

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE

**The Shores Resort & Spa
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida**

June 11-13, 2024

Transcript

Snapper Grouper Committee

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Attendees and Invited Participants

Bob Lorenz
Monica Smit-Burnello
Shepherd Grimes
Rick DeVictor
Dr. Kelsey Banks
Michael Larkin
Dr. Kyle Shertzer

Dr. Clay Porch
Nikhil Mehta
Dr. Luiz Barbieri
Dr. Michael Travis
Scott Baker
Dr. Scott Crosson

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach, Shores, Florida, on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We are all on the Snapper Grouper Committee, and Mike Schmidtke and I would like to point out that we are behind, and it is not the fault of the Snapper Grouper Committee, and so I just want to point that out. That might be the first time that has ever happened, but -- So our first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. I will look around the room. If you know an item that you want to bring up under Other Business, please raise your hand, and we'll get it listed. Anything that people know of at this point for Other Business in Snapper Grouper? Yes, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I just want to put on the record just frustrations by North Carolina recreational fishermen with the golden tilefish closure, based on the start date.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I've put it on here, and I think it also might come up in the AP discussion as well. Okay. Any other Other Business that people are aware of at this point? All right. Do we have any objections to approval of the agenda? All right. Seeing none, we'll consider the agenda approved.

The next order of business is Approval of the Minutes from the March 2024 Meeting. Any modifications or changes to the minutes of that meeting? Any objection to approval of the minutes? All right. Seeing none, next up on the agenda is the Update on Exempted Fishing Permits, and somebody from the Regional Office, I think, is going to give us an update. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Rick disappeared. Rick is coming.

MR. DEVICTOR: Apologies, and so exempted fishing permits. We issued those exempted fishing permits to FWC. There is three of them, and we went over those EFPs at the last meeting, and so I don't need to go through them now, and we are working this week -- There are some small changes that FWC has approached me this week to make, pushing the data back and such, and so we're working on making those changes, but, since last time we spoke to you -- What we presented to you at the last meeting, we made changes, based on public comment, on the number of red snapper that can be taken in one study and the number of trips for that study.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Rick. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Jessica, you can correct me if I'm wrong, and so the full retention study was the one that we made changes to, and so, originally, FWC was proposing sixty red snapper, and that was reduced to thirty-six red snapper, and then, rather than authorizing three trips per quarter per entity that was selected, it's now four trips per quarter per entity selected, and that reduced the total number of red snapper that would be taken under the EFP to around 5,000, or 5,500.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, the proposal that we call the study fleet. Yes. Thank you. Any questions on exempted fishing permits? All right. Thanks for that, Rick and Andy. Next up, we're going to dive into red snapper management, and the first order of business is a presentation on

recreational landings from 2022, 2023, and 2024. I think Mike Larkin is online to give us this presentation.

DR. LARKIN: This is a real quick presentation, just a few slides, and I'll just go -- I'll start off with the next slide, please. Recreational landings data sources in the South Atlantic for red snapper, we get data from the individual state surveys and harvest programs. We also get data from the Marine Recreational Information Program, known as MRIP, and headboat landings come from the Southeast Region Headboat Survey.

I've done this before, and I'm going to touch on it now, and I probably should have put a bullet in there, but, in SEDAR 73, there was a working group where we decided, you know, when do we use MRIP, when do we use the state surveys or harvest programs, and so that is all written up and documented from SEDAR 73, and I'm going to go through when -- You know, we bring it up by mode, when do we use MRIP and state surveys and so forth, but also some results for that.

In 2022, the recreational season was open for two days, July 8 and July 9. In 2023, the recreational season was open again for two days, July 14 and 15, and then here's a breakdown by mode, and by year, for the July 2022 landings for red snapper. You can see, for example, in North Carolina, at the beginning there, the charter landings came from MRIP, the private came from MRIP, and the headboat -- All the headboat landings come from the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, but, basically, as I talked before -- You know, basically, if there's MRIP, but there's no state survey program, then we use the MRIP landings.

If there is a state survey, or a carcass program, but no MRIP during that time period in that mode, in that state, then we use that state survey, or the carcass program, data. If there's both, then the working group broke down a method to look at sample sizes and uncertainty, but, really, I just wanted to point out, at the bottom here, you know, in all cases, in Florida -- The Florida survey, which is a really specifically-designed red snapper survey for that short season, that one has been used over and over again, and no disrespect to the other states, but Florida really dominates. It's like over 90 percent of the landings, and sometimes it's as much as 95 percent of the red snapper landings in a given year.

Anyway, here's the 2022 breakdowns of the landings by mode and by state, and then, if you go to the next slide, here's the 2023 July breakdown of the landings, when MRIP was used, when the state survey data was used, and I'll give you just a second to look at that.

Then, in the next slide, I'm providing the actual numbers, and so this is in numbers of fish, but the 2022 landings -- You know, again, you can see that Florida really dominates the landings there, and you can see the landings were low in 2022, but there was a weather issue there, and then, in 2023, you know, we have over 33,000 fish, and they both have the same, you know, time period, the two-day season, but you can see the higher landings in 2023, with over 33,000 fish harvested there. That's it, and my next slide is a questions slide, and so it's just a quick presentation on the 2022 and 2023 landings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mike. We do have questions. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Mike, can you go back to your survey slide? I was talking with Dawn Franco, and she indicated that, since 2021, we do not have Georgia survey data, and so I was curious as to -- Is there a placeholder for numbers that would have gone in for charter?

DR. LARKIN: It actually is -- For example, this one right here, you'll get like charter Georgia survey data, and there was no MRIP data during that mode, and so I just got -- I'm trying to remember, and, for Georgia, we just got like some carcass -- It's not like you had a specific survey, and so I'm sorry if I'm misleading there, but I believe that came from the Georgia carcass program. I might have that one confused with the other states, but I believe that one came from the carcass program, is where those numbers come from.

DR. BELCHER: I guess my understanding from Dawn was that they were using an augmented portion of that to give you charter landings, because they were talking with folks, and not necessarily thinking that the carcass substituted in for that, and so I think that was kind of where our confusion was coming from.

The other question that I had was relative to the numbers. Is there a white paper that you can provide that talks about how you come up with the annual landings, especially for the MRIP, because, if the average person goes and looks at MRIP right now for those landings, and I know that, you know, you can parse it down annually, and you can parse it down to wave, but the numbers that are there for Georgia's 2023 landings are not the number that you have there, and so, understanding that there's probably something that you're doing, because it's a mini-season and all of that, it would be helpful to know what at least the aggregate methodology looks like for that.

DR. LARKIN: Yes, we do, and, also, keep in mind that we're still -- So, if you go to like the NOAA data query, that's all in FES, right, and so this is still -- We're going back -- When MRIP is used, it's using the CHTS landings, and so that alone will give you different numbers there, and it also, again, is in numbers of fish, but, yes, we do have some white papers that we could dig up, some reports I've done that I could provide, that do break that down. You know, I'm just following that method designed from the SEDAR 73 workshop, and I'm just following that method and continuing it and moving it forward with more recent data.

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and I just think it would be helpful for folks to have that as a reference, because, if you looked at 2022 landings, it actually had an estimate from the MRIP for 2,689, and, obviously, with a very high PSE, but seeing 255 fish -- I thought maybe there was some sort of transposed error, where the 2023 should have been 2022, but I'm just thinking, for the average person, who is probably going to -- If they know that tool is available, and they try to go and look at that, to reproduce what's there, they're not going to get those same numbers, and so I just want to make sure that we're clear in understanding how to explain the discrepancy between what's on the query tool and what you're presenting relative to the MRIP.

DR. LARKIN: Sure, and, also, in some case, like, you know, they don't have the carcass program data or the SAFE survey data as well, right, and so -- But you can't get that from the internet, that I know of, and so anyway, and we do have some white papers that do break that down, that data.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. Any more questions? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Just a follow-up. I think the point that Carolyn is making is very important, because, in 2023, that difference was -- You've got 2,680, but what's published in MRIP is 45,086, and, I mean, it's a remarkable difference, and it could be extraordinarily confusing to people to try to figure out, well, what are you using to make your decisions, and so just we need to be armed with the ability to at least explain it, if it's explainable.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Are there other questions? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: An observation about this. With a two-day season, I wonder how much weather impacted this information. In 2022, it did, and so, for 2023, we had flat, calm seas from North Carolina to Key West?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions? All right. I don't see any additional hands. Thank you, Mike.

DR. LARKIN: Sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Next up is the red snapper management options study presentation. Sorry. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm in the unenviable position of talking about the 2024 season, and so I know a lot of frustration that we haven't announced it, and so I did want to talk about that today, but I did want to, I guess, just go back, briefly, in terms of kind of how we arrived here today and why the Fisheries Service is taking action through an interim rule.

Back in the summer of 2021, we notified the council that overfishing was occurring. Over the course of two years, we worked on Reg Amendment 35, and, ultimately, the council voted to submit that for secretarial review, but then later rescinded it, back in December of 2023. The Magnuson Act requires the council, in these instances, to end overfishing immediately, and "immediately" obviously isn't defined here, but, after two-plus years, now going on three years, we've yet to address the overfishing.

The Fisheries Service, under our authority in the Magnuson Act, which allows for interim, or emergency, regulations to reduce overfishing, we are taking action, and so, on Friday the 14th, we will publish an interim rule. That interim rule reduces the total catch for red snapper from a little over 42,000 fish to 31,000 fish, consistent with the SSC's ABC advice, and then the commercial quota will be reduced from a little over 124,000 pounds to 85,000 pounds. The recreational sector will be reduced from 29,600 fish to a little over 21,000 fish, and then the recreational season is going to be one day, July 12.

I will add one change that, given that this will likely be an immense derby, like it has been, we wanted to look at safety-at-sea considerations, and we put in a provision, and so, originally, I had authority to modify the season start date if tropical weather and hurricane conditions exist, and we have now expanded that to small craft advisories, and so we will utilize that as needed, and we'll have to, obviously, give advance notice, and it could be disruptive, but we would rather try to plan the season during safer weather conditions.

With all that, I know there's frustration, and there's anger about the shortness of the season. We are taking action because, obviously, we need to address the overfishing. I don't look at this as a long-term solution, and I want to continue to work with the council. I think we have a number of presentations coming up this afternoon to give us some opportunities, as well as the experimental fishing permits, and so I will answer any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Hands are going up. Kerry and then Judy.

MS. MARHEFKA: Andy, did you say what day the commercial season would open?

MR. STRELCHECK: I will look to my team. Is it July 8?

MR. DEVICTOR: It's the second Monday, which is the 8th.

MR. STRELCHECK: July 8.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you. Could you go over about -- I didn't kind of get about the weather, and you said July the 12th is the only day it's going to be open, and that's Friday, July 12, correct, and so did you say something about if the weather was a small craft advisory or -- So what would that mean?

MR. STRELCHECK: If, before July 12, right, we have an indication that there is going to be bad weather conditions, right, a small craft advisory or worse, we could then make an announcement that we are modifying the start date of the fishing season, or the date of the fishing season, to a different day, and we would give notification, through Fishery Bulletins, weather radio, and other means, to let you know that we are changing it from July 12 to a date in the future, where there would be safer weather conditions to operate.

MS. HELMEY: So the snapper season is open from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, right? So what if there's a small craft advisory in Georgia, but not in North Carolina? How will you do that?

MR. STRELCHECK: Obviously, you know, we're going to have to look at the depth and breadth of weather information and make an evaluation, in terms of whether to open or not, right, and we're not going to take this lightly. This is, obviously, concerning, that the season is this short, and we want to make sure that people are operating in as safe conditions as possible, but we recognize that weather conditions are going to vary up and down the coast.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Is there going to be a public comment period before the interim rule?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: No. It's a final interim rule, and it will get filed, I believe, on Thursday for public -- You can look on the Federal Register website on Thursday, and then it gets published on Friday.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions for Andy? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to, again, get clarification, and the trip limit on the commercial is remaining at seventy-five pounds, and it is still going to be a one-fish-per-person bag limit on the recreational sector?

MR. STRELCHECK: That's correct. I will just note that we'll pushing out a Fishery Bulletin shortly. I, obviously, wanted to notify the council first.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Andy. Any additional questions? All right. I don't see any other hands, and so back to the agenda and the red snapper management options study, the Shertzer et al. 2024 presentation. I think Kyle is going to give that to us. Sorry. Scott is going to give it to us.

DR. CROSSON: I don't know if Bob Beal is coming back up right now or where I should sit for this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think you're okay right there.

DR. CROSSON: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Scott Crosson, and I'm an economist for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and Kyle Shertzer is a biologist at the center, and he's also going to co-present with me, especially for anything that's biological, because that's not exactly my background, but this is a joint effort, and I will get into that, but the results of this study I think are something that the council should consider. It might be informative as you guys go through the process of continuing to regulate not just red snapper, but the snapper grouper fishery overall.

One of the things that I have noticed over the years with the snapper grouper fishery is that there seems to be some discontent with how the system is working. There's a lot of species that seem to be either undergoing overfishing or are overfished right now, including a lot of the most popular ones, like red snapper and gag and red porgy, and I guess black sea bass now, and there's a lot of discarding that's going on, and I hear it constantly during the public comment periods for the council meetings, and I guess also sometimes at the SSC, about why can't we just keep these fish, and why do we keep dumping these fish back overboard.

There are extremely short seasons for some species, like red snapper, as we just heard, and there just generally often seems to be a process where there is a restriction in the fishery, which means that you have to lower the ACL, which then causes more discarding, which then means that you have to further lower the ACL, and you sort of get trapped in this management loop, and, basically, I think, for some portions of the fishery, it's become a catch-and-release fishery, and perhaps unintentionally, but that's what it is right now, and I think that that's socially probably something that the angling community is not happy with, and, biologically, it seems to be that a lot of the species are not responding well to that.

This was -- When I looked for South Atlantic red snapper in Google Images, this is one of the top pictures that came up, and I guess this is from last year, and so this is, again, just sort of illustrative of how people don't seem to like the way that things are going right now, and so, in the next slide, I was wondering about, a few years ago, whether there were ways that we could manage this fishery that would be more successful by a number of different criteria, and so -- And I didn't

intend this just to be a red snapper focus, and this was supposed to be sort of a snapper grouper fishery overall, but I wanted to see something that would explore the policy space and just look at, if we change the regulations for a number of different fisheries in the snapper grouper fishery, how would the different stocks respond, and not take things on one at a time, but try and take things on cohesively as a group.

I wanted it to be closely tied to the stock assessment process, so that we would have all the information that's currently being used for management incorporated in there, at least as much as that was feasible, and I wanted it to be a flexible model, something that could really address the multispecies nature of the snapper grouper fishery.

Because red snapper seems to be the highest-priority thing right now, and I guess if often is, we started with red snapper, and so the results that you're going to see here are for red snapper, but I will explain, further into this presentation, that we're not going to stop at red snapper, and we're going to continue moving forward.

Kyle and I are presenting today, but this is a joint effort, and it has a history that goes back a few years, to shortly after the pandemic ended. We had a meeting up at the Beaufort Lab, between myself and several of the stock assessment groups, and Rick DeVictor also, from the Regional Office, was there, and three members of the SSC, Jie Cao, Genny Nesslage, and Chris Dumas, and we had sort of an ideas workshop, where we went over, you know, just what are some of the different policy options that we could imagine for regulating the snapper grouper fishery, and we spent a day or two on that, and then we spent another day or two discussing how we would conceivably model those.

That process was reviewed twice by the SSC, once in October of 2022, where we brought sort of the initial idea forward to them, and again just recently, in April of this year, and then the study for this model is now out in *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*, and the link is there, and I'm sure that, you know, we can get a copy of that to you, if you don't have one right now.

Thinking about the management tools that the South Atlantic Council has been using for the snapper grouper fishery overall, a lot of the ones that commonly seem to be employed in the different FMP amendments are things like bag limits and trip limits and size limits, and sometimes different gear requirements, and occasionally time closures, but it's not a closure of effort necessarily, and it's a closure for just being able to retain species.

Some of the things that are not used particularly are looking at sort of big aggregate bag limits for most of the major species, limiting access for the recreational sector, where we're experimenting with different area closures, and I'm not advocating for any of these, and I just wanted to experiment and look around and see what would happen if we tried to impose them on the fishery, and how would the stocks respond, you know, if we had tags, and, when I think about tags, I don't think about the tags that the biologists tend to stick in the fish, and I'm thinking about tags that would limit how much fishing you can do, like sort of the way that you have stamps or tags for big game hunting.

You know, we could try and think about different ways that we might impose that, and how might the fishery respond, and then also requiring, or allowing, full retention, and I would say requiring

full retention, but people still may discard, but I would like to see what happens if you just changed the regulations so that people were not dumping the fish back overboard.

The model that we have here is a spatial model of red snapper, and eventually the rest of the multispecies fishery that we have in the South Atlantic, and, for this initial study, we looked at twenty-five different management measures that I will explain in more detail here, but, broadly, they're in several different categories of gear modifications, which includes descender device usage, but also some other things, looking at size limits, spatial approaches, whether you could close different areas of the South Atlantic and how the stocks might respond to that, and then a general effort reduction, and however that is achieved is something that would be discussed further, I think, in the next stage of our research, and probably also for the council itself, but, if you're going to reduce effort overall, you could do it a number of different ways. You could do it through a temporal closure, where you would have seasons, or you could do it with something like tags or some other sort of alternative things that economists sometimes dream up.

For the modeling, for each scenario that you will see here, we looked at the current conditions, and then we ran the model until everything sort of stabilized for the different variables that I will explain, and then we sort of flipped the switch, and we tried to see what would happen if you changed the scenario by changing one of the regulations, or changing one of the assumptions in the model, and so we started with red snapper, but we're going to continue forward with other species.

Then the criteria that we were looking at, and these are from some of the council's own management goals, but we were looking at -- Obviously, decreasing dead discards is a very high priority for the red snapper fishery, but we also want to rebuild the age structure, which is another thing that they're looking at right now, with some of the younger fish being caught, is to possibly get some of the older fish back into the population.

We want to increase the landings, and, again, this is a key component of this research, is that I want to actually get the landings up for the recreational and the commercial fishery. I want to try and improve the quality of the fishery for the people that participate in it. I want to increase the biomass, but I don't want to just stop at the biological markers, and so what can we do to sort of take this catch-and-release aspect and turn this back into a catch-and-keep fishery, and what things do we potentially need to change to do that?

Gear modifications, the first one is really kind of -- There's no real technology that I can present for this, but I have heard discussion before of whether there would be new sort of smart technologies that might come in the future that would allow more selectivity by, you know, recreational anglers kind of going out there and catching things, and so, if there were ways that you would reduce the efficiency of the recreational fleet substantially enough, would that -- Would this population of red snapper, and other species, respond favorably to that?

The second group is descender devices, which we've heard lots of discussion of, and, in this model, we assumed 100 percent compliance, which is a very strong assumption, and so you can certainly estimate that this would probably be the top level of benefits that you would get from using descender devices, but there's more than one study that's out there looking at how effective red snapper respond to descender devices, and so the first one is the one that was in SEDAR 73, but

there's also that one from Brendan Runde that has a higher estimate of the effectiveness of descender devices, and so we tested both of those in the population.

The size limit, that's a straightforward thing, and so we put a twenty-four-inch size limit in there. Effort reduction, all right, this is, again, just looking at, if you reduce the recreational fishing effort, either 25 or 75 percent, and, of course, obviously, we could change those numbers in the model, but looking at either 25 or 75 percent of current effort that would somehow be distributed by changing fishing seasons, or doing some sort of tags, and how would the stock respond to that, and then, also, then combining it will full retention, right, so that people could keep -- I say no discarding, but, obviously, if somebody discards, and some of the fish survive, that's just sort of a positive benefit, but allowing full retention from anglers of everything that they bring onboard.

The area experiments, obviously, there's no proposal, that I'm aware of, that uses these, but these seem to be the general ones that we've heard discussed, because of the areas that red snapper tend to congregate in, and so have both a shallow-water area and a deepwater area, and then we broke it down into different geographic regions that the fishery tends to concentrate in, or not concentrate in, for red snapper, and so, for all the different scenarios in here, we looked at what would happen if you prohibited red snapper retention in these different areas or what would happen if you prohibited bottom effort completely in those areas or just for recreational effort.

Then metrics, all right, and so, again, I don't have a straightforward answer to you for what's necessarily the best thing to achieve what the council wants to get done, but we want to increase the abundance of the stock overall, and we also want to increase the spawning biomass, which is an important biological marker, as is the average age of the population, which is just sort of a proxy for how the different age classes are structured, and then we want to increase the landings for both the commercial and the recreational fleet, and we want to decrease the discards, and so almost all of these are things that you want to have more of, except for discarding, and you don't want to have more discarding, but you want to bring up the weights, and you want to bring up the age of the population, and you want to increase the catch rates, because, again, these are all positive things, from my perspective, and then we did also sort of do a proxy for CPUE, because, obviously, the effectiveness of angling, or commercial fishing, will increase as stocks rise or fall.

The quick overall picture is that, for the twenty-five different scenarios that we looked at, descender devices had some modest effects, but they depend on the assumptions, on whether you use the assumptions from SEDAR 73 or you use the assumptions from the Brendan Runde paper. Size limits are not a particularly effective management tool for regulating red snapper. Reducing recreational fishing effort overall is a very promising scenario, depending on how you set it up, and then spatial measures that still allow effort don't do much for red snapper, and so, if you're going to do a spatial measure, it actually has to close the area for activity.

In the following slides, if you have a copy of the paper, or, if you want to look at this later, you can compare it, but the number in parentheses, that I have in purple, is the scenario number that's in the paper, the Shertzer et al. paper that we published in *North American Journal*, and then so -- Blue, to me, is a desirable change, and a red is an undesirable change, and so, if landing go up, that's blue. If landings go down, that's red. If discarding goes up, that's red. If discarding goes down, that's blue, but most thing you want to see going up.

The gear modifications, and, again, I don't want to concentrate too much on this one, because I don't have the technology, that I can think of, that would actually do this, and the only thing I can imagine -- It's not a particularly -- If you reduce somehow the efficiency of the recreational fishing fleet, you would have to really reduce that efficiency a lot to sort of get the discards. I think you would have to reduce the fishing power by something like 75 percent to get the discarding down below a 50 percent decrease from where it is right now, and there's just -- Given human nature, there's no guarantee that fishermen are not going to respond to this by finding a new alternative technology that's going to get the fishing efficiency right back up, because that's basically what we've been seeing since the 1990s.

I mean, short of ripping GPS out of everybody's boats, I can't think of much that would work, but you can see that, you know, if you were able to reduce the catching efficiency somehow, technologically, some of the things would respond. The abundance would go up, and the biomass would go up, but the landings would go down, because you would be reducing the efficiency of the fleet, but it does drop the discards, and, of course, the commercial fleet is going to benefit from that, because the recreational fleet is catching less of the fish.

The descender device discussion, the assumption in Scenario 3, on the left, is from the SEDAR 73 model, and then on the right is from the Brendan Runde paper. Because the second one assumes a higher level of effectiveness from descender devices, the stock responds more, and you can see the percentage increases and decreases for different things, and so there's some modest effect of descender devices, and I definitely would think that the council would want to continue investigating that as one of the potential solutions to addressing the issue with discard mortality.

Size limits, size limits did not work. You get some small increase in the stocks, but, generally, you see that a lot of the things that you want to have go down go up, or vice versa, and it has a negative effect on landings, and it has a negative effect on discarding, and so it's not one of the solutions that seemed to present very positive results, in terms of what the council is trying to achieve.

Having a red snapper season, one of the things that I've heard sometimes, or am asked by the angling public, is why can't we just -- If we're just discarding all these fish, why can't we just go out there and just catch them and keep them, and the shorter red snapper season I think is what the council is seeing right now, which is that, yes, you've got some increase in the biomass, a small increase in the biomass, but you still have a large discarding issue.

If you were to increase the red snapper season, the stock itself -- You will get some increase in the recreational landings, but the stock itself is going to drop, as is the biomass, right, and so you'll have some benefits in reducing your discarding, but, overall, biologically, the stock is not going to respond well.

Effort reduction, there's lot of different ways to explore effort reduction, but, overall, we found it to be the most effective tool for addressing a lot of the different management goals that the council has, depending on what you put in there in terms of retention. If you reduce recreational effort by 25 percent, and, again, whether you choose to do it through a season or through some tags, and you can see that the stock does respond, you know, to some degree, and you see some increases on the left side. If you were able to reduce recreational effort by 75 percent, you see that the spawning biomass goes up quite a bit, and it more than doubles, and the commercial landings

respond favorably to that. Obviously, the recreational landings are going to go down, and this is sort of the tradeoff that you're seeing in that relationship. Because you've reduced the effort, the landings are going to go down, and so you can achieve some of the goals, but not all of them.

We did find that, when we combined effort reduction with full retention, which is basically allowing people to keep whatever they bring onboard, in terms of red snapper at least, that you did get an increase in landings, but 25 percent is probably not sufficient, because it's still going to have an effect of dropping the biomass. If you were able to do a 75 percent reduction, it would kind of definitely go in the other direction, and I think this is one of the most promising scenarios that we've found.

Now, somewhere in between 25 percent and 75 percent is probably a golden point, in terms of trying to balance out some of these different factors, and it's not included in this slide, but the CPUE, the sort of catch efficiency, for everybody jumps dramatically with this stuff. It goes up like 300 or 400, or even 700, percent, because there is so many more fish out there, and there's so much of a reduction in effort, and so, at that level, you could allow people basically to keep every red snapper that they bring onboard, if you were able to reduce the effort significantly.

The area closures, we experimented around with the different pictures that I showed you earlier, but, generally, if you do close different areas for red snapper, the stock size does increase, but, of course, you have reduced the catch, and so most of the benefits come from closing the recreational sector, and those benefits especially come when you close sort of the northeast Florida area, but you're going to have a corresponding drop in recreational landings, and so that's not necessarily one of the management goals that you're trying to achieve.

The middle region I think was the area that we saw the biggest concentration of red snapper, and so, if you close that area just to red snapper retention, you get some of what we -- Again, what we saw with one of the earlier scenarios, is you get these small increases in the biomass, but you still have lots and lots of discarding going on. If you close the middle region to effort, the stock bounces back pretty dramatically, or reasonably dramatically, but the recreational landings go down, and so it's not -- You know, and the commercial landings go down as well, and so the discarding goes down, but you've not increased sort of the value of the fishery.

Overall, I mean, our conclusions, from looking at this, were that the management measures that somehow limited the amount of recreational effort that's happening in the snapper grouper fishery, either throughout the year or in areas where the red snapper are abundant, especially when you combine it with some sort of full retention, allowing people to bring everything onboard that they can, and keep those fish, probably has the potential to meet most of the management goals that are considered here.

It can rebuild the stock, and you can increase the landings, and you can increase the catch rates, and then the big unspoken factor in all of this is that this is currently a one-species model, all right, and the next step that we have in this, and you can flip to the next slide, is that we want to incorporate other species into our modeling and see what happens, because this is, again, going to look at -- You know, if you change some of these variables to try and address the red snapper issue, how is black sea bass going to respond? How is red porgy going to respond?

The species that we've selected next on our list are ones to try and get at that. I mean, gag and black sea bass have issues right now with overfishing or overfished status, and red porgy is one that has not responded particularly well to different management measures, and we put vermilion snapper in there, because vermilion is a healthy fishery, and we want to see how a healthy fishery also responds, and red grouper is another fishery that we want to look at, and, of course, as an economist, I haven't put economic valuations into this, but that's certainly high on my list.

We also want to look at what happens if you sort of sync up the bottom seasons for a lot of these different species groups, so that you would, again, close them for particular areas of the year, or times of the year, for effort, but then sort of open them all up together, and then also looking at aggregate bag limits, so that people are not pulling in one species, but discarding others, which is the problem that we have with the snapper grouper fishery, because it's not hugely selective, and so that's most of my conclusions, and so that's it. I mean, that's the gist of it, but, I mean, I haven't even let Kyle speak, but, if you guys have any questions about the model that you want to go through, please ask, and I guess, at that point, I will pause.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you for that presentation. Are there questions? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Can I ask maybe to get the SSC report relative to this, since the presentation was given in April, and, Marcel, would you be willing to talk to that, just to kind of help us maybe with addressing the question at the bottom of Scott's slide about bringing things back in priorities?

DR. CROSSON: Yes, that sounds like a good idea to me.

DR. BELCHER: I'm just saying if that cuts in right or -- Sorry that I didn't make that clear. I mean, if we have general questions for Scott, but, at the same time as we're talking about it, I would like to have the SSC's information, before we go into our discussion. Sorry.

DR. REICHERT: All right. I see hands up. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and so a general question for Scott. Scott, one of the things that I had a hard time following throughout is it was sort of muddled, sometimes, when you were talking about sort of sectors, and you weren't -- You all weren't super clear, on every slide, when you talk about sort of -- You know, I understand -- When you got into seeing the actual graphs, it was clear that the effort reduction was for the recreational sector, the 25 and 75 percent, but there's sometimes, when you're talking about some of these scenarios, which -- For me, it wasn't clear if you meant one sector or both sectors, and I would just hope, in the future, that could be a little clearer.

DR. CROSSON: Is that a question or a comment? I'm not sure. Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Are we waiting for the SSC to talk before we give comments on prioritization of this?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and this was just general questions. I will come back to you. All right. Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Scott, thanks for that, and I appreciate you doing a nice brief, but thorough, job on that. I was intrigued by the idea of the catchability and the impacts, because we talk a lot about catchability and how catchability increases our concern in the fishery, but I thought it was interesting that, you know, the benefit was only about half of the change in the catchability. You know, you reduced catchability by 10 percent, but only about a 5 percent reduction in what was caught, and so it just got me thinking, just sort of long-term, that are we maybe overblowing the impact of excessive catchability, or what are your thoughts on that, that it didn't seem to have as much impact as maybe anticipated?

DR. CROSSON: You're talking about early on, the initial -- Yes, and, I mean, it seems -- Well, I guess I think of it as an economist, right, and, every time that you increase the technology, or you try and restrict one technology, people find a way around it, and it's sort of -- It's human nature, and I wasn't really -- I tend to -- Personally, I tend to fish for pelagics a lot more than snapper grouper species, and so I wasn't aware of -- Was it Spot-Lock or some of the new technologies, and I was like, wow, okay, that's another new one to add into the list, and so there always seems to be a new source of technology, that people are going to find a way.

I don't even know how you would sort of introduce a technology that would immediately produce some sort of response from people just trying to improve their own quality of fishing, you know, but, yes, in terms of the model, it doesn't respond that well, and it's not something that is going to save the fishery. I think you're going to have to look elsewhere.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. All right. Let's go to Marcel, and we'll see that presentation, and then we can kind of discuss these together.

DR. REICHERT: I guess we'll do the same thing, and I will ask to move to the next slide, and so thank you. It's good to be back, seeing some old, familiar faces and meeting some new ones. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the council with an SSC report on the very interesting study on red snapper management and the paper that Dr. Crosson just presented to you.

Before I do that, I would like to note that, in our April meeting, we also received excellent presentations, and updates, on a variety of other projects, including the Science Center's low recruitment working group, the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, the Southeast Reef Fish Trap Video Survey, and the Red Snapper Research Project. The presented information will greatly help the SSC to formulate management recommendations to the council in the future, and we are looking forward to future updates on these and other projects, and so I just wanted to appreciate the fact that we were able to get these presentations and discuss them.

Also, and I don't want to forget that, last, but not least, the SSC thanked Jeff Buckel and Fred Scharf for their service to the SSC, as the chair and the vice chair, for the last couple of years, and, with that, the remainder of my report will focus on the SSC discussions and recommendations relative to the paper that Scott just mentioned, the Shertzer et al. paper.

In April, as we just mentioned, the SSC received a presentation similar to the one that you just saw by Scott, and we expressed the appreciation of the interesting research in the publication and the presentation. Some of what you will hear from me is similar to what Scott mentioned earlier. These modeling efforts can be very valuable as a tool in understanding and exploring a variety of

management options, and the SSC recommends continuing this kind of modeling, in particularly with the addition of additional species, again as Scott mentioned earlier.

We recognize that this study looked at a suite of strategies in rebuilding red snapper in a long-term equilibrium timeframe, to compare the relative performance of the different strategies. However, the SSC mentioned that it is important to realize that the management needs are for a much shorter timeframe, and, in order to help us provide management recommendations to you, we will need some shorter-term technical analyses.

We expect that the management strategy evaluation activities that are currently underway, in conjunction with assessment projects, et cetera, will inform those shorter-term recommendations for us. Furthermore, the SSC recognizes that these management strategies can be applied to the short-term. However, and I will mention this again later in my presentation, planning for long-term should begin now, because -- Given the fact that this process will likely take multiple years.

The SSC commented that the overall conclusion of the study was that a significant effort reduction would be required to meet the management goals, as defined in the paper. Also, once red snapper is rebuilt, an assessment and management strategy evaluation, some other harvest policy analyses, or a combination thereof, is needed to prevent a return to the overfished and overfishing status shortly after red snapper is rebuilt.

As Scott mentioned, the management goals for this research were increasing red snapper biomass, the decrease in discards, increase in landings, and rebuilding the age structure. With those goals in mind, the SSC recommends giving the following management approaches a lower priority, based on the outcome of the various model scenarios, as Scott showed you earlier, the size limits, red-snapper-species-specific season length, and we also noted that area closures for bottom fishing did not perform well across all metrics, due to the estimated decline in recreational landings. Also, we mentioned that this could result in inequitable practices and the possible shifts in effort will likely negate some of the benefits, and so there's a tradeoff.

Despite the negative effects, the SSC also points out that modeling efforts showed that area closures can actually be very effective at rebuilding the stock, and, again, it's a tradeoff. In addition, gear modifications and related selectivities, annual catch limits, and species-specific bag limits are also options that should be given a lower priority. Now, having said all that, we also recommend that the management strategy evaluation development team should retain all these options in their MSE, to demonstrate that, A, they have been explored, but also to indicate the relative effectiveness of some of the other strategies.

The SSC further discussed what other potential strategies should be explored for the snapper grouper MSE, and we recommend the investigation of effort control strategies with a broader range of reduction in effort, specifically by looking at values between 25 and 75 percent. We also discussed some other strategies that are worth investigating, such as alternative ways to implement effort controls, for instance by capping the number of vessel or angler trips, harvest tags, et cetera.

Looking at the number of trips by individual reef fish vessels, or anglers, could also be very useful. For instance, if most of them only take one or two trips a year, then limiting the trips will not be very effective in reducing effort. However, on the other hand, if most vessels, or anglers, are taking a relatively high number of trips, then, obviously, a reduction in trips can be very effective

in reducing effort. It's also worth investigating potential non-linear responses in effort control and other effects, such as those related to biological, economic, and social factors. Furthermore, a look at the responses to different levels of compliance with full retention strategies, or other management strategies, such as the use of descending devices, can also be helpful.

Talking about descending devices, the SSC recommends retaining the descending device usage and best fishing practices in the MSE, and they also felt that more detail is needed on the calculations of the number of fish conserved by using various barotrauma mitigation techniques. Overall, it will be helpful to explore combined strategies and additive effects, for instance looking at barotrauma mitigation plus a reduction in effort, or there's a variety of other combinations.

As far as the area closures for bottom fishing are concerned, the SSC noted that Scenario 20, and, as a reminder, that was the scenario with a closed region to all bottom fishing effort, and that scenario has a substantial potential to rebuild spawning biomass and mean age, due to the large effect on reducing discards, but we also noted that this is not the case for a very similar scenario, Number 16, due to the dead discards, and 16, as a reminder -- Scenario 16 is the strategy to close the region to retention of red snapper only, and we thought that perhaps a combination of different spatial and temporal closures can be considered.

In terms of effectiveness, it's important to keep in mind that spatial and temporal closures may impact species in other areas, or seasons, due to effort shifting, and I think that's something that Scott mentioned also, and, finally, and this was a point that was important for the SSC, it's important to realize that, since this is a multispecies fishery, spatial and temporal closures, and effort reductions, would likely need to be implemented for the entire snapper grouper fishery, to make sure that they're effective and feasible. As a result, this would affect all species, irrespective of biomass or stock status, and that concludes my report, and I am happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Marcel. Questions? Thoughts? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I didn't put my hand up yet, but I was going to. In looking at this, and the term "effort" just continues to -- I keep coming back to that, but I tend to draw a line between effort and discard mortality. There's a pretty significant correlation, looking at this, and, you know, until we get through -- I noticed, in the last slide, there's some additional management tools, and I have been particularly focused on aggregate snapper grouper bag limits, and so, until we, you know, have that built into this, and can fully vet all of these options, I --

I mean, it's great we've come this far, but I think there's some other things that we really need to prioritize and look at before we, you know, make decisions moving forward on what management tools we want to start implementing to try to, quote, unquote, reduce effort, when I think we've talked about, again assuming 100 percent compliance, there's a way to completely eliminate discards. Now, whether that's a, you know, a management tool we want to implement, I think we need to understand that, but what does it look like if there are zero discards, and is reducing effort something that actually has to happen, but just some comments.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Others? Other thoughts? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. This is -- I've discussed this with a few people, based off my experience, and I just kind of want to throw it at Scott and Marcel and see how you would in any way quantify this, and so my experience in North Carolina is, when we are lucky enough to have weather for a recreational season, or, actually, it's not just that. With a longer commercial season, they're going to get more days to fish, and what I've experienced is, once that commercial season is open for a couple of weeks, they start to get a lot harder to catch, and particularly last year we had weather that was just good enough for us to get out in the recreational season.

The week after that, a lot of these areas where there's higher concentrations of red snapper, they become -- I'm not going to say scarce, but there were some areas where you just really shouldn't fish, because you will catch so many, and it got to the point where you could fish them, and you may go from catching ten a day, if you fished pre-season, to maybe one, and so I wonder, if we were to align the commercial and recreational seasons differently, such as open the commercial season earlier in the year, if we could potentially eliminate some more of those discards over the course of the year, by taking some of that harvest out earlier, and say aligning it with gag season. I don't know if we can quantify that, but it's just kind of a thought I have, to kind of think outside the box and reduce some of those discards in a different sort of way.

DR. CROSSON: I mean, my thoughts on bringing this to the council generally, okay, is that, if you all think this is a fruitful endeavor, if you think this is a useful analysis to continue, that it's going to aid you in your process of regulating the fishery overall, and not just red snapper, but all the different species, then tell us what -- We threw a lot of these scenarios in there, just because these are things that came out of our ideas workshop, but, if you have things that you think we should focus on, if there's different things that you would like us to focus on moving forward, beyond what I outlined, which was I want to make this multispecies as quickly as possible -- If there are certain things that you want us to explore like that, that's great. That's why I'm -- That's one of the things that I'm asking, because I would very much like to come back, if you're willing, to present this further to the council, once we've done more stages of this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead.

MR. ROLLER: Scott, just to be clear, I think it's great, and I'm glad of what you're doing, and it's really good to see this stuff, putting forward this analysis, and I was just presenting a different idea, right, and that's what I'm offering, and I've discussed -- I haven't discussed it with you, but I've discussed it here with people at the table, and I just wanted to get some feedback on that and see if that's something that you could look at or if anyone else here thought that it might be an interesting thing to look at.

DR. CROSSON: Also, we keep saying Marcel and I, but Kyle is on the line, and so if Kyle wants to chip-in on this as well, and he's done a lot of the hard work on the modeling, and I don't know if he has any thoughts on this.

MR. ROLLER: I'm not excluding Kyle, just to be clear. We all like Kyle.

DR. CROSSON: It's an old trick though, right? I will throw it to my coauthor, and he will explain it better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Scott, just one point of clarification. Are we talking multiple species being evaluated similarly, or are you talking about a multispecies approach with a -- Just to be clear.

DR. CROSSON: Let me be clear, because Marcel and I had this discussion out in the hallway yesterday. I'm not a biologist, all right, and there are two different questions that I can think of that are happening when you use the term "multispecies". One, and this is the one that comes to my mind, is, if you change the regulations for Species A, how do they affect Species B, all right, and that's what I want to look at.

I want to look at what happens -- If you change some of these scenarios for red snapper regulations, how do -- Especially the ones that involve things that are going to affect black sea bass or gag or what have you, and how do those stocks respond, and that's what I want to look at. Marcel, you know, taking it from a biological viewpoint, asked me, well, there's a limited amount of food on the reef, or these different species compete with each other, or there's competition inside the same species, where different red snapper are fighting it out for their spots, and I have no clue on how they would respond to that. That's a much broader question, and I'm not sure that it's something that I would want to get into with this particular model, because that's ecologically something that's so far beyond my knowledge, but I do want to find out what happens when you start regulating different species and how the different stocks respond, especially because several of them are in rebuilding plans right now.

I would expect that, if you did some of these measures that we anticipate the red snapper would respond favorably to, you would probably accelerate the rebuilding plan for gag, for black sea bass, and for some of these other species. You would have to. You know, not for all of them, but for some of them, and so what happens? How does that cumulatively roll together, right, and what are the effects overall for the fishery? That's what I want to look at. Did I answer your question?

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and, I mean, basically, it's, again, are we looking at them like what we get stuck in with a single-species stock assessment versus a multispecies stock assessment, and, similarly, are you looking at it as an aggregate for the fishery, or are you looking at different components of the fishery, which, again, just a single --

DR. CROSSON: I am looking at it from having watched the council struggle and have to address single species rebuilding plans as if they were isolated, and that's -- Like that was one of the main things that got me motivated with this project, because I saw the frustration that was happening with the council, and I wanted to see how we could address it from our side, from a modeling side, in a way that would, again, produce responses that are in sync with what the council's management goals are, which are not just to rebuild stocks, but they're also to increase landings and increase the enjoyment of the fishing public.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think, Scott, where this really seems to be appealing is as a companion to the MSE that we have underway, because, you know, as you've shown, you can do this relatively quickly, and certainly, compared to the full-blown MSE that's underway, way quickly, and you're able to tease out some things that don't seem to have promise and identify some things that do have promise, which then, to me, sort of says those things that have promise are worth looking at

more in-depth through the other MSE, because we know those take longer, and so, you know, I think the idea of looking at aggregates, and potentially looking at some of the multispecies-type interactions, would be good, because you could take this and maybe quickly identify some things that, hey, this is worth pursuing, and this is worth the council maybe thinking about, all right, if this works, and we know that effort controls can reduce fishing mortality, then that benefits stocks.

I mean, the conclusions are basically, you know, fisheries theory 101. The challenge is, of course, then how do we go about doing that, but this may help show us some ways that we can find the positive tradeoffs, the carrot so to speak, for the fishery, to help us actually get there, and then maybe things that maybe we pursue in more detail to get to operating models and all that stuff through the regular MSE, and so I think that has some potential, and so I think, Jessica, it might be good, you know, to consider this within what, you know, Chip has coming up next with the management strategy, knowing that this is kind of like, to me, a sort of first look to get at some things, and the SSC suggested some good things, and we may have more things before the day is out, and so we may not want to, you know, make a strong commitment to what we think priorities are now, but something that we sort of keep in mind throughout the discussion of this stuff.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Those are good points.

DR. CROSSON: You used the phrase “carrots”, and that’s kind of exactly what I was thinking of. It’s like you want to be able to show what you can get, what benefits you will get out of doing this action, and not just have it be you have to do this action, and these are the benefits that you’re going to get out of it, and this is how the stock is going to respond, and this is how you can then increase angling or commercial landings or whatever.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: First, thank you, Scott, Kyle, Marcel. I listened to the SSC discussion, and I thought it was really helpful to have and present and then for the SSC to weigh-in on priority actions that should or shouldn’t be pursued further, or at least maybe consider with the MSE, but recognize, obviously, there may not be a lot of added value, but it’s worth at least looking at.

You know, the way I guess I’m looking at this is kind of like what John Carmichael just said, right, is that there seems to be some things that are emerging to the top already, right, and so this is a companion piece to the MSE, but it doesn’t tell us the full answer, right, and it just tells the directionality of where we may need to go, and so I think, as we continue to get the information coming forward from Scott and Kyle’s work, but also the MSE, we probably need to hit the ground running really thinking about those strategies that we can start implementing.

If it’s effort reduction, what type of effort reduction are we looking at? If it’s some combination of spatial and temporal management, what does that begin to look like, because I think the most important thing, and what I want to emphasize, is immense dissatisfaction with these short seasons, and we can do better than that. Absolutely we can do better than that, and so let’s look at relative to status quo and how much we can change from status quo for the better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Others? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: If we're giving some direction, I would like to prioritize the aggregate snapper grouper bag limit, and see a model come back on that, and, Andy, I hear everything you're saying, but, you know, in my mind, going from one day of fishing to a hundred days of fishing, but we're only letting 80 percent of the people who want -- Or 20 or 10 percent of the people who want to go fish, we really haven't changed anything. We're just spreading out that effort in a different way, and we're not achieving anything, in my opinion, and so I would like to really, you know, ask you guys to prioritize that and bring back this aggregate bag limit model, so we can start to think about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Others? Clay.

DR. PORCH: I appreciate Robert's point, but the fact is that, right now, there's just too much effort in the system, and this is classic tragedy of the commons, and so we're going to have to find a way to reduce the effort. I think it's fine to go ahead and look at the multispecies bag limits. I think that's a great idea, but I can almost guarantee that that, by itself, is not going to solve the problem. There's just too much effort, again, but things that could work, that could be further explored, are, as Andy mentioned, combinations of time-area closures, which could include having designated zones, as long as they were enforceable, that allowed year-round retention of red snapper.

What would happen is they would get fished down, and you wouldn't actually catch many red snapper at some point, but those could be smaller areas, and then other areas are just closed to bottom fishing for extended periods of time, yet to be determined, but I think there's combinations that could be more palatable and still give fishing opportunities, and we just have to think about what those might be, and we can come up with ways to test that, and, that way, you get sort of the best of both worlds, because, the way I see it, we have this -- We have kind of competing world views in fisheries.

The Magnuson view is to achieve maximum sustainable yield, and, you know, a lot of state views, and some of the stakeholder views, are really maximum sustainable fishing opportunity, but maximum sustainable fishing opportunity, maximum sustainable fishing effort, is mathematically equivalent to minimum sustainable yield, and so, you know, it's kind of those two goals are at odds with each other, and so trying to find a way that we can come to some reasonable compromise, that still gets us in that optimum yield MSY, but gives people as many opportunities as possible, is a big challenge, but I think looking at things like combinations of time and area closures, with some areas that could be open, in tandem with full-retention and multispecies bag limits, could get us a lot closer than we are now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Clay. Others have thoughts or comments or questions? I see that the Coast Guard has their hand up. If you have a question, or a comment, do you mind coming up to the table for us?

LT. POST: Good afternoon, council. My name is Lieutenant Post, and I'm the Living Marine Resources Officer at Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville. My other role is also Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator. Our area of responsibility, in case you aren't aware, goes from the Florida-Georgia line all the way down just past Cape Canaveral. Between that area, we have three small-boat stations, which means that, at any given time, we can have, at most, four boats out on the water.

In the previous slides, two presentations ago, you showed the amount of people that were on the water for the 2022 season, and something that I want to just bring to the attention is, within the first hour of sunrise, on the first day of snapper season for 2022, we had eight search-and-rescue calls, and so, between the four Coast Guard assets, we couldn't respond to everybody, and so we relied heavily on our other government agencies and our partners.

With that being said, I think the twenty-four-hour season -- I understand from a fisheries standpoint, but, also from a search-and-rescue standpoint, we could have a potential risk for hazard. Now, the second aspect to that is, yes, we could put out a release and say the season is closed, but, if I'm making this operation, and I've having my guys go out and enforce these rules, am I going to have to write a ticket for the seventy-year-old man who didn't read the right news article, but still went out and thought he caught a legal fish? I'm just -- I want to make sure that these are laid out clear, and I need to know, you know, this is the season, this is how we're going to do it, and, if it gets cancelled, how do you guys want me to go about it?

I think everybody needs to be on the same page as that, and it's something that my guys are going to get yelled at for. You guys aren't going to be getting the angry fishermen. My twenty-three-year-old maritime enforcement specialist is going to be the one who is getting yelled at, and so I wanted to just bring that to the table and lay out the logistics that we have to think about, not only for the safety of the people, but also for the laws that you're asking us to enforce.

With that, this year, we're actually planning on doing a search-and-rescue-focused operation, rather than a law enforcement operation, as we've done in the previous years, so that we are manned and ready and working with our other agencies, and, additionally, we're doing several law enforcement operations throughout the year to enforce the fisheries aspect of this, so that we can catch people outside of the red snapper season, and so I don't want you guys to think that we are ignoring red snapper, and we're actually increasing our efforts now, and we're just trying to maximize it, and so not so much questions, but, I mean, if there is any solutions, or recommendations, that you do have, but I'm just bringing these concerns to the table.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for those comments. All right. Any other questions or comments about these last couple of presentations? I don't see any additional hands. Next up is the snapper grouper management strategy evaluation workplan, and I think Chip is going to come up here and talk to us about that. Thank you, Marcel. Thank you, Scott. Thanks, Kyle.

DR. COLLIER: At the last meeting, the council had asked the snapper grouper MSE team to develop a list of prioritized management options, and we're not going to provide you a list of prioritized management options. We feel that is up to the council, and so it would be great if you all provided us comments on what you think is the most important part. In my mind, you do not want technical people providing the best management options. I think it should be coming from the managers themselves to dictate how we should begin to look at this.

What we're providing, instead of the management options, is a workplan, and so it starts off with a timeline, and you can see that you're going to be getting a report in December, with it going to the SSC and Snapper Grouper AP in October, for their meetings.

The case study that we're looking at is -- It currently includes red snapper and gag grouper, and we're interested in adding a third species, black sea bass. At least from a staff perspective, we are seeing potential issues, significant issues, with that fishery, and we think it's very important to begin testing some management options for that, so we're maybe not in the same situation that we're in with red snapper three years down the line, still trying to figure out what management options might be best for it.

Some additional information that it was indicated that we might need for black sea bass is maybe some additional spatial information, as well as some uncertainties to test with that, and, in regard to this, I think we do have some information, and we also talked to the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel quite a bit about what they think is most important for the snapper grouper fisheries, what are their biggest concerns, and what might be some management objectives to obtain, and one of their biggest concerns is a lack of robust data. There is also -- They had a lot of concern with the council not acting on new management information or information that's going on in the fishery that they're able to provide on a more timely fashion.

The model that this one is using, it's going to be similar to what Scott was talking about, and it's based on the BAM assessment model, but this one is looking at both gag and red snapper at one time, and potentially black sea bass. Adrian has been working hard to address the differences between three different stock assessments and the inputs that are in there, and it sounds like he's getting very close to completing that, and so we're excited to have black sea bass included into that model.

Some of the uncertainties that are being discussed in this MSE -- One is the recreational landings and discards overestimate. The original value was 40 percent, as was discussed through some of the MRIP discussions, that being one of the maximum values that was potentially with that FES bias, due to the ordering of the questions, and the technical team recommended including several other scenarios for that, including maybe having recreational estimates as being an underestimate right now and fully exploring what the impacts might be, and we have a variety of key questions for those uncertainties. I won't go through all of those.

There is also a second uncertainty that we're looking into, which is the recruitment uncertainty, and we have several different ways to address that. The way that it's being addressed right now, or being considered, is using the recruitment coming out of the models, and the recommendations coming out of the models, and there's also one model that Adrian has developed to link red snapper and gag grouper recruitment and have them -- A negative correlation between the two, and so, as one goes up, the other goes down, and so that could be one potential scenario to test some of that competition among species, and it would be highly dependent on some additional information.

Other uncertainties include increased recruitment variability. As populations increase or decrease, you might have increased recruitment variability, and so the technical team recommended maybe expanding that uncertainty to account for maybe climate change, and also non-stationarity in projections, and what non-stationarity means is it's just we don't have a fixed MSY value, and things might be changing over time, due to climate conditions, and so maybe that MSY value might have to change, or the recommended catch levels might have to change.

Some of the sensitivities that are going to be included in this, and one is looking at the upper and lower values of natural mortality, and then another one would be, similar to what Scott had

mentioned, is looking at a creep in effort, and maybe an increase of 2 percent per year for the projection period, and that was looking at efficiency, and, based on similar observations of that Spot-Lock being very effective, better sonar equipment, and maybe that increase needs to be a little bit higher nowadays, maybe more than 2 percent.

As far as the management options that are currently included as potentials to consider, some of it comes from the discussion that the Shertzer et al. had identified as some major factors, but, once again, this is going to be looking at two to three species, hopefully three species, and the first one, or one of the focuses, is going to be on season length, maybe changing how long the season could be open, and this would be looking at all three species at one time, a reduction in recreational effort, and I know it was 25 to 75 that the Shertzer et al. recommended, and the technical team actually expanded that quite a bit, going from 5 percent to 90 percent, and this is just exploratory analyses, so you can really see the bounds of where things might go.

Investigate size limits, and size limits may not work for red snapper, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't work for all species. Black sea bass might not be impacted by barotrauma as much as red snapper, and so size limits might be effective for managing that species.

Discard mortality, the technical team -- Well, look at hypothesized reductions in discard mortality, and then the technical team discussed adding more details on how management approaches would be implemented, and that's going to be needed for really trying to put the math to the regulation. If you know how the regulation is going to go in, you could potentially figure out scenarios on how to calculate the different changes.

The technical team also recommended to consider aggregate bag limits, full retention, and spatial limit, spatial management, and we also added in some of the SSC feedback, and so the low priorities could be size limits, although I just talked about that's one of the things that we're going to talk about doing. Red snapper, a species-specific season length, that was shown to not be all that effective, and so maybe not consider just a red snapper closure, or a seasonal closure. Gear modifications did not seem to be all that beneficial, and we have very little information on how to quantify any gear modifications.

ACLs and bag limits, and so the areas that were discussed to focus on were effort control strategies, methods to implement effort control, variable compliance with the management strategy, some of the best fishing practices combined strategies and additive benefits, and then, finally, spatial and seasonal closures, and, with that, Adrian is on the line, and so, if he has anything that I missed, we can talk about that as well.

The final thing is that some of the management options are currently fixed, and so maybe things change over time, and maybe that's going to be a needed change for this, in order to get some of the more adaptive management approaches included into it.

The final part that I wanted to look into, or to discuss with the council, is maybe some of the performance metrics. We have a list of ten of them, and that's probably a little bit of overkill for trying to evaluate some of these MSEs, and six to seven is probably the best way to look at this, and so the management options that we currently -- Or performance measures that we currently have in there, or expected time to rebuild to the target level, we feel like the rebuilding timeframe, given that, for most species, it's less than ten years, and red snapper, as it always seems to be, is

an exception, going out to 2044, and so we would be looking at the expected time to rebuild the stock, making sure it's within the rebuilding timeframe.

The level of fishing mortality relative to the reference level, whether it's F 30 percent or F 40 percent, and the average stock biomass relative to the target, the percent change in effort by fleet relative to the last three historic years, and we also have a change in landings, a change in discards, and then the overall landings and discards. Even though it's important for MSY to minimize discards, that's not -- As Clay had said, that's not always the goal of the recreational fishery, or the charter boat fishery, and sometimes catch-and-release is fun. I enjoy doing it for some species.

The average age of the population, making sure that it is sustainable, and the average length of the catch could be an important one. Fishermen see length more than they see age, and so it might be important, as we're considering this, that, if they want a larger fish, or a trophy fish, that the length is going to be much more important to the fishermen than the age, and then, finally, the recreational season length.

With that, that's all I have for the presentation. I am not seeing Adrian with his hand up, I don't believe, and so what I would be looking for from you all is maybe some prioritization of the management options, in order for us to really move forward and get you what you want for the December meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have a question. Chip, this was super helpful, and so it looks like the MSE is focusing on -- Was it red snapper and gag, with the possibility of bringing in black sea bass, but you could still, through the MSE, look at all the various snapper grouper season lengths that are out there and how that affects red snapper and gag, and is that kind of the level that you're looking for for these management options, or are we focusing on the options for thinking about only red snapper and gag? That's my confusion.

DR. COLLIER: I think, if you're thinking about something like the snapper grouper closure, and you have a timeframe for that, that's great to incorporate. That way, we can look at the information and evaluate it, and so let's say we have the first four months closed, and we can look at weather patterns and, you know, potential fishing effort in that time series and say, well, given the last three years, how have things been progressing during that time period, and what expected reduction in effort would we get by closing that, and so, as specific as you can get, we can look into the data and really give you an evaluation of what might occur.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So then you could also look at like the snapper grouper bag limit that is being tested in the exempted fishing permit, and so you could look at something like that as well?

DR. COLLIER: I think so. I'm struggling with that one, on how to really quantify that, and I tried to talk to the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel on how they might change, and so, without requiring 100 percent retention, and knowing that's going to be a very difficult management option to have in place, how would the fishery respond? If somebody caught twenty fish on a trip, did they catch gag first, or did they catch gag as the number-twenty fish? That's going to be very important to the analysis.

I know, when I used to do more fishing, in my younger days, it seemed that gag would catch early in the day, but I don't know if that's true. I didn't really test myself on that, but, you know, we

were leaving at 3:00 in the morning for a reason, and I hope it wasn't just so I didn't have a good night's sleep.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Chip. All right. Thoughts on a list of management options here for the MSE? Yes, Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Chip, is it possible to incorporate into this looking at an aggregate snapper grouper bag limit, please?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and, with that aggregate, if you could give me some numbers maybe to look at, as well as just making sure you want me to incorporate all the snapper grouper species into it, and so the full suite, and, with that, I would not include the ecosystem component species.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: If possible, because we may have a way of validating this, if we could model, you know, after the EFPs, and so you could look at that, and so we could see how your model comes out, and then how the results of the EFPs come out, so we can kind of validate the accuracy of this, and then also have Scott and his team do the same, and I think that would be helpful.

DR. COLLIER: Okay, and so we'll get the list of species from Jessica, and now maybe an aggregate limit, and so the number of fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you mean like the number fifteen? Is that what you mean, the aggregate limit? That's what's in the exempted fishing permit. Okay.

DR. COLLIER: Do you want us to look at a suite, maybe ten, fifteen, twenty?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Chip, thanks for putting this together. I think this is really useful, and, in terms of the areas of focus, I feel like you largely nailed it. I did have a question about the best fishing practices, and so are you thinking there as kind of like a modeling sensitivity, since those are kind of largely just voluntary compliance with the best fishing practices?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and it would be looking at the literature that's out there and how effective some of these descending device techniques are, maybe looking at different levels of compliance, and so I think it is very important, and also looking at a depth component with that, and so, for something like red snapper, it might be going past that, similar to what Scott was talking about, where they have a shallow-water and a deepwater areas, and the same thing was developed based on conversations between Adrian and Kyle on how to model this, and so there could be -- Let's say an area closure is in shallow water, and you have best fishing practices available in there, and you might be able to put in a different discard mortality, and then, for the deeper water, you would also -- And maybe a shorter season, and you have a discard mortality associated with that, and maybe looking at the effectiveness of descending devices to minimize barotrauma.

MR. STRELCHECK: Okay, and then you have, you know, consider aggregate bag limits, which Robert just mentioned, and, obviously, full retention is another component of this, and I think, in conjunction with effort controls, it would be valuable. You also mentioned kind of this depth-

based management approach, which we've talked about a couple of times before the council, right, and it's a version of spatial management, right, but allowing some depth-based fishing activities in certain areas, and so I don't have the answer, in terms of where to draw those boundaries, and it would be worth I think pursuing that as well.

DR. COLLIER: The depth-based part is very difficult right now, just because we don't have the information on the recreational fishery, on where it's occurring. We do have some anecdotal information on where it's occurring and how it might respond to these different depth-based approaches, and so it would be very difficult to do, and some assumptions would have to be in there, but that's something that the technical team could work on and fully describe, and I think this is one of the benefits of having a group like Blue Matter really work on it, is they're able --

They know these limitations of the models, and they know how to describe them, and so we're excited to see what kind of product we can get from them describing it, and also be able to implement this. One of my goals is to be able to operate this model and to be able to test it for you all, and with some other scenarios, after this contract potentially ends, and so that's one of our goals, is to have something that you all can test ideas out on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Anything that I say is going to sound crazy, because this whole thing is crazy, and so you all were talking about depth closures, and so I'm just going to talk about the coast of Georgia, because that's where I fish, but so you have artificial reefs in Georgia, that DNR put out, in five miles, and you have some at ten or fifteen miles off the coast, and, of course, you have the deepwater wrecks, but we're not talking about those reefs.

You could maybe come up with a way where you -- Since we're going to talk about bottom closures, I guess, you might could come up with a way where you could only fish on the bottom in certain areas at certain times. For instance, like the artificial reefs, you could fish there during a certain time, and then you could close -- That would be closing the snapper banks, of course, and I'm not sure even, you know, how this would work, but I'm trying to now -- With all these things they've been saying about -- I'm trying to stop from us being able to fish, and that's what this is all boiling down to, really.

So maybe if you had like a hundred-foot depth, where you could close it at a certain time, for so many days, or a month, or however it would have to be -- You would have to graph it out, but, in Georgia, we don't have a bunch of bottom. We just have sand, and so the only bottom that we have is what we put down, and so, as far as out to about eighty or eighty-five foot of water, and so -- But maybe we would be able to allow to be fishing, like trolling or something, instead of no bottom fishing in certain areas, and just trolling.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Judy. Others have thoughts? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Clay mentioned, and I'm not sure how you would do this, and maybe it would need to be done separately and then kind of merged, but, you know, kind of rotating bottom closures, and that's a law enforcement issue we would deal with later, but I'm intrigued by the idea of, you know, rotating that kind of pressure, so that, if you had red snapper on a spot, and kind of to your question earlier, in my experience, if there's a bunch of red snapper in a spot, that's the

first thing you're going to catch, because they're more aggressive than a gag, and they'll eat a bait fifteen or twenty feet off the bottom, before the gag grouper can get to it.

I think there's something interesting about the idea of aggregate bag limits and rotating that pressure, to make sure that essentially we're almost kind of evenly pulling, you know, fish out of habitat, to make sure that those ecosystems stay kind of in a balance, and I don't know how in-depth that modeling can get, but that's something that I think certainly, paired with aggregate bag limit, is something that -- In Scott's presentation, that made sense to continue to look at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Other thoughts? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks for this, Chip. It was a really great presentation, and it just kind of allowed me to wrap my head around it a little bit, and I wanted to go back to one of your first questions, which was whether or not black sea bass should be included, and I feel like it should be. You know, we're at the premise of this big assessment walking down the road or I'm sorry. The amendment, and not the assessment, and I would like to see it added. I guess I was curious about you said you needed to get some additional information from the Snapper Grouper AP, and they're meeting later this year, and so that would be added to that agenda.

The information on the spatial distribution of the stock, can you describe what you have for red snapper and gag, and then is that something that the coastal reef fish survey work would be able to supplement that data for you?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and they're using quite a bit of that right now, the information from SERFS, as well as some other information for areas that aren't necessarily covered by SERFS, and I'm thinking mainly of the area south of Cape Canaveral, and so it would be using a lot of that same information. SERFS covers black sea bass very well, but, you know, it doesn't cover black sea bass in inshore waters, and so that's going to be a challenge on how to address that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other thoughts? It's the end of the day, and people are ready for dinner. I don't see any additional hands, and I think that wraps up this topic. Andy, did you have anything else on this?

MR. STRELCHECK: Something additional really to red snapper, but not this specifically.

DR. COLLIER: Just to be specific, you guys wanted to test a season of, you know, matching the shallow-water grouper closure, and I heard that as one potential option. Another one was looking at the aggregate bag limit, including all the species that were in Jessica's exempted fishing permit, and looking at potentially ten, fifteen, and twenty, and maybe looking at certain area closures, potentially rotating closures, and how that might have an influence on the populations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What about the depth component?

DR. COLLIER: Sorry. I do have depth written down, and, you know, what's going through my head right now is we have done an analysis looking at red snapper from Florida up to North Carolina, looking at some of the SERFS data, and, based on that information, it looked like red snapper were gradually moving to deeper and deeper water, as you move northward, and I don't know if that was based on the sampling design or the overall abundance of the fish, and so that

might be a complication, but we can definitely look at that depth component, but it might just be a fixed depth, and we'll see what we can do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Just the size, and if you can do size limit, but specifically just for the black sea bass, and not for the other two, it would be helpful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have five minutes left today. Andy, you mentioned you had something else on red snapper.

MR. STRELCHECK: I was hoping that we could just knock out red snapper and not have to talk about it the rest of the week. So we talked about the MSE, right, and we've talked about, obviously, the interim rule today, and we have two lawsuits now before the Fisheries Service for not addressing overfishing and failing to act. The council appears to be on path, right now, of kind of waiting to see what the MSE is going to tell us, kind of seeing how the EFPs bear out, but I did want to ask directly to the council if there is an intent to take any sort of action for red snapper between now and the next fishing season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to be clear, because we're debating it up here, you mean for the 2025 season? Okay. Thoughts from folks? I don't think folks know the answer to that, it doesn't look like. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: All right. Well, I'm glad that I brought it up, right, because I think this is something the council really does need to give some thought to, right, because you're boxing the Fisheries Service into a very tight corner right now, right, and we are under litigation, and we need to address the overfishing.

I've been very clear that I do not think the short seasons are a solution. Right now, the path we're on is the Secretary would be preparing a management plan, a secretarial plan, because the council has failed to act, right, and so I just wanted to acknowledge that, and let the council know that, and certainly I think there're more discussion that needs to be had around this, and it's late on Tuesday, after a long day, but it's, to me, not a good position when the council is essentially forcing the Fisheries Service into that position. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Madam Chairman, I will pass it back to you here, and I don't think there's anything else that we can get through today.

DR. BELCHER: Yes. Agreed, and we're right at 5:30, with a couple of minutes to spare there, and so, again, I'm going to ask that we do start early tomorrow. I know it looks like we've caught up, but we're still behind, and so I'm going to ask that we start at 8:00, and then we'll -- Because we have a hard stop at 3:45 tomorrow afternoon for public comment, and so we'll be starting at 8:00, and I hope to see everybody at Jimmy's, and so we are recessed for today. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 11, 2024.)

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JUNE 12, 2024

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach, Shores, Florida, on Wednesday, June 11, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We are going to dive into wreckfish, Amendment 48. Just a reminder that hopefully this is the last time that we talk about this, and we'll finally finish and send it to the Secretary, but I'm going to pass it to Christina to walk us through the document.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Happy wonderful wreckfish Wednesday, everyone. I'm not going to go over the background in detail. As Jessica alluded to, we've talked about this amendment for quite some time, but, just as a reminder, this is a sort of response amendment to the 2019 wreckfish ITQ review, and there are a couple of things we're looking to do today.

There have been some small proposed changes to the action and alternative language, and I'll talk about that sort of under each action, and why the IPT is requesting those changes, and then the big thing that we're going to be doing today is reviewing the draft council conclusions, and so we'll sort of stop at each amendment, and I will go over what I have sort of summarized as your conclusion for selecting the preferred alternative that you have selected, and we'll just need to sort of, in some places, have a bit more discussion, or just make sure that I have accurately captured you all's rationale.

Then we'll be considering for formal review. I do recommend that you wait to do that until Full Council. The public hearing for this amendment is scheduled to occur sort of in conjunction with the public hearings, or the public comment session, this afternoon, and so I recommend waiting until that's completed before passing a motion to formally send this to the Secretary.

Then just a quick note on timing, and so, if you guys do approve at this meeting, we will get the amendment document in good working order to send off to the Secretary. It will be implemented as rapidly as possible, but keep in mind that this is sort of a new electronic system, and it's likely going to take a significant amount of time to get that system up and running, and so implementation might still be a few years out for this.

The other thing that I wanted to note is that the codified text -- We're not going to go over it sort of step-by-step at the meeting, but it is in the briefing book, and I recommend looking it over, especially those of you that were on the wreckfish subcommittee and are more familiar with this amendment. A huge shoutout to NMFS staff. This required basically an entire overhaul of the codified text for wreckfish, and it's been quite an undertaking, but the draft is available, and I do recommend looking at that before Full Council on Thursday or Friday.

With that, I'm going to go ahead and dive us right into Action 1. This is the action that looks at revising sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for wreckfish. Your current preferred alternative would modify the allocations to be 98 percent to the commercial sector and 2 percent

to the recreational sector. Again, those exact numbers are in Table 1. I'm going to sort of skip over the environmental consequences and the comments you've received from the wreckfish shareholders and the Snapper Grouper AP, in the interest of time, and you have reviewed those in the past, and they have not changed substantially since the last time you looked at them.

For the draft council conclusions, what we have right now is that, sort of given the low level of recreational landings in recent years, it was thought that modifying sector allocations to be that 98 percent/2 percent split was fair and equitable to both sectors, because it would allow the wreckfish shareholders, the commercial sector, additional annual poundage, while it would still allow the recreational sector to harvest wreckfish when they are encountered, without sort of resulting in them reaching the recreational ACL and triggering accountability measures.

We did sort of want you to review that, and maybe have a little bit more discussion on the record about how your preferred alternative fits with National Standard 4, which is that allocation National Standard that talks about fair and equitable allocations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Christina. Anything else that we want to talk about, about this particular action and the alternatives here? We did talk about allocation, and we did discuss this, and I'm looking over at Kerry, or people that were on the subcommittee, because we've discussed this a bunch.

MS. MARHEFKA: I guess can I ask -- Christina, have we been given guidance that we need to beef up our rationale?

MS. WIEGAND: I will look to Monica for what sort of additional rationale you're looking for the council to provide under this action.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think that Christina has laid it out. Maybe we could have a little bit more discussion on the change, because it's an allocation change, right, and why it's fair and equitable to both sectors, because it would, obviously, give the wreckfish shareholders some additional poundage. I don't -- Christina, I don't think that the recreational sector, so far, has met its ACL, as far as we know, and, of course, this is a little bit difficult, because it's a very deepwater fish, and we know that MRIP might have some challenges, in terms of capturing all the recreational harvest, but I guess something along those lines, of why you all think that it is fair and equitable, essentially, to transfer some allocation to the commercial sector.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I saw hands going up. Tom and then Tim.

MR. ROLLER: Just for a point of clarification, and when is the recreational wreckfish season? It's very short, and the recreational community has never achieved it, and it's a small allocation, correct?

MS. WIEGAND: Correct. They have never met their allocation, and it is a short season, and it's the months of July and August.

MR. ROLLER: So what is the rationale for having such a short season for this deepwater species? Like why is it only July and August?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Christina and I are talking about it up here, and I don't remember the original rationale. This was -- We did not get into that recreational season. The subcommittee did not get into that, and the shareholders, when they were having meetings, talked about this allocation. They felt like they could utilize additional fish, and, as you just heard, the recreational sector has never met their ACL. It's a deepwater fish, and it's hard to intercept by MRIP, and I don't know that the recreational sector needed the amount that they had, but I don't think that you want them to have zero, or 1, percent, because, you know, then that would shut the -- You know, one intercept could shut the fishery down, really.

MR. ROLLER: That's kind of what I'm getting at, right, and so I don't -- I mean, of course, the five or six fishermen in this fishery could utilize more harvest. However, we're not giving the recreational community more opportunity to catch that allocation, and so I don't really think it's fair and equitable to do a reallocation away from the recreational sector, and I would be asking that we try to find them more opportunity to catch that fish at-hand, perhaps through a longer season.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that's not something that the subgroup sort of discussed in detail. The purpose of this amendment had always been to sort of respond to that ITQ review, and so the focus has been on the commercial sector, and, in that review, it was sort of that the shareholders were looking for more allocation, and, because the recreational sector was regularly not harvesting, and that it wasn't regularly picked up by MRIP.

This did used to have an allocation of 100 percent to the commercial sector. That was changed in the Comprehensive ABC/ACL Amendment, to allow that 5 percent for the recreational sector, sort of understanding that it wasn't a targeted fishery, but it was something that recreational fishermen were encountering, and, because of the discard mortality, wanted to allow them to keep the fish that they were incidentally catching.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom, to that?

MR. ROLLER: On the subgroup, what's the recreational representation?

MS. MARHEFKA: (Ms. Marhefka's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. ROLLER: Well, I mean, I know it's a rhetorical question, but I'm asking.

MS. WIEGAND: So we have sort of -- There are three groups that have talked about this document, in addition to the council, and so there is the wreckfish subcommittee, which was a group of council members who discussed this amendment, and then there was, for all intents and purposes, the wreckfish shareholders that talked about this amendment, and then this amendment has been brought to the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, a couple of different times.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was going to say I feel like there was ample opportunity for comment, even at the Snapper Grouper AP, and so over to Tim and then to Kerry.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Yes, we have had discussion on this. As you remember, this was a 100 percent commercial fishery, and then we allowed some quota, some allocation, for the recreational sector, just in case they did encounter these, but, when you look back over the years,

MRIP can't capture this very well, and there have been zero encounters, and, you know, this is a fishery that would be -- It's very difficult to prosecute in the first place, and, you know, we talked about -- Yesterday, we talked about, you know, recreational effort, and how it's exploding, and I don't think this is a fish that you want to start putting recreational effort on, any more than we're doing right now.

You know, I think it is fair and equitable, especially given the fact that they don't catch any anyway, and so, you know, we have discussed this. It does allow the recreational sector to fish for wreckfish. How successful they will be -- There's a reason why there is only five commercial guys in it, because it's very, very difficult.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so there were some comments from the AP, and I'm going to go to Christina, and then I will go to Kerry and Tom.

MS. WIEGAND: I figured it might be helpful to this conversation to sort of go over what the wreckfish advisory group, which is the group of shareholders, talked about, as well as the Snapper Grouper AP, and so the wreckfish advisory group was in favor of Alternative 4 under Action 1, which, just as a reminder, would have been 99.5 percent to the commercial sector and half a percent to the recreational sector, and their rationale for that was that they haven't really witnessed any recreational catch, except for occasional catch as fish are migrating, and that, to their knowledge, wreckfish for recreational fishermen is just incidental catch, but they did note that, should the council go with that 99.5 and half-a-percent allocation, that they should look at the recreational AMs, to make sure that one single MRIP intercept didn't result in an entire closure to the recreational sector.

The Snapper Grouper AP, on the other hand, recommended no changes to the current sector allocation, and so to keep it at 95 percent commercial and 5 percent recreational. They noted that the trend of recreational fishermen catching wreckfish is likely to increase, because fishermen are moving into deeper water to avoid non-target snapper grouper species, and they did also feel that, if that was done, there should be more information gathered on private recreational harvest of wreckfish and other deepwater species and recommended a permitting and reporting requirement and then noted that some citizen science applications, like SAFMC Release, could be helpful at gathering information on some of those deepwater species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Christina. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: While MRIP may not capture them, and, I mean, you will see them caught on social media, right, and, you know, there is an increase of people fishing the deepwater, per the comments from the Snapper Grouper, as we have a lot of folks, particularly out of South Carolina and North Carolina, engaged in the deepwater daytime dropping, which is where you're going to encounter some of these fish, right, and so I go back to my main point, and the comments of the Snapper Grouper, that, you know, you have a really hard-to-access fish, but we're really not giving the recreational community enough time to really even catch any and harvest them, with just two months.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I feel like we are giving them enough time. I mean, first of all, we're giving them -- You can set your season any time you want to, but that doesn't mean you need to change your quota, and so, yes, you can have a longer season if you want to, if you want to have more of a chance to go catch them, and they're in very deep water. The months that you're open right now are going to afford you the best opportunity to encounter them, but, you know, that doesn't mean that you need to change your allocation. If you're not catching them, you're not catching them, and so, you know, I stick with that the allocation itself is fair and equitable. Whether or not you want more days, that's a whole different --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tim. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Christina, we've been working on this amendment, I believe, since 2019-ish, and so we've had many opportunities for public comment. Can you tell me if, at public comment, if we've ever received a comment on sort of the status of the recreational season or the quota or the allocation?

MS. WIEGAND: I don't recall if we ever took this out to scoping, and that would require me to go back in my brain to 2019, but, for public comment, no. We've never received any public comment regarding this amendment at all from the commercial or recreational sector.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that point, listen, we've been working on this for a really long time, and we need to get this done. I think it's an inappropriate time, at this juncture, to have a discussion about a season, which would be -- Changing the season would be an additional measure to this plan, and it would slow everything down. If this is something that is now, all of a sudden, becoming important, then we need to find a different vehicle for it, but we really, really, really need to get this in place, and so I think we should finish up with this action and move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just to that point, Kerry, and I'm not suggesting that we should be changing the season now. I'm just saying, when we look at this allocation and say we're not catching them, we really haven't given the recreational community much opportunity to catch them in the past, and I'm not suggesting a new season now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that point, since it's about allocation, and I want it to be part of the record and the rationale, other than what you're stating right here, which is you, you know, sort of making a guesstimate of why it's not happening, we have no public comment to that end, over the five years that we've had this discussion, and so we don't know that's true, and so I don't think that we should change sort of rationale, and our tact, based on something that we just have an idea all of a sudden may be a thing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Kerry. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Does anyone remember the timing of when we changed the season to two months and how long that's been in place?

MS. WIEGAND: It was before my time with the council, but I think maybe, if you give us one second, we can find that out.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, while we're waiting, I mean, you look at the amendment, and, obviously, what's in the amendment, it says that there has never been a headboat intercept of a wreckfish, right, which makes sense, and they don't typically fish that deep, but then there's been a single MRIP intercept, and so I think we're flying in the dark here with regard to what the recreational landings truly are, and I am okay with revisiting the season length, but I would like to kind of go back and look at the reason we changed it, right, and we may or may not be constraining harvest, but the fact is that we aren't necessarily intercepting the fish to even be able to count them in the first place, right?

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so thanks to Nikhil for helping me out there. That two-month season was set also in the Comp ACL Amendment, and the rationale, at the time, was that, for the most part, it was recreational fishermen in Florida who were encountering wreckfish during the summer months, and so that's why July and August were selected.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I will look back to the committee. I am not getting the sense that we want to change our preferred here, and we've had some good discussion on the council's rationale for the preferred that we currently have. Are we good to move on? I will just remind folks that this is the action coming out of that IFQ review, which was many years ago, and this is kind of the modernization of the wreckfish IFQ program, and so just thinking about that as we move through here. All right. Christina, I'm going to pass it back to you.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, moving forward then, Action 2 looks at implementing the electronic reporting system for the wreckfish ITQ program. Your current preferred alternative is to indeed implement that electronic reporting system. There is some small change to language here, to note that it's about recording wreckfish landings, deducting landings from a shareholder's allocation, and that it replaces the wreckfish logbook with the coastal fisheries logbook program. The change in language here is really to be more specific about what is encompassed in that electronic reporting program, and so, before I get to council conclusions, I just wanted to pause quickly and make sure there are no questions about this change in language.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions on this? Okay. I see heads nodding no. Back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so, again, I'm going to sort of skip over the environmental consequences and comments from the advisory group, because you guys have reviewed those in the past, and they have not changed substantially, and I will note that the draft council conclusions we have is that moving to an electronic reporting system would respond to the recommendations that were made in that wreckfish ITQ review and would have a litany of benefits, including one database containing all program activity, improved timeliness and accuracy of data reporting, and improved method for transferring shares and quota pounds, automated share cap calculations, the ability to match permit holders to shareholder accounts. Participants are able to view a history of all their online action, and, of course, it eliminates those pesky paper coupons.

We don't need a motion right now to accept ITQ edits. There is a number of actions through here that have IPT edits, and so we'll just have you all pass one motion at the very end to accept everything, as opposed to doing each individual by motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Christina. All right. I'm looking at the committee. It doesn't look like we want to make any changes. Are we good with the rationale, as detailed here? It looks like people are nodding yes. All right. I'm going to pass it back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Continuing on, Action 3, this looks at modifying the requirement to commercially harvest or sell wreckfish. This is the action that addresses that wreckfish permit, and so your preferred alternative would be, to commercially harvest or sell wreckfish, an individual would have to have a commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper, specifically the unlimited permit.

The permit must be onboard, and the permit holder must be a wreckfish shareholder, and so the rationale we have right now is that the council felt that removing that requirement to have the commercial permit for wreckfish would, again, respond to concerns that were brought up during the wreckfish ITQ review that that permit was duplicative and added administrative workload and complexities, both for the agency as well as for wreckfish fishermen, and, additionally, requiring the snapper grouper unlimited permit would mirror the requirements under Alternative 1, where to receive -- So, under the current system, to receive a wreckfish permit, a wreckfish holder must hold shares, and so, to sort of mirror that, without the wreckfish permit, you would require the snapper grouper unlimited permit and the permit holder to be a wreckfish shareholder, and so we're simply sort of mirroring current requirements with this preferred alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to add to that, in addition to mirroring those requirements -- So the new electronic system is really going to kind of set it up as if that wreckfish permit still existed, and so it would have the same intent in the electronic system, even though the permit itself went away, and is that right? Okay. All right. Any comments, or discussion, on this action? All right. Back to you.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. We're cruising forward. Next up, these are going to be -- The next suite of actions addresses participation and eligibility within the online system. Action 4 looks at requirements for an individual to get an online shareholder account, and so your current preferred alternative would require an individual to be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident alien, corporation, partnership, or other eligible entity to own or control a United States fishing vessel, and so a small change in language there, and hold a valid commercial snapper grouper permit.

The rationale we have right now is that, one, that language pertaining to a U.S. citizen is required by Magnuson, and then the council felt that it was key to ensure that only individuals that have the ability to harvest wreckfish were able to access the online shareholder account system, which is why there's that permit requirement.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any questions or comments here? All right. I see heads nodding no.

MS. WIEGAND: Continuing forward, next up is requirements for obtaining and maintaining wreckfish shares within that online system. Again, we have that slight change to have the U.S. citizen or other entity eligible to own or control a United States fishing vessel, and then, in order to obtain shares, an individual would have to have a valid unlimited commercial snapper grouper permit. In order to maintain shares, they would have to have a valid or renewable commercial snapper grouper unlimited permit.

The rationale under that is similar to the rationale under the previous action, wherein the council wanted to make sure that only individuals that were actually able to harvest wreckfish were able to obtain and maintain shares within the online system, and then they noted that sort of there's a difference between obtaining and maintaining shares. When you are first getting shares, you need to have a valid snapper grouper unlimited permit. To maintain shares, it can be valid or renewable, understanding that shareholders may move in and out of that valid and renewable status as they work to get permits renewed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any questions or comments on this action? All right. I don't see any hands.

MS. WIEGAND: Continuing forward, Action 6 is share divestment for permit-required accounts. Again, this is required because, under those new preferred alternatives for maintaining shares, there has to be a situation in place where, if someone no longer meets those requirements, there is a process for divesting of those shares.

There is a small change to the language here. We initially had it vague, sort of that the requirement that shareholder accounts must be in compliance with requirements upon implementation of the amendment, and there might be different implementation dates for different parts of this amendment, and so it is now specific to the requirements for maintaining wreckfish ITQ shares, and your current preferred alternative would require that current shareholders be in compliance with these regulations one year following the effective date implementing those requirements to maintain shares, and then your preferred alternative for after implementation is, if a shareholder is no longer in compliance, they would have one year following the end date on the shareholder's snapper grouper unlimited permit before NMFS would reclaim those shares.

The council's draft conclusions for that, it was noted that all wreckfish ITQ shareholders currently involved in the fishery have a snapper grouper unlimited permit, and the council felt that sort of one year following the effective date was enough time for them to shift permits around to different vessels, if they needed to, and that, again, if a shareholder were to fall out of compliance with the requirement to maintain shares, one year was sort of sufficient for them to sell their permit or do what they needed to do to address the situation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any questions or comments on this one? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just that we were going to add, into the document, that there's an appeals process, and so the Fisheries Service has a national appeals office, and they deal with all limited-access privilege program types of actions, which would require -- Which would allow an appeal, if you will, and so we were thinking that share divestment -- That someone might want to appeal the fact that the Fisheries Service wants to take back their shares, divest them, so to speak, of those shares, and so there's some language, and it's at 15 Code of Federal Regulations Section

906, and that's just what the appeals process is, and so we would insert, into the document, just that the Fisheries Service would allow an individual to appeal -- To give them more due process, if you will, and so I don't think you need to add anything into what you're looking at, in terms of actions or anything, but it will just be additional discussion that we'll put into the document.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. Anything else on this action? All right. Back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Moving along, once NMFS has reclaimed those shares, they would then need to redistribute the reclaimed shares to the remaining shareholders. Your current preferred alternative would be to redistribute reclaimed shares based on the proportion of total wreckfish landings over the most recent three years. Again, a small change to the language here, to just note, within the actual alternatives, that any redistribution would be subject to the share cap, and so, if a shareholder has met the share cap, they would not be eligible to receive any of those redistributed shares. The current draft conclusion is noting that the council felt that utilizing landings over the last three years to redistribute would be the most equitable, as it would reflect current effort in the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any discussion on this action? All right. I don't see any hands.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Action 8 is the ability to obtain annual allocation from shares, and your current preferred alternative would require fishermen to be in compliance with respect to collection and submission of cost recovery fees. Again, just a small change in language, to say "in compliance with", instead of "in good standing with".

Again, your conclusion here, your rationale here, was that you felt that it was key to ensure that individuals, again, that have the ability to harvest wreckfish were able to receive allocation, and the intent here is to use distribution of annual allocation from shares as a mechanism to encourage compliance with collection and submission of cost recovery fees, and I will talk about the sort of timing of how this action and your cost recovery actions work together a little bit later, but NMFS staff did a great job of sort of organizing it and making sure that this is possible within the way all of your current preferred alternatives operate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any comments on this action? All right. I don't see any hands.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next up is receiving allocation through transfer. Your current preferred alternatives would note that allocation can be transferred only to accounts currently holding shares and accounts associated with a valid snapper grouper unlimited permit. Again, this sort of mirrors the current system that is in place, and your draft council conclusions, similar to other actions, are noting that it's key to ensure that the individuals that are receiving allocation through transfer actually have the ability to harvest that allocation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Anything on this action? All right. Back to you.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Action 10 is retaining annual allocation before an ACL reduction. Your current preferred alternative would allow the Regional Administrator the authority to withhold the amount of wreckfish annual allocation before distribution at the beginning of a year in which a commercial ACL reduction is expected to occur, and your preferred subalternative

would set June 1 as the date that any withheld allocation would be distributed to shareholders if the final rule implementing that quota reduction had not occurred.

Your draft council conclusion, again, was sort of to note that allowing the Regional Administrator this authority would help avoid any possible issues with the commercial ACL being exceeded if that allocation was released and then the ACL was reduced mid-season, after that allocation had already been released, and, just as a reminder for this, there are not currently any ACL reductions being considered for wreckfish, and this is something that would still go through the council process. It would be something that the council has approved, and then the Regional Administrator, based on that approval, would be able to do this, and so there's still the full council process that would be gone through.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions or comments on this action? All right. Back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so now we're moving away from sort of those participation and eligibility actions and into some of the monitoring actions. The first one here is modifying the fishing year for wreckfish, and so we are requesting, the IPT, sort of a small change here to not just modify the commercial fishing year for wreckfish, but to just modify the fishing year generally, to keep the commercial and recreational sectors on the same fishing year. This doesn't change the spawning season closure for the commercial sector, and this does not change the recreational season. This simply adjusts the fishing year, and so, since this is a bit more of a substantial language change, I did want to pause here and make sure that the council was comfortable keeping the recreational and commercial sectors with the same fishing year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Christina. Okay. I see heads nodding yes, that people are in agreement to keep the same fishing year for both.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and then the draft council conclusions for this just note that modifying that fishing season would help NMFS with the administrative processes that are necessary to maintain the online system.

All right. Next up is prelanding notification requirement for commercial vessels participating in the wreckfish component of the snapper grouper fishery, and so this would require an owner or operator of a commercial snapper grouper unlimited permitted vessel that is participating in the wreckfish fishery to contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at least three hours, but no more than twenty-four hours, in advance of landing, and then, when providing that advance notice of landing, they would need to include things like the expected date and time of landing, the preapproved landing location, which we'll talk about in the next action, estimated weight of wreckfish aboard the vessel, the dealer where the wreckfish are to be received, and the identity of the shareholder and vessel.

Then your rationale for this is the council determined that implementing a prelanding notification would allow for better monitoring, enforcement, and compliance in the wreckfish portion of the snapper grouper fisheries, because it provides law enforcement officers the information they need to intercept vessels as they land and that the information reported by fishermen, as part of the prelanding notification, would help ensure proper monitoring and accounting of wreckfish landings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I just want to be clear and make sure that -- So we said no VMS in this fishery, and so it's not like they're doing a prelanding notification via a VMS system, and this would be some other yet-to-be-determined system, and I see that Andy put his hand up.

MR. STRELCHECK: I didn't mean to cut you off, and so I was just going to comment on this. In the codified text that's in your briefing book, it says that, submitting a prelanding notification, authorized methods include contacting NMFS and submitting the prelanding notification, they include calling catch share support, which is our, obviously, support service, as well as providing the information through a web-based form available on our catch shares website, right, and so I just wanted to make that clear, since the council can weigh-in on that.

MS. WIEGAND: I will just add that there was discussion of VMS included in this amendment, and you guys ultimately got rid of that action, and so a discussion of why you did not want to move forward with VMS is included in the document.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: The wording I would prefer, so that someday, when we're all not here, and there's another whole council dealing with this, and they might wonder about this, because they're doing something else, is maybe something to the effect of the council was advised by the agency that, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, because it is my recollection, of all of the discussions, is this is - - Most council members involved in this, and including participants in the fishery, were not in favor of this, but the agency gave us guidance that this was sort of required, because it's an ITQ fishery, and so I would just like to make that clear, so that -- In the future, I would like that reflected in the record. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Kerry. Any more discussion on this action? All right. Back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next up, Action 13 looks at modifying the offloading site requirements and establishing approved landing locations for wreckfish, and your current preferred alternative is to remove the offloading site requirements and instead implement a system for preapproved landing locations that would be approved by the NMFS Office for Law Enforcement prior to a vessel landing individual ITQ shares at that site, and the landing locations must be publicly accessible via freely-traversable roads or navigable waters, and no other condition may impede free and immediate access to the site by an authorized law enforcement officer. Your current rationale for that is just to note that moving to these preapproved landing sites allows wreckfish fishermen more flexibility in determining where they want to land their vessel prior to offloading fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any comments on this action? All right. I don't see any hands.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next up is modifying offloading time requirements for wreckfish. The current preferred alternative would expand the allowable offload hours to be between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. local time, and your current rationale for that was that the council determined that the 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. time block would provide shareholders additional flexibility while still ensuring officer safety, with daylight hours being present the majority of the year.

Additionally, these requirements match those requirements for offloading Gulf of Mexico IFQ species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any discussion on this one? All right. I don't see any hands. Okay. Back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. We have made to the last action in this amendment, and so Action 15 looks at implementing a cost recovery plan and the sort of associated conditions for that. Right now, your preferred alternative would have the ITQ shareholder responsible for selection and submission of the cost recovery fee to the National Marine Fisheries Service. These would be collected in the last quarter of the calendar year, and cost recovery fees would be submitted once per year, and the fee would be based on actual ex-vessel value.

I do, very briefly, want to cover sort of how bills will be generated, so that the timing of cost recovery collection fits with the preferred alternative to withhold allocation if an individual is not in compliance with cost recovery fee collection and submission, and so these cost recovery bills are going to be generated around the first business day of October, and fishermen will have until October 31 to pay that bill.

After that, if they have not paid, their account will be sent into delinquent status, and then, on December 15, if any shareholder has still not paid, they will receive notification of their failure to pay, and their bill will go to the Treasury. Then, on January 1, when allocations are distributed to shareholders, anyone that is still in that delinquent status will not receive their allocation from their shares. Once they have paid whatever delinquent fees they owed, NMFS will be able to manually distribute their allocation, but this will only occur on business days, just as a note.

Then your current conclusions for that are, again, these preferred alternatives meet the objectives of the Snapper Grouper FMP, the wreckfish ITQ program, and, most importantly, comply with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any comments or questions or concerns on this action? All right. I'm going to pass it back to Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and then just a couple more things of note. Monica already mentioned the appeals process, and this would apply for both Action 6, and so the divestment action, as well as Action 7, the redistribution action, and then sort of the last thing I wanted to note, and I will turn it over to Monica to provide additional information, is that there are some administrative changes that will be needed in the codified, and these primarily fall under the agency's purview, but I wanted to sort of note that there were some small changes that are going to be necessary in order to make this new electronic system function, but, Monica, I didn't know if you wanted to add some specific details.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: No. I mean, it's just kind of in getting the regulations ready to be submitted and that sort of thing, and they are just administrative things the Fisheries Service does. If there's any kind of -- So, when you take action to finally approve this, you always give the staff editorial license to the staff, editorial licenses to make some changes, but then any kind of substantive changes, or anything like that, gets sent to the council chair, for their review, and we would flag anything that's substantive for the council chair to look, so that she could determine

whether, you know, this is fine, and they go forward, or maybe it needs to be brought back to the council, or anything like that, and so this is just kind of normal behind-the-scenes administrative things that the Fisheries Service does to implement the program, but it's really nothing that would change any of the actions or anything like that here.

I think Christina has gone through a number of those, and the codified text, also, and you really should look at this, and I'm sure you have, and it's in your briefing book, but it really gets into the nuts-and-bolts of how you administer this program, because there's a lot to it, in terms of getting it into the electronic world and then how it works in the catch shares section. Andy's folks there, who deal with this, you know, they're really great on this, and I know they answer a lot of phone calls, and they are willing to help fishermen, to walk them through it, but they are really responsive, and they've been really helpful getting the codified text, the language that goes into the regulations, ready to kind of cover all the situations they could think of.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Monica, and so I just had a question. When we started this discussion, it sounded like it still might take some time to implement all of this, and maybe not all of it comes online at the same time, and can you all explain that a little bit and talk a little bit about what maybe the anticipated timeframe is to get this implemented?

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't have the timeframe in front of me, but, given, you know, we're changing the fishing year, right, and we certainly wouldn't be able to have an electronic system in place by the start of next year, and I would need to check with my team, but, you know, if we were able to develop a system over the course of the next year-and-a-half, and be able to roll it out on January 1 of, what, 2026, but I will confirm with the team and get back to you on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Okay, and so there's a draft motion on the board there that would approve all actions and alternatives in this amendment, as modified, if someone would like to make that motion. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: **I move that we approve all actions and alternatives in Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, as modified.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion made, and is there a second? It's seconded by Carolyn. Any additional discussion? **Any objection? We have one objection noted. Any abstentions? The motion passes with one objection.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so that's all we had for this amendment. Again, I will just note that sort of holding off on taking -- On passing a motion to approve this amendment and formalize it for the Secretary until Full Council, so that, if there are any comments during public comment, you guys have the opportunity to hear those before going final.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Christina. Thank you, sub-team, and thanks to Brian Chevront, who started this, and thanks to all the NMFS staff. I feel like we've been working on this for so many years, and I'm so excited that we're finally in the homestretch here this week, and so thanks to everyone that spent a lot of time working on this. All right. Let's take a five-minute break before we dive into the gag and black grouper vessel limit.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to move into Regulatory Amendment 36, which is black and gag grouper, as well as black sea bass, and I'm going to turn it over to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll get started with the decision document that's included in your briefing book for Reg Amendment 36. That will be Attachment 3a. That's the one that I will be walking through, but, for more detail, if you want to look at it kind of on your own, there's Attachment 3b, and that's the draft amendment as it stands right now.

This amendment, as a reminder, has really two main purposes. The first one is addressing gag and black grouper recreational vessel limits. The council was interested in revising the vessel limits that were set in Amendment 53. When those were set, they were set as vessel limits for -- Or separately for gag and black grouper, and so a boat could potentially keep up to two gag per vessel and up to black grouper per vessel, and this action that's being considered in this amendment would consider an aggregate limit, and so a boat would be able to keep up to two of either gag or black grouper per vessel, but it would be a total of two fish, in terms of that limit.

For black sea bass, we were looking at the on-demand pots that have come about over the last several years, and that technology has developed, and the council was considering how to accommodate that type of gear in the black sea bass pot fishery. After review, over several meetings, and with the consultation of General Counsel, we've kind of looked over all of the pot requirements, and, right now, there is nothing that would prohibit somebody from implementing -
- From using a pot that has on-demand gear, as long as it meets all of the identification requirements of roped gear, and it would need to be used at the same time, in the same types of places, where roped gear is allowed.

There's nothing that is restricting that use. The action that's being considered within this amendment though is trying to accommodate that use a little bit more, by making the transit provisions a bit more practical, and so I'll give a little bit more detail when we get to that action.

Since the last meeting, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel has discussed the proposed actions within Reg Amendment 36, and Bob is here to present the AP's recommendations. At this meeting, we're going to be looking to the committee, and the council, to review actions and alternatives, the preliminary effects analyses that are included in this document and in the draft amendment, and we would also be looking to -- Looking for selection of preferred alternatives, initial preferred alternatives, and some initial rationale for those preferred alternatives. Right now, we don't have any selected within this document, but those would be potentially useful, if you all want to select them, because we're also looking to the council to consider approval of this document to go out for public hearings at this meeting, and so that's kind of the gameplan for this amendment at this meeting.

We included the timeline that this document is working along right now, and, I guess, first, before going to the AP recommendations, I did want to have you all take a look at the revisions that the IPT has recommended for the purpose and need statements. For the purpose statement, it's really -- Now that we know that the on-demand gear is allowable as-is right now, we're really looking at the transit provisions. We can be a little bit more specific with that purpose, in noting that the purpose is going to be specifying the requirements for on-demand pots while they transit through some of the closed areas, and revise the need as well, to be a little bit more specific to what's being

addressed by this amendment, and so I will pause here and see if there any questions, or further edits, that you all would recommend for the purpose and need statements.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any thoughts on the purpose and need? I don't see hands going up. We can always come back to this after we have some discussion, but it doesn't look like any hands right now, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, and so we'll go ahead, and the IPT will incorporate those edits in the next round. We'll go through the -- Actually, I will pause here, and I will switch over to Bob, so that he can provide the AP's comments on the upcoming actions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I'm sorry, but I just -- At the last meeting, we talked a little bit about the vessel limit being driven by misidentification of fish. While in, at least in our part of the state, the Keys, you know, we don't believe -- We have not been told there's an issue with black grouper, but, nonetheless, they're being incorporated in this vessel limit because of issues further up the coast, and so I just wanted to make sure it's on the record that, you know, this is not being done because of the black grouper stock, but it's being pulled in because of -- I'm a little leery about, you know, misidentification, and that being kind of a precedent for moving forward. Mutton snapper and red snapper and lane snapper and mutton snapper, and you name it, and so I don't know if we needed to add anything to this, but I just wanted to make sure that that was said.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thanks, Robert, and those comments were brought in as the IPT further developed this amendment, and I'm pretty sure we went through and we removed the misidentification rationale, and we're more developing your rationale in terms of being consistent with other regulations for gag and black grouper. They are linked together, in terms of their bag limit as well, and so, being that they're linked together for a bag limit, and they have an aggregate bag limit together, then that would be the rationale for having them have a vessel limit that's brought about together.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Bob, let's turn it over to you, and I think Mike is going to get a slide up, but over to you, Bob, to talk about the AP discussions.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, for an opportunity for me to present to you all the output of our AP meeting, which was late in March, the last few days of March, and, in initiating the meeting, we ended up with a discussion that quickly went, at first, to headboats and vessels that have more than six people, and the reason we're bringing it up here to you first is it does impact, later on, with Amendment 36 and 35, where we are discussing vessel limits for fish, and we do have a member on our AP who has a very large -- Cameron Sebastian has a large headboat operation in northern South Carolina, and we have a retired captain from Morehead City, Robert Freeman, who is on our AP, and so the headboats do come up.

All the stakeholder, and I think I mentioned this at the January meeting, and, I mean, we almost think that something should be done to salvage headboats as a way of fishing along our coast. It is a way that the common person can go, with very little commitment, and the tourists. If you're looking for something that fits right up the alley of your environmental equity and justice type

initiatives, this is one. People of modest means can get involved in the ocean, and they can fish, and they can enroll and get more interest in what we're doing and get an interest in the ocean.

We think the headboats are very important, and that's across all our stakeholders, and it doesn't matter whether you're a recreational fisherman or whether you are for-hire or a charter boat or whether you're running a fish house, and so this came up for us to discuss, that they needed to have more than what we would actually give to a charter boat with six people on there, with respect to the limit, and so that's why we're bringing it up here first.

We even get discussion -- We have even people now that are calling in, what few headboats there are, and we had a woman, and I believe that she was from Jacksonville, and there might be a fleet up here, that mentioned about headboats in Florida, and I'm not sure if it's -- I can't verify whether it's true, but she stated something like there are only six headboats operating north of the Keys that are doing it successful, and I guess she, or her family, runs it there, and I also have been approached by, you know, people in the Hatteras area of North Carolina, that these folks are under more duress than most, with all the regulations. They are severely impacted by things like the limits we put due to the right whales in our area. When you get north of Florida, they are -- If recreational fishing is impacted, headboats will be affected the most.

So an interest for you to please consider them, especially in your vessel limits, but we also mentioned not slow any other amendment up in order to get to where you want to finish off Amendments 36 and 35. The headboat industry is unique also when you talk about retention, and the anglers want to retain the fish. This is not a catch-and-release. That's not the intent, and most people come -- It's no different than the home handyman going to Lowes, and it's do-it-yourself fishing, to get some fish for your table, and so it's very important in that respect.

Also, some special consideration could be given to them because -- Those that are U.S. Coast Guard inspected, there's a higher bar to pass for safety and that sort of a thing for the headboats, and we also got into discussion, a little bit, about should the headboats have their own ACL. I don't know where that goes after that, and the AP kind of thinks, you know, maybe they should, and they're well documented, and so another thing to consider out there, as a more global aspect, when you're getting into retention limits for per vessel. I will stop right there on that one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Bob. Any questions for Bob about what the AP discussed here? All right, and so I think that, Bob, you have a couple more slides about this amendment in particular, and so I'm going to pass it back to you.

MR. LORENZ: Okay. Yes, and sorry, and that was more or less an introduction, because it does affect two of our amendments, and so, noting my previous discussions, we evaluated what you had sent to our AP, where we went through a range of options for fish that would be in an aggregate limit for the gag and black grouper, whether it be -- I think what we were given was a two-limit or a four-limit, and we would have discussed that within the headboats, some consideration of parceling out per groups of six anglers, and so our recommendation came that, through all the various discussions, that the two-fish aggregate vessel limit for gag and black grouper be the way that the AP wants to go for the private and the charter components, and that, of course -- I think that retains the two-fish aggregate vessel limit, and that was very highly supported.

We had, of the members that were voting, fourteen that voted yes, and there was just one no, and I cannot remember the reason for that or who the stakeholder was, and then some sort of maximum, where we give two fish for every six passengers. For headboats -- We also talked about how practical will that be, if boats are bigger, and there also was an idea that was thrown on the table, just for you to consider, that someone said, well, what about 30 percent of the passenger count, up to say a limit of ten, if you want something, you know, a little more reasonable in the numbers of fish.

I'm going to move on to the black sea bass transit requirements that we had, and, obviously, this comes to we mentioned that, in that transit requirement, that we do recommend Alternative 3, that the buoy can be stored within the pot, which is in your preferred Action 2, and that, obviously, those pots would not be baited, and I believe, also, somewhere in there, they could remove the buoy, but, you know, our discussion was, if the buoy is there, could it be stored in the pot, and that's what our recommendation was.

We did have -- The AP is pretty active, as far as people that tune in and actually text to their favorite AP member, and so there was contact also during the meeting live with pot endorsement holders, and those that had a contact said that they would support this motion 3 as their preferred alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. Any questions for Bob? All right. I don't see any hands. We're going to move back to the decision document.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so now we're going to move into the actions that have been developed thus far. There is a summary within the decision document of what Bob just discussed, the AP's recommendations that are relevant underneath each of these actions. I won't go through that, as he already went through it, but you can reference it as you have your discussions.

The first action is addressing the recreational vessel limits for gag and black grouper. I kind of already explained Alternative 1. Alternative 1 is the current situation of there are two separate vessel limits, and there is a -- There are two separate vessel limits for gag and black grouper, and there is a vessel limit of two gag per vessel per day, and a separate vessel limit of two black grouper per vessel per day, and that is for the private component of the recreational sector, and then, for the charter and headboat components of the recreational sector, the for-hire, there is -- There are two limits of two gag per vessel per trip and two black grouper per vessel per trip. All of that is subject to the daily bag limits on a per-angler basis.

The alternatives, the other alternatives that are being considered here, and Alternative 2 addresses specifically the private component of that recreational sector, and so, if you select Alternative 2, that would establish an aggregate limit of two gag or black grouper per vessel per day. Alternative 3, as it currently stands, addresses the entire for-hire component, including both charter and headboat, and approving Alternative 3 would establish an aggregate limit of two gag or black grouper per vessel per trip, and so those are your alternatives, and, if you wanted to affect both components of the recreational sector, both the private and the for-hire, you would select both Alternatives 2 and 3 as your preferred.

The AP comments are noted, and they have their recommendation. If their recommendation was something that you all wanted to consider, in terms of revising Alternative 3, this is kind of what

it would look like. It would be removing the for-hire language, and the headboat language specifically, and Alternative 3 would apply for the charter component, and there would need to be a different alternative developed for the headboat component, however you all would want that developed.

Effects were analyzed for each of these alternatives, and so Alternatives 2 and 3 -- They're kind of along the same frame. Each of these would be expected to reduce landings for gag and black grouper on a per-trip basis, and not necessarily changing the annual landings, because, for gag, those annual landings would still be expected to hit the annual catch limit, and so, for gag, there would be an expected extension of the season, if Alternatives 2 and 3 were approved, because trips would be -- There would be fewer fish caught per trip, and so the season would be able to extend longer, but it would still be hitting the annual catch limit, and so it would still be limited, on an annual basis, by the ACL.

For black grouper, the recreational landings have not been hitting the ACL, or approaching it, and so the projections, under Alternatives 2 and 3, would be expected to maintain that. You would have fewer fish per trip, but, also, because the landings would not be reaching the ACL, there would be some reduction in the landings of black grouper that would be expected under those alternatives on an annual basis. Those are some of the landings-related biological effects.

From a release, catch-and-release, standpoint, there would be expected mixed effects, and so, on the one hand, for gag, there could be some reduction in dead releases by an extended season, because your legal-size fish could be kept for a longer portion of the year. However, there could be some effect that would increase the dead releases if the open season motivates prolonged targeting of gag, and there are increased numbers of fish that are caught above the vessel limit, and so there could be some give-and-take, depending on how the fishery responds, in terms of those dead releases of gag.

For black grouper, there would be expected negative biological effects under Alternatives 2 and 3, in terms of dead releases, because there would be expected catch above the vessel limit that would need to be released, but these may be mitigated by some of the following factors. Number one, if you look at the detailed effects analysis within the amendment, you will see that most trips already land two or fewer black grouper. Most recreational trips are already landing two or fewer black grouper, and so it's a small percentage that are landing more than that. Number two, there are few trips that land both gag and black grouper, and so this aggregate limit -- It's really kind of a -- It really breaks out into kind of a regional thing. If you're further north, you're more likely to catch your gag grouper. If you're further south, you're more likely to catch black grouper, but there is a small percentage of trips that catch both.

Then, finally, black grouper are a shallow-water species, and they have a relatively low recreational release mortality rate, and so, even if they are caught and released a little bit more frequently, it's not -- It's not one of the species that we would expect a high amount of mortality relative to those releases, and so those are some of the factors that were explored within evaluating what the biological effects could be under Alternatives 2 and 3.

Looking at other effects that were analyzed from the economic perspective, given fewer landings per trip, Alternatives 2 and 3 would be expected to have fewer economic benefits for the private and for-hire components of the recreational sector. The difference from Alternative 1 to

Alternatives 2 and 3, in considering those, is it's expected to be greater for the private component than for the for-hire component, in terms of those landings per trip.

From a social perspective, Alternative 1 would provide the greatest social benefits for those communities that value more retained catch, versus a longer season. If there are communities that value a longer season over the amount of retained catch, then Alternatives 2 and 3 would provide the greatest social benefit, and so it depends on what those communities value, in terms of what would be the more positive effect for those.

Fishery participants for large vessels, like headboats, are likely to experience stronger negative social effects under Alternative 3, because fewer gag and black grouper would be able to be retained on a per-angler basis, and that's kind of along the lines of what the AP discussed for headboats in some of their comments, and then, finally, from an administrative standpoint, there could be some short-term administrative burdens, just because of a change in regulations, but these were noted as regulations that are within the range of what's being enforced right now in the region. There are recreational vessel limits that exist, and so, once people are made aware of the regulations, then there shouldn't be long-term administrative burdens, in terms of enforcement, because that's already within the range of what enforcement is carrying out.

At this point, I will pause and see if there's any discussion from the committee, in terms of a preferred alternative, or preferred alternatives, for this action, as well as if you all could start building some of the rationale and the reasoning for your preferred alternatives as you select those.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mike. I had a question for you, and so, if we think about that timeline that you showed us earlier, if we bring in that concept about the headboats, and we change Alternative 3 and accept that, would that delay the timeline for implementation?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I would expect that timeline -- If that was the decision that you all were to make, I would expect the timeline to basically be pushed back by a quarter. We would need a quarter to get that analysis completed, because, in doing something like that, gag, in particular, would need to be evaluated, because it's under a rebuilding plan right now, and so we would need to get some analysis of how a revised vessel limit that would actually be higher than what is currently in place would affect the gag rebuilding plan.

That could take -- You know, that could take a quarter, and we could have that back to you by the next meeting. One thing to note, as far as the timing, is, when this amendment was initially put into place, there was some concern about getting timing done before an exempted fishing permit for the black sea bass pot fishery expired in I think it's April of next year. Now that we know, from a legal standpoint, that on-demand pots can be fished currently, we're not really doing -- This amendment isn't really doing anything to change the ability to fish with on-demand pots, and it's really just changing the transit, and it was never intended to kind of like that nearshore -- That nearshore pot area, it was never intended to address that.

That timing becomes a little bit less concerning, because, from talking to the endorsement holders, it seems that the primary motivation for them to use on-demand gear would be to have it in the nearshore area, where they historically fished, but, if they're not able to fish in that nearshore area, it kind of loses the motivation for them to use the on-demand gear. Yes, there would be some

additional time needed, but noting that the time concerns that existed previously may not be as important at this stage.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you mind going back up to that table one more time? So I will say that, when the season opened recently, that there was definitely some confusion between federal waters and state waters regs. When FWC went to adopt the consistent regulations, that's when we realized that there were some issues with the codified text that didn't seem to match the council's rationale in the decisions about this vessel limit, and so I would love to get this in place before the next season.

Already it looks like regulations effective early to mid-2025, and it looks like there might be another round of the season opening that would be missed, I guess, if we adopt this piece for the headboats. I mean, I would like to get it right, but there was definitely some confusion as the season opened recently, and so you're saying that we would go from like early to mid-2025 for the regs to be effective, to like summer of 2025 until they would be effective, if we bring in this headboat alternative?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Some of that being a guess, because, at a certain point, it gets out of -- You know, once the council approves, then it's in NMFS' hands, to go through their rulemaking, but, yes, I would guesstimate summer of 2025, somewhere around there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I would love to have a discussion about what the AP discussed with the headboats, and, Mike, maybe you can put up some of that language, so we can see it, and us figure out if we want to bring that in now or not. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: So, obviously, I'm a little more focused on the black grouper component of this, but, you know, looking at this document, and it's unlikely that we're going to meet the ACL for black grouper going forward under these rules, and so I'm curious what the thoughts are on kind of the repercussions of that over time, not meeting catch, you know, catch slowing down, and I'm wondering if this shouldn't be -- Since it's a rebuilding plan, should it have a sunset? Should this be for a time certain, and then us have to come back and revisit to extend this, you know, two grouper per vessel limit?

The amount of time it takes to make these changes, I'm concerned that we're going to end up having -- We're kind of going along with this, I think, from a fisherman's perspective in the Keys, and two black groupers is enough for six people and a captain, and we're okay with that, but I'm concerned about the repercussions of the ACL not being met time after time after time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's a good point. Trish and then Tom.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to say, when we discussed all of this in the original FMP, and the original intent of the aggregate bag, we talked about headboats, and remember my mountain cousins, you know, who come down, and that's what they do, is headboats, and it was going to make it more difficult for them to keep a gag, but the discussion around the table was that everybody is concerned about gag, and gag is in such dire straits that no one was comfortable with going a different route for headboats, or a different bag limit for headboats.

I'm not sure how the black grouper would fall in, and I don't know if that would be something different, to address Robert's concerns, but I just want to remind everybody that, you know, everybody was very concerned about the gag situation, to have a different limit on the headboat.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I have Tom and then Robert.

MR. ROLLER: So I want to just thank Robert for his comment. That is something that's very applicable in recreational fisheries in general, and it's something that I think we're going to be facing in other situations, and what I mean by that is, when we have two species that are hard to identify, and we're going to be affecting the ACL, due to regulation, and, I mean, we're dealing with this in North Carolina, with flounder and mullet in particular, and so this is a bigger issue going forward, and I just kind of want to underline and highlight that and thank you for making that point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tom. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thanks, Tom. I was going to follow-up on the comment about headboats, and my question is -- I'm sorry that I don't know this, but, on a rec trip, do the bag limits today include the captain, or is that vessel allowed to keep captain and mate bag limits? Does that count?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think we changed that in the previous amendment, that captain and crew could no longer --

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: No captain and crew? Okay, and so I was just trying to figure out -- And then, you know, my question was kind of like what's the average number of people on a charter-for-hire and rec boat, and so is six really the right number, or should it be eight or ten, because I do think that there should be some kind of, you know, allotment for headboats, for vessel limits, based on them, you know, displacing five boats going out. If there's one headboat going out, it would make sense, to me, to have some type of consideration for those vessels.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I think I just lost my thought here. Yes, and, I mean, I guess I feel -- I felt very strongly, and, granted, this was last year, or a couple of years, or whenever. Anyway, I was brand-new to this too, and I did feel pretty strongly about the headboats should have a different limit. I think the data though -- Didn't the data show that the headboats actually didn't catch that much more, which -- If I remember right, and I just can't remember exactly, but it did -- I was kind of surprised that the headboats did not catch as much as I would have thought, and I think that also was a discussion point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike has got some information here from the previous document.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So this is part of kind of the more detailed information included in the amendment document, Attachment 3b, and so this is in Chapter 4, and that's where we kind of go through the more in-depth view of the effects analysis, and here we see, for gag, the percentage of vessel trips that are catching gag, and how many gag they're catching on that trip, divided up by the different components of the recreational sector, and then, if we scroll down, we have the same graph for black grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Trish, I mean, it just makes sense, right, and, I mean, in a certain spot, it's only going to hold so many big grouper, but I think at least my perception is it's the ability to potentially catch them, right, and so you get out, and the first two people catch two black grouper, and the whole boat is told, hey, we're not allowed any more grouper, and I think it kind of chills everybody's experience for the rest of the day, and so I don't know how much this is actually about the retention of the fish as it is the opportunity to fish for them, and so I don't -- At the same time, I don't see a big risk that allowing headboats to have multiple vessel limits is going to cause a big impact to the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I agree, Robert, and, Jessica, you and I have spoken about this at-length, of sort of how I feel, and it's really important, at this point, that we look at the headboat sector, and the disproportional impacts they may be facing when we get down to some of these small bag limits, because they do serve a segment of the population that can't otherwise get fish, and we've all talked about that.

What I'm having a hard time, and continue to have a hard time, wrapping my head around is sort of the vessel to do that in. You know, this amendment is time-sensitive, especially for folks down in Florida, and I want to be really respectful of that, and so I think what I would love to just sort of see, and it doesn't sound like I'm the only one feeling this way about the headboat situation, and I do think it can get very complicated, and it got very complicated when we tried to do it in other plans, and that concerns me for the timing of this, and so I'm curious if the committee, you know, would be comfortable taking the most expeditious route right now to solve this gag/black issue and then being pretty clear, as we come out of this meeting, and saying there's a plan for us to maybe address overall -- Maybe it's through the -- What's that fancy thing we're doing? The MSE. Maybe that's the place to look at it, but I am hearing -- It sounds like we all kind of want to talk about that, and we are hearing the AP say that this is a problem, and this body recognizes that's a problem.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I agree, Kerry, and I don't know if we need to take an action today to start that, and I don't know if we give staff direction to start working on that, but I think we've had enough discussion, and we do need to take some action on the headboat issue, and so whatever we need to do to move that forward, while not delaying this, I --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good discussions. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to add my support, and I think a more holistic approach might be warranted here to really think through -- There may be species, like gag, where we wouldn't want to allow for the vessel limits, you know, to be increased for headboats, but other species, like sea bass or whatever, that are more commonly caught, that it might make more sense, and so I would rather kind of look at the snapper grouper species as a whole, in terms of what headboat are catching, and do a separate action.

I did want to note, you know, and so thanks, Mike, for putting up the graphics about, you know, catch per angler, essentially, or per vessel, and average headboat landings for gag between 2018 and 2022 were 561 fish per year, and so not a lot of fish, and so there's not a lot of risk here if we did decide to, you know, up the vessel limit, but I don't think there's a lot of reward for the vessels either, because they're not catching them in the first place.

MS. MCCAWLEY: One of my thoughts is it might be more of an issue as gag rebuilds, and there is more out there, and so then I think you're affecting gag, and so that gets to kind of what Trish's point was, when we had the discussion before we finalized the amendment. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: If it's okay, Madam Chair, I would like to go ahead, based on the discussion we've had, and move that the committee adopt Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Laurilee. All right. It's under discussion, and I had in the queue Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: This was just before the motion, but, I mean, I'm all supportive for doing something different, because, originally, that was where -- I was in that camp originally, and so I totally support it. My mountain cousins would appreciate it, and so, yes, I'm glad we got to have that discussion again.

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

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Based on the last comment about rebuilding, Kerry, would you be open to including in that motion a sunset provision for this, so we have to come back and look at it, whether that's two years or three years?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I would just probably want some staff guidance on that, because I think it sounds reasonable, but I'm not sure how -- I don't know how that works with projections, and it's above my paygrade, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess a separate question, and then I will come back to the point that Robert was discussion. Just noting that Alternative 2 was establishing the aggregate vessel limit for the private component, and is that the full intent of this motion, and are you intending for Alternatives 2 and 3, to have it for the private and the for-hire?

MS. MCCAWLEY: While Kerry is thinking about that, did someone else have their hand up, a second ago, to have a discussion about this? No? Okay. All right, and so the alternatives are there on the board, if you're wanting to select both of those. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, if you're going to look at a sunset provision, it's going to have to match the rebuilding plan, at some point in time, and so, you know, I don't

know exactly -- I'm like Kerry, and I don't know exactly how that works, because it really would depend on if you have a rebuilding plan.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and the other thing, now that it's kind of washing over me, is I think, in theory, sunset plans sound great, but what they end up doing is putting us on this time clock and forcing the council to sort of -- Well, I guess, if it sunsets, it's going to automatically go out, but what if something else is happening? It just puts us on this clock that I've been on before with sunset provisions, and not necessarily with these kind of measures, but I think they're better in theory than in practice, but I could be convinced otherwise.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I proposed it here because Alternative 1, no action, and, I mean, we're talking about, you know, a couple more fish, the way that I see it, you know, and so the fallback is not -- You know, it's not like we're going back to a really, really big wide open, you know, catch allotment, and so I think that, in this instance, it's keeping us true to that, and sticking to that rebuilding plan, and, again, my concern is that we rebuild gag, but we continue to leave black grouper not meeting the ACL and creating additional issues for us down south, and so I'm trying to strike a balance here that gets us to where we want to be on both of those stocks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great points, and so back to Kerry, the motion maker, and both of the alternatives are there on the board. Right now, we just have an alternative selected for the private component, and would you like to modify your motion?

MS. MARHEFKA: **Yes, and I will modify it to include both Alternatives 2 and 3.** That's correct, right? Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so the seconder was Laurilee. Are you good with that?

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. More discussion on this? So we've had a conversation about a sunset, and we've also had a conversation about changing up the headboat limit, and it seems like there is a desire, by the committee, to look at that headboat limit, but maybe not in this particular vehicle, because it will slow it down by a quarter. Any more discussion on this particular motion to select these preferreds? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Just a question, and so, assuming that we approve this, then it would be reasonable to expect that this could be in effect before the beginning of the 2025 season, right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So, if we took action in September, right, and this is a fairly simple rulemaking, and we would need the council to turn the amendment around very quickly and submit it for agency review and approval, and, you know, I can't make a firm commitment, but that certainly gives us the, you know, six-month timeframe that we usually take for rulemaking.

Obviously, if there is changes in the administration, if rules are held up because of that, then your guess is as good as mine, but September would give it a high certainty of being in effect by next year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Good questions. Any more questions or comments on this motion? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Maybe staff can help me with this, but what happens when gag meets the rebuilding plan objectives?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: In order for that to be determined, that would be the result of a stock assessment that looks at gag and sees the population status and sees that it has exceeded its biomass requirement. Coming out of that stock assessment, there would also likely be projections of catch going into the future, like we typically have from our assessments, and so there would -- Like the typical process would be we would have an assessment that would identify that the stock is no longer overfished, and we would have revised catch projections that would go to the SSC, and the SSC would probably recommend some set of those projections as the ABC and OFL, as those levels moving forward, and the council would then need to consider whether you all would put in place the new ABCs. When you do that amendment to put in the new ABCs, there could also be consideration of changing some of the on-the-water provisions, like a vessel limit, in order to meet the optimum yield associated with those catch levels.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Also, just two more pieces of information, and so the next -- Right now, on the SEDAR schedule, the next gag assessment is expected to be completed in 2027. The next black grouper assessment is expected to be completed in 2028, if that helps.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: What is the -- Do we have any projections on the rebuilding plan and how long it would take to get gag --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: We do, and it's ten, correct? Everyone is saying yes. Okay, and so I believe, and everyone is confirming that it's ten years, and remember that it's not stagnant until then. The rebuilding projections that we have right now have the ABC going up every year, and so, while, you know, the bag limit may be staying the same, barring some sort of sunset provision, Andy would have the flexibility, as the -- I believe, and tell me if I'm misspeaking, but, as the ACLs get bigger, as we rebuild, the season can get longer, and so there is reward as we go until the next assessment, and it's already built in there.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Except now, with at least black, where I'm from, we would get into spawning seasons, which becomes a whole different issue, right, and so I just -- As we sit here, right, 2024 isn't going to happen, so when -- Or 2027, and we're not going to be there, and so we're going to have to wait for another assessment beyond that, and I'm just, you know, looking ten years down the road, and I don't want to be in the situation we're in, quite frankly, with red snapper now, and so I want us to be thinking about that, and, anyways, so I will put that out there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I did want to point out that FWC is starting a management strategy evaluation for black grouper, I think either later this year or next year, and so that will be able to provide some management recommendations for black grouper, and potentially test some sensitivities of what's going on with the population and making sure that overfishing is not occurring and meeting the goals of the fishermen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, but it looked like that was pushed back some, and remember that we had to readdress the yellowtail and the mutton assessment, to bring in the State Reef Fish Survey, and so it pushed black back a little bit, and so, when we just looked at the schedule, it was an anticipated completion of 2028 for black.

DR. COLLIER: That's the SEDAR schedule, and management strategy evaluations aren't in there, and so that assessment might not actually occur. If the management strategy evaluation is successful, it might replace that stock assessment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chip. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just wanted to note, and, Chip, you may not want to go away, because it's kind of a -- I just wanted to note that gag is one of our several species that is having recruitment issues, and so there may be some uncertainty as to whether the rebuilding plan that is in place is actually something that will come about, dependent on the recruitment, and I've heard some -- I have kept Chip up here, and Clay might be able to inform us as well, but just making sure that -- Like noting the uncertainty of the projections associated with these low-recruitment species.

I have heard, you know, just verbal reports from fishermen that they're seeing more gag, which is positive, but, with the uncertainty about recruitment, that puts some uncertainty on the rebuilding plan and being able to accomplish it in that timeline.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip, did you want to add anything?

DR. COLLIER: No, and Mike is absolutely right. The projections were highly sensitive to the recruitment levels that were put into it, and so, if the recruitment is below what was projected, then we might not be successful in getting to the rebuilding plan.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: If we don't get there, we're now forever stuck -- Well, not forever, but for a very long time stuck black grouper into this place where it's just -- I mean, we just got a season put in for black grouper not too long ago, and we've had area closures for spawning aggregations in the Keys, and, I mean, this is becoming pretty burdensome. At the moment, everybody is okay, because things are trending the right way.

We're seeing a lot more black grouper, but, as we continue to see pressure on other things, not having access to that fish is going to be a problem for us down south, and so I am hesitant for us to move forward here without saying, hey -- You know, even if it was ten years, right, and we think the rebuilding plan is going to take ten years, and let's put the sunset at ten years, at a minimum, and so then we say, if gag is not going to rebuild, why do we even have this vessel

aggregate limit, and why are we slowing down black grouper, when it's a viable stock to be fished, over a stock that we might have determined either isn't going to rebuild or needs some other action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good points. Chip, did you come back to the table?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and I realize where Robert is coming from, and he's worried about the gag side of things, but I think, when information comes forward from the management strategy evaluation, just looking at black grouper, that is going to be able to provide the council with additional rationale on what management actions might be best for managing black grouper, and so that could give you a reason for separating the two, prior to that ten-year timeframe that you're talking about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I guess another thing to think about is we could also -- Since we're not doing it here, could we not direct staff to start a document that would look at headboat limits like in a more holistic way, so that maybe that gets to, if you don't do a sunset here, it gets to the headboat issue, but it looks at it across species, so it's not just for black and gag, and would that help here? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Meaning dealing with the black grouper in the headboat amendment? Sure. I mean, we're going to have to do something else, right, but just, as we sit here today on this issue, we can see, down the road, that it potentially has issues for black grouper, and at least, you know, we're building the record in this document, but I have concerns about it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, Robert, I think, procedurally, I would be most comfortable, as the motion maker, that my motion stay the way it is, and then maybe introduce, if you're so inclined, a separate action to have the sunset provision. That way, they're at least a little bit separate. They can be analyzed separately, and, if we choose not to move forward with it, we can do a sort of chosen -- Whatever that thing, the appendix, is called, and that feels cleaner, to me, and so I'm not shooting down your idea. The other thing is maybe one of the things that might be a note to staff, and, Chip, correct me if I'm wrong, but are we looking at any sort of regional management in the MSEs? This seems like a perfect situation for looking at things in a more regional nature, but I don't know if we have a way to do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Right now, based on the discussions yesterday, we did not really have a regional component put in there. Also, black grouper is not currently going to be in the MSE, and so it would be a little bit challenging.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I've got hands up. Tom and then Trish.

MR. ROLLER: I just, again, want to express my support with Robert's opinion on this issue. I think that we do need to build a record, in these cases when we have, you know, two species, due to identification issues, and, if we're going to constrain them in the future, we just have to be looking forward to see that, if we're not succeeding on the one level with this one species, and this

is big picture, that we should have some sort of record or way to discuss this, to separate them in the future, to not, you know, indefinitely constrain access to one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to say that I like the idea of maybe looking at headboats holistically. Headboats, just like, you know, big fishing piers, it's another way that folks that don't have access all the time to the ocean, and headboats is one way that makes, you know -- Again, like my mountain cousins, and that gives them the opportunity to go fishing, which they would not have the opportunity, or possibly the money, to charter a charter boat, but I do like that idea, and looking at that, and I think that will help. You know, that may be getting also at EEJ-type strategies, because it's more -- It's easier access to those folks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great points. I think this has been a great discussion, and so let me just try to make a suggestion here, to move us along, and so, kind of going back to what Kerry was suggesting, I think we keep this motion as-is, and determine if we're approving this motion or not, and so, once again, it's to select two preferreds here under Action 1, in this document, but then I think, right after this, we need to come behind it and then make a decision about are we doing a motion for a sunset, or are we giving direction to staff to look at a comprehensive headboat amendment, and I think that something needs to happen after this motion, in order to get to these points that we're talking about. Okay. Anything else on this motion that's on the board? All right. **Is there any objection to selecting these two alternatives in this motion?**

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: No, but I would like to abstain.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Okay, and so not an objection, and an abstention, and so the motion passes with one abstention. I'm sorry. Tom as well, and so I'm sorry. I didn't see your hand. Two abstentions.**

Then let's finish up this discussion that we're having and figure out what the next step is. Is the next step -- Maybe it's both of these, and is the next step a sunset to this, and/or is the next step to direct staff to start a separate vehicle that would look at headboat limits. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Is it possible to build the sunset into the amendment about headboats? John, please.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The idea is the sunset would come in when gag is considered rebuilt, and is that correct?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: The idea would be that we have to look at that, right, and make a determination of is gag rebuilt, is it going to rebuild, or are we just hampering the black grouper fishery for no real return on the gag rebuild side, and I just think, at some point, we need to think about that. Certainly, if gag gets rebuilt, I see no reason for a restriction on an aggregate bag limit anymore, but I think, sometime between now and then, I would like to, you know, have some ability to come back and say, hey, guys, you know, not only do we not feel that black grouper is, you know, rebuilt in the Keys, but they're so abundant now that, you know, we're having issues with black grouper over other species, and it just -- It has the potential for, you know, an imbalance, in my opinion.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, you know, we're not here very often talking about when something is rebuilt, but, you know, to declare the stock rebuilt for gag, we would need a stock assessment that says it's rebuilt, and, at that point, the P* potentially changes, the adjustment for uncertainty, because that considers the status of the stock, and then we would have new projections that would not be based on an F rebuild, but they would be based on the FOY, and so, you know, you need to have all of those pieces, which means then you would be doing an amendment for gag that moves from the current amendment, which is basically a rebuilding plan, into a, you know, sustainable management under FOY, and, at that point, that would give you --

You know, the mechanism is going to come that would allow you then to potentially reconsider this aggregate limit and this relation between gag and black, potentially, because you may be doing other things. You may be changing the seasons, the bag limits, et cetera, because, you know, you're going to be operating under a bigger stock, and a different fishing mortality rate, et cetera.

The other place where you will get an opportunity is with the gag assessment that's coming, and, you know, it will tell us how far along we are on the rebuilding plan and, if you have to take any action to respond, you could also consider this provision as well there, and so I guess I'm sort of thinking there's a couple of events that are going to come that would allow you to consider that without trying to put in a sunset here without really knowing, you know, what would be your justification to trigger that, okay, now this ends.

I that's going to be the biggest challenge of putting the sunset in now, versus I think we can rely on those couple of decision points that we know are going to come to us and decide, at that point, how we approach gag and the overlap with black, and I do think the idea, and I wrote down a potential task, to make sure we get it, about this headboat fishery and looking at the vessel limits and the EEJ thing, which I think is really good, the role of the fishery for access, and I think that would be another place where you could look at, you know, sort of these aggregate limits and how do they potentially affect that fishery, and so I think, yes, we could start evaluating this issue within a report of this type.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So the way I interpreted, and so, please, Robert, if this is not what you meant, then speak up, and so the way that I interpreted part of what you were saying was not just when the next stock assessment came, but I thought that you were also saying that we check back in before then, and we'll have some additional information to know whether gag is rebuilding on schedule or it isn't, because of recruitment or what have you, and, that way, you're not just leaving this in place on black, because waiting for this next stock is still so many years out, and so I was interpreting what you were saying as like a midpoint sunset, and is that right or wrong?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: No, that's right, and that's where I started, and then I kind of fell back to, you know, at a minimum, I would like to consider ten years, but that is exactly my point, and, if in this, you know, headboat amendment, we can look at regional management of black grouper maybe, and completely separate the issue, and, you know, I'm fine with that, but I just want to make sure that we're acknowledging here that there's not an issue with black grouper.

We're doing this because of gag, and we need to be cognizant of pressure that's going to put on, you know, the folks in south Florida, mainly, as a result of doing that. To Tom's point, I think

we've seen examples where we've, you know, essentially sacrificed the fishery, trying to build something else up, and ended up having, you know, some negative consequences as a result of it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I'm just going to put this out there. For those of us that have been around the table for a while, we used to have a specific south Florida committee that was a joint committee between the two councils, and we talked about black grouper and yellowtail and mutton and goliath, and we tried to look at specific regulations that would really help south Florida particularly, and how these jurisdictions come together in the Keys, for some of these exact reasons, and so we used to have that.

It met for a couple of years, maybe, and it did make some progress, and, ultimately, that special committee, or ad hoc committee, was sunset, but I'm just putting it out there that we -- That it was sunsetted, but we used to do this, to try to get at these concerns, and we formed a subcommittee that would really dive into these issues that you're talking about. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: So do we need a formal motion, or is it direction to staff to start working on this headboat, you know, south Florida snapper grouper, you know, management combination?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think direction is okay, and so do you want to try to articulate the direction for staff, and then it will be in the timing and tasks motion, and then it will need to get slotted in on the workplan as well, but maybe you can help Mike craft what the direction is for headboats.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Sure, and so I don't really like drafting by committee, but, if anybody has, you know, some thoughts here, please jump in. Based on our discussion, we're making some changes that are going to have some outsized impacts on headboats, and so we're looking to develop a special, you know, management framework for headboats, as it relates to vessel limits for snapper grouper, and we would also like to consider, in that work, looking at black grouper, as it relates to south Florida, and potentially regional management of that species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Mike is still typing there, and so we'll give him a minute to get that up there.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I am not a big fan of applying colors to papers, and I think it's just an evaluation, and just it's my personal bias, and I never really understood the whole white paper world, but, you know, I just think, you know, develop a report examining headboat vessel limits for snapper grouper, regional management of black grouper, and I think it's good to get in there too considering the role that headboats can play in, you know, advancing EEJ and access for underserved communities, because that's a big topic for us, and I think this definitely, as has come up, and as we know, and it can really be a good place for people to get into that fishery, and our AP has talked about it, and we all know it's an important part, and I think that would be really good, given that initiative within the agency.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: If you're trying to get some credit there, do you want to add fishing piers to that? I don't know if that's an issue, but I heard that mentioned.

MS. MURPHEY: I was going to say that fishing piers is not our jurisdiction, really, and so we probably can't -- I was just sort of -- It was just a similar thing, and, while I've got the mic, I just want to clarify, and so we're talking about, holistically, headboat vessel limits throughout the South Atlantic, correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and then it's specifically on black grouper. Okay. I just needed to clarify that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So, Jessica, you're well aware that regional management means something very different for the Gulf of Mexico, and so I'm wondering if it would be better if we started something like separate regulations for black grouper, or different regulations for black grouper, in south Florida.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good point. We'll change that. Other thoughts? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: The headboat thing, it really is a problem, and it needs to be addressed as quickly as we can do it. I'm just sitting here thinking, well, if we can get, on a six-pack charter boat -- If they can have, what is it, two per person, I think, and why couldn't you take that same formula and apply it to the headboat, and then, based on the number of passengers that they have -- Like, if they've got a full boat, and they've got sixty passengers, they could have twenty fish. If they had thirty people, they could have fifteen, and why can't the same formula that's being used for a smaller charter boat be applied to a headboat?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's exactly what we're trying to do here, and we're trying to look at it with this direction that it's not just relative to black and gag, but it would be looking at this across multiple snapper grouper species, when thinking about vessel limits. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: John, do you feel those are separate papers, or is it appropriate to be done together here? I'm asking because I think there's probably a larger discussion about, you know, other species that Jessica mentioned, and so I'm wondering if we should break these out, so they don't end up getting convoluted.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think that's a great point, because they would likely move at different timeframes, which I think is part of what Laurilee is suggesting. Okay, and so we're breaking that out into two different topics there. Back to Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: So, since we're talking about the number of fish that the charter boats can have now, why can't we talk about headboats now?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: So it's been a couple of minutes, but it feels like yesterday that I said this, but it was really a few minutes ago, and the basis of my motion, and the reason why I was trying to focus on strictly let's get a limit in place for all three components of the recreational sector, and

have it be the same, because this is a framework that is supposed to be moved quickly, and that's the whole intent of this, was to get this through quickly, that we need to get it done, with the understanding that we have this larger issue with headboats, for all species.

We've had this discussion about how it's probably more appropriate, and more timely, to have a holistic discussion about the headboat vessel limit for all the species that we're currently under bag limit management, and so we are having that, but we're just going to have it in a different -- In a more holistic environment.

If we -- We could really get down in the weeds very quickly, and this thing can go off the rails and slow down if we add that to this document, and then it won't be in place for the fishing season next year, which I think we've all talked about at previous -- The first time it came up I think was like September. When it was brought to us, it was clear that this is supposed to be something to get through quick enough to have in place for the 2025 season, and, if we get into that headboat separate discussion, that's a whole different level of analysis, and, you know, we just have the experience to know that that's going to slow us down, and so that was my rationale for my motion, which I think we passed, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Laurilee, I would add to that. Looking at the data here for particularly this gag and black aggregate limit, I don't think it's going to impact the headboats that much, because we just saw that they weren't catching more than two anyway, but we do recognize the need to deal with headboats across all species, and so we need to have a holistic approach for headboats, and I think Andy reiterated that, and so I think we're on the exact track here that you're looking for.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and because the AP also talked about it relative to I believe scamp, and so we're suggesting that this needs to be a discussion across multiple species. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just had a question related to this report for the headboat vessel limits. As we develop this, are we just looking at the species for which there is a vessel limit, a recreational vessel limit, in place, or under consideration, and so like scamp would be included, even though it's not at place at this point, and it's under consideration, or would we be delving beyond that and into snapper grouper species, and like do we just look at existing and, you know, on-the-horizon limits, and is that what we're looking at here?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: From my perspective, yes. It's going to get too -- You're going to have a completely different set of rules for everything, and, you know, the idea here is to have a set of rules that apply to all boats and then to have basically a multiplier effect, or some type of calculation, for headboats, and something that works going into the future too, and so, if we talk about, you know, two years from now, we're going to have an aggregate limit for this, we already have this kind of justification and precedent set up for headboats, and we just plug it in, and they're going to get the same multiplier effect on headboats.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, like a methodology or whatever. Yes. Okay. All right. Amy, you had your hand up, and then Judy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just out of curiosity, when we are talking about headboats, I just want to be careful that we're thinking about it from two perspectives, and are we looking at it from a boat capacity or an angler trip capacity? I just want to make sure that is also clear to staff, and I personally feel that it needs to be based on the number of anglers and not necessarily what the boat capacity is.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Let's clarify that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and Mike is getting that. Thank you for that, and Mike is getting that on there. I had Judy and then back to Kerry.

MS. HELMEY: I just want to go down that I agree with Robert and Laurilee. If we could base it on six passengers, and do the formula from there for the headboat, I think they might -- That might help them a lot, and we -- The headboat situation is very bad, and, in Savannah, we -- You know, Steve Amick retired, and we no longer have a headboat, and it has made a big impact on our area, because people can't -- Like you said, your mountain people can't go fishing, and neither can the people that couldn't afford to go and charter a boat, and I think it's a good idea that we do come up with some kind of framework on this, so that everybody can get the opportunity, and the headboats wouldn't have to close down.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Judy. Kerry and then Tom.

MS. MARHEFKA: Real quick, Mike, I just want to make sure that there is clarification in there about what is classified as a headboat, what their reporting requirements are, just, you know, get into the nitty-gritty that we might forget.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John and then Tom.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Is it fair to capture this and say you're really looking at an evaluation of how we apply vessel and aggregate limits fairly to the various sectors, given they have very different numbers of anglers onboard, and just give us leeway to explore this and not -- You know, it seems like it's growing not just necessarily to headboats, but there's also the issue with charter boats, and private, and we really -- You know, we've sort of gone down this path of, you know, we just used to do angler limits, and then now we've started putting in vessel limits, and now we've got aggregate vessel limits, and angler limits, and, you know, different vessel -- You've got an angler limit and a vessel limit, and so it seems like you just want sort of a holistic evaluation of how these things can be applied equitably.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Kerry got to what I was going to say, which is I just think we need to get into the nitty-gritty as to what classifies as a headboat, which, in my mind, it's any inspected vessel over six people, and as long as that is the legal -- I know we've had this discussion, about what actually defines a headboat, in the past, and I think we just look into that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I'm going to say something that I think everybody realizes, but, when you delve into this, you're going to have really invest heavily in understanding the human dimensions part of this too, because that is what really is ultimately the outcome, because people who get on a headboat have a different set of expectations than people who are getting on a six-pack boat, people who are in their own boats, and, if you really want to understand how to strike that balance between, you know, what can a person retain and trip satisfaction, you're going to have to have more information than we have now, in order to really do a good job at it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: In terms of defining a headboat, one of things that was noted in the AP presentation is that U.S. Coast Guard certificate of inspection, and that is actually on the books in the Mid-Atlantic for headboat-specific regulations, and that is a definition that is in the federal code already for headboat-specific regulations, and so that may be something to lean on in your definition of a headboat.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. This has been a good discussion. Any other points that need to go up there for this examination of headboat vessel limits? Bob.

MR. LORENZ: Just in listening, just a few things in summary that you kind of tickled in my mind of what came up with the AP, just in the big-picture sort of thing, and so, from that group of twenty or so people, with all the discussions you've talked about, there was not an interest to slow anything down with Amendments 36 or 55, and, you know, keep those going to the path they currently were, and do not affect the timing, was their recommendation.

I know it did come up, and every single time it's the captain and crew would not retain anything, and so that's also a given, and then it was expressed that this would get a lot more conversation, but, depending on how you look at this, and parceled it down, if you ever got to a point of one of these species, any of these grouper species, per angler, you might not even need a boat limit, and so that's where they came from.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. Thanks for that clarification. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: One other thing I will note, because we commented about the EEJ objectives, and, at least on the west coast of Florida, we have headboats that will actually go out and target the shelf edge, and these are not cheap trips, right, and these are people that are going for twenty-four to seventy-two hours, and so this could also have an opposite effect, and I don't know, you know, how the headboats fully operate up and down the kind of east coast of the United States, but I think it's something that we also want to think about, as this proceeds forward, because there may be some indirect implications of this as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That's a good point, and we're capturing something about that as well. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: It is an interesting point, Andy. I was thinking about it. Out of Key West, we have headboats that they're doing a two-day trip, but one day is just steaming to and from the

fishing grounds, and they're only fishing for one day, and so there is a lot of dynamics that need to be thought through in this one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're capturing all of those fun things here in this list of things that need to go into this report. Anything else that people have thought of? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just on that note, I just want to agree with Andy and Robert on that, that the nature of headboat trips is very diverse, and it is important that we look into that, because they're not always simple, inexpensive trips.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. Anything else? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just for Mike's, I guess, knowledge here, we have a definition of "headboat" in our current regulations that we use in the South Atlantic, and there's also one that is slightly different for Gulf reef fish in the regulations, but we can talk about that, and so it's already in the 622 regulations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. Anything else here? Really good discussion. I appreciate the AP bringing this forward for us to think about. We might be done with this particular action, Action 1 in this document, and I'm going to pass it back to Mike to go to Action 2.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you. Luckily, we only have two actions in this amendment, and so Action 2 is looking at the transit requirements for black sea bass pots with on-demand gear. As it currently stands, the Alternative 1, during transit through a marine protected area, special management zone, or spawning special management zone, black sea bass pots are required to have all buoys disconnected from the gear, as well as not be baited. The buoys can remain on the deck, but they just have to be disconnected from the gear. That's the current stance.

After talking to the endorsement holders, and those that have especially been involved in the testing of on-demand gear, they indicated that disconnecting the buoy from the gear seems to be kind of a burdensome requirement to have for just the configuration of how that gear is set up during transit, and so Alternative 2 would remove the requirement to disconnect from the gear altogether for these on-demand black sea bass pots, and so that would be that they cannot be baited, but they do have to -- They need to not be baited, but they can have the buoy remain connected to the gear.

Alternative 3 is based on some other regulations that are required of black sea bass pots, and so there's a different requirement when transiting through MPAs, SMZs, and spawning SMZs, versus transiting through the nearshore closed area for those pots, and, in the nearshore closed area, the requirement is that the pots must not be baited, but they can have the buoy connected to the gear, as long as it's stowed within the black sea bass pot, or the buoy can be disconnected from the gear, and so Alternative 3 is kind of mirroring that requirement and applying that not just to the nearshore closed area, but, for on-demand pots, this would apply for MPAs, SMZs, and spawning SMZs as well.

Alternative 3 would allow captains to keep the buoy connected to the gear, as long as it's stowed within the pot, and the purpose of all of this is to have some type of indicator that that gear is not

actively being used at that time, that fishing is not occurring in an area where it's not allowed, and so that's kind of the purpose of these types of requirements.

We had the comments from the AP, and the AP recommended a preference for Alternative 3, that the buoy can be stored within the pot, and, when we went through our initial scoping phase, there were several of the endorsement holders, especially those that have used the on-demand gear before, and that was kind of their preference as well.

In terms of the effects summary, this type of change to the gear is not expected to affect the catch of black sea bass. From what we know, the on-demand gear doesn't change the fish catching mechanism of the pot, and it just changes how the pot is retrieved, and so we're not expecting changes to harvest of black sea bass.

There could be some indirect effects, and so, if Alternative 2 or Alternative 3 encourages more widespread use of on-demand pots, then there could be biological benefits expected for marine mammals, through reduced probability of entanglements with that type of gear, and, in terms of economic benefits, there could be some economic benefits for fishermen that use on-demand gear, under Alternatives 2 and 3, because there would be less time spent dismantling and setting up their gear at those different times, and they would be able to move a little bit more quickly and move on to other forms of fishing.

In terms of social impacts, there would be potential social benefits, under Alternatives 2 and 3, from these changed transit requirements, because they would be more practical for commercial fishermen, and so those would be viewed a bit more positively. Also, if we kind of that ripple effect of on-demand gear being a more prominent gear, and reduced probability of entanglement of marine mammals, there could be some social benefits from recovery of endangered marine mammal populations.

From an administrative standpoint, there could be some short-term burdens, in terms of informing people of new regulations, but these are within the range of regulations that are currently enforced with the region. There could be some administrative burdens in the form of law enforcement priorities, as the black sea bass pot fishery -- If it shifts more into that on-demand type of gear, there would be an increased number of pots that are not visible necessarily, or accessible for law enforcement without the fisherman being present, and so we've gotten some feedback from the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel that is included in the draft amendment.

Basically, they said that it's more of a what does the council want to prioritize, and, if the council wants to prioritize the benefit for the marine mammals, then you all would need to recognize that law enforcement isn't going to be able to pull -- You know, to do random pulls on pots. If that's something that is highly prioritized, then law enforcement would need a way to access those pots, and so it's kind of a -- That's kind of the layout of it, but, if they shift their priorities to some other form of enforcement, then they can enforce when the fisherman is present, or go about it in a different way, but it's just it would need to be recognized, that those random pulls would be deprioritized, from a law enforcement standpoint. The action for the committee at this point is to consider selection of a preferred alternative for this action and try to kind of build the rationale for that preferred alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: So just a quick question, Mike. I remember, back when Kim Zywicki was first doing the discussions on this gear, that there were some other types, other than what the three folks who have been working under the EFP have done, and is there -- Knowing that we're not constraining them to just those types, is it -- Are there other gears out there that will still be able to be stowed, I guess is what I'm getting at, because I know there was ones that there was kind of like an external like basket, for the reel of rope, and the question would be whether or not that could be put into the pot, and I just want to make sure that, if we're going to do, that, you know, somebody getting into it, if they have a different methodology, they're not going to be locked out of that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: In our conversations with the Protected Resources folks, because some of these -- Some of the rope and identification requirements are not under Magnuson, and they're actually under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, but, from our discussions with Protected Resources, it seems that those regulations apply to black sea bass pots that have a rope and buoy, and so, if they don't have a rope and buoy, then they would not have rope and buoy requirements be applicable to them, necessarily, and they would still have like identification requirements, and still have to have tags, you know, on the pot, but they wouldn't -- They wouldn't have some round-about requirement that they're not fulfilling because they don't have a rope and buoy on that pot.

DR. BELCHER: I guess I was just thinking though that the stowage in the pot, and, if there is a spool that was large enough that it did not -- That it was not able to be contained within the pot, and, therefore, the buoy can't go in the pot, but it meets all the requirements of -- That's all I'm thinking about, because like it's very -- When you look at the pictures of what we've got, and we've identified the three that Jimmy is using, that Cowdrey is using in North Carolina, and Charlie is using, which are kind of more of a clustered rope approach, and it's easy to see where that can go in with the buoy, but there were other ones where the rope was actually like in another bag, that was exterior, and so the question was just whether or not all of that would be able to meet your stowage requirement.

There was an actual like physical secondary -- I'm going to call it a pouch, for lack of a better term, but there were just some other alternatives, that had been used in other fisheries, other places, that still meet what the definition is of that gear, but it's just my question is can they sufficiently be stowed within the pot.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't know an answer to that, Carolyn. My recollection, and I need to confirm this with my marine mammal team, is that, even though these different gear types were being tested, the preferred really still goes back to the rope being stored in the pot, for ease of use, and I think from a cost standpoint, but let me confirm that. I think the other issue that we would need to look at, beyond just what we're considering today, and what your concern is, if those other gears don't meet that requirement of stowage, do they still meet our allowable gear specification requirements altogether, right, or are they even outside of those requirements.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: You know, we had this kind of discussion when we were trying to change, or, you know, let the rock shrimp boats transit the Oculina Reef with rock shrimp onboard, and we started out, and they wanted the doors disconnected, you know, and they wanted all the gear disconnected, before they made this transit, and, after a lot of discussion, you know, commonsense finally prevailed, and we were able to decide that, if you maintained a forward speed of five knots, then that was okay, and you could still leave the cables connected to the doors, and this is kind of the same thing.

I mean, if the boat is traveling at a forward speed, they're obviously not putting pots in the water, and Carolyn is right, and some of these things are in baskets, and some of them are on spools, and you're not going to be able to get them into the pot, and then you're also -- Even if it's a loose rope, you're going to get it all tangled up, and you're going to have to untangle it when you're getting it out of the pot, and you're costing a lot of time for the fishermen, and time is money, and it just seems unreasonable to make these kind of requirements on something that, in my opinion, is not necessary.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, remember the rock shrimp fishery has VMS, and this fishery does not, and so the forward speed I believe is monitored via VMS, and we don't have a way to enforce that, and I don't think we want to go there right now. I would like to advance this discussion. We had a recommendation from the advisory panel that said they were comfortable with Alternative 3, and it does allow for both, and my recollection, and I could be wrong, is the type that Carolyn was talking about is separate, but it can be disconnected, and that's why the disconnected is in there, I believe, but I think what would be important is to -- I think either -- If we're going to get more technical than what we have in here -- You might know something that I don't know, and I'm about to do some stuff.

MR. GRINER: Well, I haven't spoken with Chops a lot about, you know, his testing of these pots, and they would prefer not to have to store it inside the pot, and the reason being that it's very cumbersome to have to load the pot, or reconfigure the pot, to actually drop it again, and so what they do is, as the pot is hauled, they can store the gear on top, without having to do it twice, and it can fit inside, and it's difficult, but the real difficult portion is taking it back out and reconfiguring it to where you can actually use it again, and so what happens is, as they haul the pot up, it's actually stored and ready to use again, but they would just prefer that it be unbaited.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so then let me try to interpret that. I think that what you're saying is we should select Alternative 2 as the preferred, and is that what you're saying?

MR. GRINER: Yes. Just unbaited.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just question -- I am worried about unintended consequences of some of these really detailed things, and the reason, as we revisited when Mike gave us the introduction, that we had been doing this is because we were trying to sort of beat the EFP running out. Based on the new interpretation that the guys can use the gear they're using now anyway, are we doing a disservice by rushing, when we have all these technical questions, when we know that we're going

to want to look at this more holistically in the overall black sea bass, addressing the assessment, and I just want to make sure -- You know, we've had a lot of unintended consequences of things we're doing, and now we have questions about whether this is good or not, and so that's just food for thought for the committee.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So hearing -- I definitely hear the concerns that you have, Kerry. In terms of these transit requirements, I'm not quite sure how many more alternatives can really be developed, in terms of this on-demand gear. I mean, Alternative 2 is kind of like that baseline just unbaited requirement, and Alternative 3 adds one more layer to it, but I'm not sure what other layers could potentially be incorporated that would move -- That would move this in any different direction than it is right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: This is a question for Bob, and so were any of the three fishermen that are testing these pots -- Were they on the AP, or did they participate? They were not? Okay.

MR. LORENZ: No, they were not on it.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So Tim -- I'm sorry. Down here. Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you. As somebody that's working with this gear, I would say that Alternative 2 would be the way to go, because it is a pain to have to take these buoys off and stow them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for chiming-in there, and so then, Tim, or Kerry, are you willing to make a motion to select a preferred?

MR. GRINER: Yes. **I would move that we select Alternative 2 as our preferred.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Motion by Tim, and seconded by Kerry. We've had a lot of good discussion on this. Is there further discussion on this motion, as it's going on the board? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I just have a question for clarification, and so, when we look at no action, and it's three sentences, right? Transit through an MPA or an SMZ or a spawning SMZ with a black sea bass onboard is allowed with fishing gear appropriately stowed. Transit means direct, non-stop progression through the MPA, SMZ, or spawning SMZ. I think what the action is getting to is the third sentence of fishing gear appropriately stowed means a sea bass pot is not baited, and all buoys must be disconnected from the gear; however, buoys may remain on the deck.

The alternatives really direct what it means to have the gear appropriately stowed, and so I would -- Just for clarification, I'm thinking that the first two sentences that I read would still be in effect, right, and we would be getting at how we appropriate stow the gear, and so, if that's true, then maybe we might want to -- I will work with Mike to clarify, in the alternatives, that that's what we mean, just so the other parts of the regulation don't go away, right, when you take final action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great. Thank you, Monica, and Mike is making some notes. Robert and then Laurilee.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Just going back to what Kerry said, I'm wondering if -- You know, I think the intent of this is that the traps can't be readily deployed, right, and so like I don't know -- In the future, like is there a CO2 tank maybe that you can take out, and there's probably all kinds of different things, and I'm not that familiar with it, but, as I'm looking at this, I'm wondering if we're not better off just setting out the requirements, right, that the pots have to be, you know, put in a way that they're not readily, you know, deployable, and maybe they can call, you know, OLE and confirm their process, but I hear what you're saying, and you're kind of creating some pretty rigid requirements here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee and then Andy.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, I don't think we're going anywhere, and can you go back to the Alternative 1, no action? That's what we need to change, because we don't want them to have to disconnect the buoys from the gear, and isn't that the goal? So we can do Alternative 2, because that's different than Alternative 1, and we just have to justify why we're doing it, right? Okay. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Two questions, one for Sonny, and you made the comment that Alternative 2 would be recommended, because I guess it's difficult to disconnect the ropes from the traps themselves, but Alternative 3 also allows the ropes to be stored within the traps, and so that's not a problem, correct?

MR. GWIN: Correct. The buoys are tied on top of the apparatus, say like the lid, and the buoys are on top of it, tied on it, and the rope is in the trap. When you press "deploy", the top comes up with the buoy on it.

MR. STRELCHECK: So the burden would be requiring you to disconnect it, but, with Alternative 3, the way it was written, it was allowing for the rope to also be stored within the trap.

MR. GWIN: The rope would be just still in the trap, and, also, one other thing. The technology is getting better and better, and I'm sure that, soon, for enforcement, there will probably be something on their phone that they can go and plug it in and say this is your trap and this is your trap.

MR. STRELCHECK: Right, and so then the second question, and I did want to look to NOAA Law Enforcement in the room, if they had just any perspective on the differences in the alternatives, from an enforcement standpoint.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: We provided some inputs at the LE AP. The new gear that is coming onboard, we're still grabbing our hands around it, and so I can't speak to that, and I would like us to stay away from that, because it's such a constant change, with new things, and, as far as stowing the gear within the buoys, the goal is for a vessel, or an aircraft, to be able to look down and see whether that gear is stowed. All the line, for the existing buoys that have the line, and the buoy --

I think this is only calling for the buoy to be stored inside the pot, and not all of the line, and so that does not seem like an unsurmountable burden, to include the buoy, but it makes it more readily available for an aircraft, or a vessel, to see that from a distance, and that's the only point that I would add.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Monica, you have your hand up, and then Tim. All right. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I mean, really and truly, the difficulty is getting the pot ready to deploy again, and that's why they want to keep the rope and buoy on top. This allows them to store it as they retrieve it, without having to reconfigure the whole pot again because they stored the rope and buoy inside the pot, and so Alternative 2 is the preferred of the twenty guys that are doing this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Tim. I think that we're ready to act on this motion, and so, once again, the motion would select Alternative 2, the buoy may remain connected, as the preferred under Action 2. There is some direction to staff there to work with Monica, and is there any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Any abstentions?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.**

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The final thing -- We have preferred alternatives for both of the actions, and the next stage of development for this amendment is for it to be approved for public hearings, and for those hearings to be conducted, and so there's a draft motion on the board, if someone would like to make that, and, if you all approve it for public hearings, then we would like just any direction to staff as far as the format and the timing with which you would like those hearings conducted.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So, Mike, were you guys thinking that you would conduct public hearings before the September meeting?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I think our ideas were to conduct public hearing webinars, probably -- I'm guessing two, two public hearing webinars, kind of similar to what we did for scoping, and we would do those separately from the September council meeting. We would do those in between now and September.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thank you for that. All right. Is there someone on the committee that would like to make this motion? Tim.

MR. GRINER: **I would move that we approve Regulatory Amendment 36 for public hearings, to be held via webinar prior to the September council meeting.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Tim. Is there a second? Seconded by Kerry. Any additional discussion? **Is there any objection? Any abstentions?** All right. **The motion carries.** All right, and so that brings us to the end of this document, and this is Regulatory Amendment 36. Let's take another ten-minute break, and, when we come back, we're going to dive into black sea bass, Amendment 56.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so we are going to dive into Amendment 56. Mike, did you want to start with the AP recommendations, or did you want to start in the document first and then go to the AP recommendations?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess I will give a brief intro, and then pass over to Bob, and just kind of going over a review of what happened at the last meeting and kind of developments that have happened in between meetings. I do want to note, just in case you downloaded the briefing book before June 5, there was a revised version that was posted in the recent documents on June 5, ahead of the meeting, and so there was a revision from the original version that was posted on the website, and this revision just adds a couple of extra notes, because, in the time between the original briefing book posting and the time of the revised version, the council received notice from NMFS of the stock status for black sea bass, and so we just added a couple of notes with regard to that.

This amendment is responding to SEDAR 76, and that assessment noticed a depleted black sea bass stock, and, depending on the reference points that were used, that kind of affected some of the status and outlook, but we'll note that as we go along with the document here, but black sea bass is another one of the species in the South Atlantic that is experiencing problems with recruitment, and that seems to be a heavy contributor to its status right now of having lower population levels.

At the last meeting, the SSC provided recommendations for overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch levels, and those are noted in Table 1 of your decision document. As a reminder, the SSC's policy is to provide ABC, acceptable biological catch, for no more than five years beyond the terminal year of data, which is 2021 for SEDAR 76, and so that is why there are ABC recommendations through 2026, but not for further years. In the case of ABC setting, the ABC would, in years beyond 2026, would revert to that 2026 level, and so it would stay at that, for the landed ABC, at that 54,000-pound level moving forward, until it is changed by some other action.

Noting the letter that was received from the Fisheries Service on May 30, that stated that black sea bass will continue to be listed as not overfished and not subject to overfishing, with an expected update to the status determination criteria, and one of the reasons why the status was not being changed is because there was a recommendation from the assessment panel, and then that was endorsed as well by the SSC, for the status determination criteria to be revised to have MSY proxies that are based on 40 percent spawning potential ratio. Right now, I believe 30 percent SPR-based reference points are the ones that are on the books, and so the ask, within the letter, was that the council consider changing those reference points, and, after those reference points are changed, or updated, then there would potentially be an update to the status of black sea bass.

The objectives for this meeting are the AP had some discussion about potential actions for black sea bass, and there was also some information that was requested by the council, that staff worked with staff from SERO and the Science Center to try to pull together, and we'll go over that request and information, and we'll give updates in the places where updates are needed, or provide the information, where we have it, and then we're looking to have a discussion today about potential actions that would initially be considered for inclusion in Amendment 56, and we had, on the schedule, potentially to consider this document to have approval for scoping. There may be some discussion along those lines as well, and so, at this point, I will pass it over to Bob, so that he can go through the AP's recommendations related to this amendment.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, and, for the AP, this was -- This is a lot of commonsense things here, and we got into a lot of chatter on this, because everybody can understand it, and many of the things just came down to being what do you want to do, commonsense, and try to benefit one thing, and you have to assess the risk on the other, and so I'll go through this.

First, I have to apologize to Clay, and then Trish, who were sitting near me at dinner, and I said, yesterday, that our AP actually went a full meeting without discussing red snapper, and I'm sorry, and I had a brain freeze. We did, and red snapper are eating little black sea bass in the Hatteras area, and then right off this coast, and so that's how red snapper -- Red snapper did get into the conversation, and we put it right up there for you, that your red snapper may be eating the little baby sea bass.

Of course, the recommendation was to align the minimum size limits for black sea bass in both sectors, and that's that risk-benefit analysis, and so we had a lot of discussion on that. There is -- I know, from the recreational side, which I guess it would be bringing the recreational size limit down, and there's always been -- I've always heard a hotspot for private recreational anglers is sort of the complaint of why must I throw back a fish they can keep and then we don't get to keep our ACL, but then you're going to balance that off with the commercial sector, which will be concerned if you up it with things like regulatory discards, and could that come and be a factor, and so a tougher decision there, but, with all the discussion that was said, and, if you want to read more of what's involved in this, we have outlined almost a full page on page 7 of the report from our AP that is in your briefing book for that, and so consider a range of eleven to twelve inches.

The AP, as always, and everybody comes out here that the time of the open season is very important, and so there was always -- What they would want is that the consideration, when you're looking at the size limit, and then you adjust that to a bag limit, and maybe you start taking more fish, and what they wouldn't want -- They would want to find the sweet spot and not go to shorter seasons, and the seasons no shorter than they have to be, and so the size and bag limits are important, but not at the risk of reducing the seasonal length. Again, the headboats came up, that it's a very important business for them, an extremely important business for them, north of Florida.

They did mention a very commonsense thing, and the single hooks can reduce the discard rate, and it slows the catch rates, but any of us that have been out fishing in your own boat, a headboat, a charter boat, I mean, you know how, with multiple-hook rigs, there is the one fish that gets priority, while the others sit there and dangle for a little bit, until we get to them, and so a single-hook rig is a simple procedure to go with.

I did miss the one thing about there is, again, the concern about the data that you're collecting, as far as what our catch efforts are, what our effort levels are, and that continues on with this species, that, the better we get at monitoring what our catches are, the better it will be for fisheries management.

We had sort of a mixed opinion on reopening the nearshore pot area, the closed area, and since it was done to, you know, protect mammals more than anywhere else, the recreational for-hire component, and I would note even the private recreational component did say they tend to benefit from the closure, and that's just less taking of the sea bass, and I know, myself --

There's an urban legend, in my area, that the commercials come in and clear out the sea bass, and I actually experienced one myself, where, on a New Year's Day, I went out fishing with my wife, and I was able to catch a whole bunch of really nice sea bass, and we told a friend, and the next day we went back to the same area, and we didn't get a single thing, but I don't think, between 4:00 in the afternoon and 9:00 the next morning, anybody threw a pot down, but there is always that chatter out there, that, when the pots were gone, the headboats did better, and the for-hire boats did better, on the sea bass. Again, headboats in the area typically like -- That's a nice trip they can make, just going ten miles or more out, often in the cooler weather of the year.

There was -- They did bring up that, because of that issue, if you reopen these nearshore areas to the pots, could there be some different way in reopening, and, in other words, to get better access for the potters, but retain some of that ability for good fishing for the recreational and for-hire sector, and I think one of the things would be like near the ARs, and could it possibly be that there could be -- Those areas are often funded by community groups, NGOs that are related to fishing, and I know us, in North Carolina, our artificial reef program is almost entirely funded by the recreational fishing license, saltwater recreational fishing license, and so something to consider there, that they would just like a way to retain some of that nice access and greater availability of fish to that sector, the recreational side.

We also wanted to consider, as we go forward, how pot locations can be identified, and communicate to reduce gear conflicts, because a lot of people black sea bass fishing are bottom bouncing, and I guess, once you get rid of the buoys, how does anybody know where they're going to be anyway, and so that's something to put into your minds for consideration.

There was no interest in reallocation between the sectors at this time, either one, and it didn't matter where you were from, for the for-hire sector or the recreational sector or the commercial sector, and keep the way it is, and, usually when this comes up, we do have somebody who is advocating for one thing or the other, and not with respect to black sea bass. Everybody is happy to leave it status quo.

Then the final thing is, and I know that Dr. Collier has told me personally, and our AP, a number of times, that black sea bass abundance has been notably increasing north of Cape Hatteras, as our stock decreases, and so, naturally, that's confusing some of us. You know, we see, or hear, in Florida, that people are actually catching less, and I'm not hearing too much from the recreational component about issues in North Carolina with sea bass.

Over the winter, I went out and walked along some docks where headboats and some charters came in, and they were rather low on sea bass, the stock, but then you can also get confused. If you read *National Fisherman*, and you find out how they start to say, yippee, we had a 203 season in the -- I don't want to call it the Bay of Fundy, but the Gulf of Maine, and, in our recent trip to New Jersey, to meet an old friend of mine who fishes out of Cape May, he told me, quote, I have to get you up here when we start sea bass fishing, and it is right up your alley, and so apparently up there they have them, and so some of us are like sitting here going, well, can't they kind of meet and cross that, where those currents intersect at Hatteras, and so we do get confused, and it may be a hard thing to convince, you know, the public that, on a basin-wide basis, the sea bass are having trouble, and it may be localized in certain areas, and, again, due to climate change, and maybe there is an issue, and it's not as serious as we think, and so that's what we came up with for that. That's it, Mike, and I'm done. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Bob. Are there any questions for Bob? I don't see any hands. Thank you so much, Bob. We might have more questions as we move through the document. All right. We're going to go back to the decision document right now. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just to answer the question there about looking at the stock, we are aware of that, and looking into it, and we're working with the MARMAP crew. At South Carolina DNR, they're doing a genetics-based study, and they're getting samples from the south, as well as from the north, working with folks to the north, and they are going to investigate, you know, the stock identification, and update it, which I think will be a really good report, and it's just getting started, and so it will be a little ways out, but it certainly should be something we have next time we're coming around to assessing it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay.

DR. PORCH: Just in regard to that expanding distribution of the black sea bass, one of the things that the agency is trying to do is expand the video survey, and the longline survey, all the way up and down the coast, because you're exactly right. They have, you know, developing fisheries for black sea bass, you know, north in the Mid-Atlantic, and even in the New England region, and so what we want to do is be able to measure how those distributions are shifting, because this could become an allocation issue among the councils as well, and the only way to really address that is to understand what the relative distribution of the stock is across the whole coast. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, next up, we're going to go into some of the information that the council requested at the last meeting, and there's quite a bit of it in here, and so Chip is going to tag-team with me to address different parts of the council's requests. First of all, there are going to be a few items that are outstanding, and I will just go ahead and get those out of the way first.

The council requested some additional projections from the Science Center that would incorporate some different management regimes, and we've been in communication with the Science Center, and they're working on those, but this would potentially affect ABC recommendations from the SSC, and so the plan is to have those go to the SSC in August, and they'll have an August webinar meeting, where they will review these projections, and possibly give some additional feedback to the council, some additional input on, if the council were to adopt some of these alternative management regimes, this would be a potential ABC associated with that.

If you recall, in several of our other amendments, the Science Center has made the comment where the council sets the ABC and then goes through changing a few of the different management regulations, the size limit, or the trip limit, or something like that, and the Science Center has noted that those projections for ABC were based on a management regime that did not include those management changes.

Well, right now, we're trying to kind of do the reverse of that. We're trying to get the projections that include the management changes, but we would note that those ABCs would be kind of in a package sort of thing, and so, for example, an ABC could be recommended, that this ABC only applies if the council were to adopt an eleven-inch size limit for both sectors, something like that,

and so it would be almost a conditional ABC type of deal, and that's what is setting up right here for potential consideration in this amendment, and so I just wanted to note that that's being worked on right now, and that will go to the SSC, and you will see the results of that planned for the September meeting.

Next, there was a request for additional information on the SEFHIER program, and that's something that was discussed earlier in the meeting, and so I won't be diving into that with this amendment, but I just wanted to note that that was part of the request, and that discussion occurred earlier in this meeting.

The next piece of information was looking at the discard mortality, and seeing how that was applied, if depth was considered within the discard mortality rates that were applied in the assessment, and so we got information here on the studies by Rudershausen et al. that were used to develop the discard mortalities that were applied in both SEDAR 56 and SEDAR 76, as well as some of the depths that were associated with those studies.

There was a note of Collins et al., and that study sampled black sea bass in deeper waters and observed decrease survival for fish that were caught in those deeper waters, and so there seems to be some type of -- The drop-off of deeper waters, and decreased survival, seems to happen somewhere between the 115-foot and the 141-foot depth range, but, within 115 feet, there doesn't seem to be a huge difference in the survival related to catch and release for handline gear. That's what was noted, but there wasn't any explicit implementation of a discard mortality rate by depth that was applied in the assessment, but that provides some of the context with which those estimates were developed, and I will pause here, and switch over to Chip to go through the next few sections of the data that were gathered.

DR. COLLIER: All right, and so Table 1 here is recreational catches, focusing on the MRIP catches, and this does not include the headboat catches yet. That will be updated to provide that information later, but MRIP is very nice for developing these types of analyses, because they do have catches designated to inland, in the ocean less than three miles, and then in the ocean greater than three miles.

We have it separated out into landings, the number of releases, as well as the overall catch number, and, for the most part, in the ocean, you can kind of see a downward trend from 2019, all the way through 2023 in the landings number, and then you also see it in the releases number, where 2023 was typically one of the lower values. Inland values, interestingly, was going up over the time period for landings. If you look at in 2019, it was only around 5,000 fish, and then, in 2023, it was 97,000 fish.

For the most part, if you're looking at overall catch numbers, the ocean tended to have the highest level of catch, followed closely by inland, and, in fact, some years, such as 2022, inland did exceed the overall catch number from the ocean. If there is any questions about this table, before we jump into some SAV stuff, we can -- Tom has his hand up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Chair. I'm really struggling on the releases from 2021 to 2022. You know, I think I raised this at the last meeting, and I just -- That's a big jump, right, particularly

when we're seeing a loss in recruitment. Now, I do want everyone here to understand, and I don't think we have necessarily captured it previously, that these fish are being caught by people at jetties and piers and bridges and the very easiest, most accessible places, and I'm wondering if we weren't capturing them beforehand or what really changed, and, again, I'm really struggling to grasp that huge release number, but I do want people to understand that, at least where we are in North Carolina, they are very, very prolifically caught by people who are out there, the worm soakers, you know, and I call them bottom raiders, and these are people who are just fishing.

You know, we've lost of our inshore fish, like croakers and spots and weakfish, and they're not really available, and so people just are going to catch what they can catch, and I think black sea bass being accessible have made that kind of -- What would you call it? Fill in that gap.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Tom, I recall the shore-based discussion at the last meeting, being a big part of that, and I actually had a question for the AP, if they had any discussion about gear, and the question of j-hooks versus circle hooks, for shore-based fishing, because that seemed to be, you know, little hooks, shore-based, small fish, and it seemed like -- My recollection was there is probably a pretty high mortality rate in that fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: On that note, I think that's important. I mean, you know, my personal experience with sea bass is that they're not a great circle hook fish. They tend to gulp things, and ingest them, but particularly what we're talking about, in terms of like the worm-soaking crowd, is you're going to see a lot of small j-hooks, the kinds with lots of barbs on them, barbs on the back to retain your piece of shrimp, and barbs on the front, and so I imagine that, just anecdotally, you're probably going to see a much higher mortality regarding releases.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I'm like Tom, and I'm really struggling with these numbers. I mean, these are big numbers, and, if there's truly this many small fish in the inland waters, I don't understand where the disconnect is with the recruitment, because, if I look at all these releases -- I mean, the releases have got to be from undersized fish, for the most part, and so why do we think we have a recruitment problem? I just can't -- I'm having a hard time getting my arms around that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Well, a lot of the recruitment problem is being observed in the fishery-independent survey, and that's done more on the offshore side of things, and so I don't know where the bottleneck is for this population, but maybe it's as they migrate from the inshore population to the offshore population, and, you know, black sea bass do have a -- They do shift from the inshore side to going to offshore habitats, and maybe there's something that's occurring in there. We don't have the information, and maybe there is increased effort on the recreational side, where shore-based is becoming more popular. I don't know, but those are things that we probably should investigate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim, to that?

MR. GRINER: Yes, to that point, and I think you're exactly right, and I think there is a bottleneck, but we're hanging our hat and saying we have a recruitment problem, but we really don't have the information to know that we have a recruitment problem, and we just think we have a disconnect, but I don't necessarily believe that we can sit here and definitively say that it's a recruitment issue. We definitely have a bottleneck, or we definitely have something going on, but I don't know that, simply from offshore independent surveys, we can say it's purely recruitment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So I just wanted to point out that, when we talk about recruitment, it's not necessarily in production of young, but it's production of young, and then those young getting to a point where they're caught by the fishery, and that whole process is recruitment, and so, if they're not getting into the size range of the fishery, then that is -- That is the place where we think the recruitment problem is happening, and it may not be production of young fish, and it may be in the development of juvenile fish to get into the size that the fishery would catch.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Well, we can see, by these numbers, that there is juvenile fish, and so they are getting into there as juvenile fish, because you're releasing them offshore and inshore, greater than three miles, and less than three miles, and so they are getting there, and they are not just, you know, brand-new fish, and they are fish that are moving through their life stages.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to go to Judy and then back to you, Tom. Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you. I was talking to Spud, and these numbers are for all four states, correct, on the shore, and there is no way that that may fish, even -- I don't know exactly -- We were trying to figure out exactly what Georgia shore, what they caught on the shoreline, but, I mean, I've been fishing all my life, and, you know, we don't catch that many black sea bass inshore, or off the piers, in our area, and so I'm not sure where they're getting all these numbers from, and I just feel like they might be inflated, but I'm not sure why.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thank you. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: So, to Judy's point, I agree with that. It would be helpful to see like where these are coming from, if they're, you know, biased towards one region, or one state, and I would be curious to see what the PSEs are on these numbers, and, also, like thinking about our discussion with like Spanish mackerel, bluefish, the shore-based MRIP mode, you know, we've had some concerns about that with some of these other species, and I'm wondering there, but, as an estuarine-dependent species, right, where we are looking -- You know, Chip mentioned the potential bottleneck between recruitment into the ocean stock, and, if there is some truth here, we may have a really big problem, and we need to -- I don't know what we would do about it, and so, you know, I just need to raise that point, that, if this really is -- If this really could be an issue for recruitment into the ocean stock, we'll have to address it somehow.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Okay. We were just looking, and, in 2021, in Georgia, 47,387 black sea bass were caught from the shore. That's impossible. I mean, there isn't that many places that they could go catch. I mean, I'm talking about just Georgia, because I'm familiar with Georgia, and this is just -- These numbers are just so inflated, for one reason or another, but that just gives me one idea of what we're up against.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish and then John Carmichael.

MS. MURPHEY: So, John or Mike can maybe answer this better, but isn't there -- Hasn't there been an issue with MRIP combining the shore into -- What was it, and it used to be separated by piers, jetties, shoreline, and now they've combined them all, and could that actually be -- That may come into play with these numbers as well, and then you tack on the MRIP study, and, I mean, maybe there's just some statistical stuff going on with these numbers, just to throw that discussion out too.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes. John Carmichael.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, on this point, amongst the many changes to the MRIP program recently, one of the big changes was the shift in the effort survey to what's called the Fishing Effort Survey from the way they used to do it, the mail survey, or, I mean, the phone survey, and now they do the effort survey, and one of the things, when that first came out, and, I don't know, and it was a number of years ago, but one of the concerns that was raised at this council, and most of the other councils, and ASMFC, was with an apparent and surprising spike in the shore mode estimates across-the-board in the catches.

It's something we talked about in Spanish mackerel, where MRIP suggests that the Spanish mackerel fishery shifted from a boat fishery to largely a shore-mode fishery, and then MRIP recently did their -- They were doing just some regular evaluations that they do, and they realized some potential bias from the ordering of questions, and so that's why they have the study that's underway right now, where they are looking at potential bias in the estimates, and they're doing a comparison of how they've asked the questions traditionally, and a new way of answering the questions, and that's underway this year, because they're concerned about this bias, and a lot of us think, from what we've seen in the estimates, that a lot of that bias is being expressed in the shore mode.

Doug made strong points along the same lines about Georgia when we first got these estimates, and so, in 2025, they will do the analysis, and, by early 2026, we should have updated estimates, if updated estimates are necessary, but it does seem that there is a potential issue, but, then again, we're bound, under this process that we work within, that those are considered to be BSIA, and they went into the assessment as the best information available at the time of the assessment, and we've been through it, and so, you know, we may have some concerns about these numbers, but, at this point, those are, you know, the numbers that we have, and the SSC has based its recommendations on, and, you know, there is --

I'm not sure there's a whole lot the council can do about them at this point, other than perhaps just, you know, refuse to make any changes, but that, as we often know, triggers a lot of concerns from the far corner of the table, with the agency's position and the best science and the need to act and

the legal requirements under Magnuson, et cetera, but, you know, what we do know now is that we'll know more about these numbers, and hopefully shed some light on whether or not the bias that a lot of people think is occurring is, you know, as severe as we think, and we just have to let that play out, really.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, John. Andy and then Clay and then Judy.

DR. PORCH: Just a couple of points here, but the main one is our most reliable information is that video survey, and so the population is clearly going down. Yes, the assessment is incorporating a lot of information, and it infers that part of the cause of that is declining recruitment, but it is possible that there is other causes, whether it's fractions of the population leaving north or fishing pressure even greater than the assessment estimates, but the bottom line is the stock is declining, and there is no question about that.

Yes, there could be fairly high PSEs associated with these release numbers, and they are also self-reported, and so I wouldn't interpret that as necessarily disagreeing with the assessment. The fact that those numbers are going up could be a shift in effort, more effort in inshore areas, where the small fish are, but, again, I just want to circle back that, any way you slice it, the population is going down.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Clay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I would want to look at a longer time series, right, because the recruitment falloff has been occurring for a decade or more, right, and I did pull up the PSEs for both landings and releases, and, as would expect, for inland landings, the PSEs are very high, and, as you kind of work offshore, they get better, because you're catching more of, obviously, the legal-sized black sea bass.

For releases, they're actually fairly good inshore, but, as Clay pointed out, and what John talked about, right, we are embarking -- Or we're in the middle of this pilot study, and so I guess one of the questions I had, for Chip or John, is, with the projection requests, did we make any projection requests that look at kind of the sensitivity of the assessment to changes in discards, based on kind of that average estimate of, you know, bias that we think might be occurring in the FES survey?

DR. COLLIER: I will have to check, but I thought that might have been a sensitivity in the stock assessment. I cannot remember though.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I mention that because, you know, we are going to be working on this for some time, and the pilot study results will emerge, but that might give us at least some general bounds, in terms of the sensitivity of the assessment and what management approaches would be considered based on that range.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: I was just looking at the other numbers, and, like I said, in 2021, it was 47,387, and then it went to 3,270, and this is shoreline, and then it went to, in 2023, zero. I just don't know how -- I do understand that it is falling, and decreasing, but I don't know how it could be decreasing that much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Other comments, or questions, on this table that we have before us? Chip, I'm going to pass it back to you.

DR. COLLIER: All right. I don't know if this next topic will be as controversial, but the council had asked about the use of black sea bass -- Their use of subaquatic vegetation as potential habitat, because there might be declining trends in SAV along the South Atlantic coast, and so I did some diving into the literature for this, looking at papers from the South Atlantic region, the Mid-Atlantic region, and as well as in the Gulf.

In the Mid-Atlantic, and in the South Atlantic, they kind of indicated that black sea bass are primarily associated with oyster reefs, piers, and wrecks, and jetties as well, with some presence in seagrass, or in areas where seagrass was present, and not necessarily in the seagrass habitat, but, for the most part, they just indicated that black sea bass were rare in trawl samples associated with some of these, and they felt like they were rare in the seagrass samples, and they were likely transient, maybe going in there to feed or something along those lines.

I do want to point out, in the Gulf of Mexico, they were documented to use seagrass habitats as potentially nursery habitats. In some of this discussion that you guys were having about black sea bass in the northern region, where they're genetically different from our black sea bass in the southern region, there's actually a paper that considers the Gulf of Mexico black sea bass as a subspecies, and so it's totally different over there, and so behaviors might be very different.

In talking to some of the people that deal with black sea bass in the Gulf, they rarely use artificial reefs, and I don't know if anybody on the South Atlantic would argue that one. I think black sea bass use artificial reefs quite a bit, and so there might be some behavioral differences, with that subspecies in the Gulf of Mexico, that is driving these differences, and so I just noted that they do use seagrass in the Gulf of Mexico. They use it a little bit in the South Atlantic, it appears, but I need to get up with some of the Florida folks, to look at some of their estuarine samples, in order to do that, and I just did not have time to dive into all the data that is likely available.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Chip, for looking into that, and I think that was one of my little things, and I think me and Laurilee kind of jumped on that one, just because we're -- You know, we're habitat, but I appreciate you looking at that, and, you know, after reading that, I'm like, yeah, that's probably not -- Because one of my thoughts was that would this be having something to do with recruitment, but I think it doesn't, and especially -- Because I was thinking Georgia and South Carolina do not have SAV, but they've got huge oyster areas, and so that kind of just shot my theory that maybe, you know, lack of that specific habitat had an impact, but I guess not, and so thank you for looking at that though.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I am just having some recollections of similar discussions, I think around gag grouper in Florida, and looking at connectivity and transitional habitat, from the inshore to offshore, and so I don't know if we've looked into that, but it seems like we might be needing to investigate that a little bit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions on this one? I don't see any additional hands. Back to you, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: All right. We were also asked to look at cooccurring species on trips that caught black sea bass, and I apologize for not writing this in the details, but this first graph is for the commercial fishery. It was developed during SEDAR 25, trying to develop an index of abundance for black sea bass, and what they used is this process called Stevens and McCall, and it's a process of subsetting all the trips that might be available to potentially trips that are likely to catch black sea bass.

In looking at Figure 1, and this comes directly from that SEDAR assessment, and I just copied it over, and, if you're looking at let's say white grunt here, and you see a large blue line going to the right, that means that there's a strong positive association with black sea bass. The second line down, you will see black grouper, and you might say it's highly unlikely that this is the case, that black sea bass and black grouper are strongly associated together, just because black grouper tend to be in south Florida, and black sea bass are rarely in south Florida.

The reason that this might be the case is because of misreporting. Black grouper and gag grouper are often labeled -- Gag grouper are often labeled as black grouper, by many of the fish houses, and so that might be the cause of this issue here, and then, looking at the other ones, grunts, gag grouper, vermilion snapper, red snapper, red porgy, and those all seem to match very well with at least my perception of what's been observed with the commercial fishery and the species that are commonly caught with it.

Going further down, if you look at something like let's say Spanish mackerel, or yellowtail snapper, you will see a strong blue line going to the left. What that is indicating is they are rarely caught together, and so yellowtail snapper are rarely caught with black sea bass. Blue runner are rarely caught with black sea bass, and so, looking at these, these are a lot of the south Florida species, and that's why I pointed out that black grouper -- That might be a mislabeling issue, and this is kind of confirming that a little bit more with some of the south Florida species, and you're highly unlikely to have black sea bass in those areas. Any questions on the commercial data, before I jump over into the recreational data?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: You mentioned because of fish houses, and so I'm just curious, if you know off the top of your head, and did the issue with misidentification of black and gag -- Is it coming from more from, you know, OLE encounters, where people are saying I thought this was a black grouper, but it's really a gag, or is this coming from the fish houses, and the reason I ask that is because -- Not where I'm from, but in other places, people refer to gags as blackbellies, and so I'm wondering if this is just, you know, a terminology issue, and not really that they think it's a black grouper, but they call it a blackbelly, and somebody in fish house, that doesn't fish, but just processes stuff, you know, deems it so, and so I'm just curious about that.

DR. COLLIER: I know, in all my years of fish house sampling, and then as a fish house worker, it was just labeled as black grouper, and it wasn't an identification issue. There's no price

difference between them, and so there was no cost to the fish house of potentially calling them one species or the other, and that's one of the reasons that they did it.

If you were to label it into multiple boxes, or different things like that, it does become an expense to the fish house, and it can be somewhat expensive, especially those wooden crates, and they're definitely not free, and so they wanted to minimize the cost, and fishermen are also looking for ways -- And dealers are looking for ways to cut time, and labeling them as just one species cuts time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Chip, I was interested to know a little bit more about the relationship with the Spanish mackerel, because it looks like that's -- That's way down at the bottom, yet, when you look at the releases, and the catch, that they're exactly where all the Spanish mackerel are, and so it's kind of -- I just need a little bit further explanation of why those two are showing that they're disjointed, but all the catches are in the exact same area.

DR. COLLIER: The previous -- The landings that you were looking at previously, that was for the recreational sector. This is for the commercial sector, the vertical line, and so commercial Spanish mackerel fishermen, I would imagine, would be very good at avoiding black sea bass, given that they're going to be a trolling-style fishing, or something along those lines, or directly targeting Spanish mackerel, whereas black sea bass -- You're going to be fishing very different, and you're going to be likely either anchored up, or staying at a spot, and so it's just a different fishing style for the commercial fishery.

MR. GRINER: So this relationship wouldn't necessarily -- It would be the exact opposite then, possibly, for the recreational sector.

DR. COLLIER: We'll be getting into the recreational sector in just a little bit.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I apologize for digging into this too much, but it is interesting. Black sea bass are very interesting. Now we're going to pop around to Appendix A, and this is -- I believe it starts on -- It's saying page 2 of 20, but I know we're well beyond that, but, if you go into Appendix A, you will see Table A-1, and I just wanted to start off by describing the species that are most commonly targeted for vessel-based trips, and the way I estimated vessel-based trips was I aggregated the catch at the party code, and so, if people are familiar with the MRIP database, that's an identifier to say this group of people is in -- Is associated with a single individual.

I was trying to do this because I'm trying to look at vessel trips, and the reason for that is, if you're looking at cooccurring species, if somebody caught a black sea bass on the trip, you want to know everybody on that trip that could possibly have caught a black sea bass, right, and it's not just, let's say, if there's a low abundance of black sea bass in the region, if they caught one, everybody could have caught one, and so that's why I was going at the vessel-based level, as opposed to the individual-angler level, and that's the typical way that you see the MRIP data, and so this is aggregated at the vessel trip.

The Table A1 is looking at vessel trips and the number-one species caught, and, when I'm saying caught here, I mean landed and discarded, and so, as you might expect, the top-two species, spotted seatrout and red drum, are very common. The highest-ranked in the inland sector is going to be gray snapper, and that's commonly caught down off of Florida. Moving over into the less than three miles, we have the kingfish genus, followed by bluefish, Atlantic croaker, Florida pompano, and then, like Tim was saying, Spanish mackerel.

Greater than three miles, we definitely see a shift here, where we're now targeting some of these snapper grouper species, where we see dolphin, where we see red snapper, dolphin, black sea bass, and king mackerel. It's interesting that three different FMPs are represented there in the top five, and then, if you go to total trips, you're seeing a slightly different one, and it's more of an amalgamation of all three areas, and so you're seeing kingfish pop out as number one. Red drum, although it was very popular inland, it ranks number five on the total trips, just because it's not as common further offshore, as well as other factors.

Now we're going to move into species that were caught when black sea bass was reported on the trip, and so, like Tom was mentioning, sometimes you catch black sea bass when you might be using some of the small hooks, and, if you're looking at the species that are caught here, these are generally fish with a pretty small mouth, and you might be fishing with something like shrimp on your hook, and the one exception there is oyster toadfish, and they have a pretty big mouth and are willing to eat pretty much anything.

We also have -- If you move over to the column to the left, less than three miles, pinfish still stays very prevalent, as the number-one fish, and a lot of the same between the two, with the exception of bluefish being included in there, and pigfish dropping out. Greater than three miles, you're looking at a strong association between red snapper, gray triggerfish, vermilion snapper, and tomtate, all what you would expect black sea bass to be associated with.

Now, that was catching black sea bass by number of trips, and now thinking about how often does it occur on each trip, and so the number of trips for red drum was very different than let's say the number of trips catching something like maybe a black drum, and so the number of trips is going to be different, and so maybe the percent provides a different piece of information, and so, with this, I just did the top fifteen.

When you catch a black sea bass, what is the frequency of trips that are likely to have -- Or that were observed to have another species on it, and so, in inland areas, when you caught black sea bass, it was also common that cobia were caught, weakfish, pigfish, and gag grouper, and then, if you look further down, you'll see another species in the South Atlantic fishery management plan for snapper grouper, which was Atlantic spadefish.

In less than three miles, you're starting to see some of those snapper grouper species pop up, where we have vermilion snapper ranked number one as commonly associated with black sea bass, followed by gag, almaco jack, and then you see white grunt and gray triggerfish down there in the top fifteen. In greater than three miles, we're starting to see a little bit different than what we saw before, as far as number of trips reporting, and spottail pinfish are closely associated with black sea bass on most of the trips, and then you're also seeing inshore lizardfish and toadfish.

Just to give you an idea of the association between these species, and I didn't want to put all these numbers in there, but you can look at Table 4 and begin to gather some of the information on this, and so we have the percent of trips that caught black sea bass, as well as the other species, and so, in the inland waters, you don't have a strong association with black sea bass and really many other species.

As you get to the ocean, the top four species were associated with black sea bass on greater than 50 percent of the trips, and so that's a pretty strong association, and then, as you work your way down, you can see the total number of species that are caught with black sea bass. 154 species have been reported caught with black sea bass from 2019 to 2023, and so it is a lot. It's hard to narrow down, and that's why you would use something like Stevens and McCall to limit the number of trips to analyze some of the data.

Then another way to look at this, and some people are glass-half-full, and some people are glass-half-empty, and let's look at the glass half empty, and what species aren't associated with black sea bass, and so, once again, if you look at the inland part, you're going to see a lot of either inland species or south Florida species. As you get to less than three miles, I would say it still includes a lot of south Florida species, but you're also starting to get into some of the pelagic species, where we have wahoo and dolphin, and then, greater than three miles, not only do you have some of the pelagic species, some of the south Florida species, but you also have some of the deepwater species, and blackbelly rosefish is one that I'm thinking of.

With that, those are all the associations, or the cooccurring species, that I had for the recreational side of things, and I hopefully didn't put you to sleep, or bore you, but, if you have any questions, please let me know.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that, Chip. Going back to Table A4, I just want to make sure that I understand what I'm looking at here. The number of species that are caught along with -- That includes the black sea bass, greater than 50 percent were zero?

DR. COLLIER: What's that saying is that there is no species that had over 50 percent of the times that they were reporting catching a species, and let's say -- Shadow shark is the one that we always use, right, and let's say there were ten trips with shadow shark, and 50 percent of the trips caught no black sea bass, and then 50 percent caught black sea bass, and there would have been a one in that, but, if they only caught -- On two of the trips, if they only -- Or only two of the trips that had shadow shark caught black sea bass, they would end up in that 20 percent category.

MR. GRINER: So then, if you look at inland waters, and, if you go back and you look at the fish that was caught the most in the inland waters with the black sea bass, then I don't see how you could have a zero there, because, at least 50 percent of the time, you would suspect that you would have caught the most prevalent cooccurring species, especially when you looked at those types of -- When you said we released 3.5 million, and so I'm having a hard time understanding why there would be zero cooccurrence with the most prevalent inshore species where they were all together on inland waters. Does that make sense?

DR. COLLIER: So, if somebody is fishing for a -- So you're saying why isn't spotted seatrout in -- So, if you're targeting spotted seatrout, it is -- I will let Tom talk about this, and he knows how to fish for spotted seatrout much better than I do, but --

MR. CARMICHAEL: If I'm right, what your thing would be saying, with the 50 percent, is that less than 50 percent of the trips that caught a spotted seatrout also caught a black sea bass, and is that correct?

DR. COLLIER: That's correct.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Right, and I think some of the thing is you're seeing the different regionality, because you've got hardhead catfish and like gray snapper coming in, that are kind of Florida species, and so it's hard for any one of these species to rise to being caught 50 percent of the time with black sea bass, and it's just a matter of the distribution of the species and what people are bringing in, and the regional variation in the stuff they're catching when they're bottom-hook-rigging with black sea bass being caught inshore.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me go to Mike first, and then we'll come back over here.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Another way that you can kind of think about that A4 is, in these different areas, you can think about how effective fishermen are at targeting those prominent species, and so, in the inland area, a fisherman will be very effective at targeting spotted seatrout and not having black sea bass bycatch mixed in with their spotted seatrout, whereas, in the offshore areas, if they're, you know, catching some other species, and maybe they're not necessarily targeting black sea bass, and they're trying to catch, you know, gag, or something like that, then you might have more black sea bass mixed in, and that's where you would get more of the black sea bass bycatch, and that might be another way to interpret that type of table.

DR. COLLIER: Just to support what Mike is saying there, at least in my mind, when you are spotted seatrout fishing, or red drum fishing, you know, you are -- Sometimes you're sight casting, but you definitely have specialized gear to go after those species. When you're going after something like pinfish, Atlantic croaker, pigfish, kingfish, that is more of a generalist fishing. You've got a two-hook rig out there, and you've got a little bit of shrimp on the line, and you're hoping to catch what's there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim and then Tom.

MR. GRINER: But then wouldn't you see those pinfish, and all those croakers, and those other little fish -- While you were worm soaking, wouldn't you see them in that greater than 50 percent? Would it not be zero?

DR. COLLIER: Well, so don't get wrapped up on the 50 percent. If you're out there -- Black sea bass just might not be that common in the areas where they're fishing and catching these other species, and so black sea bass are limited in their distribution of estuarine waters, or inland waters, right, and we just talked about that they're primarily around structure, oyster reefs and different things like that, whereas some of these other species might be distributed throughout.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom and then Andy.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. My comment is changing by the second, and so Table A1 -- Those are just trips, the most popular species. Okay, and that really has nothing to do with -- All right. Just to be clear, we talked about spotted seatrout, and, you know, particularly in my area, when spotted seatrout trips peak is in the fall, when they're concentrated, and where are they concentrated? At jetties, docks, piers, bridges, and guess what you're also going to catch when you're throwing jigs or using live shrimp? Black sea bass.

We go down to Table A2, and this is when we catch -- When we see these species that are going to cooccur on those trips, and that makes a lot of sense to me. The inland, that's work soakers. That's what you're going to catch, but, when we go down to Table A3, that's why I'm starting to get kind of confused, right, and there's just some stuff in here that doesn't make sense, and is this what people are saying they're targeting, and not necessarily what they're catching, but, for like cobia to be number one -- I mean, that's not a -- That's a fish that people fish for a lot, but do not catch many of, and I'm sure someone is going to yell at me for saying that, but, just to be clear, I mean, they're a big game species, and you're going to -- You have a higher failure rate, right? Go ahead, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and so you can either look at -- This is where I kind of struggled with trying to do this analysis, trying to get the best information to you all, and so the first one is just overall occurrence, and so how often it happens. The other one is how frequently it happens, and so you're absolutely right that, for cobia, it's very strange that it's going to be around 40 percent of the trips that caught cobia also reported catching black sea bass, and it seems odd to me. That is, once again, a highly-specialized fishery, and so I'm not certain why it would happen, but that's what the numbers are saying.

MR. ROLLER: But, on that same note, we look at ocean under three miles, and I am really curious as to what part of our coast that we catch a lot of vermilion snapper in within three miles, and that's a rarity, to me. I also find it really interesting to see Atlantic bonito on that list, being that, you know, that's a very relevant fishery for southeastern North Carolina, but not really north of Cape Lookout, and not really in South Carolina, Georgia, or Florida in any capacity, and so I'm seeing a lot of that right there, and that's really got me sort of like -- I'm struggling a little bit, right, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're going to go to Amy first, to respond to that, and then to Andy.

MS. DUKES: Actually, the Atlantic bonito is a huge fishery in South Carolina.

MR. ROLLER: Then we need to talk.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just a perspective here, and I feel like we're getting really bogged down, and really in the weeds, and, although Chip, and others, have put together some interesting information, I really feel like we need to now quickly turn to spending some time on the options for this amendment, and so I offer that as a suggestion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I was going to try to end this discussion, and us take a lunchbreak, but do any people have other questions about this fun discussion about cooccurring species and what's happening in each region? I can't even imagine the PSEs, as you broke it out, but anything else on that specific component, before we take a lunchbreak? All right. Okay. Let's take a lunchbreak, and we will come back at 1:30. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: I appreciate the good discussion that we had before lunch, but we're going to continue moving through the document, and Chip is going to start talking to us about commercial data by gear and time of year, which was another one of the questions that we asked about.

DR. COLLIER: For the commercial data, I do want to point out that it's data from 2018 to 2022. The recreational is through 2023, and so it is a slightly different dataset, but, for the most part, we're trying to make them as similar as possible, but, looking at the commercial data, if you look at all other gear, and so all other gear includes hook-and-line, and then we also have our pot and traps, and, in both of these, you can see a pretty consistent decline in the commercial catch of black sea bass over this five-year time period.

I did go back to see when the ACLs were changing and how the commercial fishery was doing relative to their ACL. In 2018, I believe they were at 60 percent of their ACL. In no other year were they greater than 30 percent of the ACL. Even though there was a substantial drop in the ACL in this time period, they still weren't -- The commercial fishery was still not getting close to the ACL, indicating, once again, that there is likely a problem in the fishery.

Continuing down, there was discussion on the seasonal component of when the commercial black sea bass fishery occurs. If you look at all other gear, it's not all that surprising that, for a species that is probably more of a temperate species that's managed by the council, the catch rates are higher during the cooler months, as would be expected. You do see a little bit of an outlier for the pots and traps that occurs in May and June. One of the reasons for that outlier might be the fact that that's when black sea bass pot fishermen are able to get back into their historic areas for fishing, and they're able to go in those areas and set their pots, and so that might be one of the reasons that you're seeing a spike during the warmer months, but, for the most part, the highest catches are January and February for black sea bass and pots and traps. Any questions on the commercial data?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sonny, go ahead.

MR. GWIN: Was there any fluctuation in participants in the pot fishery?

DR. COLLIER: As far as regulations to keep people in or out, there were no changes in that. I did not look at the number of participants that were actually involved in it, and I can dig down into it a little bit further, but I feel like, if the fishermen were able to go out and have a successful trip for black sea bass, they would have done it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions?

DR. COLLIER: All right. Going into potential interactions between black sea bass and red snapper, we have -- FWC has developed an Ecopath/Ecosim model. It's been presented to the council and the SSC. I believe when it was last presented to this council was December of 2021.

Right now, we're working on a different version of it that is actually looking at spatial distribution of black sea bass, but this one actually looked at the impacts of high red snapper abundance on basically the ecosystem in the South Atlantic region, and so it starts off -- This Ecopath/Ecosim model starts off with basically analyzing the diet, and maybe competition between species, and so what we have here is the prey overlap for age-zero, age-one to three, and age-four-plus red snapper. You can see there is some prey overlap between red snapper and black sea bass, age-zero red snapper and black sea bass, and it's also age-one -- Or age-four-plus, there was some overlap with black sea bass.

Looking on mixed trophic effects, what that's doing is basically saying what happens in the food web, if there is competition between red snapper and black sea bass, and you can see that black sea bass doesn't do well when there is competition between -- Or it is expected to do worse when there is high competition between black sea bass and red snapper, but this study indicated that the impacts weren't very large for any of the species.

Sliding on down to the next figure, which is Figure 4 in the presentation, there was a series of sensitivities that were tested to see how the different abundance, and maybe prey of red snapper, changed and how that would impact different populations, and, luckily, we were -- They had looked into potential impacts of red snapper on black sea bass, and so, one of them, the first one up there, was high catch level of the prey, and so let's say that black sea bass was a very important prey item for red snapper. We also -- We wanted to start off by driving the black sea bass population down to very low levels and see the impact on the overall biomass due to red snapper, and, from that, you can see there is very minimal change, less than a 1 percent change, in the black sea bass biomass, due to changes in the red snapper population.

There was a change in the diet composition of red snapper on black sea bass, increasing the diet of red snapper to 25 percent being black sea bass, and that had less than 2 percent change on the overall biomass of black sea bass. There was also different weightings of the diet information that went into this model. We had -- There was information borrowed from several sources, just to make it as robust as possible, and so some of the information was coming from the Gulf of Mexico, and some of the information was coming from the South Atlantic region.

As we weighted it different ways, there was very minimal impact on black sea bass by changing the diets of red snapper, and then, finally, looking at the vulnerabilities of red snapper prey to predation, and so basically looking at doubling the vulnerability of red snapper prey, making them easier for red snapper to find, even if they were at low abundance, and this too had very minimal impact on black sea bass abundance, and so all these findings are indicating that there is very minimal impact of red snapper on the black sea bass biomass.

I will say that there is ongoing surveys looking at the diet of red snapper nowadays, with more red snapper being in the South Atlantic, and so that information could be plugged in in the future, but it's not available right now. With that, any questions on the ecosystem-based management side of things for this, looking at the results of the Ecopath with Ecosim model?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't see any hands. Okay. People are nodding their heads that no, they don't have any questions. Okay.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so I'm tagging back in to finish out the requested information. Another piece of information that you all requested was information on angler metrics of a successful black sea bass fishery, and so, to gather this information, we looked at comments from recreational fishermen that serve on the Snapper Grouper AP. These comments came from the 2022 black sea bass fishery performance report and as well as the March 2024 AP meeting report, and so some of the main comments that came out is one of these was the tendency, and the requirement of management, to change annual catch limits in response to stock assessments.

The AP had recommended, and I believe this was in the FPR, that they would hope a successful fishery would have more stable management, and better catch monitoring, to limit the large changes in the ACLs. One of the things that was noted at that time was, in the previous black sea bass assessment, and I believe it was 2018, there was a positive outlook on the fishery, and the ACL was increased at that time, in response to that, and the AP, the recreational fishermen on the AP, were saying that more of a stable approach, where you don't jump up the ACL in response to a positive stock assessment, and you don't drive the ACL down as much in response to a not-so-positive stock assessment, would be, I guess, in their opinion, a better outlook for the fishery.

The AP also noted the current recreational size limit of thirteen inches, noting that it has created difficulties for that sector, and there was some support for reducing the minimum size limit at the time of the FPR, and this was at the beginning of the stock assessment, but there was a lot of concern about, if the size limit were to be reduced, how that would affect the open season, and there was a strong preference for keeping the recreational season open as long as possible, trying to find a good balance between the season and being able to retain fish based on the size limit.

Then, finally, the AP also recommended evaluation of the circle hook requirements, efficacy in reducing release mortality of black sea bass, basically getting some information on, now that the circle hook requirement has been in place for quite some time, how has that helped the release mortality for black sea bass and other snapper grouper species, and so those were the comments related to angler metrics for success, and I think this might be the last piece of information that you asked for.

You all asked for information about the potential of a phase-in approach, based on the revisions to the ABC Control Rule that went in recently, and I think earlier this year was when they were implemented, and so what you have in this phase-in approach, from the ABC Control Rule, is you have requirements based on whichever schedule you would choose, and you can choose up to a three-year schedule for a phase-in, and these are the requirements in the interim years. Year-one, for example, in the three-year schedule, the modified ABC may not exceed the OFL, and so, in that case, you would be able to set the ABC up to the OFL.

Just to kind of summarize how this would play out, or could play, for black sea bass, if you took this approach, Table 5 here shows what you would have in place, and so, in 2025, you have the recommended landed OFL, the ABC recommendation, and, I guess, before I dive all the way through the table, this is based on current SSC recommendations. If the SSC comes back in September and provides different ABC recommendations, then these numbers could change, based on whatever provisions come with those recommendations, but, based on what is available right

now, you have -- In 2025, there is an OFL of 39,000 pounds. There is an ABC recommendation of 35,000 pounds.

Based on the three-year schedule, the maximum that you could have in 2025, if you went with a phase-in approach, is to have your ABC match the new OFL, which would be that 39,000 pounds. The second year of a three-year approach, 2026, the OFL is 68,000 pounds, and the ABC is 54,000 pounds, and you're basically splitting the difference between those two levels, and so your phased-in approach would result in a 61,000-pound ABC.

For 2027, that depends on what you choose as far as your schedule. One of the notes, as far as this, is that we only have ABC recommendations that go through 2026, and so, past 2026, the ABC would be retained at that 54,000-pound level, and so it could be 54,000 pounds, if that were the approach that you all wanted to go with, or, if you went with a two-year schedule, then it would be dependent on a revised projection. That revised projection would take into account the harvest that would be projected in 2025 and 2026, and then you would get a new ABC level in 2027.

One thing that -- One potential difficulty in applying that approach is that, if there are revised projections, how the SSC policy on setting ABCs beyond five years would apply in that case, and there may need to be some additional discussion from the council, and from the SSC, on how that would apply in that situation, because that policy was kind of developed while the ABC Control Rule was being developed, and it wasn't necessarily tied in, one to the other, and so there may need to be some further discussion on how that SSC policy would potentially apply in a case like this, but this is a potential route for how the council could proceed related to that ABC setting process.

One other note, just to be aware of, is the OFL and the ABC are based on two different recruitment scenarios. The OFL assumes that recruitment is going to return to the long-term average very quickly, whereas the ABC is based on the recent lower level of recruitment, and so, yes, there's a -- That's why there is such a big difference between OFL and ABC, is because one is assuming a much more positive recruitment than the other, and that's why there is such a large gap. That may be something to consider as you're making a decision of if you want to go with an approach like this, and so I will pause there. That is all the information that we have for you, and I will answer questions, if I can.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just so I'm crystal clear on this, it says in the document, and I've heard you say repeatedly, that we're going to need a revised projection to do a phase-in, and I think I heard you say that it's already on the agenda, or it will be on the agenda, for the SSC meeting in September, correct?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, but that would be a -- What's on the agenda for the SSC in September is a different revised projection than what I'm talking about here, and so what they're looking at in September is looking at projections of the same range of years that have already been provided, but under a different management scenario of if they incorporate a lower size limit or a different season or something like that. What this would require is changing the assumed harvest levels in 2025 and 2026 and then projecting what ABC level of harvest would need to be for years beyond that.

MR. GRIMES: I guess my point then though was just to confirm that we cannot -- Consistent with the ABC Control Rule, we cannot implement phase-in until we have these new projections from the SSC.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and you would need to have the new projections, in order to know what the ABC recommendation would be for 2027 and beyond, and, again, that -- There is a little bit of conflict with the SSC's policy about setting ABC beyond five years.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We will talk about that some more, but first Tim, and then John.

MR. GRINER: A couple of things, and so -- But we don't have to wait for that to implement the ABC Control Rule through 2026, and we could do the three-year ABC Control Rule now, correct, and, secondly, when the SSC meets again in September, can we -- Is it possible for them to go back, and maybe this is a question for Marcel, but is it possible for them to go back, and can we look at the ABC and the discards separately?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, I guess addressing the first part of your question first, the council could take a phase-in approach. The thing that would -- Kind of the step that would need to happen along the way, as this amendment is being developed, is that there would need to be some mechanism for the Science Center, the SSC, for ABC recommendations for that revised projection to go beyond 2026. They would need a projection that goes beyond the current terminal year of 2026. That would be necessary in order to have an ABC level beyond that year. For -- I guess, can you repeat the second part of your question?

MR. GRINER: So, right now, we're looking at this ABC, and it's just landings, right, and so can we not look at landings -- Can they not come back and show us landings and projected discards?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We have that, and so, when they provided the ABC, they provided the ABC as removals, and then parsed it out between dead discards and landings, and this is just the landings portion, but we have the projected discards. We have that.

MR. GRINER: Do we have the projected discards by sector?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I don't think we have it parsed out by sector, no.

MR. GRINER: Can we do that?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: There would need to be a level of assumption. We would have to assume what proportions are going to be caught in the future by the commercial and the recreational, but possibly.

MR. GRINER: That's what they're going to do when they meet again in September, is make some new assumptions, right? So why can't we do that while they do that? I mean, they're going to make some assumptions, and I don't know why we can't make these assumptions as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Both Shep and Andy had their hands up, and I don't know who wants to go first back there.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so, to phase-in, right, and, procedurally, I want to make sure that I have this right, and this is how I expected that we would work through the ABC Control Rule, and we've got an ABC recommendation now from the SSC. If we're going to phase-in, then we're necessarily going to come in and implement a catch level that's above that ABC recommendation, right, which we cannot do under the statute, and so I thought we would -- If we want phase-in, we have to have the SSC know that in advance and provide us with catch levels that envision that phase-in, and that's what I thought we were talking about with revised projections.

When they're setting their ABC, and we say we want to phase this in over three years, and what would that look like, and you give us the numbers. Otherwise, that ACL is going to be above the ABC, which is a black letter violation of the statute.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So what we -- Like what the process -- You know, as it's lined out in the control rule, what we would need is, first, the council is expressing its interest in going about a phase-in approach, and so, yes, that would need to now go back to the SSC, make them aware of that, and the SSC would then revise their ABC projection recommendation, their ABC recommendation, and, if they revise their ABC recommendation, and, you know, they determine that phase-in, you know, can be applied for this species, and it would revise their ABC recommendation, and the format of that ABC recommendation is kind of coded into this -- Whichever approach the council is going with, a three or two or one-year phase-in period, but, yes, technically, they would have to revise their recommendation to do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep gave a thumbs-up on that. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Going back to discards, and apologies if this was discussed, and I had an email that I had to address, but the challenge that I see with the ABC recommendations right now is we are talking miniscule levels for harvest, right, and, I mean, tens of thousands of pounds right now, and those are conditioned, right now, on very high discards, right, and this is the first assessment in the South Atlantic where they've essentially said, hey, if we're going to continue business as usual, and we're not reducing discards, right, then discards and landings are not going to come down by the same amount, and, therefore, you're going to get a commensurately higher ABC, because you haven't reduced your discards, or because we've essentially mathematically reduced the discards through a projection model.

Right now, the projections are essentially saying they're going to remain high, or even higher than where they're at currently, and so I wanted to note that, because we can get a lot of additional projections from the SSC that might give us new ABC recommendations, but, ultimately, we should be looking at some management options that are going to bring down those discards, and, if we can, that translates then to higher ABC levels going forward, and it's going to probably have to be an iterative process then, working with the SSC in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just noting, in relation to Andy's comment, one of the requests that you all made, and that's going to be going to the SSC, is a run of the model, a projection run of the model, that assumes a lower level of discards, and so it kind of lays out that, if discards are reduced by

such an amount, through management measures or however you're reducing discards, then this would be the tradeoff and benefit of what you would get in the difference in harvest.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I had John and then Laurilee.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Jessica, and then, you know, we run into this, and, in this situation in particular, it's really coming to light, with the five-year projection period, because you've got two years, basically, projected since the assessment was done, before it gets around to you, and you've got time to develop a rebuilding plan or whatever, assuming we get to that point, and then you're left with, you know, one year, potentially, of having a projected value that you would be applying.

You know, then we're seeing that, if you do the phase-in, and try to do that, you need to go another year, and so the SSC, really following the recommendations of the analysts, has, you know, been hesitant to provide projections beyond five years, because of the uncertainties, and they're uncertain about recruitment, in particular, and uncertain about how the fishery will develop, but I think, in this case, to pursue the ABC with the phase-in option, if the council wants that, we're going to have to ask the SSC to provide us projections that go a little bit further.

When we get into potentially doing a rebuilding plan for species that are in this kind of situation, we're also going to have to say that there needs to be a way to provide us a few more years of projections, because we're not going to get a new assessment, for many of our species, in time to do this, and so what we would normally do would just be holding the line on that last year of projections, which isn't always right, and I don't know that that's any -- You know, any less risky than just projecting another year or two.

Then, to Tim's point, and I know where Tim is going on this, and it's where he's been going a number of times, is about -- You know, it's not just what's in the projections, but it's about what is allocated to the sectors, as I understand it. Correct? Yes, and so that's correct, and so, you know, where he has gone, in other cases, is saying, you know, we should take that landings and ABC, the total yield that's available from the population and the projections, and allocate that by sector, and then subtract each sector's discards.

What that requires is making an assumption, as Mike said, about what are the sector's discards are going to be. On one hand, you could assume that, you know, the sector's discards are similar to what they were in history, and you could assume that and carry forward. Some people have issues with that, and I don't think it's any less uncertain than assuming what recruitment is going to be, which is fundamental to do in all of these things, and so, you know, there's assumptions throughout these projections. Personally, I don't feel like that's an unsurmountable task to make an assumption about those discards.

The bigger question though becomes what will the council do that may impact those discards, so that the projections can reflect actions the council may take, and, of course, we don't know those actions until the council takes those actions, and we don't know what's approved, but we do know we have pursued this lots of times, and we had different scenarios. If the council were to do this, that reduces discards by X percent in the commercial or the recreational, and it can be accounted for in projections, it just probably means that it's going to become a bit more complex, and it's going to require more analyses, with just different turns of the knobs to get it done, but, you know,

the capability is there to do all of those things. If the council wanted to go down that route and do that for this fishery, then it's certainly something that the council could direct be done and figure out a way to make it happen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I had Laurilee and then Tim.

MS. THOMPSON: So, if you lowered the length of thirteen inches for recreational down to that of eleven inches of the commercial, would that -- I know that they're worried about the season ending earlier, because they're going to be able to keep more fish, but would the reduction in discards be enough to get them more fish to make up for potentially shortening the season?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: That's one of the projections that is going before the SSC at their August meeting, and that will come back to you all in September, and that's what one of those runs is looking at, is what if we assume a lower minimum size limit for the recreational, and, actually, I believe the center is working on a range, and so basically setting both sectors equal at either eleven, twelve, or thirteen, anywhere in that range, and they're going to do different runs for each of those and see how that affects the allowable harvest that would come out of each.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Thank you, John, for helping clarify that, because you're exactly right, and that's part of the reason I think that this is so important, is because, in order to make management measures that are going to affect the discards, we have to know what the sector discards are, and we have to see how they're projected out.

I mean, as you look back through the earlier tables we had here, where the discards are broken out inland, less than three miles, and greater than three miles, in order to make management measures that affect those, we have to know what they are by sector, and so, yes, you're exactly right that it does get to the point of allocations, because these management measures are going to be different for each sector, right, and so we're not just looking at -- We're not just looking at the discards overall, but we've got to look at how do you reduces these discards, right, and so, you know, I don't know -- Do we need a motion to do this, or what do we need to get this going forward in that direction?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Just to clarify, because this has been kind of confusing to me, so part of what we're doing today is we're -- What we're now doing is figuring out kind of what are the things, the additional runs, if you will, that we're wanting the SSC to look at, because there were already some apparently on the table of things that we wanted them to look at. Then we've talked about other things today, and so let me give other examples.

If we want them to look at the phase-in approach, we need to say that, and so maybe we could work on a bulleted list of the items that we are wanting the SSC to look at, and so that's one thing that we need to do today. The second thing -- So we were trying to approve this for scoping, and I don't think that we're ready for scoping, and so then, kind of taking that off the table, we would make this list for the SSC, and then, if we want to, and I don't know if we can, because we have all these things that we want to see from the SSC, but could we make a list of items that we might want in this particular amendment, a list of actions that we might want in the amendment so that

it can come back with those types of things, and so is that clear as mud, about what we're doing today? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I guess what you're saying is we're clearly not ready to approve for scoping, and the list of actions is sort of like we do have a general sense of we're going to need to reduce effort, and so what sort of general tools are we going to look at to do that, and that's kind of where you want us to head, and that will help you get closer? Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so Mike says that what we've requested so far from the SSC is highlighted there on the screen, which was what he just talked to Laurilee about, which was the equal minimum size limit for both sectors, eleven, twelve, and thirteen inches, and then you can see management scenarios where dead discards are reallocated to landings, and then I think we need to add some bullets here. Like, if we want to consider the phase-in, we need to ask them about that, and that needs to be a bullet, but we've had a couple of other points that we've discussed here today, and so Shep and then Robert.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just going to comment on saying it's too early for scoping. Scoping is the first step in the process, and I wouldn't delay that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So then, Shep, you're thinking that you would just be straight up asking people, hey, we've got this information, public, and what would you do, knowing some of this information?

MR. GRIMES: Well, so scoping is a NEPA concept, right, and it's beginning to explore the issues, and, in this case, overfishing of black sea bass -- I mean, there isn't a whole lot to explore there, and you have the assessment, and you know what you need to do, and you go out and talk to the public about that generally, and it doesn't seem, to me, it's too early to do that. I mean, I know you -- It's up to you guys, and I know you guys tend to do that a little bit later, maybe, in the process than historically was done, but, you know, then you're developing options, and then, you know, your public hearing draft that you eventually go out with before you approve it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. There's been a suggestion that maybe we want to look at potential actions before we make a decision about scoping. Okay, and so Mike is going to start a bulleted list of the items that we're going to be asking the SSC for. Over to Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: A little delayed, but I was just going to say reduce effort or otherwise reduce dead discards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Allocating total yield.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, on that, you know, you have a different size limit, and so what that means is the recreational fishery is discarding fish between eleven and thirteen that the commercial is keeping, and there's different selectivities that factors into the projections, you know, and so that factors into the overall yield, as you do those projections, and so that gets a little more complicated. What they do now is just project kind of an average selectivity through the fishery, and so it may take a little bit for them to get in and do this, and it's kind of a new thing, and so I think we'll work with the Science Center analysts to get this as good as we can get it and get it before the SSC.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, I'm trying to figure out sort of the cart-horse situation with the SSC, because, ideally, what I think is great -- What we should do, when we go out to scoping, is sort of say something as general as here's the assessment results, and it's not good, and we need to make cuts, and, recreational sector, you know, sort of knowing we have to make these cuts, what are some ideas of how we could do it that would be the most palatable to you, and, commercial sector, the same thing, right?

Then, if they come out with -- I'm just -- You know, an eight-inch minimum -- You know, whatever, and it's already gone to the SSC, then we keep coming into a circle, right, and is that why we need to be like specific before scoping? I mean, I don't want to be prescriptive at scoping if the true concept of scoping is to say what's the best -- Like what's the best pill to take this medicine in.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess a potential concern with scoping in a situation like this is that the sky effectively is not the limit. The limit is what the ABC recommendation is going to be, and, if the SSC has not provided what you all deem as that's going to be the ABC recommendation that is considered, then it may be difficult for people to comprehend and wrap their minds around how much of a cut is being taken by this fishery and what approach should be taken to have this unknown amount of cut that will occur.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and that was part of my concern, is I don't mind asking people, and like here's the results, but, until they can see how drastic the cuts are going to be, maybe they don't know exactly how to respond, I guess, in the scoping process. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, so then I would suggest that we -- That it goes to the SSC, and then we get a better idea of really what cuts we're going to have to take. Then we go to scoping without already laid out, preconceived management measures, because we now have the ability to say to them that we know we need to take this cut and how do you want to do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are you suggesting that it would go to the SSC, and then come back to us in September, and then we would consider it for scoping, because I couldn't tell if you were cutting out coming back to the council.

MS. MARHEFKA: I don't know, and I will admit that I am very turned around right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, I think, as Shep said, you can go out there and scope. If you have a number of things, and you know what you need to do, and there's some pretty big things here, like considering equalizing the minimum size limit, and they may come up with some other ideas that they think are appropriate, and it doesn't mean that you necessarily pursue them, but I also think that there's some fairly complicated things in here that may require, you know, another round of going back to the SSC, and we also know that some things require a bit of iteration, if you're going to do them well, which may require you, you know, deciding if you want to do phase-in or not, and if you want to do phase-in with, you know, the different way of doing the allocations, it

may put things on top of each other that we need to say, okay, give us the run that puts these pieces together in a way that gives us our final answer, and so you may have to get information on pieces, that then have to be brought together into one analysis that shows the net result. I anticipate there's going to be another iteration to the SSC anyway, at a later meeting, as you work through this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So then, John, are you then suggesting go ahead and do scoping, because you're going to do this iterative process?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think go ahead and do scoping, and see if people have some other ideas. Get a sense if they're like, you know, we hate eleven inches, or we hate thirteen inches, and, you know, you're going to get that feedback that will help you maybe narrow your range, and they may have an idea for a slot. They may, you know, come up with other ideas, and that is -- As Shep is kind of saying, that's sort of the point of scoping, to some extent, is to see if there an idea that comes up from the public that we haven't thought of.

The risk that we've always felt that we run sometimes in getting too far developed before you go to scoping is it does seem to sort of show the public that, well, you already know what you want to do, and so, if we go out with a little less, maybe there will be less tendency for them to feel like you already know what you want to do, and it's sort of like this is what we have to accomplish, and here's some things that have come up through the AP, and others, and are there other thoughts that you have, or what do you think about these things, and then, you know, maybe it makes scoping seem a little more approachable to people.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: We put our request in to the Science Center quite a little bit ago, I think after the March meeting, and we're going to be getting that in August, and so these additional runs that are being added might not be available for August, and they might have to wait until October, and so I just wanted to put that realization of October to the SSC and then December to the council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We were debating about what to do next here, and so Mike is going to go further into this document and talk about the things that we're required to do, the things that we might want to do, as we think about what actions we want to consider, and so Mike is going to review that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so some of the level of requirement has changed a little bit from the original document, as noted, because of the letter and the different status, and we were kind of anticipating potentially an overfished status, but that's not the case until the status determination criteria are updated, and so the first thing, in response to the SSC's ABC recommendations, that you all will need to include in this document is a change to the catch levels to adhere to the ABC recommendations.

That's one of the actions that will need to be included as a Magnuson requirement, but, as we discussed, as the SSC is going through their process to see if there are additional recommendations, based on other management changes, there may be additional levels of ABC that are being considered. I'm not sure that any of them would be any higher than the current level, that would allow you to stay at the current ABC, but they may be different than what's in this document.

The second action that -- I don't know that it's necessarily required, but strongly recommended, based on the letter from the service, is to adjust the status determination criteria based on the recommendations from the assessment panel and SSC for reference points based on 40 percent spawning potential ratio, and so that would be in another action, and that would be, you know, kind of in that category of very, very likely to be in this amendment, and noting that, if the council adopts this new status determination criteria, which is recommended as the best scientific information available, kind of following that would be a status of overfished, based on those reference points.

At that point, the council would need to develop a rebuilding plan, because of the overfished status, and so it's kind of -- It's kind of similar to what is happening with scamp, in regard to there are status determination criteria that need to be set, that may not be established right now, and then, as those are set, then there would be kind of a follow-up response to that.

Third, per your allocation review trigger policy, because there was the completion of an assessment, you all at least need to have the conversation of whether you want to change sector allocation percentages for black sea bass. In nothing the discussion that has happened already, in changing the allocation procedure from allocating the harvest to allocating the yield and then subtracting the discards, I'm not sure, and I'm kind of looking at John Carmichael, to see like -- Does that mean -- Is that a reallocation? Is that a change to the allocation, as set forward in this FMP, or is that something that could be implemented and doesn't require an action, a change to the FMP?

MR. CARMICHAEL: It may come down to how it's written, I suppose, and it's somewhat of a change in the process, even if you didn't change the actual percentages, and this is one where the percentages were set before -- You know, we did it based on historic periods and stuff, and so it doesn't bring that concern in of many other stocks, but I do think it probably would require action, because you are changing the approach, and the basis for how you're setting it, and it looks like Chip may be coming up to add to that.

DR. COLLIER: I think it would require an action, just because it is -- You would be pulling in another source of landings, and so it's deviating from how it was calculated in the past, because even when we -- For some of these species, when we're dealing with changes in the recreational estimates, even though it was a change in the process of how they were estimated, that change -- You still were required to do an allocation.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, given all that, if that's a route that the council would like to pursue, or to consider in this amendment, then there would be an allocation action that would be included within this amendment. Then we listed out some other actions that have been kind of heavily discussed, either at the AP table or at the council table, that you all could include in this amendment, but they're not things that are necessarily required of you by Magnuson, in order to do, and so one would be some form of discard-reducing measures, and a variety of those things have been discussed in different forms for -- You know, in relation to red snapper discussions, or other species, and so that may be a route that you all might consider.

There is the revision of the size limits, and that's been pretty heavily discussed, and that's being looked into right now, and there's also the discussion about potentially reopening the nearshore areas to on-demand black sea bass pots, and then, finally, there was -- In some of the previous

discussions, and I think it was the 2022 FPR, the AP had noted considering a potential gear allocation within the commercial ACL, kind of similar to what's done for golden tilefish, where it's allocated to the hook-and-line and the longline.

Those are some of the -- Those are the maybe options, and those are the things that you might consider, or you might not consider, and I guess what we were looking for then, for your action coming out of this meeting, is whether you would approve for scoping and what of these actions, of the -- Obviously, there is the required components, but then are there any of the additional components that you all would want to let the public know that these are some of the things that you're thinking about at this point, or anything that's not on this list that you are thinking about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. Kerry and then Tim.

MS. MARHEFKA: Mike, I have a question, and can you just remind me -- It's been a minute, and the nearshore seasonal closed area is like a layer of two regulations on top of each other, correct, one that is not under our purview, which is under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, that says that gear can't be in that area during that time, and then we have our own -- That you can't - - So I don't mess it up, can you remind me how that is, and the reason I'm asking is because if -- In the future, who really is responsible for if that area was to be opened up again, and does it take both bodies? If, through some method, they were like, all of a sudden, ropeless gear is okay, and so we're going to remove our restrictions, or are ours still in place?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I need to get back to you on that. I don't have that answer with me, but I can find the answer.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for bringing that up, Kerry, because I was going to ask the same thing, but, in any event, the reason for this body to have a regulation in place for that closed area was simply because of the ropes, and, now that we are paving the way to move to ropeless gear, absolutely we want to look at reopening that from our end, and if that's all -- You know, if that's what we can do, then that's what we need to do, because that was the only reason that we had a restriction to not be in there in the first place, was because of vertical lines in the water, and so we're going to remove the vertical lines, and we need to remove the restriction to be there on our end.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. In light of Tim's comment, I am going to remind us what we're doing here, and so we're coming up with a list of actions that we're trying to figure out what we're going to convey to the public during scoping that we might be considering, and so, for example, Tim just mentioned, which is Number 3 up there, reopening nearshore areas to on-demand black sea bass pots, and it sounds like we want to let the public know that through scoping. Okay. I see heads nodding yes. Okay, and so Kerry and then Carolyn and then Sonny.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that end, I think it's going to be a foregone conclusion that, if we're going to consider that, then therefore we're going to need -- We will need to consider looking at subsector allocations, and we will want to hear comment on -- There's going to be an increased -- There could possibly then be increased effort on less fish, and how would we like to deal with that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Got that. Carolyn and then Sonny.

DR. BELCHER: So I'm going to direct a question to Clay. Relative to the BSIA determination with the proxies, the last document we had seen, that was in discussion with the NS 1 modifications, was last September, and we saw it at the CCC meeting, that Rick was talking about, but has there been a finalized version of that document? It was a technical document on reference point proxies and --

DR. PORCH: Okay. Now I know which one you're referring to. I haven't seen the final, final version of it, but that really wouldn't have any further bearing on this. I mean, ultimately, this is a decision of which is the best proxy for MSY.

DR. BELCHER: There was a specific section in that document that talked about 40 percent, and I didn't know if that particular section was where the change from the 30 to the 40 for management was coming from. I mean, that's kind of where -- I know that the decision was made, and it was presented to the SSC, but I know that there was that document in development, which has guidance in there, which did indicate a 40 percent, and so --

DR. PORCH: It's citing other research that indicates that, often, 40 percent is a better proxy than 30 percent, but it depends on the life history of the animal, and so it's not coding in stone 40 percent over 30 percent. In some cases, it could be 50 percent, and, in some cases, it could be something else, but it just depends on the life history of the animal, but it mentions that, in the context, if I recall, that a lot of the other -- Or some of the other councils adopted -- Particularly on the west coast, I think 40 percent is the default, but that doesn't codify anything, and it's just really reflecting the work that has been done that does show that, more often than not, 40 percent is a better proxy for MSY than 30 percent, but it really depends, again, on the life history of the animal.

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and I just thought, because of the management implication of that, that that document, if it was finalized, would be helpful for us, and that was pretty much where I was going. Thank you.

DR. PORCH: I can find out when that's going to come out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you. Just a comment on Tim's comment that, up in the Northeast lobster pot fishery, they're allowed to fish with this gear in closed areas for whales.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Right whales.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Kerry, did you have your hand up? Then Andy.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I have a question regarding this SPR proxy, the MSY proxy, and can we dumb it down a little bit? What I'm trying to figure out is this is going to be an action in this document, right, where the council is going to make -- They're ultimately going to be the ones

to make the decision between what our MSY proxy is, whether it's 30 percent or 40 percent, and I'm assuming we'll only have a no action, because we're at 30 now, and a no action and a 40 percent, because that's what I'm seeing.

If that's the case -- We're approaching this in that we're getting scientific guidance, from the SSC and the center, that 40 percent is what is now ideal, but it's the council making the decision, and so the council -- Unlike an ABC, where it's very clear that this is what the SSC says is the ABC, and, in this case, the council is then making some kind of informed judgment decision on 30 percent to 40 percent, or whatever, because I have a feeling this is going to -- You know, I've watched us go from 20 to 30 to 40, and I suspect this is going to come, and it already has with other species, and it's going to continue to come up.

I would like some more -- It doesn't have to be here, but I personally would like some more discussion, or maybe a little tutorial, and really understand where we are law-wise, because, if it comes down to 30 or 40 percent, and we're the ones making the decision, I would like to know what we can take into account when making that decision.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds good, and we'll add it to the list of items. John, and then we'll go to Andy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: To that, I think the SSC discussed it, and I looked at their report, to see what they said, and it just says, you know, we recommend F 40, and there is a difference in the yields, et cetera, with F 30 and F 40, and I think, with the council taking action, and thinking of the various things you have to consider in an action that are beyond just the recommendation, it might be good to get the SSC -- To ask the SSC to elaborate a bit on the difference in F 30 and F 40.

I'm thinking even particularly the SEP, because, you know, the social and economic aspects of it, as well as the biological, would be good, because all of those things have to be put into the amendment to do the comparison of, you know, F 30 and F 40. FMSY is off the table, because it's not estimated, but you've got to compare these two and justify why you're selecting F 40, unless it's adequate to just say the SSC recommended it, but I don't feel like that would generate an adequate record, if I channel my inner Monica, when it comes to that, and you really want to elaborate on that, about the other benefits that are coming from F 40, the potential benefits to the stock as well as how it impacts the fishery, and so I think we can just ask the SSC to elaborate a bit on that discussion for us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think we captured that, and so Andy and then Clay.

DR. PORCH: Just to respond to that, I think it's fair to ask the SSC to be clear, on the record, which is the better proxy for MSY, but, all things equal, if F 30 percent -- Let's say the SSC said F 30 percent and F 40 percent were equally likely to be good approximations to MSY, and then it would be really up to the council just to pick one, and it doesn't really -- Because the SSC didn't give you any clear guidance which is better, but, if the SSC gives you guidance that F 40 percent clearly is a better proxy, then, if the council picked F 30 percent, that means that there is more than a 50 percent probability of overfishing or the stock becoming overfished, because you picked a proxy that deliberately allowed a higher rate of fishing than the SSC recommended. Then the burden would be on the council to demonstrate what evidence they were able to muster to go

against the SSC's recommendation, and I think that's a very important distinction, certainly from the science perspective.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, but, I mean, the council has to take an action, and actions require certain things, and so I guess I will ask Shep. Would it be adequate to just say the SSC recommended F 40, and that's the council's justification, and stop right there, or don't we have to talk about all the other impacts that go with it, like we do with any other action?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, in this case, you know, it's maximum sustainable yield, and it's a recommendation from your scientific panel. They built the record for why they are making the recommendation. Adopting that, and going forward, would be fine with me, based on what the SSC said, and, I mean, historically, we have looked at options for MSY, and we've sort of come to the position, and I'm going to look to Monica a little bit, to make sure that she agrees with me on this, but I think we've kind of evolved to the position where, if you have a stock assessment, and the assessment produces here is your MSY value, and you look at it, and you get the science recommendation, and it says, yes, that's MSY, then why do you even need actions and alternatives?

You have this scientifically-derived parameter, and there it is, and there are other regions in this country where those numbers then just are entered into the FMP amendment, and they're adopted, and there aren't actions and alternatives and considerations.

Once you don't have a specific MSY, a clear, identified MSY, and you're talking proxies, then you're exercising discretion. In the exercise of that discretion, you have the action with alternatives to look at other things, but, if you have a -- You know, even when you're selecting among proxies, if you have a recommendation from the SSC, that is supported by the Science Center, that this number is strongly it, I would say you probably, in reality, don't have a lot of discretion, because there's a clear indication of what appears to be best available science, and adopting something lower than that is probably not going to be consistent with that. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I don't dispute that. My point was the SSC report says that we recommend F 40, and it stops there, and so I was simply asking for the SSC to elaborate on the justification, as you said, because I looked at that, and I said I don't feel that we have a record to carry forward into amendment action to fill out all of that text, and so I think it would be good to get the SSC to elaborate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Absolutely, and the only thing I wanted to say is that that SSC report is not everything. There are the minutes from it. There's a lot of discussion that does not get incorporated into that report, and so the record as a whole is really broader than that, but thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: To this topic, Carolyn?

DR. BELCHER: So I guess the thing is, for me, is that we never specifically asked the question about management -- Well, currently, it's written into the FMP that we use SPR 30 as the proxy. Do you think we should change it, and there was never that question asked. Instead, it was this was what came through the model, and it was something that seemed like it was evaluated with a, yes, we see where that's going, and we think that a 40 percent probably is a good thing, but, in the context of the management question, I don't think we asked that that way, and it was in the context of the assessment, but not in the context of management.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you again, Madam Chair. But I don't think that's uncommon, right, and, I mean, we get assessments that are coming out now, with increasing frequency, where, you know, for whatever reason, they could estimate this, and they couldn't do that approach, and you get changes, right, and, in the short time I've been dealing with it, we have scamp and yellowmouth, and we're in the same position now, and we have black sea bass, and two in a row, and so I suspect this is something that we will probably see with increasing frequency in the future.

While I have it, it's a great segue to one of the things we talked about on the agency side of this, is building more flexibility into your specifications of MSY, so that, when we have an assessment that comes out, and it says F -- You know, we're going to use this SPR at F 40 percent, that you can just use that, because that's one the options on the menu, and we don't have to go back and amend the FMP to have it incorporated, so we can make status determinations based upon that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got people in the queue that have been patiently waiting. I'm going to start and go back to Andy and then to Tim.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm not sure that I remember what I was going to say. No, but that was a really good back-and-forth, and I appreciated that discussion on reference points. All right, and so I'm going to backtrack a little bit and then offer some ideas for scoping. With regard to the question about is the closed area an MMPA rulemaking or a fisheries rulemaking, thank you to Jenny Lee, and she did some homework, and she confirmed that it's a fisheries rulemaking, but we would, obviously, want to work with any changes with the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team. There are a number of requirements that they specify regarding rope strength and weak links and things like that, and so I just wanted to clarify there.

In terms of scoping, a few thoughts here, and one is, right now, you provide the Fisheries Service authority to open black sea bass and project the season, right, and I think that's a terrible model, especially if we're getting into shorter seasons, right, because it doesn't provide a lot of predictability. We also, I think, have a fishing year that starts on April 1, and then consideration of the fishing year, consideration of the start date of the season, consideration of when people optimally would be wanting to fish for black sea bass are all things that we would want input on in scoping.

Then I will add, more broadly, because I think we're actually quickly approaching this, right, and so it was mentioned in the projections that, you know, aligning the closure with the shallow-water

grouper closure, and all of our seasons are shrinking for major snapper grouper species, right, and so getting input from the public, with regard to this patchwork of openings and closings for single species, versus collectively managing the snapper grouper fishery with some seasonal openings or closures, or at least with the main species that are caught together in what Chip was showing earlier. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We're capturing it. I think we've got all those captured, and we're on the last one right now. Al right. Over to Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I just want to jump back to that discussion, just briefly, because I got really super confused again with the 40 percent proxy and the current FMP, and so what is the status of the stock right now? Is it overfished and undergoing overfishing, or does the service consider it -- Or is it not overfished and overfishing? I mean, I guess I'm confused as to where we are now.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I will start talking, but Andy may need to start talking, but the letter states that, right now, the status of black sea bass is not overfished, and not experiencing overfishing, and that's the current status. Also, within the letter, there was the recommendation that the council take action to change the status determination criteria. That would need to be done through an amendment, okay, and so we would go through this amendment process.

Now, status determination criteria is changed through the amendment process, and, at that point, if there is no new information for black sea bass, concerning like a new assessment or something of that nature, then, based on the information we have right now, at that point, then we would very likely get a letter from the service indicating that black sea bass is overfished.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm taking us back to this list here of items to take out to scoping, and so, so far, we have the items that Andy just mentioned, and we also have some items that we had highlighted below from our do-we-want-to-do-this list, and so we're going to try to combine this into one list down below here.

Okay, and so then we have those items there in italics, and then we also have the reopening of the area, and we also have the allocations. If we reopen the area, then maybe we need allocations specific to traps and hook-and-line, and so then, above that, we also had discussions on size limits, and it sounds like, yes, because we're asking the SSC to take some looks at the size limit, that I guess we want to consider revising size limits, and we're talking about making rec and commercial the same, and so, if that's not what we're thinking, then someone needs to raise their hand. Then the other thing is a reminder that -- So, number one, there is discard-reducing measures, and so just a reminder that the AP said that they would be willing to consider single hooks, and so I'm just putting that out there as well. Kerry and then Amy.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm really -- I'm not belaboring anything, and I am legitimately trying to understand, and so this is not me trying to make a point. The way we are right now, we have an assessment, and the assessment -- Through the assessment, the SSC gave us a new ABC that, by law, we obviously have to take measures to make sure we stay under the new ABC.

However, we don't have a letter, right, because there is no clock ticking, because technically -- The clock hasn't started, right? I'm trying to figure this out, so that I'm clear when we talk to

people, because I am not looking -- Whoever the person is who has to explain what this 30 percent and 40 percent proxy has a big load ahead of them. This is really complicated. Hold on, and I really had it.

I know what my question was. If, for some reason -- Right now, we're at 30 percent, and are our projections based on what rebuilding timeframe, because we're not rebuilding -- We're not overfished, and so what are we rebuilding to, right now on paper, but, when we switch to 40, we will be overfished, and so then we will have to say we will have to rebuild this fishery within, what, ten years, right, because they're short-lived, and do you see where I'm lost?

MS. MCCAWLEY: First John and then over to Robert.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So you're overfished based on any look at the current assessment, right, and they had FMSY, and, if I'm correct, in Amendment 18A, and I'm looking at the letter, set it at FMSY, and the SSC said FMSY can't be estimated, and so then you're in the realm of looking at one of the proxies. The default proxy that we have, in one of the generic amendments, is F 30, but now they're saying, you know, F 40 is preferable, because of all that's going on, and so the letter falls back on that prior assessment, which says it's not overfished and not overfishing, because we have this issue with changing the reference point and having a reference point that's on the record for the species that is not estimable, and so you're sort of left in the situation where you don't have a relevant reference point for the new assessment, and so we're still back on the old assessment.

Once you take the action to respond, as you're obligated to do, to the latest recommendation, then you're going to end up with a stock that is overfished, and then that will trigger another letter, and then we'll have to start an amendment to do a rebuilding plan, and so it's kind of a two-step process. It will take an amendment to respond to the SSC's ABC recommendation, which we need to do, which we all know often is a much bigger dose of medicine than the rebuilding plans work out to be, and consider all those other things, which probably impact discards, like equalizing the size limit, and you're going to get all that stuff in, update your stock determination criteria, and then that will determine your status, and then that will make it infinitely easier to set a rebuilding plan, because you're not going to be juggling all those other uncertainties as well.

If you change how you do your allocations, all of that is going to affect the outcomes and the analysis of your rebuilding plan, and so, if you get all this housekeeping done, and then get the letter, that's going to start you a two-year clock to get in a rebuilding plan, but your rebuilding plan should be a much simpler effort than say scamp, recall, where you've got more actions than I can count, because you were juggling all these things at one time, and stuff gets all nested.

Yes, you're going to be doing this, and you're not dealing with the rebuilding plan initially, but you know it's coming, because the stock is in the shape it is, but you're putting in an ABC which is going to help you in that regard as well, and maybe recruitment gets a little better, and the rebuilding plan, two years from now, when you're analyzing this, isn't as bad, because, you know, you're going to have a lower ABC in place, and do other things, and we don't know, and so the important thing is like it's a two-step process that's coming.

MS. MARHEFKA: (Ms. Marhefka's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. Thank you, John. Robert. All right. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I will just point out that it doesn't have to be a two-step process, right, and I think that's the confusing part, about the proxy changing, and I guess I wanted to look to John, because John and I had an email exchange and discussion about MSY proxies, right, and I would like to avoid this situation in the future, right, and I know the council doesn't necessarily want to blanket accept an SSC recommendation for an MSY proxy, but I feel like we should take a look at this for snapper grouper species, or future stock assessments, and see if the council can adopt a range, or something, that's approved, with rationale from the SSC, and accepted by the council, to be able to allow this to, you know, make a status determination without this lag time between when an assessment occurs and when that status determination criteria is changed, and so I don't know, John, if you have any thoughts on that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I do, and I thought that, because the council has to still take an action to establish that proxy, that you would still be in the boat of not really being able to do the status determination until the council took the first action to change the proxy, even if it maybe reduced the number of alternatives available to that proxy and if you said upfront that whatever the SSC tells us is what we'll adopt, because we still would have to set the proxy, and there would still be some lag in there, as I understood it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I think you're exactly right, in terms of how the Gulf has done it, right, and so there's still the management plan, or amendment, that comes after, but, to me, I've been thinking about this, that maybe we could do it differently, and get the Gulf Council even to modify it, where you specify like an acceptable range, based on the life history and the science of those species, and, if we get recommendations that change, up or down, right, and it's in that range, we're not necessarily always bouncing around and having to change the proxy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that discussion. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciated your addition of the single-hook, as it reflects to the discard-reducing measure, and a couple of the other things that the AP, the Snapper Grouper AP, mentioned, that I don't think we have necessarily captured here, is it's -- Andy hit on some of it, with the timing of the season, and the length of the season, but they were also saying it was more important for them to have access for a longer time period than perhaps access to individual fish, and so do we need to think about not only size limits, but perhaps bag limit changes, more specifically, in the recreational sector, and can some of that be done through that analysis work, in addition to the size classes of eleven, twelve and thirteen, or are we getting too complicated?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't think it's too complicated, and Mike is capturing both of those things there, just to be clear, on the board. All right. We have a number of items here that I guess we will be letting the public know that we are considering as this goes out to scoping, and is the committee good with this list that we have? I feel like we've had a lot of good discussion on it.

I see heads nodding yes, and it seems like people are good with this list. You will see it again in Full Council. I think we also need a motion to take this out to scoping. All right, and so Mike is

working on a draft motion there, but, if someone would like to make a motion to approve Amendment 56 for scoping, and if you would like to add some timing here, and I'm assuming that folks would like this done before the September meeting, but thoughts on this? Anybody that wants to make this motion? This is the last thing for this document. All right. Hands are up now. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: **I would like to make a motion to approve Amendment 56 for scoping.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there a second?

MR. ROLLER: Second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom seconded. It's under discussion. What do you think about when you would like that scoping done? Do you want it done before September?

MR. STRELCHECK: That sounds fantastic.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there any more discussion on this motion to approve this amendment for scoping? **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **The motion carries.** All right. Let's take a ten-minute break before we move into the next item. Good job, everybody, in this afternoon lull right after lunch.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and so, next up, we're moving into scamp and yellowmouth grouper, which is Amendment 55, and so would you like -- Allie, do you want to start walking us through the decision document and then go to Bob, to give us the AP comments, or how do you want to do this?

MS. IBERLE: I kind of had a plan for how I was going to walk through this, and so maybe it might be better to start with this today, and the AP comments are in there, where applicable, and so we can always get him to weigh-in as we go, if that's okay with you. I guess we can pivot and start on the decision document.

All right, and so we've been working on this amendment for several meetings now, and so I'm not going to spend too much time on the background with this one. Obviously, the goal of this amendment is to reorganize the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper, take yellowmouth grouper out of that complex, and create a new complex for scamp and yellowmouth, and then a lot of the actions in this amendment deal with creating the catch levels and management measures for that new complex.

Again, I'm not going to spend too much time on ABC, and you've seen this for a couple of meetings now. I did want to pause on the objectives for this meeting, and so there's a couple of things that we have to go over. The way that I was planning on going through this document -- So we've got a couple of things to review, and so the IPT did a really great and thorough review of this draft amendment, and we have some really minor changes to some of the alternative language.

None of the changes that we are going to be bringing to you today change the, I guess, spirit of the alternative, but we do want to run them by you and make sure that there's no objections there, and then we're going to be reviewing the effects summary for each action. Then kind of the big thing that we've had for you, since March, is the updated analysis and decision tool, and so we'll be able to kind of plug-and-play with the recreational management measure actions, much more than we were able to in March, and then we'll be looking to select any remaining preferreds, and so, for the actions that we don't currently have preferreds for, they are Sub-Action 2d, which is your OY, Action 7a, for the recreational bag limit, and 7b, the recreational vessel limit. Then, finally, we'll have the opportunity to approve this amendment for public hearings.

My plan was to just go through each action, review those alternative language changes, if needed, and the effects summary, and then kind of come back to that decision tool, and we can plug-and-play with the decision tool and then come back to the decision document and select any preferreds, because I think that's something that you guys really wanted to look at. I'm going to go through the actions a little quickly, but stop me if you have any questions.

We've had a lot of discussion today, both in Reg 36 and 56, about the vessel limit, and the AP did make some recommendations for the vessel limit, and very similar for scamp and yellowmouth. However, a good segue into tentative timing, and we are on a statutory deadline for this amendment, and so it's really tight timelines here. We are trying to hit the September meeting for a final approval, and so public hearings, if it gets approved for public hearings at this meeting, we're anticipating holding those public hearings in between this meeting and September, looking at those comments, and then considering for final approval at the next meeting, and so that timeline is pretty tight, and so keep that in mind, that an additional analysis will be needed, but we'll get back into that when we talk about the vessel limit.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time on the purpose and need either. We've read this, and then you guys approved it in March, and we haven't had any changes there, and so, unless there is any objection, I will keep moving ahead. Okay.

All right, and we'll go ahead and start with Action 1, and that's to reorganize the other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper complex. We've been lovingly calling it the OSASWG complex, and create that new scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex. Alternative 1 would be to not do that, and then Alternative 2, you can see in that table, we would just be removing yellowmouth from those OSASWGs and creating that new complex. That ABC that was at the top of the document, a quick reminder that that ABC recommendation, and then the resulting ACL, in I believe Action 4, accounts for scamp and yellowmouth, and so those catch levels are inclusive of the two species as we move forward with each action for the new complex.

As we go through this document, for ease of explaining, I have summarized the effects that are in the draft document. The writers have done a really great job of really adding detail to this, and that can be found in Chapter 4 of your draft amendment, and that's Attachment 5b. These tables are meant to really summarize, to give you the high points, but I urge you to consult Chapter 4 for the full detail on the effects summary, but these I'm going to use just to help you guys get the gist of those summaries, but please visit that draft document.

For a lot of these things, Alternative 1 is going to be a non-viable option, like it's shown here, and so we're not expecting a benefit from this alternative, because it's not following the best available

science, and then, obviously, we're expecting administrative burden, because we're not following BSIA.

Obviously, Preferred Alternative 2 has benefits to the stock. There are no direct economic benefits, but there are expected long-term benefit, and then, socially, it will help alleviate misidentification issues, because anglers will no longer need to identify between the two species. Another common theme that you're going to see in the effects summary is the administrative burden. A lot of the things that we're creating for this new complex obviously have an upfront burden, but we're following BSIA, and so we would assume that, in the long-term, this would have benefits and less burden moving forward. Since you already have a preferred, no action is needed unless you want to change the preferred, and so, if there's no questions or comments, I can go ahead and move to 2. All right.

Action 2, I know we just had a lot of discussion with black sea bass, and so these are those actions and subactions for scamp, and so Action 2 has four subactions that establish your MSY, MFMT, MSST, and OY. We currently have preferreds for MSY, and you guys selected an MSY proxy of F 40 percent SPR, and your preferred for Subaction 2b is an MFMT equal to your MSY proxy at F 40 percent SPR, and then, for Subaction 2c, your preferred is an MSST equal to 75 percent of SSB F 40 percent.

We've got some quick language changes here to your alternatives, and so, when the IPT was reviewing Subaction 2a and 2b, it's worth noting that your MSY, or MSY proxy, is a yield, and so the units on that is pounds, whereas your MFMT is a rate, and so, essentially, the language changes here is just making that explicitly clear, stating that super clearly in the alternative language, and, again, the spirit of the action doesn't change, and the number doesn't change, but it's just making that abundantly clear, and so that's essentially the same thing with the language change in Subaction 2b. It's just making sure that that's clear that it's a rate.

Then we've got a little bit of a language change for Subaction 2c, and your MSST. I added some bullets here, so that I don't -- That I hopefully don't confuse anybody, and so, in previous meetings, we talked a lot about Regulatory Amendment 21, and so this amendment redefined MSST for a select group of species, and that was the previous rationale. You know, we were thinking that's why we were basing this preferred alternative.

However, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper, were not included in that list of select species. However, the definition of MSST in that amendment -- They have a range of natural -- Or the definition includes a range of natural mortality, and, according to SEDAR 68, that natural mortality does qualify for that 75 percent of SSB MSY definition, and then, when we looked back at the assessment, and so the most recent assessment, the SEDAR 68 OA, it recommended this MSST definition. However, instead of labeling it 75 percent of SSB MSY, which is how we had it previously written, they, in the assessment, labeled it as 75 percent of SSB F 40 percent.

The IPT thought it was better to, since that was the recommendation from the assessment, to just match that wording. Again, the spirit of the preferred doesn't change. The number isn't changing, and we're just making sure that it's matching the recommendation, and so, before I move on to Subaction 2d, any questions on that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I saw some confused looks. Clay.

DR. PORCH: I just want to remind folks that, when you say 40 percent, you mean 40 percent SPR and not actual rate of 40 percent, which would be extremely high, and so you might just want to make sure that you put that in the language here.

MS. IBERLE: So that was, I think, one of the questions that we had. However, in the SEDAR 68 OA, it was stated that MSST was recommended -- Or is defined as 75 percent of SSB F 40 percent, and so were just matching what was in the assessment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Clay.

DR. PORCH: Right, and F 40 percent means the F that produces 40 percent SPR. Fishing mortality rate of 40 percent means you're taking basically 40 percent of the fish every year, and it's two different things, and that's all I was saying.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. We're fixing that up. Other questions or comments here? I don't see any additional hands. Allie is typing up some direction here.

MS. IBERLE: All right. Thank you so much for that guidance. All right. The last subaction for Action 2 is Subaction 2d, to establish the optimum yield for the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex, and so we have alternative language here, because we don't currently have a preferred. Alternative 1 would not establish an OY for the new complex. Alternative 2 would establish an OY at 75 percent of MSY, and then Alternative 3 would be an optimum yield at 90 percent of the MSY, and Alternative 4 would be 95 percent of the MSY. I did want to remind you guys that this subaction is dependent on, obviously, your preferred for the MSY action, and so the number will change, you know, if your preferred changes. Right now, you have a preferred for the MSY proxy, and so no real issue there, and I just wanted to note that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Are we ready to select a preferred here?

MS. IBERLE: I will always forget about the effects summary, and so the way I split this up, for kind of ease of explaining it, is the effects summary for 2a through 2c were very similar, and so I kind of lumped those together. Obviously, Alternative 1 is not a viable option, and so it's not something that the council can consider. Alternative 2, which I will remind you is based on that 30 percent SPR, and there is less benefit, because it's not following BSIA, pretty much across-the-board, and then Preferred Alternative 3, and, obviously, we're thinking the most benefit, because we're following the recommendations from the assessment and the Science Center. Then, for OY, that's going to be in a separate table. Go ahead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to make this comment on the effects summary, and I've made this comment relative to some NEPA analysis I've seen, and so, even though we may not be able to select the no-action alternative, that is our analytical baseline, right, and it's in there for NEPA purposes, and it's in there so that we can do a comparative analysis between what exists if we don't take action and what will occur if we take these other actions.

Therefore, the effects of the no action are absolutely relevant, right, and they're critical to appreciating the effects of the other alternatives, and so, even though we may not be able to select it, we need to have those effects under consideration, and we absolutely have them in the document, and they're explained in there, and so I would just suggest, for future effects tables, to please include that in there, so it doesn't look like we're not looking at those effects. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Will do. Thank you, Shep.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and then effects for OY. Outside of Alternative 1, which isn't expected to provide biological, economic, or social benefit, we're thinking kind of more along the lines of how high the buffer is. With regard to biological benefit, a higher benefit is going to provide more biological benefit, where, conversely, with regard to the economic and social benefit, a higher buffer could lead to lower catch levels and lower economic or social benefit. Then, as far as administrative burden, no big differences between the alternatives, because all alternatives are going to need to establish an OY, and so there is going to be that administrative burden upfront, and then, with that, I have a draft motion in here, if you want.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Now we have them on the screen, and so this is one of the subactions where we have not selected a preferred, and I see people reading and looking at it, and is there one here that we're wanting to select? We made it a little bigger, if you were having trouble seeing, and it's better now. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I had a question, and now I've got myself confused again. Remind me why we had to have a buffer in the first place.

MS. IBERLE: The buffer for OY is up to you. Shep has got his hand up, and I think he might be able to better answer this question.

MR. GRIMES: Well, MSY is defined, in the act, as -- Or OY is defined, in the act, as MSY as reduced by -- She has a noted, in the document, the relevant social, economic, and ecological factors, and so, if you set MSY equal to OY, you're effectively saying that there are none that justify lowering it, which is a position that you can take, but I would also say, if you look at the NS 1 Guidelines, and the materials supporting those, MSY equal to OY equal to ABC equal to ACL is presumed not sufficient to prevent overfishing.

You guys don't typically put buffers between ABC and ACL, and so, I mean, we need to acknowledge those factors in there somewhere, and I might suggest that a good way to address picking a preferred alternative here is to discuss, you know, what ecological, economic, and social factors are at play, and it doesn't need to be guided by some quantitative analysis, and you can discuss it qualitatively and think, generally, do we have a lot of concern, or don't we, and then, you know, does that sound like a 10 percent, or a 5 percent, and that's how I would justify it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so then there's the effects chart, so that people can see it. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just a couple of comments. One is I think OY we struggle with setting, because, quantitatively, it's hard to estimate those economic and social and biological benefits and tradeoffs. The way I look at this, right, is OY is, obviously, the fishery as a whole, but, the closer

you get to MSY, right, from a standpoint of recreational anglers, that means more opportunities, right, and potentially greater harvest capability.

That also is true for the commercial sector, but then the tradeoff is we have uncertainty in our landings estimates, and, if we're wrong, right, then we have less stability, right, and we maybe have changes then in terms of those catch limits over time, and so backing off of MSY, to a lower amount for OY, provides a little bit greater stability and uncertainty in the system, but I struggle with this each time, because I think, you know, we have -- It's very difficult for us to estimate, and so I don't have a recommendation here, and I think, you know, all of these are certainly viable.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Then I would -- You know, I would strongly support Alternative 4 of 95 percent. I mean, because, really, what we're looking at here is to do something with management uncertainty, and so, to me, then you go back and, you know, this is something to give us a buffer, but still to give us the most social and economic benefit, and we've already kind of taken care of the scientific uncertainty, and so, to me, this is just a buffer for management, and I think, when you look at it that way, you really need to do what gives you the most economic and social benefits, and so I would be supportive of Alternative 4.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Was that a motion?

MR. GRINER: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so the motion is to select Alternative 4 as the preferred, and so we're fixing up that motion there. Do we have a second to that motion? Okay, and it's seconded by Gary. All right. More discussion here on this preferred by anybody? Okay. I feel like that maybe we've had enough discussion on why we've selected this preferred, and is there any additional discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **The motion carries.**

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so we'll keep going. Action 3 will establish a rebuilding timeframe for the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex. Alternative 1 would not establish a rebuilding plan, or a rebuilding timeframe, and Alternative 2 would go with a Tmin of five years, and Preferred Alternative 3 would go with a Tmax equal to ten years.

Rebuilding projections were based off that long-term average recruitment, and rebuilding within ten years is possible, but based on long-term average recruitment, which is higher than recent recruitment and assumes that recruitment will recover to those previous levels. We've had, you know, discussion on this, and I think we discussed it a lot in St. Augustine last June, when we were first starting this amendment, and that brings us to the effects summary.

Obviously, a rebuilding plan is needed, since the status of the stock -- No biological, economic, or social benefit is expected under Alternative 1, since a rebuilding plan is required under MSA for overfished stocks. The administrative burden is lower, only because we're not establishing a plan. However, it would not be following the requirements under MSA.

There was a change to this document since it was posted in the briefing book, and so, as far as the biological benefits, Alternative 2 and Preferred Alternative 3 are expected to have more biological benefit than Alternative 1, because, again, they're following the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Economically, a more restrictive rebuilding plan could result in more restrictive management measures, which could lower the economic benefit, and kind of the same thing with social. More restrictive management, lower social benefit.

Then there's the same amount of burden for each alternative, when thinking about Alternatives 2 and 3, since both of them need to establish a rebuilding plan, and so pretty much the same amount of burden upfront there, and you already have a preferred selected, and so just any additional discussion, and there's not really any action needed on this one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any additional discussion here? We already have a preferred. Okay. I see heads shaking no, that we're good here.

MS. IBERLE: That brings us to Action 4, which will establish your ABC and total ACL for the new complex. Alternative 1 would not implement the recommended ABC or establish an ACL. Your current Preferred Alternative 2 would set the ACL equal to the ABC, and, again, a reminder that ABC was the recommendation coming out of the SEDAR 68 OA, which is inclusive of scamp and yellowmouth, thinking of those as kind of one species from this point on. Alternative 3 was setting the ACL equal to 95 percent of the ABC, and Alternative 4 was setting the ACL at 90 percent of the ABC.

You've already gone through kind of a lot of that discussion, and so I'm going to straight to your effects summary, and so Alternative 1 isn't expected to have biological, economic, or social benefit, as it's not establishing catch levels, which are required under MSA. Obviously, the same thing like with the rebuilding plan, and, on paper, the administrative burden is lower, just because we're not establishing the catch level. However, those are required under MSA.

For Preferred Alternative 2, this is the lowest, in terms of biological, and we're, again, thinking about the buffer, and so a higher buffer, higher biological benefit. Then, as far as economic, it's kind of the flip side, and so the lowest buffer between ABC and ACL, and you're going to get the higher ACL and higher economic benefit, and then, again, around the same thing with the social. The more social benefit when the ACL is going to be higher.

Then, as far as administrative burden, we're kind of thinking along the lines of how likely the ACL is to be met. Obviously, it's a little bit more complex when you're thinking of how AMs play into the situation, but, essentially, the lower buffer between the ACL and the ABC, the more likely the ACL is to be met, and, therefore, an in-season closure would be needed, and, therefore, the administrative burden could increase. Again, we have a preferred selected for this, and so just essentially reviewing that preferred, and your summary effects and any questions or comments.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We already have a preferred here, and we actually had a little bit of discussion on this, as we started this document, and I don't know that we need any more. It looks like heads are shaking no, that we're good with this preferred.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That brings us to Action 5.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy has his hand up.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to acknowledge that Tim, obviously, raised this when we implemented gag, and so the track that we would be on, right, would be to approve this in September, and then this comes to the Fisheries Service for secretarial review and approval, and so, in 2025, it would be implemented mid-season, as it stands now, and so, the sooner we receive the document, we can avoid the situation of closing and having an overage.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Thanks for the reminder on that.

MS. IBERLE: All right. Action 5 will establish sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for your next complex. In March, we kind of whittled down your range of alternatives. Alternative 1 would be to not establish any allocations, and your current preferred is the split reduction method, previously termed share-the-pain-share-the-gain, and that is -- Preferred Alternative 2 is the five-year, or three-year. Sorry, and then Alternative 3 is the split reduction method with the five-year baseline. This first table here is your commercial allocation, and so you've got percentage and then poundage here, and then, on the next page, we've got your recreational allocations, and so, again, percentage and then poundage.

We've got a really small language change just to review with you guys, and so, previously, this read that commercial and recreational allocations would change, and we just wanted to make it more explicit, so that we're saying allocation percentages and sector annual catch limits, just because of how this method works, and we thought that would lend some clarity.

A reminder that, if you need a brush-up on the split reduction share-the-pain-share-the-gain, this is a really nice example of how that method works, and then, thinking about the current scamp allocation breakdown, that's what that is, and then, looking to the effects summary, and so Alternative 1 for this action is a viable alternative, and it's not required to establish allocations. However, the -- We weren't expecting biological, economic, or social benefit, as it wouldn't be establishing sector ACLs based on the updated ACL from Action 4, and the biological benefit is very similar between the two alternatives, as they're very similar ACLs, and then, when you're thinking of the economic and social, it's kind of more per sector, and so, obviously, the commercial will have more economic and social benefit if the commercial sector has a higher ACL.

However, this method is really taking into account the history of the fishery, and how it operates, and allocating based on how the fishery has been operating, and then, as far as administrative burden, both alternatives would be establishing an allocation, which would change each year until that last year, where it would remain in place, and so the administrative burden there is going to be the same, and so -- Let me make sure that I don't have anything else here, and so, yes, we have a preferred selected for this one, and so I will turn it over. I will go back up to commercial, but let me know if you want me to scroll down.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. So, once again, we already selected a preferred here, and there were two alternatives on split reduction, or share-the-pain-share-the-gain, and I don't think that we're intending to change our preferred, and I see heads nodding no. Any further discussion on this action? All right. We're going to go ahead and stop here. We had a hard stop, so we can get ready for public comment, and so I appreciate all the work on this, and we will pick this back up with the following action. I'm sorry. Trish has something here.

MS. MURPHEY: I just quickly wanted to say that I love your effects table. Those are really good, and, if you guys can do those in others, and I just -- That just really rocks, and so thank you. That's all I wanted to say.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I thought so too. It was really nice. Nice setup there, yes. Okay. I'm going to turn us back to the Chair to tell us about public comment.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 12, 2024.)

JUNE 13, 2024

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach, Shores, Florida, on Thursday, June 12, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The first thing that we're going to do, as we dive back into Amendment 55, is we're going to go ahead and go to Bob, so he can run through the AP comments before we get any further in the document, and so I'm going to pass it over to you, Bob.

MR. LORENZ: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, and a lot of what we have with Amendment 55, with the scamp and the yellowmouth, is following the same gist of conversation, and maybe a few more things were said, because the AP got a second chance to say some things when we came up with two of these -- I don't want to call them grouper aggregates, and that may not be correct, because of biological, but, you know, putting the two together, the scamp and the yellowmouth, as we had the black grouper and the gag.

What I'll start with, where we started talking, was Action Number 6, and that was to reduce the recreational season for the gag, and this was not well received by -- Your preferred alternative was not well received by the AP, and, in fact, the vote was, out of those present, fifteen did not want your Alternative 2, and then there was one abstention for that.

The main thing that got it, that grabbed it, was that September through December 31 closure. I mean, of course, that was there, and then they justified it with the points that would be shown below, and they did not want to have the closure, and, as we show, the for-hire businesses need that late-summer access to the fishery, and they're saying that scamp is just another important component, and it's another fish, and people like it. It's tasty, and it generates a lot of excitement when it comes on a boat, and so the for-hire, and that's the headboats and the for-hire guides and charters, think that's extremely valuable for them to have.

Then they mentioned, and, you know, this comes up, of why are we reducing fishing when we're not meeting our ACL, and, of course, there can be the logic that, well, the fish aren't there, and

that's why you're not meeting it, but they could also be stating that their side of the story is one of the reasons that we're not meeting our ACL is, you know, we're just not catching them, and it can be difficult.

As an example, this year was horrid, and I don't know how it was from Florida, but I know South Carolina and North Carolina, and even the opening of the snapper grouper season, and it was just wind and wind and wind, and so lots of six and nine-foot seas that we've seen, and, you know, maybe that's an area, and so that's what they'll always say, is we're not meeting the ACL because we just can't always get fishing.

They wanted you to -- Consideration of the -- The AP asked that you consider the headboat allocations, you know, where appropriate, and we did discuss that the last time, but they were adamant that do not stall Amendment 55 appreciably in order to pick that up, and it looks like that's where you're going, and you're going with the headboats with their own timeline and their own -- They're going to get their own booking.

Then one of the things that also is big, that they're concerned about, is that, if you close that season, and it's just for scamp, or yellowmouth, for most of us, because it's scamp, and we're just going to have the discards, and it's the same logic that we provide with all the species, and you have species that hang out in the same depth, kind of near the same sort of structure and together, and you stop one, and you're still going to fish for the other, and, okay, and so we still suffer from the discards, and I know, if you go into the --

We did a fishery performance report, a number of years ago, and a lot of us had some input on that, and were very much in agreement, I know in South Carolina and in North Carolina, and, basically, we were finding, you know, the red grouper and the scamp hang out together, and so the majority of the recreational fishermen in that area, or in the charter captains -- If they go on a grouper trip, a lot of people are thinking of red grouper, because they're, in their cycles, more abundant, and scamp is kind of a thing that -- It's the bonus fish sometimes, you know, that's in your aggregate.

Okay, and, sure, somebody on the boat will catch a scamp, and so that would be one of the reasons also, if you're closing it for scamp, and we're still fishing for something, like some of us in the northern part of the area, with red grouper, and we're going to have discards.

Action 7 was the recreational retention, and this is that we talked about before, and so the headboat limit, and the same thing, and your same discussions apply that were for gag and black grouper. Here's where they actually came back, and one of your charges to us was -- The things you asked us for was to look at the potential for a limit per boat, and, once we got around to this, and people were thinking of, okay, in an aggregate, three of a fish, or two of a fish, or down to one of a fish, and one or two folks brought up the fact that, hey, if we're getting down on some of these fish, and we're getting down to a retention limit of one, and, if we were to get to that, as a conservation measure, one grouper of what now could be up to, you know, four species, and then why bother with a boat limit?

When you start speaking of what the AP tends to like for conservation, it's, you know, season open as long as possible. If you have to cut us back a little bit, they really like it -- They would prefer, first, if it's a per-angler limit, and that can get more conservative, and that may not work out, and

then a per-boat limit, and so that's what is coming from the recreational component, and then, therefore, we -- Is there a next slide?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and that should be Action 8. Sorry.

MR. LORENZ: Action 8? Okay. So then where we're coming from is the season to be as long as possible, and retention on a per-angler basis is preferred, and then the boat, and so, therefore, we want to maintain access to the recreational fishery from May to December, and reducing the bag limit first, and we're going on to some of the commercial aspects of it. What else did I want to say?

One of the things that does come up with this -- The January -- A May start to December is -- It comes in on some species, that, when you get to like South Carolina and North Carolina, and, I mean, we actually have people asking, and the conversation has come up, of why can't those northern areas fish for the grouper, or at least the red grouper and the scamp, in January, because there seem to be no gravid females, and so they kind of noted that it doesn't seem like -- It seems like we get kind of a late start on it, and so that sometimes comes up, that Florida can start taking fish and things, and further south, before the rest of us get really a chance to go work on our ACL.

We talked about -- You talked about having a commercial trip limit, and I believe that, yes, currently, there is none for that, and, honestly here, I think you're probably going to need some kind of socioeconomic or work practice analysis on this, and this comes from -- The questions they have is that, and they're speculating off-the-cuff, and while they're sitting there, is that they don't know whether like a 300 pounds gross weight could have a negative effect on vessels that take these longer trips, and so it kind of works really good for dayboats, but what about the others, and so there is that consideration.

We talked about -- They don't even want to know whether the 300 pounds would economically justify a trip, and so that's why I'm thinking of some sort of more formal analysis of that, rather than just, okay, here's a limit, and then we were kind of mixed on how to make a decision on whether we wanted more pounds per trip or to justify a trip economically, versus potentially having a shorter season, and here's the one time where, you know -- This basically came from one of our members, who actually is one of the few among us that seems to know where to target scamp up in North Carolina, and he actually has some honey holes that he actually catches a number of scamp, and so this is the one time where the shorter season came in. That's it. All right. Thank you very much, and there's a couple of other things in deepwater, and we'll cover that later.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Bob. Are there any questions for Bob? All right. I don't see any hands, and I'm going to pass it back to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so we got through Actions 1 through 5 yesterday, and so I'm just going to go ahead and jump right into Action 6, and so Bob kicked us off talking about this action, since it would reduce the recreational fishing season for scamp and yellowmouth grouper. Alternative 1 shows you the status quo, and so, currently, there is a shallow-water grouper spawning season closure from January through April, and this action is not going to modify that spawning season closure. Preferred Alternative 2 would set the season from May 1 through August 31, and Alternative 3 would set the season from May 1 to September 31.

The AP recommendations with a little bit more detail regarding that motion that Bob just talked about there, and then we'll dive into effects, and, again, a reminder that the full details for the effects are going to be found in Chapter 4 of your draft amendment, which is Attachment 5b, and so, in looking at Alternative 1 compared to Preferred Alternative 2 and 3, shorter seasons would not slow the rate of harvest, but only confine landings, and so there's going to be little difference biologically between Alternative 2 and 3, and then, with Alternative 1, the season is more likely to close, which could increase discards.

When you're thinking about the economic effects, kind of thinking of this in the way of which years are going to be constrained by the ACL, and then, from 2028 onward, we're going to see higher economic benefit, based on the number of fishable days, and so kind of some nuances there on the economic effects that you can dive more into, and then, as far as the social benefits, we're looking at an increased social benefit for the number of fishable days, and so, obviously, a shorter season has less fishable days.

Then, as far as the administrative burden goes, Alternative 1 is, obviously, going to have lower administrative burden, because no season modifications would be needed, and then Preferred Alternative 2 and 3 would have the same amount of administrative burden, as the season would need to be modified.

We currently have a preferred for this one, and this is one of the options that is built into the decision tool, and so we can plug-and-play with this, when we get there, but I figured we would just run through the actions in this document, really quickly, and then we'll kind of look at the tool overall, and so, if there aren't any questions on this one, I will go ahead and move to 7.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions? I don't see hands, and I see some confused looks, but are we good here on this one? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm sorry, and I was studying something, Allie, when you were going over how we were going to approach this, and are we going to talk about -- You're going to go through everything, and then we're going to go back and revisit them, and I only bring that up because -- I don't want to change this, but I thought it might warrant some discussion, since the AP asked us to change this, and so is this the appropriate time?

MS. IBERLE: So that's up to you. If you want to dig into this now, we can bring up the tool, or we can go through and do the tool all at once, and it's really up to you guys.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we were debating up here, and so I think that we're thinking, if the committee would like, we would go through a few more of these actions, including the accountability measures, and then bring in the tool, and is that -- Okay. I see people nodding yes. Okay. All right. Are we good with that? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just kind of going back to our discussion at the last meeting, regarding the recreational season, it's my understanding that it really drops off around the first weekend of September, by the data, correct, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and that was a yes.

MR. ROLLER: She nodded her head yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right, and so we're good to pass it back to Allie, and she's going to continue moving through here, and then we're going to go to the tool.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That brings us to Action 7, which is split into two subactions. You know I love a color-coding second only to Christina, and so I'm going to go through the color-coding on this table, and so my thought process here was there's just a lot going on in this table, and so the actions that pertain to for-hire -- Within the context of this action, for-hire is charter and headboats are in red, and then anything that applies to private recreational is in yellow. If you mix those two colors, you get orange, and so anything that applies to both is orange, and so that's how you're kind of looking at this table to decide what is affecting who.

To start off, looking at the top chunk of this table here, this is going to look at your recreational bag limit. Currently, there is a three-fish bag limit, and so three scamp or three yellowmouth, within the grouper aggregate, and Alternative 2 is two fish, either scamp or yellowmouth grouper, within the aggregate, and then Alternative 3 is one fish, either scamp or yellowmouth, within the grouper aggregate, and, again, those are orange, and so they apply to everybody, private and for-hire, which is charter and headboat.

Then, when you're looking at Action 7b, Alternative 1 is the status quo, and so you see the current bag limit there, with no vessel limit, and then Alternatives 2a and 2b deal with just the private recreational component, and you will see here, in the bag limit column, there's a dependent on Subaction 7a, and so you have the ability to select a different bag limit or retain the three-fish bag limit, but that would be dependent on what you chose in Action 7a.

Then these two subalternatives either select a two or a four-fish vessel limit per day, for the private rec component, and then we come down to Alternatives 3a and 3b, and, again, we have a bag limit dependent on 7a, and this is for for-hire, which, again, is charter and headboat, and then you have an alternative for either two or four fish, either scamp or yellowmouth grouper, per trip, and so, with these two alternatives, there is an ability to take multiple trips per day.

We have some really simple language changes for these alternatives. In the CFR, the grouper aggregate is technically called the grouper and tilefish combined aggregate, and so we fixed the wording there, to make sure that that matched, and then, on 7b, we just added the word "combined", in the parentheses, just to make sure that we're clear that this vessel limit is an aggregate limit, and so anglers aren't having to identify between scamp or yellowmouth, and so, again, just not changing the spirit of any alternatives, but just lending some clarity there.

We've kind of gone over all of these discussion points, and I think it's going to be a little bit more prudent to look at the tool and how these alternatives play with the rest of the alternatives under catch limits, and we have some updated tables here, and so these are going to be the percent change, broken out kind of nicely into two tables, so that the first table is looking at the bag limit, and then the second table is looking at those vessel limit alternatives, and, again, we have the columns for private, charter, and headboat.

We've looked at these graphs, and one of them we updated in between committee and Full Council at the last meeting, and so you have seen these, but we're showing these again, and so the

distribution of scamp and yellowmouth angler harvest, and this is from dockside intercepts, and then distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper vessel harvest, again from dockside intercepts.

We have your AP recommendations, and you guys had a lot of discussion on this with black sea bass, and Bob kind of went over it a little bit again, and so I'm not going to spend too much time here. I will go through your effects, really quickly, and so starting with 7a, and so, again, this is just the bag limit, and, obviously, a more conservative bag limit would be expected to have more biological benefit. Similar to the season, with economic benefits, you're kind of thinking of more is the ACL constraining harvest, and, if it's not, then the more restrictive bag limit would have -- It would provide the least amount of economic benefit.

With social, you're kind of thinking of it more angler trip, or trip satisfaction, and so, you know, a larger bag limit would provide more trip satisfaction, and then on the flip side of that is the season length, and so, if you have a more restrictive bag limit, you may have a longer season and more access. Then administrative burden, and there's little difference between all of the alternatives, and there's already a bag limit in place, and so this modification will be quite minor.

Then, looking at 7b, a little bit more nuance here, and, obviously, if we're putting in a vessel limit, any alternative that establishes that vessel limit is expected to have biological benefit, and the economic analysis here, again, is kind of more nuanced by year, as far as which years are going to be constrained by the ACL, and so I'm not going to read through all of that, but you kind of get the gist. If your ACL is already constraining harvest, there's not a huge effect on the economics, and then, when you're not constrained by the ACL, a more conservative vessel limit is obviously going to have more economic effect.

Similar to 7a with social benefits, and so trip efficiency, and, if you have a more restrictive vessel limit, you're not going to have as efficient of a trip, or trip satisfaction, and then, on the flip side of that, looking at season length and stock benefit, and so the social benefit may come from long-term benefits to the stock or a longer season and increased access.

Alternative 1 would have less administrative burden, when compared to the rest of the alternatives, because there is currently not a vessel limit, whereas Alternatives 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b would be establishing a vessel limit and would accrue some administrative burden there, and so that's what I've got with regard to 7a and 7b. The other thing I did was I pulled over your discussion from Reg 36, and so this is the points that Mike wrote up for you guys during that discussion, and I thought, if you wanted to look back at those, I'm not flipping back and forth between documents, and I have some draft motions here that I figured we could come back to after we look at the decision tool, and, obviously, we can come back to any of the items in the decision document after we've played with that tool, and so any questions before we kind of get through the rest of the actions, so that we can play with the tool? All right.

Barreling ahead, that brings us to Action 8, and that's establish an aggregate commercial trip limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper. You see your alternatives here. Alternative 1, which is status quo, and neither scamp nor yellowmouth currently have a commercial trip limit, and Alternative 2 would establish a 200-pound gutted weight trip limit, and then Preferred Alternative 3 is 300, and then 4 and 5 are 400 and 500 pounds gutted weight, respectively.

I did want to make sure that -- It can get a little confusing, moving forward, and so the commercial trip limit is currently tracked in whole weight, and we converted the commercial ACLs into pounds gutted weight, so that we can kind of look at things apples-to-apples, but we'll still have that commercial ACL in pounds whole weight, and so, like when you look at it on monitoring, it will still have the whole weight unit on it, and I don't think that there's an issue there, but I just wanted to have it there, so that you guys could look at it apples-to-apples, and so, if you're seeing a lot of units, that's why.

Table 4 shows the percent reduction in harvest associated with each trip limit alternative, and we reviewed Figure 3 in March, and so I'm not going to spend too much time on this, but this is the distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper trip harvest between 2018 and 2022. I will remind you that's the year range that you're using for your preferred alternative for allocations. Then, again, we've seen Figure 4, and that's the distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper trip harvest between 2020 and 2022.

Then, because this is the only commercial management measure action, we were able to kind of simplify projections, and so we have the total ACL preferred, and we have the allocation preferred, and we have this, and so that's why we don't have a tool for commercial, because we have these three preferreds, so we could give you projections a little more simply than the rec sector, and so that highlighted column is showing you the projected season closure for your preferred alternative for 2025 through 2029, and so we're looking at an early September closure to an early October closure, when you get out to 2029.

Bob really went over the AP recommendations well, but they're also listed there, and then, finally, for effects, for biological effects, I just want to note that trip limits don't have a direct biological effect, as harvest is going to be capped at the ACL. However, slowing harvest may have some biological benefits. As far as economic benefits, trip limits make commercially harvesting inefficient, and so, obviously, a lower trip limit may have economic effects. As far as the social effects go, we're looking at, again, trip efficiency, and so, a lower trip limit, lower trip efficiency, and then, thinking again too on the flip side of that, and so the season length is a long-term stock benefit, and so, if you have a more conservative trip limit, you may have a longer season, and then long-term benefits to the stock.

Alternative 1 is not expected to have administrative burden, because it would not implement a commercial trip limit for species that don't currently have one, and then there's little differences between the burden for Alternative 2, Preferred Alternative 3, and 4, as all of these would establish a commercial trip limit, and then they would need to monitor for any ACL closures, or monitor if the commercial ACL is exceeded. Any questions on Action 8, before I move to 9? All right.

Action 9 will establish commercial accountability measures for the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex. We've got your AM table here. Alternative 1 would not establish an AM for the complex. Alternative 2, I kind of labeled this one status quo for scamp and yellowmouth, and so this is the AMs that are currently in place for scamp, as it is by itself, and then yellowmouth within that other South Atlantic shallow-water grouper.

Currently, there is an in-season AM, and so, when the ACL is expected to be reached, or is reached, then the current season closes, and then there's a post-season AM where the commercial ACL is reduced in the following year if commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL, the total ACL

is exceeded, and the stock is overfished, and all three of those conditions need to be present for the post-season AM to be triggered.

Your current preferred alternative I have called the uncoupled post-season, and so it retains that in-season closure, and then the commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of overage, only if the commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL, and so it's no longer tied to stock status or total ACL.

The effects summary on that, no biological, economic, or social benefits are expected for this, as AMs are required under Magnuson. The administrative burden is lower. However, it still doesn't follow Magnuson, and so it's not a viable option. Alternative 2 is expected to have a lower biological benefit, because the post-season AM is reliant on the total ACL, the sector ACL, and the stock status, whereas Preferred Alternative 3 is reliant only on the commercial landings.

With regard to economic effect, Alternative 2 is expected to have higher economic benefit, as the post-season AM is less likely to be triggered and reduce the ACL in the following season, and, again, the lower economic benefit for Alternative 3 is that post-season is more likely to be triggered.

It's pretty much the same concepts with social, and, obviously, less social benefit if the post-season AM is more likely to be triggered, and then, as far as administrative burden, Alternative 2 is expected to have lower administrative burden, as the post-season is less likely to be triggered, requiring action, and then Preferred Alternative 3 has a higher burden, as it's more likely to be triggered. Any questions, before I move on to the last two actions, and then we can look at the tool?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't see any hands.

MS. IBERLE: All right. If something comes up, we can always shoot back to one of these actions. That brings us to Action 10, which establishes recreational accountability measures for scamp and yellowmouth. We've got a little bit bigger table here, but some similar alternatives, and so, again, Alternative 1 is not establishing any AMs, and Alternative 2 is very similar. It's that status quo for scamp and yellowmouth, and so there is an in-season closure when the rec landings reach, or are expected to reach, the ACL, and then a post-season AM is tied to those three triggers. The only difference between the commercial and the recreational post-season AM is that the recreational season is reduced in the following year, and not the ACL.

Alternative 3 is the uncoupled season reduction payback, and so we kind of took that commercial post-season AM of the ACL reduction, kept the in-season closure, and uncoupled those triggers, and so the post-season AM is no longer reliant on the total ACL, or the stock status, and you have a season reduction, or I'm sorry. An ACL reduction.

Alternative 4 retains the in-season closure and uncouples that post-season AM trigger. However -- My apologies, and I think I actually messed these up. Alternative 3 is the season reduction, and Alternative 4 is the ACL is being reduced. There's a lot going on with AMs, but, most importantly, your current preferred is Preferred Alternative 5, and that is removing the in-season AM and uncoupling the post-season AM, and so, if recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, the

post-season AM is triggered, and that AM is a recreational season reduction in the following year and not an ACL reduction.

I didn't include all of the alternatives, because they're quite lengthy, and I only included the alternatives that had a language change here, and, again, very minor changes, just to lend some clarity to these alternatives, and so we just added in recreational annual catch limit here, to make sure that the overage we were talking about is clear, and then we threw in the word "complex", and we just wanted to, again, make sure that everything was crystal clear, and so not changing the spirit of anything, but we just wanted to make sure that you were aware of those changes.

Then, looking at the effects summary, it's going to be very similar to the commercial, and so I'm not going to spend a ton of time here, and I'm going to focus on your preferred, and so, for the biological, Preferred Alternative 5 is going to have the lowest benefit, compared to the other alternatives, since there is no in-season AM. It's going to have the highest economic and social benefit, because there is no in-season AM. However, that post-season AM is still triggered easier than Alternative 2, and then Preferred Alternative 5 is expected to have the lowest amount of administrative burden, since there won't need to be any monitoring for an in-season closure and only that post-season. All right, and this is the final action, and so any questions on any of the AM actions, before we get through this?

Then I'm going to keep going, and so this is your final action, Action 11, and that's to revise the total annual catch limit, sector annual catch limits, for the OSASWG complex, and so this is everybody that's left after you removed yellowmouth from the OSASWGs. In this table, and this is the -- Alternative 1 is the current status quo for the OSASWG species, and so that's rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowmouth, and yellowfin, and so yellowmouth is still -- When you're looking at these numbers, yellowmouth is still here, when you're looking at this line.

The ABC is 104,190 pounds, and the ACL is set equal to that ABC, and then we have the breakdown of commercial and recreational, and there is the respective sector ACLs listed there. The preferred alternative is just simply removing the portion of the ACL that is allocated for yellowmouth grouper, and so it's around 4,000 pounds.

If you remember that ABC and ACL that will be put in place for the scamp and yellowmouth complex, it already accounts for landings for yellowmouth grouper. If we didn't modify this ACL, essentially what would be happening is we would have two different catch limits that allow for yellowmouth grouper landings, and so your current preferred would not modify the ABC, and, again, we had a lot of discussion, I think last June, about how this will be done in the upcoming unassessed species, and the rest of these species are unassessed, and we need to have the SSC give us an updated ABC recommendation for this group of species.

The only thing that's being modified is the ACL, and so that's being reduced by that four-thousand-and-change pounds, and then what we did with the sector ACLs is just reduced them proportional to how they already stood, and so we're not modifying the actual allocation, if you will, but we're just reducing each by that four-thousand-and-change pounds.

We have some change to the alternative language here, and it looks like a lot, but, essentially, all we're doing is just pointing out the species that are in the complex, just making sure that it's super

clear that yellowmouth is included in Alternative 1, and it's not in Alternative 2, and just really making sure that there's clarity in these alternatives.

Then we'll look at effects, and so Alternative 1 -- We're not expecting biological, economic, or social benefits, as this is a non-viable option, and it would allow for landings of yellowmouth grouper outside of the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex. Preferred Alternative 2 is pretty much looking at higher benefit biologically, economically, and socially across-the-board, and then, as far as administrative burden, we're going to have, obviously, a higher burden upfront, because we have to modify this ACL, but we'll be coming back to this complex later, with the unassessed species, and so we kind of have to have this burden upfront.

Then that's all I have for you guys, as far as the decision document goes, and so my thought now would be to just look at the tool, and we can play around with the different recreational management measure actions, and underneath the current total ACL, the preferred, and allocation preferreds, and then we can come back to this and make any motions that you guys see fit.

All right, and so the tool is going to look very similar. If you were around for Amendment 53, this tool is going to look very similar, and I just want to orient us, really quick, first, and so this first blue section is going to meet all of your conditions, and so you see here that this is essentially the length of the season, and so I can modify how many days the season is closed, and so, when you're looking at the current grouper closure, 100 percent is 100 percent closed for that month, and so, currently, when you're looking at this, we've kind of already imputed that shallow-water grouper closure.

Then, down here, we can select your preferred alternative for allocations, which we already have in there, and, again, if you need me to zoom-in at any point, just let me know, and then next is Action 7a, and so we can select which bag limit. Our analyst was amazing and split it between charter and headboat, and so, right now, this action lumps those two together, but, within this tool, we can look at it for each component split out, and then we have 7b, and so, again, you choose which vessel limit you want.

Then, when you come down here, we've got projected landings in this chart, and then this table here is going to show you, for each year, 2025 through 2029, what your expected ACL percent overage, in pounds and percentage, and this sandbox ACL we used in gag. In gag, we had ten years of landings, and we bookended that analysis, and so we looked at year-one, kind of middle of the road, and then year-ten, and it was a little bit more useful to look -- To plug an ACL that wasn't displayed in this sandbox ACL, whereas, here, we have 2025 through 2029, but we could still put a theoretical ACL in that box, but it's not super crucial.

Then, down at the bottom, we have your landings, and then you have the preferred alternative ACLs, and so I will kind of just stay at your mercy, and you tell me what buttons to hit, and we can look at the season projections.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm looking to the committee on thoughts here on this. All right, and so this is the recreational season. We do have a preferred under this action, but, if you were wanting to look at other options here, other thoughts. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have a question, because I'm much less familiar with sort of how we operate the recreational seasons and closures, and this will operate the way we now operate gag, in that, at the beginning of the season, the Regional Administrator will say it opens on this day, and is that how you do it? It opens on this day, and it closes on this day, and can someone remind me? In other words, if we say the season is May through December, as no action, and that's not really what the season is going to be, correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I get all the accountability measures confused, and so let me just go quickly, and so it says -- I think the way it would work is we would open May 1, and the first year would go through December, but, if we exceeded the ACL in year-one, then I would set the season based on the commensurate timeframe to constrain harvest to that season in year-two, and then, going forward, they would have to manage for avoiding overages.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So Allie says that's if we didn't modify the season. If we set a specific time period that was three or four months, Andy, would you still be setting the season so that -- Like, if there was an overage in year-one, would you still, based on the AM, decrease it within that three or four-month window that we've already established, and is that how that would work?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and so, if there is an overage of the ACL to prevent the ACL from being exceeded in the following year, we would shorten the season. Now, presumably, by setting the season April through August, right, you're reducing the likelihood of a significant overage, because you didn't continue it on through the rest of the year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to clarify, right now, the preferred alternative is May through the end of August. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to note that, given your current preferred for accountability measures, you have no in-season accountability, and it's all post-season, and so, if you don't constrain them with that shortened season, you're going to get a big overage, and it's going to affect you the next year, and it's forcing the Fisheries Service to do that, and I would note that, at least for the first couple of years, the current analysis shows that the ACL is projected to be met within Wave 4, which is why your fixed season is what it is now, I believe. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. That was helpful. Kerry and then Tom.

MS. MARHEFKA: I certainly understand, and I'm absolutely not sitting here suggesting that we throw in-season closures in here for the recreational fishery, and I guess my question is to Bob, and I was at that meeting, and I'm having a hard time recalling the AP's discussion on this. In your notes, you said that they felt very strongly, and I guess there was a vote, that everyone sort of voted, that they prefer no alternative, but do you think they understood, at the time, the consequences of if we stick with no action, that it could have severe consequences the following year, and so you feel like that was understood?

MR. LORENZ: No, I do not believe that was totally understood, from the way the conversations go, and they often miss that, you know, and what you're seeing is just the desire to fish as much as possible, but, yes, that was not totally understood.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. A question for Bob, and then I have a question for Allie, and so, in that discussion, if the AP didn't understand the consequences, do you think they understood how little catch there is from September onward?

MR. LORENZ: No, and that was not mentioned, other than the fact -- What was dominating was that there are -- There seemed to be, from some demand from the headboats and the for-hire, for people wanting to go on trips at that time for those species, and, if it's closed, then they can't take that business on, and so that was -- Of those there, that was the focus.

MR. ROLLER: Absolutely, and so --

MR. LORENZ: Rather than, you know, oh, we may be over our ACL, and there was -- There were other discussions, even on other species, like in the deepwater, about MRIP showing that we exceed an ACL and that sort of a thing, and closing a season, and then also the fact that, on the whole basin, how Florida gets a start on some of the rest of us earlier in the season, and we get towards that wall before our fishing really starts to take off.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Bob. I mean, that's kind of always where I'm at, is trying to maximize the season, but, when you do look at these landings historically, the question we have to ask is, extending it through September, is the juice really worth the squeeze. What I am interested in here is the addition of the headboat limit analysis, and I'm just curious, Allie, if you could show us what is in the drop-down menu. We've heard a lot about this from the public, and I think, you know, if we do consider a vessel limit, we really need to have a discussion about how that impacts headboats.

MS. IBERLE: The other thing that I did want to clarify too is, in the drop-down for 7a, where it says no bag limit, that's essentially just -- Think of it as no bag limit modification, and so the three-fish bag limit. If you're not touching those, you're still assuming that three-fish bag limit, and what season would you like, just the status quo, where it's open until the end of December?

MR. ROLLER: To the end of December?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and so the current season is you have a closure from January through the end of April, but it's open from May to December. Do you want to leave it open from May to December and then modify the bag and vessel?

MR. ROLLER: Sure. I'm up for trying anything here, right, and we don't have a preferred on recreational bag limits yet, correct? Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and that's the one that we need to set, but, yes, looking back at the way that the AP's recommendation was worded, it seemed like they were willing to go down in the bag limit in order to get a longer season, and they were pretty adamant about that, and so we can use the decision tool to mess with the bag limits here, and then see how that affects the season, and so we could kind of back into this. I've got a list going of people with their hands raised. Judy and then Kerry.

MS. HELMEY: Okay. So we have, in Savannah, and so the gags, or the grouper, come in closer in October, and we actually do target them, and so maybe we could -- We can look at it any way, right, and we're just looking at it right now, and so, if we look at it, closing it -- You know, even closing December, or maybe November, and maybe that would help some, but I don't want to end up doing that and then, like Kerry said, you know, we won't -- It will end up closing, and, the next year, we'll have just like we had this year, which is devastating.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes. Good point. I've got Kerry and then Robert.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and, I mean, that's sort of what I'm trying to say out loud, is it really only matters for our Preferred Alternative 4, Number 6, is in the first year, because, in year-two, until we start getting ACL back, I suspect -- Someone tell me if I'm wrong, but it's going to be a very short season, like it's a very short season with gag, and so it almost doesn't matter what months we put on there, and the only thing I feel like we're trying to manage right -- I mean, it would, if we're changing months dramatically, if we're going from May and June to -- Getting rid of that and going to September and October, which I'm not suggesting, but I just want to make sure that I understand this.

We could choose Alternative 1, and it will matter in year-two, because we will have overrun it, like we did this year with our commercial gag, but, from then on, we are talking a very short season, and we will probably never see a September and October. We won't see anything but, what, thirty or forty-five days, until we start getting ACL back in a significant way.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm going to go back to the queue here. Robert and then Judy.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Tom brought up the headboats, and I just wanted to confirm that we can't -- Without slowing this down, we can't come up with a headboat alternative, or a special bag limit, and is that accurate?

MS. IBERLE: I'm sorry, and what was that?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Without slowing this amendment down, it's not possible to adjust the headboat-specific issue, and I think I heard, from the AP, that they would prefer not to slow this down for the headboat issue, and we're working on kind of the omnibus headboat amendment.

MS. IBERLE: If we modified the alternatives that we have here, the delay would come in re-analyzing new alternatives that we would need to look at, and that would take some time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy and then Tom.

MS. HELMEY: Okay, and let me make sure I've got this straight. If we do the shortened season, that's going to help us a lot for the next season, correct, as far as it not being closed in January, and is that what we're thinking?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I suspect, and, now, you throw the bag limit in there, and that, obviously, changes things a little, but I suspect that, even if we shorten the season to help for the next year, we would have to literally shorten it to June, May and June, and it would still probably be exceeded, unless the bag limit -- Can that happen in this situation? I mean, you have a whole tool, and I'm like spouting off, and so yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I had Tom and then Robert here.

MR. ROLLER: We've had a lot of discussion since my thought and my hand went up. Allie, could you scroll up, please? If you go to the vessel limit, and let's get rid of it and see what it looks like.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't know that you need it, and I think that you could just reduce the bag limit to get the longer season, and I don't know that you even need the vessel limit here.

MS. IBERLE: So this is -- Sorry, but I want to make sure everyone is clear on what conditions we have in the tool right now. So this is no season modification, retaining that annual spawning season closure, your current preferred alternative for allocations, and I just plugged in a two-fish bag limit, and so it's kind of middle of the road, and it's lower than status quo, and it's not one fish, and no vessel limit, and so, when you're looking at the projections here, you have a closure in year-one, but, when you're looking at that closure, it's a 7 percent overage, and so sixteen-hundred-and-change pounds is projected over the ACL. When you get to 2026, you have a 3 percent underage, and that underage increases as you go out to 2029, and so just looking at that scenario.

MR. ROLLER: Could you try it with one fish per person?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm going to go back to the hands here.

MS. IBERLE: Again, a reminder on the conditions for this, and so, currently, I have in here no season modification, preferred alternative for allocations, a one-fish bag limit, and no vessel limit, and the other thing, just really quickly, before I go on, is the alternatives for modifying the bag limit -- This is creating an aggregate bag limit, and so your three-fish bag limit is three scamp, three yellowmouth, whereas the modified bag limit is two fish, and it's scamp and yellowmouth is essentially one species at that point, and you're not needing to identify, and so, when you're looking at two fish and one fish, it's two fish, scamp or yellowmouth, and so, when you're looking at the projections for that scenario, we're not expected to see a closure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So that was the scenario for two fish or one fish?

MS. IBERLE: That was for one fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got a lot of hands here, and I'm going to back to the queue. I've got Tom, Robert, Andy, Kerry, Judy.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. Looking at this analysis here, I'm not seeing much benefit from a vessel limit, right, and so, given the comments from the headboats, I'm kind of leaning the way that we don't need to be looking at that, and, also, judging -- I mean, seeing an underage with

one fish as a bag limit, that's interesting, but two fish keeps us under for most years as well, and so, I mean, maybe a little bit of overage that first year, but, given the comments from the AP, that may be more of a better direction to go, to maximize the season and access.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that. Next up is Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: If you were to go with the one fish, and you didn't meet the ACL, is it possible for the service to extend the season?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it would have to be -- We would have to state it that way, and is that right, Andy or Shep? Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Well, in this case, there is no seasonal closure, and you have the year open, and so you run through the year, and you wouldn't catch it, and it's just not harvested ACL.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Well, I think, you know, everybody is trying to make a decision here, and, if we go with the conservative approach, shouldn't we get the benefit of having that the following year?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I get it, and, I mean, so what Robert is saying is, if there's an underage, should we carry it over, but don't we have a stock status that indicates we couldn't use carryover, because of the stock status?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: We're incentivized to stay on that side of the line then.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert tried. All right. Andy, Kerry, Judy, and then back to Tom.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I wanted to agree with Tom, right, and I'm not seeing a lot of value in the vessel limit. In terms of the tool itself, I guess a couple of things that I wanted to note. One is pay attention to how low these ACLs are, right, and scamp is not necessarily one of our best-sampled species, and so there is going to be higher percent standard error around it, and the projections do have 95 percent confidence limits, and you can see it's a pretty wide range around a very small ACL, and so our predictive capacity here is not as strong as ideally we would like it to be.

The other, I think, challenge we have with the out years of the projections, right, and so, the closer you are to kind of the current conditions, the better we can predict based on existing fishing behavior. As you go out in time, obviously, and regulations change, there's a lot of dynamics that will change in terms of how anglers might go out and target this species. Ultimately, if we're successful in rebuilding, and abundance is coming back, right now, the projections really aren't taking into account increasing catch rates, and so I would caution, I guess, putting a lot of reliance on those kind of 2026, 2027, and outward projections, really focusing in on what we would do in the near-term and how we could constrain harvest to the catch limit, to make sure that we don't have these disruptive seasons, where it's kind of seesawing back and forth with short seasons and then longer seasons.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you for that, Andy. Next up is Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That was really helpful, and I don't want to get into the minutia of sort of how the projections are done, but I do have a question as far as the no vessel limit, and I presume that -- The headboats, obviously, have the headboat logbook program, which I assume plays -- You all are looking at that, and it may play some part as you're looking at projections, and so you would have a way of, if a headboat landed on a whole pile of scamp, and we don't have a vessel limit, and they did well at that spot, and you're not necessarily extrapolating that out and then assuming that every other vessel, including, you know, a vessel with -- I just want to make sure, and I've never gotten into the minutia of how those are done, and that was just a question I had.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That was a good question. Judy and then back to Tom.

MS. HELMEY: Okay, and so, if we go with a one-fish, it's open all the way to -- Just like it is now, and our chances of still having the same season the next year is still pretty good, and am I understanding that correctly?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, according to the decision tool. I mean, Andy said to use caution, because it's a projection, but, yes. According to the decision tool, yes. Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Okay, and so, if we don't reach it, we lose it, right? Okay, but, if we go over it, we have to give it back, and what's wrong with that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's exactly what Robert just said, and Judy might have said it better, and I'm just saying. All right. I've got Tom and then back to Robert.

MR. ROLLER: Yes, but this is assuming we get that entire year season open with the shallow-water spawning closure, which we're going to have anyway, and so, assuming we don't go over, we really don't need that payback. I am very cognizant of what Andy said, particularly if we do see a rebuilding, and, you know, scamp is a fish that I target, but, at the same time, they're one that you can say you target, but you just kind of catch when they're there, right, and you can, you know, revise tactics a little bit, but, looking at this, I would be curious to see like, if we go to the two-fish bag, what a 7 percent overage would look like, in terms of a closure the following year, and I imagine that wouldn't be more than -- It would probably cut into an August or September season, given the short amount of landings after September.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Allie is working on the decision tool, so we can see the results of that.

MS. IBERLE: So the projected, and, again, projected, as Andy pointed out, overage is 7 percent, and the poundage is 1,600 pounds, and so we're not projecting a huge overage, and then, in the scenario we were just on before I modified it, the underage was -- I think it was like 6 percent in 2025, if you have a one-fish aggregate bag limit, and so the underage is quite small as well, and so just for consideration.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. A follow-up on that, Tom?

MR. ROLLER: So thank you for that. I mean, I'm kind of -- I'm curious like what that would look like in a timeframe, given that season more specifically, but, at the same time, you know, going back to Andy's comment, where I'm kind of waffling in between here is that, given this

longer season, and that seems to be more what our fishermen on the AP want. However, assuming that we hopefully see more fish, and we're getting a response, is it more safe to go with a one-fish bag limit, thinking into the future, given the length of these plans and the time it takes to revisit them?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so it's a great point. I have Robert and then Shep and then Judy.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: When would the next stock assessment for this complex happen, that would allow you to then start to recapture your underages?

MS. MCCAWLEY: John just said it might not even be on the schedule.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: So what I would say is that going with the one-fish bag limit might reduce the short-term risk, but, over the next five, six, seven, eight years, you're going to leave a lot of fish out of -- It's unfortunate that we're in this situation, but, you know, I think that the two-fish bag limit, or maybe even looking at three, because, quite frankly, long-term, the amount of fish that are going to be caught is going to be controlled by the service, and so you're allowing for more fish to be caught by your fishermen, if you go with the higher bag limit, which it's unfortunate that that's the dichotomy of the decision we have to make here today, but --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We've got lots of hands going up, and I also think that -- I'm afraid to even bring it up, but maybe you could go with like one fish in year-one and two, and then you could step it up after that, and I just hate to put out things that the Gulf Council talks about, but here's who I have on the list. I have Shep, then Judy, and then Spud and then Andy.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just two points. First, it's an annual catch limit, which means that we are not to exceed it, right, and that's the whole principle behind a limit, and sitting here and planning to exceed the annual catch limit, when you don't have an in-season accountability measure, is potentially problematic from a legal perspective, because you're setting your regs to exceed the limit and not take action until the following year.

I just wanted to respond to one thing Judy said. I mean, yes, it's lost, but it's lost in the sense that you didn't harvest it. This is an overfished stock that you need to rebuild, and so that's just not spending all your money, and you left a little more in the bank, and you're going to have more fish the following year, and, at least in theory, it's going to recover more quickly, and I would say, given that there's a lot of uncertainty to all of this anyway, and so you're hoping that you're right, and you don't end up going over, even if you predict that you won't. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Next up, I've got back to Judy. Then Spud, Andy, and then Robert.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you, Shep. That's good about the money and the fish, and so -- But the way I look at it, from a business standpoint, is, if we go with one fish, at least I will be able to tell my customers, and everybody will be able to tell their customers, whether you catch a fish or not, you at least get the opportunity to put the hook in the water and say catch it, because that's what fishing is all about. Fishing is all about being able to fish for something that you can keep, in the event you catch it, but that's where I stand anyway.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Judy. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: You actually described what I was going to say about a variable bag limit over time, to try to address this lost opportunity concern, and it compounds things, but I think it's worth -- It's at least worth investigating.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Next up is Andy, then Robert, then Tom.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I'm not opposed to, obviously, looking at a variable bag limit, and I guess there's two ways of approaching it, right, and you could build it into this amendment, and then set up kind of automatic triggers, but there is potential there that you're essentially increasing the bag limit, yet we've now started running into catch limit overages, right, under the lower bag limit, right, that you now have to then take an action to go back and change that, right, and so, to me, the preferred approach would be, if we aren't catching the catch limit, after a couple of years, and we're seeing these underages, we come back and we reevaluate our management options, and, whether it's changing the season that we adopted, you know, through this amendment, or modifying the bag limits, that's the opportunity to make those modifications.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So, Andy, I think what you're saying is, instead of -- You could either use a trigger to increase or are you also saying that you could use a framework action to increase? Okay. All right. Robert and then Tom.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: So, unless I misunderstood Bob, there was some concern, out of the AP, that they weren't meeting the ACL because they didn't have the opportunity to provide enough effort, and did I hear that correctly?

MR. LORENZ: Well, that would be brought up as sort of a logic for why they're not meeting it, and, well, hey, I'm not fishing, and so of course I can't.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: You know, kind of similar to some of the other concerns that I raised about black grouper, my concern would be to end up, you know, in 2028, or 2025, where you're at 25 percent of your ACL, and now that starts to become indicative, potentially, of an issue with the stock, which isn't necessarily correct, and we've created that underage, and so is it possible to have -- We have this tool, and is it possible every year to go in there and plug in the bag limit that gets you to slightly under the ACL, so that we can modulate that, rather than saying it's going to be one fish this year, two fish the next year, and three fish the next year?

Can we go back to every year looking at this and then setting that bag limit, whether it's one -- Why can't -- I mean, does it take this council sitting here looking at that? We're just going to plug it in and say, okay, it needs to be below the ACL, and can that be set by the service, so that we're consistently, you know, minimizing that underage, is what we're shooting for, but we want to minimize the amount of the underage.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I've heard that stated two ways, and that's part of what Andy was saying, and so, yes, you could have a trigger, and you could say something like if there's an underage, or if there's an underage of X percent, and then, in the following year, increase the bag limit to two, or X, or whatever it is, or you could put an item on the workplan indicating that you are intending to re-look at -- Through a framework action, re-look at the bag limit, assuming that you have some years with an underage, and so I think you could do either one. Tom and then Trish.

MR. ROLLER: I am agreeable to investigate any sort of variable bag limit, whether we do it here or as some sort of framework, but I am less concerned with future underages, because, if we have an underage going forward, it's because the stock remains in really bad shape. I am more concerned about stock rebuilding, and us meeting these ACLs through projections earlier, and so, if we have an underage, it's because people aren't catching them, right, and so like that's not my concern, and my concern is having it get a lot better and us seeing a -- I'm not going to use any of the red words, but having that sort of action going forward.

Now, I want to really highlight Judy's comment, and she's mentioned this before, and, more specifically, in terms of grouper, you cannot, particularly in a for-hire operation, preface enough the possibility of catching a grouper and how that sells trips, even if they're never going to catch one on some of those trips. The possibility that you could is very important.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm just thinking out loud here, after listening to all the discussion, and so I'm wondering if -- You know, we talked about variable bag limits and whatever, but I'm wondering if maybe we give this one-fish bag limit a shot for say three years, and, within three years, we'll have the updated MRIP, after they've done all their -- In theory anyway, we'll have the updated MRIP, with all the recalibrations and testing of, you know, the new sampling stuff, and then we can also monitor, you know, are we rebuilding, are we starting to see an increase in abundance over those three years, and, anyway, that's my thought, and I don't know that we need to say that we'll revisit -- That, you know, we'll do a reg in three years, but this will give us an opportunity to see what the one bag limit does, and then we can adjust in the future, and I'm just saying three years based off MRIP should be improved by then.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert, and then I'm going to try to summarize.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I just wanted to circle back to Tom's comment, and I totally understand where you're coming from, Tom, and at least, you know, my thinking on this is we're supposed to get to the annual catch limit, right, and that's what we're supposed to do, in order to manage based on all the science and everything, or close to whatever buffers, but I believe that we're supposed to fish around that annual catch limit, and so I think, as make decisions, you know, leaving a lot of extra meat on the bone -- You know, it throws out of balance other issues, other fisheries, and you threw out the bad three-letter word, but that is part of the concern, moving forward, and so I just wanted to add that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let me try to summarize where I think we are, and so it seems like, and please raise your hand to comment if this is not where you think we are, and so it seems like we're kind of honing-in on a one-fish bag limit, and then with a gameplan of relooking at this at some time period in the future, and so we could put it on the workplan, that we want to consider a framework action, and Trish had an idea of three years, and another thing that needs to happen is we need to look at the SEDAR schedule, and we need to add another stock assessment, because that's not on there either, and so, to be honest, we really need to get that on the list, and so, maybe when we look at the workplan, later in the week, we can also look at the SEDAR schedule and maybe talk about when we want another stock assessment on scamp, because it's not on the list at all.

Are folks thinking a one-fish bag limit? It seems like people are thinking -- Okay. I see heads nodding yes, because the reason it's -- Then I will go to Judy, but it seems like one of the reasons we're honing-in on the one-fish bag limit is we get that longer season, and this matches what the AP indicated that they wanted, and so we're kind of doing a tradeoff here, by decreasing the bag limit, in order to try to try to keep the season open as long as possible. Judy and then back to Tom.

MS. HELMEY: Yes. If we go to the bag limit, and I'm just making sure I'm clear about this, and so it will be open just like it was previously, from May to December, to the end of the year?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Hopefully. Assuming there is no overage.

MS. HELMEY: But, if it goes bad the next year, and say it goes over, even though we're only on one fish, and what does that mean? If it only goes over a little bit, does that mean the season will be shortened?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, it depends on how big the overage is.

MS. HELMEY: So that's how you decide, right, by the overage?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. HELMEY: Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Tom. Then Kerry.

MR. ROLLER: So, you know, I'm very -- I agree with Robert that what we're trying to do is we still need to try to maximize access, and there's nothing wrong with that, and I do see us going towards this one-fish bag limit, and me being okay with that, and the question I have, and I guess this goes back to Andy, and the discussion that you bring up about stock assessments, and let's say we go to a one-fish bag limit, and we're having overages, and how can we revisit that to increase the bag limit? Do we need a stock assessment for that, or can we just say, hey, we have an overage, and we just want to do a framework?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and that's why I was suggesting a framework, and so that's why I was suggesting that, maybe when we look at that workplan, we put a placeholder, X number of years out, and I'm sure that John doesn't like that, that we're planning the workplan out like four years from now, and we put a placeholder for coming back and looking at this, but, also, I would put an assessment on the schedule too, and I'm just saying.

MR. ROLLER: I am more -- With that logic, I am much more comfortable going with a one-fish bag limit, particularly stating, here on the record, that that is our plan to do so, and to look at that, depending upon how catch projections look.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I just want to point out that this is one of the reasons that I've been wanting to develop the SAFE reports, is to provide you all guidance on some of these questions, and so we're

not going to be getting information just between stock assessments, and we're going to be updating you regularly on all stocks within the FMP.

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

MR. STRELCHECK: I want to just remind -- Well, I guess maybe the council isn't aware, and so we had a SEDAR Steering Committee meeting in May, and, obviously, we're looking at revamping the SEDAR process, to make it more efficient, and so that potentially means that we're doing to some simpler, or less time consuming, stock assessments, and I think scamp and yellowmouth is probably going to fall into a category where we would want to look at a simpler approach, and there may be some interim methods, and there might be some indices of abundance or things that we could look at that could give us kind of an indication of how things are trending, and, if we are running into overages, right, I think the key is what Tom is suggesting, is, you know, are the overages because we have too much fishing power, and effort, or is it because the fish are responding, and the population is going up, but the catch limits aren't going up commensurate with that population growth.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Sounds good. That's a great point. Okay. We're on this action in the document where we're looking at the bag limit, and can you scroll up, so that we can see the alternatives here, because we need to select a preferred here. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am ready to make a motion, Madam Chair, if you're okay with that, based on what I've heard here at the table.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am going to try to do a two-in-one. **I move that we deselect Preferred Alternative 2 and go with Alternative 1 for Action 6.** Just so everyone is on the same page, per the AP's request, what I intend to do is go back to no action on the fishing season, based on our discussions. **Then that we select, for Alternative 7, Subaction 7a, Alternative 3, which I understand to be the one-fish bag limit for everyone, no vessel limit.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Hang on. We're typing, and then I'll try to restate it. Tom, are you a second?

MR. ROLLER: Second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We'll just type here for a second.

MS. MARHEFKA: **I would also like to select Alternative 1 in Action 7, Subalternative 7b, which is no action for vessel.**

MR. ROLLER: Yes, I'm okay, and I'm seconding that motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds great, and so the seconder is good with this. All right. Let me try to explain what we're doing, and then I will reread the motion, and so what we're doing is the first thing we did was we went into the season action, and we went to no action, and so this will basically open the season in May and run it through the end of the year. Then we went into the recreational bag limit action and selected a one-fish bag limit, like we were discussing, and

then we went into the recreational vessel limit action and said no action, and so no vessel limit, and so I'm just making sure, Kerry, that that's what you wanted, and that's what we're doing. Then I will read the motion. The motion is -- Okay. We have a comment by John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: One slight editorial, before you do, and I think it will be easier to read if you move "for Action 6" in front of "deselect", because that's how the rest of it reads, and you will kind of know which piece you're talking about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Then the specific motion to do all that is, for Action 6, deselect Alternative 2 and select Alternative 1, no action, and that's the recreational season, and, for Action 7a, which is the recreational bag limit, select Alternative 3, and, for Action 7b, which is the recreational vessel limit, select Preferred Alternative 1, no action. All right. That has been seconded by Tom. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just noting this, because it's a relevant consideration, but, again, this continued focus on season length and opportunity is going to increase discards in the recreational sector. Decreasing the bag limit, and leaving the season open, I just mention that for what it is, and this is more commercial than recreational, and discards for this stock, I don't believe, are as bad as they are -- Certainly not for black sea bass and some other things we've seen, but that is a likely consequence of this. If we do a bycatch practicability analysis, that will have to be incorporated into it. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you for that comment, Shep. All right. We've had a lot of good discussion on this, and we used the decision tool here. I think that this is encapsulating everything that we discussed. Is there any more discussion on that motion? Okay. Tom, questions?

MR. ROLLER: Just a comment, and, obviously, I support this motion, and I seconded it, but my support for the lower recreational bag is per the discussion that we will look at that in the future, if need be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes. Sounds great, and remember that when we come back to the workplan and all that.

MR. ROLLER: Absolutely.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion on this motion? All right. **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think, given what Tom said, Allie, I think, when you write the council's justification for this, to include language that the council is aware that this could result in underages in future years and has stated its intent to look at that and consider a framework adjustment, if necessary, or if it's appropriate.

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and we'll be coming back, to the next meeting in September, with any public comment we receive, and we will review you all's draft rationale, and so we'll make sure that that's clarified, and stated, in that portion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so then that took care of recreational, and so, because the AP had a lengthy discussion about this, and we already have a preferred on the commercial trip limit, but I wanted to bring this back to the committee, to see if we still want to stick with this preferred, thinking about what we heard from the AP. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: We do, and the rationale being that I think that we said last time -- It's, I believe, that same as the gag trip limit, and so that just works for us, in that way, and we also are sort of doing the same thing, and we're trying to balance, you know, how long of a season we can get, you know, with what poundage, and so that's the rationale for that 300, and we don't want to change it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Kerry. Amy.

MS. DUKES: I completely agree, and the Snapper Grouper AP also agreed with the Preferred Alternative 3 for Action 8.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Sounds good. Any more discussion? All right. Thanks for that discussion. All right, and so Allie has already walked through the whole rest of the document, and everything else in the document has a preferred, and so the accountability measures have preferred. Before we approve this amendment for public hearing, is there any desire to go back and look at those other actions and preferreds, like on the AMs, and I feel like we had good discussion on that at previous meetings, about the accountability measures, and is there any desire to revisit those things? All right. Then the gameplan here would be to approve this amendment, as modified, for public hearings, and, Allie, would the public hearings occur between now and the September meeting? Is that the intent?

MS. IBERLE: Yes, and we kind of have a bullet under what's next, and so, essentially, that's up to you guys, what you want these to look like. Council staff is thinking webinar will be best, because this isn't super targeted, from what we've heard, and so that might work best, and then we'll bring you back that public comment, but it's up to you guys.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you so much, and so we need somebody to make this motion. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. **I motion to approve Amendment 55, as modified, for public hearings.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Trish, and it's seconded by Tom. Any more discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** Then, just to wrap up that discussion, the intent is, in that direction to staff under what's next, it would be that staff would try to hold public hearings, via webinar, prior to the September meeting, and I feel like we have 700 items that are going to scoping or public hearing between now and the September council meeting. Just saying. All right. Anything else on scamp and yellowmouth? All right. That concludes our discussion of that document. Let's take a ten-minute break while we transition to our next item. All right. Our Chair says a five-minute break. Okay. Ten minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going back into Snapper Grouper, and next up is diving into Amendment 46. I think we have multiple folks here that are going to give us some recommendations, and so the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical AP recommendations and then the Private Recreational Angler AP recommendations, and so let's start with Luiz Barbieri, to give us the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical AP recommendations.

MR. HADLEY: Madam Chair, if I could, I was going to provide a brief overview, before we get into the AP recommendations, is that okay?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure.

MR. HADLEY: Okay. All right. Well, thank you, everybody, and, again, apologies for not being able to present this in the room with you. I'm a little under the weather, and so I'm trying to keep my germs to myself and presenting remotely today, but I appreciate the opportunity to present.

What I'm going to do is provide a brief overview of the amendment, just to kind of orient everybody. That way, the AP presenters aren't presenting the same topic over and over again, and so to make sure that everybody kind of has the same baseline information, but I will provide, you know, just a brief overview of Amendment 46, and then we'll go into the AP reports, the AP summary reports, that you requested AP review from, and so we'll start off with the Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel. We have the Private Angler Advisory Panel, and then also the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel, and so I will turn it over to the various AP chairs in just a minute.

Just to orient everyone, and kind bring everyone up-to-speed and, you know, remember where this amendment stands, the council has discussed this over several meetings, and there is five actions in the amendment. The first two actions, Actions 1 and 2, cover the private recreational permit in the snapper grouper fishery, and so Action 1 establishes the permit. As a reminder, the council has selected a preferred alternative under this action, where the permit would be an angler-based permit, versus a vessel-based permit, and so the angler-based permit is currently the council's preferred alternative.

Under Action 2, this action specifies which species would be covered by the permit, and the council, thus far, has chosen all fifty-five snapper grouper species to be covered by the permit, and so it essentially covers the entire complex, and that's the council's current preferred, and so those two actions cover the permit.

The next two actions, Actions 3 and 4, cover the education requirement, and there are no selected preferred alternatives for these two actions, and so Action 3 establishes the education requirement, and Action 4 specifies when the education requirement would need to be satisfied, and how often it would essentially need to be renewed, or whether or not it would need to be renewed, and so those are those two actions that cover the education requirement.

Then Action 5 sort of ties all of those previous decisions together for the permit and the education requirement and allows states to be exempted from the federal permit requirement if they are willing to implement their own equivalent measures, and so some sort of equivalent private

snapper grouper permit and private education sector education requirement, or private component education requirement.

That's kind of a very brief overview, but I just wanted to introduce that and remind you that you have selected preferred alternatives for Actions 1 and 2. There are no preferred alternatives for Actions 3 through 5, and, just to kind of orient everyone, and I think that will be some good background for what you'll hear shortly from the AP chairs, and so, without further ado, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Luiz Barbieri to present the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel summary points.

DR. BARBIERI: Thank you, John, and thank you, and good morning, Madam Chair and council members. Apologies from my end as well for not being able to be there in-person, and I had planned on being there, but life happens, and we have to adjust, and so I had to modify my plans. It's great to have that introduction that John Hadley just presented, and so, you know, that situates you on the main purpose, the main goals and actions, associated with this amendment, and then it provides you with an overview of, you know, what we're going to be discussing next.

At this last meeting, and this was our fifth AP meeting, and we met by webinar, and this happened on April 9, and what we did was basically review and discuss our previous recommendations, given the fact that we haven't presented to you in a while, that you have been looking at this regulatory amendment, and making some changes, revisions, and choosing things there, right, making choices, and so we reviewed our previous recommendations, and then, in light of any changes or questions that you provided, we then went on to provide our own technical feedback to you.

One of the things that I wanted to -- I think this is a good time to highlight here that there are several APs that have been put together separately, right, to look at this issue and to provide you with advice, and recommendations, and this AP, the technical AP, is more focused on, of course, the technical side of things, but, from a survey, design and survey, implementation perspective, right, and so you may see, throughout this presentation, that, at times, we may -- We may sound like we're going against the grain of what you have chosen as preferred, but it's because we want to talk to you from that perspective of what would be the best options, considering the survey that's going to be in place, right, as a complementary survey to MRIP, to be a specialized complementary survey and provide better data for snapper grouper. The other APs are going to provide their own advice, and they're going to be touching more on some of these other actions that we are not really focused on.

As John pointed out, for this first action, which is to establish the private recreational permit for snapper grouper, you have chosen a preferred, as John mentioned, and so this an angler-based permit, while we, as a technical AP, have recommended vessel-based, and this was one point of discussion at this last meeting that we went through, and then, you know, trying to address some of the questions that you had as this discussion of angler-based versus vessel-based continues.

One of the questions that you posed was about rental vessels, as well as vessels from boat clubs and other circumstances where a vessel owner may not be present on a vessel, and so you wanted to hear about that, as well as, given our recommendation for you to go with Alternative 2, a vessel-based permit, would integration of a vessel-based permit be in conflict with implementation of the education requirement, and what would be the problems associated with that, or lack thereof.

Regarding the rental vessels, the boat club vessels, we actually, after much discussion, felt that this was unlikely to be a significant concern. Those are a very small proportion of the vessel trips. When you compare the entire universe of private boat trips, this is a very small percentage of trips, and that those are mostly operating inshore, or nearshore, and so their actual effort, fishing effort, towards the snapper grouper species is even smaller, in general, and so we don't think that this would be a significant concern.

In terms of integration of a vessel-based permit with an education component, we felt that this needs to be further discussed, if you reconsider your preferred here, and you decide to look into a vessel based, because there are details that still need to be clarified on how we would be able to align the vessel-based permit with the education component, and so, for example, who would be required to obtain this permit and then required to go through the education component, right, and is the vessel owner, or the vessel operator, at least one person onboard the permitted vessel, and so aligning all the people that are going to be fishing from that vessel, potentially, beyond just the vessel owner and the vessel operator, and how do we align the two, in terms of the coverage of the education component that we want to achieve.

In that sense, even though the vessel-based permit, establishing that as a vessel-based permit, would be beneficial from the survey design and implementation, it may not align very well. There are some challenges, and it's not that they cannot be overcome, but they are going to have to be discussed, and choices made, on how to align a vessel-based permit with the educational component.

Again, our recommendation was to continue recommending the vessel-based permit, and we thought that that would be superior to an angler-based permit, from a technical perspective, from a logistical perspective, and for survey design, and that the net benefits to any subsequent improvements in private recreational catch and effort estimates from a vessel-based permit are likely going to be greater than those resulting from an angler-based permit, and this is why, in the beginning, I wanted to emphasize that this recommendation, being presented from that perspective, still needs to be integrated with recommendations coming from the other APs and then, of course, evaluated by staff, and the IPT, as they go through this process.

Then another point that was discussed, that came up in our discussion, and that applies to both vessel-based on angler-based, would be exemptions, right, and, looking at the language that's there now in this draft amendment, we did not see any thought about potential exemptions that are likely to come up, and it's not uncommon for the current angler-based permitting and licensing systems, that we have in place now for most states, to have those exemptions for seniors, for military folks, et cetera, including how do we handle the people who buy a fishing license with a lifetime validity, right, and so how do we align that with having our directory, our sampling frame of anglers, updated annually if people are not renewing their license annually, and so all of this is something that needs to be thought about, right, in terms of exemptions.

We feel that a vessel-based permit would be more likely to avoid exemptions, but this is because those exemptions are, right now, mostly based on the angler-based license. Exemptions could be developed for a vessel-based permit as well, but it's just something that needs to be discussed as this goes forward, but exemptions is an issue that is important, because, the fewer exemptions made, the better for the survey, in terms of the final results and the estimation process, right,

because don't have to account then for those people that are not covered, that are exempted, by that permit.

Right now, if we have those exemptions, we have to actually, from a statistical point of view, develop correction factors to account for that non-coverage, right, to make sure that our survey is being applied to the entire universe of anglers, and so, the fewer the exemptions, the better it is, but it's something that you're going to have to think about seriously, because, as it aligns with other licenses and state systems, this is likely to come up.

Our recommendation was for the council -- For you to consider addressing exemptions for that private recreational permit, right, it's something that you need to discuss and see how this would potentially impact the design and implementation of this permit and the subsequent survey.

Action 2, as John explained, is really to cover what species, right, would be under this permit, and, as he said, the current status is that you have a Preferred Alternative 2, which is all-inclusive of any species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit, and that actually is in agreement with all the APs, and this is a consistency that we have in place now, that we chose the same one as the technical AP, and the other APs have also supported this Alternative 2, to be all-inclusive, and that is your preferred, and so there's no conflict there.

One question that you asked us is about how comfortable we are with this existing recommendation, and, you know, any concerns, right, that could exist, and, well, the main concern involves how do we align, right, this all-inclusive recommendation with existing programs, like Florida's SRFS, the State Reef Fish Survey, or other programs that other states in the Southeast might implement, and this is because, as we develop this sampling frame, right, the list of anglers that this permit is generated to, increases the efficiency, and the effectiveness, of the survey that we want to put in place, and that having different species along that distributional range of coverage would create a major problem, in terms of the estimates that come out of the survey.

This could -- This inconsistency across the region could actually comprise the utility of the permit, and it would be much better to have that consistency that all the four states, in state waters or the federal waters, would be thinking about having this all-inclusive, any species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit, and so this is one point there still would be problematic, and it still needs to be discussed, as we look into this suite of species to be included under this permit.

Then, still on Action 2, one of the questions, going beyond what we had already discussed, is are there ways for this permit to improve estimates for deepwater species, and so, as we consider this suite of species to be included under this permit, how effective would this be for deepwater species, right, and is this permit, and the subsequent survey to be put together, is it likely to improve the estimates for deepwater species, or would the deepwater species need their own sampling framework?

The technical AP discussing this felt that, really, because of the nature of how deepwater species are, they could fall -- They are very well suited for a permit like this, because they are primarily caught in federal waters, right, and so they're exclusive to those areas, and so they fit well into that federal permit, but, because of the nature of those species, rare-event species, they -- Most likely, for a generalized survey, they would have such a coverage of species that the improvement for them would be modest, at best, right, in terms of precision of the recreational effort estimate.

I remember, when I gave my last presentation, we had the discussion about what species to include under this survey, and I said, okay, the more specific we are on the species, the higher the likelihood that it can have higher precision on the estimates, because it's that laser focus on those species occur, where they occur, and the fishers that focus on them, but that creates problems, because all the other ones that have been discarded, or that indirectly are being caught incidentally as part of that fishery, are not really properly covered, right, under the permit, and that would not generate the improvements to the recreational fisheries estimates they're looking for.

This is one issue that we're still struggling with, that having this higher number of species included is beneficial for the permit as a whole, but, for deepwater species, most likely we're going to have to be more focused and probably develop something that is more inclusive.

From the effort perspective, this would not perhaps be difficult to do, and the problem is how do we improve that dockside sampling, at the dock, because these are such rare-event species that it becomes difficult for you to design a really efficient dockside sampling program, unless you have a dedicated program that's focused on the deepwater species themselves, and so that is the prognosis here for the deepwater species.

These are combined, because they were discussed so closely together, and I combined Actions 3 and 4, and Action 3, as John explained, is to establish the educational component, and Action 4 is really just to talk about the timing of this education component requirement, and so, in reading through the current text in that draft amendment, we felt that, for Action 3, Alternative 2, the wording there may be a bit confusing.

Now it reads as that this permit is required before -- Not this permit, but the educational component is required before initial issuance of the permit, and we felt that -- Although we understood the meaning, we felt that this could be confusing for people trying to interpret what that means, the language there, and so we suggested perhaps revising the current language there to something that reads like "the education component would be required with initial issuance of the permit". That might make things more clear.

Another thing that we wanted to bring up regarding the education component is, with the no reporting requirement, and, you know, this is where we are right now, right, and you made a choice to proceed with this permitting, focus on develop a better sampling frame for surveys, and integrating into that an education component, and so you removed that reporting requirement that initially we had discussed, and we wanted to emphasize that, even though this is the case, we need to be very careful about explaining the stakeholders the importance of this survey, right, and how having this permit implemented would really improve the data that is now being used for assessment and management of snapper grouper fisheries.

This is something that Jessica McCawley may remember, that, when we were considering implementation of the State Reef Fish Survey in Florida, that was a bridge we had to cross, right, and it was really most people don't want to have government imposing on their ability to just enjoy fishing, right, and so they're going to look at this permit as this is an additional burden, or an inconvenience, but, if we do a good job explaining to them that, by and large, this permit needs to be put in place because they would like to have better data, and data that's more precise to inform

assessments and management, that this would be more likely to be successful, to have higher compliance, right, than not.

The comments here continue, and it's pretty much that first bullet there, and that's pretty much what I already said, right, that we need to be clear and make a very directed effort, to be very deliberate about explaining the purpose of this permit to stakeholders, so they understand they are gaining something by it, in terms of assessment and management.

Another thing that we wanted to mention, regarding the education component, was we looked at the list that you had put together, and I think it was perhaps at the last council meeting, or maybe the previous one, where you developed a list of topics, the main factors that you thought would be important to be included in this education component, and we thought that everything that you put on that list was relevant, and made sense to be there, but that this may be a little overwhelming for people, a little sensory overload for an average angler, and now imagine the entire suite of species in the snapper grouper, and so you're going to cover a fairly large number of people there, and that these people are being required to have the permit and to take the education component, and it may be a little too much for them to go through that entire list, right, and so it's something to think about and discuss with people on the Education and Outreach AP, to see a way to basically chunk this, or decrease the number of topics there that are covered, to make this education component more effective.

Other things that were discussed is that HMS has a compliance guide that the public can download, and so having something like this in place, that, if we go forward with it, could be implemented, that this would actually facilitate that you can have a smaller number of topics handled through that education course that people are going to be required to take, but then they have that compliance guide providing additional -- It's a reference guide, right, that they can go through, and they can look at all the issues there by themselves and not be so overwhelmed by all the information given through just the educating training that they're going to receive.

Again, in terms of alignment of a vessel-based permit and the education component, that is still a little problematic, and it's not that this cannot be resolved, and it can, but we're going to have to discuss, right, if, at some point you decide to switch to a vessel based -- That this education component would then require a bit more work, right, for us to basically discuss the criteria that we would use to make sure that we have proper coverage, that all the people fishing for those species are actually being exposed to that education component and are also being captured in the sampling frame for the survey.

Then Action 5 is the final action, right, and it's to establish that exemption to the federal permit, based on permitting and education components that we develop could be developed by the states, put in place by the states, right, as a substitute for the federal permit and education component, and, again, the idea here is to -- That we wanted to convey is about consistency, right, and state-based permits, in our opinion, to really fit well under all the issues that we want to handle through the federal permit, would have to match the federal criteria pretty much exactly, right, because, again, we are thinking about using this as a frame for sampling, and so we need to think about how differences along the distributional range, from North Carolina to Florida, how this would influence, right, all the calculations that are done for different species to provide those estimates of recreational catch and effort focused on snapper grouper species.

We need to maintain a common design, right, that is ideally across all the ocean areas, and so that consistency, again, north to south, as well as on the east and west component, and so, even if some states rely on the federal permit, or others create their own permit, the common design then would allow that consistency that would be needed from a statistical design and estimation criteria.

We need to make sure that these exemptions to the states are in complete agreement with the federal process that we are putting in place, and this is because, yes, the other options where the state and federal requirements are not in alignment, it may create the need for additional calibrations, and these calibrations, right, are basically you're trying to find scalars to adjust for the fact that a survey that's done in part of the distributional range of that species is not in complete alignment with a survey that's done in another part of that species' distributional range, and so, to be comparable across the entire area where the assessment and management unit are being looked at, we're going to have to calibrate.

The more calibrations you have to do, the more uncertainty you are inserting into this process, and this uncertainty, of course, as you know, is what we're trying to account for. We're trying to generate a specific process, a specialized supplemental survey to MRIP, that would be focused on the snapper grouper, to decrease the uncertainty in the estimates, right, decrease the uncertainty and increase the precision, and so, the less calibrations we have to do, the better, and so I wanted to emphasize this.

Again, you know, the concern, in terms of the compatibility, right, across the distributional range, and so, as of right now, the only thing that we have in place, that already exists, is SRFS, and so the committee discussed the concern regarding the species coverage, which SRFS covers nine species, and there are a lot more in the snapper grouper unit, right, that would be covered by this, and so, right there, we would have to do an adjustment, and then, you know, the fact that SRFS is angler-based, and potentially you could end up choosing a vessel-based, and all of these things can be dealt with, and they are not insurmountable challenges, right, but there are some hurdles to overcome.

I already discussed that, when you think about Action 2, the species covered, that the effort estimation may be compromised if we have different species being surveyed for the permits covering different species in different areas, and so those adjustments, or calibrations, have to be completed, and, again, we could consider a vessel-based permit for SRFS, right, but that would be a very challenging mountain to climb, a very steep climb there, to update SRFS to go from an angler-based to a vessel-based, and we have our own FWC State of Florida process to go through, and there are no guarantees that we would be able to get there, and so, again, it's not an insurmountable challenge, but it's something to take into account.

Our recommendation, and all the language that we have there at the bottom, is basically that we chose, you know, Subalternative 2d, to add that to the existing recommendations that we had already provided, and that now we recommend, for Alternative 2, Subalternatives 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d in this action, which actually means consistency across-the-board. In all the dimensions of this permit, that everything be as consistent as possible between what the states could be developing for an exemption versus what this would establish for federal waters in the EEZ, and there we are. Madam Chair, this completes my presentation, and I will be glad to address any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Luiz. Questions for Luiz? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Luiz. I appreciate your work, and the work of this advisory panel, and I've got a couple of questions. One is, and we'll hear this from the angler AP, is, you know, there is no clear guidance right now on how this permit, whatever form it takes, is going to result in improvements in statistical rigor, and it's sort of theorized right now, and I guess I will put you on the spot. Do you think that -- Whichever of these designs that could possibly be implemented, is it reasonable to expect that they could result in annual catch estimates for snapper grouper, at the state level, that have PSEs below 30 percent, because I think that's our measuring stick for success, is that level of statistical rigor, and so that's my first question, and then I will follow up with my second one.

DR. BARBIERI: Sure thing, Spud, and good question. Well, the short answer is, no, I don't believe that, across-the-board, we'll be able to reach that level of precision, you know, 30 percent or less. We're going to be more precise with some species that occur more often, that are more common in the catch, that are more targeted, and, in that case, those species would see improvements relative to MRIP, because it's a dedicated survey that's specialized and is being put together for that special fishery angler count, but, as we look at the entire suite of species that you manage now, I think, for some, the improvements will be relatively modest.

I mean, this has been our experience even with SRFS, right, that there are some species for us, like greater amberjack, where the improvement is not as substantial as it has been for other, more common species, like red snapper or gag. For those, that are more common, our estimates are actually quite a bit more precise than that 30 percent bar that you set, which I agree with, and, I mean, that's the maximum that can be tolerable for us to consider, that is precise enough for us to use for assessment and management, and so is that good enough for you there, Spud?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes. Thank you, and my second one is so, given your experience with SRFS, and the application of data from MRIP and SRFS and all, and kind of where we are, what do you think the council should do relevant to Amendment 46, given this recent announcement by NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology to spend a year, or two, to revision recreational data collection at the national level? Do you think that some of what we're grappling with here would be best dealt with in that forum?

DR. BARBIERI: Spud, I seem to be going through a tunnel here, and I'm losing connectivity, and I'm not sure if -- Just kidding. That's a good question. I mean, you know, looking forward, one of the concerns, and let me clarify that I am presenting this as the chair of this AP, but, because we haven't discussed that question specifically, Spud, I am speaking now basically from my own personal level, right, as my experience working on this for a while.

One of the concerns that I have is that I don't see, unless conversations have been had that I have not been part of, and I don't see, right now, any concrete effort to establish the survey, the supplemental survey, right, and I don't see the funding being identified by it, and I don't see all the nuts-and-bolts that need to be taken into account and developed, right, for a survey like this to be put in place, to be a factor.

Yes, right now, all of these conversations are we establish the permit first, the permit and the education component, and then we hope that, along the way, we'll be able to go to step number two, which would be development of the survey, and who is going to conduct the survey, how it's

going to be implemented, that's TBD at this point, and so, yes, your question, seeing all the announcements that have come out regarding this revisioning of the MRIP program, going from the national perspective that they've had to now a more regionally-specific perspective, I mean, at least what's being discussed --

You know, you may remember that, a few years back, you know, we had a report, a study conducted by the National Academies of Science, you know, involving a number of people, and I chaired that study committee, and we discussed multiple things, and this was one of the recommendations that came out of that report, is that we start looking at things more from a regional perspective, and the reason being, you know, if you look at how the Magnuson-Stevens Act was established, right, it was established to set up the regional management councils, and we don't have regional management that is completely consistent across-the-board, right, throughout the country.

We have established councils, and we have the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the National Standards and Guidelines, to be the overarching set of guidelines and standards, to be followed by these councils, and the councils have the flexibility to adapt, right, the assessment and management to their regional needs, and the recreational fisheries survey enterprise has been sort of falling behind on that, and so it's not something that has been applied taking the regional approach more into consideration.

All of the discussions that we hear now coming out of NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology is that they feel that this would be a good way to go, a good way to proceed, and I can see major benefits. I can see that they are committed to moving forward with that approach, and that provides opportunities for us to have discussions such as this with that, because that process is starting. They are going to have to integrate the councils, and the states, in each one of the regions, to be discussing those details of how that regional approach could be done, obviously, to address council needs, and this would be one of them. I will stop there.

MR. WOODWARD: Thanks, Luiz. I appreciate your perspective on that. It's very helpful to me.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John and then over to Clay.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Spud, I think that was a good question, and what I wanted to add is, looking ahead to the September meeting, we are planning to set considerable time aside to discuss this MRIP re-envisioning process. They reached out about wanting to attend, and I've already been in conversations with like Evan and Russ about how we get good input from this council directly into that process, and so what we're anticipating is, in September, a presentation from them, and then I would hope a forum, an open forum, where you guys can give input directly back to them about what we need, and so I think that fits in with, you know, what you're saying, trying to understand how would that re-envisioning factor into this, or how could this potentially influence the direction of that re-envisioning, since they are saying, you know, they're open to looking at new ideas and better ways to meet the needs regionally, through the MRIP program, and this is definitely a need.

So, you know, we may want to consider that timing, as we decide where to go with this, and I think we also have to consider -- You know, we have a purpose and need about improving data, and we're relying upon MRIP improvements to achieve that, and so we are putting the success of achieving our purpose and need in the hands of something out of our control, and I wrote down a

note, when we were talking about, you know, going out and telling fishermen why they should participate, that, you know, how will improving MRIP estimates, as the carrot for doing this, go into play.

Given the current atmosphere and attitude of fishermen, I think that's a pretty tough challenge for us, actually, based on what we hear in the public, what we hear at every one of our public comment periods and all that we get, and so, you know, there's more discussion coming on this, and maybe that factors into where we go with this over the next few meetings and our plans for when we feel this is ready for hearings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, John. Clay and then Robert.

DR. PORCH: A couple of points. First of all, Luiz, thank you for this very thorough and excellent discussion. It's really, really helpful, and it's very thought-provoking. I wanted to come back to a point that Spud raised about -- You mentioned that having a private recreational snapper grouper permit would likely result in only, at best, modest improvements in precision, but, as we've seen over the past couple of council sessions, this council is also very worried about accuracy, and, in fact, you suspended stock assessments over an accuracy issue, and not a precision issue, with the FES survey.

Luiz, I wonder if you could comment, and isn't it true that having this kind of private recreational snapper grouper permit, whether angler-based or vessel-based, and I support the vessel-based argument, but, either way, wouldn't that be a more accurate estimate of offshore fishing effort than the current system?

DR. BARBIERI: Yes, Clay, and I definitely think so. You know, in conversations that we have with, you know, the MRIP folks, and the Office of Science and Technology, and you know, Clay, that they worked with us, and they are very helpful in the development of SRFS, and so they are very familiar with that process, right, that we went through, and, if you look at some of the conversations, some of the correspondence that Evan has sent out now regarding next steps for MRIP, they bring up SRFS explicitly, saying that they believe that, you know, you have better accuracy, as well as better precision, and so I think there is general consensus that a better frame, with a more directed effort survey, like SRFS, would be more accurate, as well as more precise, yes.

DR. PORCH: Then my follow-up to that is the precision issue, and I 100 percent agree with you that the best way, with the current type of approach, to improve precision is to increase the dockside sampling. The problem is, to have the precision, you've got to quadruple the amount of sampling, and so that's going to require a lot more resources, and, at least from my interactions with congressionals and state directors, no one has really expressed an interest in putting that kind of resources into the dockside sampling, and then there's a logistics issue, of can you actually even get that many people out there, and so that makes, you know, some type of mandatory reporting requirement a lot more attractive to me, and I wonder if you could comment on that.

DR. BARBIERI: Right, and, I mean, that survey estimate, right, for the dockside, is a challenge, for sure. As you know, we received, you know, through the Florida legislature, recurring appropriation, and it cost \$3 million to implement SRFS statewide, right, and this is on top of about \$3 million that we get from MRIP to implement MRIP, and so all of this costs quite a bit of money,

right, and so, yes, there is the option of going with a mandatory reporting. Clay, the short answer here, I think, is I don't know whether mandatory reporting would be best.

I think it would be very difficult to implement and get good compliance, right, and, I mean, look at where we are with SEFHIER, and this is a much, much smaller sampling universe, right, and look at where we were in the Gulf with some of the surveys for the for-hire sector that, again, are much better known, and a limited number of vessels and fishers involved, with compliance with mandatory reporting, and so it's possible, if it's really implemented in a way that can work. You know, I was listening to the conversation about SEFHIER, and it looks like less than 50 percent of people are complying right now, right, and so that creates problems that, at this point, I would not know how to overcome.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Luiz. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you, Luiz, and the AP, for that presentation. I agree that it was very helpful, and thanks, Spud, for your questions. I struggle quite a bit with this one. You know, we talk about accuracy, and relativeness of the accuracy, and, I mean, even if we improve the accuracy of MRIP, is it enough for us to have the data we need to make better management decisions, and, given the breakdown in confidence, lack of reporting and everything else, I see this as a major burden, without us being able to even articulate how this is going to improve management decisions.

When you look at the purpose and need, I think we need to stop trying to just improve effort data. This has to go to what's being caught, and what's being discarded, and, if we're not getting that information, we can't convert that into management decisions that are improving the fishery, in my opinion. I was prepared to suggest we, you know, stop work on this, but with the understanding that, you know, we're having a presentation on MRIP and some of that in September, and I'm inclined at least to hear that out, and maybe I could change my mind about how this can be used to create the data that we need to make better management decisions, and so I'm inclined to table this until we get that information and then revisit it and see if this makes sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Robert. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: A couple of things, and so kind of picking up on what I was hearing also in public testimony yesterday, right, is that I think people are looking for more details with regard to how we would implement this, and so maybe there's an opportunity in September where we, as an agency, based on the recommendations we've provided so far in the document, could come back and talk with a little bit more specificity with regard to implementation.

In terms of Robert's comments just now, you know, as well as Clay's, right, and so there is immense trust with the use of MRIP, but we also know that two of the greatest sources of uncertainty in our recreational catch statistics are expansion or estimation of fishing effort and dead discards, or discard estimates, right, and those two things are plaguing us right now in the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and everywhere else, right, and so I think it's not as easy to say like this isn't something that couldn't improve, obviously, our information and understanding and data, and I think it's a kind of realization, in terms of how it's going to be used, what it would actually tell us, and how it would be implemented, and so kind of putting that full picture together I think really can benefit things.

I don't think a lot of people would understand, right, that a survey that comes in the mail, whether it's from the State Reef Fish Survey, or MRIP, or however it's delivered, right, that now we've improved that universe of samplers, and we're actually targeting them more effectively, because we've decided to have this snapper grouper permit requirement, right, and so putting that all together -- I think my recommendation is to bring it back in September with more details on the bone.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that discussion, and so I would like to -- We still have a whole other AP to see a presentation on, and I feel like we're getting into discussions on the amendment, and the purpose and need and all that, and so it doesn't seem like there's any more questions for Luiz. Okay. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and sorry, and I don't usually ask these things, and pardon my ignorance with it, but I'm trying to understand, or I guess help understand a little more, the difference between the vessel permit and the technical AP's comments on the vessel-based permit versus the angler-based permit. On page 4 of the decision document, there's this statement in here that the vessel ID is already a component of APAIS. Thus, a vessel-based permit would not be an impediment to integrate into existing sampling programs and could be verified with existing an existing APAIS-related survey.

I do remember discussion, and not from the most recent one, but at past meetings of this panel, that that seemed to be a big deal, but I don't really understand the significance of it, and I would just like some discussion to unpack, a little bit, what that means, and why it is a bigger deal, and, given some of the discussions here today, one of the questions I was wondering is, since you're talking about the APAIS component, and that's catch, and not effort, and does the vessel, versus angler, create -- Are there any differences for the precision of the catch estimation, rather than just the effort piece? Thank you.

DR. BARBIERI: Madam Chair?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Luiz.

DR. BARBIERI: Thank you. Yes, thank you, Shep, and, well, so, first, the issue about vessel-based, right, has to do with the fact that licensing systems that are used to generate sampling frames, or sampling domains, for statistical estimation benefit from having cross-referencing, and so, right now, most of the surveys that we have in place, including MRIP, uses some level of cross-referencing that goes beyond just the angler's saltwater fishing license.

It uses other things to try and improve the list of participants, to make sure that everybody is accounted for, and that what you have there makes sense, and so cross-referencing things, right, the information through that cross-referencing, includes the efficiency in the estimation process that you have to go through, and so the technical AP has been talking about vessel-based, because just having that vessel license, that is mandatory I guess in all states, right, will create a cross-referencing between the people that are being interviewed, right, and the people who will be, you know, handled through the -- Responding to the effort mail survey, and so it's just an efficiency that increases precision, and potentially accuracy, Shep, and does that make sense?

MR. GRIMES: I am good. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more questions for Luiz? Shep.

MR. GRIMES: I did have one follow-up to that. So, if it increases accuracy and precision of the dockside piece of it, are there implications for this for the deepwater stuff, because I know one of the comments on there was, for deepwater, you might need, you know, more dockside intercepts or whatever, and so I'm just wondering if the vessel question plays into that, by improving the dockside component. Thank you.

DR. BARBIERI: Madam Chair, if you don't mind, I will respond to that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

DR. BARBIERI: Well, it's hard to tell how that would play into that part without discussing more of the details, and this is the kind of thing where the devil is in the details, Shep, and so, overall, what you're doing here is creating a dedicated survey. For example, and I think I used this analogy before, right, and so, if you want to find out the political opinions of people who vote Republican, right, you're going to have efficiencies if you have a list of Republican-registered voters, and so most of the polls, of course, that follow very strict statistical procedures, take advantage of that, instead of just doing a shotgun kind of thing, and they interview more people, and, sure, you're going to have some of them who are Republicans who will respond positively to you if you have that information, but, the moment that you focus, and you have a dedicated sampling frame, you increase that efficiency by quite a bit, and so your sample size is larger for what you're trying to achieve, because you've targeted it.

For example, because we have been conducting MRIP for a long time, and we have a list, a directory, a frame, a list of sites that generate trips, and so we know what probability there is for a specific site to generate a trip that is likely to be inshore versus offshore, because we have the data, many years' worth, right, and so what SRFS does is that selects then those sites that have a higher probability of generating offshore trips, and so the probability of finding those trips, those reef fish trips, is higher, right, and so that's another efficiency that you add to that process. Okay, Shep?

MR. GRIMES: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Luiz. I would like to move on to the presentation from the other AP that met.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and, Madam Chair, if I could, I might switch things up a little bit and have -- So we have two more presentations, one from the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel and then also another one from the Private Angler Advisory Panel. I will be giving the Private Angler Advisory Panel summary report, but I was going to go ahead and switch it up and let Scott Baker have the floor for the Outreach and Communications, if that's okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure.

MR. HADLEY: Okay, and so, just while I'm bringing the presentation up here, and I'll hand it over to Scott in just a second, but, as a reminder, you did request that the Outreach and

Communications Advisory Panel meet to go over particularly some of -- The Actions 3 and 4, so the education-requirement-related actions, and Scott is online today to provide -- He was the AP Chair for the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel, and he will provide a summary report for those recommendations, and, Scott, I will hand it over to you.

MR. BAKER: Thank you, John, Madam Chair, council members, and staff. Thanks for the opportunity to present an overview of our meeting that we had back in May. We met in May, via webinar, and we were tasked with kind of revisiting a lot of the things that we actually talked about at our last regularly-scheduled Outreach and Communications meeting in October, and so to basically kind of go over some of the items in Amendment 46 related to the recreational permitting and education requirement, as some of those things were discussed at the prior council meeting to this. I'm kind of going to go through some of the same bullets that Luiz went through, and mine just aren't labeled, but, in general, I'm going to hit on some of those same topics.

These are kind of not really in any random order, but talking about the general framework of establishing an educational component, and the AP, you know, reiterated that the component should be required before issuing the permit and available online, and, kind of like Luiz said in his presentation, it was a little confusing, but I think what we meant was you have to fulfill the obligations for completing the education component before you're issued the permit.

I'm talking about some of these issues, you know, in light of, a lot of times, a human element, and so how people will respond and how they would, you know, deal with such an issue as a permit, given that, you know, particularly an education component is not really, you know, required in other programs in the South Atlantic, and so we're kind of treading on new territory here, should something like this be implemented.

There was, you know, broad support for not reinventing the wheel, incorporating components of other successful programs, and other existing programs, and the best fishing practices was very successful, and the Return 'Em Right program operating in the Gulf, and, of course, FWC is also developing an education course for their couple of exempted fishing permit projects, and so there's a lot of things going on currently that could be pulled from, which is great, if something like this were to happen.

Kind of like Luiz said, we also agreed that it was very important to explain why this permit would be required, and, more importantly, how that information will be used, or how it might improve, you know, management, and I will get to more on that later. The other thing was, you know, we talked about, you know, renewal reminders, things that can help with -- Just help with the general framework, in terms of making people remember, and so automated things to -- Automated reminders and renewals, such that it reduces restrictions.

Of course, you know, given the scope of something like this, this would absolutely have to be an online course, and this is something where we actually kind of changed our recommendations somewhat, based on more discussion, but we had a range of discussion, or recommendations, anywhere from three to five minutes, seven to ten minutes, up to fifteen minutes, and, of course, you know, all of those options have different tradeoffs.

One of the things that we really talked about a lot was also building in benchmarks for the course, rather than a course that would have like a pass-fail quiz at the end, and I think everybody would

be scared of that, and not very happy with that, and there's a lot of existing types of curricula where there are like benchmarks built in, you know, and at least listen to certain components to, you know, quote, make it through that component, which would be considered a success, and, of course, any approach would really need to meet the goals of the course, whatever those be, and, as we've -- You know, as has been talked about, they're pretty broad.

Again, just some of the mechanics, and, you know, you should not be able to skip sections, and, I mean, I know, having taken many of these courses, and I've designed some of these things, and there's definitely things where you can hit play, and you can walk away from your computer, or walk away from your phone, but, once it gets to the next section, it basically stops and says you can't go through this next section without at least pressing the button and getting away with that.

Of course, dealing with the ability to, you know, retake sections and that, if there was a quiz, or a benchmark, to get through to the next part, to be able to retake that, and, also, of course, considering people with learning disabilities and how that might be constructed, and, of course, you know, particularly in south Florida, thinking about how folks that speak other languages and how they might utilize such a course, or be able to, you know, have that course.

We looked at the list of topics that were recommended at the previous council meeting, and, in general, kind of like Luiz said, I think, we felt that the list was way too ambitious, considering the scope of time that we want -- That people will likely spend on this, or will be allocated to this, and we did have some suggestions on how to minimize that list of topics, one being consider removing the fish ID and how to measure a fish.

One thing particular to that that came up was the use of Fish Rules, and how that's such a great resource, but I know, in our previous OC meetings that we've had with the Coast Guard, how, you know, that resource is a very good resource for a lot of people, but, when it comes to, you know, the legalities of that as a resource, that's where it becomes a challenge, because it's not really considered an official, you know, government record.

Similar to what Luiz said, we had -- We talked about having a downloadable component, or links to other sources, and, perhaps when folks get emailed, you know, their permit number, or things like that, after taking an educational quiz, or component, and, again, having reference book mailed to those after -- Something that people could keep on a vessel, and, again, reminding people and focusing on why this education component is important, and that's mainly dealing with discards, you know, dealing with effort, focusing on barotrauma and the regulations in place to help keep fish alive.

Again, in the framework of things, we just kind of talked about, you know, how to positively do this in an engaging way, and, you know, folks really don't want to watch a PowerPoint with a bunch of bullets saying do these things, and so, if there's a way to do that, and, you know, I'm sure many of you have seen different ways, on social media or whatever, like a fishing trip, or something where maybe two people are talking, and they're talking about what a great day they're going to have fishing, but, you know, they need to do these things first, and they talk about it, and joke about it, and so any way to make it a little bit more enjoyable to get through as an education course.

Again, I've talked about how important it was to show that one of the reasons for something like this is the impact that recreational anglers have on the resource, and, of course, you know, much of the OC AP is made up of state partners, some industry, Sea Grant and others, and everyone expressed a willingness to help, you know, with developing the content for such a program, should it be created.

In terms of scope, we provided some comments here. You know, we realize that this would be a very large lift, and it would require probably quite a bit of funding, and it would require oversight by other official parties. Just, you know, with the -- You know, I keep saying Luiz, but he talked about this a lot with a survey-type component, but you would have similar issues with an education component, in terms of, you know, incomplete modules, which would definitely be the case, and you could have, you know, confirmation numbers, and multiple IP addresses trying to register or attend a survey, and it could be the customer support aspect of something like that, and so all of those things would certainly need to be considered in the broad, you know, vision of something like this.

You know, we talked about enforcement, very briefly, about how, you know, that would be a group effort, and it's something to consider, but, of course, you know, the question was asked of, well, whose responsibility would this be, and the AP recommended that this would be the responsibility of NOAA Fisheries, just because of how immense and broad it would be, and the scope of the program, the implementation, and the responsibility to maintain the program.

You know, just as us speaking as a group, we talked about how, you know, there seems to be a similar program with Highly Migratory Species, and, you know, it's a very short, web-based program. Again, I don't know about the funding, or how that works, but there is an example of something at least similar to that, and, of course, you know, there could perhaps be a private contractor that could handle that. Again, we just -- We expressed our interest, and support, for being involved in the development of any education materials, as needed.

An important thing about -- You get your education together, and this is starting to get into the weeds, but one of the things that we really talked about was, you know, just because folks are watching the video, or taking the class, it doesn't mean that they're necessarily going to institute a behavior change, and I can speak 100 percent from this, from the Sea Grant perspective.

You know, just because we provide a workshop, it doesn't mean that people leave that workshop and are going to take advantage of everything they learned and implement it in their daily life, and so I think it's important to -- If the council does proceed to move something like this, to have it a multifaceted program, considering the scope and considering, you know, human behavior and the way that anglers are currently kind of responding to existing regulations, and perhaps future regulations, and so there is different ways to kind of complement that, you know, through something like the Return 'Em Right program, different communication techniques, et cetera.

Of course, we talked about the need for dedicated funding. I mean, this, I cannot imagine, would be an inexpensive endeavor, and it was really kind of difficult for us, as an AP, to kind of get our minds around how many people, whether that's people or vessels, this would impact, and so, for perspective, we heard that, you know, the Florida state survey has 628,000 permits, and, again, that's the South Atlantic and the Gulf, as of a couple of months ago, and, importantly, you know, that project, or that survey, has no education component, and it does have exemptions.

For all practical purposes, unless I'm wrong, it seems like this permit could be larger than that, at least that we discussed, and, of course, you know, things that are going on in the Gulf related to, you know, discarding and barotrauma are supported by tangential efforts, like the Return 'Em Right program, which is funded at \$20 million, and so we're talking efforts, you know, in the South Atlantic would be hindered without some type of support and things like that.

I mean, we, as an AP, just kind of thought about it, if there was a way actually see how many people this might impact, and that would be helpful for you as managers, but also, you know, should this be shopped out to a potential contractor to develop such a program and what that might look like.

I think this is my last slide, and we talked about the state exemption, and there was basically general support for a universal requirement, and, you know, there was -- It seemed that there would be a standard education module that basically all the states could use, and, of course, they might want to add stuff separately, if they wanted to add to the core materials, and so, in general, I guess nothing new here, and we definitely wanted to -- Not adding any unnecessary information or requirements. I think that is it. Thank you, and I would be happy to take any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Scott. Any questions for Scott? All right. I don't see any hands. Wait. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: You made the comment that you believe this permit could be bigger than the State Reef Fish Survey in Florida, and did you have any discussion about the fact that that permit is free?

MR. BAKER: Thanks, Tom. No, not really, and we were just trying to wrap our heads around how many people would be, you know, trying to get this, or are involved with that, and, obviously, in Florida -- Of course, it's the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and so it would be less than that, at least for Florida, I would assume, but maybe not, and, yes, it's -- We really had no bounds, and I think, when you're designing a program, it helps to have the bounds of how big it might be.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Scott.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Scott. Any other questions? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. You talked about, and I'm -- Having the need to address people with learning disabilities, and I think that's very, very important, and would you see this as maybe two parallel paths, one for a totally different or a separate way for people with disabilities, or that have some challenges to actually go through the program?

MR. BAKER: Thank you for the question. That's a good question, and I'll be honest that I don't know, and I would look to some of the existing programs that are in place, and like, in North Carolina, we have, you know, boating safety type things, and hunter safety, and see how some of those commercial vendors have operated something like that. That would be my first guess, to see how others have done that, and maybe to see how HMS has done that, if they have done that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Hi, Scott. Amy Dukes from South Carolina here, and I just wanted to echo on what Tim said, and also the idea that these modules will need to have other languages, and it's things that we are thinking about in other aspects, but I wanted to get down to the education component. I know that you mentioned there was a strong support for the APs, the state partners, Sea Grant, and other agencies to help in the developing of that education model, and was -- Did you get a sense that there was also a willingness for those folks to be able to participate in this process, rather than just support?

MR. BAKER: Amy, I think absolutely, and I think, to be honest, I think, you know, developing the components is the easy part. The hard part is going to be putting that -- Making that available to the world and then controlling how that's accessed and maintained, and that's the hard part. Making the content will be fairly easy. Of course, I think, with all things like this, the shorter that you make it, the harder that it becomes to scale down the most important things that you want to convey.

We did, and just to add to that, we did have pretty strong support for saying, you know, here is the very minimum that you need to know, and then, of course, having online resources, additional resources, that people can follow-up with, but, to answer your question, yes, there was very broad support for participating and helping out, actively helping out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Scott. Any more questions for Scott? All right. Thank you. We really appreciate you all's discussion on this, and thank you, Scott, for giving us a presentation and answering questions.

MR. BAKER: Thank you very much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. John Hadley, I think we're to the final group that met about this, and I'm going to pass it over to you to talk about the Private Angler Advisory Panel meeting, and I believe that this was their first meeting.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and I want to say thank you to Luiz and Scott for their time and being online to present, and so I appreciate you both, you know, being able to present your respective AP summary recommendations and comments. This will be, as mentioned, the final AP summary report, and it's the Snapper Grouper Private Angler AP meeting.

As you may recall, this is a fairly new advisory panel, and it was recently put together, and so this was their initial kickoff meeting. The reason that I'm presenting today is that they did not have a chance to elect a chair and vice chair. Presumably, at their next meeting, they will elect a chair and vice chair, and I think there were some interested AP members, and so next time you will be hearing from the AP chair directly, but, for this meeting, I will be the one providing the presentation.

They had their first meeting, by webinar, on May 7, 2024. A large portion of this meeting included sort of an orientation and introduction to Amendment 46, sort of what's in the amendment and what sort of feedback is desired on the amendment, and so we had a very good discussion on that, and the AP actually had some very good kind of high-level comments, that I will get into in just a minute, on the amendment that I will be important for the council to hear.

Additionally, the AP provided initial feedback on Actions 1 and 2. However, they did not have a chance to get into the other actions in the amendment, just due to time constraints, and so you'll see -- You know, we'll focus on the overview, on the higher-level comments, on the purpose, perceptions, and messaging for the amendment, and we'll get into some recommendations on Actions 1 and 2, and there were a few points that were made that were actually relevant to Action 5, even though we didn't have a chance to get into them, but you'll see, you know, we didn't cover all of the actions in the amendment, again due to time constraints.

In relation to the kind of higher-level comments on the general amendment, if you will, as mentioned, the AP had some very good feedback for the council, and just some general comments for the council, on the purpose and messaging related to the amendment and, you know, starting off with what is the purpose of the permit, and they noted that it's important to make sure that anglers understand the purpose of the permit, and really how it will be used, and, you know, some of the questions that came up were, you know, exactly how will this be used, exactly how much will this information --

How much will recreational catch and effort estimates be improved by this permit, and that's a question that, you know, it's hard to give a definitive answer, since, in this case, the council is creating the tool, which is the permit, but the council is not necessarily in charge of how that tool is used, which is down the line after the permit is created, but the AP did want to stress that it's important -- The messaging is important, and it's important to keep in mind what is the purpose of this permit, and how is it going to be used, and it was noted that the council should keep in mind the vision of the future. You know, what's the next step for the permit after it's established?

You know, particularly, is a one-step process, where the permit is created by the council and that's it, or is there a two-step process, or a two-amendment process, and is there a subsequent amendment that will happen after this amendment that may be geared towards data collection and reporting? If that's the case, if reporting is going to be considered in the future, that's going to influence the decisions made in this amendment.

In relation to perceptions and messaging, it was noted, by AP members, that many anglers have lost trust in the council, and in NMFS and the fishery management process, and it was noted that anglers may be willing to comply with a permit requirement, but they may not be as willing to provide additional information, particularly without the proper messaging on why this permit is going into place, and so it was noted that this permit is an opportunity, or at least a potential opportunity, to rebuild some of that trust that has been lost, and it is important to communicate how this permit can improve recreational fishing data and management, and so, again, you know, we heard it in the other two AP reports, and you're hearing it again from this advisory panel, and, you know, the communication aspect of this is going to be very important if the council moves forward with developing a private recreational permit.

It was also noted, by AP members, that the permit is going to be viewed by some as an additional constraint on fishing, and it is an additional regulatory burden, and so it would be helpful to note that the council is not considering reporting, and so put some bookends how much of an additional burden it will be, and so, as of now, the council is not considering reporting.

Clarify to the fishing public that this will be an open-access permit, and you're not considering limiting access at this time, and creation of a permit is in pursuit of better recreational catch and effort estimates that will hopefully contribute to the prevention of future access restrictions, and it was noted that, if there are not better estimates of catch and effort information provided, the council may be left with fewer options in the future and may have to actually consider alternatives that include access restrictions, if those data needs, and those data gaps, cannot be addressed.

Switching gears, we'll go over to the action-specific comments that the AP, the Private Angler Advisory Panel, made. It was noted that a vessel-based permit would be a better option than an angler-based permit, and this was the general sentiment, I believe, if you will, of many of the AP members, and it was noted that, if there is an angler-based permit, it may deter some people from participating, and that several anglers participate in the snapper grouper fishery infrequently, and so any additional regulatory burden may deter them from participating altogether, and so consider the, I guess, the regulatory burden in general.

That was the point of that discussion, and it was noted that anglers may not be as experienced in fishing, and fishing ID, as vessel owners, and so, you know, it was just kind of the discussion of there's an additional responsibility that comes with being in charge of operating a vessel and that vessel owners, or vessel operators, may likely be better suited towards any subsequent sampling or data collection. Also, a vessel-based permit makes more sense if there is not a reporting requirement that's going to be involved.

AP members felt that a vessel-based permit would be easier to enforce on the water, or at the boat ramp, since there's only one permit to check, versus multiple permits, if there were an angler-based permit, and satisfying the permit requirement should be the responsibility of the vessel operator, and so it is preferable if the captain of the vessel is responsible for the education requirement and can essentially direct their crew and better direct anglers onboard.

Regarding the rental and boat club vessel topic that the council discussed in March, the AP generally felt that the boat club vessels are not likely a major concern, or a major component, of the snapper grouper fishery, the private component of the snapper grouper fishery, and it was noted that boat club vessel operators must be certified, and there are often restrictions on how far offshore they can go, and it was noted that they are not likely accountable for a notable portion of the participation in the snapper grouper fishery off of North Carolina, South Carolina, or northern Florida.

However, it was noted that there are more and more rental boat companies, and there are -- Some have boats that are fishing in the snapper grouper fishery, both in federal and state waters, and so, if there is a vessel-based permit, it needs to be clear on who is responsible for getting that permit, so you don't create a scenario where it is really unclear, you know, who is responsible for satisfying a vessel-based permit requirement.

Regarding Action 2, and so the action that specifies which species would be covered under the private recreational snapper grouper permit, you know, there were some varying opinions here, and I will go through -- There is two slides for this, and it was noted that it's an unnecessary burden on anglers to have to identify a subset of species that are covered by the permit, and so that comment lent itself to being more inclusive of species, rather than narrowing down the list of

species. Also, if reporting eventually follows, it would be preferable to have the permit cover all species, to facilitate reporting.

It was also noted that the number of species covered is likely to affect estimates of participation, and so the species covered could influence the universe of anglers that are identified and how well they actually represent participants in the fishery, and, if the council stays with all fifty-five snapper grouper species, consider the implications on the Florida State Reef Fish Survey. Would Florida have to expand -- The question was posed of would Florida need to expand their program to cover all fifty-five species, to allow the state to opt-out of the federal permit requirement?

Additionally, they noted, during the AP discussion of this action, that including all snapper grouper species is a big ask, and many in the recreational fishing community may be skeptical if all species are included under this permit, and there is the perception that NOAA, and the council, has been picking away at species that can no longer be harvested or that have severe restrictions on harvesting within the snapper grouper complex.

A concern with including all species is that some species may be caught incidentally, and so, for example, you have greater amberjack that are at times caught when trolling for highly-migratory species, and so including all species -- By including all species, you may be bringing in participants that aren't necessarily, quote, unquote, common participants of the snapper grouper fishery, but they may be just incidentally participating in the fishery, and, really, you know, the question was posed of what's the council's goal here? Is it to count the number of people that are targeting the snapper grouper species, or is it to count the number of people who are catching the species, and so the intent -- You know, the intent is important, and also the intent to eventually require people to report, and so, again, keeping in mind what's the next step that's going to affect decisions that need to be made in Action 2.

In regard to Action 5, the AP didn't have the time, and they ran out of time, to discuss this action. However, there were some comments that came up, sort of in the higher-level general discussion, that were applicable to this, and so Action 5 establishes the exemption to the federal permit requirement if states are willing to implement equivalent measures, and so, in this case, some AP members noted that, if a permit requirement is established, it will likely remain indefinitely, and so it will be fairly permanent, and, with that being the case, it would be preferable if the permit could be an endorsement on the existing saltwater fishing license issued by the state, rather than requiring anglers to obtain a separate permit. This would essentially make it as noninvasive and unrestrictive as possible and really make compliance of the permit easier.

Also, it would be easier for anglers if state agencies administered the permit, and it was noted that states already have apps and saltwater licensing infrastructure in place that anglers are used to, and, you know, they're getting their saltwater fishing licenses, and so they're sort of used to that state permitting process, and so it would be -- Again, it would make compliance with the permit much easier if it were issued by state agencies. That's the summary report, and I'm happy to answer any questions or clarify any points.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, John. Are there questions? All right. I don't see any hands. Wait. Amy.

MS. DUKES: John, thank you, and I did listen into this AP meeting, and I think the conversation, and the discussions, were really great, and a lot of it was backfilling and providing a lot of information and content to those folks, and my question is has this AP determined if it's going to meet again and when?

MR. HADLEY: The answer is, yes, it will meet again, but we're still working on the -- We'll need to work out the date for that, but it will meet again, particularly to cover the -- At the very least, to cover the additional actions that weren't covered at the first meeting, and, also, they need to elect a chair and vice chair, and so, yes, they will be meeting again, and I can notify the council when that date is set.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, John. Any other questions? Clay.

DR. PORCH: I appreciate this presentation, and it's also very thoughtful, and so, not directly related to this presentation, but the general problem across all the three presentations we've seen, and what I've heard is that the recreational snapper grouper permit will result in more accurate estimates of snapper grouper effort, and not necessarily more precise, and, in other words, it won't bring the PSEs down a lot.

I hear people complain about that a lot, you know, the high PSEs, which I totally get, but, when it comes right down to it, I never hear people willing to put the resources in that it would take to get those PSEs down, and the reality is that this isn't Harry Potter.

There is no magic wand that we can get those PSEs down, and we've got to either invest the resources or, and I will allude to the last presentation, we're going to have to think about some alternative management approaches, and I might punt this, as a question, over to John, in case they put some thought into it, and some things could include aggregating statistics over longer time periods, and that gets to multiyear catch limits, rather than annual catch limits, or aggregating across species, working with complexes, and maybe they had some other thoughts, but, John, I don't know if you could comment on that. What other alternative approaches did people have in mind?

MR. HADLEY: Just to clarify, was that Carmichael or Hadley?

DR. PORCH: Hadley. Sorry, although John Carmichael can pipe in too, if he would like.

MR. HADLEY: Well, the short answer to that is that that hasn't been discussed, as far as, you know, alternative management approaches looking at multiyear catch limits, and that sort of discussion, to my knowledge, hasn't taken place on the AP level, and I know it's been mentioned occasionally during some meetings, but, to my knowledge, that really hasn't taken place, at least in an in-depth capacity, at any of the AP meetings, and, you know, I think those are all great avenues to explore, but they just haven't been explored, at least on the AP level. I don't know if there's anything else to add from others in the room.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, I think, to kind of the big picture there of what MRIP is asked to do, and what we've seen over decades, and what it's actually funded for, is certainly something that we should consider in September, when we're talking about this re-envisioning, because that is, unfortunately, the reality of the situation, and it's been discussed ever since we were first told

to use that data system to manage hard catch levels and to apply accountability measures using it, and we're just not there, and it's unlikely that we're going to get there with this program, and so I think that should be a fundamental part of input on the re-envisioning process.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: That's exactly why I asked the question that I did of Luiz, because I think it's time to move this into a forum where you can bring the subject matter expertise to bear on this, because, in some ways, it's unfair to ask this council to make decisions far beyond its subject matter expertise, and this thing is much more complicated.

On the precision thing, I understand, but I think the challenge we've got is you've got an MRIP administration that tells us to not use estimates with certain levels of precision for management, but yet we are using them, and so we've got this dichotomy between what the people who generate the estimates tell us and what we end up doing with it.

Somehow that's got to be rectified, or else it appears to be a reckless and irresponsible thing for us to keep using, you know, these estimates that have 50 and 70 and 80 and 100 percent PSEs, when the MRIP administration says don't use them, and so somehow this re-envisioning process has got to reconcile all that, and bring this bear, and either we go with alternative management, where we're not vulnerable to using these high PSE estimates, and so that's why, I mean, I believe it's time to move this, and, to that form, I think it's an opportune situation, and move it there, and let that expertise be brought to bear on this, and then this council can make an informed decision about what is the best course of action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Spud. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thanks, Spud. Clay, back to your comment. One, what do we need to do to understand what the resources are that are necessary, in order to ultimately -- I think we're talking about getting actual catch and discard data, and the second thing was you mentioned, you know, maybe different management approaches, and what did you mean by that? Different fishery management approaches or different data collection approaches?

DR. PORCH: So, you know, consistent with the conversation we had earlier, if you really want to knock the PSEs down, say in half, it really requires an investment of essentially quadrupling the amount of dockside intercepts, if we're going to continue using that type of approach now, and we can't get to a mandatory reporting situation.

That's a considerable investment in resources, and I've not -- Again, I've not heard from Congress, or the states, that they're prepared to make that kind of investment, and so either something changes on that front, so that you get the more precise data, or you implement something that, you know, is required in reporting, you know, things like fish tags, that some states have used for some fisheries.

Short of that, then you have to do things that lower the PSEs by looking at aggregate statistics. For instance, one thing would be multiyear catch limits, and so you're looking in say three-year blocks. If you look at the catches averaged over three years, they're going to have a lower PSE, because some of the ups and downs average out, and it could be looking at species complexes,

where that's appropriate, and you're lumping multiple species together, and so the PSE is lower. The danger there is, if you have one species that's a more common than the other, the less-common species could get overfished, because people just switch their efforts, and so there's subtleties there that have to be dealt with.

There may be other things, again, that get into things like how do you control effort, or monitor effort, a little more directly, and can you do it through time-area closures strategically done that still provide fishing opportunities, but also ensure that the stock will not fall below the overfished level, and so there's ways to do it, but none of them are going to be easy.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I appreciate that, and just knowing that, at least to start, and then we can collectively try to allocate those resources. I think, looking around the table, we don't have a choice, right? If we want to get more precise about managing this fishery, we have to collectively understand what that ask is and then go start asking for it, and so I'm very supportive of that, and I would also ask, you know, if there is a different approach, right, and so dockside landings is one, and the other a mandatory reporting program, and I would like to understand the resources necessary in those various methods for us to try to figure out what's the best path forward.

I would suggest -- I asked Jessica about this, and I don't know how far along we'll be, and I understand we're kind of waiting on approval of the EFPs, and I would like that to happen, so we can start getting this underway, the education, get the apps stood up, and get people in that, because I think we're going to, hopefully, have a lot of -- It might be early, but we could look at it early on, but a lot of data about what compliance looks like in a program like that, where, you know, hey, you can fish this way, which everybody can fish, and so we've got a one-day season, and, if you want to fish this other way, you can, but it comes along with these requirements, and will incentivizing fishermen to give us this information improve things? I don't know. Hopefully it will, and I think it will, but I would like to understand, you know, what the universe of our options are there and what respective resources are needed, so we can figure out how to be more helpful there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Andy and then over to John Hadley.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, good discussion. I don't know, Madam Chair, how you want to kind of proceed on this, and where we want to go, and it seems like we're going to want to come back to this in September, and I'm not sure how much we want to discuss the amendment today.

You know, a few things, right, and so I would just agree with Robert's comments, right, and, I mean, I think that's exactly where we're at, whether we're talking red snapper or some other management approaches, is looking at those benefits and tradeoffs, right, and is this really short derby season preferable to something else, right, and can we look at some other innovative management approaches that might have a little more accountability, might have a little bit more work on the frontend, but, ultimately, have the payoff of that flexibility and better reporting and better information.

I also want to agree with Spud, right, and I don't think any of us around this table would consider ourselves data collection experts, including Clay sitting next to me, right, and he knows the most probably of all of us sitting around the table, but, at the end of the day, you know, I think we're challenged, in terms of putting together recommendations, in terms of how to improve data

collection, and I'm appreciative of like the presentation by Luiz, in terms of the technical AP, because I think they've given us a lot of good guidance.

I go back to my earlier comments, right, that, wherever we're at with the preferreds, even if, you know, we got a presentation from MRIP staff, working with Clay's staff and others, on how this could be implemented, and what does it mean to anglers, and what are the benefits, trying to get into some --

You know, answering some questions about precision and accuracy, and I think that would be really helpful to guide us, and then, as you pointed out, right, this state-federal partnership revisioning effort, right, I don't think we have a specific goal in mind, in terms of exactly what that looks like, and what those changes are going to be going forward, but, ultimately, at the end of the day, we want this to be a partnership with the states. We want to work side-by-side with all the states, and, if a federal permit is not the answer, then what is the answer, and maybe there is other solutions that we can work side-by-side with the states to implement.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. I'm going to go to John Hadley next, but I want to come back to kind of where you started your comments, is what does this committee want to do today? We are behind in this committee, and trying to figure out what are we going to dive into on this document, and are we really going to sit here and go through preferreds again, or are we going to have debate, or are we going to instead pick this back up again, maybe after that AP has met again and after we have this discussion about data at the September meeting, and so be thinking about what you want to do here as a committee today, and then I'm going to go to John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and so, really quickly, to add to the discussion, and it sounds like we're going to have a larger MRIP discussion about how to address recreational data in September, and so I did want to remind you that you do have another avenue to look at how accountability measures are triggered. In the dolphin wahoo fishery, you have looked at alternatives that included multiyear averages, as well as the geometric mean, and so, you know, another avenue potentially that the council could explore on how to address recreational data deficiencies, or error statistics, and so thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, John. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Real quick, just, Carmichael, does it make sense to table this and bring it back in September, or should we table for December, so that we have the ability, in September, to dig into MRIP and go through that, and, procedurally, what makes the most sense there?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, I think we can have -- We should have the discussion with MRIP, and we should keep this in mind, and then, you know, I think, during that, you could give some guidance on this, if you feel so compelled, and then we could say that the next time we schedule this on the agenda could be in December.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Well, then I'll make a motion to table this until the December meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We don't really need a motion, and I think the guidance is enough.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so, instead a motion, we have guidance to table this discussion until the December meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We can put that in the tasks, and the timing, and just say, you know, bring this back in December for the next stage of discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Given the uncertainty, and the questions around what the practical effect of some of the alternatives are in this, I was just going to suggest, and I don't know the answer to this, but how much work would it be, and is it even possible, to do some sort of simulation analysis, something similar to your decision tool and the guidance that it provides you, that, if we went this route, and we had this, you know, simulated information, how much would this improve the precision of our estimates, and, if we had this approach, and this information came from it, how would that affect the precision of the estimates, and maybe you could use that to guide your decisions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I saw hands going up. Spud and then Robert.

MR. WOODWARD: I think that's what we're looking for from this re-envisioning process, and that's going to be your thinktank. They're going to have workgroups that are focusing on how to improve the product of MRIP, and I think that's why we can depend on them to, you know, say, hey, we think this will help, and you tell us how it's going to help and how much it will help, because we can spend a lot of time spinning our wheels here, and we can't answer those questions, and, to me, those are the people to answer those questions for us and then give us guidance.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I would add to that, Spud, and I don't think we want to just be restrained on how to improve the effort surveys, but also what other tools, or possibilities are there, for us to get this data, whether it's increasing dockside inspections or, you know, mandatory reporting or other, but I think that's kind of the universe of what we're looking to talk about, Shep, and figure out -- Then we'll have those paths, and the resource requirements for them, and then I think the next step is just that, which of these tools -- Where is the best ROI for us, right, and, if we have to go spend four-times what we're doing now to do increased dockside landings, but two-times as much to do mandatory reporting, and mandatory reporting gives us better data, then I think that will inform kind of how we proceed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Robert. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I really do appreciate all of the dialogue, and the conversations, that have gone around this table regarding 46. I completely support the idea, and, Andy, thank you for suggesting it, that the agency can come back with sort of a how this would be implemented, and I think special attention would be helpful, from my perspective at least, to include some language about perhaps some dedicated funds for the outreach and education components, whether that be through your agency, or perhaps through council staff, and we have a great momentum going right now with our outreach and education, specifically through CitSci

and best fishing practices, and I feel like something -- That 46 falls very well within the realms of those meetings that were face-to-face, in front of these recreational fishermen, and that it's a great hook to get them to understand what's going on.

I continue to applaud the AP work, both the technical and now the private, and soon to be the for-hire, and I think all of this input is really helpful, but I'm not so sure that just stopping this conversation on 46, at this point, and punting it to December, is maybe the right call. We're punting it to December, and that's two meetings, and we had, on the timeline, to discuss the AP comments, and perhaps to come back to the council at September to go to final hearing, and so now are we punting the September to that December work? Am I understanding that timeline correctly?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I think you're understanding that timeline, and so, just to respond to a couple of those things, and then I will go back to you, and, yes, I get that it's concerning, but I feel like there's all these other moving pieces out there, and we can't approve Amendment 46 in a vacuum, you know, and so we need some of these other pieces of information.

You've heard from some of our APs, and you heard, during public comment, about the lack of trust, and the frustration, and so we need to implement something that is going to have success, and get us the data that we need, and we're also hearing that, maybe in addition, or instead of Amendment 46, there are other pieces that need to happen, and so it also seems like we're doing our due diligence to make sure 46 is the right route.

I didn't realize, until today, that we were planning on having a big MRIP discussion at the September meeting, and so that was news to me, and so it was helpful to hear that as well, and also some of the comments from Andy helped me kind of understand, and Clay, to think about, well, maybe there's some other tools, and ideas, and to think about the monetary piece of this, how much these various things would cost, and then kind of like what Robert said and the return on investment on which way, or which multiple paths, we want to take in thinking about this moving forward, and so, if we dive down into Amendment 46 today, it just seems like it's a little premature until we have those other discussions, and, yes, I think we need more information, because Amendment 46 -- Where we are is we have some very specific preferreds, and we also don't have the reporting component.

We heard from at least one AP, and we heard during public comment, if there's no reporting with this, how are you going to get the public to buy-in, and so, you know, we want to set ourselves up for success, and we want to get the data that we need, and so I just don't know what the utility is in going through say the preferreds in Amendment 46 today, or saying, hey, now, staff, we want to go back to adding the reporting component to this, and bring something back to the next meeting with reporting, and it just seems a little premature, but maybe I'm missing something or not understanding your thoughts, Amy, and so I'm going to put it back to you to elaborate more on what you're thinking.

MS. DUKES: Yes, and thank you, and I agree with all of your points. The last thing that this council needs to do is to take action or put something out to public hearing that isn't necessarily completely fleshed out, and, again, I'm not complaining about the timeline being punted, but I just don't want to show disrespect to some of the technical AP members that have already been really involved in this and for us to not to at least take a little bit more time to have conversation about

some of their recommendations, and not so much, you know, necessarily changing preferreds and doing all that, but I just wanted to take a few more minutes, but it's also the pleasure of what the group wants to do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Amy, I think that the presentations from the APs further solidified, you know, the burden, the questions about this, and are we really going to get the data that we need, and, you know, I started, and I will go back to -- I think that we'll come back to this, but, you know, if we were trying to do this today, I would be questioning, you know, the purpose and need. You know, enhance our ability to collect recreational effort, and, I mean, if we're not doing something that's going to actually improve recreational catch data -- I think we need to hone-in on that, and we need to get closer to that before we move this forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Carolyn and then Andy.

DR. BELCHER: I mean, I'm kind of still with Robert, in the fact that I would like to see us kind of push this back. I mean, we still have another group that we've just started to shore up, and we haven't heard comments from them on this yet, and so I think, the more we get stuck into how our trench is going to be -- If there's something from that group that could deflect us in a different direction, it's going to be a little bit harder to, because we're starting to lock ourselves into things that maybe aren't the best way to go, and so I think there's enough that can be brought back in September, between the MRIP discussion and what the Science Center and the Regional Office said that there's potential that they can offer, that maybe the best course -- Again, we're not under any statutory requirement, or timeline, and so I think it would be better for us to have the conversations with everybody.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I have several comments, and so, by improving effort, we're also improving catch estimates, right, and so just to make that clear, because the effort is an expansion for the catch estimation. In terms of September, a couple of asks, and so one is I think council staff -- Reach out to Evan Howell, me, and Clay, and we're all kind of spearheading this re-envisioning effort within the agency, and I think it would be a good discussion, to make sure we hit the mark, in terms of what we want to bring back in September.

What's on the board is a little bit broader, in terms of I think what I was initially thinking, but I think it's great, and we need to, I think, have a discussion about how Amendment 46 specifically could look, but then, obviously, that broader discussion of what else, or what more, could be done.

Then the last ask is to you, Jessica, and, given the comments that Luiz made, and some of the AP comments specific to this vessel versus angler permit, including all snapper grouper species versus the SRFS list of species, and I think it would be good to hear from FWC, in terms of perspective on, if we continue to move forward with Amendment 56, what FWC's decision would be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So do you want me to come back with that in September or December, and is that what you're suggesting?

MR. STRELCHECK: I was thinking September, just because that helps to inform us going into the December meeting, right, and, if there's going to be some major hurdles that, you know, we would have to overcome, it would be good to know those sooner rather than later.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Sounds good, and then our EFPs, once we get those running, there is some pieces here that could inform Amendment 46 as well, including the piece about the educational components, vessel versus angler, and other things as well, but, yes, I will be prepared with that information for September, and then maybe preliminary information from the EFPs probably by the December meeting. Any more discussion on this topic?

It's been a good discussion, and we will continue this, and I don't want people to be frustrated just because we're not going through the nitty-gritty details inside Amendment 46, and I feel like we are still moving concepts forward, and we're still trying to come up with the best path forward here, even though we're not going through the details of 46. I'm going to consult with our chair here, and we'll figure out what we're going to do next, and so standby.

All right, and we're going to continue to go through Snapper Grouper here and try to get this done before lunch, and so the next item on our agenda here is commercial fishery discussions, and I'm going to turn it over to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so there's really no material associated with the commercial fishery discussion. I will scroll on down to a portion of the overview that kind of includes some of the information there. At the March 2024 meeting, there was some discussion about potentially forming a subcommittee, that would work outside of council meetings, to kind of gather up some recommendations and bring them to council meetings moving forward that are looking at potential revisions to the commercial fishery.

What we were looking to do today was to see is that the approach that the committee would like to take, as far as doing revisions for the commercial fishery, and, if so, try to get that committee formed and get some initial tasking of what they should discuss, as well as, if that's the approach, get an idea of the timing when that subcommittee would report-out to a council meeting. That was really all we were looking to do today for the commercial discussion, just trying to get that committee formed, and so is that still the approach that the council is interested in taking to try to address some of the commercial fishery concerns?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mike, and I will look to the committee. We had a good discussion on this before, and I think the subcommittee approach would be great here. Thoughts around the table? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I am very supportive, in concept, of pursuing this. After the last council meeting, Kerry and I had a great conversation, and we committed to kind of spending some time going through the old visioning document, and we kind of pulled out some ideas that certainly I think could be a basis for this subcommittee to look into, as well as some other things that have come before this council in more recent years.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Andy. Kerry, do you have any thoughts that you want to add here?

MS. MARHEFKA: No, and just that I think we should do it. I don't know that we should necessarily -- I would like to not just limit it, and I hope some other people other than just, you know, me and Tim and Andy and you, and part of -- You know, we realize -- I mean, we've already seen, this week, where sometimes the subcommittee can sort of go through and do all this work, and then you get to the Full Council and, you know, someone is like but only the commercial people were talking about it, and so I would hope there would be some interest from, you know, one or two other people, and I think I heard Amy -- You weren't here the last time we did a subcommittee, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so, first off, maybe we could have a motion to form this subcommittee to discuss commercial topics, since we're going to be spending some budget on this, and so if someone would like to make a motion to do that, and then let's figure out who is interested in being on this committee, or who is being voluntold, but Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I was just going to suggest maybe talk about voting on whether we -- You know, again, starting the committee, but hold off on populating until September, because we do have new members coming in that may have interest in it, and, you know, again, I just -- Otherwise, you're forming it up, and you're people some people on, and you could have a meeting before then, and why not wait, just to see if you might pick up one or two people.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, to that point, I mean, I would like to envision maybe that it could work in the way that we do with our normal committees, which is we give the discretion to leadership to -- You know, you all, whoever, whether it's John, or John and the two of you, and I presume, after the new people are appointed, are going to go through and look at committee leadership, or, I mean, committee makeup anyway, like happens every fall, and so can we go ahead and sort of populate it now, with who wants to do it from here, and then, when those people come on the council, it gets switched around, the way we normally do every year anyway?

DR. BELCHER: I think that's a fine thing, and I just didn't realize if we were doing this as something that would be like an ad hoc workgroup type of approach, where, again, it's just kind of people are assigned, and then that's the last we hear, until they come back to report-out, and that was the only thing I was thinking with that, and if that wasn't a repopulated group, but --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me add one more thing, and there's a lot of people that want to talk right now, and so let me add one more thing. We have so many things that we say we're going to get done between now and September, and are we really going to be able to meet this group between now and September? I'm just putting that out there. I'm just putting it out there. Okay. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I had a thought kind of similar to what Jessica was thinking, in the sense of you all -- One route that you could take is to form the subcommittee, get membership from those council members here that are interested right now to be a part of it, but set the report-out date to be December, and that would give opportunity for any potential new members to hop on, and we will set the meeting to occur between September and October, but, that way, we at least have it formed, and we have some initial membership, and we can say the ball is rolling, and we have a report-out date.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. The meeting date would be between September and December? Okay. So maybe we just need a motion to form this subcommittee, and then the other items that we might just mention we could capture as bullet points that are direction. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Do you want a motion? **I will motion to form a commercial snapper grouper ad hoc subcommittee, and I don't care what you call it, and naming isn't my strong suit, but what I would like to say is I would like to have the caveat that this group meets twice a year, in the way that like we have the AP meeting twice a year, until such point as which - - When sort of management recommendations come out of that and it gets passed to the full committee.** I don't want it just to happen in the fall and then -- I would like there to be some flow to it, I guess is what I'm trying to get at, and you all can tell me there's a better way to do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So do you -- Do you want that to be part of the motion itself or direction? Okay. All right. Okay. Kerry, check that out, because we modified it. Do we have a second for this motion? It's seconded by Tim.

MS. MARHEFKA: I would just like to make the point, on the record, in case, you know, there are people who see this later and don't understand the intent of it, and, you know, this isn't a way for us to go off and sort of do some sort of commercial maneuver. I mean, we're taking our piece of pie, that has already been designated to us, through the, you know, normal council process we have, and we are talking about sort of the social and economic ways in which the best deal, with the piece of pie we're given right now within the management that we already have that exists, and we're not trying to -- You know, this isn't us trying to grow the commercial fishery, and, you know, it's us trying to look at what we have right now and how best to use it. Does that make sense?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so we have a motion on the table here. Let me read the motion. **Form a commercial snapper grouper management subcommittee that will meet at least twice per year until a commercial management amendment is initiated by the Snapper Grouper Committee.** Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I would reword this to remove "until", just like we've done with Wreckfish Amendment 48, right, and we continued working as that amendment was before the Snapper Grouper Committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: So would that pull out of the general Snapper Grouper Committee discussions, things like discussions on if there's a gear allocation within the commercial sector, and other things like that, and is that -- Is this, by de facto, making the Snapper Grouper Committee a recreational Snapper Grouper Committee discussion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't think so. I did put there, or Mike did, initial tasks, or topics, and so I was hoping we could get into what this group is going to work on, and so, for example, I envisioned this group talking about what to do about the two-for-one. You know, you heard about the two-for-one, and we've talked about it a couple of times, and if this group wants to talk about leasing of permits and vessels, and so those are the types of things -- So, to me, we would build-out that topic list here, and kind of set the charge, if you will.

I'm going to go back to read the motion again, because it has changed. **The motion is to form a commercial snapper grouper management subcommittee that will meet at least twice per year through the development of a commercial management amendment initiated by the Snapper Grouper Committee.** That's been seconded by Tim. Is there any additional discussion on the motion itself? **Any objection to the motion?** All right. **The motion carries.** So then let's talk about both the initial membership of this group as well as the topics that we want this group to talk about. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: The intent, really, I think, in my conversations with Andy, and with John, and with you, Jessica, is that, as we know, we're working on the MSE, right, and so that is going to be a couple of species in the recreational fishery. Just by the nature of that process, you can't look at everything, and so this is sort of, you know, in the meantime, how we look at the commercial fishery, and so I do see it, in response to Robert, as sort of the bigger-picture questions, the where we're going with this fishery in general, and not down into the minutia, and, if we get to the minutia, it comes back to the whole -- You know, the committee and council as a whole, and so I think, like you said, the two-for-one, leasing, and I don't want to get too specific.

Andy and I talked about things that were, you know, going back to the vision blueprint, and looking at some of the themes that came out of the vision blueprint. I suspect things that will come up with be things like two-for-one leasing, regional management, you know, the 225 permits in existence, and, you know, I think that's -- Within those, little things might come out, like permit stacking and other things, but I think that we've all talked about the things that came out of the vision blueprint, and maybe even we go and look at what came out of Florida too, the commercial fishing summit, and grab onto some of those.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so can we add the types of topics, like you just mentioned, maybe underneath that bullet, like -- Because there are some things that are kind of just hanging out there, that the committee has discussed, and I wanted to make it clear that we are kind of punting those discussions over to the subcommittee, like the two-for-one, like the leasing, and so I'm trying to regurgitate here some of the things that you said, and so you said two-for-one, the 225, and regional management was another one, examination of items from Florida's commercial fishing summit.

MS. MARHEFKA: Different permit regimes, and I don't want to like be as specific as permit stacking, but I don't know, and some kind of general way to describe different ways we could look at making boats more efficient, if they wanted to be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That sounds good. Is there anything else that's missing from this list? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: It might come underneath regional management, but we've talked, several times, about how can we make the fishing trips more efficient for like the boats that are down around Canaveral, where they don't have very many species to fish for, and so I guess it would be like stacking their days.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Ways to increase efficiency, trip efficiency?

MS. THOMPSON: There you go, and so, if you have like a 200-pound snowy grouper trip, would you be able to catch 600 pounds, and call it a three-day trip, but you only do it in one day, but you stay at the dock the other two days, but you have made it more efficient, as far as fuel consumption and time and everything else.

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

MR. CARMICHAEL: Infrastructure? We hear about it a lot, and I think that should be a topic, and then maybe EEJ and climate concerns, how that factors into this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds great. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to emphasize that I think we need to view this as examples of things that we want them working on, and not the comprehensive list, and the other thing is, you know, we've got a lot of really good feedback more recently from the AP, right, and so someone going back and going through that record, and some of the AP's recommendations, that are more recent than the vision blueprint.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great. Okay. This is a good start to a list, and I don't know that we need to put more. Back to the membership here. I heard suggested Kerry, Tim, Andy, Jessica, Amy. Who else? Trish. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I think I would like to see, you know, guys like Sonny on this too as well, and, I mean, he's a permit -- He's a liaison here, and we've always had Dewey on committees, and, I mean, they can be parts of committees, and I think it would be valuable, especially when we're going to talk about climate change and all these other things, that we have some input from, you know, commercial guys that are, you know, in different regions, especially when we're talking about regional management.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Tim. Sign me up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I'm just going to say I will hold off until we see who populates the Georgia seat.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. So we have an initial list of folks, an initial list of topics, example topics, and are we good here? Any further discussion on this? All right. So then the intent is that this group would begin meeting between the September and the December council meetings. Okay. All right. We're done with that topic, I believe. Next on the list are the updates on the spawning special management zones, and I believe we're going to get that from Chip.

DR. COLLIER: It should be pretty quick. As I had mentioned earlier in the week, I am working on some evaluation tools that can be used for the spawning special management zones. At the meeting, the workgroup had recommended that we evaluate each area independently, and the reason for that is not all of them are going to be performing the same, and so providing you the

information for each area is going to be -- It's going to take more time to do, but I think it's going to provide you with a better product, in the end, to make management decisions.

The other thing that's going on is staff have been working with The Nature Conservancy, as well as LGL, in developing some information in regard to the spawning special management zones and the sunset. The first one is, you know, trying to develop outreach for this, and we are working with TNC, in order to get more sampling out there, and The Nature Conservancy wants to have two sampling events at each of the spawning special management zones that have a sunset clause associated with them, and so we are working on a grant with them, in order to get those areas sampled.

I do want to say that Devil's Hole has been sampled twice, the spot off of Georgia, and it does have some of the focal species that were identified in Amendment 36, and so that's encouraging. They are getting ready to do a sampling event down in Warsaw Hole, later this month, and so that's another encouraging sign, and then they're waiting to hear back on a cooperative research proposal to be doing the sampling off of the South Cape Lookout, as well as an additional sampling event down in Warsaw Hole, and so trying to get those two sampling events there.

Then, like I had mentioned, just working together and trying to develop some consistent outreach, so the findings from some of these sampling events can get to the public, and, you know, the council staff -- We try to be neutral on this. Right now, we're trying to promote the spawning SMZs as a really good area to -- Or to follow the regulations for these areas, trying to encourage that, but, as it transitions to more of amendment development, and consideration, we might have to step back on that, and really consider exactly how we do it, and so Kim and Nick have been working with an outreach team from TNC, in order to have consistent messaging, and so that's it with spawning SMZs, if there's any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chip. Questions? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: No, but I just would like to personally thank TNC for putting money behind this. This is really important, and I don't know that we would have this work any other way, and I'm just very appreciative of that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Kerry. Anybody else? Any other comments or questions? All right. Thank you, Chip. Next up, we have the AP recommendations on topics that we haven't already covered in the agenda, and I'm going to turn it back to Bob Lorenz to go over these last remaining items from the AP.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the things that our AP was asked about was to provide recommendations on the timing and things of the seasons for the deepwater species, and so we spoke about that, and the input pretty much is as follows, and, naturally, there is support for aligning the start dates of deepwater species, and you will note there the golden tilefish, the yellowedge grouper, on January 1, should be aligned with snowy grouper and blueline tilefish, and, of course, the obvious incentive to that is bycatch, dead discards, that sort of thing, that actually affect the fisheries.

You know, the species that -- The groupings of species that basically are in either a water depth or a type of structure, or a lack of structure, with the tilefish is, you know, certainly a good way to

go, and you can't fish for one and not hook the other one, and that happens, and so the AP had concern of that, and it agrees with aligning that. There are some caveats with that though, and so they want to align the co-species, to reduce discard potential.

Then there's the statement that they would like to develop a cohesive start date, and then important is where there's saying consider the fishery's ability to access deepwater species, including the effects on timing and length of the open season, and that's not -- They're not thinking about just within respect to the fish, and being able to have their portfolio of things to fish for, and in addition to the other aspects of those that are together, but the timing some are thinking of is even their ability to access the fishery, and it's interesting that they brought back regional fisheries management, because I haven't heard that talked about strongly for about five or six years.

We know -- We have Florida, which we see does it with their own state species, and they have regions, and then we looked, and, with Florida taking up about 60 percent of the linear coastline that this council oversees, you have those in the north that tend to have issues that, when seasons open, what might be nice for the southern part of the region is just a horrible time to go fishing up there, and so, if they had more of an ability for the fishery to open at a different season, you wouldn't run into issues that -- We had complaints that someone brought up about golden tilefish, where the ACL tends to be met, or getting close to it, before like those in North Carolina get to go out for them and get to fish, and so your regional management approach would kind of help that, and so it's not just on their ability to get their portfolio of fish, but also the timing, and the safety, behind it for that.

Again, coming from that group, the representatives from North Carolina feel they need the blueline tilefish in late summer, July and August, but not necessarily a longer season, and that actually, I think, came from our for-hire section, that there is a decent fishery for this up near Hatteras, and so looking to have the ability of that fish, along like what some of you said with grouper, and Tom had mentioned it, and it's just something to draw anglers out there, to get an interest in a trip, and, also, in it would be the stated -- Along with the regional management would be the consideration of a split season, or an ACL, to allow fairer access for different areas of the region. I guess the golden tilefish last year was one of the more blatant examples of that, that people felt that it could be a little fairer.

That's it with respect to that discussion, just a couple of other things, and then, just to report the things we did, we completed our fishery performance report for the hogfish for the east coast of Florida and the Keys. We had an exercise for MSE input, and a lot of that was with respect to red snapper, and it was held by Chip, and he gave us all tablets, and we were focusing on -- There were questions about, as there are changes in the stock conditions, and, you know, you're getting feedback from the AP that the things that come up, that you learn how quickly will they be applied to a situation like red snapper, and, you know, as you get data, or you get the anecdotal evidence, fishermen's reports and that sort of a thing, that, as stated, some people think the fishery has recovered, and, well, how quickly, and efficiently, can that be used to change where you are going in fisheries management.

Then we also talked a lot about additional restrictions, or questions were related to additional restrictions or things we can do to reduce the release mortality of red snapper, and then, finally, I am termed-out, and I've done nine years on this AP, and so I'm finishing up today, and we did

have the chair and the vice chair elections, and I will let you know that this is going in very good hands, and we have James Paskiewicz from Florida.

He fishes -- He's pretty much a specialist in the yellowtail snapper fishery, and he's very good at it, and he's well-spoken. You will like James. He's a very good man, and then, on deck, we'll have Chris Kimrey. He's for-hire from North Carolina, the Morehead/Atlantic City area, and so that concludes my reporting for today and for this council session. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you so much, Bob, and I just wanted to take the time to thank you for all of your service and for serving as chair on this AP, and I know it's a lot of work, and we just want to thank you, and we appreciate you for that. It looks like we do have questions for you. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Just a couple of comments. First of all, thank you, Bob. It's been a pleasure working with you, and you're doing an awesome job, and we appreciate everything that you've done. Bob's comments, you know, again, they reinforce the need for regional management when we're looking at some of these species, but I want to be careful on the tilefish, because, again, the tilefish is the only thing that the boats off of east central Florida can fish for, you know, in January, and so that's a time of the year when they're getting the most money for their fish, and, if you change the start date to later in the season, to accommodate the boats up north, then that really throws a wrench into the boats off of east central Florida, and so I think it's great that we're going to -- You may have to start looking at some regional allocations, also, you know, to make things more fair for the boats, and so I appreciate you all starting to talk about regional management. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I just wanted to clarify that what the AP was talking about was specific to recreational. Okay. Are there more questions? Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: This isn't a question, but this is more comments, but, yes, thanks so much, Bob, for being a part of the AP for nine years, and being the chair and vice chair, and so thanks so much for all your time. I just wanted to hit on some of the things that Bob did talk about, as far as the deepwater fish.

I did have a phone call from one of our fishermen that does serve on this AP, and he talked to me about the concerns of -- He talked about specifically golden tile, and how I guess Florida -- The ACL gets caught up pretty quick, and, you know, whereas, in North Carolina, the weather is just not conducive to trying to get out, especially in January and February off of North Carolina, off of Hatteras, and so he was asking if there was a way to address that. I mean, he called, and, you know, is there a way that all groups could have practical access, and this gentleman is -- He is a for-hire, and so he's talking recreational.

You know, I told him that I would bring this up, and since it was brought up also at the AP, and I don't know if there's a way to visit that, and I don't know what the workplan looks like, and I know we've got a lot of stuff going on, and I don't know if we need to revisit that, or at least talk about revisiting it during the workplan, but I think that is something that we need to think about, and I think this has happened in other fisheries over time, where one state gets it before the other state, and so I know this is not really a new problem, but I just want to -- But, anyway, I just wanted to share that phone call.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I appreciate that, and, before I go to Tom, so this came up at our FWC Commission meeting as well, and so golden tilefish is important to some of our commissioners, and so they felt like the recreational season was way too short, and they actually were interested in reallocation from the commercial component over to the recreational component, and so there were lots of discussions about this.

Before I go to Tom, because I know Tom wants to speak on this exact same topic, one of my thoughts, and I would like to hear what the committee thinks, is, yes, I agree that we would need to slot this into the workplan. Is it something that becomes part of the amendment that's coming out of the MSE, or is it something that is standalone? So I guess be thinking about that. Tom, I know this was on your list, and you had put it under Other Business, but would you like to talk about it now?

MR. ROLLER: Yes. Thank you, Chair. I think this is the perfect time, and thank you, Trish, for bringing that up. I was at the AP meeting, and I listened to the discussion, and I've also received a lot of feedback, from fishermen in North Carolina, on this issue, going back months. I heard about it at the mackerel port meetings, because it was a great, you know, avenue for us, as council members, to talk to the fishermen at-large.

There's a lot of frustration, for North Carolina fishermen, regarding the golden tilefish season closing earlier with the January start date, and that reason being it just doesn't seem to be fair and equitable access for our fishermen to this, and I really need to -- You know, like I brought up earlier, and I just want to make sure they're hearing that we're talking about this, and that it's definitely on my radar.

That frustration is also continuing with blueline, and I know we discussed this in the past amendment, but North Carolina fishermen, particularly in the Hatteras area, really need those fish later in the summer, when they're more important, and they believe the May 1 start date just isn't good for them. Now, I know we discussed this at-length, but it is important to my fishermen, and I need to bring it up and put it on the record.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Another idea too, and so I think that the tilefish assessment is coming soonish, and so then you could do an amendment that maybe covers not just golden tilefish, but covers these other deepwater species as well, in talking about the seasons, but I think Carmichael has an idea, too.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I do, exactly on that topic, Jessica, and so you have the golden tilefish assessment scheduled to come to you in December, and you have the blueline tilefish assessment scheduled to come to you in June of 2025, and one of the questions that I was going to raise, when we get to the workplan, and so ponder this, is would you want to perhaps combine those, and maybe reduce the number of overall activities, and does it make sense to talk about those together, and so that is an opportunity for you to consider regional management.

What you may want to do is see what comes out of those assessments and decide if you want to do something rapid through a framework, because that's just updating an ABC, you know maybe for golden, and then decide what you want to do for tilefish more broadly, and so I think we should

keep this factor in mind, but let's see -- Let's get some more information about what comes out of these assessments, and what you think you need to do for your response, before we lock in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy and then back to Tom.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I like the approach being suggested, and I certainly like the idea of aligning the seasons. I just wanted to remind people that, you know, when we get to talking about fairness and equity, we're taking about a 2,600-fish quota for golden tilefish and a 1,700-fish quota for snowy grouper. There's just not a lot of fish, and there is, obviously, a lot of uncertainty in the catch estimates, and so it's really hard for us to even monitor the fishery in the first place.

With that said, we are looking at our annual catch limit monitoring for the first wave, because we opened and closed golden tilefish during that timeframe. Right now, our catch estimates indicate that the catch level has not been met, and so there's the potential that we could reopen the recreational sector later this year, and so we'll continue to look at that, and then update the council if we do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Andy. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Andy. That was kind of what I was getting at, and I was curious of what the parameters had been for closing the season, but I think this is important to point out, that, with the reduction in the blueline tilefish season this year, combined with the closure for golden tilefish, it was a two-for-one hit for our fishermen, particularly with gag being, you know, reduced and stuff, and it's particularly hard for our for-hire fleet.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. These are great points, and so, to try to wrap that discussion up, it sounds like we'll kind of revisit this again when we get to the workplan, to think about how we want to handle this, do we want to group species together, et cetera, and so be thinking about that. All right. Are there any other questions for Bob? All right. Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? We have covered the one Other Business item already, and it was the golden tilefish closure and season, and is there any other business to come before this committee? All right. Seeing none, I'm going to pass it back to our chair.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 13, 2024.)

- - -

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
July 17, 2024

Tuesday
6/17

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2024 COMMITTEE MEMBERS continued

MACKEREL COBIA

Tom Roller, Chair
Spud Woodward, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher
Gary Borland
LT Cameron Box
Amy Dukes
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Trish Murphey
Robert Spottswood, Jr.
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Mid-Atlantic: Skip Feller
Staff contact: Christina Wiegand

SEDAR

Carolyn Belcher, Chair
Trish Murphey, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Amy Dukes
Tim Griner
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Andy Strelcheck
Staff contact: Chip Collier

SHRIMP

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Trish Murphy, Vice Chair
Carolyn Belcher
Gary Borland
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Amy Dukes
Jessica McCawley
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Staff contact: Allie Iberle

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Dr. Kelsey Banks
Dr. Clay Borch
Mike Larkin (web)
Dr. Kyle Shertzer (web)

SNAPPER GROUPE

Jessica McCawley, Chair ✓
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair ✓
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher ✓
Gary Borland ✓
LT Cameron Box ✓
Amy Dukes ✓
Tim Griner ✓
Judy Helmey ✓
Trish Murphey ✓
Tom Roller ✓
Robert Spottswood, Jr. ✓
Andy Strelcheck ✓
Laurilee Thompson ✓
Spud Woodward ✓
Mid-Atlantic: Earl "Sonny" Gwin ✓
Staff Contact: Mike Schmidtke ✓

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Dr. Marcel Reichert
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Sonny Gwin
Robert Beal

Tuesday
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Wednesday
6/17

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Robert Beal
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Bob Lorenz

Monica Smit-Burnello

~~Andy~~ Rick DeVictor

Shep Grimes

Dr. Kelsy Banks

Nikhil Mehta

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Spud Woodward ✓
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2024 COMMITTEE MEMBERS continued

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 Dr. Clay Poreh
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 Rick DeVictor
 Nikhil Metu

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- Spud Woodward ✓
- Mid-Atlantic: Earl "Sonny" Gwin ✓
- Staff Contact: Mike Schmidtke ✓

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 Dr. Michael D. Travis
 Scott Baker

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SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (6/10/24 - 6/14/24)

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 01:38 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/11/2024 07:50 AM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

First Name

Atkinson

Seth

Bajema

Jordan

Bajema

Jordan

Baker

Scott

Barbieri

Luiz

Barnhill

William

Barrows

Katline

Beal

Bob

Benyshek

Elizabeth

Bergmann

Mike

Bianchi

Alan

Bogdan

Jennifer

Bonura

Vincent

Brame

Adam

Brennan

Ken

Brouwer

Myra

Bublely

Walter

Buntin

Jesse

Bunting

Matthew

Byrd

Julia

Carrigan

Abby

Cermak

Bridget

Chansky

Brian

Chen

Leyi

Cheshire

Rob

Clarke

Lora

Corbett

Ellie

Cox

Jack

Cross	Tiffanie
Crowe	Stacie
Curtis	01Judd
Dale	David
Dancy	Kiley
Davis	Jefferson
DeVictor	Rick
Delrosario	Leeanne
Dixon	Michael
Dover	Miles
Dyar	Ben
Eguia	Leonardo
Emory	Meaghan
Fauble	Joshua
Finch	Margaret
Fletcher	Brad
Flowers	Jared
Fluech	Bryan
Franco	Dawn
French	Lindsay
Gentner	BRAD
Gervasi	Carissa
Glazier	Ed
Gordan	Alexander
Gray	Alisha
Guyas	Martha
Gwin	Earl
H	T
HILDRETH	DELAINE
Hackney	Heather
Hadley	John
Harrison	Alana
Harrison	Alana
Haymans	Doug
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Hordyk	Adrian
Horn	Calusa
Howell	Samantha
Huber	Jeanette
Hudson	Joseph
Iberle	Allie
Johnson	Denise

Kaalstad	Simen
Karnauskas	Mandy
Kean	Samantha
Keener	Paula
Kellison	Todd
Kent	Russell
Kittle	Christine
Klasnick	01Kelly
Knowlton	Kathy
Kraiss	Marisa
Krug	Stephanie
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Max
Levy	Mara
Locascio	James
Lombardi	Michael
Lovell	Sabrina
M	Amanda
M Borland	Gary
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Malinowski	Richard
Mallory	Ryan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Masi	Michelle
McGirl	Maria
McGovern	Jack
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez Ferrer	Natasha
Merrifield	Mike
Meyers	Steve
Montañez	José
Moore (NC)	Jeff
Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
O'Shaughnessy	Patrick
Oliver	Ashley
Ostroff	Jenny
Owens	Marina
Package-Ward	Christina
Pate	Jessica
Petersen	Andrew
Poholek	ariel

Potter	Caroline
Puglise	Kimberly
Putman	Nathan
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reeder	Kelly
Riley	Rick
Robbins	Megan
Robertson	Captain B F
Roller	00Tom
Rose	Tyler
Runde	Brendan
Sauls	Beverly
Scerbo	Sabrina
Sedberry	George
Seward	McLean
Shertzer	Kyle
Silvas	Rachael
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spurgin	Kali
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Townsend	Maddie
Travis	Michael
Treece	Andrea
Walia	Matt
Wamer III	David
Wiegand	Christina
Williams	Travis
Williams	Erik
Williams	John
Wilms	Sean
Withers	Meg
Wolfe	Wes
Woodward	00 Spud
Yandle	Tracy
carvalho	avelino
colby	barrett
collier	chip
foss	kristin
gloeckner	david
hallett	fletcher

laks
lavine
moss
oden
sandorf
sica
thomas
thompson
vara
wilber

Ira
craig
david
jeff
scott
Xavier
suz
laurilee
mary
pace

SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (6/10/24 - 6/14/24)

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 02:45 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/12/2024 07:15 AM EDT

Staff Details

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Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

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Beal

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Bianchi

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Brogan(Oceana)

Gib

Brouwer

Myra

Bubley

Walter

Buntin

Jesse

Bunting

Matthew

Byrd

Julia

Carrigan

Abby

Cermak

Bridget

Chansky

Brian

Cheshire

Rob

Clarke

Lora

Coggins

Lew

Cox

Jack

Cross

Tiffanie

Curtis

01Judd

DeVictor

Rick

Dixon

Michael

Dover

Miles

Dukes

Amy

Dyar

Ben

Emory	Meaghan
Every	Langford
Finch	Margaret
Flowers	Jared
Floyd	Brad
Franco	Dawn
Geib	Rob
Gentner	BRAD
Gervasi	Carissa
Glazier	Ed
Glazier	Ed
Goebel	Jennifer
Gore	Karla
Gravitz	Michael
Guyas	Martha
Gwin	Earl
HILDRETH	DELAINE
Hadley	John
Harrison	Alana
Haymans	Doug
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Horton	Chris
Howell	Samantha
Hubbard	Dylan
Huber	Jeanette
Hudson	Joseph
Iberle	Allie
Johnson	Denise
Karnauskas	Mandy
Kean	Samantha
Kellison	Todd
Kent	Russell
Kittle	Christine
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Klibansky	Nikolai
Knowlton	Kathy
LaVine	Britni
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Lee	Max

Levy	Mara
Locascio	James
Lombardi	Michael
M Borland	Gary
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Mahood	Bob
Malinowski	Richard
Mallory	Ryan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Masi	Michelle
Mathis	Grayson
McGovern	Jack
McWhorter	Will
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez Ferrer	Natasha
Meyers	Steve
Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
O'Shaughnessy	Patrick
Oliver	Ashley
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Poholek	ariel
Potter	Caroline
Potter	Caroline
Ramsay	Chloe
Read	David
Records	David
Reeder	Kelly
Riley	Rick
Robbins	Megan
Roller	00Tom
Rose	Tyler
Runde	Brendan
Sauls	Beverly
Seward	McLean
Shervanick	Kara
Silvas	Rachael
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Stam	Geoff
Starbeck	Haley
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley

Sweetman	CJ
Thompson	00Laurilee
Travis	Michael
Vecchio	Julie
Walia	Matt
Wiegand	Christina
Williams	John
Williams	Erik
Wilms	Sean
Withers	Meg
Woodward	00 Spud
carvalho	avelino
colby	barrett
collier	chip
foss	kristin
gloeckner	david
griner	tim
hallett	fletcher
iverson	Kim
laks	Ira
marinko	Jeff
moss	david
murphy	allison
oden	jeff
sandorf	scott
sica	Xavier
thomas	suz
vara	mary
young	Jerome

SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (6/10/24 - 6/14/24)

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 02:49 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/13/2024 07:31 AM EDT

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Interest Rating

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Brennan

Brouwer

Bubley

Buntin

Bunting

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Chansky

Chen

Cheshire

Coggins

Curtis

Curtis

DARDEN

Dale

Dancy

DeVictor

Dixon

Dover

DuBeck

Dukes

Emory

First Name

Scott

Luiz

Katline

Alan

Randy

Vincent

Kenny

Ken

Myra

Walter

Jesse

Matthew

Julia

Bridget

Brian

Leyi

Rob

Lew

Becky

01Judd

TANYA

David

Kiley

Rick

Michael

Miles

Guy

Amy

Meaghan

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Franco	Dawn
Franke	Emilie
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Iberle	Allie
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Kittle	Christine
Klasnick	01Kelly
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Lazarre	Dominique
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Lee	Max
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M Borland	Gary
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McGovern	Jack
McWhorter	Will
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Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
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Oliver	Ashley
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Patterson	Cheri
Plant	Dan
Poholek	ariel
Potter	Caroline
Potter	Caroline
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reeder	Kelly
Roller	00Tom
Runde	Brendan
Sabo	Mary
Sawicki	Kim
Scerbo	Sabrina
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Smarrito	Michael
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spurgin	Kali
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Travis	Michael
Vecchio	Julie
Walia	Matt
White	Geoff
Williams	Erik
Withers	Meg
Woodward	00 Spud
colby	barrett
collier	chip
foss	kristin
gloeckner	david
iverson	Kim

laks
moss
oden
sandorf
thomas
thompson
vara
young
zales

Ira
david
jeff
scott
suz
laurilee
mary
Jerome
bob