminal years of the stock assessment, and that was 84 percent of the MCBE runs, and, also, we wanted to point out here that the recreational landings and discards are the majority of the recent fishing mortality, over 90 percent.

Both the natural mortality and the discard mortality are important sources of uncertainty in the stock assessment, which were explored extensively in sensitivity runs that are included in this report. However, the stock status is robust to the range that was used in the stock assessment. Essentially, every value that was chosen to be plausible in the stock assessment model produced similar estimates, that the stock is in fact overfished and undergoing overfishing.

There is a pattern of low recruitment, again, in this stock assessment, and low recruitment has been occurring since 2014, and it's very much like scamp, and that does raise the question of whether this could have been caused by a regime shift. The SSC did discuss this, but it came -- Well, it basically did not feel that there was conclusive evidence that a regime shift had occurred, and the pattern of low recruitment has also occurred, and it's coincident with implementation of a thirteen-inch recreational size limit and the eleven-inch commercial size limit that occurred in 2013, but we would also like to point out that fishing has been above the level of F_{MSY} since the mid-2000s, and so the mechanism for explaining the recruitment failure is currently lacking, but there is a possibility that it's either recruitment overfishing or in fact a regime shift.

The management advice is under development, and we have developed four different projection scenarios, to date, that are described in the stock assessment report, and so, to inform potential rebuilding plans, we did run two different projections at F equals zero, one with a long-term average recruitment and one with a more recent average recruitment value.

Those projections, very much like scamp, with F equals zero, do indicate that the stock could recover to $BMSY$ within ten years at F equals zero, only if the recruitment returns to the long-term average. If the recruitment remains low, like scamp, the stock abundance will not recover to an SSB that supports MSY .

We also ran projections of F current, with the recent average recruitment value and $FMSY$ with the recent average recruitment value, and those are in the report. We are currently refining the projection scenarios to be run, based on the recommendations from the SSC meeting, and we will present them for further review in July of 2023, and that concludes the presentation, and so I am happy to address any questions that you might have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Are there questions? Okay. Hands are going up. All right. Laurilee and then Dewey and then Mel.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, actually, this is a dumb one, but what is $MCBE$? What does that stand for? I couldn't --

DR. CALAY: Monte Carlo Bootstrap Estimate.

MS. THOMPSON: A what?

DR. CALAY: Sorry. It's Monte Carlo Bootstrap Ensemble, and so it's essentially we rerun the model with a variety of different assumptions about natural mortality, discard mortality, about the index weighting, and also the CVs on the recreational and commercial landings are all elements of uncertainty that we rerun the model and bootstrap it across that range of uncertainties, and that's what produces that envelope you see on slide -- That one right there. That envelope you see is of 90 percent of the outcomes of that $MCBE$ simulation study fall within that blue envelope.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. Could you go back to Slide 12? This is for your both recreational and commercial discards, correct?

DR. CALAY: This slide does show that information, yes.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Given that you said -- I forgot what page it was, but that 90 percent of the recreational landings and discards account for the mortality, and, in this stock assessment, your discards, which make up a majority of your mortality here, comes off the top of the stock assessment, correct?

DR. CALAY: I think what you're alluding to is that we're giving management advice that is in landings, and we're making assumptions about what the discards will -- That the discards would be reduced in proportion with our reduction in landings, and is that your concern, when you say it comes off the top?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, my concern is that, when you look at this, and you do over twenty-two years of looking at this, with this particular $SEDAR$ that has taken place, and you have commercial discards of 77,000 pounds, and you have recreational discards of right close to 10.5

million pounds, and so, given that you have a 43 percent split, and I might be off a little bit, recreationally, and a 57 percent split commercially, it appears to me that the commercial industry is paying for a heck of a lot of recreational dead discards that a continuation of your stock assessment is not apportioning them out to account for who is discarding, and so it's affecting the bottom line of the commercial industry and the consumers who we fish for.

That is why, even though I've given a lot of comment here, my question would be why couldn't in the future -- Is it possible to apportion out dead discards after the stock assessment and before you give you each sector their ACL? On that ABC, you take off their dead discards that they have accounted for, the best available science and everything else that's been sanctioned by National Marine Fisheries Service and this council and the SSC as best available, and why couldn't that be done, so that each side is credited and has skin in the game, so to speak, and that might not be the right words to use, but I did, to have skin in the game, so that they've got to change their method of behavior so that one is not affecting the other, and this is going to be a further story when we look at other species going down, that somehow this has got to change, and so why couldn't this be done, please?

DR. CALAY: So we can give the allocations based on the total kill rather than on landings, and that would better account for the total kill of the rec versus commercial, because I agree with you that the total kill of the rec has a much higher proportion of discards than the total kill of the commercial. The commercial discards are relatively low, and so these things are all possible within a stock assessment context, and they are really choices that, you know, we could make, that managers could make, to decide to give the allocations based on total kill, and we can provide that information, upon request.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: If that was the case, then, in actuality, when the percentages are given to each individual group, based on the historical record, FTS or CTS or whatever methodology it comes up with, it's going -- One is going to be given -- Folks are going to be accounting for their catch, and their catch, their annual catch limit, is going to be what they're allowed to catch, no matter how low it is or how high it is, and would that be outcome, by doing it the way that I'm suggesting that you could do it?

DR. CALAY: If you were to give the ACL in total removals, landings plus discards, you would have to monitor landings and discards in-season, and you would have to manage the amount of fish that you are keeping, as well as the fish you're discarding, and so, once you exceed -- We may be talking across purposes, and so, if I'm not addressing your question, maybe rephrase it.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: All right. I will try one last time, and I will not take up more, and so what I'm asking for us, right now, in the stock assessment, you take dead discards off the top, and then -- This is my understanding. Then you spit out a number that has an ABC, and that ABC -- Then you go to give two sectors their annual catch limit, and so what I'm asking is you don't have to monitor it, and you take that number that you're given, and you take the dead discards that you're going to project, and I guess it would be a projection, off the top, and so, therefore, that sector that has that certain percentage is allowed to fish on -- Basically, I am getting tired of the commercial industry having to pay for the recreational discards in the millions of pounds and millions of dollars, and we've got to do something different for fair and equitable and the continuation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy, do you want to go, and then Mike wants to add to this as well.

MR. STRELCHECK: You're pounding the scientist with questions that really I think are in the management realm, and I have a little bit different take. I mean, I think your point is well taken, Dewey, right, but this is what I have been hammering on for the last two years, when we've been talking about red snapper. We have to get control of the discards, and it's not just black sea bass and making an adjustment to the catch limit.

Just because we lower the catch limit and account for their discards, it's doesn't mean that recreational anglers stop fishing, because they're fishing on a multispecies snapper grouper complex, right, and so my take-home, and this is another bad news report, right, and this is seven or eight species in the South Atlantic that are overfished, right, and some maybe out of our control, because of climate and environmental factors, but a lot of these stocks are being driven down because of discards and discard mortality, and so I really want to go back to emphasizing the need to focus on that. I realize that we have this MSE for red snapper that's ongoing, but, to me, this should be our top priority, working forward, as well as dealing with these assessment results.

Let me ask a question of Shannon, while I have the mic. The assessment, Shannon -- One of the things I'm always interested in is looking at the results and comparatively seeing kind of how they track relative to past assessments, and the overfished status is very consistent with the previous assessment, but we were, I think, at that point, starting to see a trending downward in biomass, back in 2016 or 2017, whenever that last assessment terminal year was.

The fishing mortality rates seem to be very different, and they seem to have dropped down during kind of the entire time series, up until about 2015, compared to the previous assessment, but then have been incrementally increasing over time, from about 2005 to 2020, and so I'm just curious what might be causing the different results and interpretation of the overfishing, and is it the natural mortality, or are there other factors that are contributing to kind of those changes in trends?

DR. CALAY: So Matt Vincent is on the line, and he says that it is the change in the recreational landings from MRIP that is causing that change.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to go back to my list of hands, and I'm going to go to some other folks first, Dewey, if that's okay, and I have Mel and then Chester and then back to Dewey and then Tim.

MR. BELL: Thank you. Thanks, Shannon. Great presentation, and not a happy story, and so you've heard us talking about regime shifts, and we don't fully understand that, and understand from a management perspective how we deal with that, and so a regime shift and fishing mortality both, but so black sea bass occur coastwide, and we manage the southern stock, which we draw the line, I guess, at Hatteras, and the northern stock, which we call the Mid-Atlantic, is trying to become the New England, and they're definitely --

I think they seem to be moving north, and so I suppose what could be going on here, in part, is maybe everybody is moving north, and so you've got this point where, you know, the southern stock and the northern stock collide, or mix, and I'm not sure how we deal with that or how you kind of sort that out, in terms of who is who, but, if everybody is moving north for this species, then there's not much we can do about that, but is that when we talk about a regime shift, and is

that kind of what we're looking at? Then, you know, how -- Well, I guess there's really nothing we can do about that, but is that what a regime shift would look like, I guess, in this case?

DR. CALAY: Well, it's not clear, but a regime shift could just cause conditions that aren't favorable for spawning, for example, and so the low recruitment could be caused by something ecological, and we could also be seeing a stock that is moving outside of the jurisdiction, and that was not -- You know, I think that that's outside of the scope of the operational assessment, and so I think that this assessment probably retained the stock unit boundaries of the SEDAR 56 assessment, and I am kind of hoping that Matt will confirm or deny what I just said, since he's listening to me, but, yes, there is a possibility that this is environmental, that the low recruitment is either environmentally caused, or it could be, you know, that the stock is shifting to the north, you know, or it could be that this is caused by recruitment overfishing, and we don't know the answer to that yet, but there is a team of people that are looking at these low-recruitment stocks, to try to identify the causes of those changes.

MR. BELL: I guess, for purposes of the model, we're assuming our fish stay on our side -- On the proper side of Hatteras, and what's above Hatteras is all credited to the Mid-Atlantic stock, right?

DR. CALAY: Yes, that's the current condition. That's right.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Chester.

MR. BREWER: My last meeting, and I was hoping that there wasn't going to be a bunch of controversy come up, but apparently it has, and I don't know who decided that it was time to beat on the recreational this time through, but apparently it's been decided, and now it's about setting allocations based upon what is probably the least -- I don't want to use the word "correct", but some of the most suspect data that's out there, and you're talking about -- I was a little amazed when I read it in this report, but that, with regard to the commercial bycatch, which we say is so low, 70 percent of the logbooks report zero bycatch, and you say, well, that ain't right, and so, in fact, I don't think that's even possible.

How is that we're now going to manage based upon data that is that suspect? It doesn't make good sense, to me, and you're going to start some wars that I don't know that the commercial guys are going to want to fight, but, in any event, I will cut it short there, and I don't want to be any more controversial than I already have been.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Next up, we're back to Dewey and then Tim.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, in response to the 70 percent of the logbooks, there's no doubt that that's wrong, and so, given the disparity of 77,000 pounds and 10.4, out of the goodness of my heart, I'm going to put 300,000 pounds of dead discards into the commercial, and it's still minute compared to those numbers, and, even though we're talking about the suspect of MRIP, and that's what the agency's best available scientific information is going to, and, with respect to Andy, I totally understand the conundrum that this agency is in.

I didn't put it in there, and I think some of this council put it in there, but the fact of the matter is the commercial industry does not have the ability to sustain five or six more years of this continuation of recreational use of the ocean and not properly accounting for their discards. If

discards is good enough to be used in a stock assessment, it daggone well should be good enough to be used for management.

If the commercial industry -- In 1999, this council chose to cut us in half, and we've been cut further in half, even more, and, if we had the luxury of time, I wouldn't be wasting my breath, but we do not have the luxury of time that is placed upon our sector, and, when we talk about looking at different things, your choices are tough, and the only couple of choices that you have that I see is if you close some ocean or you tie some boats to the dock, because that's about what the commercial side has, when we look at this, and so I only look at this as folks accounting for their dead discards, and maybe that cleans up their house.

Is the commercial 70 percent of the logbooks right? No, it's not, but it's far vast from 10.4 million pounds, or five-million pounds with black sea bass, but that's the only reason why I bring this up, is we don't have the luxury of waiting for another five years. We're not going to be here. We'll be a boutique fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I am going to take the two people that we have in line here, and then we need to get the SSC report, because Jeff won't be with us in the morning, and we can continue this discussion tomorrow, and so Tim and then Spud are already in the queue.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Real quick, and I don't want to belabor the point either, but I do -- Since that 70 percent of logbooks came up in this report, I will make a comment on that as well, and that's absolutely not correct, because only 20 percent of all logbooks are selected to have discards, and so, you know, if you looked at it, if you just said what percent of logbooks showed no discards, it would at least be 80 percent, because only 20 percent were selected, but, that aside, and that I don't think is the real issue here.

I think the real issue here is, as you alluded to, it's the MRIP data for landings and discards, and we had some discussion earlier, and Chip brought up about now they're kind of color-coding these PSEs, and I was curious, and, in this SEDAR here, what were the PSEs associated with the MRIP discards and landings?

DR. CALAY: I am going to have to look that up. I don't have the answer on the tip of my tongue, but I will look it up right now.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. While you're looking that up, I'm going to go over to Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mine is real simple, and what we using as a discard mortality rate for black sea bass in this SEDAR?

DR. CALAY: The SEDAR 56 estimates were retained, and it's actually dependent on which fishery. Are you talking about commercial or rec?

MR. WOODWARD: I am talking about recreational hook-and-line.

DR. CALAY: Recreational is 6 to 19 percent, depending on the fishing mode.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just we're debating up here about what Shannon just said, and so, Shannon, you said 6 to 19 percent, and that was discard mortality, right, and not natural mortality, right?

DR. CALAY: 6 to 19 percent discard mortality. Correct.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you for that. Jeff, are you ready to give us the SSC report? We're going to try to work that in, because I know you're not going to be with us tomorrow.

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, and I can hit the highlights and skip some slides that are less important, and so Chip asked me to speed talk. All right, and so I will just go through the bullets that we were asked. The SSC agrees that the assessment appropriately addresses the terms of reference that Shannon just laid out. We also agreed that it's BSIA. For the most part, it reliably captures past trends in the fishery and population, but I have an asterisk to remind me to go to the next slide.

The last few years, shown there on the left-hand side, as Shannon mentioned, the age-zeroes are -
- Those are not estimated in the model, and those are the average age-zeroes from 2014 to 2019, and so it looks like you get this improvement, and, in fact, one of the SSC members said, well, it looks like things are improving, and things are on the rise, but that's just based on the reason that the mean number of age-zeroes from 2014 to 2019 and for 2020 and 2021, and then, of course, that zero in 2020 impacts the number of age-ones in 2021, and so that's the one thing where it's not -- You know, we don't know if that's true or not. If recruitment stayed at the 2019 level, then you wouldn't see that bump-up in the 2020 and 2021 years.

We also agreed that the assessment provides a reliable quantitative estimate of current stock status, but, again, I have an asterisk here, because the analysts assumed that the FMSY proxy, this F_{max} , and so F_{max} is the F at which maximum yield per recruit is achieved, and there were several SSC members that are assessment scientists that spoke to the fact that F_{max} is an overestimate of true FMSY, because it assumes constant recruitment, even when the SSB drops, and so, to account for this risk, the SSC recommended that stock status and projections be based on $F_{0.1}$, and so that, again, comes from the slope of the -- It comes from the yield-per-recruit curve. Instead of it being the F_{max} of that yield per recruit, $F_{0.1}$ is the fishing mortality rate where the slope of the yield-per-recruit curve is 10 percent of the slope of the curve at its origin, and that's been shown, in past work, to be a more robust reference point relative to F_{max} for sustainable fisheries.

Does the assessment provide reliable predictions of future conditions to support fishing level recommendations? Again, for the most part, projections were appropriate, but there were projections of discards that showed much higher estimates, around four-times higher, than the last two years of observed discards, and so we discussed this concern and recommended using average F , instead of average landings, in the interim years for those projections.

The next slide will discuss this question about reviewing and summarizing and discussing the factors of this assessment that affect the reliability of estimates of stock status and fishing level recommendations, and so the key factors that affect the reliability of the assessment are uncertainty in recruitment, the discard rates and discard mortality, and whether there has been a regime change.

An initial point of discussion was whether male and female spawner biomass should be used in future assessments, and, in the assessment just presented, it's eggs are the index for female spawner

biomass, but there were some that were concerned, because the larger fish are males, that we may be missing a reduction in that part of the population, and so having the male biomass in there for the spawning stock biomass may be more appropriate and should be explored for the future assessment. Then, as you saw in the indices of abundance, in recent years, the only index, fishery-independent index, of abundance we have is the SERFS index, and so, again, we, you know, think that it's reliable, but just pointing out that the model is relying on just that single source.

Describe the risks and consequences of the assessment uncertainties, and there is large uncertainty in F that's driven by uncertainty in natural mortality and discard mortality, but, nevertheless, there is very high confidence that the stock is currently experiencing overfishing, and that is the F is too high, and the uncertainty in recruitment in developing catch advice is a key factor. Recent declines in recruitment are critical to fishing level recommendations and perhaps the future long-term viability in the stock, even in the extreme case of dropping fishing mortality to zero.

Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information? The answer is yes, and we wanted to commend the staff for employing the state-of-the-art, and there is the MCBE methodology, which I don't have to define, and that was already talked about.

We were asked to list, in order of the greatest contribution to risk and overall assessment uncertainty, and comment on the effects of those assessment factors that most contribute to risk and impact status determinations and future yield predictions, and so we've listed those top three here, and number one, not surprisingly, is this issue of low recruitment, and that's the key to determine long-run viability of the stock, even when F equals zero, and discard mortality, and that's a key driver of uncertainty in F , and natural mortality is another key driver of F .

We applied the ABC Control Rule, and I won't walk through each tier, and that ended up with a P^* of 32.5 and a probability of rebuilding of 67.5 percent. These are recommendations of rebuilding projections, and so I mentioned this before, and the fixed F for the interim years, with F being the average of the last three years of the time series. The discards, in the past, there was a -- In the projections, they've been allowed to follow the landings, but we recommended to allow F from the discard fleet to remain constant.

Use both recent average and long-term average recruitment in projections, consider all available information regarding actual landings and discards for 2022, and then the OFL projection -- We recommend using an F of 0.1 instead of F_{max} for the FMSY proxy, and, again, sticking with our catch level projection workgroup recommendation, that OFL projection would use long-term average recruitment, whereas the ABC projection would use the recent average recruitment and 75 percent of the FMSY proxy, instead of F of 0.1. All right, and I'm going to skip these, and these are our research recommendations, but those are in the report, and, for saving time, I will move over that one.

This is the important one, the guidelines for the next assessment. We recommend conducting an interim analysis to provide an updated indication of stock health and potential recruitment trajectory, examine the combined video index, landings, or discards to determine if substantial changes have occurred to inform whether a new assessment is warranted, and so the SAFE report would be helpful there. The timing, within five years from the terminal year of the previous

assessment or to be adjusted based on results of an interim analysis, and then the recommended type was an operational, with flexibility to explore model structure changes.

This is just an overall comment that the SSC had, that we're deeply concerned, not just with biomass status and low-recruitment trends of black sea bass, but also concurrently occurring shallow-water snapper and grouper species, such as red grouper, red porgy, scamp, and gag. The SSC supports the use of increased education to reduce dead discards, such as the usage of descending devices. However, improved release practices that increase survival of discards are not sufficient to reduce overall discard mortality. The council needs to consider additional strategies to reduce discarding, by limiting interactions, and thus promote rebuilding through effort reduction. I think that's the last slide, and I would be happy to take any questions, Chair, if there's time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Carolyn, do we have time for a couple of questions?

DR. BELCHER: Yes, I think we can get a couple.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Are there questions here on this stock assessment? Mel and then Laurilee.

MR. BELL: I know we're not talking about SEDAR schedules in the future or anything, but we mentioned an operational assessment, but, if there's an indication that something is going on with this, that might take us to a regime shift, or movement, or something, would that require us to shift to a more robust assessment, or would an operational work, or I'm just wondering, at this point. I mean, I know that's down the road, but things may be going on here with sea bass and other -- Particularly with sea bass right now, maybe.

DR. BUCKEL: That's a good point, Mel. If there is an indication of a regime change, and that workgroup, or other work, shows that that's going on, or, as you mentioned, a shift, then that may -- The SEDAR Steering Committee should consider a research track, and, yes, that's a good point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: What was the logic behind having a different minimum size limit between the commercial and the recreational? If eleven inches was good enough for the commercial, why is the size limit for recreational thirteen inches, and could they be throwing a lot of fish back in the water trying to reach the thirteen-inch fish? Would we reduce the discard mortality if we lowered the minimum size limit to eleven inches, to match the commercial? Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: This is a management question, and so someone here from the council staff can try to answer it.

DR. COLLIER: Given the time crunch that we're under, I'll answer that tomorrow, when I go over the fishery overview.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds great. Let's do that. All right. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I just want to make the same comment that I made about the recruitment for scamp, when we were talking about that, that the fact that that long-term -- If we really have a regime shift, we're really raising that ceiling higher than we probably should, and so, if it's possible to get that OFL estimate, based on the lower recruitment, I think it would be helpful to have it.

DR. BUCKEL: Thanks, and we did ask for that to be done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Shannon.

DR. CALAY: I actually have the answer to the two questions that were asked at the end of my presentation, if there is time before we end.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure. Go ahead.

DR. CALAY: All right. I wanted to correct one answer. When I said 6 to 19 percent, that's the full -- That's all fisheries, including the commercial fisheries, and so, for the rec, it's between 14 and 15 percent, for the recreational fisheries, and it's 13.7 percent for charter boat and private, and the 6 to 19 includes commercial gears.

Then the two questions about PSE, for the general rec landings, the PSEs range from 0.4 in a single year to about 0.19, and so they're most often in the range of 0.2 to 0.3, in most years, and, for the discards, surprisingly, it's generally lower, and so, in the first few years of the discards in the general rec, the PSEs are 0.4 and 0.3, but, in the more recent years, they tend to be closer to 0.1, and so there are some higher PSE values, but, in general, they're not terribly surprising.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Shannon, just for clarification, because most people are used to hearing it in percentages, that's basically 10 percent and 20 percent, and so, for those of you who were thinking that sounded lower than what you're used to hearing for PSE numbers, and I just wanted to clarify that.

DR. CALAY: That's correct.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think that will cover us for today, and I'm going to pass it over to Carolyn to tell us how much time we have for a quick break before we go into public comment.

DR. BELCHER: I'm going to need probably at least five to ten minutes to get with staff, to figure out what we have for numbers and time, and so, right now, I have we're two minutes to four, and so 4:10 is what I'm hoping that we'll be able to start into public comment.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 14, 2023.)

JUNE 15, 2023

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the World Golf Village Renaissance, St, Augustine, Florida, on Thursday, June 15, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get started here. We are still in the Snapper Grouper Committee, and our AP Chair, Bob Lorenz, has to catch a flight, and so, instead of going right into black sea bass, we're going to put that on pause, and we're going to go back to Bob, and he is going to cover what the Snapper Grouper AP said about the recreational permit and then their additional items that weren't on the agenda, which included space operations, and so I'm going to pass it over to Bob.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning, council. It's a beautiful day. Yes, we were asked, as an AP, just to kick in a few ideas of what were our thoughts with respect to the space operations that are occurring, the fact they're going more commercial rather than governmental and military and things, and I think it was based on some concerns that Laurilee had.

We have a number of fishermen on the AP that are impacted by that down there, with let's say -- I don't know, and it would be about twenty-two members, maybe, that show up regularly for one of our meetings, and at least five or six are fishing or are familiar with that area that have been chased, as they like to say, and so they had some thoughts on it.

Again, as this is becoming more increasingly orienting towards something that's commercial, which is what they feel they are, versus, as I said, military or governmental-type or research-type situation, and we have a member on our AP, Andy Fish, and he's down that way, and he's lived his whole life there, and he does some recovery diving in the area, and so he's quite familiar with what goes on there, and he's quite familiar with debris that can be in that area. You know, being from that area, of course, lots of friends, relatives, ex-classmates from high school, are somehow, in some way, involved with the Kennedy Space Center, either directly or as contractors, and so he gave us kind of a good bit of information on what went on there.

I believe that our AP report -- If you get to page 9, you can see a few more details on that, on what was discussed, but, basically, what's happening down there, that they are concerned of, is, of course, when there's a launch, things are closed. If there is a delay in the launch, things continue to be closed, and launches tend to be done, and I don't know if you're noticed, on pretty days, and they don't do launches in really snotty weather, and so that's also a great time, and a safe time, to fish, and so that's a concern of them, of theirs, and then the other issue is that, when the launches get delayed, so do they, and you continue to be kept out of the area, and you're not let back in for a while, and so this just elongates what is going on, and so that's the concern, and most of them said that they have dealt with that on and off with that, some more than others, because some are directly in that area.

Questions they brought up, as far as, I guess, if you want to throw a little muscle behind what's going on with this, because, again, shifting away to what's more and more private industry, people like Space X using the thing, for maybe a thousand-plus launches, and these are well-paid

businesses, with stockholders, and, you know, high-value people are involved in this, and so maybe help out our guys that are commercially involved with fishing, be it for taking clients out or whether it's the commercial guys.

Questions they brought up is how does unrecovered debris from space launches affect oceanic species and environments, and I guess you could say that's a potential research question, but that's one of their questions, is what goes on with that debris, what's in it, and that's a question. What could you do? Coming from them, something they would like would be, I guess, as a body that supports activity, you know, the Commerce Department, which is governmental activity, and our economy would be, and I don't know, and maybe there would be a letter or something that would be something that could be written to at least weigh-in.

What they would look for is can the time of the closures be shortened as much as possible, and the other thing is apparently they're not getting very much, or very good quality, notice, and they would like more advance notice of when the start and the end times are going to be, and that helped them plan a little better, and it seems like with some it's more a surprise than anything else.

They also asked that, since this is a commercial activity occurring, essentially offsetting, or shutting down, their commercial enterprise for a period of time, on these very pretty days, that could there be compensation for missed fishing time for the commercial and the for-hire businesses, if they can honestly prove that they missed out on something, a charter had to be cancelled, et cetera, and is there a way to get compensation for that.

They brought up the fact, and I know it's a little different, because it was a bad pollution spill, that there is some precedent for compensation from the BP oil spill response in the Gulf of Mexico, and then they brought up that this occurs in other areas, and like it was brought up that we have some areas in North Carolina that are periodically closed, and it's not that bad for us, and right around the Camp Lejeune military base, there can be -- They tend to be closer to shore, and we have sort of a blast zone down near for Fort Fisher, down near Wilmington, that there is no entry at all, and you will be chased out of the river at a certain point, depending on if the military is deploying, et cetera, from out of that, and I believe there's a lot of ordnances stored down there.

Those were the items, and that's what the folks on the AP wanted to provide, and it was mostly the people from Florida that talked, and a few other people did add some other comments and information.

Then another item we had would be the AP may want to have some potential conversation about commercial permitting and considering removal of the two-for-one requirement, and that comes up periodically, and, you know, it's mostly brought up by folks who are newer, or want to be newer into the fishery.

A few things that I didn't have on there, but I will just tell you some items that we do come up with, just for your general knowledge, because I had heard it here, and working waterfronts comes up a lot, that loss of the inability of the commercial sector and all to have a good place to go, and it's not just a good place, or a place that they're allowed and comfortable, but it's also that it be affordable, and, when we often talk of this online, we -- The agendas are so full, with what you ask us to do on the species, that we often don't have time to, as a group, discuss the things that affect us, and, often, where we as a group, since you have selected us to, you know, give you

information, where we can take some action, but on those working waterfronts -- I mean, with a lot of us, what we find is where the power is is within our states.

You know, I know, in North Carolina, we do have a -- There's a fund or something to try to address working waterfronts, but they also do put in -- I think, right now, they're soliciting applications if you want an appropriate marina built in a certain area, and it's to provide dockage for boats thirty-five feet and above, but I don't think they had the commercial men in mind, and so a little bit more noise will have to be made on that part.

The recruitment issue is continually talked about, and so, if you're thinking of research or something, or things we like, or would be interested in, is, more and more, there's a feeling of, well, what are fishermen going to do as these stocks decline, because it keeps coming up that recruitment is an issue, and, you know, we've been through the red porgy, scratching our head of what's going on, and, you know, now we're hearing about the scamp, and we don't quite understand and whether it ends up becoming, for most of, us what would be called a red grouper cycle, a boom-and-bust, and those sort of things.

Coastal water quality constantly comes up along the entire state, and, again, that's a state issue, and I don't know how we have that as a government issue, because you're going up against development. Big development has a lot of muscle, but then you get to siltation, and the inshore seagrasses die, and so, you know, you can't find the grouper species in what might be secondary nursery areas, and they are concerned with that, and we would like to talk more about that, and even among ourselves, and, you know, what can we do to slow that down, or get an offset, as this development occurs, and basically the lawns get fertilized, and the areas -- I know, just around my area, areas that -- Water that was as clean as the Keys, twenty years ago, and, I mean, you could just see the fish swimming around, and they pretty much have a little more of a cloudy haze to them, kind of most of the year and in the summer.

Then, again, the conversation for the two-for-one, and we do hear, periodically, about how to serve underserved communities with respect to getting into the snapper grouper fishery, and, again, because the price of entry is very expensive, but that argument goes both ways, because then we've got the gentlemen who considered the permits something for a family legacy, and it is their pension and future retirement, and so, with that, thank you. That's the other items from the AP.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. Are there any questions for Bob about the AP meeting? All right. I don't see any hands. Thank you so much, Bob. Bob is going to go ahead and give us the comments on the recreational permit, just in case the black sea bass discussion is lengthy.

MR. LORENZ: Just give me a minute to organize my notes here a little better. All right. Thank you, Mike, for the slides. I'm going to ad lib a little bit here, just to give you a little bit of history on recreational permitting, being that I sat through the public comment, and it's something that's been discussed for many years.

I mean, I'm in my eighth year on the AP, and I'm into my last year, and it's always been discussed, and, for those who may not know, the start of most of -- The strongest fervor for this started with the commercial fishermen, and it was more a matter of fairness, and that's what they brought up, you know, of that here they are, well documented and permitted, and everybody knows what they're doing, and everybody knows what they're discarding and what they're catching, but here's

a recreational fleet that can sort of do what it wants, and we don't know exactly who they are, and we're not exactly sure of what they're catching, because there's always been this sort of lack of full trust in the MRIP process, and so it has gotten better, and it's not what it could be, and so it was always -- It started with them, as, you know, a matter of fairness, and, you know, come on, and what's fair is fair.

You know, permit both sides, and who are all you guys, and then the fever just built with COVID, with the explosion of boat buying, and I experienced that myself, selling a boat for more than I ever thought that I was going to sell it, as people went into the recreational boating to do it, and so understand now, when you talk to our AP, you are going to get literally a unanimous across-the-board agreement to have a permit, but understand who is on it.

You know, we are selected by you, and, you know, you basically have a more enlightened group, with very active fishermen, and we're into conservation, and most of us really care about the species, and we are certainly into fairness, and we're right next door to our commercial comrades also, and so you will get possibly a little bit better -- It won't probably be as wonderful from the general public as you probably hear from your AP, because I get it back. I get back comments like, well, you're for it, or, gee, you could afford a permit, or, gee, it's going to be another tax, and those comments are going to be out there, and so, when it goes to the whole general public, you might expect a lot more negativity than the constant positivity you're getting from us, and we're constantly literally pushing this council to come on, let's do it.

I will get into the slides, and the bottom line, from the AP, is let's go, let's just do it. If anything, get the permit started, and really to just take a census count of who the recreational fishing community is in the EEZ waters at least, and everything else, education and this and that, is great to develop, but, if this takes time, it's critical not to delay at least the start of a permitting process, and so I will offer that.

This will come to the motions that we had, because we've been asked about how it should be, and so we did have a motion that the Snapper Grouper AP -- We recommend that we would like a vessel-based permit, rather than an individual angler-based permit, to be required for the private component of the recreational sector in Amendment 46, Action 1, Alternative 2.

I, as a private angler, know how wonderful that is, versus, when I get folks from out of town, and literally my whole life is giving free charters to family and friends and having to -- They show up with nothing, and, right before, the night before, I'm online buying day permits and all just for my own state, and I love vessel-based permits. I will pay for a vessel-based permit, and so that's me, and that's where a lot of the AP wants to go. I know, in side conversations to many charter folks, some of them would actually like to put some of that responsibility on the angler from the boat also, and so I've also gotten that feedback.

I've stated some of these things before. The vessel-based permit, it will identify the universe of the participants, and it will be consistent with how you're permitting now the commercial sector, and you're doing it by boat, and, as I just explained, in my own personal experience, it's the vessel owner is typically the one taking people out fishing, and is the responsible party for the trip, and we're responsible up and down for safety, with our boats and all, and we are basically the ones that have to know the rules, and lots of people that fish with us only fish with us, and they don't follow the rules, and they don't even know this management process actually exists, and so that's

what is good with going with the vessel owners, is the vessel owners know, and word gets around, particularly when there's enforcement behind it. The word gets around.

Then the part that -- They feel the logistics of implementing the vessel-based permit should be easier than angler-based permits, because you will have much less to do, and you already have a system for doing boats on the commercial side.

The next motion would be to recommend that the council selects Alternative 2, all species within the snapper grouper complex, to be included in the private recreational grouper permit, and the fact would be that that will be more regionally comprehensive than what we're seeing with the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, which I believe is a little more selective with respect to the species that are picked and that including all snapper grouper species could reduce regulatory confusion and improve the compliance with the anglers, and it would be a lot easier.

I will just add one thing, since I'm up here and I have the mic, and this -- I did not say this, and I thought of this myself the other day, and it was one challenge with that, that I wish that I could have brought up to the group, for you all to think about is the species I think that would be the biggest snag, that I think you're talking next, is going to be black sea bass, because, until I came on this AP, I didn't realize that it was in the snapper grouper complex, because of the way my state, North Carolina, treats it. It's a big thing on sea bass, and, in fact, the population splits, and there are different rules for below Hatteras and different rules above Hatteras and state waters.

In my area, it's just a wonderful species in the winter. They get pretty big, and they hang out around the little coquina rocks, and it's a great fish to go for in December and March, but being part of that snapper grouper complex I think may -- You're going to need a little work on that, and think about the challenges with that, and one thing you will do is get a heck of a lot more people buying permits, because that's the one snapper grouper species that you're going to find within three miles, six miles, that sort of a thing. Most of the rest of them, and even like white grunt, you're out there a little further, but that's coming from me, and I did not talk about that to the AP, and I'm just offering that to you, since I'm here.

On Action 3, specify the area where the private recreational snapper grouper permit would be required to fish, harvest, or process the snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region, and I guess I got off-track by giving you my personal opinion there, but there was no support for no action, zero, from the entire AP. Nobody said no action, and that may be contrary to probably a few comments that I heard last night here, and there was some support -- We wrestle with this a lot, and that's why I am putting the numbers down here, but there was some support for Alternative 2, the permit required for the snapper grouper species caught in the EEZ only. Out of the sixteen or so members that we had there, eight were in support of that, and that was the biggest vote, for the EEZ.

There is some support for Alternative 3, for snapper grouper species caught in the EEZ or state water, and six were in support of that, whereas the Chair -- I didn't get to vote on that, but, actually, you can hear, from my comments, that I'm a little squishy on that one, because of the sea bass.

The note that notable fishing activity that affects the stock assessment and federal management occurs in state waters, and that a lot comes from all the Florida folks and not so much from -- Those of us from Georgia on up, we're having to go a lot farther to get most of these snapper

grouper species, and they really aren't that prevalent in our state waters and that we're catching them. If we do, they're extreme juveniles. Including state waters could improve identification of the snapper grouper recreational fishing universe, and I mentioned that with sea bass. You're going to get a lot of people because of that, and knock a species like that out, or white grunts, and it's going to be a significantly smaller universe that you're going to see. Including state waters could reduce regulatory confusion and improve compliance, and it's just, okay, you have to have a permit if you're fishing for these particular fish, any of them.

Then we got to the education-related actions for the draft, and we know this came up, and the biggest fear that came from the AP is, oh, is this going to delay the permit, and, again, that's this group of more enlightened anglers that you hand-select.

Recommend a new alternative that would immediately implement a mandatory education component to go along with a permit, but do not delay implementation of the permit. An education component could move forward independently of the permit, if necessary, and our thoughts are that you can drop it in a little later, and identify that universe of anglers first, please.

The education requirement be modeled to the HMS permit that is required for sharks, including links to encourage anglers to use existing reporting and regulation apps, and that comes up a lot, and we have -- Actually, one of our members is always pushing for the citizen science app, Tony Constant down in -- I think he's down near Hilton Head somewhere. Again, very enrolled and very much behind the use of these type of apps that are occurring with the Citizen Science Program, as you already have the tool, and you don't have to reinvent the wheel here for that, for reporting, and you've got a lot of it already in place.

Implement -- Consider implementing an education requirement that is valid as long as the permit is maintained and up-to-date. If the permit lapses, or a new permit is issued, the permit holder would need to go through the education requirement again, and so, you know, we've spoke of that. If you keep your permit up, you don't have to resign on the education. If you drop it, if you forget it, if you let it lag, you go through that again. Personally, I feel you could even do that with the price of these permits, and I think you could have a heftier charge in the beginning and a cheaper charge each year after, as long as somebody renews it every year. Again, my personal opinion, and I didn't get to bring that forward during the AP meeting, but I would like to throw that in there. Madam Chair, that concludes my report of what the AP discussed with respect to the recreational permit and private anglers.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. It looks like you guys spent a lot of time on that. Any questions for Bob on this topic? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you, Bob. That was really good, and we really appreciate you taking the time to chair this committee. You know, as I was going through the meeting materials, there is this constant drumbeat about how we need to collect data from the recreational industry. It's everywhere, you know, every species that we talk about, and it's constant, that we need data.

We started working on the recreational permit, and I was under the impression that it was going to require some reporting, you know, but then the reporting component got pulled out of it, and I understand, you know, that everybody wants to get this thing going, and get it going as quickly as possible, but, in listening to you, it seems like the AP is okay with going ahead and getting the

permits going, and they're okay with the educational component, but I didn't hear anything about a reporting requirement in what you said, and are they -- Are they okay with going ahead and issuing the permit without a reporting requirement?

MR. LORENZ: Absolutely not. The whole idea was to get reporting, and it was taken out, and so we weren't asked to discuss it, but, in other AP meetings, it has been discussed. They are banging the pots constantly about that, and where most of the discussions have led is maybe, okay, don't report everything, but maybe report critical species. Start this on some of the more critical species, you know, the species that we all go for, the red groupers, the gags, and, yes, this comes up constantly, and, no, they want reporting.

If you want my personal opinion, I think you're going to need reporting with the permit, you know, almost immediately. Otherwise, be careful of things that might come from the recreational component, the private recreational part, and they will use the massive numbers that will be reported to argue why they need more of other things, and that could come up, and that may backfire on some folks, if that happens, and you will see this mass of people that have a license, and they'll say we need more, because look how many of us there are, and so keep that in mind.

MS. THOMPSON: I don't think -- It wouldn't necessarily be every single person that has a permit that reports, and there's, you know, some parts of the commercial industry where 20 percent report this year, and then another 20 percent, and, you know, they can rotate it around. The electronic -- The commercial electronic logbook that we saw a presentation about, it is fabulous, and it looks like it's going to be simple to use, and it covers all of the species, you know, in the complex, or that we manage, and could that same electronic reporting mechanism be used by the recreational fishermen too, and so like we don't have to create a whole new thing for the recreational people? I thought that app was great, and I'm looking forward to getting it implemented, but why couldn't that be used for the recreational people also?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mike and then Mel.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just wanted to note that, when we get into Amendment 46, we are going to have a report from our technical AP for that permit, and that question might be better suited towards Luiz, when he gives that report, and we can get into that discussion, and so, if you don't mind holding onto it, we can get into it later this morning.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: That's all I was going to suggest, is we're going to get into the weeds on this stuff really deep later, and so it might be good to let Bob finish up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Are there other questions? All right. Thank you so much, Bob. Thanks for spending so much time on this, and, as you heard, thank you so much for chairing our Snapper Grouper AP. We really appreciate it, and we appreciate you taking the time to come here and give us those updates.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I consider it an honor, and I'm glad to be here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We are now going to backtrack and go back to black sea bass, and we're going to dive into the fishery overview. Remember the goal for, after going through this fishery overview, is discussion of, you know, starting another amendment here to deal with what we've heard so far on black sea bass, primarily the stock assessment, and so be thinking about, and get your questions ready as we go through the overview, and we're going to have a discussion after this.

DR. COLLIER: All right, and so this is a similar fishery overview to all the other species that you have been given, and the one exception is the history of management has changed a little bit. We just extracted this from the stock assessment report, just to give you -- Just to make it a little bit easier for everybody to read and to find, and so the history of management changed a little bit.

The fishery performance report is the 2022 fishery performance report that the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel discussed for black sea bass. If you do want to see the 2017 report, that is still available you just go to the welcome back and scroll down, you can see it here on the 2017 report, and that's going to be in the list of all the fishery performance reports, and that's going to be that app, where it's available, and so we'll dive into the graphs.

Shannon gave a great presentation yesterday on the stock of black sea bass, and so I'm not going to go into any of those graphs, and we just pulled the information directly from the stock assessment report. When we do get the projections, I will update this graph, so you are able to see how the current catch levels are going to be compared to the catch levels, and, just as an FYI, I did update, yesterday, the catch levels for yellowtail snapper, and so, if you go into the yellowtail snapper fishery overview, that does have the current catch levels relative to the projected catch levels.

Going into the combined data, much like what was described yesterday, things don't look that great for black sea bass, and you can see that both the recreational and commercial fisheries are not achieving their ACL. If you look at the actual catch rates, or landings, you can see that quite a bit of it is coming from the recreational fishery, and I'm only providing 2014 to 2021, just because there is -- I had a hard time describing where the catch was coming from, and I haven't had to deal with the issue in North Carolina, where it's north of Cape Hatteras and dealing with how to break out the landings from there, and so I'm working on that. NMFS does have a very good way to separate the landings from north of Cape Hatteras, and I just have not matched that data stream up yet, and so I'm working on that, and so we'll get that done, and so North Carolina, for scup and black sea bass, that will be addressed in the future, but, for right now, we have a pretty short timeline.

Then you have the recreational and commercial by month, and you can see most of the recreational occurs throughout the year. However, from 2014 to I believe it was -- Well, maybe it was just 2014, but, if you remember, back in that time period, there was a black sea bass pot closure, and that was when the council was dealing with the right whale closure and how to get the increase in the ACL back at that time, and so that's why you're seeing that no landings of black sea bass in 2014.

This fishery is a little bit different than most, and it is concentrated in North Carolina, and most of the landings are coming from there, both recreational and commercial, and so, diving into the commercial sector data, I have data provided here, at least for landings, from 2000 to 2021, and

you can just see a continual decline in that, and you also see a continual decline in the number of releases, and these number of releases were provided in the stock assessment, and so both of those sources of information are declining.

Growing up, I remember black sea bass being primarily a winter fishery, and we are not seeing that right here in the data. What you're seeing is it's primarily a May-June fishery, and that tends to be the peak. However, in 2017 to 2022, you are also seeing the highest month of landings tends to be -- Or the months of landings tend to be January and February. As I said, it's primarily a North Carolina fishery, and this is where the commercial fishery is operating, and you can see that here in the graph on the regional comparison, where the majority of landings are coming from North Carolina. However, you also see just really a reduction in the overall commercial landings.

We do have the length distribution from 2000 to 2021. Over this time period, the length, or the minimum size limit, for black sea bass has increased, from an eight-inch fish to an eleven-inch fish for the commercial fishery, and I'm going to go into a little bit more detail on the recreational fish, on the time series for how things have changed. The other thing that I do want to point out, from 2010 to 2022, is you see, when we're looking at how many trips were catching black sea bass, or the pounds of black sea bass that were landed, you can see, in 2010, there was a lot of trips, and a lot of the pounds were coming from greater than a thousand pounds, and so they had over a thousand pounds on a trip.

Then, over time, you're just seeing this overall decrease in number of trips, and the pounds of those trips decreasing, and so what you are ending up seeing is you are no longer seeing this little blip on the end, where it's the number of trips landing black sea bass, or landing a thousand pounds of black sea bass, are occurring in the South Atlantic region. That's one indication that the stock is not doing well, much like the stock assessment had indicated yesterday.

Then we'll go into the recreational data. In recreational, you're seeing the overall decrease in landings over time, and there was an increase in the number of discards, all the way up to 2014. If you remember back to the stock assessment, that's when they were -- At least in 2014, that was one of the peaks in the recruitment, and then, since 2014, you're seeing a decline in the number of releases in the recreational fishery. From 2000 to 2021, you can see the distribution of the timing of landings, and it's pretty sporadic for black sea bass, and there is -- It tended to be a little bit of a winter fishery, but, in more recent years, you're just seeing an overall decrease in the landings of black sea bass.

As far as the area where harvest is occurring, prior to 2010, probably up to 2015, the majority of landings were coming from Florida, and then, since then, you're seeing the majority of landings coming from North Carolina, and so there might be a shift to a more northern area for this species.

The size limit for black sea bass, and I will be talking about these next three graphs in a little bit more detail in a second, but the majority of the lengths that we're getting for black sea bass are coming from the private recreational fishery, and, for the most part, they're greater than ten-inch fish. These are measured in fork length, and, if you've ever seen a black sea bass, it's a little confusing to think about what a fork length is, because they have a tricuspid tail, and so what is a fork length can be interpreted differently by people, and so don't take these lengths as being absolute. They worked through this in the stock assessment process, to make sure that what lengths

are being reported are accurate, but, for the most part, it is a challenge, and that's why I'm not putting the size limit on this graph.

The other thing that I want to point out is, prior to 2006, there was a bag limit of twenty black sea bass per person, and that has changed over time, and I will get into all the changes that have occurred, and so, prior to 2006, you're seeing a pretty big -- You see a nice little bump here at the end, and that's indicating that, yes, some people might have been achieving their bag limit of the fifteen or twenty bag limit of fish, but, since then, you're seeing a truncation in the number of people that are actually achieving that bag limit, and that's a good thing, because regulations have changed and restricted how many fish people can have, but it's also a little bit discouraging, because you're not seeing a high number of people getting those.

Going back to a question that Laurilee had yesterday, as far as why is the commercial size limit eleven inches and the recreational size limit thirteen inches, in 2006, there was a stock assessment that indicated the stock of black sea bass was overfished and overfishing was occurring, and, at that point, the bag limit was twenty fish per person, and the size limit was ten inches.

The council decided to reduce the bag limit to fifteen fish per person and increase the size limit, and they did it in a two-year time block. They increased it from eleven inches one year to twelve inches, and that was to allow -- That was to prevent having to go down to a five-fish bag limit, and they decided that that was the better option, at least for the -- They indicated that was the better option, based on the input from the Snapper Grouper AP as well as from the public in general.

Then, in 2011, they dropped the bag limit from a fifteen-fish to a five-fish bag limit to increase the season. If you remember back then, the season was getting very short for black sea bass, and so they decreased the bag limit. In 2012, they increased the size limit to a thirteen-inch fish, to address overfishing, based on the stock assessment at that point, and then, in 2016, they increased the bag limit, from five fish per person to seven fish per person, when the overfishing and overfished status was removed for that stock, and so it's been a pretty dynamic regulation history for black sea bass, and much of it was trying to keep the -- Trying to address some of the concerns of the recreational fishery, trying to make sure that they could extend the season beyond just a few months.

If you remember back in 2010 to 2012, the recreational fishery was being truncated quite a bit, and it wasn't getting to the winter fishery, and it was ending -- In one year, I think it was only a three-month season for the recreational fishery, and so that's it for the black sea bass overview. I do have the life history information, and all that other information that's included in there, if you would like to see that, but I'm not going to pull that up today.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We appreciate you going through that, Chip. Questions for him about this fishery overview? Yes, Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you for that, Chip, and so it looks like, over time, the size limit has gone up, and it's gone down, and it went to twelve inches, and then somehow it's now back down to eleven inches for commercial, and it went up to thirteen for recreational, and I'm going to ask the same question. If we lower the size limit to eleven inches for recreational, do you think that would help decrease the dead discards, and can the stock support it, because I know that the bigger fish are the male fish, and is that the reason that it's thirteen inches for the recreational, to try to keep more males in the population? What is the reason that there is two different sizes?

DR. COLLIER: With the commercial fishery, the reason that the size limit was eleven inches is that matches the -- If you think about the black sea bass commercial fishery, the pot fishery is one of the big fisheries for that, and, at that time period, the available mesh size for the black sea bass pots matched an eleven-inch fish, and they indicated that it was a challenge to find a different mesh size for the black sea bass pots that would match those larger fish, and so they kept the size limit for black sea bass at eleven inches for the commercial fishery, and they were happy with earlier closing for that, and, basically, it's we'll catch them at eleven inches until we get to our quota, and then close us, and the commercial fishery -- They tolerated that, and, I mean, nobody is happy with a closed fishery, but that is the part that they were dealing with.

For the recreational fishery, they decided that they would go up in size limit, as opposed to going down in bag limits, and that's the reason that things have gone up to a thirteen-inch fish. If you want to go down to an eleven-inch fish, we had an analysis that was done -- I am trying to remember, and it was a few years ago, but, for black sea bass, the reason -- The reason most black sea bass are being released is because of the size limit, as opposed to people reaching the bag limit, and so you're going to increase the number of people that are reaching the bag limit, and so you would decrease the number of discards. However, you could potentially also decrease the season that black sea bass are open, and, based on past council decisions, they wanted to extend the black sea bass season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: I would just like to -- I wanted to say about -- Just to talk about Georgia, since that's where I fish primarily, and there's been a lot of things -- There is a lot of things that has taken place in Georgia over the last couple of years, and number one is the weather here is -- The weather in Georgia has been awful, and so that has limited the amount of time that people could go fishing. Number two, the biggest part of our charter fleet has retired, and so we don't have as much -- We don't have as many people fishing in the charter industry as we did before, and then we had COVID, where we didn't know what to do for a while, and so we didn't fish, and I just wanted to go on the record saying that.

Also, when we had a bag limit of five fish at thirteen inches, I thought that was working pretty good, and then we changed it to a bag limit of seven, which I didn't understand why we did that, but, of course, we had to do it, I guess, because of the keeping it open, and my suggestion is that we go back to the five bag limit, and just anything to keep from closing the fish. When you close the fishery, that really is very, very bad for us. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Judy. Mel.

MR. BELL: Not to worry too much about what was, but part of the rationale also for the eleven-inch fish in the commercial was, in the commercial world, those eleven and twelve-inch fish are marketable products, because they size grade sea bass, and so, if you're catching them for the commercial market, there is some value. Recreationally, filleting out an eleven-inch sea bass -- I mean, if you can only have five, or seven, you know, it's not much of a meat yield, and so there was more desire for fewer fish and larger fish. You know, that was part of that history, too.

The other thing with why we went from five to seven is my recollection was that that was after sort of things were rebuilding, and the idea there was the council wanted to kind of give something back, give some potential back to the fishermen and all, and so the thinking was, yes, here's some more fish, but maybe it didn't work out so great in the long run, but that was part of the rationale, I think, from what I recall from all of that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Others? This is a good discussion. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Was the contingent with right whale closure area of reducing the sea bass potters is the reason why the quota got increased, and was there a caveat there that you reduced the sea bass potters by great numbers, and then you increased the quota, and was that explicit to the right whale, like a one-for-one tradeoff, that that's the only way that got done, was to reduce the fishermen, the commercial industry?

DR. COLLIER: The council took some actions prior to a consultation with Protected Resources, and one of the actions, or some of the actions, that they took was to make the black sea bass pot fishery -- They restricted access in that, and they made that a permitted fishery, and they restricted the number of pots. However, when it came to the final consultation, they also had the restricted areas that were added on to them, because, when the ACL increased around 2016, due to the better condition of the stock, there was concern of increased risk for right whales, because of the pot fishery, and that's why there is closed areas in that black sea bass pot fishery right now. Does that answer some of the questions?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, it does, and so, basically, the quota only got increased when the fishermen reduced. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Gary.

MR. BORLAND: I think that, kind of along Dewey's, effort, right, and is there another component to this where commercial effort has changed, causing the overall landings to go down, and how about, you know, market dynamics on the consumer side, where, you know, people might not want to buy black sea bass, because there was another option, imports or whatever, that have caused some of the total poundage to go down? I think that component needs to be added in here, when we see this kind of massive decrease in the commercial side.

I mean, there may be less permits out there, and these commercial fishermen may have, you know, changed fisheries, or changed targets, and I feel like that needs to be addressed when we see this kind of decline. I get that the recreational piece is going down too, and so it overall -- What we talked about yesterday, I get it that it's overall going down, it looks like, the population, but I believe there's more information here that could be had to explain this a little bit better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Kerry. I think Kerry wants to respond to some of those things that you just brought up.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that point, in my experience, the fish left, and then we've stopped fishing for them, because they weren't there. We catch very, very few anymore, on hook-and-line, and we used to catch a lot more. The market demand is certainly there, if we had the fish, and I think either they moved, or something else happened, but, in this, there are fish, and you can sort of say,

oh, there's less fishermen, but that doesn't make -- You know, the trends are happening for everyone, and so, in this case, the fish aren't there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Gary, to that, and then we'll go to Tom.

MR. BORLAND: Just to -- I get that, and I think that is the overall, and I think that my comment too, more as we look at these different fish, and I think part of that could be brought into this equation, right, the effort, you know, less fishermen, less hours, less trips, and obviously, if the fish have left, people aren't fishing for them anymore, and the fish could still be there, but the people have quit, and just those type of things brought into some of these reports.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Chip, and then we'll go to Tom.

DR. COLLIER: Just thinking about the way to potentially display that for you all, for the recreational fishery, we can do directed trips, because we have that information, and, for directed trips, we would define that based on if the fisherman indicated that it was the primary species or the secondary species on the trip, or they landed the species.

For the commercial fishery, there is different ways to do it, and one of my thoughts, for something like black sea bass, is maybe saying number of trips catching black sea bass that had over a hundred pounds. Just looking back, or just thinking back, to how the trips were -- The distribution of trips, and, if you had over a hundred pounds of black sea bass, it seemed like you were kind of directing on the fish a little bit, and maybe at least at one spot you were directing for that species, and we can definitely do that. That pound limit might change, and, obviously, it would have to change for something like black sea bass, where it's only a seventy-five-pound trip limit, but that is something we could easily add in there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: You know, my experience with black sea bass in North Carolina is they're not necessarily a fish that, recreationally or for-hire, that we take directed trips over. They're a part of our snapper grouper component species, right, and they're pretty available, and they're a fish that are available across a wide ecosystem, and we catch them in a lot of different areas, and they're not there. We do not catch them like we used to. We always are going to catch small ones, and we catch small ones inshore.

The only time we really have, I would say, directed trips are in the winter, right, because they're going to be found in colder water, closer to shore, and at least that's when I do them, but I will say that my experience with this fishery, over the last decade-plus, was that truly it was best after we had those closures for a time period, and I'm just trying to think back to what years they were, and it would open up in the summer, and immediately the fishing got much, much, much better, and we had wonderful sea bass fishing for the summer and fall months, as long as it was open, right, and, as soon as we started going to that year-round season, it just seemed to dip down. Now, I'm not saying that fishing pressure is causing this, and it could very well be climate, but that's just my experience with this fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Tom. This has been a great discussion, and I would say that the next steps in this process are I think we need a motion to begin an amendment to address the

findings in the stock assessment, and I don't believe we have an ABC recommendation yet, plus we've talked about regime shifts and how to bring that in, but I guess I would say we're having a good discussion here about, in my mind, some management alternatives to look at in this document. Mike, I don't know if you want to capture some of these, as people are talking about it, as items to possibly bring into that document, in addition to just initiating a motion.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Before a motion for the amendment gets made, I did want to just add that there's one extra thing that you all might want to consider including in a black sea bass amendment, and so, right now, there is an EFP that allows ropeless black sea bass pots to be fished, and that EFP expires in 2025, and so, if that gear is to be allowed in this fishery beyond that EFP, it needs to be added to the FMP as an allowable gear.

We have a couple of things coming up related to that, and so, right now, there's a ropeless gear workshop that's being planned for August. We're working with Georgia Sea Grant to put that together, and that's going to be followed by meeting with the pot endorsement holders, researchers, NMFS Protected Resources, and some council staff and council members, and there will be a report on that coming to you all in September, and so I just wanted to throw that out there, that, if you would like to, when you initiate the amendment, that's a potential action that could be included related to black sea bass as well. There's also a seminar series coming up on ropeless gear in August.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Mel.

MR. BELL: I mean, I think that would be a logical thing to have an action, to at least allow for that, and this would be the place to stick it in, and so it would make sense to me to initiate an amendment and include that as a suggestion for an action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, kind of tiering off what Mel is suggesting, I am thinking maybe a motion to initiate an amendment and then direction to staff about what types of things you would like to see in that document. Mel.

MR. BELL: Does our motion to initiate an amendment trigger anything, timing-wise? Does a clock start, or does --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: No, and so any clock starting, in terms of rebuilding, you know, the black sea bass stock overfished determination, that would start when we receive a letter from the Fisheries Service, and so that hasn't come yet, and so that doesn't start the clock, but it is -- You know, we are going to have to have an amendment to respond to the assessment results.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy and then back to Mel.

MR. STRELCHECK: Good discussion, obviously, in terms of addressing the amendment, and so I don't want to modify that discussion, but I do have concerns, right, with regard to it's going to take us a couple of years to get through probably an amendment, and, if we want to do something more quickly, that would be maybe a more simplified action, and, if you recall, the commercial fishery opens on January 1, and the recreational fishery -- We announce the season every year on April 1, and, given the trends, you know, it would be a year-round fishery.

Recognizing that we don't understand exactly what is causing the change in abundance, and some of it might be fishing mortality rate, and some of it might be climate related, I feel like it's really important that we try to move quickly to at least address some of the fishing mortality in this kind of interim period, before we can complete a longer-term action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Mel, you had your hand up?

MR. BELL: I guess, following up on that, that's like multiple amendments then, but we're talking about starting -- I mean, we don't have to have it fleshed out, obviously, but just starting some sort of amendment to address what we've learned from the stock assessment, right, and then do we need to specify, in that motion, this list of things we want included or just -- Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and I wouldn't put that in the motion. If you have some items that you would like for staff to look at, I would put that in direction to staff separate from the motion itself.

MR. BELL: Would we need to specify right now the type of amendment, or just an amendment?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: It would need to be a plan amendment, just because we're coming off of a stock assessment, and so that at least initiates a consideration of reallocation, and so that's -- If allocation is included, it would need to be a plan amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm not sure how specific we want to get, and, I mean, Jack and I were just talking, and we have the abbreviated framework process, and so that might be well suited if we wanted to at least adjust catch limits and do a couple of simpler management changes quickly, and then build a bigger amendment with kind of broader management measures, and so I don't know if we need to decide it today, other than just kind of setting in motion how we want to do a two-pronged process, if the council is agreeable to that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. That is helpful. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I am trying to get all this straight in my head, and are we basically talking about what we just did with Spanish, and we'll do a framework amendment to make the changes necessary to address the stock assessment, and then we'll do a full amendment to take care of allocations and gear and all that? Is that what we're talking about, because I'm drawing a parallelism here, and so are we following that same procedure?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and that's kind of what Andy was suggesting, was to do a framework to bring in what was coming from the stock assessment, and then there would be another one behind that would look at allocation and other things, because it's about what items can go in a framework, versus what items have to go in a full plan amendment, but we do need to look at allocation, because our trigger policy says that, following a stock assessment, we go back and look at allocation. Mel.

MR. BELL: So would it be enough to just say that we would move to initiate an amendment process for the black sea bass, you know, based on the results on the black sea bass stock assessment?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. BELL: Then we can figure out which kind of way we're going to zig or zag, and that's enough to get us going, right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, exactly, and I think it is just to initiate an amendment, and you don't need to say what type, and staff will bring something back, and so, yes, I think it can be more general.

MR. BELL: All right. **Then I would, if you would like, I would move that we initiate an amendment process for the black sea bass fishery to deal with the findings of the recent black sea bass stock assessment, or however you want to word that.** That gets us going.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We are working on getting that on the screen here. All right. **The motion is to initiate an amendment process for the black sea bass fishery to respond to the SEDAR 76 stock assessment.** Tom, are you seconding? Yes. Okay. So motion by Mel and seconded by Tom. It's under discussion. Once again, we're keeping this more general here, and we think it's going to be a framework, followed by a full plan amendment, but we'll have further discussions on that at the next meeting. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just to remind you of the timing, and kind of where we are, we don't have projections for ABC yet, and so those are being developed by the Science Center right now, and they will be reviewed by the SSC at their July webinar meeting, and so the hope is that there will be an OFL and ABC recommendation from the SSC at the September council meeting, but we're kind of -- As far as like developing the amendment, we need to get an OFL and ABC first, and then the IPT can get to work on developing that actual document.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. It's under discussion. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It was not to this, but I was going to ask SERO a question about the timeline for when you all will be sending a letter or the timeline starts for the two-year period to end overfishing, and when do you all expect to be sending that letter to the council?

MR. STRELCHECK: My expectation is it will be sometime after that July SSC meeting, when we have all the scientific advice.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion on this motion? All right. **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. That motion carries. All right. That's all we need to do on black sea bass, unless there is other comments that we need to discuss right now, and I don't see hands up, and we've already done some of the other items here on our agenda, and so I suggest we take a ten-minute break, and then, when we come back, we're going to be working on the private recreational permitting amendment, Amendment 46. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: In the essence of time, since we still have a couple of big items, and I know that there's been some other business that's been brought to our Chair's attention for this committee, I

am asking that we kind of limit what we're doing for Other Business, and we can vet through Jessica, and let us kind of see what we're going to add into the queue, but just, again, to be respectful of our time and the fact that we've got some pretty big things to talk about, because wreckfish is still out there, and just Other Business is being filtered through your two Chairs, and so thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I can do my Other Business with Andy, privately.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Got it. One other thing is you probably noticed that Tim is not with us this morning, and he's having a vessel emergency, a work emergency, and so he had to run off and work on that, and I didn't want you to think that he just skipped out on us, and so then we are now going to dive into Amendment 46. Instead of starting with the AP recommendations, we're going to kick it over to John, and he's going to kind of set up this amendment, this document, and then we'll go to Luiz.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and I just wanted to kind of briefly go over the general contents of the amendment at this point, and I think it will help tie into the AP report a little bit better in that way, kind of help connect the dots a little bit on some of the AP recommendations and how they relate to the contents of the amendment, since it has changed -- Sorry about that. The screen was paused, and so it should be showing up on everyone's webinar screen as well right now.

I just wanted to give a brief overview of the actions in the amendment, because they have been split out, according to the committee's previous guidance, and so you have five actions, to start off, with that focus on permit-related items, and so you split those out to look -- We split those out to look at essentially establishing the permit, specifying the species that would be covered, specifying the area that the permit would cover, and so the fishing activity that would be covered, looking at the length of time that a permit would be valid, and establishing a mechanism for states to potentially opt out of a federal permit requirement, assuming they had some sort of equivalent requirement in place.

Those are the first five actions, and that's really what the AP spent a great deal of their time on, but I just wanted to go over those, and they will come up again during the report, and we'll get into the details of them in the subsequent discussion with the committee.

Then, switching gears over to the education component, there is four other actions that look at establishing an education component, specifying whether the component would be mandatory or voluntary, the timing of implementation for an education component, and specifying the length of time that an education component would remain valid, and so that's just a brief overview, and, again, we'll get into the details, and, unless there are any questions, I'm going to hand it over to Luiz.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions? All right. We're going to pass it to Dr. Luiz Barbieri, who is going to give us some updates from this Permitting and Reporting AP.

DR. BARBIERI: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, John, for that overview and introduction to the amendment. It's great to be here, and I haven't been before the South Atlantic

Council for quite a while, and so it's great to see so many old friends, familiar faces, and get to meet some of the people that I haven't met before, and so it's a pleasure to be here.

As John explained, right, we have this technical advisory panel, right, that you put together, and we are developing a number of comments and recommendations on this snapper grouper recreational permitting and reporting amendment, Amendment 46, and so we met via webinar on May 15, and, looking at and discussing through that regulatory amendment, draft regulatory amendment, we developed a number of comments and, to the extent possible, made some recommendations, and I bring up this issue of to the extent possible because, as you're going to see during the presentation, we were, at times, unsure of a sense of direction.

I mean, we're basically trying to develop something from a technical perspective, and so it's like we will build it, right, but you have to tell us what kind of building you want to have, for what purpose, and then we know what materials to use and how to put it together, and so I think that this discussion today is going to be helpful in giving us a little more guidance in that direction.

As John mentioned, there are five draft actions dealing with different components of the permit itself, and then there are several additional, three additional, items that have to do with the education component, and then, through our discussion, we identified, you know, some next steps that we're going to proceed with for a future meeting, and hopefully get some guidance from you today that will help us solidify that sense of direction. I don't know if I need to re-read through those permit-related actions, and they are Draft Actions 1 through 5, since John already covered it.

Draft Action 1 is establish a private recreational snapper grouper permit to fish for, harvest, or possess snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region, and it was really interesting, to me, to -- You know, to have Bob Lorenz, the chair of the AP, give his presentation first, because it basically solidified my idea at least, and I know that is in line with several of the other technical AP members, of different expectations, a range of expectations, about this permit, right, and what it would serve, and so I got the impression that the AP is providing some input on their expectations, and I just want to make sure that this is in line with where the council thinks this should go.

We were basically thinking more of this as a way to define the universe of anglers and develop what we think would be a more specialized survey that will be supplemental to MRIP, or perhaps substitute, and, I mean, that's to be decided, right, but it would be something that would be more focused on the snapper grouper fishery and, therefore, increase the precision, and hopefully the accuracy, of those estimates that we get from the recreational fishery.

The Draft Action 1 is dealing with a vessel or angler-based permit, and there are pros and cons to either one of those, right, to those choices, and so it's a matter of defining that ultimate goal that you want to achieve, and then all the attributes of that would guide you in defining, deciding, whether you want this to be vessel-based or angler-based, but, for us, from a technical perspective, we felt that vessel-based would have some benefits, and you end up dealing with a smaller universe, right, of items there, because vessels -- It's a lower number, and the vessels have their registration number associated with them, and so that allows identification of the participants of the fishery, as they return to shore, and that's easy to identify and validate your observation right there, and it also provides, as part of the registration of the vessel, addresses that are associated

with that registration, and that allows then the use of that directory of addresses for development of something that could be akin to, or integrated into, the Fishing Effort Survey, the FES.

I bring this up because, at this point, we haven't discussed yet what the data collection process would be associated with this permit and who is going to conduct that data collection, and is this going to be a survey itself, or is it going to be a mandatory reporting, right, that's associated with each one of those permits, and, in that case, it would be a census and not a survey.

Back in December, right, when you last met, you decided to remove the mandatory reporting out of this, to facilitate, you know, streamlining the process and help this move forward a little faster, and I don't disagree with that, but this is something that we need to start a conversation towards in identifying the type of survey then that we're going to conduct and then how we can structure the survey.

All of this will matter, and it will have a major influence on the choices that we make on the type of permit that we develop, but, at this point, we are leaning towards a vessel-based permit, but, you know, another thing that we wanted to point out to you is that having a vessel or angler-based, you know, both have pros and cons, but having a consistent approach across all the states and the region, throughout the South Atlantic, is really, really important, that we have something that is not on a state-by-state, or two-regions, or whatever, right, and that you have something that is consistent over the entire South Atlantic regional area, because that will facilitate the estimation process, and it will bring cohesiveness on the data for quota monitoring and for providing inputs for the stock assessment, and they're comparable throughout the range of the species that we're covering, and so consistency across the region is a stronger preference than choosing whether the permit is angler or vessel-based.

Again, another component of this, in terms of vessel versus angler-based, is consideration of shore anglers. If you have a permit that is vessel based, you're not really considering shore anglers, and so are shore anglers really important for some of the species? Do you have landings, and/or discards, in the shore mode that are important for some of these species that you want covered by this permit? This is something for you to think about and, you know, for us to discuss as we move this forward.

I don't need to read this, because you can see what's there, right, but discards, as you know, is a very important component of the data collection process for you in the South Atlantic, given the situation that we see, and so evaluating whether, you know, shore mode for some of the species is important, you know, if it's an important component for that species is really relevant, and then the magnitude of that shore-based, either harvest or discards, is very important, and, also, are we satisfied or dissatisfied with the existing estimates from MRIP for shore mode, because, if we think that MRIP is doing a good enough job for shore mode, then we can have a supplemental survey that covers this vessel-based, but is integratable with MRIP for the shore-based component.

Then, looking at one of the alternatives under the vessel-based permit, Alternative 4, which would have at least one angler on a vessel would need a permit, and we decided this is not a good option to leave in there for a vessel-based permit, and so we decided to remove this one, because, in this case, having only one angler on a vessel needing a permit would create a problem in identifying, right, the universe of anglers that we are trying to identify, and that would create some problems

for the data collection component, and so, from a technical perspective, that's not advisable, and we decided to remove that one.

Then permit type recommendation, I already mentioned this, you know, along the way, that we are struggling to separate the questions on permitting, you know development of the permit itself, from the survey. I mean, the two are really integrated, and the way that we understand the purpose and need associated with Amendment 46 is that this is primarily a supplemental data-collection-focused permit, right, that this effort is focused on increasing, improving, data collection, and so, in that case, the two cannot be independently developed, and they have to be thought about at least together, in tandem, so that we have all the components in the permit that need to be there for us then to be able to develop a sampling program that obtains what we are trying to obtain.

We need to further discuss how a survey will be applied to each permit option, how a survey will be used for the various permit options to improve estimates, and then intended use of the permit to formulate then our recommendation, because, the more definition we have on that, the better we're going to be able to provide you with the technical advice needed.

We're going to be discussing this in the next item, but it's difficult to recommend a permit type, vessel or angler-based, without knowing which species will be covered, and all of this is an integrated package, right, that needs to be taken into account, all of these dimensions of the permit and how that ties into the data collection program, and we're going to have to do this in an iterative way, going back and forth and adjusting, as needed, and so we decided to discuss shore-based catches, integration into a survey, and the species selection at a future AP meeting, and we actually requested staff, and I've talked to John, about potentially bringing additional data for our next meeting, that we can look then at the magnitude of shore-based catches for different species, and we can look at different survey options, and we can then, you know, help inform the discussion of species to be included.

Draft Action 2 -- That completed Draft Action 1, and so Draft Action 2 is to specify the species that will be covered by a private recreational snapper grouper permit, and, you know, it's what I just explained, that this is -- It's really dependent on what we want to achieve, right, and there are some pros and cons of being more focused, right, and limit the number of species, versus more inclusive and broader, in terms of being more inclusive of other species.

If you look at the document, the draft document now for Draft Amendment 62, you see that there are tables there that list different options for combinations of groups of species that could be used, you know, for the permit, as an initial starting point, right, for the panel to discuss, and one of those was doing this just for species that have already been assessed, or are able to be assessed, and so assessed species would be Alternative 3, and that's a good option, because will have better data to inform assessment of those species, but that would then prevent development of better data for species that we want to assess in the future.

There is the issue, also, of, you know, how inclusive we want to be, right, and so tilefish, because you have a reporting requirement, a permit and reporting requirement, already being conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Council, and the Mid-Atlantic region, it would be beneficial to have that expanded into our region, but think about the consistency of the permit itself and the sampling instrument that's going to be used, the type of survey, or data collection program, between the two.

Tilefish is a very specialized fishery, and not necessarily as suitable to be sampled through a broad survey, and this is why, up there, they have developed their permit with a reporting requirement, and that's like more of a specialized fishery for the recreational component, and so, you know, this will help us think about that component.

The more that you can limit the number of species, the more focused your survey is going to be, right, and so, if you think about something like red snapper, tilefish, and greater amberjack, you're talking about very different life histories, very different fisheries, really, right, and so, when you include more species in this group, you're going to decrease the probability of having higher precision in your data collection, because now you're having to cast a very broad net, and you're not focusing on developing sampling strategies that are directed just for that specific fishery, but, when you do this, you actually avoid having information on discards for the other species, right, and so, the more that you broaden the number of species there, the more now you can see that people who are going out to fish for black sea bass may be catching a lot of red snapper, right, and discarding red snapper, perhaps, and so having a broader group of species there helps you prevent missing some of the fishing effort, missing some of that information on discards, that you will be collecting for those groups of species that are caught together.

Again, it's very difficult, and we're struggling. We're struggling with that, and it's something that we're going to have to continue discussing, right, and how much is enough, and how much is too much, in terms of focus here, and then the issue of regulatory burden, right, and potential future requirements also, and, the more that you broaden, right, the scope of species, the more you are imposing on a larger number of individuals, and regulatory burden, of course, is higher.

Draft Action 3, specify the area where a private recreational snapper grouper permit will be required to fish for, harvest, or possess snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region, and so this is really to discuss whether this permit would be for federal waters only in the EEZ or also include state waters, or just state waters, and, you know, in this case, we felt that, the broader that you have the geographic scope for the permit, the more you're going to have the opportunity to collect the information on catches and discards of these species, right, and so, even though people may be fishing mostly, for harvest purposes, on the EEZ, on federal waters, council-managed, perhaps you have a component of the fishery, younger and smaller fish, that are being discarded in state waters, and so having something that covers both state and federal waters really allows you to have that broader coverage in data collection, if that's what, you know, is important to obtain.

Also, the higher, I mean broader, coverage would allow for better outreach and education, and so that generated the discussion then of, okay, if we're going to have this be a federal permit that's also applicable to state waters, what's the administrative step, right, or the jurisdictional authority, that we need to consider for implementation of this, and we didn't have that information in front of us as something else that we, you know, thought about discussing at a future meeting, you know, the mechanism that we would require to have a federal permit required for state waters.

Then other permit-related items, Draft Actions 4 and 5, you know, one is the length of time that a permit will remain valid, and we just reiterated our previous recommendation for annual renewal, right, just because refreshing that directory, that list of participants, maintaining that up-to-date is important, you know, both from the participation component as well as the information on their

contact information and that, if it needs to be updated, doing this annually is the most helpful way to get it done.

Then we discussed this option for states to opt out of the federal permit requirement, and that was another difficult discussion, because different states had different feelings about this, and, you know, we clarified our prior recommendation for a federal permit, and we discussed this as an option for states to opt out if they have their own permit in place already, but, if this is now going to be expanded, right, beyond perhaps just a state-water -- If states are concerned about how they would develop something, or implement something, that would allow them to opt out, if they don't have the necessary resources in place, that they haven't developed yet the infrastructure, you know, to have that permit and data collection process in place.

We also felt that, you know, the criteria, the conditions and the mechanism of that opting out had not been spelled out yet, and, if it's something that you feel we should consider, we can continue looking into this, but we'll have to have more in-depth discussion, and this is one of those things where the devil is really in the details, and so we need to continue discussing this with you and get some direction on whether this is something that we should or should not pursue and get more input from the states as well.

The education component, Actions 6 through 9, Draft Actions 6 through 9, again, you know, in general, we reiterated support for an educational component, and, I mean, it's something that we see is valid, and it would be very beneficial to have in place, but, again, the devil is in the details, right, and so what represents an educational component, and I was discussing it with some people during the break, right, and there could be a three-minute video, versus a one-hour class, in-person or not, annually or you just do it once, and so there's different versions of this, right, that could be implemented, and I think we would have to have a better definition of the permit itself, the components of the permit, the species that are covered, you know, before we actually start developing the details for the educational component, but, in general, having an educational component tied to this we felt is very beneficial, and we are supportive of it, and I think this will be my last slide.

Yes, and so, for our next meeting then, you know, as I mentioned before, we're going to evaluate discards by mode, including shore mode, to evaluate how much that could be important, in terms of data collection for some stocks and species that have relevance to the South Atlantic, in terms of vessel-based versus angler-based, as well as what species and what areas are being covered.

We're going to follow-up with some of the AP members that are looking into the technical components of the survey development, and you know, if we start developing options for how this is going to be actually implemented, in terms of a survey, and is it going to be integrated into MRIP, you know, conducted side-by-side with MRIP, or a completely stand-alone type of process, you know, and all of this needs to be worked out and is really, really relevant for the data collection part of this, and so we're trying to develop working with some AP members, some of these individual options and how they may fit into a revised sampling framework.

Unfortunately, because our conversations on the previous items were so lengthy, we did not actually complete our Agenda Item Number 2, and so the draft statement of potential permit benefits, and we're going to have to address that at a future meeting, but, because we had so many open questions left, right, regarding the permit, the potential benefits of the permit are dependent

on us having a lot of these other items defined first, and so, you know, it wasn't too bad that we didn't complete that one, you know, and it allowed us to have a broader discussion of the other previous items, and I think, Madam Chair, this completes my presentation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Luiz, and so hands are going up with questions. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Luiz. We appreciate you having the courage to step up and lead a technical AP that's been given such a daunting task. I mean, it really is, and anybody that has ever worked in the discipline of survey design knows that it oftentimes is a gordian knot that we tug on the edges of, but it's always hard to unravel and find perfection, and I think that's what we're all going to continue to struggle with, is like the old cliché of don't let perfect be the enemy of the good, the way we find that place at, but can you back up one slide, because I'm just wondering -- If you will indulge me, Madam Chair, but this issue of discards by mode.

I think I can give an example, and our discussion yesterday about black sea bass sort of brought this into stark relief, and so, just for everybody's context, Georgia has a hundred miles of coast, and we have three barrier islands that the public can get to, and we have probably the least amount of shore fishing access relative to the total number of miles of coastline of any state in the South Atlantic region, but yet, in 2014, MRIP estimated that shore anglers discarded 419,613 black sea bass. In that same year, the shore mode, the B1s, and all the actual harvest, was 8,698 fish.

The next year, 2015, the B2 estimates were 309,525 fish, and so, obviously, we've got an issue with shore mode estimates of discards for that species that are -- Those discards are being -- You know, a mortality rate is being applied to them, and then that's being considered as part of the removals from the population, and so, I mean, I agree, and I think a vessel-based approach makes the most common sense, because the other part of this discussion, which is going to be probably the most difficult, is you can build it, but can you actually implement it?

That is going to be something that is kind of out of our control. You know, if this is a federal permit, it's going to fall to the service to implement it, but I think this pretty much shows that, if it's vessel-based, we're still going to have the introduction of biased information from the standard MRIP, because the shore-more anglers obviously would not be subject to whatever the revised methodology would be, because they wouldn't be necessarily in the sample frame, and so I just think that's -- Again, this is a complicated situation, and it defies a simple solution, but I look forward to continued discussions, and I appreciate what you all are doing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I have Mel and then Chester.

MR. BELL: Luiz, I will echo what Spud said. Thank you for your leadership in this, and what was kind of a difficult task, and I really appreciate your point about the sense of direction and guidance, and I'm going to climb a little higher and kind of maybe talk about that a second, and so I think part of the problem with that is that what we've -- Our vision is that we're going to build this tool, and the tool is going to be this permit, and so somehow the tool will help us facilitate the collection and validation and analysis of harvest and discard data, to improve catch and effort estimates used for fisheries science and management decisions, and so that's how we envisioned this tool helping us, and so I guess where we are is we're in a position where we feel that perhaps our current understanding of the picture of the status of these various fisheries is not as good as it

could be, and so this tool is going to help us improve our understanding of the truth that's out there, and so that's sort of our understanding, maybe, in the room.

Now, folks will take it to another level, and the fishermen, and what is, you know, their desire, and, well, their desire is perhaps to have a better picture, and what they would consider maybe a better understanding of the truth involving the fisheries, which, from their perspective, should result in better access, more fish somehow, and so that's sort of the expectations. Well, that's the expectations, but the thing here is we've got this tool, and we're talking about building the tool, and we can get into the details of what the tool would look like, and all the bells and whistles it would have on it, and how it's wired, but it really all depends, in building this thing, is who is actually going to use this tool, and commit to using the tool, whether it's federal or somehow we go to the states, but, you know, there has to be an understanding of the use of the tool that you've built.

I mean, we can build what we think is the greatest permit in the world that will do this stuff, but unless -- Unless someone is willing to commit to a specific use of that tool in their piece of all this, you know, the equation for management, it's -- You know, we could find ourselves building something that doesn't produce what we want, because there's not a commitment, or an ability, to use the tool, and so where I'm going with this is you start with the end in mind.

If the end in mind is that this tool will be used to provide this better picture of the status of the fisheries and all, that can be -- That can give us better management decisions, there's got to be a solid understanding and commitment to the use of that tool, whether it's from the federal side or the state side or however that's going to work, and I think that's part of what we're struggling with in directing this thing, is there's a lot of uncertainty, and, even if we build this thing, you know, can the -- From the federal perspective, can it work, and if there are impediments to it even being used, and is it incorporated somehow into an understanding of a better universe that MRIP can then improve MRIP calculations, and then there has to be a commitment to that, or is it some other direct -- Again, we've kind of disconnected from the direct data piece right now, but I guess what I'm struggling with is, yes, we can build a tool, but, if we don't really understand totally how we're going to use that tool, and have commitments to use that tool, to give us the outcome, we're going to frustrate ourselves, and we're going to frustrate -- We're going to really frustrate, you know, our fishermen and all.

That's sort of -- That's more big picture, but I just don't have a sense that we have a clear commitment to how this tool is going to be built, and I don't want to build something that we're not going to be able to follow through with and provide, you know, the expectations for, and I'm struggling with this, because I have this -- If you're familiar with -- It's kind of a management concept of the Road to Abilene, if you're all familiar with that, and I almost feel like I'm in the car, and we're going to Abilene, and I've agreed to go to Abilene, but I'm not really sure what that's going to look like when we get there, but that's why, just stepping back a little bit, bigger picture, we've got to make sure we design this thing with the end in the mind, and the end in mind that's going to be a better world, because we've committed to using what we get out of this permit into the data and the management decisions, and that will --

It may or may not result in what the next level -- Maybe there will be more fish, and maybe there will or there won't, but what we need is the truth, and we're trying to get to the truth here and a better understanding of what the truth is regarding the status of fisheries. I've just taken it up a

level, and I think that's part of why we're not providing maybe the real specific direct guidance and kind of leaving you guys trying to figure out which way to go.

DR. BARBIERI: If I may, Madam Chair, and, yes, Mel, I agree completely, right, but not in this particular technical AP, but the previous, and I forgot what we called, but the working group, and, from the beginning of development of this, we came out of it already with that sense of direction to say, okay, we want to, first of all, do something that is regional level, right, thinking about some lessons learned from the Gulf and from previous efforts, right, and so we're going to do something that's more regional level, number one, and we want to do something that's fully integrated with and working in partnership with the Fisheries Service and our regional -- ACCSP, our regional data repository and the people who really handle, right, all the parameters for data collection for recreational fisheries along the Atlantic seaboard, because we're trying to avoid, really, getting to a point where we've developed the tool and nobody will use it, or there's no real applicability.

I agree with you completely, and we're trying to move in that direction intentionally, right, and I think that specialized surveys have a place. Within the current family of MRIP surveys, there are specialized surveys, right, that are used for that purpose, because they provide better estimates for something called, you know, the pelagics, the large pelagic survey that was developed specifically to address that group of fish that is not properly sampled by the general MRIP survey.

I think that we are heading in the right direction, right, and perhaps just start defining a little better, working with the surveys, who is going to take responsibility to start developing the technical components of the survey itself and start identifying how we're going to fund it.

You know, right now, there are close to thirty specialized surveys throughout the country that are being used within, you know, all the different regional frameworks, and they are done because they supplement the general surveys that are in place, and so I think that there is a place for this, but it's just a matter of us, you know, trying to work more specifically with them in getting to that level of detail and commitment, but I agree with you completely.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to back to my list of hands. We have Chester and then Carolyn and then Dewey.

MR. BREWER: Well, Mel talked about what's going to be done with this tool after we build it, and I want to talk about trying to figure out how to build this tool so that it is used. When we did the 102 workshop, this whole area and whole topic was discussed for a day-and-a-half or two days, and the recommendation that came out of there was that the program, ideally, would be administered by the feds, because you needed to have the conformity, and you needed to have the questions or whatever put into the right framework, so that they could be used by our scientists and incorporated into our different analyses.

I've been a huge proponent of this permit, for at least nine of ten years, and we all began working on it about that long ago, and I'm now concerned, very much concerned, because, if this program is administered by the, quote, feds, the recreational community is not going to want to have anything to do with it, and that is because the level of trust in the recreational community with regard to federal management -- The reputation is less than -- Well, it's been destroyed. It's just literally been destroyed, and so much of the research, or data, that we require, or ask for, from the fishermen is given voluntarily.

In other words, we could have this thing in place, and then somebody calls up to gather data, calls up somebody who has got a license or a permit, and the person who has the permit says either I'm not telling you a damn thing, or they don't tell the truth, but instead give data or information that they think might be beneficial to their agenda.

I wouldn't have thought that, I don't know, up until about two months or so ago, but I have seen, since then, opinion papers in the recreational fishing magazines, and talking with recreational folks, and I was a little taken aback, quite frankly, at how little trust there is, and, I mean, I think we heard yesterday -- We heard words like "despise", and we heard words, or phrases, like "non-violent" and "non-conformity", meaning I'm not going to tell you a thing, and I think that --

I hate to say this, but I think, until something is done with regard to that issue, and that problem, and it's a huge problem that permeates almost everything we do, and that, unless something is done with regard to that, I think we're just flapping our gums with this whole thing, because it's based on -- It's based on people that you're targeting giving you accurate information, and we're hearing, from some of the red snapper folks over here, that we're not going to do that, without even knowing what all of the basics are of the permit, and so I have great concern with that, and I'm not going to profess to know how to fix it, but it's certainly out there, and there is no question that you've got a whole segment of the population who is, you know, not happy and does not want to cooperate with the feds. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Chester. Carolyn and then Dewey.

DR. BELCHER: I am kind of -- I understand Chester's points too, and the hard part of all of this is it's the idea that this is a tool, and I still see it as the idea that we're recognizing our current estimates of recreational landings and discards come through a process that we don't have confidence in, and so we're looking to substitute, supplement, augment, whatever your verb is, relative to -- It's easier to work through an MRIP, in the fact that you've got information available through a survey that has a long stand of history.

You know, as we kind of keep talking ourselves out of this idea, but I think we have -- We have answers to what does and doesn't currently work. I mean, MRIP, okay, fine. It's too big of a universe, and we can't get at red -- Or snapper grouper, and I'm going to go with snapper grouper, because I think, the more you whittle it down, the harder you make it, because, okay, now, as Luiz said, you get information on one species at the cost of information on all the other ones that are caught around it, and, at some point, you're going to wish you had that information, and so getting us too focused on one is not getting us anything.

Are we over-focused in snapper grouper? We've all acknowledged that, and we're talking about ecosystem components, all of these things to help kind of bring down the number of species that we want to focus on, and so I think there's a lot of stuff there.

You know, the permitting thing, it's that give-and-take with the feds and the states, and are they going to be more trustful if the state runs it? I don't know, and we've got to convince our legislature as to why we're taking on a federal project, and there's going to -- State money is probably not going to be ponied up for that, and so the money is still going to have to come from a federal source.

You know, so there's a lot of things that I think that are going on that we can look, and HMS has their recreational permit for shark species, and that obviously applies in that swap-out into the federal waters, but is that complete? The stock assessment includes state-water takes as well, and so we know, at that point, we can't just stop at the federal fringe and say we're not going to include states, and so I think there's a lot of stuff that's there, and the question is just how do we make the harder decisions, and, you know, mandatory reporting, voluntary reporting, we already know, as Chester said, they can tell us no, and so we've still lost data, and so is it any better? I mean, you can have a universe of, you know, a hundred people, versus a hundred-thousand people, and, if there's still not willing to talk to you, the data is still not useful, and so I still think we have more things to look at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey and then Tom.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: As a commercial fisherman, I don't have the option of liking or hating or loving the feds. If I don't meet the permit requirements, logbooks, vessel monitoring and other things, I don't go fishing, plain and simple. The Mid-Atlantic implemented a tilefish reporting requirement in August of 2020, and that year of August of 2020, we had 340 permits issued, and we had eight trips reported, and eighty-four fish. In 2021, the number jumped up to 814 permits, and they reported thirty-four trips and 319 fish. In 2022, you had 790 permits that were issued and thirty-three trips reported and 396 fish.

We have no enforcement mechanism. When the council made it mandatory, when we sent the package to GARFO that you had to report your fish before your vessel -- Before the fish were off the boat, or your boat out of the water, and they came back and changed it that you had twenty-four hours, and so that took the enforcement mechanism out of it, and, also, it's not an enforcement priority.

You know, simply -- We're to the point where we discuss MRIP, and the numbers given for Georgia, you know, land-based, and nobody believes MRIP and all this stuff, but the other alternative is either implement -- I tend to think of a deepwater survey, like the SADL, where you go from forty-one fathoms to 200 fathoms, and you might look at the species that are caught there and implement five or six species to begin with, but simply the part of either you report or you don't go fishing.

I mean, I don't know how these kids gloves with anglers -- It don't matter if you hate or like or whatever, but there is no other way to count the fish. MRIP is not counting these rare-event species, and, I mean, I could go on and on about that, but that's well documented, and so it's either you come up with a plan, and you make it vessel, and make it mandatory reporting, and it will take a couple of years for compliance, and you get some enforcement involved, and you give compliance assistance for a year or two, and then you start throwing some fines out there, and people will start tuning up, or else they're not going to go fishing, because, if we continue using MRIP, it's going down the toilet bowl.

There ain't much choice here, and it's like we procrastinate about doing something that, you know -- As a commercial fisherman, I don't have a choice whether I like it, and the words Chester uses about the language he's been hearing, heck, I turned on the TV this morning and heard all kinds of different things, and so like it ain't going to matter, and a lot of it has to do with other things

besides -- Well, I will leave that, but it just has a lot to do with everything that you hear, and so don't take that personal, but you've got to do something here, and, you know, there's apps out there today, and there's different things that could be done that's relatively intrusive, and people stay on their cellphones all the time, and they could report this stuff.

Simply it's like here, and we don't have no other option, and so, public, come tell us the other option, and simply going down the route we're going down is not working, and so we put something in place, and you put some enforcement mechanism to it and go from there, and either you go fishing, and you report, or you don't report and you don't go fishing, and so it's pretty simple, but we can go around in circles for another two or three years, and it's going to get worse, because of MRIP and what's going to take place, and so the challenges of the public going fishing recreationally is going to get worse, and we're sitting around the table, and we know it, and you all are the ones -- Thankfully, I don't have to make that decision, and you all know that it's going to get worse, and you're going to be having to vote on it in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I'm going to keep going to the list here. At some point, I feel like we're not really asking Luiz questions, and we probably need to dive into the decision document and start going through the purpose and need. I think that Luiz can stay up here and continue to answer questions as they come up, as we go through the document, but I'm going to keep going through our list of folks that are providing comments, and hopefully we can dive into the document. I can tell you that we are over the time for the committee, and so we definitely behind, officially behind, at this point. All right. I have Tom, Laurilee, and then Andy.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica, and I just want to point out this is more of a comment. Sorry, Luiz. I am going to respond to -- I think I can work a question in there, and so I'm going to respond to Chester a little bit, who brought up like a lack of trust in the federal fisheries management system, and he's absolutely right, but I believe that's why we're here with this permit, because we hear it at every level of stakeholder, the frustration with MRIP sampling in the recreational world, and we are trying to address that.

I go back to the comment about a specialized survey, and I think it's important for us to remember here that this is a specialized fishery. Offshore fisheries are a very small component of fishing effort in the Southeast, and, from my state of North Carolina, we have tremendous MRIP sampling in our state, and our North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries is outstanding, but, when I look at some of the catch estimates, I believe that we're just not adequately capturing that, and so, in my opinion, that puts our state at a disadvantage, because, if we're not adequately capturing effort and catch, when we talk about things like red snapper EFPs and whatnot, that is a disadvantage to my state, both, you know, economically, but anyway, that's my comment, and that's why I believe what our purpose is, is to just to actually address these specialized fisheries.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tom. Laurilee and then Andy.

MS. THOMPSON: I appreciate what Chester said, you know, and it's tough, knowing a lot of people don't like us, but the really important work that Julia is doing, and, you know, the project with Rick Bonney from the Cornell Lab, and I watched them develop the eBird concept, and go from just a little teeny-tiny thing to -- I mean, it's worldwide now, and, I mean, it's huge, and everybody is proud to participate in it, and so that's the kind of thing -- I hate to sound like

Pollyanna, but we have to be optimistic, and, if we can generate the enthusiasm for reporting for fish the way that eBird has done for the birding community, that would be outstanding.

We did hear some positive stuff last night too, because there was the gentleman from St. Augustine that was really excited about working with his fishing club and trying to get them to start reporting and getting involved, and so there are some people that support us out there too, and so I think that we need to continue with what Julia is doing. Her public interactions with the fishermen at tackle stores and stuff like that is really, really important. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: You beat me to it, Jessica, and so I was just going to call the question, and I think it's time to move into the amendment, and I felt like we were all providing personal perspectives, which is helpful, but I think it's been at least twenty minutes since Dr. Luiz Barbieri got a question, and so, if we could move into the amendment, that would be great.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John, do you mind diving into the document itself?

MR. HADLEY: Not at all. Let me pull it up here, really quickly, and we'll get underway. Okay, and so we're going to jump into this. Really, just to kind of frame what we're trying to accomplish today, review the AP's feedback and recommendations, and we're looking for approval of the draft purpose and need statements for inclusion in the amendment, provide guidance on actions and alternatives, and approve the actions for inclusion in the amendment.

One note on timing, before we do that, and in front of you is the general timeline for the amendment. One thing that has been changed, since the last time you saw this amendment and the decision document, is that it's suggested that you add an additional meeting, essentially, to be able to kind of flesh out some of the actions and alternatives and ideas before approving it for public hearing, and so there's the addition of the September 2023 meeting to review the amendment and preliminary analyses, and everything else sort of scooted down by one meeting, and so that's a little change to the scheduling, if you're okay with that. If not, you know, we could certainly do our best to maintain the original timing, in which case you would be seeing an amendment document in September and approving the amendment for public hearing, and so that's a little bit of a change in the timeline.

With that, I will jump into the draft purpose and need statements, and I'm not going to read this, and this is the wording that you came up with last time, at your last meeting, and I just wanted to make sure that you're comfortable with this as your purpose and need statement, noting that the purpose, you know, very briefly, is to identify the universe of anglers and enhance the ability to collect recreational effort and catch data, and also promoting best fishing practices, through education, and then you see the need there is to improve education on best fishing practices and the quality of effort and catch data for the private recreational component who target snapper grouper species. With that, I will turn it over to the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I see hands going up. Laurilee and then Spud.

MS. THOMPSON: All right, and so, since we pulled the data collection out of this amendment in December, do we need to take the words "and catch data" out of the purpose? My question is, if

we push this amendment through, and then we're going to -- Are we going to come back and just make a whole other amendment for the reporting requirements, which is going to add another two years, or is there a mechanism to put in like a warning, an advance warning, in this amendment that, eventually, reporting requirements are also going to -- That they're going to come at you, and it would be in this amendment, where you would have to wait another two years.

MR. HADLEY: So, as you mentioned, reporting has been pulled out of the amendment, and so, assuming it stays that way, where it is not included in this amendment, it would be -- If you wanted to pursue reporting at a later date, it would require another amendment, and so it would be that sort of two-step process to add that in there. If it is your purpose to eventually have reporting, you know, that's something we can discuss, and I think that would help the technical AP in some of their recommendations, but, if you wanted to implement reporting along with the permit, it would require inclusion of actions to do so, and I don't know if that helps answer the question there on timing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I will just add to that that, if you wanting to go back and add those types of actions, then we would need to have that discussion, and those types of actions would have to be added to the document. All right. Next up is Spud and then Chester.

MR. WOODWARD: Before I say what I was originally going to say, I think this issue of reporting -- We can't specify anything related to reporting until we figure out how we're going to use this permit to create a mechanism for data collection. I mean, that's where we're -- We're in a cart-and-horse thing here, and we keep flip-flopping back and forth about all of this, and I think reporting means different things to different people.

I think the purpose of this -- It is a means to an end, the end being better catch and effort data, and what we're -- The two don't live separately, you know, and, in fact, I was going to recommend that we put stronger language in this purpose statement, and we get rid of sort of "would", because "would" is -- It needs to say "develop a recreational permitting system that will identify the universe of private anglers", and so forth and so on, and "will result in more accurate, precise, and timely recreational catch and effort data". I mean, that's what we're trying to achieve here, and that needs to be the needle in the compass, you know, that we use to direct this thing and where we're going.

I think it's implied that this is -- There will be some requirement of people to provide information to us, and whether you want to call it reporting or participation in a survey or whatever, but this, again, is a means to an end, and we're leaning on this AP to help us figure out how to make the connection between the means and the end, so that we do the right thing, and then it's going to be up to whoever is responsible for executing it to take this ball across the finish line.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that, and so, just to let you know, John captured that language there on the screen. Chester and then Andy.

MR. BREWER: Thank you. Are we talking about both the purpose and need right now, or just the purpose, because I can wait. If we're splitting them, then I can wait until we get to the need.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead. We're talking about both of them.

MR. BREWER: Okay. I think that the need needs to be changed, because, here, it says the need for the amendment is to improve education, and that's one of the sidelines of what we would like to accomplish, but what we really need is more accurate data regarding recreational catch of deepwater species, and so what I'm saying is it's not education, and we do hope to have some education in the program, but that ain't the -- That's not the primary purpose, or the primary need. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. John is working on trying to capture that. Andy and then Mel.

MR. STRELCHECK: I was going to make a similar comment to Chester, and I think just flipping the order of that, because we do talk about improving the quality of effort and catch data. Maybe a question for Dr. Barbieri, and, you know, we're talking kind of how we're going to use this, right, and I think, in its simplest form, in the way I am thinking of this, is it is an enhancement to the existing effort survey, right, because, right now, what we do is we do a mail survey to licensed households, and some unlicensed households, but that is all angler licenses that are issued by states, including those that might fish some shore or state waters and don't even harvest snapper grouper species, and so I think, as we work through this, and then we probably need to talk about that further, but that would be a major enhancement, and something that's been done already at the state level with the SRFS survey, and so I don't know if, Dr. Barbieri, you have any further thoughts or comments on that.

DR. BARBIERI: Thank you, Andy, and I agree completely. I mean, that would be the bottom line, right, and so it will be something that is -- In the case of the State Reef Fish Survey, the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, that we developed to be supplemental to, right, MRIP, but focused on this component of the fishery that we feel is not well represented, not well captured, by a generalized survey, and so it supplements what is there, and it improves data quality, right, and, as an example, you know, Andy, we had a recent stock assessment of gag in the Gulf, where, instead of the actual general MRIP data, the SSC chose to use the Florida State Reef Fish Survey as the data input for that assessment, because it was a more specialized fishery that is primarily just more than 95 percent caught off the coast of Florida and better captured by SRFS than by a generalized survey like MRIP. It has helped, in that way, in generating more precise data that was incorporated in a stock assessment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mel and then back to Spud and Laurilee.

MR. BELL: You already did it, and I was just going to say flip the order in the need.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Andy mentioned, obviously, the effort part of it, but I think it's also -- You know, we've got to remember too that more accurately describing the catch is just as important, and, you know, Luiz, if you would sort of speak to how the Florida survey has contributed to a better description of the catch of those species, versus the MRIP general survey.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: So I have an issue with keeping the words "ability to collect recreational effort and catch data". I mean, we talked about this in December, and we said that all we want to do is

we want to know who is out there fishing, and so, by creating this permit, we'll be able to identify the universe, and that was our goal with this. I think we are misleading the public if we leave the words in there "the ability to collect recreational effort and catch data", because it's clear that there is no survey, and there is no questioning or anything that is going out with this amendment, that there is a second amendment down the road that we will work on how the surveys are going to work.

I have a problem with leaving any inferring that effort and catch data is going to be a result of this amendment, because, once again, you know, it's going to be, well, they said they were going to collect information, and now they're not, and they're big, fat liars, and I would like to see those words taken out, unless we really are going to try to collect data from this amendment, which we're not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to jump in here, and then I'm going to go back to Spud. I completely disagree with your statement, because identifying the universe will help enhance the ability to collect that effort and catch data, and so identifying the universe will help do that, and I feel like we've had those discussions around the table, and so I think it's accurate to keep that in there. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, and that's what I was going to say, is that it's not the responsibility of this council to develop the survey methodology, and it's our responsibility to develop things within our purview that facilitate the development and implementation of the best survey methodologies that can be done, from design, money, practicality, all those other things, and so, again, it's a means to an end, and that end has to be stated in that purpose statement, or you've just created a permit for the sake of having a permit, you know, and what's the point of that?

I think it is important that the public understands that there is a commitment to that permit facilitating better information on which decisions are going to be based. I mean, I think that's what we're all trying to achieve here, and we want to make sure that, before we commit ourselves to any course of action, that this has at least the maximum chance of a successful outcome, or don't do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to try to move us along here. We're still on the purpose and need, and we're behind, and so we've made some edits to this, and this is not final action or anything, and it's not set in stone. I would say that we could come back to it at Full Council, but I don't know that there's the time to debate it again at Full Council, and so what are folks' thoughts, and would someone like to make a motion to approve these purpose and need statements, as modified? Can people -- Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: **I will make that motion, Madam Chair, so we can move along.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. It's moved by Spud and seconded by Tom. Any more discussion on this at this time? Once again, this is not final, final forever. This is just to move us along in this document. **Any objections?** All right. Thank you for that discussion on the purpose and need, and I'm going to turn it back to John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. With that, we'll jump into the draft actions in the amendment, and so the first set of actions, the first five that we'll go over, relate to the permit, and so the details

essentially of establishing a permit and what that permit will encompass, and, as you will note, and as this -- The actions have changed, in accordance with the guidance that you provided at the March 2023 meeting, and so, if you recall, we kind of had a single action, with different sub-alternatives, looking at the permit type, the species that would be covered, and the fishing location. Those have been split out into different actions, so you can kind of really concentrate on each individual subject, depending on the action at-hand, and so that's one of the reasons that there are the additional actions in there.

Draft Action 1 is really the -- That's the action that establishes the permit and specifies what is that permit type, and, really, this is -- Table 1 summarizes the alternatives within that, and sort of the range of alternatives being considered, and so you have Alternative 2, which would essentially establish a vessel-based permit, and Alternative 3 would establish an angler-based permit. However, it would be tied to a vessel, and so any angler onboard a vessel would need to obtain a private recreational permit.

Alternative 4 is a little more of a broad-based version of that, where at least one angler onboard a vessel participating in the private angler component of the snapper grouper fishery would need to get a permit, and then Alternative 5 specifies that any angler, regardless of where the fishing occurs, would need to obtain a permit, and so that's sort of your range of alternatives there, and so the first Alternative 2 is focusing on the vessel only, and Alternatives 3 through 5 are looking at some sort of angler-based permit.

I am not going to go over your AP recommendations again, but they're all there, from both the Snapper Grouper AP as well as the Technical Permitting AP, but, moving down to the IPT comments, there is some information from your IPT. Regarding Alternative 5, the council and NMFS have the authority to cover fisheries taking place -- For federally-managed species in state waters, but they would need very robust rationale for including this fishing activity.

I am going to add an additional piece of information that has been gathered since then, and so, to go along with this, there's sort of a caveat, and the important part of that is that the council does not have the authority to require an angler, or a vessel, to obtain a federal permit if their fishing activity only takes place in state waters, or if they do not already have a federal permit, and so that's an additional piece of information there, and I think it's very important regarding Alternative 5, because there are limitations that that angler or vessel would need to fish in the EEZ for the permit requirement, for essentially the council's jurisdictional authority to apply, and so for them to need the permit, or need to obtain the permit, and, also, that will -- I will bring this up again when we discuss Action 3, when we're talking about the areas fished.

The other thing that the IPT discussed, when they were bringing this up, is if there could potentially be any sort of permitting option by gear, and I don't know if that's something that the committee would want to entertain, but that's something that the IPT thought of an additional route, or an alternative route, to establishing a permit. With that, I will turn it over to the committee, and I'm happy to answer any questions, and, as far as the authority part of it, I may ask for some additional assistance from GC in explaining that, but that was an additional piece of information that we've had since then, there again affecting Alternative 5, and it will also come up again in Action 3, and so thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Could you scroll back up to the particular alternatives, and so what we're trying to do here is make sure that this is the proper range, and are there any that we want to remove, and, ultimately, if we have questions for the Technical AP, then we need to articulate those as well, so that we could start making a list of what information you need from the AP, if Luiz can't answer that here today. Okay, and so I see lots of hands going up. I have Spud, I have Kerry, I have Tom, Mel, and Andy. All right. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Jessica. Based on what we heard from Luiz this morning, I think we can dispense with Alternative 4. I think that one is fatally flawed, right off the get-go, and so I would recommend that we remove it from further consideration. I am still trying to process the comment about 5, in my mind, and I'm not quite sure that I understand all the moving parts of that, and so I'm not ready to recommend removing that one, but it might need to be removed, or altered somehow, based on further consideration.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're typing that up as direction to staff. Kerry, you're next. All right. Her comments are already stated. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Yes, and, obviously, I support, given the comments, removal of Alternative 4. In my previous comment in Luiz's presentation, and I neglected to ask him my question, but it's pertinent here. I guess, from a technical standpoint, I'm surprised that we're always -- That there is a lot of discussion about the benefits of a vessel-based permit, and the reason I ask that question is because, in North Carolina, we've had the discussion of the impacts of the for-hire industry, right, and we have a blanket fishing license, and so we don't have as good of a picture of who is fishing on our boats, and so I wonder, if it's a vessel-based permit, if that's -- If just that other -- I'm trying to figure out the best way to ask this question, but is it we're not going to capture the universe as well as if it was an angler-based permit?

DR. BARBIERI: Yes, that's it, yes, and it's basically having, you know, a directory, because also think about the fact that you're going to be measuring both catch at the dock, right, and effort, right, and so you have to have as complete of a directory of addresses, right, or any other mode to contact people, right, for the effort component, which is done separately from the catch dockside, and does that make sense? Having that directory of all the people who are fishing is important for you to generate a random sample of who is going to receive the effort survey.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Mel and then Andy. All right. His items are covered. Andy and then Trish.

MR. STRELCHECK: I was a little confused by what John was saying with regard to our authority, or lack of authority, to regulate in state waters, and I know Shep had to leave, and I don't know if Monica is on and could speak to that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Sorry, and I raised my hand, but I will just jump in. Right, and you need some sort of federal hook, right, to exercise your authority, and so, if you have an angler, and let's say a shore-based angler, because we've talked about them, that only fishes in state waters, or from shore, but I will call that state waters, and does not have any other kind of federal permit, then the council doesn't have the authority, under the Magnuson, under the current facts, to require that angler to get a permit, and so we're talking about the person that only fishes in state waters, does not fish in federal waters, and also does not have any kind of federal permit. If they had some

sort of federal permit, like a for-hire, then I think you could exercise your authority and say, regardless of where you're fishing, you have to report.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy, anything else?

MR. STRELCHECK: That was my understanding, and I guess the clarification that I was seeking, and so, given that -- I mean, I don't even know if Alternative 5 is viable, and I think we would have to remove that as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and those were my thoughts as well. Okay. Trish and then I believe our Coast Guard rep at the table today had his hand up.

MS. MURPHEY: So we are not picking preferreds today, correct, and we're just picking --

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and we're just giving direction to staff on do we like these alternatives, do we need to remove any, do we want to add any, and I don't -- Technically, we haven't really seen them in this format before, and so there's no need to pick preferreds.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and so my next comment then is -- This is because my brain thinks differently, but I wonder if it would be better, instead of any vessel, any private angler, blah, blah, blah, it should be all vessels, all private anglers, and, wherever you've got "any", should it be "all"? That helps my brain, and that's my only suggestion. That is my suggestion, and I'm good.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and we're capturing that as direction for the IPT to look at that. All right. Next up is our Coast Guard rep today.

LT. HUTCHINSON: I'm Lieutenant Pete Hutchinson from the Coast Guard, the Sector Jacksonville representative, and I'm the Living Marine Resources officer for the Georgia line down to Melbourne. To speak to the authority and jurisdiction piece, if you're looking at it from the federal level of the Coast Guard, outside of three nautical miles, we are fairly limited, with the exception of if you have any kind of HMS, like BAYS tuna species onboard, and we can do boardings, and we have all kinds of authority in that aspect, regardless of where your vessel is located, and the same deal with any kind of endangered species and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

If you're looking for the Coast Guard to assist with this, the issue that we're going to run into is, if you have a vessel inside of three nautical miles, we're really not going to be able to do much, unless we physically see them coming in from three nautical miles, and so, if you want us to help out, or if this is something you want federally enforced, the requirement process, or sorry, the reporting process for this, would have to be these fish have to be reported prior to coming in.

For a lot of our operations, what we'll do -- For example, in red snapper season, in the State of Florida, you're allowed two. In federal, you're allowed one. A lot of times, people will catch those two fish and come in and try to sneak them in and get the state permit, or the state bag limit, and so we'll set up a perimeter search and board vessels that are coming in from that three-nautical-mile line. This is really the only way that I could see enforcing that, is, hey, guys, did you document your fish that you've caught so far, and they show it to us, and, all right, you're good to go. Again, with recreational vessels, it's not as easy to do as for commercial.

Now, if you're talking about permitting for a vessel, you have it written into federal code that, for commercial vessels, we can assign that violation to the owner of the vessel or the owner of that charter. Recreational, you're going to have -- We're going to have to implement essentially an entire new, you know, code. I'm new to this, and I know I'm going to be, you know, gone next year, and I try to learn as much as I can, and so, just from what I've seen, and how we can help, because, actually, I agree with everything that we're putting forward, and everything needs to be reported, but, for us to help, these are the things that we need to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. That's much appreciated. Here, on Action 1, I'm going to try to wrap us up on what the discussion was, and so we have some direction to staff here, and we have remove Alternative 4, and we have remove Alternative 5, and we have replace "any" with "all". Anything else on this action, so we can move on to the next one? We will see this again. Are we good for now? Okay. It looks like we're good for now, and I'm going to pass it back to John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you, and so, with that, we'll jump into Action 2, and Action 2 covers the species that would fall under the permit, and so there are several alternatives here. Taking into account some of the guidance from the March meeting, we added a few alternatives to this action, or a few options to this action, and so Alternative 2 would cover all species within the snapper grouper complex, and so all fifty-five species would fall under this permit, and then Alternatives 3 through 6 incorporate subsets of that greater snapper grouper complex, if you will.

Alternative 3 covers any species, any assessed species, for which harvest is allowed, and Alternative 4 covers the species that are currently covered by the Florida State Reef Fish Survey. Alternative 5 would cover any species in the deepwater complex, and Alternative 6 would cover any species in the shallow-water complex, and I know that is quite an array of species, and so, to kind of keep track of where each of one of those alternatives may fall, Table 3 here has all species within the snapper grouper complex, and then, if there's an "X" next to the name, that specifies whether they would fall within one of the alternatives, being the assessed species or the State Reef Fish Survey species, deepwater species, or shallow-water grouper species.

One thing to keep in mind here is, if the council does want to sort of parse out the species, and not go with the whole fifty-five species complex, you could choose multiple preferreds, and, again, we're not choosing preferreds today, but, eventually, you could sort of stack those alternatives on top of one another as preferreds, and so you could say, you know, choose the Florida State Reef Fish Survey species as well as the assessed species, and so there are options to sort of stack alternatives there eventually, and so just keeping that in mind.

We went over the AP comments and recommendations. As far as the IPT comments, it was noted that a recreational permit -- That there may be some enforcement difficulties if the permit does not encompass all species within the complex, and Alternative 3 is if only assessed species are chosen. There may be some complications, as far as how you address that with new species that are assessed, and so say the situation that we are currently working through with scamp and yellowmouth grouper, where you have a new assessed species, or complications with assessed species, where an assessment gets rejected, or if there is a harvest prohibition added to that species, and say it's really doing poorly and harvest is eliminated, and that kind of makes it a little bit of a moving target there, but that could be addressed.

Also, it was noted to consider the applicability of the Florida State Reef Fish Survey angler designation to apply to the entire South Atlantic, and it was brought up that some of the deepwater species are not under that designation currently, as well as black sea bass, which is a topic that the council is currently discussing, and so that kind of came up in previous committee discussions, and so, really, we're looking for input on the range of alternatives here and any comments on the action, and, with that, I will turn it over to the committee, and I'm going to scroll back up to the summary table of alternatives.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, once again, we're trying to figure out which alternatives we want to keep, which ones we want to get rid of, and if there are any that are missing. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: At this time, I do not see Alternative 3 and Alternative 6 as being sort of directions we would take, Alternative 3 because of the reason that John brought up, that that can change, and then we have to go through an amendment process, and that just seems not efficient. Alternative 6, it seems like that's just carve-out that doesn't feel important to me at this time, and I do share concerns over the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, as a South Carolinian, who has different fish, but I don't know that it's -- You know, it fits within our range right now, and so it may be worth leaving in there, but, yes, I would like to see 3 and 6 removed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Spud and then Andy.

MR. WOODWARD: I guess this is a question for I guess both you and Luiz about -- You know, if we were to develop some sort of permit that covered the entire complex, and I'm not going to hold you to this, but what would that do in terms of affecting how the Florida State Reef Fish Survey is used? I mean, is that going to create a negative unintended consequence or not?

DR. BARBIERI: Well, for instance, yes. I mean, it would most likely impact it. We probably would have to adjust what we do in the South Atlantic, right, for -- I mean, the east coast of Florida and adjust the species to be in line, because keeping that regional consistency and cohesion is important, and so there is the issue of the authority of our commission to then -- To go in and amend our list of species included, and, of course, the cost that's associated with all of that would have to be factored in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me just add to that, and I agree. I don't think it's out of the question, but there would just be a number of significant challenges. Our survey is paid for by the Florida legislature, you know, and it's part of our budget for those thirteen species. If we're going to add a number of other species, and are we doing it only to the South Atlantic side and not to the Gulf Coast side, and so then you would also have point-of-sale problems, when you're selling to someone, and then the vendor, whoever that is, even if you're going online, is trying to figure out what are you targeting on the Gulf, versus what are you going to target in the South Atlantic, and so I see some challenges, and then I also have some concerns about what the legislature funded.

I don't think we could add all these additional -- These fifty-five total species to one coast and still operate the system with the same amount of money that they originally provided, and so I'm not saying it's out of the question, especially to add some, maybe, and not all, but there would be some challenges. Andy and then Trish.

MR. STRELCHECK: I was going to agree with Kerry about removing Alternative 6. I think we should keep Alternative 3 in the document for now, and it's not that -- We would have to codify it, in terms of that specific list of assessed species, right, and so I recognize that it could change in the future, and that more species would be added, but the way the regulation would work is we would just set whatever the fifteen, or seventeen, assessed species in place and put it in the regulations. Just a note, John, to add scamp and yellowmouth to the list of assessed species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy beat me to it, and I just wasn't comfortable with removing Alternative 3, and partly, you know, one of the discussion points from last night, from public comment, from Luiz and everything, is what is the purpose, and what is going to be a value to the council, and I think leaving -- Taking that alternative out kind of kills that important need, and I get it too that, as more species become assessed, and that will be a good thing, and we can -- I don't think it would be that hard to implement additional amendments, or whatever, if we need to add, and so, anyway, I just wanted to -- I agree with Andy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We've got some good discussion on this, and so what John has done is deleted the "remove Alternative 3", and it still says -- So we're keeping Alternative 3, just to be clear, and we are at a point of suggesting removing Alternative 6, and then also a reminder to add yellowmouth grouper and scamp to the list of assessed species in this document. Anything else here? Any other direction on Action 2? Chester.

MR. BREWER: Let me go back, and I've been thinking about it ever since we started talking about the reef fish survey, and go back to I guess it's -- Is it Action 1, and is that the one where we dropped out Number 5? In further thought, I think we ought to keep 5, because, I mean, that's how the Florida survey works, is everybody has to have their permit, and it's not by boat or anything, and I think you're going to get better data, quite frankly, if you go forward with Alternative 5, and I know that people may disagree with me, but, for purposes of evaluation here, I think 5 ought to stay in, and so I don't know how you wish to handle that procedurally, if you want me to make a substitute motion or -- It wasn't done by motion, and it was just consensus.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to clarify, for the State Reef Fish Survey, it's only people fishing from a vessel, and it's not all anglers, and so just to be clear, and we didn't have an original motion, and this was just direction to staff, and so I don't think we need another motion, but I would put it back to the group, and so I agree with the group that I think we should remove it. To me, what Chester is saying is I would like to see some analysis on it, and so I will put it back to the committee, and let me know what you think here, if you think that we should keep Alternative 5, and there are going to be some significant challenges, including state legislators and others, getting upset about this. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, that's the problem, right, and we can't mandate the states to do this, and, based on what Monica said, we don't have the authority, and we can put permit conditions in place, right, but, if someone is only fishing in state waters, there is no federal nexus for that permit condition.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree. Mel.

MR. BELL: I will display my ignorance here, but so, when we say “any species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit”, that’s everything, and then assessed, and I get assessed, and that’s a subset of that, but then there are also species within the overall unit that aren’t assessed, but they’re under some sort of size and/or bag limit, and so they’re under management, and you could say they’re all under management, but they’re under management through a size and bag, and so for instance like spadefish, and we don’t assess spadefish, right, but they have a bag limit. I mean, so is there like another little subcategory of that, where, if it has a size and/or bag limit, then that’s worth looking at as well? I am just trying to make sure that we cover everything, but not too much, and that might not -- That may be more than assessed, but it’s fewer than the total fifty-five, right, or do all fifty-five come under some sort of bag, at least?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can you hang tight on that for a second? We’re trying to resolve Chester’s issue, real quick, which was back on Action 1, and so it seems like the purview of the rest of the group is to remove Alternative 5, because the council does not have the authority to mandate that states do this. Okay, and so we’re -- It seems like the rest of the group is saying we’re good with removing Alternative 5 from Action 1, and let’s go back to Action 2.

All right, and so now we’re on Action 2, and so, to go to what Mel is saying, it seems like he’s suggesting another alternative that is something more than the assessed species, but less than the entire complex, and it’s something like all species with size and bag limits, or something like that.

MR. BELL: Well, they’re all under management, right, I guess, technically, but, if they have a size and bag limit, they have it for a reason. I mean, you’re interested in trying to restrict, you know, that fishery a little bit, and so -- I just used spadefish as an example, because it’s an important fish for us recreationally, but so data on those fish might be of interest to us, and maybe not in other places as much, but it’s not -- It’s more than just the assessed, but it’s fewer than the entire fifty-five, and that’s just the only other permutation I could think of that might provide useful data to fish that people target or are of interest.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. John has tried to capture that there, the addition of another alternative. Anything else here on Action 2 that we want to remove or add? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Maybe not a recommendation to add at this point, but, I mean, the other thought that I’ve had is just to narrow the universe of species, right, looking at kind of the most -- The highest harvest levels, right, landings and discards, right, and kind of doing a cumulative summation to see what are the top species that fall out, and we want to capture 80 to 90 percent of the snapper grouper landings, based on, you know, however that falls out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We’re capturing that as well, to examine the top species, so that we can consider a new alternative, maybe at a future meeting, that would tier from that list. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Just to think a little bit differently, one of the reasons for this permit is to improve our knowledge for data-limited species, and so those tend to be the species that have very low catch rates, and so maybe it could be considered based on PSEs, or something along those lines.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Anything else here on Action 2? All right. I’m going to try to keep moving us along here.

MR. HADLEY: Really quickly, I was going to suggest adding -- Going off of Trish's recommendation, and just changing the slight change of wording to replace "any" with "all", to maintain consistency across the actions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that sounds good. Trish, are you good with that?

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, actually I am, and I was actually not going to say anything, because I was thinking, in my crazy little brain, that it did infer that you have to catch all of them to have it, or just any, and so I kind of think "any" probably works here, in my crazy little brain.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We captured that. I think we're good here with Action 2.

MR. HADLEY: Okay, and so Action 3 covers the area where fishing activity takes place, and, there again, that information on the extent of the council's ability, and jurisdiction, to require a permit for anglers or vessels only that do not fish in federal waters at all is not there, or very limited, and so, with that, you know, the action, the draft action, and so this is, you know, your first real look at this action, but the action would specify the area where a private recreational snapper grouper permit would be required.

There are two alternatives here, and one -- Well, the Alternative 2 would require a permit for any fishing activity, for any angler or vessel, with fishing activity in the South Atlantic EEZ, and Alternative 3 expands that to include both the EEZ and state waters.

There again, the same caveat from the IPT, and the council can have the authority to cover fisheries taking place for federally-managed species in state waters under certain circumstances, but there has to be some sort of federal component there, and so, you know, noting that the council does not have the authority to require an angler, or a vessel, to obtain a federal permit if the fishing activity only takes place in state waters or if they do not already have a federal permit, and so the guidance that you heard from Monica applies to this action as well.

With that, I will turn it over to the committee, but I think this is something maybe the IPT could come back to you with better information, and it may not be a necessary action, since you may not have a -- There's not really a range to examine here, but, you know, that's certainly at the guidance of the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mel.

MR. BELL: It sounds like, from the previous discussion that we had, Alternative 3 is not even viable, and so, therefore, if Alternative 3 is not viable, and all you've got left is the EEZ, do you even need it? Are you saying let the IPT look at that first, or we just ditch it, maybe, and I --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Mel beat me to it, and my recommendation is we could eliminate this action and maybe just combine it with Action 1, with regard to clarification of where the permit would be effective.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Sounds good. John is going to capture that, and then we'll move on to the next action.

MR. HADLEY: Okay, and so, with that, we'll move to Action 4. This specifies how long a private recreational permit would remain valid, and so one point here is it does not say how long it would be the renewal dates, and so this is not going to be -- This is not going to be a limited-access permit, and it's an open-access permit. As such, it's something that does not have a permit number associated with it, and so you're really renewing it each year, or sorry. Excuse me again, but the permit would be -- I misspoke there. The permit would be issued for a certain amount of time, and then you would need to get a new permit, and so that's why we're kind of framing it as how long the permit would remain valid and necessarily in renewal terms.

With that, there are three alternatives here, and, again, this is the first time you are seeing this, and so, you know, I wanted to make sure you're comfortable with the alternatives, and are there any other alternatives that you would want to add, but, under the alternatives given, the permit would remain valid for one calendar year. Under Alternative 2 and under Alternative 3, it would remain valid for two calendar years, and there is sort of a catch-all Alternative 4. If there's another time period that you wanted to add to this action, we could certainly do that at this time.

With that, this is really a recommendation of the IPT, when we were discussing the different actions, and so which actions would be necessary to go ahead and create a permit, and this is something that was suggested by the IPT to be added to the amendment as an action to specify how long a permit would remain valid, and so, with that, I'll turn it over to the committee for further discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thinking about the State Reef Fish Survey, why would one of these time periods not be something like one year from issuance, and is that what you mean by -- Because that's a little bit different than one calendar year, or two calendar years, and could the start date not be from the -- You know, the time period from the date of issuance? Judy.

MS. HELMEY: We could follow it just like we do our federal permit, and it's renewed on your birthday every year, once a year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John is capturing all of that. Mel and then Tom.

MR. BELL: I was trying to line this up with the privilege that you have from an individual state that allows you to do this, but that's so varied, because some have one year, three years, and mine is lifetime, and so that's if you kind of go the person route. If you go the vessel route, then you're tied to this vessel, and the vessel doesn't have a birthday, of course, and the owner has a birthday, if you wanted to go that route, but I just was -- I mean, we've got one and two and other, and I don't know if, right now, if "other" just kind of covers whatever we might come up with in further scoping, and we're good enough, because "other" could be anything at this point.

It kind of depends on if you go -- You know, if you go personal vessel, and the other thing is it's going to be paired with an educational requirement, maybe, and how often do you want that, and do you want that annually, or -- So maybe "other" is enough for right now, is what I'm saying, just for us to move forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, we've just added two things to the other, and so I feel like we're editing other right now, and just a couple of things. The State Reef Fish Survey, we're trying to have people renew annually, because we're trying to get the phone book, and so I'll just put that out there, and I don't know that we need to remove things at this point, and we can discuss it further later, but we've had two other items to be considered here, one year from issuance and then the date of the birth of the permit holder, which in this case would be the vessel owner. Anything else that we need to add or change? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I would recommend that we remove Alternative 3, the two-year thing. I don't think that really is applicable, and I would get rid of that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate Judy's comment, and I think where I would go with that is it would be nice to have some consistency within permits in our region, right, because HMS is a January 1 to December 31, and our region goes by birthdate for the for-hire permits, and I would also comment that I agree with removing Alternative 3 and going to Alternative 2, and, also, just based on a vessel leaving the fishery, right, and I sold a boat last year, and, from my perspective, cancelling those multiple permits is not easy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on this action here? All right. It looks like we're good.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. Moving on to Action 5, and this is the last permit-related action that we'll go over, this is the action that would establish a mechanism that would allow a state to opt out of the federal permit requirement, and, currently, there are -- This is the action, essentially, that establishes this program, and then the sub-alternatives of Alternative 2 would specify the stipulations of that, and so a state could essentially opt out of the federal permit requirement if the same permit -- If there is the same permit type as the federal permit, and so specifically vessel versus angler type, or vessel versus angler-based permits.

2b would specify that the same snapper grouper species would need to be covered under the state permit, and Sub-Alternative 2c would specify the same areas would need to be covered, and Sub-Alternative 2d would specify that the same permitting timeframe would need to be covered, and, so essentially, that's trying to match that up to whatever your preferred alternatives would be under the previous four actions that we just discussed, and so that's sort of the intent there.

Really, in this, you know, there is -- The mechanism that would allow anglers or vessels, in certain states, to opt out of a federal permit requirement would really need to be specified further in this action, and some additional guidance that was provided on this, since this document has been put together, is that -- You know, essentially, the IPT probably needs some more time to discuss this, and sort of flesh this out a little bit more, after your discussion of the action, but Congress specifically allowed a state exemption under the Federal Fisheries Registry Program and the National Saltwater Angler Registry section of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

This kind of exemption is not really specified in the section of the MSA that the council would use to require a recreational fishing permit, and so there's a little bit of -- There is some details, and that's all to say there are some additional details that need to be worked out for this to move

forward, assuming that the council wants to continue to pursue this, and so, with that -- You know, in summary, it needs a little bit more work, and the IPT needs a little bit more time to discuss it, after some of the details have been worked out by the committee and by the council, and I will turn that over to the committee, with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica and then Chester.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: John pretty much said it, and, to quote Dr. Barbieri, the devil is in the details on this one. I mean, it's clear that Congress provided a specific state opt-out section, under the National Saltwater Angler Registry under Magnuson Section 401(g), and we've got some issues here. You know, adding a permit is a discretionary provision that would fall under Section 303(b), and that section states that the council may require, or the Secretary may require, a permit, and the permit is to be obtained and fees paid to the Secretary.

How do we figure out whether a state-issued permit would fit within that requirement, let alone some of the jurisdictional kinds of issues in Florida. If we had such a system and Florida issued a permit, does that mean that you could fish anywhere in the EEZ off the South Atlantic, or just off of Florida, and so, anyway, I think that, at the next meeting, we could come back with some additional clarification, at least from the legal end.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so it sounds like the intent would be to get some additional information. Chester, did you have anything that you wanted to add here?

MR. BREWER: Just briefly, and this similar issue came up about, I don't know, twenty years ago, or maybe longer, with regard to the saltwater licensing, and the way that it was handled then is the National Marine Fisheries Service essentially said, okay, we're going to have these, and they're going to be federal, and then went so far as to say, however, if the state involved chooses to, it can enact its own saltwater license, with these things that -- There were certain specifications that had to be met in order for the state to opt -- We used the word "opt out", but, here, it was for the -- In order for the state not to have to require the issuance of a federal permit, and it ended up being for every state.

North Carolina, as you might imagine, was a little bit slow on adoption, but eventually everybody entered -- Eventually, all the states went ahead and passed their own saltwater licenses, and they followed the criteria that was set forth by the National Marine Fisheries Service, and so I don't know whether that's just coming at it from a different direction than what you've got up here, and I don't think so, and I think what happened before -- You're close to it when you're saying permit type, support, et cetera, but maybe one of your sub-alternatives would be to use the services that has been used, and states may issue their own licenses if those licenses meet the requirements of a proposed National Marine Fisheries Service mandate, or specification or whatever, and that's probably not a good word, and I'm doing this off the top of my head. That reads okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I don't know if this will help that or not, but I was looking at HMS and how HMS works with their angler permit, and so the language that they have is federal recreational fishing regulations apply in federal waters and on the high seas and may apply to recreational fishing in state waters. Anglers possessing a federal HMS fishing permit who are fishing in state

waters must follow federal regulations for HMS in those waters, unless the state regulations are more restrictive, in which case the state regulations apply. Anglers who are planning on fishing in state waters should be familiar with the state regulations for specific species and situations.

You're doing a federal permit, with the idea that, if you fish outside of the three miles, and you decide that you want to come in and fish for that same species, as long as you've got that federal permit, you're held to the federal permit first, unless the state is more restrictive, and I don't know if that helps the conversation or not.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm not sure. I feel like, once again, staff needs to work on this and bring pieces back. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Carolyn, because that's kind of one of the things that I wanted to ask about, just for analysis and discussion points, is that, if a state is going to opt out and do their own permit -- We had previous discussions about what our authority was to require fishing in state waters, and could this be a way for states to have a permit, or is there a way for us to -- You know, if they opt out, could a state permit also apply to state waters?

MR. HADLEY: I believe so, and, you know, to look at an example, and I would look to Florida for this, representatives from Florida, but I think that would be similar to how the State Reef Fish Survey operates, where there is a requirement to that get that permit, or that license, I guess, for designation on your fishing license for anyone fishing on a vessel for that list of snapper-grouper-related species, and so that would apply in state waters as well as outside, and so it would be an opportunity to incorporate state waters, because, obviously, the states do have jurisdiction over their waters as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: So does this mean that, if a recreational fisherman buys a federal permit, and red snapper is closed in the federal water, then they can't go back into the state waters, where it's open, and catch red snapper? That is how our federal permit states, right, and is that how it's going to be?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think that depends on how the council structures it. I mean, that certainly could be a restriction, but it may not be a restriction. I think, if you allow the IPT to bring this back to you, that could be one idea that we could look at as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Maybe because I'm just a keep-it-simple-stupid person, with the discussion of authority in state waters, with what looks like will be an awful lot of analysis, would this be an action that, at this point in time, should be dropped, and then we could discuss it in a future amendment, as we kind of get our feet on the ground for this permit in general?

MS. MCCAWLEY: As from someone that already has a state permit, I would like to at least see some more analysis on this, before we just drop it. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, I agree, and I'm the one that sort of brought this up, and so, you know, it may not be permissible, but what Carolyn just said about the HMS thing has kind of spooked me, and there's a big potential there, I think, for an unintended consequence, to create conflict between state-water management and federal-water management, and so I think this needs to really be carefully thought through and thoroughly examined for what would really happen if you created a federal recreational permit that could constrain somebody from fishing opportunities in state waters.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica and then Tim.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: To that point, and to what Carolyn said, remember that HMS -- What they do is not always comparable, right, to what the council is able to do, because I believe that, for some of their species that they manage, they manage them in state waters as well, and so that's not the case here with the council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I appreciate that, and I keep going back to what we just heard from the Coast Guard, and the devil is always in the details, but somebody has got to enforce this stuff, right, and so, for the State of North Carolina, we don't even have a JEA, and so, at the end of the day, somebody has to enforce this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm going to try wrap up this discussion. Are we good with putting this back to the IPT and letting them come back with some more information on this? Okay.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so, with that, that wraps up the permit-related items, and the permit-related actions, and we'll jump into the education-related actions, and I think these will probably move a little bit quicker, and they're not quite as intricate, if you will, and so, with that, we have four education-related items.

Here again, the guidance, at the March meeting, was to split up each sort of decision point into its own separate action, and so looking at establishing the education component, mandatory versus voluntary measures, and the timing of implementation, and those have been split off into their own separate actions, again responding to the committee direction from the March meeting, and so, with that, Draft Action 6 would establish the education component for the private recreational portion of the snapper grouper fishery, and really it's a pretty simple action here. You either sort of establish it or you do not, and so Alternative 2 would establish an education component for private recreational anglers who fish for, harvest, or possess snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region.

You had a series of AP recommendations. Generally speaking, both of the APs that reviewed this were in favor of an education, or supportive of an education, component or education requirement, and so, with that, I will turn it over to the committee for any discussion, as far as the range of alternatives or the action itself, and so that will wrap it up, and then we'll go into the next action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any comments on this education component that we need to give the IPT direction or that we need them to come back with here? Anything on this education piece? Mel.

MR. BELL: Just a real quick question, and so Alternative 2, implement it immediately, meaning the day it goes into effect, right, I guess, and then the other one is delay, and the delay would maybe be necessary to -- You would start it, but then you've got like within six months to have this thing up and running, or whatever it is, although I think that's probably the easiest thing to do, quite honestly, is develop the educational piece.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. The timing is in the next action. This is just establishing the component, and so it seems like we're good here to establish -- Okay. All right. I'm going to turn it back to John.

MR. HADLEY: Okay, and so the next action looks at specifying whether an education component would be mandatory or voluntary. Again, a pretty simple action, and you either -- There is two alternatives other than the no action alternative.

Alternative 2 would make the education component mandatory, and Alternative 3 would make the education component voluntary, and, really, of note with this one is that, you know, it's excellent to have council discussion on this, and guidance, and, if you do end up wanting to go down the voluntary path, some of these actions would end up coming out of the amendment, because, if it is a voluntary measure, it's not necessarily going to involve a change to the federal regulations, and it's not something that necessarily needs to be examined in the FMP process. It's in there, and it can remain in there, but, if Alternative 3 is chosen as the preferred, some of these actions would come out of the amendment, since it would be a voluntary measure, and the council would really be on its own timeline to move forward and develop that portion of it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. It seems like we have a good range here. Tom, did you have anything you wanted to add?

MR. ROLLER: Just that, you know, John really covered that really well, and I don't really see the need for Alternative 3, and I'm not saying that we should remove it, but, you know, I just -- Given what he said, it's good to get that clarification, but, in my opinion, I think it should be mandatory, or we shouldn't be doing it, right, but my other comment was, given that we're still having this discussion of whether vessel or individual, would it be applicable to have the language read like for all recreational permit holders?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John is going to capture that. All right. Anything else on this one?

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you for that, and so two more actions to move through related to the education component. Action 8 would specify the timing of implementation of an education component, and this is, I think, the point that Mel got to, as far as there is two options here that the council, or the committee, has wanted to discuss within this action, and so two alternatives.

Alternative 2 would implement the education component immediately, and so essentially, when the rule package goes out, it would implement the education component with the issuance of the permit, assuming that moves forward as well. Alternative 3 would specify some sort of delayed

implementation of the education requirement, and, again, we don't have to figure out all of the details today, but, if the council were to have some sort of delayed implementation, or prefer some sort of delayed implementation, the length of that delay would need to be specified. That is really the extent of the action to look at whether there is an immediate or delayed implementation, and I will turn it over to the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mel, this is the one that you were asking about a minute ago, and do you think that this captures this?

MR. BELL: Yes, I think you've got the full range in there, and I was also thinking about things where we implemented a requirement for shellfish fishermen, and it took us a little time, but you guys probably are ready to go on this this afternoon, if you wanted.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and this is the final draft action in the amendment at this time, and this would specify -- This is similar to the discussion we had with the permit, and so this would specify the timing of the education component, and so when they would need to be -- How long they would be issued for, and so, once the permit holder received the education component, how long would it be valid, essentially, and so Alternative 2 specifies that the education component would need to be received each calendar year.

Alternative 3 specifies every other calendar year, and Alternative 4 specifies one time, and so, essentially, you would have a one-time issuance of an education requirement, and that would be good indefinitely, and then, sort of there again, that catchall. If you have some sort of other time period that you wanted to add, that's what -- The Alternative 5 is put in there for that discussion piece, if you have a different time series, but, with that, that's sort of the range of alternatives that were added for initial consideration of the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Maybe we also need at each issuance, because I don't see one for that. Mel, did you have your hand up as well?

MR. BELL: Well, yes, and I was thinking issuance, and I was also thinking this every-other-year thing is kind of like -- Maybe just take that out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. John, so that was two things, and the other one was remove Alternative 3, since we took that out earlier in the document. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I agree with the comment to remove Alternative 3 in discussion like of how we renew the permits. However, you know, this is a wide range of options, right, and you could do something like every other calendar year from issuance or something, if we didn't want it to be done every year. Now, personally, I think it should be every year, or upon issuance, because that also gives us the ability to update the education component, right, but I just think that this table includes a wide range of options, and it doesn't necessarily have to be tied to the permit renewal times.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so Tom is saying keep Alternative 3 in there as an option. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Or more along the lines of like every other issuance, as opposed to every other calendar year, just to give us a full range of options.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. Anything else? Do we think we have a good range of options here on this one? Okay.

MR. HADLEY: With that, that brings it to the end of discussion for the draft actions in the amendment, and so we have a draft motion for you, essentially to approve the changes that you have made, sort of a catchall inclusion into the amendment for all of the actions and alternatives.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Would someone like to make that motion? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: **Madam Chair, I will move that we approve the actions and alternatives, as modified, for inclusion in Amendment 46.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Spud and seconded by Mel. Any more discussion? We've had a lot of good discussion on this amendment, and we did a lot of work on it. **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** John, does this now go back to the technical committee or only the IPT? How does this work?

MR. HADLEY: So I think we could probably have it go back to both, and I think we could schedule an IPT meeting and discuss some of the items that came up related to that, and we'll have to get with the technical AP, to look at the scheduling and timing and see if we can coordinate everyone's schedules, but I think they laid out a very clear path forward, as far as the topics that they wanted to discuss, and to help come with and formulate recommendations for the committee, and so I think, you know, the short answer is I think we could do both in the meantime.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, John. I am going to turn this back to our Chair and let her tell us how we're going to handle lunch and what we're going to do when we come back from lunch.

DR. BELCHER: All right, and so, again, just because of the timing issues, and I guess even yesterday we couldn't get back before an hour-and-a-half, and so it's quarter after now, and so quarter to two is when we'll come back from lunch. We'll pick up with Other Business, and I am going to talk with John and Jessica about procedures on how we can keep the timing short, but we'll pick up with Other Business, and then we will move into Full Council.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going, and we are still in Snapper Grouper. We are going to do the spawning SMZs update with Chip, and then we'll go into the best fishing practices outreach update with Christina, and then we will go into Other Business, and the Chair has given us fifteen minutes to do all of our other business, and so, at the end of fifteen minutes, they're going to cut off Other Business, and then we will go into Full Council, and so I'm going to pass it over to Chip.

DR. COLLIER: All right. I will be as short as I normally am, and so I reached out to the chair, or the co-chair, of the System Management Plan Workgroup, and we can have a meeting. She's available to have a meeting this fall, and so we're going to be working on setting up a meeting. In the meantime, I did want to let you guys know that I'm working through The Nature Conservancy

managed areas work, and it's a working document, just to evaluate that, and I was going to send that to the working group as a piece of information to include.

I also want to highlight some research that's been going on in the spawning SMZs. The Nature Conservancy funded a research trip to go out to Devil's Hole, and they did in fact find some priority species, and so they observed scamp in the area, and one of the scamp was in a color phase of spawning, and so that's encouraging, and they also found some speckled hind in the area, and so both of those are encouraging. The speckled hind were pretty small, and so they didn't keep those for samples, and they probably were not of spawning size.

We are hoping to get some work done in Warsaw Hole, and we're working with The Nature Conservancy in order to get that done, and hopefully we can get that done in the next year or two. They had applied for a MARFIN grant. Unfortunately, we found out, yesterday or the day before, that we didn't get funded for it, but we're going to work through it and try to get some more information on these areas, and so that's my update on the spawning special management zones. Information is being collected, and so we are going to have additional information to provide to the System Management Plan Workgroup, and then we'll bring hopefully a report to you guys, maybe in December.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chip. Any questions for Chip? I see that people are very excited. Thank you. Let's now turn it over to Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. For the best fishing practices outreach update, I wanted to let you guys know that we have made a new hire for the Reef Fish Sea Grant Fellowship. If you will remember, Ashley Oliver was originally in that position, and then we created the Best Fishing Practices Outreach Specialist position with the council, and very greedily scooped her up, so that she's now council staff, which means that we were fortunate enough to get to hire David Hugo as our new reef fish fellow, and so I wanted to give him just a quick minute to sort of introduce himself. I know a couple of you around the room have already met him, but, if you haven't yet, please take a chance to talk to him.

MR. HUGO: Hello, everyone. My name is David Hugo, and I graduated from Duke University last year, and I have a little bit of background, and I used to intern at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, with saltmarsh ecology, and then I worked at NOAA for a little bit, doing fish passage research, out of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, with salmon, as well as a little bit of experience with aquaculture R&D, and I'm really excited to be here. I'm a big fisherman myself, and I'm ready to spread the word of best fishing practices and descending devices and help with the SAFMC Release project as well, and so I'm glad to be here, and I would love to chat with you.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and then, in the interest of time, I'm not going to go over sort of everything we've been doing for best fishing practices outreach, but I do just want to take a moment to give a couple of shoutouts to people that have been incredibly helpful for spreading the best fishing practices and SAFMC Release word.

First, our state agency partners have been incredibly helpful, and we've been participating in the South Carolina DNR open house, and, just this last weekend, we had staff at the NC DMF jamboree, and so being able to partner with state agencies on events like that are helpful. Also, a

number of state agencies have been willing to send out mailings for us about SAFMC Release, and including information about that program, as well as best fishing practices, anytime they sort of reach out to their constituents about, you know, grouper openings and things of the like.

I also want to give a quick shoutout to some of our Snapper Grouper AP members. Cameron Sebastian recently hosted a seminar for us, and he let us come up to North Myrtle Beach and have an event at his dive shop, which is incredibly helpful. Chris Burrows, of the Dolphin Wahoo AP, wrote a wonderful column in *Carolina Sportsman* highlighting SAFMC Release and best fishing practices, and then Chris Woodward recently had Meg Withers, our Citizen Science Project Coordinator, on her Women in Fishing podcast, which will be out later in July, and we'll be sure to send that around to you, and so just a real quick thank you.

When people, you know, in the fishing community partner with us to help spread this word, it means a lot, because it's always going to sound better sort of coming from anglers in the community than coming from us, and so I won't get into everything, but I did just want to take a quick moment to, you know, give them a shoutout and say thank you for continuing to partner with us on these projects.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you so much for that update. Any questions? All right. Thanks, you guys. All right. Now we're going to dive into Other Business, and the first thing that we're going to start with is we're going to go back to -- I don't know if this is really other business, but we're going to go back to wreckfish, and so we said we would come back to that later in the week, and so a group of us have kind of been working on that, off to the side, and so I am going to kick it over to Kerry to talk about an idea that we've come up with here for wreckfish.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Jessica, and so, as you I'm sure have now realized, wreckfish is highly specialized in sort of the technical aspects of what we're getting into now, and we really get down into the muck and the weeds, and so I had suggested possibly, for the sake of efficiency, maybe creating a wreckfish committee, or subcommittee, or ad hoc committee, whatever the correct language is, and have that committee meet outside of the full council meeting, sort of a la Mid Atlantic, where the committee meets outside of the committee meeting and then reports back at the Full Council meeting, so that not everyone has to sit through all of that information, and we might be able to get through it a little more quickly, but we didn't even get into the electronic monitoring and all of the sort of permitting nuances, which are just -- It would take another day or two here. That was a suggestion that I made to Jessica and Andy earlier this week, and I just wanted to throw that out for everyone, to see how they felt about it, and so that was my thought, to save some time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that, and so we also had a conversation about what do we do about the current shareholders, and can we meet the wreckfish shareholders, even though we're possibly creating a whole new wreckfish AP that's not populated yet, and so I believe that council staff have worked with Monica, and I am going to turn it over to Christina to tell us a little bit about these motions on the board to do some of these things.

MS. WIEGAND: We've got two motions on the board and then a draft direction to staff. The first draft motion would create that ad hoc wreckfish advisory group that Jessica was talking about, with the intent that it would be for the current shareholders to discuss Snapper Grouper Amendment 48 specifically, but then we would still continue to move forward with the wreckfish

advisory panel, as directed by you all at this meeting, through the existing process, and we would make appointments to that AP in December of 2023.

The second draft motion on the board would then establish that ad hoc council wreckfish subcommittee that Kerry was talking about, again, like she said, with the intent for that group to sort of meet outside of these usual council meetings, still publicly, but we would then bring a committee report back to the Snapper Grouper Committee during these regularly-scheduled meetings, and then, finally, that draft direction to staff would be to go ahead and convene a meeting of the wreckfish advisory group, or the WAG, and the wreckfish subcommittee, prior to the September meeting, with the intent that the advisory group and the subcommittee would meet together, and then the subcommittee would maybe stay longer to discuss what happened at the advisory group meeting, and so two separate groups, one with shareholders and one as a council committee, meeting before the September meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Christina, and, also, thinking about kind of the timing, which was another big discussion that we had earlier this week, and so it looked like we were going to be able to finalize this in September, but then, maybe with some of these add-ons, maybe December of this year, and we are thinking that maybe this finalization, based on all these moving parts, might actually be pushed to March, and so we're trying to get this through as fast as possible, but this might have another meeting added, until we can finalize all these different pieces. With that being said, Kerry, would you like to make the first motion, and then we can have discussions on this specific motions?

MS. MARHEFKA: Sure. **I move that we create an ad hoc wreckfish advisory group consisting of its current shareholders, for the purpose of discussing Snapper Grouper Amendment 48. A Wreckfish Advisory Panel would be created, as directed by the council in June of 2023, through the existing AP process. Appointments for this AP will be made in December of 2023.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there a second? All right. It's seconded by Laurilee. It's under discussion. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: You talked to me about this, and I'm supportive, and I think the question is, you know, composition of the subcommittee, and so is it just council members, or is it council members and council staff and NMFS staff, or what are you envisioning?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think that's the second motion, and we're still on the advisory group motion. Do you have anything on the advisory group first? It looks like no. Does anybody have anything on this basically bringing together the wreckfish shareholders? Okay. **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.** Then I am going to pass it to Kerry to make the second motion and then go back to Andy to ask that question again.

MS. MARHEFKA: **I move that we establish an ad hoc council wreckfish subcommittee to continue development of Amendment 48. The wreckfish subcommittee will report to the Snapper Grouper Committee during regularly-scheduled meetings.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Kerry. Do we have a second? Seconded by Carolyn. It's under discussion, and so I believe, Andy, what you were asking is what would the makeup of

that committee be, and is it just council members or what is it, and I'm going kick it over to Christina to answer that.

MS. WIEGAND: The intent is that this is an official council committee, and so it would be council members only, and we would, you know, FRN notice these meetings, and they would all be publicly available via webinar, and certainly, you know, we would be working with NMFS staff closely through the IPT process, and I imagine would be giving a number of presentations, like the one that Jessica gave a couple of days ago to that group, but the intent is that that's a council committee with council members.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would also add that, if people aren't aware, the committees, and in this case the subcommittee, those are populated by the chair of the council and the executive director, you know, outside of our regular process, and so this would happen between now and the next meeting, that the council chair would work on populating this. More discussion on this motion? Other questions about what this would do or how this would work? All right. **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.** All right. Kerry, would you like to give some direction to staff here?

MS. MARHEFKA: Convene a meeting of the wreckfish advisory group and the wreckfish subcommittee prior to September of 2023.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we have some direction to convene those before the next council meeting. Any questions on the direction? Any additional directions or concerns on wreckfish? All right. We're going to go into some of our other items on Other Business, and so another item that was on Other Business was Laurilee's item on golden tilefish landings that are coming in after the closed season. Laurilee, you can certainly, you know, articulate the point here, but I'm also wondering if maybe you could work with the NOAA folks to maybe get this resolved outside of this meeting week, but let me go to you.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, and I will be happy to do that, and we don't need to spend time on it here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Laurilee. Another item under Other Business is I'm going to go back to Kerry for something that came up during the Snapper Grouper AP meeting relative to the two-for-one permit.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just very, very quickly, I just -- The AP actually had it in their motions, and in writing, and I didn't want to be dismissive or have them think that we didn't hear them, and so I wanted to address sort of where I thought we were on that and make sure we're all on the same page, and so hopefully they will hear this, that, in my mind, you know, sort of looking at things like the two-for-one would be part of the overall MSE, that sort of step back and take a big look process, and that we hear them, and we're not ignoring them, but that is not in our workplan in the immediate future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to go to Chip to talk a little bit more about the MSE.

DR. COLLIER: As opposed to putting this in the MSE, because we're really trying to focus on some of the recreational aspects, we could do that in the amendment development process, because

I think it's more of an economic issue than it is a resource issue, and so I think we really need to dive into the economics of the two-for-one, as opposed to the modeling aspect of it, and I see John is thinking about it, and he's nodding his head yes, that that might be an appropriate place to really dive into that consideration, and so, as opposed to putting it in the MSE, we can do it in the amendment that's associated with the MSE.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is that okay with you? Procedurally, it's not actually technically in the MSE modeling, but it could come into the amendment that follows the MSE, that is the outputs of that. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That makes a lot more sense to me, and I get what you're saying there. I think what hopefully was not lost in what I was trying to say is, you know, I don't know what direction this body wants -- If this body even wants to do anything about it, and I have my own opinion, based on the number of overfished species we still have and things like that, and so, as long as there is a way for us to take a step back and look, economic, broadly, at the snapper grouper commercial fishery, however we do that, that's fine, and then, if the mechanism, if we decide to do something, is that amendment, that's totally fine.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, you guys. All right. The final item that we had of the Other Business that I know of was Dewey's item on discards, and so let me pass it over to Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. My request would be that the council change the way it applies the percentage to ABC and calculating sector ACLs, and, basically, what you would be doing is each sector would be accountable for their dead discards. The way you do it now, each sector is not accountable for their discards, and I think that, going forward, given the environmental inequity and injustice, and just fair and equitable, and I know -- I believe my State of North Carolina does that for southern flounder, and maybe Tom and Trish could correct me if I'm wrong, but they take discards off the top, and each sector is given their ACL, and, in the Mid, we did it because we were having recreational overages, and they finally decided that this is the best way to do it.

I think, given the state of the commercial industry, and what's left, we need -- We can't afford to paying the bills for the recreational discards no more, and so I have a motion that I would like to put forward, if I could, given the short amount of time. **The motion would be that the council change the way it applies allocation percentages to ABCs and calculating sector ACLs.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Staff is trying to get that on the board there, and so if you can watch the board and see if this accurately captures your motion, and just hang tight.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It was applies allocation -- We want the council to change the way it applies allocation percentages to ABCs and calculating sector ACLs. I guess, that being said, I think I might want to say we want the -- Well, further, we want the SSC to provide the ABC in total removals, and then so all discards would be included in that ABC, and then the sector allocation percentage would be applied to the total removals. I am not sure if I'm presenting it right, but I know what the outcome is, and I believe everybody around this table is understanding what I am asking for here, and maybe John could help me here.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think what you're saying, Dewey, is -- I mean, the SSC already does all of this, and so that's not an issue, and we get total, and you want to apply the allocation percentages

to the total yield and then subtract the sector-based discards from each sector's total yield, to provide the sector's landings.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, that's it, and so, that way, each side --

MR. CARMICHAEL: You want to allocate total yield to sectors and subtract sector-specific discards and then have sector-specific ACLs.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes. I also want to make sure that -- Was that correct about our state does that for southern flounder?

MS. MURPHEY: I can't answer that question right now on how they do that, because I have not been involved with southern flounder.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: All right.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Let me try to read that. **Motion to change the way the council applies allocation percentages to the ABC in calculating sector ACLs. Allocate total removals and subtract sector-specific dead discards to provide sector ACLs.** Is that your motion?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, that is.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. So then do we have a second? It's seconded by Tim. It's under discussion. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for making that motion, Dewey, and, you know, we've talked about this and talked about this, and Chip gave a great presentation at the last meeting on this exact issue, and they do it -- I know they do it in the Mid, and I'm pretty sure that some other councils do it as well, but, I mean, it only makes sense.

We already have the data broken out this way, and it goes into the assessment this way, and so, you know, this is the logical and best way to do this, and I think we need to do it, going forward, for every single time we do an assessment. I understand that, for something like scamp, when the overall total discards weren't really worth the -- The juice wasn't really worth the squeeze to try to tease these out, and I get that, but, you know, as standard operating procedure, this should be the way we do things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John and then Mel.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The one thing that will probably need to go along with this is recalculating the allocation percentages based on total removals for the past, because the allocation percentages that we have now are based only on landings, and so, if there's been a difference in discard rates over time, this would affect that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say, based on the way that's worded, I would be really reluctant to go that route, just because I don't think that I understand enough about what might happen, or what might not happen, or the unintended consequences, and we're talking about actually changing a policy, I guess, without any more information, and maybe it's been discussed enough, and everybody else gets it, but I don't -- I'm not so sure that I could really support just doing that right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I'm right there with you. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I would almost consider changing -- Again, the process is not my strong suit with the Roberts Rules, but changing that to "consider changing the way that we apply this allocation percentage". Again, I think having more in front of us, to actually see what the perils could be, or how they work out, might help us a little bit more with that, as opposed to jumping in with both feet.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: **I think that would be great, "to consider".**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Or "evaluate"?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Either way you choose, and I know it takes time, and you need to go out, and people have got to digest it, but I think they've got the crux of what I'm asking for. We look at it when we look at the tables on the SEDAR process of the different discards and what is happening, and the commercial industry is tired of paying for the recreational discards, and I think that this is a way to get at it, even if you have to go back and recalculate, and you could look at it going forward, or something to that aspect, but I think most around the table -- When they look at it, they look at the fair and equitable part, and they will be signing on after they figure it out in the future. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chester.

MR. BREWER: Obviously, I am not going to support this motion, but, if we're going to be fair and equitable, then we need to make sure that we are using the same system to evaluate discards in all sectors. Right now, we use different systems. Right now, we have logbooks and whatnot for the commercial folks, and we have what is really questionable data for the recreational. Now, the recreational may be horribly overstated, and it could be understated, but I think you need to say, okay, well, fine, and we'll do this, but you can't be comparing discards apples to oranges, and that's not fair, and that's not equitable.

Additionally, the -- I think it was yesterday that we saw that there are logbooks in which 70 percent of the commercial reportings for -- You know, it's not even made, and they were zero, and everybody here knows that that's just impossible, and yet we're going to use those to compare, or use those to set allocations, or at least the modification of allocations? No, and I can't support that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John Walter and then Dewey.

DR. WALTER: When this came up yesterday, and Shannon was asked, she was being very modest in not actually citing a paper that she published with a student, Erin Bohaboy, that that looked at this exact concept of allocating the total kill for each sector, and there are some pros and cons to it, and I think those pros and cons are what is valuable for this council to think about.

One of the pros is that it incentivizes cleaner fishing, and so, if you know you have always historically had dead discards, and you implement a measure that reduces that, then that directly goes back into your retained ACL, in that manner, and so that actually incentivizes improving best fishing practices, and I think that's one of the carrots to that.

Some of the cons are that our discards are not as well estimated as our landings, and so, if we were to be able to monitor ACLs with discards, that might challenge our existing system. There is a number of other pros and cons that it may disincentivize reporting of discards, because you would never reach your ACL if you never report discards, and so I think that thinking about those pros and cons are probably what would be a valuable thing to consider, and I would just say that there's some work already done on that, and it's been considered I think for other fisheries, and so, if the council wants to go there, maybe having your SSC look further into the pros and cons of that might be valuable. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're running out of time here. Kerry, I don't know that you've spoken on this. I will go to you, and then we'll let Dewey have the last word, and then we're going to call the question, and so over to Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have brought this up, and it's very complicated, and I think that I am great if we can just start considering it, start thinking about what this means for us as a council, and, Chester, to your point, we monitor landings in different modes too, but we use those, and we have expanded the observer program to 500 days this year, and so there is some groundtruthing to those logbooks.

I am not saying it's perfect, but I'm just saying let's keep it open, and let's explore it. I think this is going to be a bigger issue as these species that we're dealing with now, that we're lowering fishing mortality on, that, in theory, could rebuild, and this could become a bigger issue, and I don't want to throw it out altogether, but I fully understand that we're not ready to just say let's start doing it this way now, and so I would just ask that we can continue having this conversation, get some of the information that John Walter brought up, and move forward in that thoughtful manner.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey, last word.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think there is ways to look at this into the future, where you're projecting the dead discards similar to how other councils do, and something else is you could include the use of best available science, that it be the best available science, best available information, best available science information available, or something like that, and I can't remember, but, I mean, that's what we use, and these numbers -- When we talk about it, they're what we use for our stock assessments, and so I think that use further consideration of the best available scientific information and look at this, because it's definitely the route that you're going to have to go for for accountability here in the near future. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We captured that not in the motion itself. All right, and so the question has been called, and so we're going to vote. All those in favor -- Do you want me to read the motion again? **The motion is to evaluate changing the way the council applies allocation percentages to the ABC and calculating sector ACLs. Allocate total removals and subtract sector-specific dead discards to provide sector ACLs.** That is the motion. All right. We're calling the question. **All those in favor, raise your hand; all those opposed. The motion passes seven to five.** All right. Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I just wanted to bring up that we heard, in public comment yesterday, from some very respected members of the for-hire industry, regarding their desire for us to discuss limited entry, specifically I believe in the grouper snapper fishery, and I can bring that up at Full Council, under timing and tasks, to see if we can have the AP discuss it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We can discuss that at Full Council, in Other Business. All right. Any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? All right. That concludes this committee, and I'm going to pass it back to you, Madam Chair.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 15, 2023.)

- - -

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
August 1, 2023

Snapper Grouper Committee

Tuesday, June 13, 2023		
Attendees	Present	Remote
Jessica McCawley, Chair	✓	
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair	✓	
Robert Beal	✓	
Carolyn Belcher	✓	
Mel Bell	✓	
Gary Borland	✓	
LT Cameron Box	<i>NOT Attending</i>	
Chester Brewer	✓	
Tim Griner	✓	
Judy Helmey	✓	
Jessica McCawley	✓	
Trish Murphey	✓	
Tom Roller	✓	
Andy Strelcheck		
Laurilee Thompson	✓	
Spud Woodward	✓	
Dewey Hemilright, Mid-Atlantic	✓	
Earl "Sonny" Gwin, Mid-Atlantic		
Mike Schmidtke, Staff Contact		
SAFMC STAFF		
Myra Brouwer	✓	
Julia Byrd	✓	
John Carmichael	✓	
Chip Collier	✓	
Judd Curtis	✓	
John Hadley	✓	
Allie Iberle	✓	
Kim Iverson	✓	
Kelly Klasnick	✓	
Michele Ritter	✓	
Mike Schmidtke	✓	
Nick Smillie	✓	
Christina Wiegand	✓	
OTHER		
David Hugo	✓	
Rick Devictor	✓	
Dr. Jack McGovern	✓	
Monica Smit-Brunello		
Dr. John Walter	✓	
Shep Grimes	✓	
Lt. Patrick O'Shaughnessy	✓	

Snapper Grouper Committee

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Attendees	Present	Remote
Jessica McCawley, Chair	✓	
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair	✓	
Robert Beal	✓	
Carolyn Belcher	✓	
Mel Bell	✓	
Gary Borland	✓	
LT Cameron Box	NOT ATTENDING	
Chester Brewer	✓	
Tim Griner	✓	
Judy Helmey	✓	
Jessica McCawley	✓	
Trish Murphey	✓	
Tom Roller	✓	
Andy Strelcheck	✓	
Laurilee Thompson	✓	
Spud Woodward	✓	
Dewey Hemilright, Mid-Atlantic	✓	
Earl "Sonny" Gwin, Mid-Atlantic		
Mike Schmidtke, Staff Contact	✓	
SAFMC STAFF		
Myra Brouwer	✓	
Julia Byrd	✓	
John Carmichael	✓	
Chip Collier	✓	
Judd Curtis	✓	
John Hadley	✓	
Allie Iberle	✓	
Kim Iverson	✓	
Kelly Klasnick	✓	
Michele Ritter	✓	
Mike Schmidtke	✓	
Nick Smillie	✓	
Christina Wiegand	✓	
OTHER		
David Hugo		
Rick Devictor	✓	
Dr. Jack McGovern	✓	
Monica Smit-Brunello	GO TO Webinar ✓	
Dr. John Walter	✓	
Shep Grimes	✓	
Lt. Patrick O'Shaughnessy	✓	
Nikhil	✓	
Billy Broussard	✓	
Frank Heller	✓	

Jeff Buckel ✓

Snapper Grouper Committee

Thursday, June 15, 2023		
Attendees	Present	Remote
Jessica McCawley, Chair	✓	
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair	✓	
Robert Beal		
Carolyn Belcher	✓	
Mel Bell	✓	
Gary Borland	✓	
LT Cameron Box	NOT ATTENDING	
Chester Brewer	✓	
Tim Griner		
Judy Helmey	✓	
Jessica McCawley	✓	
Trish Murphey	✓	
Tom Roller	✓	
Andy Strelcheck	✓	
Laurilee Thompson	✓	
Spud Woodward	✓	
Dewey Hemilright, Mid-Atlantic	✓	
Earl "Sonny" Gwin, Mid-Atlantic		
Mike Schmidtke, Staff Contact	✓	
SAFMC STAFF		
Myra Brouwer	✓	
Julia Byrd	✓	
John Carmichael	✓	
Chip Collier	✓	
Judd Curtis	✓	
John Hadley	✓	
Allie Iberle	✓	
Kim Iverson	✓	
Kelly Klasnick	✓	
Michele Ritter	✓	
Mike Schmidtke	✓	
Nick Smillie	✓	
Christina Wiegand	✓	
OTHER		
David Hugo	✓	
Rick Devictor	✓	
Dr. Jack McGovern	✓	
Monica Smit-Brunello		✓
Dr. John Walter	✓	
Shep Grimes	✓	
Lt. Patrick O'Shaughnessy		
Nikhil M.	✓	
Lt. Jessie Post	✓	

Attendee Report: SAFMC 2023 June Council Meeting Snapper Grouper Committee

Report Generated:

06/20/2023 01:18 PM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
147-909-795	06/13/2023 07:26 AM EDT	9 hours 31 minutes	149

Attendee Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	59	Addis	Dustin
Yes	48	Bailey	Adam
Yes	54	Barrows	Katline
Yes	83	Batsavage	Chris
Yes	41	Beal	Bob
Yes	74	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	94	Berry	James "chip"
Yes	40	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	92	Blair	Holly
Yes	90	Bonura	Vincent
Yes	31	Brantley	William
Yes	63	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	43	Carr	Kayla
Yes	40	Cimo	Laura
Yes	40	Clinton	Haley
Yes	90	Clinton	Haley
Yes	93	Cox	Jack
Yes	39	Cox	Derek
Yes	37	Crosson	Scott
Yes	43	DeJohn	Frank
Yes	50	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	34	Dover	Miles
Yes	37	Finch	Margaret
Yes	48	Flowers	Jared
Yes	71	Foss	Kristin
Yes	34	Franke	Emilie
Yes	54	Freeman	Matt
Yes	40	Gore	Karla
Yes	37	Guyas	Martha
Yes	41	Hadley	John
Yes	71	Harrison	Alana
Yes	46	Helies	Frank
Yes	79	Helmey	Judy
Yes	50	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	37	Heyman	William
Yes	91	Hoppe	Walter
Yes	46	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	74	Hudson	Joseph

Yes	38	Iverson	Kim
Yes	40	Karnauskas	Mandy
Yes	39	Kean	Samantha
Yes	91	Kersting	Anne
Yes	100	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	37	Knowlton	Kathy
Yes	42	Kolmos	Kevin
Yes	49	Kramer	Rob
Yes	90	L	Kelcie
Yes	55	LaRoche	Kelcie
Yes	48	Larkin	Michael
Yes	53	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	38	Lee	Max
Yes	36	Lee	Jennifer
Yes	48	Lowther	Alan
Yes	69	M Borland	Gary
Yes	90	Mahoney	Andrew
Yes	40	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	68	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	48	Masi	Michelle
Yes	44	McCoy	Sherylanne
Yes	64	McGovern	Jack
Yes	32	McPherson	Matthew
Yes	38	Meehan	Sean
Yes	52	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	38	Merten	Wessley
Yes	33	Meyers	S
Yes	69	Murphey	00Trish
Yes	90	Myjak	Michael
Yes	41	Neer	Julie
Yes	97	Newman	Thomas
Yes	92	O'Malley	Rachel
Yes	48	O'Shaughnessy	Pat
Yes	51	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	57	Owens	Marina
Yes	58	Package-Ward	Christina
Yes	45	Peterson	Cassidy
Yes	52	Poston	Will
Yes	36	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	51	Records	David
Yes	100	Ritter	Michele
Yes	62	Roller	00Tom
Yes	90	Scott	Tara
Yes	84	Sedberry	George
Yes	97	Seward	McLean
Yes	32	Siegfried	Katie
Yes	48	Smart	Tracey

Yes	57	Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Yes	40	Spurgin	Kali
Yes	40	Sramek	Mark
Yes	46	Stemle	Adam
Yes	39	Stephenson	Sarah
Yes	46	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	90	Thompson	Laurilee
Yes	42	Travis	Michael
Yes	40	Tuohy	Chelsea
Yes	91	Vecchio	Julie
Yes	42	Vincent	Matthew
Yes	58	Walia	Matthew
Yes	58	Walsh	Jason
Yes	72	Wamer	David
Yes	93	Willingham	Darrin
Yes	52	Withers	Meg
Yes	44	brewer	00chester
Yes	90	brewer	00chester
Yes	79	broussard	billy
Yes	98	colby	barrett
Yes	41	collier	chip
Yes	37	gloeckner	david
Yes	90	merino	joy
Yes	90	oden	jeff
Yes	39	sandorf	scott
Yes	47	stephen	jessica
Yes	100	thomas	01 suz
Yes	45	thompson	laurilee
Yes	36	vara	mary
Yes	39	walter	John
No	0	ALHALE	SYDNEY
No	0	Antonaras	Manny
No	0	Brennan	Ken
No	0	DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
No	0	DuBeck	Guy
No	0	E Brown	Julie
No	0	Franco	Dawn
No	0	Gray	Alisha
No	0	Groeteke	Mike
No	0	Hallas	Sara
No	0	Heffernan	Katie
No	0	Hull	James
No	0	Keilin Gamboa-Salazar	Keilin
No	0	Laks	Ira
No	0	McWhorter	Will
No	0	Moore	Jeff
No	0	Muffley	Brandon

No	0

Noell	Brian
Pehl	Nicole
Prewitt	Brian
Privoznik	Sarah
Pugliese	Roger
RINCONES	RON
Rohrer	Frank
Salmon	Brandi
Sauls	Beverly
Sheridan	Sean
Smillie	Nick
Soltanoff	Carrie
Thomas	Lauren
White	Geoff
alvarez-stratton	ally
griner	tim
moss	david

Attendee Report: SAFMC 2023 June Council Meeting Snapper Grouper Committee

Report Generated:

06/20/2023 01:34 PM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
147-909-795	06/14/2023 07:24 AM EDT	10 hours 5 minutes	178

Attendee Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	41	Addis	Dustin
Yes	37	Atkinson	Seth
Yes	32	Bailey	Adam
Yes	81	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	94	Berry	James "chip"
Yes	58	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	91	Blair	Holly
Yes	55	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	90	Byrd	Julia
Yes	38	Calay	Shannon
Yes	93	Cathey	Andrew
Yes	90	Cenci	Chris
Yes	41	Clinton	Haley
Yes	35	Coggins	Lew
Yes	92	Cox	Jack
Yes	40	Crosson	Scott
Yes	64	Curtis	Judd
Yes	33	DeJohn	Frank
Yes	50	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	33	Dover	Miles
Yes	40	Finch	Margaret
Yes	35	Flowers	Jared
Yes	87	Foss	Kristin
Yes	91	Franco	Dawn
Yes	55	Gentry	Lauren
Yes	94	Glazier	Ed
Yes	47	Gore	Karla
Yes	40	Gray	Alisha
Yes	50	Guyas	Martha
Yes	90	Hallas	Sara
Yes	98	Harrison	Alana
Yes	44	Helies	Frank
Yes	96	Helmey	Judy
Yes	67	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	52	Heyman	William
Yes	91	Hoppe	Walter
Yes	44	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	92	Hudson	Joseph

Yes	39	Iverson	Kim
Yes	38	Karnauskas	Mandy
Yes	37	Kean	Samantha
Yes	40	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	87	Kersting	Anne
Yes	100	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	34	Knowlton	Kathy
Yes	32	Kolmos	Kevin
Yes	47	LaRoche	Kelcie
Yes	90	Laks	Ira
Yes	73	Larkin	Michael
Yes	40	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	51	Lee	Max
Yes	92	Lloyd	Victor
Yes	91	Locke	Charlie
Yes	81	M Borland	Gary
Yes	97	Mahoney	Andrew
Yes	44	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	84	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	92	Marinko	Jeff
Yes	35	Masi	Michelle
Yes	67	McCoy	Sherylanne
Yes	60	McGovern	Jack
Yes	78	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	43	Merrifield	Jeanna
Yes	65	Murphey	00Trish
Yes	51	Neer	Julie
Yes	91	Nelson	David
Yes	86	Nelson	Chasity
Yes	97	Newman	Thomas
Yes	49	O'Donnell	Kelli
Yes	44	O'Shaughnessy	Pat
Yes	50	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	71	Owens	Marina
Yes	63	Package-Ward	Christina
Yes	91	Pellicer	Joseph
Yes	32	Peterson	Cassidy
Yes	42	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	61	Records	David
Yes	100	Ritter	Michele
Yes	79	Roller	00Tom
Yes	36	Runde	Brendan
Yes	64	Schueller	Amy
Yes	40	Scott	Tara
Yes	99	Seward	McLean
Yes	34	Shertzer	Kyle
Yes	32	Siegfried	Katie

Yes	38	Smart	Tracey
Yes	60	Smillie	Nick
Yes	63	Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Yes	58	Somerset	Carly
Yes	46	Sramek	Mark
Yes	43	Stemle	Adam
Yes	50	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	42	Takade-Heumacher	Helen
Yes	46	Travis	Michael
Yes	43	Vincent	Matthew
Yes	52	Walia	Matthew
Yes	73	Walsh	Jason
Yes	62	Wamer	David
Yes	57	Waters	James
Yes	58	Wiegand	Christina
Yes	92	Willingham	Darrin
Yes	56	Withers	Meg
Yes	90	Wolfe	Wes
Yes	96	brewer	00chester
Yes	81	broussard	billy
Yes	47	collier	chip
Yes	48	froeschke	john
Yes	31	gloeckner	david
Yes	91	griner	tim
Yes	35	kittle	christine
Yes	66	moss	david
Yes	45	oden	jeff
Yes	37	sandorf	scott
Yes	58	stephen	jessica
Yes	99	thomas	01 suz
Yes	79	thompson	laurilee
Yes	41	vara	mary
Yes	38	walter	John
No	0	ALHALE	SYDNEY
No	0	Antonaras	Manny
No	0	Barrows	Katline
No	0	Batsavage	Chris
No	0	Beal	Bob
No	0	Bonura	Vincent
No	0	Brantley	William
No	0	Brennan	Ken
No	0	Carr	Kayla
No	0	Cimo	Laura
No	0	Clinton	Haley
No	0	Cox	Derek
No	0	DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
No	0	DuBeck	Guy

No	0	E Brown	Julie
No	0	Franke	Emilie
No	0	Freeman	Matt
No	0	Groeteke	Mike
No	0	Hadley	John
No	0	Heffernan	Katie
No	0	Hull	James
No	0	Keilin Gamboa-Salazar	Keilin
No	0	Kramer	Rob
No	0	L	Kelcie
No	0	Lee	Jennifer
No	0	Lowther	Alan
No	0	McPherson	Matthew
No	0	McWhorter	Will
No	0	Meehan	Sean
No	0	Merten	Wessley
No	0	Meyers	S
No	0	Moore	Jeff
No	0	Muffley	Brandon
No	0	Myjak	Michael
No	0	Noell	Brian
No	0	O'Malley	Rachel
No	0	Oden	Jeff
No	0	Pehl	Nicole
No	0	Poston	Will
No	0	Prewitt	Brian
No	0	Privoznik	Sarah
No	0	Pugliese	Roger
No	0	RINCONES	RON
No	0	Rohrer	Frank
No	0	Salmon	Brandi
No	0	Sauls	Beverly
No	0	Sedberry	George
No	0	Sheridan	Sean
No	0	Soltanoff	Carrie
No	0	Spurgin	Kali
No	0	Stephenson	Sarah
No	0	Thomas	Lauren
No	0	Thompson	Laurilee
No	0	Tuohy	Chelsea
No	0	Vecchio	Julie
No	0	White	Geoff
No	0	alvarez-stratton	ally
No	0	brewer	00chester
No	0	colby	barrett
No	0	merino	joy

Attendee Report: SAFMC 2023 June Council Meeting Snapper Grouper Cmt.

Report Generated:

06/21/2023 01:21 PM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
147-909-795	06/15/2023 07:16 AM EDT	9 hours 32 minutes	197

Attendee Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	57	Addis	Dustin
Yes	42	Bailey	Adam
Yes	82	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	93	Berry	James "chip"
Yes	33	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	34	Brennan	Ken
Yes	49	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	93	Busse	James
Yes	81	Cathey	Andrew
Yes	91	Cathey	Andrew
Yes	39	Clinton	Haley
Yes	42	Coggins	Lew
Yes	91	Cox	Jack
Yes	55	Cox	Derek
Yes	49	Crosson	Scott
Yes	58	Curtis	Judd
Yes	46	DeJohn	Frank
Yes	47	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	90	Dover	Miles
Yes	37	Dukes	Amy
Yes	37	Finch	Margaret
Yes	41	Flowers	Jared
Yes	97	Foss	Kristin
Yes	92	Franco	Dawn
Yes	50	Gentry	Lauren
Yes	49	Glazier	Ed
Yes	48	Gore	Karla
Yes	56	Guyas	Martha
Yes	47	HILDRETH	DELAINE
Yes	92	Hallas	Sara
Yes	95	Harrison	Alana
Yes	51	Helies	Frank
Yes	81	Helmey	Judy
Yes	96	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	90	Heyman	William
Yes	92	Hoppe	Walter
Yes	45	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	77	Hudson	Joseph

Yes	89	Iberle	Allie
Yes	39	Iverson	Kim
Yes	33	Karnauskas	Mandy
Yes	39	Kean	Samantha
Yes	35	Kellison	Todd
Yes	91	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	67	Kersting	Anne
Yes	99	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	66	Knowlton	Kathy
Yes	40	LaRoche	Kelcie
Yes	96	Laks	Ira
Yes	53	Larkin	Michael
Yes	32	Latanich	Katie
Yes	55	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	35	Lee	Max
Yes	45	Lee	Jennifer
Yes	32	Lowther	Alan
Yes	87	M Borland	Gary
Yes	97	Mahoney	Andrew
Yes	91	Mahood	Bob
Yes	81	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	97	Marinko	Jeff
Yes	35	Masi	Michelle
Yes	35	Mastitski	Anthony
Yes	61	McCoy	Sherylanne
Yes	68	McGovern	Jack
Yes	90	McWhorter	Will
Yes	68	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	38	Merrifield	Jeanna
Yes	62	Merrifield	Mike
Yes	38	Moore	Jeff
Yes	33	Morrison	Wendy
Yes	42	Muffley	Brandon
Yes	89	Murphey	00Trish
Yes	67	Myjak	Michael
Yes	52	Neer	Julie
Yes	97	Newman	Thomas
Yes	50	O'Shaughnessy	Pat
Yes	58	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	48	Owens	Marina
Yes	61	Package-Ward	Christina
Yes	59	Pehl	Nicole
Yes	93	Petersen	Andrew
Yes	33	Poston	Will
Yes	90	Prewitt	Brian
Yes	52	Pugliese	Roger
Yes	100	Ritter	Michele

Yes	89	Rohrer	Frank
Yes	76	Roller	00Tom
Yes	33	Runde	Brendan
Yes	92	Salmon	Brandi
Yes	48	Sauls	Beverly
Yes	38	Scott	Tara
Yes	34	Sedberry	George
Yes	45	Seward	McLean
Yes	90	Seward	McLean
Yes	36	Shertzer	Kyle
Yes	67	Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Yes	41	Somerset	Carly
Yes	39	Spurgin	Kali
Yes	46	Stemle	Adam
Yes	49	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	44	Takade-Heumacher	Helen
Yes	81	Thompson	Mary Jean
Yes	54	Thompson	00Laurilee
Yes	42	Travis	Michael
Yes	91	Usher	Davis
Yes	39	Vincent	Matthew
Yes	45	Walia	Matthew
Yes	44	Walsh	Jason
Yes	90	Wiegand	Christina
Yes	92	Willingham	Darrin
Yes	59	Withers	Meg
Yes	32	Zamboni	Katharine
Yes	36	blough	heather
Yes	98	brewer	00chester
Yes	86	broussard	billy
Yes	46	collier	chip
Yes	33	gloekner	david
Yes	35	merino	joy
Yes	86	moss	david
Yes	39	sandorf	scott
Yes	36	stephen	jessica
Yes	99	thomas	01 suz
Yes	48	vara	mary
Yes	42	walter	John
No	0	ALHALE	SYDNEY
No	0	Antonaras	Manny
No	0	Atkinson	Seth
No	0	Barrows	Katline
No	0	Batsavage	Chris
No	0	Beal	Bob
No	0	Blair	Holly
No	0	Bonura	Vincent

No	0	Brantley	William
No	0	Byrd	Julia
No	0	Calay	Shannon
No	0	Carr	Kayla
No	0	Cenci	Chris
No	0	Cimo	Laura
No	0	Clinton	Haley
No	0	DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
No	0	Delaney	Glenn
No	0	DuBeck	Guy
No	0	E Brown	Julie
No	0	Franke	Emilie
No	0	Freeman	Matt
No	0	Gray	Alisha
No	0	Groeteke	Mike
No	0	Hadley	John
No	0	Heffernan	Katie
No	0	Hull	James
No	0	Keilin Gamboa-Salazar	Keilin
No	0	Kolmos	Kevin
No	0	Kramer	Rob
No	0	L	Kelcie
No	0	Lloyd	Victor
No	0	Locke	Charlie
No	0	Malinowski	Rich
No	0	McPherson	Matthew
No	0	Meehan	Sean
No	0	Merten	Wessley
No	0	Meyers	S
No	0	Nelson	David
No	0	Nelson	Chasity
No	0	Noell	Brian
No	0	O'Donnell	Kelli
No	0	O'Malley	Rachel
No	0	Oden	Jeff
No	0	Pellicer	Joseph
No	0	Peterson	Cassidy
No	0	Privoznik	Sarah
No	0	RINCONES	RON
No	0	Ramsay	Chloe
No	0	Records	David
No	0	Schueller	Amy
No	0	Sheridan	Sean
No	0	Siegfried	Katie
No	0	Smart	Tracey
No	0	Smillie	Nick
No	0	Soltanoff	Carrie

No	0	Sramek	Mark
No	0	Stephenson	Sarah
No	0	Thomas	Lauren
No	0	Thompson	Laurilee
No	0	Tuohy	Chelsea
No	0	Vecchio	Julie
No	0	Wamer	David
No	0	Waters	James
No	0	White	Geoff
No	0	Wolfe	Wes
No	0	alvarez-stratton	ally
No	0	brewer	00chester
No	0	colby	barrett
No	0	froeschke	john
No	0	griner	tim
No	0	kittle	christine
No	0	oden	jeff
No	0	thompson	laurilee