

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE

**Town and Country Inn
Charleston, S.C.**

September 12-15, 2022

Transcript

Committee Members

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Robert Beal
Mel Bell
LT Cameron Box
Tim Griner
Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Spud Woodward

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Dr. Carolyn Belcher
Gary Borland
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Judy Helmey
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Kathleen Howington
Kim Iverson
Dr. Julie Neer
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
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Attendees and Invited Participants

Rick DeVictor
Frank Helies
Dr. Jack McGovern
LT Pat O'Shaughnessy
Meg Withers

Dale Diaz
Jamal Ingram
Dr. Clay Porch
Monica Smit-Brunello

Additional attendees and invited participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on Monday, September 12, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're moving into the Snapper Grouper Committee, which is a committee-of-the-whole. Are there any changes or modifications to the Snapper Grouper Committee agenda? Does anybody have any known items for Other Business at this time? All right. Any objection to approval of the agenda? All right. Seeing none, the agenda stands approved.

The next order of business is Approval of the June 2022 Transcript, or what we've been calling the minutes. Any modifications to the transcript? Any objection to approval of the transcript? All right. Seeing none, that's approved, and now I'm going to pass it over to Myra or to Rick to talk about the EFP.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks, Jessica. I believe that Frank Helies is here to brief you guys on that exempted fishing permit.

MR. HELIES: Thanks. I'm Frank Helies, from the Fisheries Service. If I may give a quick update on Amendment 50, and Snapper Grouper Amendment 50, red porgy rebuilding, the notice published last Friday, and the comment period is open through November 8. We sent out a Fishery Bulletin with information on how to comment and some additional information on the amendment. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions on that. Nothing? Okay. Good.

NMFS received a request for an EFP from David Portenoy at Texas A&M Corpus Christi. If granted, the EFP would allow harvest of speckled hind in federal waters of the South Atlantic, and the samples would be used to assess the speckled hind population structure, connectivity, and life history. The agency previously granted Dr. Portenoy an EFP to collect speckled hind samples, but that EFP expired last month, on August 31.

Unfortunately, they haven't been able to collect adequate samples for their study, and so this EFP would allow select commercial fishermen to retain up to forty speckled hind each year of the proposed timeline, and so eighty total, and speckled hind would be collected by rod-and-reel and black sea bass pots in depths from sixty to 600 feet in federal waters of the South Atlantic. Fin clips and carcasses would be sent to the researcher for processing and analyses, and the EFP would be effective through August 31, 2024. We published a notice in the Federal Register soliciting public comment on the application, and comments will be accepted through September 21. That's about it, if you have any questions on that. Easy. All right. I will be around all week. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

DR. COLLIER: With this EFP -- The ABC for this species is zero, is set at zero, and I'm just wondering how harvest is going to be allowed for this.

MR. HELIES: It's through the EFP. We would exempt the commercial fishermen from the non-retention regs.

DR. COLLIER: But the ABC is still zero.

MR. HELIES: Well, it's an exempted fishing permit, and so this exempts them from fishing regulations.

DR. COLLIER: It still doesn't exempt them from the ABC. It exempts them from the regulations, correct, and I feel like the ABC is put in place to protect the status of the fishery, and, if you're encouraging harvest, it's problematic.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So it doesn't change the ABC, but what it does is it exempts them from the prohibition on harvesting these fish. There is not that many fish, and I can't recall how much, and they're doing it for genetic study, basically so they can give you more information to manage the species, and so the Fisheries Service is taking public comment on it, but they thought it was worth the -- It was worth an exempted fishing permit. As Frank mentioned, my recollection is this council approved the same request before, for a certain time period, but they just weren't able to harvest the fish, I think because of COVID and other reasons, and they couldn't get out there to harvest, but you're right that it doesn't change the ABC.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: That brings up a question that I had earlier this week, and so, in an EFP, when there is an ABC that is not equal to zero, where does that fish -- Does that fish actually have to come off of somebody's ACL, or does it -- Just like in this case, where the ABC is zero, and so it just kind of is there, is that the same, if you were to do an EFP for a species that already has an ACL, and it just doesn't come off of anybody's, and it just is there?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Frank is looking at me. I guess it would depend. I mean, there are some FMPs, fishery management plans, that are set up that have research set-asides, and they allow a certain amount of harvest allocated for these kinds of activities, although I don't think any of your plans allow that kind of thing, and so I'm assuming that it gets taken into account with the stock assessment. Someone keeps track of it, right? It's a permit, and it's information that -- I think the report, the final report, gets submitted to the Science Center, as well as I think the Regional Office, but I don't believe -- In fact, I am certain it does not come off the commercial or recreational ACL, if there was an ACL, and, in this case, with speckled hind and that, the ACL is zero.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Frank.

MR. HELIES: I guess I could give you a little more background, and so they received a MARFIN grant, probably about four years ago now, and their initial intent was to get the samples from fishery-independent surveys, and they just haven't had much luck. I think they've been asking SC DNR, and the Center's survey as well, and, to date, they've only got eleven of the eighty that they would like to, and they keep adding additional fishermen, and it's just -- These fishermen, just when they are incidentally harvested, when they're targeting other things, and so, instead of throwing back potentially dead speckled hind, they can use it for this study, and hopefully the results will lead to some better information on this very data-limited species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: You're right that this is something we looked at before, we approved before, and I think it was a victim of COVID, when it all kind of fell apart, in terms of the ability, and then, like Frank said, we couldn't get the samples from fishery-independent, and so it's not really new, and it's just kind of a continuation of something we looked at a while back.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was just wondering where these fish -- Where are they going to be coming from in the South Atlantic, North Carolina or South Carolina, or is he working with all over, and, also, does the fish -- Like could it be frozen?

MR. HELIES: Are you asking if you would like to participate? Do you run into these?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: No, and I was just curious how -- Because I think what would work would be to give out tags to a certain amount of people, and you say, if you catch two or three, you put a tag in it, and that tag says this is the exempted fish, and so, that way, you don't have to go through the minutia of -- I mean, it's on there, and the person is listed, and he knows he's got two tags, if he gets stopped by the Coast Guard or Fisheries, and he say, hey, this is an exempted fish that we're doing for this thing, and I was curious about how -- Like, you know, the reason why they can't get the samples, and I'm sure that there could be somebody catching them, but, the last I recall, in 2015, at a workshop, the speckled hind was inside of 240 feet, and you remember the 17B closure and stuff, and I thought that would be the focused area, inside of 240, and not outside of 240, where the speckled hind was, and where this council chose the 17B closure to protect that area.

MR. HELIES: I think the applicant would be open to additional fishermen to reach out to us, for sure, and so we'll run vessel checks, and, as long as they pass, we can add them to the EFP, and they don't need a tag. They just need to have a copy of the EFP onboard, and so, if they are fishing, and they happen to catch a speckled hind, and they are approved for the EFP, they can just keep it and send the -- There is going to be fin clips and carcasses, and so we would make sure that the researcher and the captain are aware of the protocols, but I'm sure that, yes, they're going to probably send a frozen fish back to the researcher, to take otoliths and biological samples.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions?

MR. HELIES: We had questions. Yes, that's what I thought. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Myra. We're going to look at Number XI on the agenda.

MS. BROUWER: We figured, if we have just a few minutes, and this is an item that's not going to take very long, and recall that, when the advisory panel met in the spring, and when you discussed Amendment 52 at the last meeting, there were motions about bringing together the golden tilefish longline endorsement holders. When we did scoping for Amendment 52, there were fishermen who were interested in getting together to talk about ways to better manage that portion of the snapper grouper fishery, and so you indicated to us that let's bring that group together.

We don't really have a list of topics, and so that's why we wanted to have that discussion with you here at the table, and we were also wanting to get Monica to provide some guidance on bringing groups of stakeholders together that are not officially advisory panel members, and how that would work, and so, while I pull up a Word document to gather any guidance, I'm going to pass it over to Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So I've been -- Myra asked me some questions about this, and I've been thinking about it, and I think that the council needs to also think about it, and so here's what I'm going to ask you to think about. Under the Magnuson Act, you're given certain authority, right, and part of that authority is that you can establish advisory panels and other kinds of groups to give you advice and information, so that you can do all the work you have to do under the various FMPs for your conservation and management measures, and I think, in the past, the wreckfish IFQ holders were -- There was a sub-group of the Snapper Grouper AP that was -- I think we almost called them the Wreckfish AP, then they're no longer, I believe, an AP, advisory panel.

Under the Magnuson Act, you have authority to establish these advisory panels, and then that gives you the coverage, if you will, under FACA, to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, so that you don't have to apply for a specific charter for these groups and go through all the requirements of FACA to allow these groups to meet, and so I think, with the wreckfish permit holders, there was a meeting, and, theoretically, we could probably say it was kind of a scoping meeting, because you're developing Amendment 48, which is going to change the wreckfish permitting reporting requirements, or reporting, and I shouldn't say requirements, so that they come into really the electronic world, as opposed to the paper world.

Actually, I think that you don't really gather any other subgroups of permit holders, and I think, when you do this in the future, you ought to either somehow think about whether you ought to do -- Like what kind of information are you asking of them, and you have, on the agenda, and we talked about I think briefly at the last meeting, gathering the golden tilefish longline endorsement holders together, and that kind of falls under the same kind of umbrella of, you know, this really isn't a council group, under the Magnuson Act, where you would have the coverage under FACA, and really under the Magnuson Act, to gather them together.

They could gather on their own. They could do all kinds of things on their own, but, when you're calling them together, you're probably, you know, paying for their hotel and per diem and those sorts of things, which is fine if it's an advisory panel, but they're not advisory panels, and so I think you should think about whether you want to make them advisory panels, whether you really need to gather them together, or whether they could gather on their own and give advice to you, without -- You know, if you do not want to make them advisory panels, and we could probably call them a working group, and I think we've done that before, but do you really need to call them a working group?

Do you really need to form a working group? You know, it's those kinds of things where I should have brought this to your attention before, but we just all had a lot going on, and it just didn't occur to me until we really started thinking about it, and I know under -- I talked to my colleague who advises the Gulf Council, and they also -- When they gather -- When they want information from -- Dale could speak to this, but, when they want information from specific groups, I think they form working groups, and they form APs, just like you all have done in the past, to get that kind

of information, and so I am throwing that on the table for further discussion, and I just wanted you to start thinking about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just a question, and forgive me if you mentioned it already, but I didn't hear you talk about whether the council could appoint people to a temporary AP, or would they have to go through the same application process that we go through for other advisory panels?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, I think you've had appointments to technical APs, and I think you have one right now, right, to consider the recreational permitting process and those sorts of things, and so I think you probably could appoint people to a technical AP, or something of that nature, and I don't know whether any of those individuals went through the advisory panel process, in terms of filling out background information or anything like that, and maybe we should look at the handbook, or the SOPPs, and see if we need to, you know, amend any of that to fold in some of these other kinds of working groups, and I don't know, and I will talk to John about that.

I do know for the group -- Like, when the wreckfish permit holders got together, or the ITQ holders, whatever we call them, it was publicly noticed, and anybody could have attended, and it was noticed in the Federal Register, and it met all those kind of requirements, but it really wasn't, you know, a council-sanctioned, if you will, advisory panel, or a working group, or anything like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got hands going up here. Kerry and then Chester.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have to say that, in thinking about this further, it's a little funky for me, because I think this -- What we're hearing from the golden tile fishery is there's some conflict over access, and the fact that we would convene just one segment of the fishery, and not the entire fishery, would be really hard, quite frankly, to do the entire fishery, sits a little uneasy for me.

If there are -- On one hand, if there was something that the longline fleet wanted to propose, they could go through channels, and they have people on our advisory panels, and they can get on an AP, and they can go that way. At first, and I think it was in favor of this when it first came up, but the more it sat with me, the more -- I don't know, and this could be a slippery slope, and Monica is sort of reinforcing that idea, in my mind. I don't know why we would just convene one segment of the fishery and give them sort of special preferential treatment, if you will.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Kerry. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I'm thinking about the recreational -- What do we call that thing, the 103 working group?

MS. MCCAWLEY: 102, yes.

MR. BREWER: The 102 working group, and I'm not aware that there was any great appointment debacle, or not debacle, but process that was gone through. It is a group that has one specific mission, and it's met several times, and I think, after our next meeting, it's going to be disbanded, and so, you know, this whole thing about, if you do a formal AP, then I think you start getting into

this whole thing about, well, then you've got meet at least once a year, and I don't know that there's any real need for that group to meet once a year. They don't have a lot of really pressing issues. They're kind of happy where they are, it seems to me, and so it seems like, if we are going to -- Well, what we might want to do with the golden tilefish endorsement holders is identify them and bring them together as needed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I go to John, based on what's in the golden tilefish/blueline tilefish amendment, I don't know that we need to bring the group together as a group at this time, and Kerry is shaking her head, but let's go to John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just some of the process issues, which is totally separate from the concerns that Kerry raised and the other discussions, is so like the Section 102 group included council members, and so that's recognized different, under Magnuson, than groups that don't include council members, and so we followed that process for them. The recent reporting AP that we created -- We did ask people to apply, given the unique nature of them, and we asked them to submit CVs and a statement, which we provided to you, because they weren't, you know, fishermen-type folks, and they were more technical, and so we got that information, and so, basically, we had a process, and we followed the process, and you named the people.

I think, if you wished to create a group like this, then I think you can say we want to create this, people, and here's what we would like to have, and we would like to say have them follow the regular AP application process, provide us that information, and you could say this group exists for this period of time, and they won't be subject to like the standard meetings, and they won't exist forever, and so you have flexibility within your process, if you wanted to create a group like this.

I think, if you provided the appropriate guidance as to what it would do, and how long it would exist, then we could deal with all of those aspects of it, and so I don't think that's an impediment, just as long as you address the various things, like, you know, Chester brought up, about, well, you know, do they meet, et cetera, and so I think we have flexibility to do that, and so then the question comes back to, you know, do you think you need a group like this, and, yes, I think considering the questions of like fairness and transparency and a voice within the fishery, where are you going, and are you are setting a precedent that some other group says, that maybe has 500 people, that says, well, get all of us together. You got all of them together, you know, and why not get all of us together, and so I think that's probably one of the bigger concerns you should look at in these type of situations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, John. Dale.

MR. DIAZ: Thank you. I just wanted to weigh-in, for just a minute, and so a couple of things that I'm listening to you all talk about, and so we have advisory panels. We do have one ad hoc advisory panel that we have, that's different from a regular advisory panel, and so, on our advisory panel, a person can only serve on two advisory panels, but that doesn't count the ad hoc. They could be on an ad hoc and then on two other advisory panels, and we do not -- Our panels do not necessarily meet once a year.

Like we have a red drum panel, and it infrequently meets, but we have seen the need, and I actually mentioned this this morning, to set up a couple of focus groups, and I mentioned this morning, for

our IFQ program, we're kind of bogged down, and so we've kind of got a broad spectrum of people out there, mostly in the industry, and some folks from academia and different areas, to get on this focus group and try to give us some targeted advice.

We also did that with a shrimp focus group, and so, right now, we're changing the way that we monitor shrimp vessels out on the water, with some new systems that is going to go on them, and so our regular Shrimp AP didn't necessarily fit the bill for what we needed, and we wanted some on-the-water experience and some people that, in their careers, worked with that type of stuff, and so we focused those groups.

Now, having said that, we did take applications for these focus groups, and we met in closed sessions, and we reviewed the applications, and we set it to a fixed number of people. I think, on our -- I believe it's eight people on our IFQ focus group, and, on our shrimp focus group, it's more than that, and it might be ten or twelve, and so, anyway, we set different parameters for it, and we handled it differently, and we didn't have any trouble doing that within our SOPPs and our other procedures that we follow, and so thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dale. I wonder if maybe we give folks time to think about it, and, as we're going through the amendment in committee, then maybe that brings some clarity to the need to do this, and, if we do want to do it, then how? How do we want to go about doing this? Myra.

MS. BROUWER: I agree, and that sounds like a good approach. I just wanted to also remind you that the guidance was for us to convene this group before December, and so that's why we're bringing it to here, because then we have to like hustle in getting that on the calendar.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point. Thank you for bringing this forward, Myra. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just one other point, and it's kind of like, well, what's the harm, and why not do this, and, ultimately, you know, if you got -- Let's say something came out of one of these groups that wasn't established under the Act, and that information led to a fishery management plan amendment, and that went through the process, and, ultimately, if that was challenged -- Somebody might challenge it and say you violated FACA, and you can't use that information, and that's a possibility. It would kind of taint the whole process, the whole resulting product, and so that's why we want to try to get it correct from the beginning, so that we don't have those kinds of issues that could -- I don't know what the risk would be, in terms of -- I haven't heard of anybody bringing any kind of legal challenge on these particular things, but it could happen in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Monica. All right. I'm going to pass it back to the Chair to tell us how we're going to conclude today and then what time we're going to start in the morning.

MR. BELL: So we'll recess from Snapper Grouper for the day, and we'll pick up tomorrow morning in Snapper Grouper, and I appreciate -- I am going to give you almost ten minutes off here, and so you can't say that I'm driving you too hard, but, no, you've done great today, and we've banked a little bit of time, which sometimes we find is really helpful, as we kind of get into things and we have, you know, a lot of issues that take a little bit more time than we thought, and

so I think we're in good shape right now, and so thanks for working so hard to get us to where we are, and we will go ahead and adjourn for the day. 8:30 tomorrow in Snapper Grouper, in this room.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on September 12, 2022.)

SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're going to go back to being in the Snapper Grouper Committee, and first up this morning -- All right, and so we are on release mortality reduction in red snapper, and I believe we're going to start this discussion by bringing up a PowerPoint that Andy created, and I believe Myra sent that around to you, if you wanted to follow along with that, and so Mike is going to get that pulled up, and I'm going to turn it over to Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks, Jessica. Leading up to this meeting, the Fisheries Service has had a lot of really good conversations with a lot of people, and the Fish and Wildlife Commission, we recognize, is an important partner to work with. They represent about 90 percent of the landings and discards for this fishery, and they've come out, obviously, opposing some of the, you know, actions that we were at least discussing at the last council meeting, and so we view it as really important to figure out where we have common ground, where we can come up with a path forward, and ensure that we, as an agency, and you, as a council, meet legal mandates.

The presentation this morning is really intended to cover some ground that we've already covered, but just kind of a refresher, in terms of where we're at, and then I want to talk a little bit, from my perspective, which I hope, in discussing this, will open some dialogue and conversation in terms of broader management for both snapper grouper, but also specific ideas for managing the red snapper fishery.

Just as a refresher, I want to talk about the success we've had in rebuilding this stock. It may not be viewed as success, because of strong, stringent management regulations, but the reality is that we're seeing some of the highest abundances, the highest abundances, that this fishery has ever seen, and you can see that in the left-hand graphic. The challenge is that those abundances are driven by fairly young, small fish, and, under the Magnuson Act, we're required to maximize sustainable yield. We've also had progress though in rebuilding the population. The population bottomed-out at low levels in the 1990s, and since has been increasing.

You can see that there's been a fairly substantial increase in the biomass from about 2010 to 2018, the terminal year of the stock assessment, or 2019, excuse me, and part of the success is reducing

mortality, but it's also driven by high recruitment, which we've discussed as part of the SSC projections and information that has come before us, and so that high recruitment is good. That's a good sign that more fish are coming into the fishery and the population, but the challenge, for us, is then ensuring that we manage fishing mortality and allow those fish, as they come into the fishery, to reach older ages that are ages in which they produce more eggs and ultimately are more fecund.

The good news as well is that we're seeing our fishery-independent abundance indices increase, and so the fishermen are telling us there is more fish on the water, and they're seeing that, and we're seeing it as well, and so I don't think there's a disconnect there between the fishermen's observations and the science, but it's really, I think, how we translate that science into management that has created some of the challenges and problems that we're now experiencing with red snapper.

We have shifted the fishery, over the last decade, from a fishery that's primarily landings, or more so landings, relative to discards, to a largely discard-driven fishery, to try to address overfishing and rebuild the stock, and that resulted in closures in the 2010 to 2015 timeframe, with some short re-openings and landings occurring kind of thereafter, but, as the stock has been coming back and becoming more abundant, and fish encounters have been increasing, and we're seeing more and more discards, and so, to me, this is the challenge before us, is how do we figure out how to move these discards from the discard pile, as I like to talk about it, to the landed catch pile and make this fishery more efficient and effective.

We've also talked a lot about scientific uncertainty, and there is uncertainty in a number of areas of the model, and I just want to acknowledge that, because I expect that that will continue to be part of the conversation, but we do have, obviously, self-reported discard estimates, through logbooks and through intercept surveys, and we also model the uncertainty in the stock assessment, and, ultimately, at the end of the day, based on the best available science and the information that's provided in that stock assessment, it indicated that the stock was still overfished and undergoing overfishing, and fourteen model sensitivity runs were completed that concluded the stock was overfished.

There was one hypothetical run, which lowered discards to 10 percent of current levels, and that one was the only one that indicated that overfishing was not occurring, and so I think this is an important conversation piece, as we look at management strategies, in terms of how we address reductions in discards going forward.

Probably the question that I get asked more often than not is, okay, stock abundance is going up, and the population is improving, and biomass is increasing, and how can the stock still be undergoing overfishing, and so this graphic is essentially intended to show what's occurring, and so, with a population of fish, in order to kind of end the overfishing, what you want to do is reduce the mortality so that the age classes fill out over time, and, ultimately, you kind of have this gradual decline of the age classes in the population, and so this is ages one to twenty.

What you can see here, based on the latest assessment, is you see the slug of recruitment that's coming into the fishery, those ages-one through three, but then there's a pretty substantial drop after that, in terms of the ages from four to about seven fish, and then, after age-seven fish, there's really very few fish in the population, based on sampling and information, and so we have high

fishing mortality, based on those recruits coming into the fishery, and what's even, I think, more evident is, if you recall back in the 2006 to 2008 timeframe, we had really high recruitment.

Well, those fish are now twelve to fourteen years old, and you can see a little bump-up in the age composition of those fish in the population, but, because of high fishing mortality, there's not nearly as many fish in the population that we expect, once the population is rebuilt, and so the fishing mortality, which is driven not only by directed harvest, but discard mortality, is essentially reducing the number of kind of older fish that are living in the population, and those are the breeding population, the larger egg producers in the population.

This is the last slide on the science, and so this is the kind of snapshot of the sources of mortality from the stock assessment, and so you can see, from 2010 forward, we have cut fishing mortality in half, even more so in some years, but we still have fishing mortality exceeding our threshold, and so that's why the stock assessment indicates that overfishing is occurring, and the challenge is reducing discards and, in particular, the major mortality source of recreational discards in the fishery.

As we get into conversation, I think it's important to discuss kind of what the legal requirements are, as well as the National Standard guidance that we have with regard to Magnuson, and so we've talked about it a lot. Implementing regulations need to end overfishing immediately, and "immediately" isn't defined, but I would contend is that we notified you as of July of last year, and we need to be making rapid progress toward addressing and ending the overfishing, and that that cannot take an extended period of time, in order to address the overfishing and rebuild the stock.

With that said, the other aspects -- When we sent you the letter, we indicated that the major cause of the overfishing was discards, and the National Standard Guidelines talk about evaluating the cause of the overfishing and then addressing that, and so we've talked some, in Amendment 35, about how we can reduce discards, and certainly I think there's additional options that we could consider, going forward. Set catch limits to prevent overfishing and then minimize bycatch, and bycatch mortality, to the extent practical.

In conversations that I've been having with many people -- The concern I have is that the path we're on with Amendment 35 -- I don't necessarily view it as a solution, and it's not, to me, going to achieve our broader management goals, nor our legal requirements, and the reason I say that is we functionally are at a point where we barely have a recreational season, and reducing the ABC will mean even shorter commercial and recreational seasons. Gear modifications, although good, and I don't want to discredit that, and I think that's a positive step. To reduce discards, by themselves, likely won't be sufficient to end the overfishing, and, to me, there is opportunities to look at new approaches to reduce discards and increase opportunities in the fishery.

One of the things that has really surprised me, from June until now, is the messaging on what we were asking, which was trying to do some analytical work to discuss spatial area management versus what was essentially communicated, which was potential large shutdowns of the South Atlantic, and, to me, I think there are tailored approaches to look at, you know, management options, whether we're talking spatial area management or anything else, and we really need to be thinking about that, and, using a term that we used several times yesterday, keep those tools in the toolbox and really be thoughtful, in terms of how we approach this. It doesn't mean that,

analytically, we may determine that that's not the best approach and eliminate it, or decide that we're going to go with another preferred, but let's keep our options on the table.

The bigger, I think, issue that I wanted to emphasize with this presentation is this has become very red-snapper-centric, and we need to keep in mind that this is much bigger than red snapper. We have a multispecies snapper grouper fishery. The reason that we have some of the challenges we do is because we do have a year-round fishery. We don't have year-round harvest, but we have a year-round fishery, and there are lots of encounters of fish when trying to target species that are open while other species are closed.

We also have very high levels of fishing effort and overcapitalization, and that's only been increasing in recent years, and then add to that modern electronics and just open-access fisheries right now, and these are the downward pressures that are essentially affecting the management of our fishery and why we are looking at so many restrictive management measures, not only for red snapper, but so many of our snapper grouper fisheries.

This is just, graphically, something that really struck me, and I certainly could have grabbed other species as well, and so the compare and contrast here is, if you look at the Southeast Reef Fish Survey data, red snapper is increasing, right, and that's the good news story, but there's a lot of stocks, and I talked about black sea bass yesterday, where we're seeing steep declines in abundance, for a variety of factors, and so, to me, this is a snapper grouper fishery challenge, and fishery problem, that I think we need to look more holistically at trying to address, and red snapper is just one component of that.

Options, going forward, for snapper grouper, we have the management strategy evaluation, and we have analyses that are being worked on with the Science Center. I bucketed these into kind of big categories, and, obviously, we can get more into the details, but, to me, there is really kind of four main ways in which you can address snapper grouper management.

You can adjust catch limits, which we've been doing, and we can come up with technological solutions, which we've proposed for snapper grouper and reef fish, the descending devices and gear modifications, and we can limit effort, which I know would be unpopular, but it's certainly something that would potentially reduce encounters and control, obviously, better how many fish are being both caught and discarded, and we could limit where and when fishing occurs, or a combination of all of these, right, and so I recognize that some of these things are wildly unpopular, and I recognize that these are things that people may not want to pursue, but I view these as reasonable options that we should be looking at and thinking about as we think about snapper grouper fishery management going forward.

With red snapper, we thought, very carefully, in terms of kind of where we're at in the process, and we're almost fifteen months into when we notified the council that the stock was undergoing overfishing, but making adequate rebuilding progress, and we've talked a lot about short, mid-term, and long-term actions, but the short, mid-term, and long-term I think have been -- Have meant different things to different people, depending on how quickly or slowly you want actions to move, and so these are the Fisheries Service recommendations, and not the council's recommendations at this point, but, as I mentioned, when we reduce the ABC, we're going to have, I think, 28,000 fish.

That is functionally almost a closure for red snapper. I expect that, if we're lucky, we would have a one-day red snapper season, which is, I'm sure, not desirable for anyone, and it creates safety-at-sea and derby fishing conditions, and then the commercial quota would be cut roughly in half from where it is today. Also, I recommend, rather than delaying action and making Amendment 35 more inclusive of additional management actions, moving forward quickly with Amendment 35, based on, you know, some alternatives and actions that are included in the amendment as it stands, any other modifications we might make at this meeting, but try to move these forward to address the 2023 fishing year.

Then, in the mid-term, that would give us some additional time to then focus on further actions to reduce discards, and I left that intentionally vague, because we need to talk, as a council, as to how we go about doing that and what approaches we would want to take. I have had at least some initial conversations with Jessica McCawley, but I'm certainly open to talking with other states, about pilot studies or exempted fishing permits. I think this is an opportunity to look at innovative new management strategies.

Then, to get to the long-term, we have a lot of things on the horizon, but how quickly they're going to inform management will, you know, be still a number of years away, and so we've talked about management strategy evaluation, and we have the South Atlantic red snapper count results and that being plugged in the next assessment. Clay, and his team, has been working with the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and others, to secure some new science that will be going forward, I think as early as 2023, that will expand observer coverage, to give us better estimates of discards, versus self-reported discard estimates, as well as an effort count, given that there is seven or eight inlets along the eastern coast of Florida, to be able to quantify vessel activity and compare that to MRIP and other data statistics, and so these are all, to me, positive steps, in terms of informing future management and informing future science, but, in the interim, don't address the legal requirement to end overfishing.

I have categorized these from kind of short, mid-term, and long-term steps, without specific timing, knowing that some of this will be subject to change, but I certainly recommend that, in the short-term, we move forward quickly to take these actions, and then take additional steps, as needed, to reduce discards thereafter. With that, I will stop, and I welcome questions or comments or conversation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Next up, we're going to dive into the actual document, but, first, do you have any questions for Andy about the presentation? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Andy. I appreciate that, and that's a good status of where we find ourselves. Just for clarification, on that previous slide, when you say, "close fishery", in the short-term actions, that's closing the snapper grouper fishery and not -- Or just the red snapper fishery?

MR. STRELCHECK: Sorry. I should have clarified that. Yes, the top of the slide says, "red snapper", and it would be specific to red snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Chester.

MR. BREWER: Spud asked the question I was going to ask.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mel.

MR. BELL: Part of the thing we've been struggling with, I guess, for a while, is "immediately", and I guess what -- I like this approach of short, mid, and long, and that's kind of what we were doing, and we thought that 35 was short, and we were trying to do just some reasonable quick things that we felt we could get through in the short-term, and I think we can move quicker than December or whatever it was we -- I think we're set to finish up, and I would like to see that move forward even quicker, but I think we can do that without incorporating some of the things that have been discussed, which may be more longer-term, and that's where we seem to be kind of caught up.

Like you said, we were simply going to just look at data at this meeting, and some of that got turned into, all of a sudden, the long-term things are going to go into effect, but I think we can move quickly with 35, with some fairly simple things in there, and I think we can enhance it a little bit, and I have an idea, or some ideas, for when we get into that, and we can talk about how we can enhance the things when we get in there, but, you know, you had basically said what we need to have is rapid progress to address overfishing.

I would consider our trying to move quickly on 35, in my opinion, as rapid progress. It's not ending overfishing, which I know we're required to do at some point, but I think we're moving as rapidly as we can move, and we are making progress, although perhaps not to the degree that, you know, we might like to see, but we will get there eventually, and so I think, if we kind of -- I am in support of this sort of progressive moving into the future, but I think we can move quickly, and move even quicker, with 35 if we don't, you know, complicate it with things that are extremely potential dangerous or controversial, but I like that approach, and I think we're actually on track there, in my opinion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks for that, Mel, and I guess a couple of comments. One is we, I, recognize this is not an easy issue to solve. If it was, we would have probably been moving more quickly than we even are at this point, right, and so solutions take time, and especially out-of-the-box innovative solutions are going to take even a longer time.

The Act is binding on the agency and the council, in terms of ending overfishing, right, and it doesn't say address the overfishing. We can address overfishing through interim rulemaking, or emergency rulemaking, but I think that's really been the rub and challenge, and, as Monica would give you, in terms of advice, you're going to have to build a record, in terms of explaining how you've ended the overfishing, or how you're addressing the overfishing, but the Fisheries Service ultimately has to review and approve that action and determine, obviously, that it's consistent with the Magnuson Act and other applicable law. That is where, you know, I think it's important that we try to move as quickly as we can, right, and influence, obviously, the 2023 fishing year, in terms of management actions, and then take some more measured, longer steps in terms of what we could do for long-term action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think Judy has her hand up.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you very much, and thank you, Andy. That was a great presentation. I was just wondering, Andy, does any of the consideration -- You know, you say that the black sea bass and the red porgy and the triggerfish and everything is failing, and do they take any consideration over the large population of red snapper that we're having to deal with to get to those fish? I mean, as you know, I've been fishing a long time, and we have had to deal with not being able to catch grouper, and I consistently have fished areas, for over forty years, and have kind of fished them so that I would have fish that I could count on and go and say, well, I think I'm going to catch a grouper here, and, well, now I can't catch a grouper there, and not because they're not there, but I just believe that the red snapper have taken over so much of our bottom off the coast of Savannah. Now, that's what I am talking about, is that area. We have so many red snapper, and I believe it's shading what's really actually going on. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay.

DR. PORCH: Yes, and thank you for that question, Captain. I can see your point, when it comes to interpreting catch per unit effort, and so I could see, for instance, both commercial and recreational catch per unit effort for grouper is going down, in part because, as some people say, red snapper are hook happy, and so they're much more aggressive in taking the hook, and it's harder to get the hook down to them.

However, our fishery-independent surveys, our video and trap surveys, aren't so much affected by that. Certainly the camera survey isn't, and that is showing pretty sharp declines in the species, and, in fact, I think that was the index that Andy was showing, and so we see red snapper increasing clearly in that video survey, but we're also seeing the other stocks decreasing, and so I think the decrease is real, and it's not just a matter of red snapper making it hard for you to catch those fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Clay. Any more questions about the presentation? Chester.

MR. BREWER: I had a question for Clay. Clay, we're seeing declines in I guess what you might call competing species, the species that are competing for food, and is there any indication of how much the -- I will use the word "predation", but of smaller fish by these massive numbers of red snapper is causing a decline in these other species? I would be curious to know that.

DR. PORCH: We've been trying to look at that and get diet information. We do find, occasionally, red snapper will eat the juveniles of some of the other species, even things like red porgy, but we don't think it's a very substantial part of their diet, and so we're doubtful, at this point, that the increase in red snapper abundance is a primary decline of some of the other stocks, and we think it's other things going on, other environmental influences, and also heavy fishing, obviously, and so I don't think, at this point, there's any clear evidence that the rise in red snapper is substantially affecting the other species. It might have an impact, but we don't think it's the major cause of the declines.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: If you guys remember, and I can't remember which meeting it was, but we did supply an Ecopath with Ecosim model that investigated the impact of red snapper on different snapper grouper populations. In general, it found there was very minimal impact, unless you had a substantial increase in red snapper, well beyond what is in the model, and it wasn't even

biologically feasible. They wanted to see how far to take it, and then you could see some reductions in certain species, but it was well beyond what we're seeing right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chip. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Could a possible strategy be -- Like if you give the EFPs, and you have people that go out and catch the red snapper for scientific research, could you do a stomach content on the boat, right when you catch them, and actually cut the fish open and see what's in their stomachs at that time, because like, if you're cutting otoliths and all that, you're not looking at what is in their stomachs. When the fish come in, the commercial fishermen have gutted them, and you don't know what was in their stomachs, and so, to me, it kind of makes sense that, if you were doing some analysis on the boat, looking at stomach contents right after you catch the fish, that would be validation. It's hard for me to say look at a model and believe it, but, if I cut a fish open, and it's full of baby red porgies, then I know.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: There was a seminar series that was provided to the council and everybody, and I think it was one of our first ones that we had, and it was on DNA barcoding for the diet of red snapper, and it focused on areas probably off the Carolinas and Georgia, and it didn't really get down to Florida, and so I don't want to draw any conclusions on it, but what they did indicate was DNA barcoding was probably the better approach to take, and he found a substantial increase in the number of species that they observed with that DNA barcoding, as opposed to just looking at the stomach contents of the fish, and so I think that should be the direction that we try to go, is trying to get some DNA barcoding for the diet analysis.

It will increase the sample size and potentially increase the probability that you're going to get more of the components of the diet, and so what they would be doing with that is they would just need the stomach contents. I'm not exactly certain how they would preserve the fish. We could find that information for you, but Kevin's work was definitely eye-opening on the diet of red snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just to clarify, Laurilee kind of brought up a thought here, and so, with the EFPs that you normally see before the council, it's, a lot of times, kind of research related, sampling, collecting some additional fish, like we talked about yesterday, and the pilot studies, or EFPs, that I was mentioning in my presentation are really looking at recreational, and potentially commercial, fishing strategies that would be different than how we're currently managing and would exempt from the regulations and activities like size limits and bag limits and closed seasons.

In the Gulf of Mexico, we went down this path with a number of projects, private and recreational, and state management was one of them, where we delegated the states authority to manage private recreational harvest, and we've done a headboat collaborative, which is similar to like a catch share program, and tested that out, and so, when I say pilot studies, these are really kind of bigger-picture, more innovative management strategies that we're testing that could include some scientific aspects in addition to the work that will be done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Judy and then Mel.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you. That's a good idea, Laurilee, about checking the stomach contents, but I just want you all to realize that, since I have been fishing the same area for so long, I've managed to kind of have my own management, if you would say, and so I have moved from place to place, and not overfishing a place, so that I'll have places to fish later. Now, the way we do it now is we have what is called a three-drop limit, and so I tell my customers that we're going to go to a spot and we're going to drop, maybe two or three times, because, after two or three times, the fish that I'm targeting, which are the black sea bass or the grouper, I'm not going to have any way to get my bait to the bottom after about two to three times.

We catch what we're going to catch, which is black sea bass, which I'm targeting, and then, all of a sudden, I've got twelve red snapper on the line, and so we just move, and that's how we manage to stay away from the red snapper, and so I just wanted to put -- I will just make people aware of our situation off the coast of Savannah. We have so many red snapper, which I know you've seen all the letters and everything, which are true, and we have actually more red snapper than we incurred in the 1950s and 1960s, and so that's how we're handling our management. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Judy. Mel.

MR. BELL: Two things. One is I know MARMAP has done, and I believe published, some stuff on red snapper diet, and it's kind of what you've heard from others, and it's not necessarily a lot of the fish that you might think it is, things like shrimp and stuff, because we kind of feed out and around in the sand and things, and so there are data on that.

The other thing that I was just going to mention, just kind of like Judy is talking about, kind of long-term observations, is I can tell you, from paying a lot of attention to what reef ecosystems looked like forty years ago off of South Carolina, what they look like now is completely different, and part of that is an amazing abundance of red snapper now, which we never saw, ever, and we can attribute that to rebuild, but I think, with some of the things -- You know, Andy showed some kind of alarming trends, perhaps, in black sea bass and red porgy and some of the other species, and so there are things going on out there now, in terms of a dynamic environment.

What we have out there now is what -- It wasn't there forty years ago, in terms of the conditions, perhaps increasing water temperatures, and we're watching range shifts of species, like cobia, and I suspect that black sea bass -- Some of that could be range shift, and I can't prove that, but I just wouldn't be surprised, and so there's a lot of things going on there, which complicates our management picture. We're managing kind of in a -- We sort of think statically, but we're in a very dynamic environment, and there are things going on that we can't control, that we can't really account for, and it's hard to even incorporate that into an assessment or to deal with it, but there's a lot going on.

The reality is what we see out there right now, which nobody argues with the data, but it's just an amazing difference in what the balance looks like, in terms of -- And presence of certain species, and so it's a very complex thing, and I just brought that up, in terms observations, and I think -- But that's what it is. That's what we have to deal with, and that's what we have to manage. We have to manage what we have out there, but there may be things going on that are being driven by factors such as changing water temperatures and all that are beyond our control, but we're stuck

with managing what we've got and what's set up, and, right now, that is -- Part of why I brought this up is it could be that part of what we're seeing is a range expansion, perhaps, of red snapper farther north.

They're still present, obviously, in their original range, but you have an expansion because of more preferable water temperatures and food and habitat and that sort of thing, and so we may be building something, right now, through our rebuilding, that was never there before, and I don't know what it -- If you went back fifty, sixty, eighty years, what it looked like out there, but I would suspect that it doesn't look like it does now, in terms of the dominance of red snapper out there, but that's what we've been given, and that's what we're going to have to manage in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel. Any more questions about this presentation, before we dive into the documents? All right. Thanks for the presentation, Andy. Good discussion. I'm going to pass it over to Mike to start going through the document.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, and so staff from the council and SERO and the Science Center, via the IPT, we started work on the regulatory amendment, as directed by the council in the last meeting, and we have developed, I guess, the beginnings of an options paper, and this will be formalized, and potentially considered for scoping, at a later meeting, but we'll get to the timing a little bit later.

It includes, initially, some background information, giving descriptions of the stock assessment as well as the situation that the council is in right now relative to the discard levels. Right now, the proposed changes that are included in this regulatory amendment include adjusting the catch levels for red snapper, based on the latest stock assessment, prohibiting the use of automatic rod-and-reel for the recreational sector of the snapper grouper fishery, and prohibiting the use of more than one hook per line for the recreational sector of snapper grouper.

We are at the early stage of this regulatory amendment, and so we're at the point, right now, where we are gathering direction from the council for what you all want to see included, not included, as far as getting a range of alternatives, building that range of alternatives that will be considered moving forward, and that's where -- That's the stage that we're at right now, and so our objectives for this meeting are to get some initial review of the purpose and need statement and then to go through the actions and alternatives, as they're included right now, and put that to you all, if you want to add additional actions, take anything out, add alternatives, things of that nature, and so we'll go through each of those.

I am initially going to show this amendment timing. We will probably want to revisit this, especially given kind of the last presentation that was talked about and the timing that was talked about related to that. This table shows our regular timing for a regulatory amendment, via the council end, and so this is just kind of standard timing. If we're going to make any adjustments to this, then that's something that you all would need to talk about where are things possibly getting combined, moved around, so that the timing fits your needs, but I'm initially showing this, and then I feel like that might be a bit more productive after we've gone through what the actions and alternatives that are going to be in this amendment -- What those are going to look like, and so we'll put that on hold for now and come back to it at the end.

We have our initial draft purpose and need statements for this reg amendment, the purpose being to revise the OFL, ABC, and annual catch limits for red snapper in the South Atlantic, based on the most recent assessment, and implement measures that would reduce dead releases in the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. I will pause there and see if there's any additional feedback on the purpose and need, and I will try to zoom-in, so folks can see it a bit better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let us know if there is an additional feedback. This is another thing that we can come back to, the purpose and need statement, after we amend this document, and see if we need to update the purpose and need, but are there any questions or thoughts at this time? It looks like heads shaking no.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. I will keep moving through. We do have a summary included there of the ABC and OFL recommendations from the SSC. Just as a reminder, those can be found in Table 1. I did need to make a couple of edits. There was some confusion, looking back on the record, of what the current OFL and ABC for red snapper are, and so you will notice those, as highlighted in the italicized numbers, and the current OFL for red snapper, and that's from the previous stock assessment, and not the one that we're working on now, but the current OFL is 56,000 fish, and the current ABC is 53,000 fish, and so you will notice those numbers in the early sections of the options paper, and that's what those are.

Now getting into the proposed actions, the first one being to revise the catch levels, the OFL and the ABC and ACL and optimum yield, and so we have our current OFL and ABC levels. There's a bit of history there on how those came to be and how we got to the current total ACL. The total ACL, right now, is 42,510 fish. Based on the SEDAR 73 stock assessment, we have an overfished and overfishing stock status, and so the ACLs are needed, because we have a new recommendation for OFL and ABC from our SSC, and those were provided up at the top, and there's quite a bit of background information here about ACLs and how those are divided among the sectors.

Option 1, no action, and this would need to be -- I will go ahead and on-the-fly revise this, as far as the current OFL and the current ABC, to match what I said before, but those are the current levels. Option 2 would revise the overfishing limit and ABC, setting them equal to the most recent recommendation from the SSC, and you can see the table below that option that would provide those numbers.

Option 3 would put in a 5 percent buffer between ABC and ACL, and Option 4 would be a 10 percent buffer between ABC and ACL. That was the range of options that was requested at the last meeting, but I can pause here and see if there's any additional input from the committee on what alternatives you all would like to see included here. We don't need a preferred at this stage. It's very early, and we haven't gone to scoping yet, and so it's just gathering what alternatives you would like included.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. Also, part of the discussion is -- So we need to say that we want this to be a formal action in this document, because it's just an option right now, and is that right?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: That can just be direction. We don't need a formal motion for that, because it's already been directed to staff. All right. Discussion? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Based on the presentation I just gave, I guess there's two ways to consider closure of the fishery, and one would be to consider a catch limit equal to zero, right, and so set that catch limit and add it here. The other would be, I guess, a new action, or a sub-action, that would prohibit harvest and retention in federal waters, right, and so I don't know if the -- I recommend doing one of two of those, and so I guess the question is what would be the best approach, from a staff perspective?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess it makes sense, to me, that this is revising the catch levels, and so adding an alternative to this action that would be an ACL equals zero -- That seems like where that would fit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just thinking back to the little bit of fuzziness that we had yesterday regarding speckled hind, when there was an ABC that was zero and what that implies for any sort of EFP or scientific research we may consider at the end.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I think that the ABC can still be the SSC's recommendation, and the council can set an ACL of zero.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so Mike is typing that discussion there on the board to add an alternative to what would be I guess Action 1 in this document for setting the ACL for red snapper equal to zero. Mel.

MR. BELL: I was just thinking, so we're clear on this, and everybody understands what we're doing, so there was a stock assessment, and the stock assessment resulted in a new ABC recommendation from the SSC, and the council is required to take that recommendation and implement it, and so that's where we started with this, was simply part of this moving quickly needed to be to get that new ABC in place, because we had a requirement to take that, and so now we're kind of adding another option, but that was where we started initially, but this is -- The reason we're doing this is because of the stock assessment, the stock assessment resulting in information, and the SSC acted on it and gave us a new ABC.

Therefore, we have to take that new ABC, and so the point is that the level we have right now in the fishery is going to go down once that new ABC is adopted, and so things, from a fishing perspective, are going to get a little worse before they eventually get better, just for the record, and that's correct, right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I will jump in. Right, and so you have a new fishing level recommendation from your SSC, and it's less than what is currently in place, and so the Act says that you cannot exceed that fishing level recommendation, and so, if you accept that recommendation, then the council's discretion comes in setting the annual catch limit, and that's also going to have to decrease, because your recommendation on the fishing level from your scientific committee says that it has to decrease, and then you've got the other problem of ending overfishing, and that's why the option is being discussed of setting your annual catch limit at zero, because you're trying to end overfishing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion on adding this alternative? All right. Back to you, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so the second action that was included was prohibition of the use of automatic rod-and-reels. Just noting a distinction that was pointed out among the IPT, the council had directed electric reels to be removed, but folks on the IPT pointed out that there was some diversity to automatic rod-and-reels, some being electric and some being hydraulic, and it seemed that the council's intent was more along the lines of the rod-and-reel that you don't have to hand crank, and so we generalized the definition to be automatic, but I did want to point out that distinction, because it does go a little bit different from what was initially directed, and, if the council has a specific type of rod-and-reel in mind, then that change can still be made today.

This was brought forward from you all in an effort to reduce the number of encounters with snapper grouper species that cannot be retained, and so there was the consideration here, and, right now, the two options that were developed were either automatic rod-and-reel may be used, or they may not be used by the recreational sector to fish for snapper grouper species.

There was a note about individuals with physical disabilities that would necessitate the use of an automatic rod-and-reel, and that's something that, at the IPT level, we're still working through. It's a bit of a unique condition that we don't have with a lot of our fisheries management rules, and so we're still working out how exactly to word that, but it's at least noted that it's something for us to keep in mind as we develop these options. One thing that we would be looking to the council for, potentially, is if there are any additional options, other than just turn it on or turn it off, that you all would like to include about that.

We do have some comments from the IPT meeting related to this action, and there was kind of the concern about the exception for disability as something that's atypical, and so we need to work a lot through the clarifications of that.

There was also concern about evaluating the level of current automatic reel use, to determine how it contributes to reducing the catch and reducing the dead releases, as far as how that contributes to ending overfishing of red snapper, and there's a limited amount -- There is little to no data that is systematically collected about that, and there is little scientific information that's known about estimating the effects or the frequency of use, and so that's kind of an impediment of evaluating it, from a quantitative standpoint, and so there was some suggestion that this action could be considered in an area-based, or depth-based, type of fashion, looking at potentially excluding species that red snapper does not frequently co-occur with, and so that was something that was brought up as, you know, potential additional options.

There was a comment that, south of Melbourne and Cape Canaveral in Florida, there is a prevalent recreational use of automatic rod-and-reels, and that is something that is really important to that fishery, and it was noted that that's not really the heart of where red snapper abundance is, and so there may be some latitudinal consideration of where this regulation would go into place. There was also discussion about the possibility of a sunset provision in an action like this, because it is very important to parts of the fishery, and it's intended to address something with red snapper, in terms of overfishing and rebuilding red snapper, that, right now, the trajectory of that population

says that red snapper would be considered rebuilt hopefully within a few years, and so the possibility of a sunset provision, when this is no longer needed.

Then, finally, there was a request that the SSC should review -- If contributions of this action are going to be considered towards the ending of overfishing of red snapper, and meeting those qualifications, that there would be SSC review of how much this action is being considered to contribute to that effort, and so those are some of the notes from the IPT meeting, for your consideration, and I will scroll back up to the action and ask if there are any additional options that should be included for consideration.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike, and so, at the State of Florida, we have a process to allow ADA accommodations for various gears and various fisheries, and so maybe on the IPT could talk to somebody from the FWC about how we do that, and so that's just a thought on how to do it, and I feel like there's precedent for that type of allowance here.

Since this action is a gear-based action, I feel like it should definitely stay in this Amendment 35 short-term document. I think it will help end overfishing, and I think it is important. You know, we're trying to find ways to reduce efficiency, and we're looking at how people interact with other snapper grouper species and how that can affect the discards of red snapper, and so I think using electric reels, or what do we call it here, automatic reels, is something that can definitely help, in this case. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I don't know what an automatic reel is. I know what an electric reel is, and I know what a deep-drop rig is, but I have never -- In my experience, I have never heard the term "automatic rod", or "automatic rod-and-reel", and I don't know what that is, and maybe it's meant to be all-encompassing, and it encompass like hydraulic equipment or something, which I don't think I have ever seen anybody recreationally fish with a hydraulic rig. Maybe it's out there, but I haven't seen it. I think you're going to have a better understanding, on the part of the fishing public, if you use the terms that they use, which is "electric" and "deep-drop". Also, I tend to agree, and Gary may not like me saying this, and I don't know exactly what his product line is, but I don't think that the equipment really is recreational fishing equipment. To me, it's just not.

I've done it, and, frankly, at an earlier time, I did a pretty good bit of it, and I never felt good about it, we did produce -- You know, we did produce a lot of fish for fish fries and stuff like that, but the -- You know, I agree, and I think certainly, short-term, this a provision that we ought to keep in here and go forward with.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Chester. Gary.

MR. BORLAND: I do feel it would be designated as electric reel, and that's what most of the recreational sector uses. I think, when we start talking gear though, you know, my mind goes to electronics, right, and, if we're going to start designating that electric reels can't be used, then we need to start designating that electronics can't be used to find the fish, right, and so how do we go down this trail? I'm against it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I know we're striving to try to find ways to deal with this discard issue, and this one troubles me. I would like to come up with some other options, but I'm not sure how to do it at this point. I mean, we know so little about how electric reels are really used across the whole South Atlantic region, and there's probably things we could do to focus this where it would be most effective, and, you know, I echo all the IPT comments, and I've got the same concerns, and, as your Law Enforcement Committee Chair, I've got -- I cringe when I think about the complications that this could cause.

Electric reels are used extensively for kite fishing, as a practical means of deploying and retrieving the kite, and so, you know, that would mean, if I'm kite fishing for pelagics, now I can't possess snapper grouper species, and so that's going to be a hindrance to the for-hire sector and the private recreational sector.

I found it interesting, in some of the comments, that people spoke to the benefits of electric reels for getting fish past sharks, and we know shark depredation is another one of these big issues that we're trying to deal with, and so it's -- I would like for us to -- I mean, I'm not opposed to leaving it in here, but I just feel like we -- If we're going to use this, we have got to use it where it matters the most and it can be effectively enforced and that we don't create a host of unintended consequences, which we are really good at doing that. With trying to fix problems, we create a whole other set of problems, and so I think it would be good -- We need to get our Law Enforcement Committee engaged in this ASAP, to talk to us about, you know, how would we enforce this, if we in fact did it, and so that's my concern.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Mel.

MR. BELL: I'm in favor of leaving it in. I think part of the -- Again, it's an imposed gear inefficiency, and I think beneficial in deeper water, because part of our problem is barotrauma associated with deeper fishing, and, the quicker you bring up that fish, probably the more extensive the barotrauma is going to be, and, of course, Spud's point about, if you bring them up too slow, you might bring up half a fish, but I think it's worth leaving in there.

I think, one, it addresses potential improvements to the barotrauma situation across all species, and not just red snapper, and you're kind of imposing an inefficiency there. I think, obviously, it's got a lot of nuances in here, whether it's dealing with the disability aspect, or definition, or whatever, but it's going to require working out, and Spud is right, from an enforceability standpoint, to get law enforcement to look at it, but I would leave it in there.

The depth, we've got, just kind of for discussion purposes, 300 feet in there, but, I mean, it could -- You know, that's -- It could even be shallower than that, and you're still going to have the potential for barotrauma, if you bring them up too fast, and so -- Even if you hand-crank them up, you can have barotrauma, and so I think you're potentially, perhaps, improving the survivability, through the use of descending devices, or venting, or however you're going to approach that, if you do bring a fish up from deeper water. If you don't bring them up quite so fast, you know, you might get a little bit better survival there, and so I would leave it in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Gary.

MR. BORLAND: Again, there are manual reels that are faster than electric reels today, and so I guess Hulk Hogan is not allowed to go, because he can reel too fast, and he's not allowed to fish for red snapper? It just doesn't make any sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I had similar comments to Spud, and so I like his idea of invoking the OLE Committee to take a look at this. The concerns I have is, any time you get into gear modifications, is enforcement, and there is challenges to enforcement, and you just have to rely on a lot of compliance by anglers, but, in this instance, you know, we're very specific to prohibiting only for red snapper, and so someone is going to quickly say that I'm fishing for grouper, or black sea bass, or some other species, and so I think that makes it difficult to enforce.

I do like exploring -- I think another option could apply this to snapper grouper, but within a certain depth range, because we know that deep-dropping is common for electric reels outside certain depths, but, to me, that would be the most effective, if we are going to at least consider this, is a gear restriction for reducing discards of red snapper, specifically, but it also could benefit other snapper grouper species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Before we go to Monica, just to clarify, Option 2 there -- This isn't just when fishing for red snapper. It's when fishing for all snapper grouper species, and so just be thinking about if you want some alternatives under that option, like you were talking about, and then think about what that would look like, so it can be analyzed. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I just wanted to let you know that there is a definition for "automatic reel" that's already in the regulations for all the Southeast fisheries, and that is the following: Automatic reels means a reel that remains attached to a vessel when in use from which a line and attached hooks are deployed. The line is paid out from and retrieved on the reel electrically or hydraulically.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Monica. Judy, I think you had your hand up?

MS. HELMEY: Thank you very much. I do have -- I'm sure I'm not the only charter boat company that has this, but I have several people that fish with me that use electric reels that would not be able to fish. They couldn't fish without them, and so I know it says if we can prove they have physical disabilities, which this is true, very, very true, and so we really need to make sure we get this right, if this goes through, because a lot of people are not going to be able to fish on the east coast. I mean, that's what it's going to boil down to.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Judy. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to add to -- I'm thinking the same thing as Mel, that we ought to leave it in, just at least for scoping, and maybe we'll get some other input at our scoping meetings, but, in my mind, trying to get the fishery a little less efficient is going to be a plus for the whole snapper grouper complex. I mean, the things I hear now, compared to Loran-a to Loran-c to GPS to things that hold you right there at the bottom, and you don't even have to take the time to throw an anchor or anything, and it's just become too easy. It's become way too easy to catch fish, and I think just bringing some inefficiency in would be helpful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Trish. Kind of reminding us how we got here is trying to find some inefficiencies in the snapper grouper fishery, and I know Gary threw out that, well, maybe no GPS, and we actually had that conversation, and so, you know, we're trying to figure out what we can do here. None of these things are going to be popular, and none are going to be easy. You can see that there is going to be challenges with each one of these, and so we are trying to think of ways that we can create those inefficiencies here to help, in my mind, in lieu of short-term closures, and that's just where I'm coming from. Right now, we have Option 2 that applies to the entire snapper grouper fishery, and for the entire council-managed area, and do we want to have sub-options? Do we want to have another option for other areas, et cetera? Spud, I saw your hand go up.

MR. WOODWARD: Like I said earlier, I would like to add some other options in there, and maybe, just to start us down that road, and following up on what Andy said, could we put one in, as described in the IPT comments, allow it only beyond a line associated with 300 feet of depth, something like that, just to give us some options to diversify this, instead of it just being, you know, a one-size-fits-all, and so an option that would have a depth criteria associated with it, and maybe an option that specified that it wouldn't be prohibited when targeting deepwater species, as we define them, something like that maybe.

I just think, the more we can diversify this, the more we can thoroughly evaluate it, to better understand it, and, you know, my greatest concern, at the end of the day, and this goes back to when we talked about descending devices, is, if we're going to do this, will we ever get any credit for it? I mean, that's what it always comes back to.

I mean, as they say, the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, and we've got good intentions here, but, if we can't measure the consequences of those intentions, then what have we done, other than frustrate a bunch of fishermen, and so I think this -- How do we get an SSC review of something when there isn't any empirical data on which they can -- At least we have something with descending devices, and it was still a struggle on how to fully incorporate that into mortality, fishing mortality, reductions, and this is even more -- It's going to be the same conversation about the hooks, and we've got a little bit more on that, I think, but, anyway, I just offer that as a starting point for something. Can we put in some options that have a depth criteria, or maybe a species criteria, something that will give us a little bit more diversity than just a one-size-fits-all application?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Spud. Mel.

MR. BELL: I agree with that, and the depth -- 300 feet is in there, and I don't know why 300 feet is in there, and it's an arbitrary number perhaps, but I don't know if there's anything, from a science standpoint, the SSC can look at that deals with depth and barotrauma of fish. The difference between 300 and 250 or whatever, in terms of gas expansion, coming up, at that depth, is not that big of a deal, and so it's really -- One way to look at it is also where are the gears being -- If we can tell that, where are the gears being used now, and is there a -- Is there kind of a depth where people tend to use that, and it's not necessarily 300, and it's something else, but, somehow, we need to kind of explore where that -- If we're going to draw a line based on depth, how do we draw that line, and how do we justify that line, and what's the rationale, and where is the line best drawn?

MR. WOODWARD: A follow-up?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can we go to Mike first? Mike and then Spud and then Dewey.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just a comment related to kind of the choosing of that 300 number, and it wasn't a specific depth that has any significance. There was some arbitrariness, and I think the intent behind it was to get out of the depth where red snapper are most common, when you're getting into areas where red snapper are not as common, areas where you would be less likely to discard a red snapper, because, while this is a snapper grouper regulation, it's for the entire snapper grouper group of species, the motivation for it is to contribute to ending overfishing of red snapper, and so that was what some of the suggestions from the IPT were, both from that depth-based perspective as well as the latitudinal perspective.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. Spud and then Dewey and then Laurilee.

MR. WOODWARD: Thanks. We're going to be talking, later on, about topics for our Snapper Grouper AP, and I think this is one we definitely need to fall back on them, to give us their insight. Also, I think a latitude option should be put in there, and that was also mentioned in the IPT comments. There may be a way to draw some latitudinal boundaries on this, to lessen the unintended consequences, but yet still derive the benefits that we seek.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Spud. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. Is there any information from the headboat surveys, to get an idea of how many people -- I know we don't have recreational permitting or reporting or anything like that, to get the magnitude of folks that use electric reels, but is there any idea, because there is no quantifiable way to really measure this, because you don't know your universe, and so it's kind of ironic, given the challenges here, that we're going to look at the gear that somebody can use, and we don't even know who is using it, or what the possibility is, and so this further backs up the need for some type of reporting, or permit system, for the recreational industry, of just what's out there, before you go regulating something that you don't even know who it is or how it's going to be accountable to get to where you want to go, but is there any information from the headboat survey that has been mandatory reporting or anything like that, or anybody with state agencies or anything that knows how many people use electric reels or what the numbers are or could be or the potential? Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm looking around the table, to see if anybody wants to try to answer that. Gary.

MR. BORLAND: I can add, from a sales perspective, that it is a small proportion to any other gear that is sold, as far as electric reels go, and I would say that -- I don't have the data specifically, but most of the gear is used in deepwater fishing, right, and so it's targeted towards the swordfish fishery. The other use for electric reels is like the Spud said, the kite fishing market, and it's used more for gear deployment and retrieval than it is for actual fishing, I think. I think people that need to use it -- That need to use, whether from an amputee or handicap or whatever perspective, is a small proportion of the fishermen, because sales show that, and not from any other datapoint.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I am going backwards, back to the definition of “automatic reel”, but I have a technical thing, you know, because it says “automatic reel” means a reel that remains attached to a vessel, and I don’t think that those automatic reels are attached to the vessel, and they’re attached to people’s hands, and so I don’t think, in that regard, that “automatic reel” would qualify for what our intention is.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We can work out the terminology. That’s what we got from talking with folks that do the reg writing, and that was the advice that we got there, but we can explore that a bit further, and I am -- I guess -- I’m trying to recall the conversation, but I think that being attached to the vessel -- If a person is standing on the vessel, then it’s considered like they’re part of -- That they’re attached to the vessel, they’re on the vessel, but I might have to -- We can definitely explore the terminology more, to get it defined.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, because, when I think of attached to the vessel, I’m thinking more like a bandit reel or something that’s attached to the gunnel that you push a button and it reels it in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy and then Spud.

MR. STRELCHECK: This is good discussion, and I would encourage us not to get hung up on some of the semantics of the definition right now. I think the IPT can take that into account and make some recommendations with regard to a definition. Going back to the idea of a kind of depth-based restriction for the electric reels, Jessica, I believe the State of Florida, through some supplemental surveys, was collecting data on depth of fishing for red snapper, and so I think that would be another source of information, to where a majority of people are fishing, and we could draw a line based on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I will get with FWRI about that. Clay, and then we’ll go to Spud.

DR. PORCH: Thank you, Chair. Just to folks that we’ve been chatting with just now, and including Bev Sauls from the State of Florida, they say that there doesn’t seem to be very widespread use among the recreational fishery, and so, if we were to implement something like this, it probably wouldn’t have much impact, really.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I was just going to basically say what Laurilee did. I think that definition originally was used to describe bandit gear, but I think, like Andy said, that sort of thing could be worked out, to make sure you have clarity.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I think we’ve had good discussion on this particular action. We’ve got some additional options down there and some things that we want the IPT to explore here. Mike, maybe back to you for the next action.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so the next action was prohibition of the use of multi-hook rigs for the snapper grouper recreational sector, and, very similar to the automatic rod-and-reel -- Now I don’t want to say the word “automatic”, but, very similar to the previous action, and, right now, the options developed are either they are allowed or they’re not allowed, but, if there are additional,

more nuanced options that the council would like added to those, we can do that, as you all have your discussion.

I do want to note, from the informational standpoint, there is a little bit more information about single versus double-hook rigs, and the council staff is actually in the process of conducting a study on that, and we'll be looking to some data that's been collected by FWC as well and seeing how these can be potentially combined, or used together, to characterize the efficiency differences. That doesn't get at the prominence of use of one or the other, but it does at least give some description of the efficiency.

The comments from the IPT meeting were very similar. You'll notice it's almost a copy-over of what was said in the previous action, that there was concern about evaluating how this contributes to reducing the catch and reducing the dead releases and ending the overfishing of red snapper, and so there's concern about the amount of information. There's a little more here, but there's still concern that it may be limited.

There are similar recommendations that this action could be considered in an area-based fashion, based on depth or latitude, and a sunset provision may also be useful for this one as well, because it is, again, coming for -- It's applying to a group of species, but the motivation is a specific purpose of ending overfishing of red snapper, and so there was talk about the sunset provision there and the need for SSC review of how this would contribute to ending overfishing of red snapper, and so it's pretty similar comments there, and I will pass it back to the committee for feedback on additional options.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do we want to add some additional options, and so, once again, this is for single-hook rigs for the recreational sector when fishing for snapper grouper species, and so, the last action, we added some options, and do we want to add some options here? The IPT brought up similar items that they did on the last action, which was do we want to consider some depth or latitudinal area for this. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I think it's worth exploring. I don't know that it's going to be quite as important as it might be with the electric reels, but I think it's -- You know, if there is something there be gained, and, again, to focus this so that we get the most benefit without, you know -- With the least amount of interference with people's activities, where it's not effective, and I don't know that there's a whole lot we can do with this, but, again, I go back to the same concerns about the ability to quantify the benefits and apply those benefits to the analyses, so that we can see a tangible, positive result from this, and that's always going to be foremost in any of this kind of discussion about gear, gear changes.

I will bring up, I guess, at this point, one concern about the efficacy of any of these approaches is, you know, there are many species out in the EEZ that are not regulated under federal law, and wouldn't be subject to any of these requirements. I mean, off our coast, sheepshead, and so, no matter what we do, ultimately, somebody could say I am sheepshead fishing, and they are -- They have no applicable federal regulations. You know, we made that decision many years ago, as a council, to remove that species from federal management, and so that's just something we need to keep in the back of our minds.

You know, if the goal here is to get hooks out of the water, you cannot get all of the hooks out of the water. You can reduce the number of hooks in the water, through some of these management approaches, but you can't get all the hooks out of the water, because there are things out there that aren't regulated under federal authority that people can actively target.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Spud. Mel.

MR. BELL: Just like the electric reel discussion, I mean, this is about an imposed inefficiency, and the idea is to reduce the number of fish coming over the gunnel per haul-back, right, for reeling in, and so, I mean, that's what it does. Instead of bringing up two red snapper, you would be bringing up one, or two whatever, and you would be bringing up one. It sort of -- It meshes a little bit with our requirement for use of descending devices, in that, if you're bringing up one fish at a time, you can kind of manage the descending device use a little better, if the fish are coming over at a reduced rate, but that's all it really does.

The other thing is like Captain Judy was talking about, and you get into them, and let's say you're in red snapper, and, I mean, if you can get into them and then get out of them, but, the time that you're now in them, you're only bringing up one at a time, instead of two at a time, and so, you know, there is some potential benefit there, I guess, and in reducing discards of red snapper, discard mortality, and discard mortality of anything that you might be bringing up, regardless of water depth, and so, I mean, that's all it is, is that, instead of two, you're bringing up one. It's simple, and then the data to support it, and I get some of that, and we may not, but that's just the simple math of what we're trying to do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Spud and then Judy.

MR. WOODWARD: Just a question, for clarification. When we say the recreational sector, we are including for-hire and private recreational, right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that's my understanding, since we don't have sector separation over here. I see heads nodding yes. Judy.

MS. HELMEY: I agree with Mel that, yes, maybe one hook would help some, and you are right. I wouldn't be catching twelve snapper, and I would be catching six, but we just would have to say -- You know, a lot of times, people will say, well, I'm not fishing for snapper and grouper, just like Spud said, because we have sheepshead, and so you're going to have to figure out a way that you can justify where they have to use that single-hook rig, and, because red snapper now is even at the artificial reefs, it's going to be kind of a -- I'm not sure how we can handle that. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Judy. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is any of this quantifiable in science, Clay, because it seems like, you know, to cut to the chase, it's just feel-good measures, and there is no way to quantify something, and so there's a pressing issue to address something, and you're using a band-aid, when you need a big stitch-up or something, and I'm just curious, and is that what the -- How does that work, Clay or Monica, about addressing something when there's no measurable way to figure out -- You know, common sense tells you yes, but we don't want to use no common sense, and we can't, and so how does that work in you all's two worlds?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay.

DR. PORCH: That's one of the problems with both of the measures we've discussed so far, is we don't have any good, quantitative information on it. I did note that the council staff -- It says they're conducting a study comparing catch rates between single-hook and double-hook rigs, and so, if we could show that there's a substantial difference in the catch per trip, then I think it would be something useful to consider, because, after all, basically we have a technology-assisted fishery that has far more effective fishing effort now than it did even ten years ago, let alone twenty years ago, and so anything you can do to reduce the efficiency would, of course, prolong the season, but, having said that, again, I don't have any quantitative information now, and I don't know if council staff have progressed on the study that's referred to here that they can inform that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: As far as the study, we've conducted the first trip for this, and there will be a couple more as well. Chip is leading that, and he's leading kind of the analysis of that. The timing that is expected for that is that that information would go to the SSC in October, this coming October, and so it should be available within the timeframe of this reg amendment, even if not available right at this moment, but it should be available within the timeframe of this amendment, before it's completed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Probably the more substantial part of this has been reaching out to FWC and looking at the past research that they've done. They've done some single-hook rig studies in the West Florida Shelf, and they did see some decreases in the amount of red snapper caught with a single-hook rig versus a double-hook rig, and there's also some observer trips that have been done, and they've been noting whether or not they've been fishing with a single-hook or a double-hook rig, and a variety of rigs, and so we're going to be looking at all that information and trying to provide that to the SSC.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Dewey, to answer your question, in part, I have some concerns about what kind of analysis you're going to be able to see, as a council, that will come out of these regulations, right, or these actions, that you're proposing, and so, if you leave them in now, that's fine, and you get some public comment, but then take a really hard look, at the next meeting, or whenever that document comes back to you, to see, you know what the public has said, but then what kind of information you have to do the economic analyses, or the social analyses, and I think the folks who do those analyses are probably going to have a tough time coming up with information to give you, in terms of how much is this used, how many people will this affect, and those sorts of things.

That's not to say they can't do some sort of, you know, maybe not quantifiable, but some sort of analyses, but, yes, I have some real concerns about it, but, if you want to -- As a council, if you want to leave it in, then leave it in and see what kind of information you get back, and maybe they can do some sort of qualitative analyses, but I think it's going to be difficult.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think we had good discussion on this particular action. Mel.

MR. BELL: So those are the things that we came up with so far. I would like to propose, and I get that we've discussed the difficulties with some of this, difficulties of requiring certain gears and things, but, if you think about it, in this fishery and other fisheries, we require a lot of stuff. We require circle hooks, and we require descending devices, and other things in other fisheries, but nowhere do we require an understanding of these things, and what I'm proposing is that we've talked about the importance of outreach and education.

I have great faith in recreational fishermen, particularly in South Carolina, because those are the ones that I know, and I have watched them change in their mentality of fishing over the past forty years, and so I think, if they understand, and they're educated, they will do the right thing, which means they will do the right thing regarding the use of these devices, the use of this gear, but to provide something measurable in here that we can put in perhaps as an action, and, I mean, I would propose that we actually have an action which deals with a mandatory education course, online, and it's simple, twenty minutes or whatever, however long, but it becomes a mandatory endorsement that you have to have in order to participate in the snapper grouper fishery.

It's simple, and we require mandatory education for hunter safety, and we require mandatory education in shark fisheries, for shark fishermen and shark dealers. At a state level, we require mandatory education for shellfish, mariculture people, for shellfish harvesters, for shellfish dealers, and so the requirement for mandatory education exists in resource management, in fisheries management, and it's something that's out there.

You don't have to make it overburdensome, and, now, I also have extremely great faith in our outreach and education people, particularly with online capabilities, and so you could set something like this up, where a license, and I'm just talking like private vessel angler in my mind, but a private vessel angler could -- He has a license, and they go on this website, enter their license number, take this course, complete the course, and it has a little test at the end, however you set it up, because we do that for other things, and then, boom, there's an endorsement, if you will, or an ability to link a permission for them to link their license with the completion of this course and, therefore, their ability to retain snapper grouper species.

You could educate folks in how and why they need to use the single-hook versus double-hook and how they use the descending devices, why they need to use the descending devices, anything we feel necessary, and you could use people like Captain Judy, or others, who are experienced in this thing, of how -- If you get into red snapper, how to get out of red snapper, or, you know, best practices, best practices across-the-board, but a very simple, straightforward educational requirement, and then -- Because we're talking about the difficulties of imposing some of these reasons, and people don't understand, or they won't do it, and educate them.

If you educate them, I think they will do the right thing, eventually, because I have watched it happen in state fisheries management. I have watched amazing things happen, and so that's an idea, and, coincidentally, if you do that, and you establish this database of people that have completed this course to get this endorsement to possess snapper grouper species, you've now, all of a sudden, created a database of a universe of all private boat recreational snapper grouper fishermen, and we've talked -- We'll talk about this later, related to permits and things, but you have basically created the universe, right there, in a database.

Not a permit, and it's simply a database of people who are going to fish snapper grouper, have permission to fish snapper grouper, private boat, and it sort of kills two birds with one stone, but that's a suggestion. We've talked about education and outreach before on this, and that's how we got to this point, but this gives it something that's mandatory.

Now, who administers it, ideally, I would think it would be better for NOAA Fisheries to administer it. If the states have to get involved in, we might could do that, and that could be something we could explore even as an EFP or something, but just an idea to kind of help improve the effects of some of these other things we're talking about. You want to reduce red snapper discards, reduce discard mortality across the snapper grouper fisheries, and it can kind of address all of those things, and so that's my idea.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We tried to capture that. Mike is capturing some bullet points there on the screen, as you were talking about that, and so the who administers part -- I think that the next discussion for the Snapper Grouper Committee is the discussion that's been occurring with that technical AP around the federal permit, and so that seems to tie-in here, but it also sounds like that there would be an option that maybe states administer it, and through what mechanism, and is it an EFP, or is it through the FWC State Reef Fish Survey, or what have you, and so, to me, those kind of sound like options underneath this particular action. Can you be glancing at that and make sure you think that captures what you were suggesting there? I'm going to go to other hands. Andy, did you have your hand up?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and thanks, Mel. I mean, I like the way you're thinking about this, and I think it's really important that we have good outreach and education. As you point out there, is a number of other permitting requirements for fishing that require mandatory education. A few concerns I have, and one is that I think including this as a mandatory requirement in this action will really bog this down for a while, and I'm not sure, short-term, this is a good idea to include in 35, and so I would recommend considering this in another action.

The other, I think, challenge, which you pointed out, is we'll be talking about the federal permit here shortly, but the only federal permits we currently issue are for-hire permits for recreational, and this is mandatory, and so we don't have a universe of people to require this, until a federal permit exists, and so we would have to think about that, and I know the states all have your own permitting programs, some of which identify snapper grouper anglers and others don't, but I think, obviously, pursuing this, but I just want to -- I think we need to think about what action to pursue it in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I go to Trish, staff is suggesting that, if we're going to add this, we would need a motion to add this particular action. If you look at the document, there's an action in there that doesn't go quite as far as what you suggested, Mel. It's about expanding outreach and education efforts to promote best fishing practices and all that, but what you were talking about, to me, is a little bit different, and then you heard Andy suggesting that maybe there's a different vehicle for that, and so maybe exempted fishing permits by the states, or maybe another amendment, as opposed to this one, just so this one doesn't get bogged down, and so think about that, and I'm going to go to Trish first.

MS. MURPHEY: Just to kind of pile-on with Mel, I totally agree. I think education can go a long way, and I had just reviewed a couple of studies that were done in the Gulf of Mexico and South

Carolina and the Atlantic coast of Florida, and so they kind of -- Those two studies kind of already identified those knowledge gaps of our fishermen. Some of the older guys, they vent, because that's what they grew up with, and we all know it's hard for folks to change behaviors, especially when they grew up with venting, and that's what they're going to do, and they're kind of shying away from descending devices, because they don't understand how they're using them, and so, if we can just expand that knowledge to folks, and I think, in general, recreational fishermen want to do the right thing, but it's just they need to learn how to do the right thing.

Then there's other options besides that. You know, if we can -- I think folks that fish off headboats and charter boats are probably less knowledgeable, and there's an opportunity for those captains to educate those folks, and so, I mean, there's even things that are non-mandatory that we can discuss, like kiosks at boat landings, and there's a wide range, but I think the fact that the knowledge gaps have been identified, that a lot of people aren't familiar with descending devices, even though there is beaucoup YouTubes on them, but they're still not -- They're not comfortable with using them.

Then there's people that are doing things that aren't even legal, just because they just don't know, and so I think that's going to be a big piece, and, yes, maybe we can't quantify it, but chances are it's totally not going to hurt the red snapper fishery, if people are better at using descending devices and better at fishing practices.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We've got lots of hands. Be thinking about , and there's an additional items section to this options paper, to figure out if we want to add the action that doesn't go quite as far as what Mel suggested, or adding what Mel suggested, and so be thinking about that. I'm going to go Mike, and then I have Mel, Chester, Monica, and Clay.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, and so I just wanted to remind the council of the discussion from June. The reason why we have this kind of additional items portion is because the council talked about expanded outreach and education efforts, things that could be, you know, suggested that states could take up and that the council -- We certainly have our own outreach efforts that we do as part of our staff.

The reason why this was included in additional items, rather than an action, is because it's not as much of enacting a requirement as it is this is something that folks are doing, and it's something that we expect to contribute to ending the overfishing of red snapper, as those efforts continue to expand and become more popular and known throughout the region, and so there's a slight distinction, but it is a distinction between what Mel is talking about as a mandatory requirement and what is included here right now as something that we are already doing and that wouldn't be considered an action of this amendment, and just a contributor, and so that's why, if you all would like to explore this as a requirement, then we would need a bit -- We would need a motion for an action to be added, and we would also need a little bit more definition of what is being required and of whom.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Mike. Mel, you're up.

MR. BELL: Okay. **I would like to move that we add an action to expand outreach and education efforts to promote best fishing practices that reduce dead releases in the snapper grouper fishery.**

That's under additional items in the decision document. Now, under that, perhaps we could have an option where we talk about mandatory now, and I totally understand the aspects of the mandatory being sensitive or whatever, and that could be an option. I realize it also kind of meshes with what we're going to be talking about later related to permitting, and maybe that would be a better time, but we could leave mandatory in there as an option or -- What I was trying to do, and where I was going with that, was to basically kind of help deal with the things that we've already -- Some of the things that we've brought up about weaknesses of the gear requirements, just to kind of help with that a little bit, and to also kind of bridge over into where we might be going with the permitting, but, at a minimum, I think we should have the action in there, just like that, and it's fine for right now, and then we could look at options, mandatory, not mandatory, how we do that.

Now, the mandatory piece, again, where I was going with that was it gave it a little bit more teeth, and some sense of -- It's going to be definite, and it's just like descending devices are mandatory, and circle hooks are mandatory, but I get what Andy was saying, and that might -- The mandatory piece may be a little offensive to folks, or it may bog things down, but, if it's just an option, it could come out at some point, as we move along with this, and so that's my motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have a couple of suggestions, but, first, is there a second to this motion? It's seconded by Trish. Okay. It's under discussion. Basically, if you're following along in the document, it's adding Additional Item Number 1 to this Amendment 35, and so we can certainly continue this discussion of the mandatory component, but, when we get to the next item on the agenda in the committee, I'm wondering if this recreational reporting amendment -- If, ultimately, this mandatory component goes over there, as an action over there, and I just bring that up.

I like the thought, and I just don't want to bog Amendment 35 down. To me, Amendment 35 is supposed to be the immediate, short-term action to try to get at the discards, and so I just don't know if the mandatory component, and tied to what, is going to bog this down, and so, Mel.

MR. BELL: I'm fine with that. I mean, I totally get it. I think it -- Again, it sort of bridges the two things that we're dealing with right now, and so, if we feel that that definitely would bog this thing down, like Andy is thinking, I'm okay with leaving it out of there as an option.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, let's leave it in there for this discussion, and I have Chester and then Monica and then Clay and then Dewey.

MR. BREWER: Well, between the two of you, you kind of said what I was thinking, but I did want to compliment Mel on your thought process on all of this, because I do see it as a pretty good way forward. I have always been a big proponent of some sort of a permit for, you know, bottom fishing in federal waters, and it might be that -- We've been talking about that for quite a while, and so it might be a good idea to not have it -- Not have the mandatory component here, but rather in another place, because I agree with Jessica that what we're trying to do here is we're trying to see what we can do quickly, because we do have the mandate that we're supposed to act immediately, and so I think we do need to, at the very least, act quickly.

I love the idea, quite frankly, of rather -- This will be a little bit of a change for me, but, rather than having a permit that you have to get every year, that is administered by the feds, of having a

mandatory educational procedure in place, because I think of a lot of the recreational fishermen that I know, and, once they understand the reasons for doing certain things, like using circle hooks for billfish, and, once they understand what the reason is, and why you're doing it, and why there is a potential benefit, they become huge proponents, and they will -- I mean, they will castigate their fellow recreational fishermen if they are not following best procedures.

I have used the example before, but, I mean, if you show up at a marina in south Florida with a dead sailfish onboard, you're going to hear about it. I mean, there is some that will not let you -- They will tell you to get out of the marina, and so, I mean, there's a lot of peer pressure that can be brought to bear, and I think, quite frankly, that peer pressure is the thing that is that most effective in getting people to change their thinking, change their habits, and that sort of thing, but I do think I would pull the mandatory part of it out of this and put it somewhere else.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chester. Yes, you're getting to kind of the heart of this, which I think is changing angler behavior. All right. Back to our list here. Monica and then Clay and then Dewey.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I suggest, or I advise you, that you cannot do what Mel wants to do in a framework action. The framework you've set up for the Snapper Grouper FMP allows you, for example, to do gear restrictions necessary to avoid exceeding the ACL, which I think is what you were talking about with your other actions, but, this particular one, I can't see how it fits within the framework that you've set up for the FMP, and so I think that it probably is a great idea, but moving it to what Jessica has suggested, which seems like a logical fit for the recreational permitting amendment, makes a lot of sense, or in another amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. I just wanted to support efforts to reach out and educate the public on proper use of descending devices and best fishing practices, but I do think we need to kind of put it in perspective. You may recall that there were analyses, in support of the last stock assessment, that suggested that, even with high compliance, you would only reduce discard mortality rates by about 12 percent. In contrast, we need to get somewhere near the 65 percent reduction mark, and so you would only really be scratching the surface with this, because -- The reason why it only reduces mortality by around 12 percent is because there is other reasons that fish die besides barotrauma, whether it's depredation or hook damage, other things that kill fish, and so I think the council needs to keep that in perspective, and we'll need more comprehensive measures than just outreach.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It seems like, given that Mel's thoughts on this -- It's a laudable goal, that's probably three to five years out, given the time constraints of the council schedule and stuff like that, but, for us in the pelagic longline industry, we had an issue with turtle interaction in the Grand Banks that led to research and changing of gear modification, and we have to take a class. We do have to do an in-person class, but, for the last -- I might get this wrong, but twelve or fifteen years, to where, every three years, you've got to go take this class in person, for about four to six hours, and travel, and, if you miss that class, your permits are not renewed, and so you don't go fishing.

I know fishermen that have paid thousands of dollars in travel to go to some class in Rhode Island from Florida, or to New Orleans, to take this class, and so you're getting there, but you're probably three to five years out with this stuff, and, you know, mandatory means you don't go fishing if you don't take the class online, and, when they tell you that you can't go fishing, that changes your attitude, and so, when I hear about burdensome, and we don't want to be intrusive, well, I know, from my experience with the pelagic longline industry, we've had all that done to us, and, you know, we're still trying to survive.

The part of using the ocean comes at a price, and so your intrusiveness, or burdensome, well, I have very little patience when I hear that, because it's part of it, and this would go a long way -- Like I said, it's probably three to five years out in the schedule, making something mandatory, and that does -- This education and outreach is great on social media, and it's feel good, and we're doing all this, but actually tying something, a class, to a permit and knowing who your folks are out there is a better way of understanding and getting a quick message to them, if you need, because you will have their emails and stuff like that, but it's a good way, and, like I said, it's probably three to five years out, given the schedule. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dewey. Good points. To what Clay said, I don't think that this outreach, by itself, gets us all the way there, but 12 percent isn't nothing, and so I think it's part of the puzzle here as to what we're doing to reduce discards, but there were more hands in the queue. Dale and then Andy.

MR. DIAZ: I am enjoying here you all's discussion, and we have had some similar discussions at the Gulf Council, and I haven't heard anybody say exactly what I'm going to say, although, if I'm redundant, I apologize, and so the things you're talking about, like education and people learning best practices and what you might get on reduced mortality I think is just one side of the equation, and so, right now, FES is estimating your universe.

If you all were to ID your universe, through these education programs and these mandatory endorsements, then I think that's where there is potential for big gains, and so, you know, FES may be identifying your universe as much bigger than what it is, but it might also be smaller, and I don't know, and you would have to see, but I think that's where the potential gains could be, is if you could translate this universe into you've got it identified, and you can get your biological stuff, weights and all, and you're going to get that, measurements, and so, I mean, it seems, to me, like that's where the big gain potentially is at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dale. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: A couple of thoughts. With the motion, given Monica's comments that it wouldn't be included in a reg amendment, my suggestion is we modify it to an action to a future document, and I'm intentionally vague, because I feel like we need to capture this discussion, but I don't know if we know the vehicle yet, in terms of where we're going to include this, and how we would include it, and so I just wanted to note that, and then, to me, nothing prevents us, in Reg 35, from still doing the voluntary outreach and education ideas and continuing to promote that, and certainly emphasizing that as a component of Reg Amendment 35, regardless of, you know, when we are able to take this up and look at maybe a more mandatory-type program.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so I'm going to try to translate what I think I heard from you. You're suggesting that the mandatory component go to a different vehicle, or were you making a motion to do that?

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, there's a motion on the table, and so I was, I guess, asking, in a roundabout way, for a friendly amendment that it not be included in Reg 35 and included in another document, and being intentionally vague about that, for now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks. Back to Mel, for the motion maker.

MR. BELL: **Yes, I'm fine with that. I would be more than happy to strike the "include mandatory component" there, and then, like you said, we would bring this up later. We've had discussion on the record, and you're good with that, and Trish is good with that, and so we're fine with that.** Thank you. I don't even know if we have to make it in the form of a motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike is trying to edit this. Let's give him a minute. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Removing the "mandatory" I think addresses part of this, and the other component that I was -- Since this is voluntary, I mean, staff could do this without a regulatory amendment, right, and you just direct staff to do that, and so there doesn't need to be a specific action calling this out in the amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thanks, and, just reminding back to June, because it was brought up then that outreach and education is going to be a very important component of making big changes to the snapper grouper fishery, but it was also pointed out that these efforts are going on, and they're going to continue to expand, which is why you all directed staff, last time, to put something in about outreach and education and how that contributes to the goals that the council has, but it doesn't need to necessarily be an actionable item that the council is choosing an alternative from, and it's just it will be included in the amendment, as part of it, as this is contributing towards the goal of improving practices in the snapper grouper fishery and ending overfishing of red snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me make another suggestion, and so it sounds like all of those pieces and parts, and having that grouped together somewhere, could be beneficial inside that reg amendment, but not as an action, and so I'm wondering if that motion could be modified to say "add a discussion to Regulatory Amendment 35", or some other word, other than "action", that gets to this, because, to me, you're trying to reduce recreational dead releases, whether it's through the other actions that are in the amendment, in addition to making sure that people know how to use the descending device. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I certainly don't want to drag this out, but it seems like, if we want this to be an action, then it needs to have some sort of defined outcome. I mean, to me, really what we're talking about is expanding, maintaining and expanding, these outreach and education activities, and then you have to have options that specify how you're going to do that.

You know, are you going to increase the number of contacts by a certain number or whatever, and, if there's not anything measurable to it, that you could check, sort of check, that you actually accomplished it, then it probably needs to be removed, or treated some other way, within this amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: That's one reason I went the way I went, was that was -- If we left that as a requirement, that would have been something that would have been in the regs, but, without it, it's basically maybe -- Maybe we just withdraw this, and it becomes direction to staff, and we've had a lot of discussion on the record here about the concept, and we'll bring it up again when we maybe get to the permitting discussion or something, but I agree with you that it's not -- What is it that we're actually achieving out of this, in terms of some sort of regulatory action, without that mandatory requirement, you know, to have that, and that's one reason that I was kind of introducing that now, but I do understand and agree that that could -- The mandatory piece could bog this thing down, but it comes up later, and so I don't know if it would be procedurally -- If we withdraw the motion, we would have to agree to -- Or let's take a break and figure out what to do. Ten minutes? What do you need? Fifteen minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. As we dive back into this discussion, we've had some discussions, during the break, about should this be an action, or where does this go, and so it seems like we are thinking about, with the intent of outreach, that maybe this goes into an appendix inside Amendment 35 and then, instead, we would direct staff to -- Look at what Mike has highlighted here on the board, develop a program to expand best fishing practice education and outreach for the snapper grouper recreational fishery and include in Reg Amendment 35 as an appendix and then direct the IPT to look at the trend of descending device usage, since the SSC evaluated it in the last amendment, and see if the improvement has matched or exceeded the previous projections, but I'm going to ask John if he wants to add anything here to this discussion, or thoughts here.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I think we can definitely do that. Direction to staff is probably better than an action and trying to get into that certainly for the education and outreach, and I think this gives us a chance to look at what's known about things that work pretty well, what's going on in other areas, and factor that in, and maybe look at, in this appendix, potential costs that would be associated, because so much of outreach and education really depends on getting that, you know, small group, even one-on-one facetime with fishermen and tackle shop owners, et cetera, to try and really get this grassroots thing to spread and grow.

Then that's where I also think that, looking at descending devices, the SSC used a study, and I don't recall now what year it was, but they accounted for descending device usage when they did the projections, and that was probably a couple of years ago, that study, and there's been a real concerted effort for expanding best practices. There is the Sea Grant project that we're working cooperatively with, that was part of the red snapper and greater amberjack count funding, and there's also been -- There's the Release 'Em Right that's going on in the Gulf.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before we go back to John, can you scroll up to that motion, please? Can you scroll up to the previous motion, Mike? Then, Mel, I don't know that we need -- You could

either withdraw it, even though it technically belongs to the committee, or you could change this. Instead of add an action, maybe it's add an appendix, since that's what we were working on before.

MR. BELL: **I agree with what we were just saying.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: **So add an appendix?**

MR. BELL: Okay. I mean, if that works. I mean, if we could also -- **Yes, that's fine.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we've modified that motion, and we had a thumbs-up from the seconder, which was Trish, and I'm going to go back to John to talk a little bit more about the items that we had below the motion. Thanks.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The idea is that best practices, and behavior changes, really, probably sort of snowball over time, and so, with all these efforts that are out there, and people starting to understand the severity of the problem, then, you know, we're hoping that maybe participation, and the effectiveness of these efforts, is really increasing, and that's something that we should look at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Do folks understand what we're doing here? We've changed this motion to add an appendix, as opposed to an action, and then what's going in the appendix were the bullets that we were just looking at a minute ago, and not the mandatory education part, but the piece there to direct staff and direct the IPT, and so we're trying to look at not only expanding these efforts, and how much would that cost, and is it beyond what's being spent on this project right now, considering how to do what the Gulf did, maybe, because they have the Return 'Em Right, and then we're also trying to -- As Clay was mentioning, we're trying to get some credit here. It's, in my mind, trying to do multiple things that, when combined, have the effect of reducing these discards, and, to me, education is a piece of that. Okay.

Then there's the motion, and, once again, it's not an action, and it's in an appendix to Reg Amendment 35. Any more discussion on this motion about promoting best fishing practices that reduce recreational dead discards in the snapper grouper fishery? Any more discussion on that? All right. **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** All right. I'm going to go back to Mike, and he's going to introduce some of the other items that we can consider for Amendment 35, and then we'll go to Chip, to talk about some of the analysis.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you. Just, before we move off of this, on the best practices front, I do want to point your attention to this section. We kind of jumped over it, and jumped right into the action portion, but I do want to point your attention to the summary that we have of our current best fishing practices outreach efforts, and that's something that we'll be using as kind of the basis, when staff looks into developing this expanded program that's been directed, but, just for your reference, that's included there.

Next, we'll move down to the other -- I guess the other additional item that was included in this document, and you all directed the staffs from the council and the Science Center and the Regional Office to develop analyses that could further inform discussions and considerations of time or area closures of the snapper grouper fishery, and there was a list of analyses that was requested, and those have been addressed within the data report that was provided in your briefing book.

You have the list of analyses there, and I'm going to turn it over to Chip, in a second, to go through the data report that is addressing those. Before passing to him, I do want to note, because we're probably going to be moving off of this options paper and into other discussions, and I do want to note that, in going through our IPT discussions, and going through the conversations of gathering the data, we were made aware of several ongoing and upcoming projects that are going to be affecting the information available about snapper grouper, and, specifically, red snapper, some of the aspects that are relevant to the council's conversations in this amendment and moving forward.

I provided a table, under Section 3 of your additional items, that just notes several of these projects, and there is the one I noted before, that council staff is working with FWC and South Carolina DNR on, addressing the catch efficiency for single and double-hook rigs, and there are also projects at the Science Center that are looking at the biological and economic effects of management measures that would increase retention in multispecies fisheries, and that's one, being led by Scott Crosson, and there's another study, coming out of the Science Center, and working with North Carolina State University, that's looking at relative abundance using a multispecies model.

There is, of course, the snapper grouper management strategy evaluation and the South Atlantic red snapper abundance estimation that's going on, as well as the SEDAR stock assessment that's coming up, and so there are a bunch of things happening on the science end, and so there are some rough timelines for when those pieces of information would be available for use, and I just thought that would be useful for the council to consider as you go through kind of timeline discussions, when we get to that point in this.

There's also -- Just for your reference, I included the full red snapper catch projections that have been recommended by the SSC, and that's included at the end of the document, and so you can take a look at these and see the full rebuilding timeframe that has been projected out through 2044 for red snapper, under the current SSC recommendations, and so that's just a piece of reference, and, at this point, I'm going to ask Chip to come up, and if he can kind of talk you all through a summary of the data report that you requested.

DR. COLLIER: Like Mike said, this is going to be kind of a description of all the information that you guys requested at the last meeting. As it was pointed out, this is -- It's a pretty heavy lift, and so not all of it is completed yet, but we are working to get there, and so there is a list of thirteen requests that you had done.

The commercial stuff, we are still working on right now, and I'm working on getting commercial discards, and that is a bit of a challenge. There's been some identified issues with the logbook reporting, and so we need to account for that, as well as just put that information together. One thing that we could do, as a separate step, is just provide you with information that was included in the stock assessments, if that would be okay, but that could be limited for some of the species, and we would not be able to get up to 2021 for all the species, and that would only be for species that had stock assessments. For species without stock assessments, we do not have estimates of discards for the commercial fishery.

As far as Items 2 through 4, those are partially -- Those are addressed. We do have discards provided for you in this one, and it's a chart format, and we could provide numbers, if needed, and

we do -- We could potentially run into some confidentiality issues with the headboat survey, if you want to have those broken out in fine detail, and so we would have -- That's going to take more time, to make sure we're not providing out confidential information, but that can be provided in some detail.

Number 5, I'm still working on, and we do have information on pounds of fish, and I will work on trying to get numbers of fish as well, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is working on average weights, and so they are going to be providing that, and so we can break it down into finer detail. As far as 6 through 8, numbers and pounds of fish, the landings, we do have numbers of fish, and pounds of fish is going to be a little bit more difficult.

If we're using MRIP, those estimates are different from what's used in the Science Center, and so I don't have the code right now to estimate pounds, using the Science Center methods, and I will request that, so I can get the actual weight estimate for those individuals, if that is requested, or we could go with just MRIP-provided poundage and just recognize that there is going to be differences between the estimates that are provided in this document and what would be used for actual comparison of reductions.

Item 9, the Science Center did provide that, and that is the second attachment in this document, and that is a discard-only projection for the stock assessment, and you will see the recommended ABC for discards in that one, and then Number 10 is the analysis of discard hotspots, and the Science Center did provide that as well, and that one concentrates mainly on the recreational fishery, the private recreational fishery, describing potential reductions that could be associated with different management measures.

We are continuing to work on Item 11, and we have requested that, and it was just -- As far as the timeline, that one could not be accomplished in this one, and then Item 12 -- Those will be the analysis of economic and social impacts, and those will be developed as the amendment is developed. Council staff will work on that, as well as the rest of the IPT, as needed, and then, finally, discussion of stock assessments and sensitivity runs -- As we indicated to the Science Center, that one is just make sure that somebody is available and ready to talk about the stock assessment, if the council has questions about it, as we move along.

Moving into the data, the first one starts on PDF page -- Well, we can -- It's basically looking at the recreational data, and what I want to point out here is the recreational data came from MRIP, as well as the Southeast Regional Headboat Program, for red snapper. These numbers that are reported in this are based on MRIP landings numbers, which is not used to estimate landings for the fishery, the primary source from Florida.

When we're looking at landings for the red snapper fishery in the South Atlantic, we primarily use the specialized survey that FWC does, and that is not included in this. One reason for that is the expanded time series, and you guys had asked for back to 2005 to 2021, and that survey did not start until 2011, and so it didn't go back in time. We can update it with just the information from that survey, and that should not be a big challenge. It would just eliminate some of the information that's available.

When we looked at developing the areas in Florida, and you guys had requested several different areas in Florida, and we have those defined here for you. North Florida includes Nassau, Duval,

St. Johns, Flagler, and Volusia County. Central Florida includes Brevard, Indian River, and St. Lucie, and then south Florida includes Martin, West Palm, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe.

MR. BREWER: Palm Beach.

DR. COLLIER: Palm Beach County. Okay. Going into this, this is just a visual description of the areas that we used, and this is based on -- The spatial plot is based on the permitting system, I believe, and then we have Florida broken out into three different sections. The first plot -- Let me enlarge this a bit. It is fairly small, and trying to get twelve different species on one plot here was a challenge, but hopefully it is meaningful to everyone.

This first plot is looking at landings and discards for the recreational fishery. Once again, this includes MRIP plus the headboat survey, and it includes data from 1984 to 2021, and, on the left side, or the Y-axis, you have the different states, and it starts off with North Carolina up top, South Carolina second, Georgia third, and then, underneath that, we have those three sections of Florida, north Florida, central Florida, and south Florida, and then we have twelve species.

These are all assessed species, and so those are provided. If you look at the size of the bubble, that is the relative importance of that area within the species, and then, if you look at the color, that indicates the relative importance among the species, and so, if you look here, at black grouper, it's red, and then it moves to orange, and so that's indicating that there is more landings for black grouper in south Florida, as expected. However, if you compare this to yellowtail snapper, at the bottom-right, you can see that there's hardly any yellowtail snapper landings anywhere north of south Florida, but it turns to purple, and that indicates the relative importance of yellowtail snapper relative to all other species. It dominates the landings, compared to all these assessed species. Do you guys have any questions on this plot?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just, Chip, when you say "the relative importance" of it, are you talking about the numbers of fish landed?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, numbers of fish. Sorry about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: This is averaged over the whole time, but, in actual reality, it could be -- Some of these numbers that show larger-sized circles could be just in the last five years, couldn't it?

DR. COLLIER: That's correct, and, as we continue down, we have it separated out into the last five years, figuring that's probably going to be most important to the council, as they're making management decisions.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Because, that way, you can look at the shift, or changes, or something like that. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I'm just curious, and is this generated from FES calibrations, or is it a blend of the Coastal Householder Telephone Survey numbers? I mean, going back to 1984, that's actually MRFSS, and so is it sort of a blend of different estimation methods?

DR. COLLIER: This is the fully calibrated series from MRIP, and so it does include calibration for CHTS as well as MRFSS.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? All right. Back to you, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: All right. As we continue down, look at the titles, to see what's in there. Like Dewey asked for, this is from 2017 to 2021, and Figure 2 is that, and so you're going to be able to see the more recent changes in it. You can see the relative importance of black sea bass increasing, and I do want to point out that this is number kept plus released.

If you go down to Figure 3, that is going to be just kept fish, and I'm not going to scroll through all of these and bore everyone with details, and this is just background information for you guys, as you're thinking about how to develop management measures for the snapper grouper fishery. On the Figure 5, that is going to be the released fish. I will give you another minute to look at this, and then we'll scroll down into the next section and series of plots. If you recall hate this format, please let me know, and we can try to figure out a different way to visualize it.

Then we will scroll on into the next group of plots, and this next group of plots, once again, starts off -- Well, it's just going to be looking at average number of fish caught by wave, and so it's the pounds is going to be on the left side, and so I'm switching axes here, and so, on the left side, this is going to be pounds, and then, on the X-axis, you're looking at the wave, and so Waves 1 through 6, and remember that waves are just a two-month bin, starting off with January/February as one, and then you work through the time series.

The way that -- For these graphs, the way that I kept it, so that you guys could see the numbers of fish by species, the Y-axis is kept constant for all species, and you can see that black sea bass is going to be the highest number of fish caught recreationally, in these different waves, and then you can see the relative importance of yellowtail snapper as well.

One thing that might be popping into your mind about why does yellowtail snapper -- Why does that appear to be so much lower here than it was before, and the reason for this is black sea bass was split out among different states, and areas in Florida, whereas yellowtail snapper was just a single spot in Florida. You can see that there tends to be high discards, or high kept and released, of black sea bass in Waves 2 through 4, and, Waves 3 and 4, you have that peak in red snapper. Yellowtail has a peak in Wave 4, and vermilion snapper also has a peak in Wave 4, as well as white grunt.

Now, if you look at the number of discards, because I know you guys have been talking about that quite a bit today, that's going to be Figure 8, and you can see that that mirrors a very similar pattern for these species, and discards is pretty high for all three of these, or the four that I mentioned. Sorry.

All right, and we will scroll on to the next series of plots, and these are extremely busy, and I apologize for it, but I was trying to cram all the information into a plot, and so what you're looking at with these are, on the left side, once again, you have that spatial representation from North Carolina through south Florida, and then, on the X-axis, you have the different waves, and, here, the size of the bubble indicates the relative number of fish that are harvested in that wave for that state or area.

Just to point out something very different here, you can see the relative -- These values are relative within an individual species and not across species, and so, with blueline tilefish, you can see the relative importance here of number of fish in North Carolina during Wave 4, and that makes sense, because that's when blueline tilefish is open. Something like red snapper, you have this peak here in Wave 4, in northern and central Florida, much of what's been talked about already. There is two more of these graphs, one for landings, one for kept for fish only and then one for released fish only, if you wanted to separate them out.

The next piece of information that is included in the discard-only scenario, as requested, and so this would provide an ABC recommendation based on this, and you can see the attributes. The recruitment was based on the recent ten-year average, release mortality applied to use the mixed approach, and the fishing rate was at F equals F 30 percent, and discard mortality, as a reduction from the descending devices, were not reallocated to the landings.

We will just go straight to the table, and let me see if I can enlarge this some. This is as big as I can get it with all of the information in the table in there. If you end up reducing all the discards, or changing all the landings to discards, you get a small increase from what was projected from Scenario 13 in the accepted ABC run. If you looked at that, I believe it was 210,000 fish would be the discards plus landings, or, I'm sorry. It was 195,000 would be discards, and 25,000 would have been kept fish, and so it's a little bit lower here, in this discard-only run, than what was actually in the accepted version, Scenario 13.

The other thing to point out is the probability of rebuilding, and this species is doing very well relative to the rebuilding plan. The rebuilding plan goes out to 2040, but, in this projection, it appears that the rebuilding would occur by 2025. In the previous one, I believe it was 2026 is when rebuilding was expected to occur. Any questions on this table?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess a couple of comments, and so Chip just referenced the rebuilding would occur if we achieved this based on 2025. That assumes if you reduce the discards to the level of reduction that we're talking about. If that doesn't happen, then, obviously, the rebuilding plan would not be achieved until a much longer timeframe.

The other thing of note is that, when we sent the letter, back in June of last year, we did indicate that you were making adequate rebuilding progress, and, looking at that more carefully, based on the original rebuilding plan, we were within a few percentage points of kind of being on track with the original rebuilding plan, and so I just wanted to note that, that what I showed earlier, and what Chip is showing here, in terms of the trajectory of the rebuilding plan, that we're pretty close to where we wanted to be, based on the original setting of the rebuilding plan.

DR. COLLIER: All right, and we will then scroll in, and you can see that the discard-only projections here -- Much like Andy said, it is showing that there is a needed reduction here, in the top of Figure 1, and then you can see the actual rebuilding of the spawning stock biomass in the middle plot, and then, in the last plot, you're looking at the average recruitment that was assumed for this rebuilding to occur.

Scrolling on to the hotspot analysis, or release hotspots, as I mentioned in the beginning of this, this focuses mainly on the private recreational fishery, and it indicates here that 97 percent of the dead releases came from the general recreational sector, and that's why they focused on that. The general recreational sector includes both the private and charter boat, but 95 percent of that actually came from the private fleet, and so that's why this paper, or this section of the paper, comes directly for recreational releases in the private recreational fishery.

Going down, this is a different way to represent the data. Once again, we're looking at the B2s from MRIP, and you will be looking at it as the number of released fish by latitude, and, if you look at the colors, basically a yellow color indicates very few releases. As you get darker, and closer towards a black, that indicates more fish, and so what you see here, from St. Johns Inlet down through Ponce Inlet, that's where the majority of discards, and even through Cape Canaveral, and that's where the majority of discards are occurring, and so basically from a little higher than 30 degrees latitude to around 28 degrees latitude. Then, going across, that's actual years.

Scrolling down some more, this is looking at the number of releases by wave, and this is done by month, and so month is on the Y-axis, and year is done on the X-axis. Over here, in 2010, you're seeing the increase in red snapper occurrences, and then you're seeing the relative importance of different months, and, basically, red snapper are caught in a variety of months. Sometimes February is very important, and sometimes December is important, or has a high number of releases, but it tends to concentrate during the summer months.

Then, if you're looking at which could potentially get you approximately a 60 percent reduction, the highlighted area in purple shows you the percent reduction for the last five years, based on wave and season, and so what they have highlighted here is, from St. Johns River Inlet through Cape Canaveral, from February through August, that gets you about a 66 percent reduction, and then, in Figure 4 for this one, taking it a different way, if you look at it from April through December, from St. Johns River Inlet through Cape Canaveral, that would be a 68 percent reduction.

That's all the information that we've put together for you so far. We will continue to work on those other requests, as available, and so please let me know if you guys need more information, or you would like it summarized in a different way, any way we can help you through these decisions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chip. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you, Chip. That's amazing, and I think that the way that you put this together is really, really good, and I wouldn't change anything. I want to request some additional information, and it would be based on the launch cadence at Kennedy Space Center, because, when they launch a Space-X rocket, they close, completely close, to all boat traffic, shrimp boats,

commercial, recreational, everything, for a distance of eighteen miles going north and south and sixty-four nautical miles going east, and so that covers everything that we're concerned about.

It covers snapper grouper, and it covers golden tilefish, and it covers pelagic species. It is a monstrous closed area that is increasing in frequency. This year alone, we've had fifty launches, and that doesn't mean fifty closures occurred, because there are scrubs, and the average -- The closure goes from -- It starts from four hours prior to the launch to one hour after the launch, and so, if you have a launch with a four-hour window, and they push the launch to the end of the window, you've had a nine-hour closure. These are real closures, and people cannot fish.

I think that these closures -- They ought to count towards our reduction in dead discards and a reduction in fishing effort. It's real. It happens, and the projected goal for the Kennedy Space Center is one launch per day, and that is their goal. I mean, it is -- It's incredible how much fishing effort is going to be reduced because of this increase in launch cadence at Kennedy Space Center, and, even though it's not -- Even though it's not an effort that's put in place by us to reduce mortality, and fishing effort, it's still there, and it should count, and so I think the SSC -- They should include these closures, and reduction in fishing effort and dead discards, in their catch projections, because it's there. It's happening. It's real.

Fish are not being caught, because of the increase in space launches, and it's just going to get more and more every year, and so I'm not sure -- I don't think it fits into Regulatory Amendment 35, but it should be a consideration, and it should count towards reduction in fishing effort and reduction in dead discards. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Laurilee. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I just had a question for Laurilee. Did you say that they are -- They want to have one launch per day?

MS. THOMPSON: That's their goal, one launch per day, and two on -- I mean, we just had -- Last week, we had two launches in one day, and this is a reality, and this is their goal. The State of Florida wants to be the king of space launch activity, and they want the Kennedy Space Center to be the epicenter for space exploration, for cargo transport out, and they want to colonize Mars, and they want to colonize the moon, and all of these -- This going to take rockets, you know, to carry that stuff into space, and the State of Florida is aggressively pursuing -- They want to be the top dog in commercial space, and it's going to shut down fishing out of Port Canaveral.

DR. COLLIER: I know you live fairly close to there. Do you have any recommendations on who we can get up with?

MS. THOMPSON: Space Florida. I mean, if you want an agency that is tracking and in charge of rocket launches, it would be Space Florida, and I can give you the -- I mean, I can give you the contact information for the CEO of Space Florida, and certainly Dale Catchem, the person that's in charge of government relations for Space Florida, and, I mean, I have a good relationship with him, but I think it's a wasted opportunity if this council does not demand that the reduction in fishing effort that's going to occur off of the Canaveral Inlet, as it's portrayed in the heat maps, that should count towards -- It should count towards reduction in fishing effort and dead discards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Laurilee. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. A couple of points. One, to the extent that it's already been happening, that would be reflected in this data, but, to the extent that it might increase in the future, I think that's worth looking at, but, again, to put things in context, if you bring up that graph that was on page 7, or if you can look at it, if you have a computer, you will see that still the great bulk of the red snapper discards and catches are happening outside that area, and so it's not as though that's going to be a total game-changer, but it is worth looking into.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there any more questions for Chip about this information? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I don't want to let the moment pass without -- I know that was a ton of work for everyone who was involved, and I'm being quiet over here, but I'm taking it all in, and I do really appreciate it. Thank you so much, and, for that to happen in that short of a time, thank you.

DR. COLLIER: I mean, it was definitely a team effort, from Regional Office staff to Science Center staff and our staff, and, yes, everybody did a great job.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay, do you have a report that you were going to give as well?

DR. PORCH: I mean, this is it. Chip gave it for me.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Just checking. Just making sure.

DR. PORCH: The only thing I would add is that we're continuing to look at red snapper hotspots, looking at our survey data, and, of course, we want to work with the State of Florida, looking at their data, just to look and see if we could kind of narrow down on this. Right now, it's broad time and areas, but there's also, within those areas, favored depth areas, and so potentially the scale of the closure could be smaller, if we add in the depth dimension, but we're still working on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just assume that the IPT -- Some of the direction that we gave previously for our couple of options of the gear options -- We talked about having a latitude boundary, and I assume the IPT will sort of be guided by the information that we've seen in here, as far as looking at -- Because we didn't give anything specific in our --

DR. SCHMIDTKE: When we get the IPT back together, and look at the direction that the council has given, exploring these different boundaries, that's what we'll be using as kind of a reference.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so back to Amendment 35 and figuring out if we're going to add anything else to that particular amendment here, and remember this is supposed to be the short-term action. We're going to come back, after we have these discussions, and look at the timeline, to see if we can move that a little bit faster. The timeline that's in there right now is not what I envision for moving fast enough for this short-term action, and so are we good with the actions that are in there now? I see heads nodding yes, with the intent of not adding anything else, and, if not, then we need to look at the timeline again and the purpose and need statement again. Mike is

editing the changes, proposed management changes, there to indicate that we added an appendix at the back for best fishing practices.

Okay. I'm having a discussion over here with Mel of questions I can't answer, and I think these are questions for Mike, or maybe Myra, and so, if we wanted to try to finalize this document say in March, or June, of next year, at the latest, would that be possible, and can you talk about how you could combine some of these things and move this faster, to try to finalize it at either the March or the June council meeting?

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jessica, and so the timeline that we have here, as Mike mentioned earlier, is the way that a regular regulatory amendment would proceed. We could try to expedite things, and, obviously, it depends on how complicated the actions are that are included in here. I think, with what you've added thus far in this meeting, it's --

We can try to have things ready, and I guess my concern would be how much opportunity for public hearings, and we still, at least in my mind, haven't fully scoped this amendment, because the council hasn't been very specific, thus far, in the actions that are included, and so, if we're going to start from the beginning, with approving for scoping here, it's going to take as long as this timeline indicates. We would do scoping hearings, and we would run it by the advisory panel in the spring, and we would come back and do public hearings in the summer, and then, potentially, I guess the soonest we could have it done would be September of next year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess I would ask -- There's not a way to combine -- To conduct public hearings at some of the council meetings and other things, like we're doing for some of the other documents, and is there not a way to finalize this by June? I felt like we did sort of scope this, but I would call it passive scoping, and not scoping with any specifics in mind, like we have in the document now, and so this would be scoping of the specific document, I guess, but we technically already did some scoping.

MS. BROUWER: I mean, I think we can shoot for June of 2023, and, obviously, the IPT has been busy, putting a lot of information together already.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks. Going back to my comments from the presentation at the start of today's meeting, if we take action in June, those rulemakings won't be in effect until the end of the year, and that won't affect the 2023 fishing season. We'll have gone through essentially three seasons, since the assessment results were known, without addressing the overfishing, and so, to me, we either have to de-link the ABC and ACL change from this action, and try to move forward with that as quickly as possible, with this being a follow-on action, or have the council recommend an interim rulemaking that could be implemented for 2023, to address the overfishing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have more questions. The interim rulemaking would be for the de-coupled actions? I'm confused about what would be in the interim document.

MR. STRELCHECK: That would be essentially changing the catch limit, at this point, and potentially closing the fishery, depending on what the interim rule would conclude, for red snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Remind me again, and what's the difference between an interim and an emergency action. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: They're very similar, in the sense of how long they last. It can be for six months, and then I believe, if you're working on a permanent fix, it can be extended for another six months and an interim rule though is specifically used to reduce overfishing, and so it's called an interim rule to reduce overfishing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so I'm having conversations up here with staff about what goes in what document, and so let me try to articulate what we were discussing and see if this is what people are thinking, or what is your reaction to this, and so an interim rule, I believe, would take Action 1 from this document that we have right now and move that into the interim rule, and then that moves separately from the rest of Amendment 35, and, also, the interim rule, I believe, is done by the Regional Office, while Amendment 35 is done by council staff and the IPT, and so are you guys suggesting -- Looking at this side of the table, are you guys suggesting that the interim rule would basically pull Action 1 from this document and put it into this interim rule action?

MR. STRELCHECK: The interim rule would be only in effect for one year, maximum, and so, if we pulled it from this, you wouldn't be setting the catch limits for the future, and so I would not recommend pulling it entirely. There are ways where the council could take action, with Action 1, by doing like an abbreviated framework. Now, timing would be tight, and I don't know if that could be done as quickly as December, or March, and I think, if we get into March, it's probably a very tight timeline to get that rulemaking in place to affect the summer fishing season, but I would like to, obviously, explore that option, as well as an interim rulemaking.

If you do an interim rulemaking, yes, you're correct that this is done by the Fisheries Service, but working -- We would want to work very closely, obviously, with the South Atlantic staff on that, and you would have to request that be a vote at the council meeting, of NOAA Fisheries to implement that interim rulemaking.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I was going to suggest that you think about -- I know we're putting out all these options for you to think about, and there's a lot, but so an interim rule is a possibility, right, but, if you're going to do the work of doing an interim rule, maybe it would just be better to do an abbreviated framework. An abbreviated framework, you've set up in your framework process for the FMP that's -- You're allowed to do an abbreviated framework when you get a situation like this, in which you have a new ABC recommendation from your SSC from a stock assessment, and then you deal with that new ABC recommendation, and then you implement ACLs and those sorts of things, and so that's a possibility.

I think that was on the table early on, when you first got this assessment, and the problem that I identified then, probably, is but you need to end overfishing immediately, and what are you doing? Just by reducing the ABC and ACL, you're not ending overfishing. However, you now have some other things in the hopper that you're working on to try to get toward ending overfishing, and so maybe there's a way to wrap several of these things together toward ending overfishing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so let me ask more questions. Then the interim rule and the abbreviated framework could be on the same schedule, and so, in other words, we could see something at the next meeting, and then it could -- Or would we see it at two meetings, or only one, and I can't -- The Gulf has done this, but I can't remember the timeline.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: You've done it before too, but it's just maybe we've done a couple of them, three maybe, and so this might be the fourth, and I would have to look at it, but I would -- I mean, I will talk to Myra, and we'll figure this out, but I would think you could see probably an abbreviated framework document at your next meeting, and maybe what you want to do is keep the interim rule in your hip pocket, if you need it, because it's just a temporary measure, whereas an abbreviated framework is a more permanent measure, and so, if you did an interim rule, you would have to follow that up with a more permanent measure, and I'm just suggesting that maybe you cut out the step of an interim rule. If you're just going to deal with ABCs and ACLs, you could do it through an abbreviated framework.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Maybe no decisions need to be made during committee, but we could talk about this at Full Council, and let people digest the information, but my preference would be an abbreviated framework over an interim rulemaking, for the reasons that Monica just described, and then that still requires us to move quickly on Reg 35, but maybe not as quickly, and then the question becomes, you know, are there other kind of more mid-term actions, and I will call them beyond Reg 35, that would either need to be considered and included in a separate action or, based on all the discussion we just walked through, and all the analysis, are we wanting to incorporate that as part of Reg 35, because, if we do, I think that's going to really extend the time period for 35, and so you could potentially be looking at as many as three actions or an abbreviated framework with Reg 35 expanding some.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Then let me also try to sum up, and so the interim rule is basically pulling out Action 1, but then you would still need another process to make Action 1 -- What's happening there permanent, in addition to the interim rule, whereas, if you use the abbreviated framework, you are using an expedited process to make Action 1, whatever comes of that, permanent, I guess, is another way to say it, and is that right?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: So I've got this, if you approach the new ABC and ACL with the abbreviated framework, that could go quickly enough, in terms of the process, because I understand that an interim rule, yes, that's fast, but then that's not permanent, and the abbreviated framework is permanent, but not as fast, but that's fast enough?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: If by fast enough you mean could it be in effect by the next fishing season, I think so. I think that's possible.

MR. BELL: That's one, I guess, thing to shoot for, but is there any other time -- Is there a fuse on this that -- Like you said, it's been a while since we received the ABC, but is there -- Is that the most time-critical piece of this, is the adoption of that new ABC?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, it gets you toward ending overfishing. I mean, I think, the longer you go without doing anything, your litigation risk goes up, and so the Act says, when you get notice that you've got overfishing occurring, you're supposed to end overfishing immediately, and it doesn't define what immediately is, and, in this situation, that's made more difficult by the fact that it's not just lowering the catch levels that will end overfishing, but it's also reducing the recreational -- The discard mortality that's going on, and so I think you're kind of taking this in a step-wise approach and building a record that, look, the council is trying to end overfishing, and we're taking this first step to reduce the catch levels, and then we're working on these other matters, and would that get you -- I mean, I think you're still -- You've got some legal vulnerability, but at least you're building a good record toward trying to get to the crux of this problem, because it's a difficult problem to solve.

MS. MCCAWLEY: From talking to staff over here, it seems like maybe we should postpone this discussion of the -- It's kind of the timing, but it's also are we using the interim rule mechanism or the abbreviated framework, and it sounds like more discussions need to be had, kind of away from the table, and then we can talk about this more at Full Council, to figure out are we using the interim approach or abbreviated framework, and then what ultimately moves in Amendment 35 and what's the timing on that. Just to explain what Mel was just saying, then we can't really edit the purpose and need of Amendment 35 until we get that figured out, because we don't know what will remain inside Amendment 35. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just for the record, since this is a public meeting, and these things are supposed to be discussed in public, I think what you meant, when you said more discussion away from the table, is more thinking needs to be done away from the table, and, when people get their thoughts together, then we bring them back and we discuss it on the record at the public meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that's what I meant, as well as staff needs to kind of think about what the timeline would be for these items. Thank you, Monica. I'm going to turn it back to Mel to talk to us a little bit about lunch.

MR. BELL: Speaking of thinking, we'll just go ahead -- It's basically 12:00, and we're on schedule. Remember that we bought ourselves a little time yesterday, and banked it, and so I think we're fine. If we can just stick to the 12:00 to 1:30 time that's on the schedule today, we'll be fine. We'll come back at 1:30, and we'll pick up Snapper Grouper where we left off, and so think at lunch, and don't discuss. See you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going again, and, now that I've had a little bit of time to think about it, I would like to go back to the discussion about Amendment 35 and bring up a couple of points before we get to public comment later this week, and so I wanted to acknowledge that we've received a number of public comments on this particular topic and what to do with red snapper and what to do with the snapper grouper complex in general, including

some congressional letters, and I think you guys probably got the same letter I did, and another letter that came yesterday that I believe was addressed to Mel, another congressional letter.

I think that this issue, this topic, is near-and-dear to many people's hearts, and so I feel like, if we're going to get to Full Council, and if the intent is to bring time/area closures back on the table, I feel like we should have that discussion now, so that the public can comment on that during the public comment period before we get to Full Council, so that it's not a surprise when it comes during Full Council, and so we didn't really have a discussion, other than to look at the data this morning, and so I'm wanting us to have that discussion, if people have the intention of bringing that up in Full Council.

I will just repeat, again, FWC's opposition to time/area closures that were discussed at the last meeting and that I suspect might be discussed here in a few minutes. I believe those closures would have significant social and economic impacts, and I think that there is other ways to go about this. I would like to see Amendment 35 move sooner rather than later, as we talked about before lunch, and I think that there are a number of items in there that are going to make a lot of headway here on eliminating the overfishing status, and, at the same time, the State of Florida would like to bring back an exempted fishing permit, between now and the December council meeting.

I don't know exactly what would be inside the exempted fishing permit, but we would be trying to get information about recreational discards and considering ways to get at the problem in innovative ways, and so I just want to put it out there that FWC would like to bring an exempted fishing permit back, and I would just like to encourage some council discussion on whether or not there's any appetite for closures here, at this time, this week, meaning, if people are thinking about bringing it back up at Full Council, because I just want the public to have that information, so that they can provide their comments on Wednesday night.

With that, I will look around the table, and so I think that -- I know folks on the webinar can't see people nodding their heads, but, before lunch, apparently there was some confusion about did we really consider closures, yes or no, and I did mention that people were nodding their heads no, but it was unclear if it was the intent to bring closures back at Full Council. Mel.

MR. BELL: I admit that, towards the end there, when we were talking about what could be done in an interim rule, or what could be done through an accelerated framework, things started getting a little confusing there on timing and all, but I know that we are in agreement that what we had originally as Regulatory Amendment 35 -- That we wanted to see that go -- Those things in there, we wanted to see that go as quickly as possible, and then we talked about how quick quick was with that, potentially, but, related to in any way closures being a part of that, and that was viewed, by myself, and I think others, as the immediate thing, and we decided, if we were going to discuss closures, that was not, by any means, an immediate thing, and so, no, it would not fit in there, and I wouldn't want to see that in there.

Also, you know, we received a great deal -- We, the DNR, received a great deal of public input on this, and opinion, and, as you can imagine, there was not any desire whatsoever to see that incorporated into anything we were doing right now. We also received a -- I got it yesterday, and I received -- It's to the Council, to me, another congressional letter referencing the -- It's a 9 September letter referencing an August 4 letter, where it's quite clear that the -- I think it was thirty

senators and representatives from our region that signed it, indicating their desires, or intent, at least their opinion, of what should or shouldn't happen, and there was no interest in there, I think, in closures either, and so I would not support any type of closure to go into 35, or whatever is left of 35, at this point.

Further discussion of closures as a fishery management tool -- It is, and it's a fishery management tool that's employed in other places, but, you know, when you use that tool, how you use that tool, why you use that tool, the details of that, that's something that takes a lot of time and data to work out, and that's definitely in the long-term type of action, in my opinion, and so, no, I wouldn't be in favor of closures being incorporated into something that looked like 35. Then, again, as I said, there is confusion about take out the ABC, leave the ABC in, and the original guidance was the ABC had to have -- It had to be in there initially, but now it's out, and so it got a little confusing towards the end there, but that's where I am right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mel. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to echo Mel's comments, and I certainly don't support inclusion of time/area closures in 35. I do appreciate the analysis, and I think that analysis will be very helpful, as we move forward, to grapple with the totality of the snapper grouper fishery in an MSE analysis and that sort of thing, but I think the complexity of how to use time/area closures to remedy the overall issues within the fishery are much more important than trying to fix this issue of red snapper to the detriment of the other species, fisheries, that are available.

I have stated it before, and I've got a lot of concerns. I mean, this is largely being driven by unvalidated discard data, and that troubles me greatly, and there has been nothing said to assuage my concerns about that. I know there are limits, and we have to operate within limits, but, you know, I have always tried to focus my approach to management as a proportional response to the problem, and I see a bottom fishing closure for all snapper grouper species to not be a proportional response to the current situation with red snapper, and that's sort of what is driving me. Yes, do we need to contemplate it in the long-term? Yes, and I don't think it needs to be completely removed, but I think, as a short-term, or possibly even mid-term, solution, it's premature. We just -- We don't know enough about the consequences of it, and the efficacy of it, to really move forward, and so that's my position, Madam Chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Spud. Any others? Trish and then Andy.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm going to just go on the record as well to support what everyone has said so far, that this seems like -- I mean, we don't even know what the socioeconomic impacts are going to be, especially in the particular area off of Florida. You know, we're talking about trying to manage one species of fish that's rebuilding, at incredible lengths, but we're talking about, at the same time, trying to close an area to everything, that we don't even have information on, and it just seems -- I always hate using the word "draconian", but I will use it. It just seems just too much for what we're trying to -- I am not even sure what our problem to solve is.

I mean, I understand discards is an issue, but this species seems to be rebuilding quicker than expected, and abundance is going up, and, I mean, everything is indicating that this species is rebuilding at a quick rate, and, I mean, if you want to talk about risk and everything, I think we're

at a minimal risk of holding off on any closures at this point and just go with the things we have in Regulatory Amendment 35 that we spoke about earlier, and so that's my thoughts.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Trish. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm, obviously, actively listening, and I appreciate the conversation, and so the challenge, as I see it, is we are taking action to reduce, or modify, the ABC, and possibly close the fishery and implement some gear modifications, and that is not sufficient to end overfishing, as required by Magnuson, and that is certainly an oath that many of you took, and not all of you took, obviously, in terms of being on this council and having to uphold federal law, in terms of fisheries management.

To me, if -- I am not here pushing spatial area closures at this point, but what's the next option then? How are we going to tackle this issue, and delaying action, waiting for another couple of years for MSE and additional analyses -- You can't wait, based on the letter of the law, and it says we have to end overfishing, and so steps need to be taken, and so I would like to at least have some conversation around that.

To me, the spatial area closure analysis, and I said this a little bit earlier, has been, in some respects, I feel like blown out of proportion, in that I think there can be thoughtful and targeted analysis, based on suggestions, recommendations, at the council, in terms of how you would consider those as tools, and, ultimately, at the end of the day, it's up to us, as a council, to decide whether or not we want to move forward with those or not, right, but the conversation seems to be, right now, it's on the table or it's off the table, but there's nothing kind of in between, and so I just request that the council consider, obviously, that as a potential option, more of that mid-term option, and I agree that this shouldn't be in Amendment 35, because it will slow it down, but it does not seem to be an unreasonable option, at least to pursue and consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that, Andy, and so I've got a number of hands. I have Mel, Tim, Judy, and then Carolyn and Clay.

MR. BELL: When you mentioned the letter of law, it just kind of triggered something in my mind, and so, if indeed that is the case, and the letter of the law says that we have to take that degree of action, right now, or very soon, and that's the letter of the law, I would say that, weighing the letter of the law against the spirit of the law and the intent of the law -- Well, if the letter of the law requires us to take actions that have significant impacts, and that's, of course, socioeconomic impacts, but I would say -- What worries me even more than that, to some degree, is impacts on Magnuson itself.

It's an impact on our credibility, the credibility of the entire system, the credibility of Magnuson, loss of confidence from the public. In this particular fishery, with this particular condition that we're facing, where, as Trish said, we've got a stock that, while, according to the stock assessment, overfishing is occurring, but this stock is rebuilding at a point to where it's become a nuisance species to our fishermen, and so that's this cognitive disconnect that they can't -- And I don't blame them. I can't deal with it either, and so it's letter of the law versus spirit of the law.

If the spirit of the law, and the intent of the law, is to keep these fisheries in a good condition, and the fisheries include all of the fishermen, the resource, everything, and something is not right with

the law in this case, and we don't write the law. Nobody in this room has anything to do with writing the law. NOAA GC doesn't write the law, and NMFS doesn't write the law, and the Secretary doesn't write the law.

The only people that write the law is Congress, and Congress has kind of weighed-in, a little bit, on this, through these letters, and so it's almost we're at a conflict between -- It may be the letter of the law says this, but the spirit and intent of the law are this, and we take perhaps this one National Standard, and we wreak havoc with these other National Standards, and the National Standards are -- You know, they're all there, and I get we've had the discussion about does one National Standard trump all of the others, but, if the one National Standard, and the letter of the law, forces you into doing something that seems irrational to everyone, that's kind of a bad place to be, and that's just my opinion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my confusion is that the reason that we're overfishing, the overfishing is occurring, is 100 percent discard driven, and so, without the discard problem, we would not be overfishing, if I understand this correctly, and so the only way that you can end the overfishing, if that's what we have to do, is to do something about the discards, and so what is the difference in running over an ABC and reducing it -- Having that reduce discards, when you have no accountability measure, and what does that actually do for the biomass? Does that hurt the biomass? Does it help the biomass?

I mean, if the fish are going to be counted as a discard, regardless of what you do, then I don't understand what our risk would be in setting that ABC, as the SSC prescribed, and then open the fishery for a longer period of time, to see what happens, and where we would be running afoul of, doing that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you want to answer, Andy, or do you want me to come back to you after these other folks?

MR. STRELCHECK: Let me just respond, and so, first and foremost, we all agree that our goal should be to have a less-wasteful fishery, right, and so I'm right there with you, Tim, right, and how can figure out how to move dead discards, discards that have a high release mortality, to the landings pile, right, and that's the challenge. That's the problem, and the issue of, you know, setting an ABC and an ACL and then allowing it to run over is we have accountability measures, right, and so you can't just do that.

You can't just open it wide open and disregard what you've already set, in terms of regulations and catch levels, because there is accountability measures associated with those catch limits being exceeded, right, and so, to me, the conversation we're not having, and what we didn't have this morning, is we've been working around the margins of trying to solve the discard problem with small activities that might help, right, but cumulatively aren't going to have a major impact.

The main challenge we have is too much fishing effort and too few fish for the people that are going after it, right, and so how do we balance that, tackle that? We have great year-round fisheries, but those year-round fisheries also result in lots of fish being discarded, which results in lots of waste, and so, to me, until we can have a conversation around those areas of focus, I think

we're going to continue to have challenges with how we manage this broader snapper grouper fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you. I just wanted to go on record that I am not for time/area closures, and the economic effect from closing something like that -- If you go back and look at what all happened when they closed 2010 -- When they closed the red snapper, I mean, there were towns that just completely dried up, because, basically, all the charter boats did was they targeted red snapper, and, when all that ended, they had nothing, and so I just -- I don't know what the answer is, and I wish I had it, because, if I did, I certainly would share it with you, but, at this time, I just don't feel like closing the bottom is going to take care of what the problem is, when we don't actually have a problem, based on all the fish that we have that we keep catching. They're everywhere. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Judy. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I guess one of the questions that I have, and maybe it's to Andy, and I'm not really sure, but what's the biggest hazard in us continuing in the process in which we're currently operating? We go ahead, and we adopt the changes to the OFL and the ABC and ACL, as set forward, and then the idea is, just as we've done for the last however many number of years, evaluate whether or not we can have a season and how long that season is going to be. We have an ABC, and why do we have to force that to zero? Why can we not continue to do operations as we currently are?

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I guess I'll take it from the legal standpoint, and Monica can weigh-in first, right, and so you wouldn't end overfishing by doing that, right, and we've talked extensively about that, and I think that's the main legal vulnerability at this point. I think, more importantly, is, based on the presentation that I shared with you this morning, do we view a 28,000-pound ABC as a solution to this, because we're going to get down to a one-day recreational season, and no one is happy with that. People are frustrated with that.

The Coast Guard reached out to me and is complaining about safety-at-sea issues, and so, to me, the focus needs to be looking at the status quo and saying that's not working, and let's not continue to keep going down the same path, and make some adjustments and some changes, in terms of how we manage this fishery, and I'm not saying that spatial area closures are the way to go, right, and I'm just saying let's take a different path than the one we've been on.

DR. BELCHER: I guess, holistically then, with what you were showing with trends with other species, to me, I still have this really strong feeling that our best bang for our buck is looking at the holistic approach to the entire snapper grouper, because getting wrapped up on one species is seeming to get us into this box that we can't get out of, and that's where, to me, we have an ABC level. I mean, that's not overfishing, and I get your point of 28,000 fish, but at least we're having the conversation as to why the length -- If we don't think, because of the other National Standards, safety being one of them, that a one-day season is not appropriate, at least we're having the conversation of saying that's why we're not having a season, as opposed to setting it to zero and not allowing for anything.

We're having a bigger conversation around that why we are opening or not opening a season, but I do think that most of our answers are going to be at the snapper grouper level. I just can't see any other way around that, and, unfortunately, that's in a different amendment, and it's not in 35, and the answer won't be a quick-and-easy answer either.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't necessarily disagree with you, in terms of the mechanism and incorporating this in Amendment 35, but let me be clear that setting the ABC, or ACL, to 28,000 fish is not ending the overfishing, unless you also have the commensurate reduction in discards, and I know the discards are at least questioned by many, in terms of the assessment, but that 28,000 fish is conditioned on a reduction in discards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. I wanted to speak to the disconnect that Mel was referring to. I think part of the problem is Magnuson is very clear that we have to rebuild the stocks to the reproductive potential that would support the maximum sustainable yield, but, in many cases, the states, and many constituents, have a different goal in mind, something like maximum sustainable fishing opportunity, but, mathematically, that's actually equivalent to minimum sustainable yield, and so they're very different goals, and I think that's where the primary disconnect often is.

The other point that I wanted to make is time/area closures are a traditional management tool, as many of you know, and many states have used, and I don't think we have to think of it in terms of massive closures that would have huge economic impacts, and I think you can do it in creative ways, including increasing opportunities for red snapper by leaving certain areas open, potentially even year-round, and you just have to look at the areas where the fish are and make sure you have enough areas closed and protected that the discards are low enough that they meet the threshold, but other areas you could leave open for a much longer period of time. The catch rates will go down, because you will get some local depletion, but people would still have opportunities. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chester.

MR. BREWER: There is so many moving parts to this problem that it's really, really, really difficult. We've been seeing essentially a death by a thousand cuts, but, in spite of what Clay says, we're now looking at a situation where we've got the chicken's head on the chopping block, and we're talking about dropping the axe, and, under so many different -- There are so many different adverse impacts involved with regard to particular socioeconomics, with doing what is being discussed, that I just -- We don't need to rush into it, and we are dealing with something that we're not -- I hate to be a contrarian, or disagreeable, but I have a really, really hard time believing that red snapper are in the condition that we are being led to believe that they are.

Unfortunately, given the advice that we have been given, we're in a trick box, and, to me, it's almost like we have to kind of stand up and say, you know what, we've been left no flexibility here, and we're going to be violating Magnuson here, no matter what we do, because it's not just red snapper, and it's a whole series of species, and it's what Judy was talking about. You've got guides, and you've got all these different things, and I feel like taking draconian, and sorry to use

your term, Trish, but taking draconian action at this time, on short notice -- Well, not short notice, but, at this time, is just not the way to go.

I also want to touch on what Mel said about credibility. Now, Clay has been dancing around it, until just now, but I think that, if this council goes the way of taking out certain areas and saying, okay, guys, because you have been catching a lot of these fish, and you've been discarding a lot of them, you're going to bear the brunt of these, quote, remedies, and, by the way, other states, if we take care of it there, off of St. Augustine, you may get longer seasons, because that's what was just said, and that -- You talk about taking what little credibility that we have left, and you start driving a wedge between the states, and I shudder to think. I just shudder to think, and I think we have to stand up, at this point, in my opinion, and just say no. No, we're not going to do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay and then Dewey.

DR. PORCH: Just to clarify the record, I wasn't suggesting that this should be between the states. I mean, you can have open areas and closed areas within the State of Florida as well, and so it's nothing to do with closing Florida and leaving other states open, and you can do it in a number of ways. I think the point was that it's not just a matter of closing areas, and you can do it in a way that actually would increase fishing opportunities and leave some areas open to red snapper fishing, or other fishing, for a longer period of time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Clay. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I don't want to say too much, to get myself in trouble, but you're at a hard impasse here, with the council and with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and this didn't happen overnight. This has been building for years, and there ain't but a few remedies here, and, if you feel like that one of the remedies, or both remedies, aren't acceptable, then you probably need to go ahead and do what you're going to do, and then the agency will have to do what they've got to do, and then we'll get it hashed out, and it might end up in a court of law, and, you know, Magnuson -- I am not a Magnuson expert, but it don't say economics alone dictates the fishery.

You've never -- When you've looked at different things, particularly this council, and I will rehash it again, but 17B, and some of you all might not have been in the room, but you didn't have no problem with 17B to protect speckled hind and warsaw. You did a closure without the data, and then, nine months later, after the closure, you went back and gathered the data, and you reopened the fishery. That's on the record.

It's almost like you're at an impasse, because nobody has offered a way to fix this in the last two or three years, and, even though you've got senators and congressmen and a lot of folks sending letters, they still haven't -- Magnuson don't say economics alone, and so it's almost like you've got to show down, and people fire the bullets, and we'll see where it hits and how it plays out, because it just ain't a good scenario either way, but the fact of the matter is this has been brewing, and nothing has been done about it until we're at this impasse here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dewey. All right. Let me try to summarize where I think we are. I think we're saying that Amendment 35, which includes the outreach in the appendix, and it includes a change in the ABC, the reduction in the ABC, and it also includes two separate gear modifications, which I might add are themselves unpopular, as you heard this morning, and so I

don't think Amendment 35, in and of itself, is a slam dunk. I think that there's items in there that aren't going to be popular to people, but I see Amendment 35 as a partial path forward. I think that other things need to be done. I just don't think that they can be part of this short-term action.

We have talked about this MSE. We said, a year ago, that we were going to work on this short-term, mid-term, long-term plan, and the Amendment 35 is the short-term plan, with the items that we can agree on in that particular document. I think we're going to have a broader conversation, or I hope that we're going to have a broader conversation, when we start talking about the MSE for the long-term, and Andy had a slide up, this morning, that talked about, well, what happens in the mid-term, and what happens in between those two things, and I think that things like exempted fishing permits coming from the states is one option, and maybe there's some other options that we're not thinking about, but, yes, these are challenging discussions, and Dewey is right.

We didn't get here overnight, and there is not an easy or clear path forward here, and, in our discussions of this, it seems that the -- Trying to abide by the National Standards that you are making decisions about, and is one National Standard more important than the other, and I don't think that that's the case, and so I guess I would ask others if there's anything else that they want to talk about relative to Amendment 35 or relative to red snapper, so that the public can hear this discussion before they comment later this week, so that we don't just bring up tons of new items out of nowhere at Full Council. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to one of your last comments about the National Standards all being equal to each other, I don't think that's true. I mean, I think that your first National Standard, which is conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing, while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry, and so your primary edict is to prevent overfishing, and you've heard me go on about this before, about how the Magnuson Act requires you to end overfishing, and I think that is your goal.

I mean, that's what you have to shoot for. I understand you've got a short-term action, and you've got other actions that you're hopefully going to talk about, in terms of how they are working toward ending overfishing, and, again, I won't repeat myself from this morning, and I know it's a difficult problem, but your goal is to end overfishing, and, Mel, that's what Congress has said. Congress hasn't change the law. They've said that you have to prevent overfishing and end overfishing, and so that's what is written in the law.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Monica, a question I have for you, and this is -- I will start with the fact that I know that I'm only taking a small part, but, as I was reading through and I talked with you before lunch about certain things that I learned with dusky management when I was working with HMS species, and, as I was reading through one of the last discussion points on assessments that came out of that, there was this -- Again, the concerns are the overfishing is because of discards and bycatch, and, as they were talking about their solutions, and their alternatives, there is always this phrasing that comes up of "reduce all bycatch and bycatch mortality to the extent practicable".

That doesn't necessarily guarantee that you're ending overfishing, and so how is that that language -- Just, to me, it seems like there's an opposition in that. We must end overfishing, but we're saying, in that situation, we have to reduce it to what's practicable, but practicable might not get

us to that level, and so how does that language not lead to the same, you know, disparity in what we're trying to do?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, I cannot speak to the dusky shark situation, but, as I told you, I'm going to look into that and get back with you, and so Congress specified ten National Standards, and the ninth National Standard talks about conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, minimize bycatch, and, to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.

Some of these National Standards do seem to be, you know, knocking against each other, but Congress didn't say you shall prevent overfishing to the extent practicable, like they did with the bycatch National Standard, and so, when you read these together, you do your best with bycatch, and you try to minimize it, to the extent practicable. You've got a situation where your bycatch, I guess, in effect, is causing the overfishing, or at least that's what we think, and so, in my mind, we have to figure out how to end the overfishing. I mean, time/area closures are something that can end overfishing, I believe, and I don't want to get into all the discussion about it, because this is your choice. This is your policy call, but that is an option to end overfishing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess, connecting a few of the conversations, with minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable, it, once again, goes back to the record that the council would demonstrate, and, to me, there's still lots of management options on the table that we could look at to minimize bycatch in this fishery.

I really appreciated Dewey's comments. Yes, there is disagreement, and we knew that going into this meeting, and that was partly why I wanted to kind of lead with the presentation that I did, knowing how contentious the last meeting was. We have a lot of challenges and difficult decisions ahead of us, and, you know, the key, to me, is trying to collaborate and work together on those decisions, and I know that people might disagree with the law, or might disagree with the interpretation of the law, but it's certainly important to me, and I hope all of you, to try to continue to roll up our sleeves and work hard to collaborate on solutions, whether we're talking red snapper or any other species.

I said this to the Gulf Council, and I will say it to you, and I think we're in a bad place if we're going to let politicians drive the decisions or if we're undermining the science that is supporting the decisions that we make, and many of you, and not all of you, are appointed to this council, and the Magnuson Act specifies, obviously, representation on this council, and, to me, the process has been set forth to be successful because of, you know, how it was created, and we should leave it in our hands to help make those tough decisions, even if they might be some difficult ones and some unpopular ones ahead of us, and so I stand ready to work with you, and I recognize, obviously, there is disagreement, in terms of the path forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Given the dusky comments, the remedy that National Marine Fisheries did is they closed area from January to July 15, I believe it is, off of Cape Hatteras in North Carolina, and we wasn't given a chance, when we bottom longline fished, and we carried observers in these

areas that were known dusky places, and, instead of being able to modify gear and change, or try something different, they just closed area, and they are still closed today, and so that was a devastating effect, economically, for us, but, you know, in my experience, which I don't know why, and I guess it's just the way that my fisheries get into, we get into some closures, whether it be pelagic longline, whether it be bottom longline closures for sharks, whether it be the Snapper Grouper 17B, and the outcome of all of them has always been to close area.

It was never anything else, and we didn't get ourselves into them overnight, and it was like, all of a sudden, they did a, I thought for us, a draconian action to remedy, and what HMS did was to close area, and so there ain't a whole -- I don't know how you can -- How the same agency, NOAA, can interpret one way for different applications and interpret the other way, and so it's just really a pickle, and it's going to be interesting, as I sit on the sidelines, watching how this plays out for the future of stuff that, you know, we can't go back and said we should have done this, or should have done that, but it's a mess, and I don't -- My remedy is there ain't but a couple of ways, and it ain't popular.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dewey. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just one more comment, because it keeps coming up, and the socioeconomic consequences of any management action that we might take -- The key to that is we need to at least consider the option, so we can analyze it and evaluate it, and I don't think any of us at this table want to put people out of business, and we don't want to, obviously, substantially curtail the socioeconomics of these fisheries, and so that is where I go back to looking at the alternatives and actions and trying to keep them on the table and being able to analyze them, and that was the discussion that I was having in June and what I'm reiterating now.

I know it was spatial and temporal area focused, but I go back to my question from earlier, and, if not that, fine. We'll take that off the table, and then what else, right, and so can we have those conversations? Can we get our economists and social scientists analyzing those things and seeing how we can meet our biological goals, our legal goals and targets, as well as the socioeconomic consequences being minimized, to the extent practical?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I will go back to -- I still think there's got to be a holistic approach to it, because it feels schizophrenic. Every time we focus on a single species, we're toggling on one species, and we make these changes, and it puts a squish on a different species. Then we start focusing on that one, and we squeeze it on that end, and it goes to a different direction again, and so, short-term, that's where the hang-up is, I think that there is some things that are pretty hard-slanting, short-term, but the question is, two years from now, would they have been too heavy? Could we have come up with something lighter, and the problem is our timeline is not allowing us to be a little bit more creative, I think.

I mean, personally, I would love to see us expend a ton of energy in 46 and get that straight and figure out, if there's area closures needed, let's talk about it relative to the fishery as a whole, and at least put everything in the same box, rather than keep trying to piecemeal around and fix them on a one-by-one basis, and I think we need to be more across-the-board than that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. I've been sitting here quietly listening and figuring out if I had anything of value to add to this conversation, and I'm not sure that I do, as far as changing the way the conversation is going, but I think, because it is such a hot-button issue, that I don't have the right to sit back and not say what I'm thinking, and so I want to put on the record that I -- Carolyn, you're really hitting on how I feel about it.

The thing that I'm passionate about, the thing, after twenty-four years, that I know is the only way we're going to fix this is this holistic plan, and I understand there is the timing mismatch. The problem is, if we put area closures in Amendment 35, we can kiss that goodbye. We've lost everything, and, if it's breaking the law, if it's breaking the oath, sometimes you have to stand up, and you have to look beyond that, and you have to do what you feel is right in your heart, and I know this process really, really well, and I know these fishermen really, really well, and the right thing to do is to look at the bigger picture and figure out where we can really make a change.

I think it was a year ago, and we weren't in-person, and so it was a lot easier to hide my motions, but I got teary, and you all knew that I was getting teary on a webinar, because I truly feel like this fishery is not operating correctly, on either side of it, and that we're not doing -- We're not doing anything for these fish, and I feel so strongly that, before I leave this fishery management process, we do something, and Amendment 35, with area closures, will put an end to all of that, and I just -- I don't want to see that happen, and I want to see us solve this problem, and so I have never broken the law, and I hate breaking the law, but, if this is the first time I do it, it's the first time I do it, because I think it's for the greater good.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I feel the same way that Kerry does and the way that Carolyn is indicating, and I think that we need to look at this holistically, although time is not really on our side. I think that there are some items that are in Amendment 35 that can move faster while we try to work on this problem, and we have more data coming on the horizon, and I'm not saying we should stop work until we get that additional data. I mean, there was a paper that released last week, or the week before, that Karnauskas et al. paper, that indicated maybe some fish from the Gulf, maybe even 25 percent of the recruitment in the Atlantic, is coming from the Gulf, and I don't really know how to resolve that with the data that we have from the stock assessment, with the terminal year being 2019.

We just reran the yellowtail assessment because the data was getting kind of stale, and so I'm not even saying let's not do anything. I'm not trying to have any action, but I'm saying these are some things, although unpopular, but I think that they can made some headway on this while we try to figure this out in a more holistic way.

I agree with what Carolyn is saying, is that we focus on one species, only to realize that we've moved the effort to a different species, and we're literally just like, as Chester said, death by a thousand cuts, as we move around to the different species trying to figure out what to do here, and so I think the part of the frustration around the table is the timing issue. I don't think that the members of the council are trying to abdicate their responsibility, and I believe that they're trying to do some things that we feel like will make a difference and try to look at this in a more holistic way and have those hard discussions that you mentioned, Andy. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: So I've been sitting here for a little bit listening as well, and what keeps coming back to my mind is this stock is rebuilding. We have done a good -- Or this council has done a good job, and it's rebuilding, and that is what has caused the problem now all of a sudden, is, because it's rebuilding so fast and so good, now we've got a discard problem, and I think about the very first time, first meeting, that I attended, and so this -- I've almost done a year round now, and we started with porgy.

Porgy was overfished and overfishing, and it's been overfished and overfishing for, what, twenty-something years now, and we just put in a new rebuilding plan, and we're talking about doing things that are even more draconian than we're doing on red porgy, and so, you know, kind of getting to the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, even if we aren't following the letter of the -- Even if we don't go with the letter of the law, we have totally followed the spirit of the law, and we've got a stock that is rebuilding so fast that -- You know, the fact that it's rebuilding is now the problem, and so it's like what do you do, and so, again, I think going with the closures is too much, and I think we can come up with innovative ways.

I mean, thinking about your policy, and you talk about trying to come up with innovative ways to manage, you know, ways to work with the states, trying to ensure access, and I think we can all come up -- If we just put our heads together, we can come up with something without having to put such a burden on the recreational fishery for a stock that's rebuilding faster than ever expected.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel and then Spud.

MR. BELL: I won't belabor this, and I have -- Monica tells me what the law says, and that's the interpretation of the law, and I believe that. That's what the law says, and that's an accurate interpretation. I am not arguing that at all. Where we are right now is, unfortunately, because of this species, at this time, and the way it's rebuilding, and as Clay was trying to explain what the cognitive disconnect was, and that's right, but it's so unfortunate that the one species that has become kind of a choke species for this entire complex, and our ability to kind of even think rationally and holistically about it, that one species is the only species that just seems to be rebuilding like gangbusters, to the point where --

I may be overstating that, but they have become so abundant, and I get the whole life history, and you need those older fish for your spawning potential, but they have become so abundant that I can't look the fishermen in the face and tell them, yes, because these aren't rebuilt to the point they need to be rebuilt, we could potentially, you know, take other actions and affect the entire complex.

It's just unfortunate that it happens to be this one species that's got us caught in this dilemma, and it's because they live fifty years, or whatever they live that we've decided to use in the stock assessment, but that's where it just becomes really hard for the public to understand, and even for me to explain that to people with a straight face. I mean, I can talk about abundance versus spawning potential, but the reality is that they're so abundant out there, and, as I mentioned this morning, abundant in areas where they really weren't ever before.

I mean, even when they might have been -- You can go back decades, and I don't think you saw red snapper like we're seeing in sixty feet of water off of South Carolina, and so something is a little different now than it was back then, but that's just the real unfortunate point here, is that this one particular species that we're doing so well with is the one reason that we're talking about

taking these measures, potentially, that affect the entire complex, and it's a bad spot to be in, and that's what I'm saying.

If the letter of the law compels you to do that, we're in a bad spot with the law, because that just seems to be totally counter to logic, and, again, whether it's socioeconomic or not, it does damage to the whole system. That's what -- That inability for folks to comprehend that just damages the whole system, and then you don't want to damage the whole system, because then you've basically done harm to Magnuson.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud and then Clay.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I certainly don't want to draw this discussion out any longer, but I want to borrow a term from our mutual friend, Robert Boyles, Jr., and that is need to make durable decisions, decisions that can withstand, you know, the changes, as best we know that are coming, and, just because we don't, you know, memorialize, in this amendment, time/area closures, it doesn't mean that the kinds of things that Clay is talking about can't be investigated and illuminated. I mean, I think, the more in-depth analysis that can be done about the efficacy of time/area closures, it's going to help us all in the long-term, but, you know, there is a -- There is a lot of skepticism about it.

I mean, we advanced marine protected areas as a solution to some of our chronic problems, and, yet, we struggle to have the resources to truly evaluate the efficacy of those MPAs, and so people are -- You know, they're justifiably skeptical about the merits of just closing places to fix the problem, you know, and especially when it always looks like a one-way street. We'll close it, and then we'll figure it out, if it works, and, well, we don't have the resources to figure out if it works, but we'll just leave it closed, and so, you know, if we're going to go down this thing, it needs to be rigorously and thoroughly understood and investigated for all of its implications.

You know, when I took my oath, I realized -- I know the importance of ending overfishing, but those other National Standards are there as a way to focus us, to understand the totality of what we're supposed to be doing to manage and conserve the nation's resources, and I think, while they might not necessarily be prioritized, I think, in our minds, we look at all of them when we contemplate this, and, you know, as you were reading National Standard 1, it reminded me that the conundrum that we're facing here is that we're looking at taking very severe measures to fix one species of a fifty-plus-species complex and could actually possibly create impediments to optimum yield on the other species by trying to fix this, and that's a management conundrum that we're facing, and there's no easy way out of it, and so thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Spud. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. We've heard a lot of talk about, you know, the focus on one species, red snapper, and I certainly agree that we need to take a more holistic approach, looking at the whole snapper grouper complex, but the problem of discards is not unique to red snapper. The actual problem is we're seeing a lot of stocks declining. Red snapper is the one that happens to be increasing, and we're talking about it now, but a lot of our stocks have been declining, and they are not recovering, despite rebuilding plans, because the discards haven't been addressed, and only the landings part of the equation has been addressed, and so it's not a unique problem to red snapper.

You are unlikely to rebuild the other stocks, as long as we have these high discard rates, which is a product of the way recreational and -- Well, predominantly recreational fishing is prosecuted and the very high effort that's in the fishery, and it's getting higher all the time, because of the advanced tech that's being used.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy and then Kerry.

MR. STRELCHECK: I wanted to agree with the comments about taking a holistic approach, and I think we've recognized that Amendment 35 isn't necessarily that vehicle, and I think there's still a disconnect, from my mindset, in terms of the timing of that holistic approach and what we could be doing beyond Reg Amendment 35 and before we have the management strategy evaluation and other data that's going to inform this council going forward several years from now.

I'm concerned that we're putting a lot of eggs in a lot of baskets, in terms of what we think is going to happen and what it's going to tell us, and, to me, I think there's some opportunity to start digging into that holistic approach, looking at snapper grouper fishery management, and I don't like the term "visioning", but what's our vision for the fishery, going forward, and what changes do we want to explore and look at, and can we reach agreement on some of those actions and alternatives that we would at least want to start exploring, and then, hopefully, we'll be far enough down that path, for the MSE and other things, to, obviously, help inform that discussion, but, to me, I think the challenges now, and I would go back to Spud's comment.

The hard part we've run into, with fisheries management, is that we, unfortunately, regulate and don't often give back, right, and I've thought a lot about that issue, and the challenge, as I see it, is people are exactly right. We rarely are able to give back, unless we're successful with some of our rebuilding plans, but the part that's missing from that is there's a changing baseline that we're experiencing as well, and what were the drivers and challenges thirty or forty years ago, or twenty years ago, or even ten years ago, are different than they are today.

That's where I go back to how can we manage this fishery better, given the state-of-the-art technology and the electronics and boat motors, the amount of people that are moving to the coast, right, and all of those are downward drivers on our fishery management system that make it very difficult for us to ultimately alleviate restrictions, and, when we started down this path, about a year ago, with Kerry's comments, which I so appreciated at the time, we had gone through six or eight amendments that day, and all we had talked about was low trip limits, changing size limits, low ACLs, and I would argue that those are pretty damning socioeconomic consequences as well, right, and so we're talking about a lot of tradeoffs.

I want to figure out how we can, you know, turn the corner on this and make the successful management, where we can actually give some things back, or have different opportunities, and so, to me, I like the holistic approach, and I would encourage that we move forward with that sooner rather than later.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Andy. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Pass.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Does anybody else want to add anything here? Let me try to wrap us up on this particular discussion. I appreciate this discussion, and I appreciate having these difficult conversations, and I appreciate people getting their frustrations out and frustrations with the items before the council, before this committee, and so I think where we are is we're going to come back to Amendment 35 when we get to Full Council.

We're going to talk about an interim rule versus an abbreviated framework, but, as of right now, it seem that the committee is saying, in Amendment 35, the ABC, the gear modifications, and the outreach. It seems like people are saying Amendment 35, which is the short-term action, that they likely do not want to consider time and area spatial closures, and so I'm just trying to -- If people disagree, or have other thoughts about where we are at this point, but I'm just trying to sum up what we're hearing around the table.

Also, I hear people saying a commitment, as well as a frustration, to try to figure out how to look at this snapper grouper fishery as a whole, and I'm not sure exactly what all these innovative measures look like, but trying to put those things on the table, old ideas and new ideas, to try to figure out how we're going to move past this, because, otherwise, we're at a place with a number of fisheries in decline, as well as a problem created because red snapper are everywhere, and so just lots of different issues that we need to think about this as a whole.

I think that the MSE is a start, and Andy is suggesting that maybe we need to, as a council, have some of those conversations sooner rather than later, and not wait for the MSE, and maybe, at some point, we can get an update on the timing of that, because I can't remember, and, you know, is the MSE a year out, or is it two years out, and I can't remember. Anything else? I am looking around. Is there any else that I'm forgetting here to wrap this discussion up? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just in response to the timing of the MSE, it's estimated to be completed by the end of 2024, and, when we get to this stage of Snapper Grouper Committee, you all will review the AP's agenda for their October meeting, and one of the topics that is included there will be having the primary investigators for the MSE come to the advisory panel meeting to gather some input, and so that project is progressing, and it will be -- The next step will be in October, with a meeting with the AP.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that, Mike. All right. Anything else before we leave this discussion? All right. Once again, I appreciate the discussion that we've had this afternoon. Anything else that you need from us right now, Mike? All right. Let's take a five-minute break, while we switch over, and we're going to go into I believe it's Amendment 46.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going again. We're going to be moving into recreational permitting and reporting. It is technically Amendment 46, but we're going to be focusing on the Private Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel's input, and I am going to pass it over to John Hadley to walk us through this. You have a document in your book, and I believe that John has a PowerPoint.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. I appreciate that. Just to, as Jessica mentioned, to kind of orient everyone to this conversation, we'll be focusing -- We have a few kind of higher-level questions

for the committee on Amendment 46, and going over the AP report, and we're not necessarily going to get into the details of this. The intent was to receive some of the AP's comments and recommendations and then come back to the amendment at the December meeting, sort of in detail, with your more typical decision document or options paper, and so just to kind of get everyone's mindset on that.

Without further ado, what I'm going to go over is a summary presentation that I put together, and, basically, I pulled a few of the salient points out of Attachment 3a, which is the summary report for the Snapper Grouper Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel, and so, as you may recall, this is a panel that was put together and appointed at the June 2022 meeting, and they had their first meeting very recently, and so, with that, let me get this going.

This AP, and so the technical AP, met, via webinar, on August 18, 2022, and so this was really the kickoff meeting for the AP, really to orient everyone, and also to go over the process and charge for the AP, and, as you may recall, at your June meeting, you did provide a charge to this AP, and so the direction was for the AP to review the Mid-Atlantic recreational tilefish reporting program, with consideration of its applicability to the South Atlantic snapper grouper complex, and so some of the items that the AP also went over -- There was an update on the Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup recommendations, and so a lot of the members from that workgroup are now on this advisory panel, but sort of a refresher for what came out of that.

Then there was an update on the SEFHIER program, and so the for-hire electronic reporting program, and then the AP got into a discussion on the Mid-Atlantic recreational tilefish reporting program, which gets to the charge that the council gave the AP at the June meeting, and so, really, overall, with these first few items on the agenda, they went over and provided background for the AP's discussion, and particularly the Items Number 3 and 4 there, and they provided a good bit of lessons learned.

I think a great deal of that discussion kind of hinged around compliance and validation and the importance of that when coming up with a reporting program or a permit program, and so, after these background discussions took place, the AP came up with a set of comments and recommendations, and so that's really what I'm going to take a little bit of time to go through here, and, overall, the AP's discussion went over quite a few topics.

There was a great deal of information provided, and a good range of conversation there, but, generally speaking, the AP went over implementing a permit requirement, some of the ins and outs of getting the most out of a permit, and then Items 3 and 4 covered a reporting requirement, and so implementing a reporting requirement, and species that should be covered, sort of a back-and-forth between the benefits of including all species in a reporting requirement, versus a subset. Available information, to start to get a ballpark idea of how many permits may be issued under a program. Then timing of implementing a permit and reporting, whether or not to do it at the same time, or potentially separately, with a permit in place first, or a reporting requirement in place at a later date, and then integrating permitting and reporting with existing programs.

You will see a few items in here are italicized, and these are recommendations that came out of the AP, sort of for the council's consideration as you go down the road with Amendment 46 and potential development of a permit and/or reporting requirement to go along with that, and so, initially, the AP discussed resources and timelines.

One of the recommendations that came out of that was to carefully consider the resources that are going to be needed and whether these resources will realistically be available to fully support any sort of permit or reporting requirement, and it was noted that these efforts take a great deal of resources dedicated towards outreach, compliance, and data acquisition, as well as storage, and so the idea there really is to specify requirements -- If requirements are specified ahead of time, it can help estimate the resources that are necessary for outreach and compliance, to really have a successful program put in place.

There was some discussion of the timeline, and, overall, generally, approximately five years would likely be an appropriate expectation to develop and calibrate a permit or reporting for use in management, and so it may not be ready for use in management right off the bat, but that timeline will really vary, based on the initial design, and, overall, there was a discussion of a pilot study, which could be helpful, perhaps in the first three years, and so really having an endpoint there for that pilot study, but this could help troubleshoot some potential issues with bringing particularly a reporting requirement fully online.

Switching gears over to getting the most out of a permit, there was a lot of discussion of permit type, as well as the importance of validation, and so the AP had a little bit of discussion on the permit type, looking at individual versus vessel, and it was noted that the Mid-Atlantic's permit, which, there again, was the charge of the AP to examine, is a vessel permit. The AP recommended that a vessel permit be considered, rather than an individual permit, since this helps reduce the universe of how many permits will need to be issued, and it also helps with validation and survey design.

A vessel permit is easy enough to -- From a validation perspective, to look at a vessel ID number that's on the hull, rather than asking for an individual permit and associated paperwork along with that, and so that's sort of some of the items that came out of that discussion, and, also, it's consistent with existing permits. A vessel permit is consistent with existing permits, and the vessel permit doesn't create an impediment to integrating with the existing programs.

Looking at validation and data collection, which, there again, were very important items that were highlighted by the AP, the recommendation was provided for an annual renewal requirement, including a specific permit number, even though these permits will be open access, and including a number of there would be helpful, and creating a separate permit application for the existing commercial and for-hire applications, and so, right now, the point there was that the existing permit application, covering commercial and for-hire vessels, that a lot of that information may not be applicable, or necessary, for private vessels.

Within the validation discussion, there was discussion on the issue of potential oversubscription and whether that could be an issue, and ways to mitigate that, and so oversubscription meaning people getting the permit just to have the permit, and they may not have any intention of using that, and so, really, your permitted universe is really, in reality, larger than your actual universe of vessels or individuals fishing in the snapper grouper fishery, and there was a discussion of whether there -- Is the burden of getting permit enough, and so going through the process and paperwork of getting a permit, or should a fee be considered, and so that's an item that I think the committee has highlighted as well for future discussion.

The AP had some discussion on implementing a reporting requirement, and there were similar comments on resources and timeline that were applicable to the permit discussion. However, one of the recommendations of the AP was a suggestion that the council establish clear goals on the expectations and intended outcomes from requiring reporting. This will help shape the future AP recommendations, as well as the reporting design, and so I highlighted that there because this is an item that we're going to follow-up on in the subsequent discussion, is sort of, in the committee's own words, what are the goals and expectations of this exercise, if you will, of developing a permit and reporting requirement, and I think, if those could be stated, that would help the AP, in subsequent meetings, in helping design some of their recommendations.

Some additional considerations, in regard to reporting, is it was noted that a reporting requirement doesn't have to be a census. There could be a subset, or a survey, of permit holders. Permits may not accomplish as much without reporting, and reporting is not useful unless enforceable. It's helpful to get a good size of the universe of potential permits ahead of time, to help gauge the resources necessary for such a program, and just kind of a question in general is can the outcome of a survey -- Could the same outcome occur with a survey versus a census?

Looking at the species that should be covered, sort of that debate between all species versus a subset, in favor of considering all species, and there are notable issues with bycatch, which we just got -- And regulatory discards, which we just had a lengthy discussion on with Amendment 35, for many species across the complex, and it was noted that the snapper grouper fishery is truly a multispecies fishery, and so being inclusive of all species would increase the utility of the program, and it would be beneficial to cover all species in one program with one permit or one reporting system.

Looking at some of the benefits of covering a subset of species, it was noted that including all species may wash out some participants, if specialized in one fishery, and so you're going to have certain species that are sort of drivers of the snapper grouper fishery. If you're getting a reporting on all species, it may wash out some specialty fisheries for say deepwater species, and including all species would create a major reporting burden, both for anglers as well as the administrative burden of handling all the data that may come from them.

Looking at the available information, to determine the number of potential permits, the AP suggested to come up with a lower-bound estimate, and there are some sources of information available, looking at sampling during the red snapper season in Florida, the Florida Reef Fish Angler designation, HMS-permitted vessels, and MRIP information to examine relative distribution of effort.

Then implementing a permitting and reporting requirement at the same time, versus separately, the AP had this discussion, and, really, in general, it was noted that, if a permit is implemented first, total cost and necessary resources could be forecast for reporting, and so getting a better idea of, there again, what sort of resources you would need to put a reporting requirement in place, and, sort of in a perfect-world scenario, if the resources and outreach efforts are available, getting a permit in place would be a reasonable approach to help with -- It would help with outreach and demonstrate compliance rates, and so getting the permit in place first could avoid some of the growing pains, so to speak, exhibited in other programs where permitting and reporting requirements were rolled out at the same time, and it would allow the opportunity to integrate a

pilot for reporting, to determine the potential barriers and costs of sort of a full-blown reporting program.

I believe this might be the last slide, but integrating data collected via permits and reporting with existing programs, and this was sort of another major topic that the AP covered. The recommendation there was to have a clear plan in place for how a permit is going to be used, and potential future reporting, and then, also, they noted that it would be beneficial to start outreach as soon as possible. Outreach was a very important aspect that came up multiple times during discussion, and the first year of implementation is very important to successfully get a requirement in place and to maintain and encourage good compliance.

It was noted to keep in mind the existing permit in Florida and make sure that actions are fully supported by the states, noting that many anglers rely on state agencies to know what regulations are applicable for certain fisheries, and, also, it was noted that private anglers and for-hire captains share a great deal of information, and the for-hire sector could be helpful for outreach. With that, that's sort of a high-level overview summary of the AP's discussion, and I'm happy to answer any questions on that, and then we'll get into some of the higher-level discussions on Amendment 46.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, John. Are there questions? I don't see any hands. I'm going to pass it back to you to go to the document.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so, switching gears here, we'll go over to Attachment A3b, if you're following along in the briefing book. This is a short discussion document to go over and really follow-up on the AP report. First and foremost, the idea is to get a little discussion from the committee on the goals and intended outcomes of a permit and reporting requirement. As noted during the AP report, that was an item that -- Concisely, in the council's and committee's own words, if the end goals, or desired outcomes, could be stated, that would be helpful to the AP in their future discussions, and so we'll start off with that, and then, coming up, there is also a directive -- You know, whether or not you have a directive for the next meeting of the technical AP, and so we'll start off with the goals and intended outcomes.

There again, in the council's words, what are the overall goals, or desired outcomes, for developing a private recreational permit in the snapper grouper fishery? Pulling a few examples from previous council discussions, better identifying the universe of potential private recreational participants, improving the accuracy and timeliness of landings data, or discard data, and, really, any other items that may be intended goals or outcomes.

I highlighted, and this is a recent addition, based on the previous discussion, and is there an education component to go along with that, since it seemed like that may be the case, and maybe a focus of Amendment 46, and then, also, do those goals apply to a reporting requirement as well, and so, with that, I will turn it over to the committee. Does that list look good, or is there something you would like to add or take off from there, and I just put it there as a starting point, those set of bullet points.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, John. Kerry and then Gary.

MS. MARHEFKA: I don't necessarily want to add it, but I would love to have some discussion about whether there's ever any intent, because I think we need to be upfront about it, to have an

enforcement component, or, you know, sort of a -- If you have a commercial snapper grouper permit, and you break the rules, one of the consequences can be that you are in danger of having enforcement upon your permit, and I'm just wondering if that's intended here. Again, I don't feel strongly either way, but I feel like we do need to have a discussion and be clear about how we feel about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good question. Gary, did you have your hand up?

MR. BORLAND: I think mind is more around comments, and I think you've done a good job identifying that we need to find out, but I think, as you gather your arms around the universe, it's a very targeted group, and we've talked about education on descending devices, and, whatever comes in the future, I think we need to know who those people are that are fishing offshore for bottom fish. I think the cost -- You know, what people spend on boats today, including myself, to go offshore and go bottom fishing, the cost of a permit -- It should be -- It should cost something.

I think it should be -- You know, it should be self-funding itself, right, and whether that's the reporting side or the cost of issuing the permit side, and it could be a federal-type permit. How that works with the state permits I don't -- You know, that's not my deal, but we could figure that out, I would think, some kind of endorsement on there, for the bottom fish at least, but I think it's the only way to get our data, the best data we can, from this group.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other thoughts? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Jessica. Well, I have taken the liberty of sort of developing what I call a vision statement for this. You know, what are we really trying to accomplish, and I'm going to send it to John, and maybe you can put it up -- Can you put it up on the board, if I send it to you? I apologize for not doing this before, and I was a little distracted by --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can you send it to Chip?

MR. WOODWARD: I will send it to Chip. Okay. All right. While he's processing it, I will read it. A permit for the private recreational sector of the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery will improve the collection, validation, and analysis of harvest and discard data to improve the catch and effort estimates used for management decision-making, and I think that's what we want this produce, as an end product.

Now, there is lots of potential ways to get there, but I think, you know, do we all agree that that's what we want this to produce, you know, something better than what we have now, so that we can maybe prevent some of the concerns that we have about some of the current data we're using on which we have to make difficult decisions?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Spud. While we are getting that up, I'm going to go to other hands. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I think I'm generally in agreement with you, Spud. I think it would add science to that, a science component to that, so that it informs the science as well, and maybe not a goal or intended outcome, but maybe something for the AP to consider, going forward, is giving us input on pros and cons of different permitting approaches and how that then benefits,

affects, both science and management going forward, and that may be difficult for them to do without knowing the specific kind of management -- You know, use of it in management, or use in science, but I would really like to better understand any kind of tradeoffs, in terms of different permitting approaches and how that could affect, obviously, our goals and objectives.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. I am going to go to Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Chair. A comment on enforcement, and I think, as we look at this, I would be interested in seeing like a state-by-state report on how each state would be able to enforce such a permit, because I think the burden would fall to the states, for the most part. I have had the discussion, with our state division, regarding finding mechanisms in which to better enforce the federal for-hire permits, because North Carolina doesn't have joint enforcement, and so that makes it a little bit more difficult, right, and so I think it would be helpful for us to see, you know, from each state, how we would be enforcing this permit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I took notes on that. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Madam Chair, I promise not to capitalize this, but, obviously, I'm pretty well invested in this, for a lot of reasons, and, you know, I was emphatic, and perhaps overly so, during the AP meeting, that what I really want the AP to do is not be bound by where we are, but where we need to be and to look at the end processes here, the management that we're trying to apply, and to reverse-engineer what do we need to feed that, and I use the analogy that, if you're trying to launch a rocket, you need rocket fuel, you know, and can you get the rocket fuel?

I apologize, Laurilee, and I know rockets is a sore subject with you, but, you know, you need to match the fuel to the machine, and so, you know, we've got an established fuel source, so to speak, and I think, a lot of times, we are frustrated, because it seems to be inadequate for what we're trying to do with it, and so I think, you know, this is an opportunity for them to reverse-engineer back and tell us what do we need to fully benefit from the processes that we've got in place, and I certainly --

You know, like Andy said, I think we could insert in there, easily, "improve the catch and effort estimates used for fisheries science and management decision-making", if we need to capture that in there, just to make sure that that's fully elucidated, but that's what I really -- My hope for them is that they won't be bound by existing dogma, so to speak, but can really think openly on what do we need to do, maybe differently than what we're doing, and how do we do it, and I think they were very pragmatic about the realities of this, that you can't just flip a switch.

You can't just establish something and flip a switch and assume that you're going to, you know, get full benefit of it. I mean, it's not like a lightbulb, you know, and it's sort of like you want it to be 100 watts, but you start off, and you might get twenty watts, and then, after a little while, you get fifty watts, and, eventually, hopefully you get a hundred-watt lightbulb, but it doesn't work that way, and I think that's -- I heard Dewey was on that AP meeting, virtually, and one of the, I guess, problems with the Mid's tilefish thing was you've got to rigorously outreach it, and you've got to sustainably outreach it. You can't just do a one-and-done, and so it's a strong commitment to do something like this and to do it well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Spud, and so we have the mission statement suggested by Spud there on the screen, and what do folks think about that? I see some heads nodding yes. Anything we don't like about the mission statement? It looks like heads nodding no. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Just a clarification, because I think a permit alone is not going to improve collection, validation, and analysis, and it needs to be a combination permit and reporting requirement.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I think that's -- You know, everybody understands that, but I think we're sort of looking at this in a systematic fashion, and that is whatever mechanism we use to permit has got to facilitate those types of things. I mean, we've got -- You know, there is various ways that you can survey people who have identified themselves through a permit, and, you know, I was sort of hoping that this wasn't -- You can't really describe the surveys you need, but it's just the permit is a means to an end, and you've got make sure that you connect it with the processes that will develop, you know, hopefully simultaneously with it, because the worst thing you can do is just put a permit in there and just make it an orphan and go away and leave it.

It just sits out there, and it's one more thing that people have to do, but they never see a tangible benefit for it, and that's another part of -- I think the tasking of this group is the simultaneous investment in what you do with it when you identify what's the best way. If you decide to execute it, and that's a big if, that it produces the most it can. I mean, Florida has got, you know, a unique experience I think for all of us to benefit from, and I'm sure there's things that, you know, they learned after they did it, and they might do differently if they had it to do over again, or might modify it as time goes, but I think it's implicit in this that it's a means to an end, and it is not an end in and of itself.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so let me try to restate that, and so the intent is that there would be a reporting requirement, but that's a second part of the process, and is that how you see it?

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I think reporting comes in lots of different ways. It's participation in surveys, and I don't -- You know, mandatory reporting for the private recreational sector, is that a realistic expectation? I don't know. You know, I think I alluded to yesterday that I hunt ducks. Well, if they send me a wing survey, I don't have to do it. I don't not get able to buy -- I am not not able to buy a duck stamp the next year because I didn't do it. You know, they hope that I will do it, because I'm interested in waterfowl being managed the best that they can be, and so they hope that I will take the extra effort to do that, but I don't lose my right to hunt waterfowl the next year because I didn't do it, and so I think that's where, you know, there is a balancing point in all of this of what you can expect people to do and what they're willing to do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for that clarification. Mel.

MR. BELL: This is always dangerous to engage in group wordsmithing, but I thought, when Laurilee brought that up -- The permit, in itself, does not do anything, and so, I mean, if you wanted to -- Just a suggestion, and instead of, initially, where it says, "fishery will improve the collection", you could say, "facilitate the collection, validation, and analysis of the data to improve the catch", and so, I mean, if you wanted to take the first "improve" and change it to "facilitate the collection

of'. I mean, that's just a suggestion. We've got "improve" in there twice, because that's all the permit does, is it just allows you to --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are you good with that?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, and I have no pride of ownership, and at least now we know why each book in the Bible was written by one author.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What an analogy. All right. Other comments or thoughts on this mission statement for the group?

MR. HADLEY: I think this is a good mission statement, and I think this will be helpful for the AP, and also the IPT, going forward. I mean, I think it will be something that can be, you know, a driving overall goal to move towards, and so I appreciate that. I think we already had a discussion that the permitting and reporting idea is sort of inevitably linked, and so there's no need to belabor that point.

Moving along, the next question for the committee is do you have a directive for your next technical AP meeting? As you recall, last time, you did give them a directive, and that was helpful in sort of formatting the agenda and narrowing the focus of the discussion, and so what would you like them to evaluate, essentially, at the next meeting?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I think it would be great to have them weigh-in on Mel's idea, the efficacy of using sort of education certification as a proxy for a permit. You know, if your end result is that you identify a universe of users for that particular activity, then you're accomplishing the same thing as a permit might, with the added benefit of conveying to them the information you want for them to learn and apply in their activities, and so I think this would be a good thing for them maybe to look at and sort of pro-and-con it and how best could it be done, how would you --

You know, because, if you establish a sample frame that you believe is inclusive of all the people that are doing something, does it really matter where it comes from, as long as it is a sample frame that's accurate and can be periodically refreshed, and that might be one of the challenges of this. If it's a one-and-done, you don't necessarily get them to refresh their information, and the sample frame can get stale, and so there's some things like that that I think they would have to sort of talk through.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Spud. Mel.

MR. BELL: I agree with you on the one-and-done thing, and I was kind of envisioning this thing -- Originally, it was like it would be at least upon renewal of whatever valid license it was that you had to participate in recreational fishing off of whatever state we happen to be, and so there would be repetition, depending on the cycle, and I wasn't really thinking one-and-done, but you're right, because you would get longer long-term benefit from the ability to reach out and touch those people and impart the latest knowledge.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What else for the directives for the next meeting? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I think, Jessica, you will appreciate this one, given our experience in the Gulf of Mexico, and, you know, one of my broader concerns is, you know, there needs to be, obviously, tailoring of permits to meet the purpose and need of whatever that permit program is, but, with the Gulf, we created five different state surveys that don't necessarily talk to one another or produce matching estimates, and so I would be interested in the panel weighing-in and discussing, you know, more of the global use and how could a permit like this, as designed, be translated and used in other areas, whether we're talking Mid-Atlantic and New England, or even the Gulf of Mexico, to ensure that there is consistency and standardization in its use.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We're capturing that. What else do we want them to talk about this fall? Spud.

MR. WOODARD: You know, this keeps coming up, about -- This may be nullified, if you went down the course of this education approach, but, you know, does charging some nominal fee really effectively reduce oversubscription and result in a better sample frame? If there's any kind of research or anything like that out there that might could access and maybe provide us some insight on that, and just what -- Because I know we've always struggled with that at the state level. You know, we've had check-off on commercial licenses, and, last time Georgia did a license renewal, we applied some nominal costs to each one of those little check-offs, just to try to, you know, I think they said wash out the people that are really doing it and eliminate the oversubscription, and so if there's anything like that that they might could dive a little deeper into and give us some feedback on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. That's captured as well. What else? Is there anything else? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Presently, for commercial, it's \$25 for your first check-box and then \$10 after, for every other check-box, for your permits, and I guess, by charging a nominal fee, to reduce oversubscription -- I mean, they will come back with the research done to say, if it's \$25, or \$50, you kick out the ones that are just buying it to have, or something like that, but that's kind of the, on the commercial side, the practice of the rate for your different permits, especially with the federal permits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dewey. Anything else? Anything else here? Mel.

MR. BELL: On the education certification -- Go to Judy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Would this be like a -- You know how we buy our federal permits, and would this be a yearly permit? Would they have to -- Do they buy it for a couple of years, or is it a one-year permit, like, you know, the state licensing, and some of it is two years, and is it going to -- You know, we probably need to talk about that, what the term is. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Are we good with that? We had a short discussion about that a minute ago, about what the term should be. Mel.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say, on the first one up there, do we want to say “mandatory” in there, or do we bring that up, or is that implied, that it’s mandatory?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good question, and so, yes, do we want it to be mandatory or not?

MR. BELL: Or ask them to think about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Or ask them to discuss it.

MR. BELL: I was thinking, you know, in terms of the worrying about oversubscription or, in this case, people just taking it for the sake of taking it, there are people that have a saltwater fishing license that, you know, they fish for red drum, spotted seatrout, flounder, and spot and croaker, and they don’t go offshore, and so they wouldn’t want to do that, necessarily, and they might do it, if they thought they could, in which case they would be part of the population that fishes out there, and so it might be sort of self-governing, in terms of the -- Just because it’s free, if we were going to make the educational certification free, I don’t think you would necessarily get a lot of oversubscription to it, but the people that would be subscribing would be licensed fishermen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chester.

MR. BREWER: I was just going to say, with regard to the oversubscription, if you have the requirement that these courses, or this course, be it an hour long or whatever it is, every one, two, or three years, you’re not going to worry too much about the oversubscription, because it could be free, but people are not going to go do that course unless they’re going to be out there fishing, and so that might be a better way to go, and perhaps they could talk about that, but we’ve had all these discussions back and forth, about, if we go this route, with regard to permit, et cetera, that we -- If it’s administered by the feds, and they don’t really want to do it -- I think you don’t have to worry about oversubscription, if you’re going to have to spend an hour, or two hours, or whatever, to get the thing. Then people are not going to do that unless they’re going to go out and actually prosecute the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Chester. In that first bullet up there, about how can the permit, without a reporting requirement, potentially be integrated into the existing MRIP sampling framework, could we also put, in parentheses, maybe “State Reef Fish Survey”, since that already exists as well? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Sorry if I missed this, and this is specific to snapper grouper, but, to me, obviously, we manage a lot of fisheries, and this has applicability to a lot of other fisheries, and so I would be interested in weighing-in if the panel sees any differences, uniqueness, to some of the fisheries we manage and if the permitting would be different, based on that, or if there is a system that could be kind of a one-size-fits-all that applies to all of our fisheries.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What about the vessel versus individual? Is that already covered above this, or do we need to add it to this list?

MR. HADLEY: We can certainly add it. The AP discussed it a little bit, but they could have a much more in-depth conversation on that, if that’s a directive. If I could, very quickly, it sounds like -- Some of these bullet points were some example questions, and it sounds like the first bullet

point is something that's desired from the AP, and are the other two? Is that something you want your AP to discuss, and so the utility of implementing a permit without a reporting requirement and considerations for implementing a reporting requirement that can be validated, and so are those two other things you would like your AP to discuss?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think so. Let me look around the table. Yes, with or without a reporting requirement. Andy, I saw your mic is on. Did you have more to add? So are people okay with those additional questions? I see heads nodding yes. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I think it would be important, because are we talking a mandatory reporting requirement, or a mandatory/voluntary reporting requirement, because that's two very different things there. I think it's implied that it's mandatory. If you get a permit, and you get a survey, then like my example of the duck stamp, and, if you don't complete that survey, then you may not be eligible to have your, whatever it is, permit renewed the next year, and that's very different than, you know, reporting through voluntary participation in surveys.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Yes, let's capture that. Okay. What else?

MR. HADLEY: I think that's a good range of topics there. I don't know if they will be able to make it through all of them in one meeting, but we will certainly do what we can, but certainly what can't be done this next meeting can be covered at a subsequent one, and so I appreciate all of that, and these are all items that will help quite a bit, having additional information for the development of Amendment 46, but that was the final item, unless there are other topics that you would like the AP to discuss.

Just to kind of bring this to a little bit of a closure, the idea here, and to kind of meet expectations for the development of the amendment, the idea is for, as mentioned, the council to discuss this more in-depth, and so more of a traditional decision document, or options paper, at the December meeting, and so you'll have a little bit more material, from the amendment perspective, to review.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, John. All right. Next, we're going to move into yellowtail snapper interim analysis. All right. I am going to turn it over to Shanae Allen, who is going to give us a presentation on the SEDAR 64 interim analysis on yellowtail snapper.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I am Shanae Allen, from Florida Fish and Wildlife, and I'm very happy to be here in-person with you all today to present the interim analysis for yellowtail snapper that Mike Holly, Chris Swanson, and I recently completed. First, I will cover some relevant yellowtail snapper history, followed by model results, stock status overview, and, finally, projections.

The first yellowtail snapper assessment was done in 2003 and used data from 1981 to 2001, and that assessment found that the stock was not overfished, nor was it undergoing overfishing. Then, in 2012, the model changed to the ASAP2 framework and used data from 1981 to 2010, and that model also found that the stock was not overfished, nor undergoing overfishing. However, estimates of stock size were much higher than the previous model, and estimates of fishing mortality rates were much lower. That brings us to early 2020, when Chris and I completed SEDAR 64, which was done in Stock Synthesis, using data from 1992 to 2017, and, again, the

stock was found to be healthy, but the levels of stock size and fishing mortality rates were much closer to the first assessment.

However, by the time the 2020 assessment could be used for management, it would require the use beyond five years from the terminal year, use of the projections, and, since both SSCs discouraged this, because of increased uncertainty, the councils requested an interim analysis, and so the first TOR for this interim was to use landings and discards data -- Add landings and discards data for commercial, headboat, and the other recreational fishing modes from 2018 to 2020, and, in keeping with SEDAR 64, we only used landings and discard data from Florida waters, and so no length, age, or index information was updated.

During SEDAR 64, we performed a model bridging exercise, to try to understand why the magnitude of the results from the 2012 assessment was so different compared to ours in the first assessment. On the left here, you see estimates of spawning stock biomass, relative to the reference points, for each assessment, and, on the right, you see fishing mortality rates, relative to the reference points, for each assessment. The gray lines, that stand apart from the others, are the results of the 2012 assessment.

We think that this was due to a limitation in the ASAP2 framework which limited the number of weighted age matrices that could be used, because, when we used the same data, but increased the number of weighted age matrices, the results aligned well with the other two assessments, and that is shown by the green line.

Moving on to the quota and closure history for yellowtail snapper, the total ACL, currently, is about four-million pounds, and, again, this is based on the previous, the 2012, assessment and the recreational units are in CHTS, based on the CHTS data, and so the total ACL is further divided 75 percent in the South Atlantic and 25 percent in the Gulf. However, the Gulf includes an additional buffer of 11 percent, and so that works out to about three-million pounds in the South Atlantic and 900,000 pounds in the Gulf. Then the South Atlantic then is further divided by sector, between commercial and recreational. The commercial proportion is about 53 percent, and the recreational is about 47 percent, and there were a few brief commercial closures in recent years, starting in 2015 and then again in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

I will now present model results for the interim base model. I will only show fits to the landings and discards, because the other data sources, such as the composition data and index data, didn't change, and fits to those data components didn't change either, and so here's reported versus model-estimated landings and pounds, and so, starting with the commercial, which is in blue, the commercial -- The observed, or reported, landings, in pounds, are shown by the blue squares, and the model estimates are shown by the blue line, and so you can see they overlap. They match the landings exactly.

In Stock Synthesis, the recreational units are in numbers, and they're not in pounds, and the recreational landings, in numbers, also match the observed landings exactly. However, when you compared the reported landings, in pounds, versus the model estimates, converted to weight, you can see there is some differences here, and so, again, the data, the reported landings, in pounds, are shown in green for MRIP, and triangles, and in orange for headboat, and circles are the reported data, and so you can see how that lines up with the model estimates. For MRIP, there is some overestimation going on since about 2012, but headboat fits pretty well since about 1994.

Here is a plot of commercial, the fits to commercial discards, and the observed values are the open circles, and the vertical lines represent the 95 percent confidence intervals. The blue dashes then are the model fits, model estimates, I should say, and so you can see that there is pretty good alignment, and there's some overestimation going on after about 2012, and there's very high uncertainty associated with these discards, but, also, the magnitude of the discards are very low as well. Very similar plots here for MRIP discards on the left, and headboat discards on the right, and you can see that the observed and the model estimates match up fairly well.

Age-zero recruitment, estimated by the interim analysis, is shown on the left, and that's in thousands of fish, and log deviations from the stock-recruit relationship is shown on the right, and so, from these plots, you can see that there was increased recruitment from about 2011 to 2014, followed by a period of near-average recruitment.

The plot here on the left is to help determine whether the stock is considered to be overfished. This shows the model-estimated spawning stock biomass, and compared to the current spawning stock biomass, which we define as the geometric mean from 2018 to 2020, and that's shown by the red line, and so that value, compared to the MSST, which is the minimum spawning stock threshold, is -- Again, which is defined by 75 percent of the spawning stock biomass at F 30 percent SPR, and it's alphabet soup, I know, and that is shown by the solid gray line, and so you can see that the current spawning stock biomass, in the red, is above the MSST, and so the stock is not considered to be overfished. The biomass target there is also shown by the dashed line, which is the spawning stock biomass at F 30 percent SPR.

On the right is the distribution of the current spawning stock biomass relative to the MSST, and you can see that that distribution falls above one, and so there's very low probability that the stock is overfished.

Similarly, looking at fishing mortality rates, to determine if the stock is undergoing overfishing, we compare the current fishing mortality rate, which, again, is the geometric mean from 2018 to 2020, which is the red line, to the MFMT, or maximum fishing mortality threshold, and that, again, is below that threshold, and so, again, the stock is not undergoing overfishing. The plot to the right, the distribution of the current F, relative to the MFMT, is all -- It falls below one, and so a very low probability that overfishing is occurring.

These plots here are just to illustrate that -- It's a comparison of the SEDAR 64 model results to this interim analysis, and so the interim analysis model results are in blue, and the SEDAR 64 model results are in red. Starting from the top-left with spawning stock biomass, and on the right is age-four fishing mortality rate, and the bottom-left is recruitment, and the bottom-right is recruitment deviations, and what you can see is that these are all overlaying each other, and so the model results are all very consistent between the two assessments.

I won't go through this whole table, and this is just the stock status determination criteria table, for your reference, and the MFMT was estimated to be about 0.43, and the fishing mortality rate associated with a P^* of 0.375 is estimated to be 0.4, and so very similar, and those are a bit higher than the current F, which, again, is the geometric mean from 2018 to 2020, which is estimated to be 0.3. Below that, you will see values for the MSST, the spawning stock biomass at F 30 percent SPR, the current spawning stock biomass, and the equilibrium values of OFL and ABC.

The last section of this presentation is projections, and so we ran hundred-year projections, in order to reach equilibrium, but I will only show results of ten-year projections, from 2021 to 2031, and we ran multiple constant F scenarios, and constant catch scenarios as well, and the structure, and the parameters, of the projection model are the same as the assessment model. The selectivity is taken from the terminal year of the assessment model, and recruitment for the first year of the projections is based on the stock-recruit relationship, and it's about 17.8 million fish, which is very close to the long-term average of 17.1 million fish.

This is an iterative method that specifies fishing mortality rates for each fleet, per year, and it has the added benefit of being able to specify fleet allocations for each year, and, because the model that we use is not spatially explicit, we used fleet allocations according to those in the South Atlantic, and so about 53 percent for commercial and 47 percent recreational.

The first two constant F scenarios here were specified in the TORs, and the first scenario is the F at 30 percent SPR, which is, again, about, 0.3, 0.43, and followed by the P* scenario at 0.42. I added an additional scenario here of 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR, at 0.31, and so you can see, on the plot on the right, the F 30 percent SPR, in red, scenario and the P* scenario, in the greenish color, are very similar, and that that green region there, or greenish-blue region, that highlights the first five years of the projections, and so you compare that to historical fishing mortality rates, and you see that they're a bit higher than recent years. Well, since about 1997. The 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR scenario leads to something very close to the average current F.

Here is a plot of recruitment under these constant F projections, and you can see they're very stable, and they don't change very much, and that's because of the limitations of the projections themselves and that we don't know what's going to happen with recruitment in the future.

For spawning stock biomass, under these different constant F scenarios, we see, again, that the two scenarios in red, the F 30 percent SPR and the P* scenario, both lead to very quick declines in spawning stock biomass that reach the target within the first five years of the projections, whereas the 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR scenario levels out at recent, near recent, values.

Finally, this plot will show the estimated retained yield streams that come out of those constant F scenarios, and so, again, the highest yield streams, as expected, would come from the F 30 percent and the P* scenario, which lead to very similar yield streams, and below that is the 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR, in blue, in the dark blue, and these are all presented in a table form here, and so, starting from the far left, we have the OFL scenario, which is F 30 percent SPR, and the ABC, which is the P* equal to 0.375, and then that additional scenario of 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR, and, also, I included here the ratio of the ABC to the OFL, and, finally, on the far-right, is, if the ABC is equal to the OFL, and according to the fleet allocations in the South Atlantic, here is how it would break down by sector.

At the very bottom of this table, there are some values highlighted in orange, and those show the three-year and five-year averages of the OFL and ABC scenarios, and so, for instance, the three-year average would be the average of the OFL from 2021, 2022, and 2023, and then, at the very bottom, you see the equilibrium catch, which is the yield associated with the equilibrium of OFL, and so these five values then were used as constant catch scenarios.

Out of the five constant catch scenarios, you can see, in this plot, that the three-year average is, of course, the highest, and the P* and F 30 percent SPR values are very similar, followed by the five-year average, and then the lowest is the equilibrium.

The fishing mortality rates that were projected under these different constant catch scenarios, they reach the MFMT within the first five years of the projections, and so 2023, and about 2024 for the five-year average scenarios, and spawning stock biomass, also for the three and five-year scenarios, reach the target, and so the spawning stock biomass at F 30 percent SPR, either within five years or close to it, and then, beyond, nine or ten years in the projection timeframe, they also reach the MSST. This is the recruitment under those constant catch scenarios, and, again, you can see they vary just slightly, and there are some declines that do occur, but not very much, and that's all I have today. Thank you for listening.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Shanae. I really appreciate you and Chris rerunning this, and then I appreciate you guys putting this presentation together to walk through this for us. Are there questions for Shanae? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, first, thank you for bringing us a stock assessment where we don't have to address overfishing, and thank you for rerunning the assessment, as Jessica said. I did have a question. You had shown the commercial and recreational yields, based on the allocations, and am I -- That's based on the South Atlantic allocations, right, and so is that specific to the South Atlantic, in terms of their 75 percent apportionment as well?

MS. ALLEN: The allocation was applied to the total yield, and so it was also applied to the Gulf portion as well, because it's not a spatially-explicit model, but we figured that, since over 95 percent of landings occur in the South Atlantic, that it was a close-enough approximation. Does that make sense?

MR. STRELCHECK: I think so, and so we have an apportionment between the Gulf and South Atlantic, and then we allocate the South Atlantic, but we don't allocate the Gulf, and so I just want to make sure that, when we get our catch advice -- It sounds like you've addressed that, and that would be included in our catch advice.

MS. ALLEN: We were unable to apportion between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, because our model is a single-area model, and so we only used the fleet allocations in the Atlantic to apply to the entire yield.

MS. MCCAWLEY: More questions? I don't see any more hands. If we don't have any more questions, then we can move into the SSC recommendations, and I believe that Jeff is available online to give us those. Thank you, Shanae.

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, I'm here, Jessica. Can you hear me?

MS. MCCAWLEY: We sure can, loud and clear. I think Chip is going to get your presentation pulled up for you.

DR. BUCKEL: Thank you. Thanks, Chip and Jessica. All right, and so this is a report of the joint South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico SSC meeting that happened on August 4. Shanae went through

this, but I will just do a quick background, given that this was two years ago that SEDAR 64 was brought to you, and so yellowtail snapper had a benchmark, SEDAR 64, stock assessment, and that had a terminal year of 2017.

The joint SSCs met in the summer of 2020 and set a P^* of 0.375, and that was based on that SEDAR 64 stock assessment, and so you just were presented this interim analysis, and that applied the updated landings and discard data to the SEDAR 64 base model, and that was the 2018 to 2020 data, and so the joint SSCs were asked to provide feedback on the projections and uncertainties and make catch level recommendations.

In terms of the review of the interim analysis, the interim analysis addressed all the TORs to the SSC's satisfaction, and we found no issues with the interim analysis that would prevent it from providing fishing level recommendations. The other question we were asked is, is the interim analysis consistent with best scientific information available, and we concluded that, yes, the interim analysis is consistent with BSIA, as specified by the TORs for this assessment.

However, there was discussion about what exactly is an interim analysis, and there was sort of some confusion about the terminology, and so, as far as I know, for the South Atlantic, this was the first interim analysis that we've seen to review, but folks on the Gulf of Mexico SSC had seen interim analyses, but those had come from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and they were a little different flavor than what we received from FWC, and so, I guess, just in the future, we'll have to be careful with the terminology and what exactly an interim analysis is, but, in terms of the South Atlantic SSC, the interim analysis process has not yet been vetted, and so there was just a word of caution that we're still awaiting further information and evaluation to determine under what circumstances these interim analyses can be considered BSIA, but, in terms of this interim analysis, we felt it was consistent with BSIA, as specified by the TORs.

In terms of research recommendations, again, following-up on this interim analysis discussion, and so the joint SSCs recommended to compare the different types of interim analyses provided by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the FWC, and, for the yellowtail snapper update, the next stock assessment to update indices, as these were not updated in this interim analysis. Another recommendation was to update the MRIP catch per trip estimates, and there was an error in SEDAR 64, where the MRIP data were catch per angler, and so just ensuring that the MRIP catch per trip are used in the next assessment, and then reemphasize the previous research recommendations that were listed in the SEDAR 64 benchmark assessment.

In terms of catch level recommendation, there was discussion about the use of the P^* that was calculated in summer, or fall, of 2020, and that discussion was, well, that P^* is two years old, and so there's an increased level of uncertainty surrounding the use of that P^* , given that two years has elapsed, and, again, this is just landings and discard data that were used, from 2018 to 2020, and so no other indices of abundance, for example, or, as Shanae said, no new information on recruitment, and so that time lag concerned members of the joint SSC.

The other thing that was of concern was the projections did not contain discards, and it was just the landed -- It was just landed fish in the projections, and so, again, we had considerable discussion about reducing the P^* , given the above two points, especially the time elapsed, but we ultimately decided just to stick with a P^* of 0.375.

The catch level recommendation, the SSCs recommend setting OFL at the yield achieved at F 30 percent SPR and ABC at the yield achieved at P^* equals 0.375, but, again, given the discussion about the P^* -- You know, there was a lot of discussion about reducing it, but, ultimately, the joint committees came to the decision that this was management uncertainty, and so that the reduction would come in play from reducing the ABC to a lower ACL or ACT, and so P^* is unchanged, but the joint SSC's recommendation to the council is to select an ACL, or ACT, to account for additional uncertainty that I just described and go with a 90 percent or 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR.

Just a reminder that, in 2020, it was a similar recommendation, because of concern about uncertainty in the stock -- Additional uncertainty in the stock assessment, and so we had a P^* of 0.375, but the recommendation was to go with the 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR for the ACL, and so those values are shown here for the year 2023 through 2027. The first column is OFL, and the second column is ABC, and then the third and fourth columns are the 90 percent and 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR, and these values are in millions of pounds and are those last rows that Shanae just showed in her presentation. I think that's it, Chip, and I'm happy to take any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Jeff. I am looking for any questions here. I guess I have a question, and so all of those slides that you went over were actually a result of a joint SSC meeting, and so those were the recommendations from both the SSCs, right?

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, that's correct, if I didn't make that clear. Sorry, Jessica, and, yes, both SSCs met in the morning of August 4.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. I just wanted to make sure that was clear to everybody. Questions? I don't see any hands. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Does the yellowtail snapper fishery reach its allowable catch every year? If you went to the 75 percent, would that result in closures? I mean, it's a lot of fish, but would that result in closures?

DR. BUCKEL: I think Shanae had a good slide that showed that that 75 percent, and, Shanae, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but the 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR -- That was -- That gave a projected landings that was similar to what's currently happening, and is that right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shanae is coming to the microphone.

MS. ALLEN: Yes. The 75 percent of F 30 percent SPR did -- It resulted in fishing mortality rates that were close to the average, very close, like 0.31 versus 0.30. However, the retained yield streams were less, because spawning stock biomass has declined.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Does that answer your question, Laurilee?

MS. THOMPSON: I'm not sure. I'm just wondering -- If you went with the most conservative alternative, would that result in people not being able to fish for a month or two, or some period of time during the year, and I'm going to assume that the fishery is open all year now, and I don't know anything about yellowtail snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The commercial sector has reached their ACL a couple of times. I think, with the new FES data, that, depending on what you select here, based on this updated information, there might be chances that the recreational sector would reach it as well, but, to me, that's part of the next steps, and so I think that, coming out of this process, we would ask staff to reinitiate this amendment that we were working on, that we put to the side, and both the Gulf and South Atlantic Council put it to the side and asked the FWC to update the stock assessment and then asked the SSC to look at those results, and so, to me, that will kind of come out in an easy table, I think, to look at when we go to the next step, and so good questions, but I just think it will come in the next phase. Other questions for Shanae or Jeff? All right. Thank you both for those presentations.

Now we're going to jump into the fishery overview document, and I think Chip is going to walk us through that, and then just a reminder that we have a hard stop at 4:30, where we're going to hear from Sam Rauch.

DR. COLLIER: All right, and so this is linked in the agenda, and it's Attachment 4 under Snapper Grouper, and it's Item C, and so what you will see is the same type of fishery overview that we've been providing after you guys get assessments, and this kind of gives you the ballpark of what potentially might happen, what the fishery is currently doing, looking at the commercial and recreational fisheries independent, and it also incorporates some of the stock assessment information, and then it also -- There is different tabs up here, and so it includes the history of management, and this history of management targeted at yellowtail snapper, or the snapper grouper complex, and so management that affects yellowtail specifically, and you can look back, and it goes in chronological order, starting with the oldest item first, and then it scrolls all the way through, and there is seven pages of regulations that are related to yellowtail snapper.

We also provided the latest fishery performance report, as developed by the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, and this one was developed in October of 2018, and so you guys can look through this and see what the advisory panel has been saying about yellowtail snapper, if you had any questions about that, and then the final tab is looking at some of the outputs from the stock assessment, the fishery, the projections, and so you can look at the FMSY.

Once again, this is just for you guys, if you want to see a Cliff Notes version of the information that you want for yellowtail snapper, and this is a quick snapshot. We are going to develop additional information as the amendment gets developed, but this kind of helps put things in the ballpark, and so we'll go to combined data for both sectors, and I think Laurilee had a question related to this.

If you look at this first graph, you're looking at the percent of the ACL that was harvested by sector, and you can see, in the last couple of years, neither sector has been achieving their ACL. In 2020, and 2021, neither one were getting there, and then you can look at the landings by recreational and commercial sector. I do have recreational data in here for 2021, and I don't have it for commercial. If you remember, the fishing year for yellowtail is a bit different. It starts -- I can't remember the exact starting date right now, but it starts in August. It's in the opening page for this, but I just forgot to look at it, and I apologize.

You can also look at the seasonality of landings, and you can look at it by sector, and then I also have it by state. This is dominated by Florida landings, and that's why FWC does the stock assessment. There is very little landings in other states, and then, if you want to look at the

individual sectors, we provide that information as well. This is potentially getting into some of the information that might be more relevant for considering for this stock.

You can look at the landings, and we have a time series of landings from 2000 to 2020, and then we also provide the discards over time. Interestingly, for this stock, you can see the number of discards have been decreasing through time. That's not the typical trend that we see for many snapper grouper species, and, once again, this is focused on the commercial sector. You can see the seasonality for commercial. For the first ten years I have here, from 2000 to 2009, it seems like it's pretty flat, but you start to see peaks that begin occurring in May and June, and those generally are occurring -- Some of them will appear in March and April as well.

Then, looking at the size distribution for this fish, this is something that I did want to point out. If you look at the commercial sector, the sizes here are eleven and twelve inches, is generally what the size -- Eleven, twelve, or thirteen inches is what's being caught by the commercial fishery. The sizes that I'm referring to, these are fork length estimates. They're not total length estimates, as in the regulation.

You can see it's pretty consistent over the time series, and there's no noticeable trends or anything like that, and the other thing to look at is how much is the commercial fishery landing, and we have broken these out into a series of different size bins, and you can see that there are a few trips that are catching over a thousand pounds. Those trips tend to dominate some of the landings streams. They do not dominate the overall number of trips though, and it's just a few trips that are doing that, and that's not an unexpected phenomenon. As you catch more weight, your trips have a little bit more influence, and so there are some directed trips that catch a lot of the fish.

Then, for the recreational sector, we have very similar graphs, and you can see the number of fish caught and the number of fish released, and, the last few years, you begin to see a deviation between the discards and the number of fish caught. You can see, in 2020, the discards went down. However, the catch went up, and then, in 2021, we have the landings going down, while the releases went up.

Seasonality, it's pretty much all over the place, and there doesn't appear to be a real trend here in the seasonality of catch. Once again, the landings are dominated by Florida, and then, getting into the size distribution, we're looking at data from MRIP alone here, and we have estimates from the charter boat, the private recreational trips, as well as shore trips. Shore trips really only showed up in 2014. If you scroll back up to the landings in that time period, you also see a spike during that year.

The other thing I wanted to point out is the size distribution for the recreational-caught fish. Quite often, a ten-inch fork length is what is the modal size, and so that is a little bit smaller than what the commercial guys were seeing. As far as the number of catch per trip, currently, the regulations are that ten fish is the current bag limit for yellowtail snapper. It's also included in the aggregate bag limit for snappers, and you can see that the maximum number of fish -- Ten is very unlikely, but it's spread out over a variety of number of fish caught per angler.

That is the overview. I forgot about the nerd page, and we have the life history data. I am a biologist at heart, and so I put that information in there. Not everybody looks at it, but we do have the length-at-age, and we have the weight-at-size, and we also have the maturity, and then, for

some of the species, we will have changing proportion male to female, but, for this stock, it stays at 50 percent the entire time, and so that is an overview. This link will be live until we update it with new information from the next stock assessment, and so I'm not going to update it every year, but this is just kind of a primer on fisheries biology and fisheries statistics for yellowtail snapper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any questions? I appreciate you going over all that, Chip. Then the decision point now, I guess, is if the committee wants to restart -- Is it 44, Amendment 44, and so Amendment 44 would bring in ABC, ACL, and we put that on hold, because we were waiting for the stock assessment to be updated, and so, just to remind folks, the Gulf Council did make a motion to move forward with bringing Amendment 44 back to the forefront here, now that we have the new stock assessment, and so I'm assuming that we would want to make a similar motion to do that. I see heads nodding yes. The motion is going there on the board to reinstate Snapper Grouper Amendment 44. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I really wanted to craft that motion myself, but thank you for -- **I make a motion to reinstate Snapper Grouper Amendment 44.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Kerry and seconded by Mel. If this motion is passed, then, when we go to Full Council Session II, I believe we'll look at the priority list and figure out when in the world we would start working on this again. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Given that this is a jointly-managed fish, did you all decide, or did you want to think about, whether you want to have one document that's a shared document with the Gulf that would amend the Snapper Grouper FMP and the Reef Fish FMP, and you don't have to decide that now, but it's just something to think about, going forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra saves the day, and so it's already been decided, since we worked on this before, that it's a joint document, and the South Atlantic Council is the administrative lead on the document.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Okay. That's what I thought. You could always change your mind, but I don't see the point in that at this point, and so thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Monica. Any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.** All right. I'm going to pass it back to Mel.

MR. BELL: All right. That will conclude Snapper Grouper for today. What we're going to do now is -- Say 4:30, and give us seven minutes, and Sam will come up, and, in seven minutes, we'll put Sam on, and he can say a few words, and then what we'll do is reconvene tomorrow at 8:30, as scheduled, and we're doing pretty good. Good job, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on September 13, 2022.)

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SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We are still in Snapper Grouper, and we are now on gag, Snapper Grouper Amendment 53, and I'm going to turn it over to Allie.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so I'm going to move through some items of this amendment that we've gone over during multiple meetings a little quicker, just for time's sake, and that includes the background, and so I'm going to use Table 1 to kind of summarize where we're at, and so the most recent assessment was SEDAR 71, and it indicated that the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing. You guys reviewed the assessment in June of 2021, and you also got some additional guidance on the rebuilding plan in September of that year, and then you received the overfishing letter from NMFS on July 23, 2021.

I am going to skip straight to objectives for this meeting, and so we've got some additions to -- We've got some additional alternatives to review for this meeting, and then we have one action that does not have a preferred selected, and then, at the end of this meeting, we'll have an opportunity, or, at the end of this document, we'll have an opportunity to approve the amendment for public hearings.

As far as the timing goes, in June, we reviewed the preliminary analysis, and you guys looked at the decision tools for the first time, and we do have an updated decision tool for the recreational sector. Today, again, we'll review this decision document, and you have the first iteration of the draft amendment in your briefing book materials, and we'll review some of the amendment summaries.

During the fall, we'll conduct public hearings, if this amendment is approved for public hearings, and then we'll talk a little bit more about that process at the end. In December, we'll review public hearing comments, select any remaining preferreds, and approve all actions, and then we're scheduled for final approval in March of 2023.

A recap on what you guys did for this amendment in June, and so we did add language about the overfishing limit to the purpose and need, and you guys accepted that, and we're going to talk a little bit more about that in just a second. For Action 3, which is the allocations action, you selected Alternative 4, which is that lovingly termed share-the-pain-share-the-gain method, with a five-year basis, and so Sub-Alternative 4b, as the preferred alternative for that one. Action 4a, the commercial trip limit, you directed the IPT to develop additional alternatives which incorporated an increasing trip limit, based on projected landings from the decision tool, and selected Alternative 2, which is 300 pounds, as the preferred. We'll review those additional alternatives today.

Action 4b, which was the commercial spawning season closure, you guys selected Alternative 1, no action, as the preferred. For 5a, which is the rec vessel limit, you directed staff to include additional alternatives that incorporate both a separation of rec vessel types and increasing vessel bag limit, and we'll make sure that we spend some time looking at those additional alternatives, and then 5b mirrors the commercial spawning season, just for the rec. Again, you selected Alternative 1, no action.

For Action 6, that was the commercial accountability measure, and you guys made a motion to remove that action, and so actions are going to be renumbered, and so we're at six actions, now that that has been moved, and then Action 7 is the rec accountability measures action, and you directed staff to remove Alternative 5 and then selected Alternative 4, which retained the in-season closure and uncoupled the post-season AM as the preferred alternative, and so any questions on that, before I hop to the purpose and need?

All right, and so the purpose and need statement -- I mentioned that we included the addition of the overfishing limit to this, and we've been kind of going back and forth with guidance on when and where to include the overfishing limit, and I will talk about it more as we go through the amendment, but that term might come out of the purpose and need, and so, as it currently reads, the purpose of this fishery management plan amendment is to establish a rebuilding plan, set an acceptable biological catch and overfishing limit, revise annual catch limits and sector allocations, and make modifications to management measures and accountability measures for South Atlantic gag, based on the results of the most recent stock assessment.

We added "revise" in there and "modifications to management measures and accountability measures", just to make sure that it blanketed everything that's being done in this amendment, and so those are the highlights that you see there.

Then the need for this fishery management plan amendment is to end overfishing of South Atlantic gag, rebuild the stock, and achieve optimum yield, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects. I will pause here, and I don't know if, Monica, you had anything that you wanted to go over, as far as the overfishing limit and how it pertains to the purpose and need.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Sure. You will see, in a later action, and I think it's, Allie, with the ABC action, Action 2, in this amendment, that we added in the overfishing limit to the actual action, in addition to the acceptable -- The ABC and the ACL and those sorts of things, and, looking back through what the council has done in the past, the council has already adopted using the overfishing limit as one of the measures of overfishing. In Amendment 37, the council approved using the overfishing limit to determine the overfishing status for many of the assessed species, including most all of the species you're going to deal with today, and probably not wreckfish, but everything else.

In looking back through, and discussing this with Myra, it seems like it might just create more confusion if we add it into the action, and so we're going to -- In all of these amendments that you're going to see today, we're going to take it out of the action and recommend that it be taken out, so as to avoid the confusion, but then, in Section 1, we're going to describe what was already done, and here's the overfishing limit, and these sorts of things that came out of the assessment and the recommendations from the SSC, and so we'll do a better job, in Section 1, of describing

all those sorts of things, but it doesn't need to be an action in the amendment, and so you may want to revise your purpose, and take it out of there, because it seems like -- I mean, you could leave it in there, but it seems like the purpose is really addressing the actual things in the actions, and so you might just want to remove it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What do folks think about that? It does make sense that we should remove it from the purpose and need. I see heads nodding yes. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think we need a motion, don't we? Okay. **I will make a motion that we adopt the wording of the purpose and need statements, with the revision of removing the overfishing limit.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. Do we have a second? Seconded by Tim. Any more discussion on this? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

MS. IBERLE: Okay. Moving on to Action 1, Action 1 is one of the ones that we can move through pretty quickly, and so this is establishing a rebuilding plan. We've already gone over this, and you guys have selected a preferred of Tmax, which is ten years, and that's the longest timeframe for rebuilding allowed under National Standard 1.

Your other alternative was Tmin, which was seven years, and we've talked a little bit about that, and so I'm not going to spend too much time, and I'm going to jump straight to the amendment summary sections, and so this just gives you a little bit of a ranking of each alternative, and so, for bio effects, Alternative 1 is not a viable option, and so you're not going to see it in the ranking. The ranks, highest to lowest, biological benefit is Alternative 2 and then Preferred Alternative 3, noting that a rebuilding plan that is expected to rebuild the stock in less time is expected to provide the greatest biological benefit.

As far as econ effects, from highest econ benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 2 and Preferred Alternative 3, and these rankings consider the long-term economic benefit. A shorter rebuilding period could potentially accrue benefits sooner, rather than a longer rebuilding plan, and then, finally, social effects, and so highest potential social benefit to lowest, and we have Preferred Alternative 3 and Alternative 2. Preferred Alternative 3 is likely to have fewer short-term negative social effects, as it establishes a longer rebuilding schedule than Alternative 2. With that, I will turn it over to you guys for any discussion on this action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We already have a preferred here, and we just reviewed the effects. Any desire to change any of this? I see people nodding no. All right. We'll turn it back to you, Allie.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so Action 2 deals with the total ACL, OY, and, again, as Monica mentioned, there will be some wording changes coming at the next meeting, and so these highlighted sections may drop off, and we may make some changes to both the action and the alternative language, but none of the meat-and-potatoes will change.

The purpose of this action is the gag total ACL is being revised to incorporate the new ABC recommended by the SSC, based on that new stock assessment, SEDAR 71, as well as incorporating the MRIP-FES recreational estimates, and so your alternatives are Alternative 1,

retaining the current ABC, and your preferred Alternative 2, which sets ACL and OY equal to ABC, and then Alternative 3 and 4, which include a 5 and 10 percent buffer between the ACL, OY, and ABC.

In Table 3, we have that summary of kind of a snapshot of your alternatives and which recreational landings estimates are used for each alternative, and then, in Table 4, you can see your actual catch levels there. Figure 2 we saw in June, and so this just gives you a snapshot of how the fishery has been operating. You see recreational landings, and those are MRIP-FES landings in blue, commercial landings in orange, and total landings in green, and then Figure 3, again, I'm going to move through this one quickly, and we saw it in June, and this kind of shows you a little bit about the gap between your preferred alternative ACLs versus how the fishery has been operating, and so that orange line is an average total landings from 2015 to 2019, and so you can see, until around 2028, the ACL, the total ACL, is under what the fishery has been catching.

Then, moving into the effects section, again, the same kind of similar rankings situation, and so highest biological benefit to lowest, and we have Alternative 4, followed by Alternative 3 and then Preferred Alternative 2. Alternative 1 is not a viable option, since it doesn't include an ACL that's based on best available science, and then, also, consider that lower ACLs, such as Alternative 3 and 4, result in fewer fish to catch, earlier closures, and higher regulatory discards. Higher ACLs, such as Preferred Alternative 2, would allow for more fish to be caught, resulting in longer seasons, later closures, and lower regulatory discards.

For econ effects, again, highest econ benefit to lowest, we have Preferred Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 3 and then Alternative 4, noting that ACLs that allow for more fish to be landed can result in increased econ benefits, as long as those ACLs do not affect the long-term health of the stock.

Then, last, but not least, the social effects, and so highest social benefit to lowest. We have Preferred Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, noting that ACLs do not directly affect resource users, but rather the likelihood of an AM being triggered is what has the social effect, and a higher ACL lowers the chance of an AM being triggered, and, therefore, negative social effects, and so, for that one, I will turn it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so, as Monica discussed, this part that's highlighted here, about revise the overfishing limit, is going to come out of this particular action. We already have a preferred here, and are we okay with the revisions here to this particular action, and do we want to change the preferred? It looks like people are saying no.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That brings us to Action 3, which will revise the gag sector allocations and sector annual catch limits, and so allocations are being reviewed, since the recreational landings stream has changed in the new assessment, switching from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey to the MRIP-FES, and your alternatives for this one are Alternative 1 would retain the current 51/49 commercial and recreational allocation. The highlights that you see here, I had commercial and rec in a wonky order, and so I just had it consistent for all alternatives, and so those are the changes that you see there.

Alternative 2 would reallocate, using the method that was used to get to the 51/49, and I'll show you that in a second, in the summary table, and then Alternative 3 would use the Comp ACL

formula. Preferred Alternative 4 is the share-the-pain-share-the-gain method introduced in December of 2021.

We've gone over that, and I will walk through that in a little more detail, but, essentially, it reduces each sector proportional to how the sector has been fishing, and then, as the total ACL increases, it splits the increase in pounds, and so the allocation changes slightly each year, until the last year, where it remains in place until modified, and then we have two sub-alternatives for Preferred Alternative 4, and that was the basis, and so we either based it on three years of landings or five years, and you guys discussed that and went with Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b, which was the five-year average.

Table 5 gives you kind of a summary for the methods for each alternative, and so, again, the current allocation was based on landing distribution from 1999 to 2003, but it was based on recreational landings from the CHTS method, and so Alternative 2 uses that same kind of formula, and so the distribution of landings from 1999 to 2003, but, instead, it recalculates, incorporating those updated MRIP-FES estimates.

Then Alternative 3 -- I mentioned that Comp ACL formula, and so that formula is there for you to see, and that results in that forty-three-and-change and fifty-six-and-change allocation. Then Preferred Alternative 4 is here, and I think this wording doesn't really do it justice, and so I'm going to keep moving, and so Table 6 is those first three alternatives, and they were kind of easy to put into a table, and so those are your catch levels for the first three alternatives, and then we have these massive tables for Sub-Alternative 4a and 4b, and they show the share-the-pain-share-the-gain method.

I'm going to go ahead and scoot to Table 8, since this is your preferred, and so this is going to be the catch -- The sector ACLs underneath that preferred alternative, and, when you look at how the allocation changes throughout the years, a reminder that you start out at a 49/51 split, but, instead of 51 being to the commercial, 51 is to the recreational. That allocation kind of stays until 2027, at which time it shifts to 50/50, and then it would remain 50/50 for the rest of the rebuilding plan and then remain in place until modified.

Similar to the total ACL, we've put together some graphs that show you the essentially gap between how each sector has been operating and your different allocation options, and so the colored bars are going to be each allocation alternative. I will note that Preferred Alternative 4b is the green bar, if you're wanting to hone-in on that one, and then the dashed line is average commercial landings from 2015 to 2019, and so you can see, in 2027, those commercial ACLs are starting to get closer to how the fishery has been operating.

Then the same thing for recreational, and so here we see the dashed line is recreational landings, average recreational landings, from 2015 to 2019, and, again, those bars are going to be your alternatives, with the green bar being Preferred Alternative 4b, and so, again, in 2027, we're getting closer to how the fishery has been operating.

We reviewed the preliminary analysis in June, and so I'm going to spend too much time on it, but I will kind of note your preferred alternative, and so this is the time at which the projected landings predict the ACL being met. Because of the length of the rebuilding plan, we kind of bookended this, and so you can see 2023, 2027, and then 2032, and so kind of year-one, the middle of the

road, and then the end year, and so you can look at the dates here, and, again, these are -- We have the word “closure date”, and the closure wouldn’t happen immediately, but this is when the ACL is projected to be met.

For the bio effects, it was a little difficult to rank these. Sector ACLs, under this action, would not be expected to result in any major biological changes, positive or negative, noting that high sector ACLs for one sector could result in earlier closures for the other sector. However, both sectors currently have AMs in place.

For econ effects, we kind of split this out by sector, because it differs, and so, for the commercial sector, going from highest potential econ benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 1, followed by Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b, Alternative 3, Sub-Alternative 4, and Alternative 2, and then, for the rec sector, we have highest econ benefit to lowest is Alternative 2, followed by Sub-Alternative 4a, Alternative 3, Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b, and Alternative 1. Remember that sector ACLs that allow for more fish to be landed can increase the econ benefit.

Then, again, for social effects, the highest social benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 1, followed by your preferred, Alternative 3, 4a, and then 2. Then, for the rec sector, we have Alternative 2, 4a, 3, your preferred, and then Alternative 1.

Some considerations are alternatives that decrease a sector’s ACL could have negative social effects. Because of the reduction in catch though from Action 2, regardless of the allocation, sector ACLs are expected to be constraining, and so, when we were looking at those figures, the landings that each sector has had from 2015 to 2019 is still showing that, in the first couple of years, no matter the allocation, there is going to be a constraint on harvest. With that, I will turn it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Allie. We already have a preferred here, and we’ve had a lot of discussion at previous meetings, a lot of discussion about this particular preferred relative to allocation. Are we good with this? I see heads nodding yes. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Not to comment on the specific measure, but kind of allocations in general, and you all have a lot of amendments before you that come out of the stock assessments, and so many of them deal with allocations, right, and so I thought it would be good to maybe just mention what National Standard 4 says, just so you can think about that, not just for here, but for all of these amendments that you’re going to be looking at today.

National Standard 4 deals with allocation specifically, and it says conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different states. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various U.S. fishermen, such allocations shall be, one, fair and equitable to all such fishermen; two, reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and, three, carried out in such a manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privileges.

Most of that seems pretty intuitive of what we’re supposed to think about, but I wanted to focus, just briefly, on what the second prong is, of reasonably calculated to promote conservation, and what that means. In the National Standard 4 Guidelines -- I’m just going to read you this, and then

I will make one other statement. It says that numerous methods of allocating fishing privileges are considered conservation and management measures under the Magnuson Act.

An allocation scheme may promote conservation, by encouraging a rational, more easily managed use of the resource, or it may promote conservation, in the sense of wise use, by optimizing the yield, in terms of size, value, market mix, price, or economic or social benefit of the product. To the extent that rebuilding plans, or other conservation and management measures that reduce the overall harvest in a fishery are necessary, any harvest restrictions or recovery benefits must be allocated fairly and equitably among the commercial, recreational, and charter fishing sectors of the fishery, and so promotion of conservation doesn't just mean reducing the stock or increasing the amount of harvest.

It talks about wise use, and wise use can be -- You can, I think, meet the requirements of National Standard 4, for example, by considering the biological impacts to the stock, including preventing overfishing and the economic and social impacts to the fishery, to the fishermen, and, well, fisherwomen. What do we call it? Fishers. People who fish.

It's just kind of to get you thinking about those kinds of things, and I think the gag -- This particular preferred, that I think Tim originally came up with in this amendment, is a really interesting example of, you know, how you're sharing the pain and sharing the gain, and your other allocations, in your other amendments, I think also meet the standard, but sometimes we might need a little more conversation and discussion, for the record, on how this is promoting conservation, and so maybe we'll ask a few more questions, or maybe you'll see a little more discussion in the document, specific to National Standard 4.

There have been some lawsuits in various parts of the country, where the groups are saying, you know, the council didn't consider National Standard 4 sufficiently, and this doesn't promote conservation, and then, of course, we argue about whether it does or whether it doesn't, and so, anyway, just to get you thinking along those lines for not just this amendment, but for the others that you'll be looking at today. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. I feel like, in this one, we've already considered that here, and so it seems like you're not saying for this, just for gag in particular here, but you're saying this when we look at all of these.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I thought it would be good to bring it up for all of these, and I know Shep and I share this seat, and so we have a lot going on, and sometimes we mention these National Standards, and sometimes we take them for granted, and you all know them, and so I thought, at certain points, it's good to just bring up National Standard 4, and certainly we talked National Standard 1, and some of 9, yesterday, and so there's ten of them, and each amendment, and all the actions you do, are supposed to meet all of the National Standards, as well as all applicable law, but, anyway, without allocations, it seemed like a good time to just bring us back and look again at what the Act requires for allocations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Monica. All right. Any more discussion here? Any desire to change the preferred? It looks like people nodding their heads no. All right. Back to Allie.

MS. IBERLE: Really quickly, before I move off this action, I will note that the language for Preferred Alternative 4 -- We may be wordsmithing this a little bit as we move forward, and so just keep that in mind. Again, the meat-and-potatoes of it won't change. All right.

Action 4 modifies the commercial management measures, and so we've got two sub-actions for this, the first being to reduce the commercial trip limit, and so the -- The council is considering modifying the commercial trip limit to achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain the catch to the updated commercial ACLs, while maintaining an extended commercial season, and so, for this, in June, you guys had five alternatives, and so retaining the current trip limit of 1,000 pounds, including that step-down to 500 at 75 percent of the commercial ACL. Then Alternative 2 was 200 pounds, and you guys did select a Preferred Alternative 3 of 300 pounds in June, and then Alternative 4 was 400, and Alternative 5 was 500, and then, like I mentioned in the recap of June at the top, you guys directed the IPT to look at a possible alternative that would increase the commercial trip limit based on those decision tools, which are based off of projected landings.

The IPT discussed this and included -- We're calling it a draft alternative, Alternative 6, which would reduce the commercial trip limit to 300 pounds gutted weight in 2023, and then increase the commercial trip limit to 500 pounds gutted weight in 2026 and then to a thousand pounds gutted weight in 2027, where it would remain a thousand pounds until modified, and so I'll talk a little bit more about that in a second.

I wanted to go through the discussion really quick, and so we do have information in here on the step-down. I'm not going to go over this, because you guys have seen it, because it kind of goes through when it was put in place and when it has been triggered. Figure 6, we did go over in June, and so this shows the number of gag or -- Sorry. The pounds of gag harvested per trip, and so you can see there roughly 78 percent of trips harvested around 200 pounds, and then, again, Table 12 was in the document in June, and so this is the predicted change in landings for each alternative, from 1 through 5.

Diving into Alternative 6, and so, again, this was developed per IPT direction, and Table 13 shows you kind of the basis, and so, without having to jump and show you in real time on the decision tool, we put together this table, which shows you the rationale of why we picked the years that are included in that alternative, and so, to run down what you're looking at, you've got the year, and then the second column is your preferred allocations alternative, and so you know we love a good acronym, and so SPSG is the share-the-pain-share-the-gain.

Again, I just noted that we have the five-year basis in there, and then I just put in the trip limit that we were starting with, and so that was 300 pounds, and then whether or not the projected landings were exceeded or not, according to those projected landings in a decision tool, and so, if you're looking at this, you see, in 2025, we're still showing an overage, and then, in 2026, which was the date included in that alternative, it doesn't show an overage for that suite of options and that trip limit.

Then the reason there is not a second table in here to bump up to the thousand is because it's essentially the same, and so you can bump up then in the next year, and so I wanted to go over some discussions that the IPT had on this alternative, and so there was a lot of discussion about the next assessment for gag, and so gag is scheduled to be assessed in 2025, with results anticipated in 2026, and so this could give the council an idea of how the stock is rebuilding before changes

are made to a trip limit, and I did want to note that that alternative -- The years in that alternative would be codified, and so, regardless of how the fishery is rebuilding, those years -- The trip limit would increase in those years, regardless of how it's written now.

Then the IPT just wanted to emphasize being cautionary, due to uncertainties with rebuilding of the stock and the fact that these increases are based on projected landings. We wanted to ask if you would like an increase based on actual landings, and so waiting for landings for that year to then trigger an increase. The only issues with that is, if you're not triggering -- If you don't have an overage, is that because the stock is rebuilding or because there's no fish there to be caught, and so you kind of have that uncertainty, when you're looking at it that way, and then we did want to note that, if you did want to increase the commercial trip limit later, or after the assessment, that could be done quickly through a framework action, or a framework amendment. I'm going to pause here, before I dive into the effects and have to say the word "alternative" like eighteen times in a row, for discussion on this, before I move forward, and so I'll hand it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, once again, this is the action with the gag commercial trip limit, and our preferred alternative is 300 pounds, but we saw, in the table, that we're going to be over for the first, I believe, three years, and then, also, we had talked about, last time, that alternative in yellow, Draft Alternative 6, which is a step-up over time, which, based on what Allie just said, and reading the document, I think that there might be some concerns here, just to automatically step up in those years, but I will put it to the committee, to figure out what you want to do here, whether we want to change the preferred,, what we want to do about Draft Alternative 6, because we could change this via a framework action, moving forward. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: A couple of things. I do worry about it being codified and automatically going up, because, as we've seen, we've been in rebuilding plans, and they haven't been successful in the past, and that does worry me, and I don't want to put us in the position of that. On the other hand, this is a trip limit that is changing, and the ACL is going to go up no matter what, right, and so nothing is changing in the total amount of fish that we're legally allowed to harvest. What's changing is how many trips it takes to do it in.

We have a fleet -- You know, there's still a big segment of our fleet that are old, slow boats. I want to bring this up, and I don't even know if it's possible now, because of where we are in the process, but I have had conversations with members of the South Carolina fleet, the northern portion especially, that has still big, old, slow boats that they want to talk about -- I hesitate to say this, but this is my job, but permit stacking, because these boats -- The ability to go out and harvest, you know -- They're going to put \$2,000 to \$3,000 of expenses on a boat, and 300 pounds of gag, and this is an area where there's not as much jack, and, you know, you're looking at gag and vermilion, and it's becoming not as economically feasible.

It's at least a discussion that I would like to throw out there for the committee, and I believe there's been previous discussions, before I sat at this table, and so I'm unaware of the history of that, but I wanted to throw that out there, and I'm also very concerned too that, yes, we have an assessment in 2025, and results in 2026, and, yes, I mean, that's what we're saying now, but we've seen that happen too, and so I guess that doesn't give any guidance, other than we're going to public hearing, and I don't know that I want to see this taken out of the document. I would like to see it go out to public hearing. I'm also swayed in the other direction, by the fact that the data shows that only a couple of percentage, what, 15 or so, or 14, percent of trips even harvest more than 250 pounds

now, but those might be the big, slower boats that, you know, we're trying to allow to stay in the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I go to Mel, just to clarify, and so you're still good with the preferred being Alternative 3, for now?

MS. MARHEFKA: I personally am, yes.

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

MR. BELL: I was going to say that I would like to leave it in, but I'm fine with keeping 3 as the preferred, and, just for clarity for everyone, when she's talking about old, slow boats, it's old, slow boats with a long way to go, as compared to perhaps some other places within the region, and so it's not just that they're slow, but it's that they have a long way to travel.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I appreciate Kerry's comments, and I'm supportive, I think, of maintaining the preferred as-is. I like the stepped approach, in that there's one less thing to work on, if we're actually successful in rebuilding, right, but it also has that automatic trigger. The one caution that I will provide, and it's with the recreational and commercial analyses, is that we're kind of assuming baseline conditions with a lot of these projections, and it kind of -- We're remaining static, but, as the catch limits go up, then the likelihood of actually hitting that quota goes down, and, if the stock is rebuilding, and abundance is coming up, I expect that will not be the case, right, and so it's that tradeoff between closing the fishery, once the quota is met, versus extending the season, and, as you're pointing out, Kerry, the profitability of trips, right, and it makes a lot more sense to have those higher trip limits and try to make those trips as profitable as they can, so they're not running back and forth offshore as many times.

I think one thing I would recommend is the Fisheries Service, working with the council, can closely monitor this, going forward, and, if the trip limit is needing to be adjusted, we can come back and give you that advice, sooner rather than later, so that those framework actions could be moving forward and timely, so that you don't get in a situation where you're not catching the quota because you're limited from catching the quota.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Chester.

MR. BREWER: Thank you. First, I wanted to congratulate Mr. Griner on providing us with yet another acronym. I am fine with Preferred Alternative 3 and having that go out for discussion. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chester. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I kind of agree with Andy. You know, I would like to see Alternative 6 stay in there, but I'm fine with keeping 3 as the preferred, and I do share the concerns of the stock not rebuilding and us having an automatic trigger that increases that, and, if Andy is confident that we can quickly move the framework to adjust the trip levels, then I think that would be a better way to go, at least in my opinion. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. Any more discussion? Okay. All right, and so we don't need a motion to keep Alternative 6 in the document. It doesn't seem like we want to change our preferred, and it seems like we want to leave in Alternative 6 in there to go out to the public, and so I think we're good here on this section.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so the other sub-action under Action 4 is to modify the commercial spawning season closure for gag, and so this was considered to help increase the opportunity for gag spawning before being harvested, and your alternatives were Alternative 1, which retained the current spawning season closure from January 1 through April 30, and Alternative 2 extended it an additional month in the spring. Alternative 3 extended it an additional month in the winter, and then Alternative 4 extended it two additional months, one in the spring and one in the winter, and so Table 13 kind of gives you a summary there.

These discussion bullets, we've kind of already covered it, and they talk about when the season was established and why, and the preliminary analysis we saw for the first time in June, and so this just looks at commercial landings by month, from 2017 to 2019, and so pretty high in May, right when the season opens, and kind of decreasing from there, and I will go through the bio effects, and so, for highest biological benefit to lowest, we've got Alternative 4, followed by Alternative 2 and 3, and those are going to be the same season length, and it's just which month you're closing, and so those are kind of on par, and then Preferred Alternative 1 is considering that a longer spawning season provides the most biological benefit to the stock. However, the current spawning season does encompass peak spawning, according to some of the literature.

Then, for econ effects, from the highest potential econ benefit to the lowest, we have Preferred Alternative 1, followed by Alternative 3, Alternative 2, and Alternative 4. These rankings consider the short-term economic effects, provided that increased spawning protection would potentially provide improvements in the stock abundance and, therefore, long-term economic benefits. A longer spawning season closure would restrict access to the fishery, which would have a negative short-term economic effect.

Then, for social effects, the highest potential social benefit to lowest, we've got Preferred Alternative 1, followed by 3, 2, and 4. These rankings consider, again, the short-term social effects. Gag landings have historically been highest in the month of May, and so the potential effects on commercial fishing businesses and coastal communities will be a tradeoff between the biological benefits of the closure and increased commercial fishing opportunities, and a longer spawning season closure would provide long-term social benefits, since it would provide biological benefit to the stock.

This section I added in here, and we're kind of at a fork in the road, since we have Alternative 1 as our preferred, and so we wanted to start building out the section for the amendment that provides rationale for if this action is moved to Considered but Rejected, and so I have some bullets here that kind of go over what some of the discussion has been thus far, and so Preferred Alternative 1 already encompasses the peak spawning months. Therefore, extending the spawning season would not be expected to provide a substantial increase in biological benefit for the stock, and the council will rely on the current spawning season to protect gag spawning.

Then, for committee action, underneath discuss preferred alternative, this amendment is going to get approved for public hearing, and so we kind of want to discuss whether or not you want to leave this action in for public hearing or kind of shove it to the Considered but Rejected.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so is there discussion on this action? If we were going to add a month, I would say add the month of May, to try to get some benefits here, and I know that that would be unpopular, and then, whatever we consider, I think the same month would need to be considered on the recreational side, and so, even if we select no action, part of me kind of wants to keep this in there to go to the public, but, Mel, do you have thoughts here?

MR. BELL: I was just going to say, I mean, given what would be involved in leaving it in, is it worth it, and what is it that we think we would get from the public that would cause us to perhaps change our minds, because we've given it a bit of thought so far, but, I mean, that's the only reason to leave it in, really, is if you think we're missing something and there's some compelling argument from the public that we might hear to cause us to adjust, and so I might could see advantages to taking it out right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I was just wondering, and do we have any advice from the AP on adding the month of May, because I just don't remember.

MS. IBERLE: I can get back to you on that.

MR. BREWER: Okay. That's fine.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The AP didn't have gag on their agenda for their April meeting, earlier this year. It is on their agenda to have a more in-depth discussion of it in October.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm looking at the minutes, because Bob Lorenz came to our June meeting, if you recall, and he said -- This is the charter fishermen, and the charter fishermen -- Tom had said that charter fishermen were a little bit more opposed to adding an additional closed month in the spring, and was there any other consensus about, or interest in, having another closed month from any other groups, and Mr. Lorenz said no, and it only comes up as kind of a general conversation thing if we must do something and you have roe females out there, and it wouldn't that be something sensible to do, but, no, I didn't see tremendous amounts of support or a lot of people beating the table for reducing it a month, and I guess that's reducing it, and it's just a default if nothing else works.

What I take from that is that the AP -- I did listen into that meeting, and I don't recall a super strong feeling about changing this. The utility, just to answer -- To play off of what Mel said, and I don't know that it would change our minds, but I always find it very interesting, when topics of spawning season closures come up, and you do get public comment, and people start sharing their knowledge of what they're seeing on the water.

To the extent that we can use that to make our decision, I don't know, but, to the extent that informs further research, because, all of a sudden, you're hearing something you've never heard before, that's always interesting, but I don't know if that's a good reason to keep it in the document.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: To that, what we do tend to hear is a lot of difference depending on where you are, and, given our latitudinal expanse, you get -- North Carolina sees this, and Florida sees this, and so it's probably the same sorts of things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Based on what Monica pointed out, in the National Standard 4, on not giving preferred preference to states, and Mel's comment on it depends on where you are, I would even think that, you know, eliminating the month of January, on the front end -- If you look at the chart, the peaking spawning months for gag are February, March, and April, and that would give the fishermen from Florida, when there are gags off of our coast, an opportunity to fish for them in January.

It wouldn't affect red grouper, because January is not even indicated as a spawning month for red snapper, and so, if the shallow-water closure was dropped by a month, that would give fishermen on the southern end of the range an opportunity in January to be able to fish on that fish before the spawning season opens, because, by the time it closes, most of the fish have moved further north, and we can't fish for them. They're not there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I certainly appreciate the concerns about where the fish are and when they may be available. Let's keep in mind this stock is severely overfished, severely overfished and depleted, and I think it would be a bad precedent to start ratcheting back on current regulations. We really need to be thinking about how we're going to rebuild the stock and impose further management measures to get this on the right track, and so I would speak against changes to the spawning season closure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree with Andy. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I think the key that I keep coming back to here is that this is a fishery in trouble, and, although I'm not sure how much the spawning closure has helped, with it being as long as it is and starting in January, I do think there's benefit to it. Gag is a species that aggregates for these spawns, and, if we were to look at trying to make sure that these efforts we're putting in place are going to help rebuild this stock, then I think, if we did anything, you would have to look at adding the month of May.

Even though it may not be peak spawn, I feel like that these fish are still -- They have not yet dispersed from their aggregation, and so, maybe, if we did anything, it would be to add the month of May, and I'm not saying that I advocate that right now, but I'm just saying that this is a species

that aggregates, and we don't need to be -- We don't need to be putting measures in place that are going to be detrimental to either the spawn or their dispersal from the spawn. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I would like to echo my support for what Andy said. I do very much worry, and I think there's going to be also shift in pressure to gag, with a lot of things that we're doing, and so I don't know that I would support shortening it. I would like to make a motion that we keep Alternative -- Let me think about how I want to word this. **Make a motion that we select Alternative 1 as our preferred action, and the intention is that this stays in the document, for the sake of discussion at public hearing, and hopefully some more discussion on extending it to May, because I am hearing increasing support for extending it a month into May.** I'm just not personally ready to make that my preferred choice yet.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Kerry. Do we have a second? Second by Spud. Can we try to make sure that we're getting the motion correct? Just stand-by, and so retain the preferred. Do you want to add that we are trying to gather feedback on the month -- Adding the month of May, or that's just direction to staff and not part of the motion? I am just trying to make sure.

MS. MARHEFKA: It's already in there, but I'm just not -- First of all, it was my mistake that I hadn't realized that we had already selected Alternative 1 as our preferred, and I thought we had no preferred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's okay, and we just worded the action to say "retain", "to retain the action and preferred alternative for public hearings".

MS. MARHEFKA: I think direction to staff is plenty. As they talk to fishermen, let them know that we're having this serious discussion about extending it a month into May.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds good. All right. Back to Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Jessica. Maybe, just for consideration, if Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 really aren't viable, could we remove those? I mean, one of the challenges of this is, you know, we send these things out, and they're multidimensional, and, the more parts there are in them, the more confusing it is to people, and so I would recommend that we delete Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 for further consideration.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Hang on. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So they're in there, I think, because we all must have thought they were reasonable alternatives to consider, and so I guess I would -- I think you could do what you're asking, but I think you would need some rationale as to why, why it's no longer reasonable to include them in the document, or why they are no longer reasonable alternatives for you to consider, and how's that? That's better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I don't know that I can necessarily articulate that. I think we've debated it in the past, and maybe there's some of that that we could resurrect, but my rationale is more based on simplifying a public hearing document, to make it easier for people to understand what the viable choices might be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Using the decision tool, it didn't look like adding December would really reduce harvest at all, but Laurilee and then Kerry and then Andy.

MS. THOMPSON: I can try to help with some rationale. If you look at the spawning chart, December is not a month when gag grouper is indicated that it's spawning. January is light gray, and the black is February, March, and April, and so adding December makes no sense at all, and so then, if you aren't going to add December, that takes care of Alternative 3. If you're not going to consider December, then Alternative 4 gets thrown off the island too, and that would only leave Alternatives 1 and 2.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Laurilee. Kerry. Okay. Already covered. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm going to ask Jack McGovern to come up, and so my comment is I think Alternatives 3 and 4 are reasonable alternatives, based on the science and biology and what we know about spawning of gag, but Jack can talk about work he's specifically done on this.

DR. MCGOVERN: Thank you. Back when I was with South Carolina DNR, in the 1990s, we did a life history study of gag, based on an emergency collected, and collected a lot of data in 1995, and we found that gag spawn from December through May, with spawning starting in December off of Florida, and the transition from female to male occurred after the spawning season was over, in May and June, indicating, like Tim suggested, that the spawning aggregations remain intact after that, sort of as a signal to those larger females to transition to males.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Jack. Mel.

MR. BELL: I think, based on that, and also based on what we've already said about concern about the stock, I mean, I would just as soon leave those right now, as a possibility, just because we've already kind of gone on the record with our concern about rebuilding, and they could be potential viable options.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Hear me out. Could we do -- Have an alternative that had a spawning season closure in say Florida, some southern area, that was December through April, and then a point north, and we would need to consider with biologists that had familiarity with the data, that was January through May?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess we could. Is that something that you're wanting to add now, because it would need some analysis before it goes out.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm not looking at Allie.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I like the way Kerry is thinking. I think the concern I would have is that Florida is going to get a head start on fishing the quota, and so the states north of Florida then would potentially not have as much of a fishing season, and you would be closed by December anyway.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, to that point, which hits home with me, obviously, maybe, in thinking about it, this is something that would love to retain somewhere, and this is the kind of discussion that I want to have when we finally get to the MSE approach, because we are going to have to look at these regional differences, and this is just another example that highlights how important that will be when we get there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds good. Judy has her hand up.

MS. HELMEY: How about half of December and half of May? Is that an option, or a possibility?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's a possibility. It's a wee bit late in the document, but I'm looking around to the other committee members, to see, and so I believe the goal is try to finalize this document in March. Do we want to add an alternative that is a spawning season closure?

MS. HELMEY: Okay. I was just thinking about Florida and -- Anyway, okay. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Judy. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Our fishing year is January 1 to December 31, and I would be curious to know the last time the fishery actually was even open in December. We might be -- It might be a moot point, and I don't think we've had gag open in -- I mean, this year, it will be, probably, because we're at 32 percent in September, but that also tells me -- Well, that tells me a lot of really sad things, but, when the fishery is healthy and operating well, we won't be open in December, and so I don't know. I think we just leave in there what we have, and I think we'll get lots of comment.

MS. IBERLE: So I want to get clarification, first if the motion that we have on there is either approved or not, and I want to make sure that we get that, and then was there a motion to remove Alternatives 3 and 4? It sounded motion-ish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let me work on that, and so let's go to the retain the sub-action and preferred alternative for public hearing motion, and that motion has been made and seconded. **Is there any objection to that motion?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion is approved.** Then there was a half motion, almost motion, by Spud to remove Alternatives 3 and 4 from Sub-Action 4b. Do we want that to be an actual motion, now that you've heard the discussion? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Madam Chair, I profusely apologize for even having done this. I naively thought that we could simplify something, and it backfired tremendously, and you can strike from the record anything I've said in the last fifteen minutes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No need for apology. All right. Believe it or not, I think we're good with this action, and we're going to go to the next one.

MS. IBERLE: All right. Action 5 is going to mirror Action 4, but for the recreational sector, and so it will modify management measures for the recreational sector. Sub-Action 5a will establish a recreational vessel limit for gag, and so the council is considering a vessel limit to achieve reduction in harvest needed, constrain catch to the updated rec ACLs, while maintaining recreational access.

In June, you guys were shown Alternatives 1 through 4, but they looked a little different, and so we discussed several things in June, including sector separation, and then, just like for the commercial action, we talked about including options that would increase the vessel limit, based on the decision tool and those projected landings, and so Draft Alternatives 5 through 7 give you those options, and so I'm going to start at the top.

Alternative 2 would retain the current bag limit. Actually, I'm going to use -- My apologies, and this is a very large table, but I think it's helpful to walk our way through it, and so Alternative 1 would retain the one fish per person per day, with no vessel limit, and my apologies, and we do have a 1a and 1b, and so, essentially, if you're wanting to not separate the sectors, but you would just choose the alternative and no sub-alternative.

For Alternative 2, this is a set vessel limit of two fish per person per day, and then, if you would like to separate, or choose this sub-alternative for just one portion of the rec sector, you can choose a or b. Alternative 3 is a set vessel limit of four fish per day, and, again, a or b provides you the option to apply that to just private rec or for-hire, and I will talk a little bit more about how the IPT separated that out in just a minute. Alternative 4 is set vessel limit of six fish per vessel per day, again either private rec, charter/headboat, or everybody, not selecting the sub-alternative.

Then Alternatives 5, 6, or 7, and so, for 5, you're going to start with the most restrictive vessel limit of two fish per day, increasing to four fish per vessel per day in 2026. Alternative 6 starts with that kind of middle-range vessel limit of four fish per vessel per day, stepping up to six fish per vessel per day in 2028, and then Alternative 7 starts with a six fish per vessel per day and then steps up to that bag limit, and so one fish per person per day in 2028. Again, for those three alternatives, you can choose a sub-alternative, to apply it to just one portion of the recreational sector. Then, with the vessel limits, the vessel limit would not exceed the one per person per day bag limit.

The discussion talks just a little bit about each of those alternatives, and there is the current bag limit. We had a little bit of discussion in June on black grouper, and we ended up not needing to include black grouper in the alternative language, and so we took that out. If we're modifying gag, black grouper will remain the same, by default, and then those same tables that we looked at for the commercial trip limit -- We have Tables 15 through 17, and so those are the same thing, the rationale on why we stepped it up, using that decision tool.

I did want to note, when you're looking at the recreational sector -- So, in Table 15, this is the share-the-pain-share-the-gain five-year basis allocation, and that two-fish vessel, and whether or not there was an overage, and so, when you're looking at 2026, the projected landings don't show

an average, but you're at negative-1 percent, and so, essentially, you're meeting that ACL. You're right at the ACL.

Table 16, we're showing that the four-fish vessel limit would not exceed the ACL in 2028, and then, in Table 17 -- Again, we have a pretty small underage for 2028, when you're looking at that six-fish vessel limit, and then Table 18 is the bag limit, and so no vessel limit, one fish per person per day, and, again, in 2028, you're not exceeding the ACL, but you're right there, and so Figure 8 we did see in June, and so this shows you fish harvested per vessel for MRIP and then headboat, from 2017 to 2019, and then the projected change in landings for private and charter vessels and then headboat vessels, and so we've already reviewed this, but we did include Figure 9, and so this separates that out a little bit more into private, charter, and headboat, and so you can look there at the distribution of fish harvested per vessel there, with the majority harvesting one gag per vessel.

Then Table 20 is that predicted change in landings, and so we looked at that before we separated out and then added these additional alternatives, and so the first row here is the recreational landings, and then these two columns are going to be what I like to think of as a or b, and so, Alternative 1, you have zero change across-the-board, and so Alternative 2 is only for the private sector, and so you have a 20 percent decrease, and then so on, and so this would be Sub-Alternative a, and then the other two columns, and so both of those for-hire components, are the change, if you selected just Alternative 2b, and so you can look at that table for the predicted change in landings.

I want to go over the IPT recommendations, really quick, and so the council did want to clarify that the intention was to create a vessel limit per day, to make sure that wasn't per trip, and so we wanted to get some clarification and make sure that we're writing that correctly. We talked about this in July, and I just wanted to get clarification, and then, when we discussed separating the rec vessel types, the IPT recommended, and built it into the alternatives, separating private recreational and for-hire, and so lumping charter and headboat in together, and then the same thing, the same concerns, that we had for that commercial trip limit.

Again, we're getting an assessment soon for gag, and the increase in these alternatives, those years, would be codified, and so regardless of what's happening in the fishery, whether it's rebuilding or not, and those increases in vessel limit would be put in place regardless, and the vessel limit can be changed through a framework action.

Then I will go through the effects section, really quick, before I hand it over, and so the biological effects are not expected to differ among alternatives, in terms of risk of overfishing, because harvest is still limited to the recreational ACL, and then, under Alternatives 5 through 7, the vessel limit would be increased regardless of whether adequate rebuilding occurs, which could have a negative effect on the stock, and potentially a larger rec vessel limit could have a shorter recreational season and, therefore, higher discards.

For econ effects, if the economic benefits from a longer fishing season offset reductions in harvest, that should be -- Or on a trip level. The implementation of vessel limits would increase the economic benefits compared to Alternative 1, and then allowing vessel limits to increase in later years, as the ACLs increase, could help better utilize sector ACLs and increases and the total economic benefits derived from that ACL. Then, assuming this were the case, the economic benefits from a prolonged season would be higher under Alternative 2, followed by 5, 3, 6, 4, 7, and then Alternative 1.

Some additional considerations for the economic effects are implementing the vessel limit would likely result in a reduction in harvest and potential economic benefits on a given trip. Therefore, Alternatives 2 through 7 would be expected to reduce consumer surplus on some fishing trips, and a more restrictive vessel limit could result in longer seasons and increase access to the fishery.

Then, finally, social effects, we split this out between the longest access to the fishery and the lowest reduction in landings, and so those are kind of some of the things that we looked at when we were looking at the social effects, and so, when you're considering the longest access to the fishery, the highest social benefit comes from Alternative 2, followed by 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and then, least of all, 1, Alternative 1, no action. Then, considering the lowest reduction in landings, you have Alternative 1, and then Alternatives 5, 6, and 7, because they're kind of on par for the lowest reduction in landings, and then Alternative 4, Alternative 3, and Alternative 2. With that, I will turn it over, and, if you guys have any questions on those additional alternatives, let me know. That was kind of confusing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. This is confusing. Spud and then Chester.

MR. WOODWARD: I know we've probably seen this before, but what percentage of the annual estimated harvest is attributable to headboats? Do we have that, or just a -- I mean, even a ballpark figure, a percentage, and I assume it's not a large percentage of it, but I'm just curious what it might be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Maybe we could have that for the next meeting?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, and, I mean, I think it's important, because I think, when you're trying to understand -- I think this goes back to some of what we're trying to accomplish now with this equity and justice, is a headboat is a mechanism where a lot of people access fish they can't get to otherwise, and is there a -- Is there a logic to allowing greater access through a headboat venue, as long as it doesn't create a detrimental effect, and I think that's something that would be useful for us to have, to analyze the effects of these.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Here it is, Figure 9, if this helps. What Allie is saying is, if you look underneath that, there's not that many trips that make up this graph, but that's what went into this, and so not as many private trips and charter trips, but a number of headboat trips, make up that graph. All right. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I was wondering, and is there data on the percentage of bycatch mortality, or release mortality, for this species?

MS. IBERLE: I don't want to misspeak on this, but I don't believe that there's a significant difference between the sectors, but I want to confirm that for you. We've looked into that a little bit, putting the amendment together, but, since this is our first draft, we haven't gone into that in a huge amount of detail in its respective chapter yet, and so we'll be building that up as we move forward and writing that amendment, and so I can get back to you on that.

MR. BREWER: Yes, and I do think it's something to be considered, for sure, because it's -- You know, if it's -- As we take a look at these different alternatives, it may well be that there -- We

may want to select one over another as the preferred because of maybe the lower bycatch mortality. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: From SEDAR 71, it looks like 40 percent for commercial handline and 25 percent for headboat and general recreational. What else do we -- What do we want to do here? Do we want to remove any of these? One of the questions is do we mean per day, or do we mean per trip? I think we mean per day with these alternatives, but do we really mean that, if we're talking about a headboat? I just feel like there's a lot of questions that need to be answered on this particular action and the step-ups here, and we looked at some tables, but I have some concerns about the automatic step-ups, just like we expressed those concerns in the last action that had the automatic step-ups. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just for clarification, Alternatives 5, 6, and 7, are they in the document, and then have to be removed, or are these proposed for inclusion in the document?

MS. IBERLE: Proposed for inclusion in the document, and I did also want to remind you guys that you don't have a selected preferred for this alternative.

MR. STRELCHECK: Okay. Thanks for the clarification, Allie, and so I guess my perspective, kind of similar to the commercial trip limit step-up, is I'm not seeing a huge need for these, and I would not recommend adding Alternatives 5 through 7 in the document, and, if you look at the analysis results for Alternative 4, it virtually has no reduction in harvest. We'll get, you know, to Spud's question with regard to the proportion of landings that come from the headboat fishery, but I want to say it's less than 10 percent, Spud, and so it's a fairly small fraction, and so I'm not seeing a strong need even for Alternative 4, but I'm okay with leaving it in the document, if people want to.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Andy. That was helpful. Spud, and then we'll come over here to Chip.

MR. WOODWARD: I agree with Andy, and I think that just complicates things, and probably creates more confusion than it does any benefit, but back to this issue of day versus trip, and I think, for the private recreational sector, a day is a trip, usually, but I suspect that there are some for-hire situations where they make two trips a day, and they're carrying different clients on one trip than they are on the other, and so I think it gets a little tricky there, in terms of how do you apply the definition to the for-hire headboat sector versus the private recreational sector, and so, I mean, I don't know how that would work in practicality, but I think, for the PR, it's a day, and, maybe, for for-hire and headboat, it would actually be a trip.

MS. MCCAWLEY: If we're going to go in that direction, we would need to modify the way the alternatives are worded, because, even though you have sub-alternatives, the overarching alternative is specifying what happens to both, and so just putting that out there, and we might need to fix that. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Going back from 2011 to 2021, and thinking about the headboat percentage of the recreational catch, it's as high as 8 percent, is what has been observed in that time period. Over the last five years, it's generally been around 2 percent, and so it's been fairly low.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: A couple of questions. I think, on that note, it would also be interesting to get the percentage of catch that's for-hire, for the future, and just kind of a general question. How, here at the council, do we define what a headboat is?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, there's specific definitions, but I think the simplest definition is a vessel that participates in our Southeast Region Headboat Survey, and so there are pay-per-passenger vessels that operate kind of outside that, that also operate as charter vessels, but there's a unique universe of about seventy or seventy-five vessels that are solely focused on kind of headboat operations that report to our Southeast Region Headboat Survey, and that changes a little bit from year to year, but not much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I just wanted to make a brief comment with regard to per trip and per day, and I -- It's true that some of these charter boats, or some of the headboats even, at least where we are, they do make two trips a day, but you've got different anglers, usually, on there, and so how do you say, to the folks that are on the afternoon trip, nope, you can't keep any grouper, because the guys that were on the trip this morning caught up our allocation of whatever fish it is, and so, you know, I'm a big proponent of treat everybody the same, and it shouldn't matter whether you're on the first half of the trip or the second half of the trip, but treat all the anglers the same, and so I think that we're fine going with per trip on these things. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We heard discussion of per trip, and another thing we could do here is say no bag limit for captain and crew. It's not in the document now, but I'm just throwing it out there. I know we're doing it for some species that are not doing well, and so it's just another way to deal with this, and it's not in the document now. Mel.

MR. BELL: I think, in terms of what's in regulation, a day is defined, and is a trip defined enough? If you could make multiple trips, there's no limit to the number of trips you could make in a day, right, legally?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, what are we talking about? Are we talking about bag limits?

MR. BELL: Yes, and so private vessel bag limit per trip, but you could make --

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I will look at the regulations, but I think the bag limit is -- It's a daily bag limit. It's not per trip.

MR. BELL: That's something to look into.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We don't have preferences selected, and we've also heard to not add Alternatives 5, 6, and 7 to the document. We've also heard discussion that maybe Alternative 4 doesn't work either, and so then, to me, you're looking at focusing Alternatives 2 or 3 as a

preferred, and we probably want to try to pick something, so that the public can react to it. Are there thoughts here? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I guess I'm still a little confused on day versus trip, as to exactly where we landed on that, because, you know, I think we've always treated trip and day as synonymous, but, obviously, there is probably circumstances where that doesn't happen, and, you know, the burden sort of falls -- I mean, if I go out with a for-hire operation, then this applies to me individually, as a customer of that for-hire operation, and so maybe day isn't as problematic as it might seem to be, because, you know, the burden falls on me to -- You know, it's a daily bag limit, and it's my day.

Whether my trip is in the morning or my trip is in the afternoon, that's my day of the trip, and I can't go out and double trip that day, I mean, just like in waterfowl. I can't go out in the morning and shoot a limit of ducks and then go back in the afternoon and shoot a limit of ducks. I've got a day, and so maybe it's not as big of a deal as it seems to be, but, anyway, I do think we need to make sure we're all absolutely clear on what it does mean.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I think it's a great point, and I agree with the point and, trying to look at Alternatives 2 and 3 that maybe we're honing-in on here, it says not to exceed the daily bag limit, and so we might be okay here.

MS. IBERLE: I just want to make sure that I get clarification for the way that we're writing it, and so, if you're looking at Alternative 2, we have it written as two fish per vessel per day, and so, when you're thinking about trips, if your first trip goes out, and you catch two per vessel, then the second trip, the way it's written, wouldn't be allowed to retain any, if I'm understanding it correctly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Because it's almost like we're choosing one thing for for-hire and one thing for private vessels, and so one of my suggestions would be you could break these alternatives up, so that, instead of having the sub-alternatives -- Because it's the wording above the sub-alternatives that is the issue here, and I'm wondering if we break it up so that there's alternatives for the private rec and alternatives for for-hire.

I see people nodding that, yes, it needs to be broken down further, and so, just to try to give direction, what we're saying is let's pretend that we only keep Alternatives 2 and 3 in the document, and you're really creating -- Taking those two alternatives and splitting it up so that it's actually four alternatives, because one alternative would be what's in Alternative 2, and it would be worded for the private rec component, and then the next alternative would be wording that for the for-hire, and that is allowing you to fix the per day per vessel daily bag limit language, as is needed for each of those components, and is that where we're heading? It looks like people are nodding yes. Let me look on this side of the room. Yes. People are nodding yes.

MS. IBERLE: I want to just clarify, and so then we would be having alternatives that would provide a vessel limit per day for private rec and then a vessel limit per trip for for-hire, and does that sound correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am looking around, and heads are nodding yes, that's the intention. Okay, and so, while Allie is trying to write that, let's go to Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Mel, just to answer your question, I think a little bit better than I did before, we have regulations that say, unless specified otherwise, bag limits apply to a person on a daily basis, regardless of the number of trips per day, but that's your bag limit, and so you would want to write, I think, a vessel limit specifically to what you mean, just as you just described, in terms of whether it's per day or per trip or whatever.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. That was helpful. Okay, and so we're going to split these up, and that's going to get to the bag limit, the daily bag limit, the per trip vessel limit, but do we want to try to remove Alternative 4? Do we want it to stay in? We've already said no to Alternatives 5, 6, and 7, and do we want to try to pick a preferred? Apparently 5, 6, and 7 aren't actually in the document yet, which was what Andy asked, and so just clarifying that we're saying no to 5, 6, and 7, and so we're not re-splitting those three out. It is a little challenging to pick a preferred here, since we're turning these alternatives into splitting them, and so one is for private rec and one is for for-hire. Mel.

MR. BELL: With gag, I'm in kind of a more conservative mode, and so I'm fine with removing Alternative 4. I can make that in the form of a motion, if you would like.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, please.

MR. BELL: **I would move to remove Alternative 4 from Action 5, Sub-Action 5a.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Mel and seconded by Spud. We've already had some discussion on that, and you've heard Mel's rationale about the status of gag and trying to be more conservative, and Andy also spoke to this as well. Any more discussion on this motion? **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I want to go back to what you mentioned a while ago about captain and crew retention. I do think we should add that in there, given the precarious state of this stock, and I think it would help address this, you know, conservation efficacy of this approach, and so does that need to be a separate action, I guess, and I don't know that it's -- Or is it a sub-action of 5, because it is modifying recreational management measures, I guess, technically, and so would it be a sub-action of 5, another sub-action?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Apparently a sub-action, and so it sounds like a motion to -- I don't want to wordsmith it for you, but add a sub-action under Action 5 to remove the bag limit for captain and crew, and is that right?

MR. WOODWARD: **Yes, and I guess the motion would be to add Sub-Action 5.3, which would prohibit retention of a bag limit by captain and crew when they're in for-hire mode.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. **We've got some wisdom here from Myra, and so she is suggesting that, instead of adding it as a sub-action, that it should be an alternative.** That's how it's listed in the blueline tilefish document, and part of that would be what would be the range of alternatives, if it's an action or a sub-action, and so, instead, she's suggesting that you could select multiple preferreds here under this particular item, and so you're basically -- It would change your motion so that it is an alternative, which that's what it looks like Allie changed it to, under this action, and

are you okay with that, Spud? All right. Thumbs-up. All right. We finally have the motion. Is there a second to this motion? Okay. It's seconded by Gary. It's under discussion here.

We do have something similar in blueline tilefish, and we've been talking about this, occasionally, when stocks are not doing well, considering something like this, with the intent that, when the fishery is doing better, that we could go back and consider changing that. Any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.**

MS. IBERLE: As far as selecting a preferred for this sub-action, I chatted with Myra, and, if you wanted to make a motion that would select a preferred that would, and then give the detail for whatever alternative that you think that you would want to build, and the other option is we can try to put something together for you by Full Council, and then you would have wording, and you could select a preferred at Full Council too, if that's something that you want to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think I like the Full Council idea, because, now that we're splitting this all up, it's super confusing. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Right now, the -- I know we can change the title of the action, but, right now, we're talking about vessel limits, right, for gag, and so, for captain and crew, talking about a specific bag limit, or prohibiting them from having the bag limit, you might just want to make that a separate alternative on its own, instead of a sub-alternative, and it might be easier to understand for the public and then to analyze.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and good call, and she had fixed that for us already, Monica, and so, instead of "sub-alternative", it says "alternative".

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Perfect. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Perfect. Thank you for bringing that up. All right, and so I'm looking around the table, that we would not select a preferred on this right now, and we would wait until we see this broken out at Full Council, and I see heads nodding yes.

MS. IBERLE: All right. Then the second sub-action underneath Action 5 is, again, mirroring the commercial spawning season closure, only we would be modifying the recreational spawning season closure, and so the same suite of actions, and I'm not going to go through them again, and you've heard them.

You had selected the same preferred, Alternative 1, no action, for the rec season as well, and you've had multiple discussions on wanting to keep this consistent, and it's kind of the same discussion and similar analysis, and so Figure 9 is going to be the recreational landings by month, from 2017 to 2019, and then your projected landings, and so you can kind of look at how the fishery operates there, by month, and then, for bio effects, for the recreational sector, we've got the highest potential biological benefit to lowest of Alternative 4, Alternative 2 and 3, and then Preferred Alternative 1. Again, same thing, and the longer spawning season provides the most biological benefit. However, the peak spawning season is encompassed in the current spawning season closure.

As far as econ effects, the highest econ benefit to lowest is going to come from Alternative 1, followed by 3, 2, and 4. However, these rankings consider the short-term economic effects, and so providing increased spawning protection would potentially provide improvements in the stock abundance, and, therefore, long-term economic benefit, and then a longer spawning season closure would restrict access to the fishery, which could have negative short-term econ effects, and then, for social effects, highest potential social benefit to lowest, we've got Preferred Alternative 1, followed by Alternative 3, Alternative 2, and Alternative 4.

Again, these rankings consider that short-term social effects. The potential effects on recreational fishing businesses and coastal communities would be, again, a tradeoff between those biological benefits and increased -- Sorry, and that should say "recreational fishing opportunities". A longer spawning season closure would provide long-term social benefits, and so it would provide biological benefit for the stock.

Again, we've got this kind of section, and this is essentially verbatim from what we've got in the commercial action, and the rationale is kind of the same here, and so it's the same discussion that we had for the commercial we should have for this one, and so I will hand it over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Allie, and so let me remind us what we did on commercial, and so there was a motion to retain the preferred, and, right now, the preferred is Alternative 1, no action, but the motion under commercial -- Just so that we can look at the recreational and talk about what we did on commercial here, and so, on commercial, we said that we wanted to retain the action and retain the preferred, even though the preferred is Alternative 1, no action, because we wanted to get some input here.

One of the things that we're suggesting, and we gave direction to staff, is that we wanted input on adding the month of May on the commercial side, and I'm presuming that we want the same direction to staff, that, when they talk to the public, what they think about adding the month of May, and is that the same direction that we're wanting here on this action that's for recreational? I see heads nodding yes.

All right, and so, in order to try to be consistent here, we need a motion to do that, and so we're grabbing that motion from the commercial. **Basically, it would retain the sub-action and preferred alternative for public hearings.** Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I will make that motion, Madam Chair. Do you need me to read it again?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and I think we're good. Do we have a second to that motion? Seconded by Mel. It's under discussion. Does everybody understand what we're doing here? We're taking the same action for the spawning season on the recreational as we just did a minute ago on commercial. All right. Any more discussion? **Any objection?** All right. Just to reiterate, one more time, we also, just like we said on commercial, we want staff to gather input on considering adding the month of May and also to gather input on a regionally-specific spawning season closure, that we could use that information at a future date.

All right. I know we're not done with this, but I anticipate discussion on the accountability measure, and let's go ahead and take a ten-minute break, and we'll come back and we'll finish that last action in this document.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to go ahead and get going again here. I hope you picked up some coffee on the break, because, before we dive into the accountability measures, we're going to have a discussion about black grouper, because we forgot to discuss the identification issues on black grouper in south Florida, and so, in the past, when we have modified gag or black, and they are grouped together in the CFR, and we have alternatives in here on the rec side to do the same thing for black that we're doing for gag.

My recommendation would be to add a stand-alone action to this document that would be for black grouper, and so that would include -- We'll see this at Full Council, and that's the intent, and it would look at the vessel limit, like we have for gag, and it would have the spawning season closure in there, and, of course, we're no action on that, and so we might end up being no action on that for black, and, also, the captain and crew for black grouper.

Does everybody -- We've had this discussion before, about the identification issues, and it's even more important, now that gag is not in good shape, trying to make sure that recreational anglers, especially in south Florida, aren't saying, well, I thought this was a black and not a gag, and so trying to deal with that by going back and making sure these actions are grouped together. Any questions or any discussion on that we intend do, and I would love to have a motion that would do this. Okay. There has been a suggestion to write it out, and then someone can make it. Our Chair has suggested that we type that up, and so I'm going to let Allie get that on the board there. Okay. Would someone like to make this motion? Mel.

MR. BELL: All right. **I move to include an action that would modify the black grouper vessel limit, spawning season closure, and captain and crew bag limit and alter the purpose and need accordingly.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Mel and seconded by Kerry. It's under discussion. Any more discussion on this? Once again, the intent is to have this come back at Full Council, for us to look at the specifics at Full Council. All right. **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.** Now we're going to the accountability measure.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so Action 6, revising the gag recreational accountability measures, we're looking at these recreational accountability measures to prevent rec landings from exceeding the rec ACL and correct for any overages, if that does occur. I am going to use Table 21 to just review these, and you guys have seen them before, and then we're going to take a look at an overview that we have and talk about consistency across several amendments that we have going on right now and just have you guys discuss that a little bit, which you can do as we move through all of the amendments that we'll cover.

Alternative 1 retains the current AM, which includes an in-season accountability measure, where, if the rec landings exceed, or are expected to exceed, the ACL, then then current season closes, and then you have a post-season AM that's dependent on the rec landings exceeding the rec ACL, the total ACL being exceeded, and the stock status as overfished, and so, if all three of those things happen, then the rec landings are monitored during the following year, and, if necessary, reduce by the amount of the overage.

Alternative 2 would have NMFS annually announcing the rec season end date, and so they wouldn't announce a start date, and you would start on the opening after the spawning season closure, and so that's how that reads, but they would announce the end date annually. Alternative 3 would remove the in-season AM and then what we've been terming as uncoupling the post-season AM, and so you had those three triggers that would need to be met. You would no longer be tied to stock status or total ACL, and so the post-season accountability measure, which is the recreational season for the following year, would be reduced to prevent -- By the amount necessary to prevent the ACL from being exceeded, but it would only be triggered if the rec landings exceed the rec ACL.

Then your preferred alternative retains the current in-season AM, and so, if the rec landings exceed the rec ACL, then the current season closes, and then the post-season AM is uncoupled, and so, if the rec landings exceed the rec ACL, then, the following year, it's reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the rec ACL from being exceeded, no longer tied to stock status or total ACL.

I am going to flip, really quickly, to -- This, I apologize, and this font is tiny, and so I'm going to make that bigger, if I can. Hopefully that helps a little bit, and so what we did was compile some of the recent amendments that we have, and we included red porgy, obviously, and red porgy is in formal review, currently, but that's where this kind of uncoupling and changing of the AMs kind of started, and so we have here the amendment, the species, and then we included the recreational season, because that's kind of the basis for the decision on these AMs.

Then, for the active amendments that changed the recreational season, such as snowy and then blueline, we put what the proposed season changes are, and then the preferred in-season and post-season closure, and so we kind of wanted to talk a little bit about the consistency among the amendments, and so, for red porgy, their selected preferred was no in-season closure and then uncoupling that post-season, and that has a season of May 1 to June 30.

I am going to talk a little bit more on snowy in a little bit, but that preferred is no in-season closure and uncoupling the post-season closure. For Amendment 52, we have slightly different alternatives, and I will let Roger speak more on that when he comes up for Amendment 52, but we have a year-long, or calendar-year, season for golden tilefish, but then the blueline tilefish is currently May 1 to August 31, modifying to -- Proposed to modify May 1 to June 30, and then, finally, this amendment, again, retains that in-season closure and uncouples the post-season closure, and so I will leave that up, and then we can kind of discuss further.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Discussion on this accountability measure? We already have a preferred here, and I know folks are wanting to look at that table a little bit more closely here, to make sure this is doing what we intended. Andy and then Dewey.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess, first of all, I'm supportive of the preferred as it stands. A couple of points of clarification, and so Alternative 2 and Alternative 4, in my view, are functionally very similar, with regard to NMFS setting the season, right, and they're just worded differently, and so I think, going out to public hearings and talking about this, we need to be very clear that, you know, NMFS would be essentially setting the season, from May 1 until whenever we would project it to be met or, based on landings and projections, when it would be met.

Jessica, you're familiar with, obviously, what we're doing in the Gulf, which is very different, which is kind of prescribing a fixed season, so there's stability to the recreational sector, but then there's accountability measures that could allow us to shorten that season. There is pros and cons to that, obviously, and fixing the season limits the ability to extend it when catch limits are going up, and maybe allowing for more fishing opportunities.

The benefit of this approach, obviously, is that we're able to set it based on, you know, information that's coming in, either real time or in past seasons, but the challenge then is that recreational anglers are waiting for us to announce that season and having to keep track of, obviously, those changes over time, and so, as far as the AM though, I think it's structured appropriately, and I would recommend that we stick with Preferred Alternative 4.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Andy. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Could you scroll down, back to your slide where it showed the seasons and the different species? These seasons that is proposed in the current amendment, is that the preferred dates?

MS. IBERLE: So Column C is the current season in place, and then Column D -- So, for Amendment 51, 52, and 53, that's what the preferred alternative would modify the season to.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: When you look at particularly the blueline season, of May 1 to June 1, I believe that, given the past data history, that that's simply not going to allow the recreational industry, particularly where the biomass of fish is, north of Cape Hatteras, to catch -- A reasonable chance of catching the ACL, because I think demonstrated history in the past is that between May 1 and June 1 is the minimal most landings, and most of the landings that come, particularly in this season, where a new modification of the season to the July 26 ending date, instead of August 31, as in the past, and so I wonder how -- If this was to go forward as a preferred in this amendment, how SERO is going to be able to account for the fact that the May and June season is not giving access and a reasonable chance to harvest the quota, given where the biomass is, and there's been no demonstration that south of that area is ever going to harvest a reasonable chance of harvesting the quota, and so that's what the data shows.

I brought this up before, and I'm not speaking here for the recreational industry, but the data, which is clearly there, and it's been, you know, gathered over numerous years, and especially since 2016, when we've been on this same track, has clearly showed that the landings come from July and August, and that's where your opportunity to catch fish is.

May and June, in this particular area where the biomass is, is mahi and tuna season and not blueline tilefish season, and so, this year, whenever the data comes out, which I'm still waiting, given that August 15 is the timeline where MRIP should have been out, or available, and there's a lag there that happens, it's going to show that -- I'm just curious how the agency sees as this season being set and not allowing for the opportunity to harvest our ACL, given that the biomass is in a limited location, where the season really doesn't kick in for them until July and August. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jessica, and thank you, Dewey, for those comments. I was a little bit concerned that we were going to get into discussion of other amendments by bringing up this table, and I really would like to get the committee -- The intent of this table was to show you guys that there's some inconsistencies right now in the AMs, and we are going to be talking about blueline as soon as we're done with gag, and so let's come back, if you don't mind, to those things, because it's going to be a lot more relevant to the next amendment, but, yes, looking at this table, just pay attention to whether you want the inconsistencies that we're currently showing here, and make sure that we capture your rationale on the record, so that the IPTs can then go and flesh those out for each of the amendments. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more questions? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just that, Allie, that table that you showed is not in the briefing book, right?

MS. IBERLE: No.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It might be helpful to send it around.

MS. IBERLE: Yes, we can send that around. I will make sure that that gets around.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to make sure it gets part of the --

MS. IBERLE: We kind of threw it together last minute, as a reference, so we could see everything all at once, and so I needed to be able to visualize it.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It's very helpful, and so I think it would be good to send it around.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree. I thought it was helpful. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I don't want to punt this down the road, but I would really like to spend a minute with that, because I think there's something to be said for us, if we're not consistent, explaining why we're being inconsistent, and I don't have that on my screen, because I'm not dialed into the webinar, and so I haven't had a chance to really look at that closely, and so maybe we revisit this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That sounds good, and so is there discussion? People can look at this between now and Full Council, and maybe we can look at it in Full Council, or when the amendment comes back. All right. Thanks for putting that table together for us. It's very helpful, but it sounds like, at least at this time, on gag, that we don't want to change our preferred alternative that we have here for the accountability measure. It doesn't look like it. All right, and so then we have a draft motion on the board there to approve Amendment 53 and all actions, as revised, for public hearings. Do we maybe want to wait for this motion at Full Council, after we see all those changes? Okay, and so maybe we wait for that.

MS. IBERLE: Anticipating that, at Full Council, after we've seen the revisions, we'll have a motion to approve for public hearings, we did want to discuss how to conduct public hearings, and

so we have been doing multiple webinar public hearings, in addition to the council public hearings, and we've been talking a lot on kind of optimizing those public hearings, and we discussed, with staff, doing listening stations as a possibility for this amendment, and, ultimately, that's the decision of the council, and so we just wanted to put that out there for consideration, and, obviously, the webinar is an option as well, and so I'll let you guys discuss.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Is listening station a fancy term for the way we used to do public hearings, where you went in-person? If you will forgive me, I would like to take a moment to talk about this, because I feel pretty passionately, and I'm sorry to staff, if you don't like doing them, and I'm sorry to Kelly for probably wanting to kill the budget, but, in my experience, there's just some things that cannot be replaced when you're face-to-face to people, and, yes, I know some of the arguments sometimes can be you will show up, and you'll have a public -- I am going to call them public hearings, for the sake of my vocabulary, but maybe you don't get a big turnout, but what happens is, the people that come, you start to build a relationship with and a rapport with.

The time you spend in whatever location you're in is incredibly valuable to relationship building. We spent a lot of time, yesterday, in Amendment 35, talking about the process and important the process is and our credibility, and I personally don't think that -- You know, I know, when I sit, and I listen to public hearings at home, I'm paying attention, and I'm engaged, but no one knows that. No one can see that we're really engaging with them, and so I'm a huge, huge believer in on-road public hearings, when practicable, being part of the process.

I don't know if we can roll -- I forget where we're at with each amendment, and I don't know if we can roll a couple into one, but I feel strongly about doing in-person component, when we can, and I will personally set up and -- I have already volunteered to help, if needed, and that's how strongly I feel about it.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks for that, Kerry, and, as staff, we also feel that it's really important that the public be able to relate and establish that relationship with council members, but the way we're proposing to do the listening sessions, and so it's kind of a hybrid between the webinar and the in-person, where staff are remote, and we provide the presentation over the webinar, and council members are at a station, library, community center, whatever the venue might be, in-person to receive comments from the public.

We tried this, I don't know, a number of years ago, and it worked fairly well, and I think Amendment 34, when we were considering the spawning management zones, was one where we tried it, and so we were going to put that out there for you guys to consider, and it's kind of an in-between that maybe saves you a little bit of money, but allows you to also, you know, start those relationships back up. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think we also did it for yellowtail. Mel.

MR. BELL: I participated in some of those, and so it is kind of a hybrid thing, but you're actually doing both. You have the face-to-face, but you also have the additional ability for people to come in as well, and so it worked fairly well, I think, but I agree with you totally, yes, that that face-to-face stuff is extremely important.

MS. IBERLE: I think that's enough, if the direction to staff is to start organizing the listening stations, and so we can take it from there. All right.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, everybody. Good discussion. This wraps up gag, and we're going to go out of order next, and we're going to go into the golden tilefish and blueline amendment, to make sure -- There's a couple of amendments that need to get completed before we go to the hearing tonight, and so wreckfish is going to go to the end, instead of coming up next. Dale.

MR. DIAZ: I don't want to take up much of your time, and I've been out in the hall, on the phone, for a little while, and so I might have missed some stuff, but I did want to mention, before you all left gag, that I noticed there was no mention about males. When we got our stock assessment back in the Gulf of Mexico, one thing I thought that was very unusual is the stock assessment basically said that less than 2 percent of the population in the Gulf were males, and I know that's not been a focus here, and so it's probably not as serious of a problem as what there is in the Gulf of Mexico, but I did want to mention that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dale, to that point, you guys also have some area closures to protect males, the Madison-Swanson, Steamboat Lumps, and The Edges, to protect males. Thanks for bringing that up. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that, Dale. I don't know that I've seen any really hard data, but I suspect we have some of the same thing going on here, and I think that's one of the things that I think we're really going to have to start taking a look at, and I think some of that may be related to gear types as well, and so, you know, I don't know any hard-and-fast numbers, but I have a very strong feeling that we have a problem with a lack of males in our population as well, and thank you for that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on gag before we leave gag? All right. Thank you. We're going to switch into golden tile and blueline.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. We'll go into Snapper Grouper Amendment 52 for golden and blueline tilefish. We're just coming off of a number of hearings, and we received public comment on a number of different online sections, and what I think I'm going to do is -- Well, we know how we got here with golden tile, with a new stock assessment, and moving forward with a new ABC and addressing some of the specific needs for the commercial fishery and for some of the longer-term accountability measures, and, with blueline tilefish, addressing some of the issues of like exceeding the ACL and the concern over addressing recreational accountability measures and potential management measures in this amendment to address those.

With that, what I wanted to do is just touch on at least the comments we did receive, and I know, if members went into it, it was a little bit tough to get into some of those, because they got buried in all of the other red snapper comments, and so I did go through and try to pull at least some of the key ones, and, to a great degree, many of them are either complimenting what is being proposed in this amendment or do have some longer-term issues.

First of all, there was support for a year-round recreational season for tilefish and other deepwater species, considering the pressure in the Florida Keys, and so it's probably tailored specifically to that area. The recreational fishermen -- There was a comment that they're constantly hurt by the commercial quotas, and they don't have the impact on the environment as commercial fisheries, and vessels fishing on the weekends have to deal with natural sea conditions and compromising access.

Multiple commenters supported the increased ACL that is in the amendment, and some commenters supported retaining the current allocation among user groups. Also, there is support for a very limited season and accountability measures for the recreational fishery to be held accountable for the fish, the catch and/or kill, due to discards.

There was a comment that fishery operates during the roughest time of the year, and this is specific to golden, both sectors, with the fleet going hard to catch as much as possible in the shortest period of time, causing a flooded market and a very short, limited supply on one of the most premier products available, and it also forces boats to fish during potentially hazardous weather conditions.

Multiple commenters supported golden tilefish longline endorsement holders getting together to discuss changes in the fishery, address the derby fishery, dangerous weather conditions, flooded markets, and professionalizing the fishery. There was support for establishing a commercial hook-and-line endorsement, potentially, and this is something that's come up before, and the ACL is being caught quicker each year, with the popularity of deepwater fishing.

In addition, there was a comment supporting changing the opening of the hook-and-line and/or longline season, and the point with that one was that it's going to benefit some and not necessarily work for others. There was support for the January 15 start date for the golden tilefish longline sector, and there was one commenter that would like to see some type of trip limit reduction after 50 percent of the quota has been met, in order to extend the season a little bit longer, and those were at least the core comments that were provided through all the different forums we had. We had the hearings, and we did not actually receive any specific comments to golden tilefish and blue-line tilefish during those hearing sessions.

That brings us into today's charge. What we're going to do is -- I've already started with the review of public hearing comments, and then we're going to go into the alternatives right now, and, given our time, we'll try to focus in on some of the key issues that are there. The council has already adopted Preferred Alternative 2 under Action 1, which to revise the overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch, total annual catch, and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish, and this is the action that sets ACL equal to ABC. Therefore, in year-one, the ACL would be 435,000 pounds for the sectors.

Under this action, Preferred Alternative 2 would result in the least biological benefit to the fishery, because there's no buffer between ABC and the total ACLs, and the biological benefits resulting from Alternatives 4 and 3 would increase the buffers. Alternative 1 is not a viable alternative, since it does not implement BSIA. Also, among the viable alternatives, Preferred Alternative 2 would allow for the highest potential economic benefits, followed by Alternative 3 and Alternative 4.

Alternative 1 would not update the golden tilefish ACL, based on current information, and it would not provide the social benefits associated with an update to scientific information, and, among the alternatives, Preferred Alternative 2 would have the most benefit for fishermen, followed by -- For social benefits, followed by Alternative 3 and Alternative 4.

MS. BROUWER: For this action, I guess we're, again, looking -- I guess I'm going to reiterate, I guess, your previous guidance for gag, to remove the overfishing limit from the action, as well as the alternatives, and so I just wanted to make sure that's on the record and everybody is okay with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see heads nodding yes. Thanks for reminding us.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. Are there any comments or needs or anything on Action 1, other than the revisions that we'll make to be consistent relative to OFL? If not, we'll move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Anything? I don't see any hands. All right. Heads are shaking no.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. That brings us to Action 2, to revise the sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for golden tilefish, and the council selected Alternative 2, which allocates 96.7 percent of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the commercial sector and 3.3 percent of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the recreational sector. It also -- The council made clear that, within the commercial sector, the 25 percent allotted to the hook-and-line, and 75 to longline, would remain, with no modifications to that.

What you have is, in 2023, the total ACL would go up to 435,000 pounds, of which 420,645 are for the total commercial ACL, and 105,161 would be hook-and-line, and 315,484 pounds would go to the longline sector, and the recreational ACL, in numbers of fish, would be 2,559, and, to put that in a little context of where we are, relative to where the original -- In the statement, it does identify that the longline sector will increase on the average of 32,562 pounds, and that's looking at a 2017 to 2021 average, relative to that average, and the rec would -- In the hook-and-line, it would increase by 12,877. However, when you look at it compared to the actual present, in 2023, the hook-and-line will increase by 22,226 pounds, and the longline will actually increase by 66,679 pounds.

Under this action, biological effects are not expected to be substantially different between any of the alternatives, since the allocation percentages are similar, and they do not really affect the total ACL, as specified in Action 1, significantly. In terms of total net economic benefits for the action, in comparison to Alternative 1, the preferred alternative would increase net economic benefits by \$11,613 in 2023.

Based on the recent landings of tilefish, from 2018 through 2021, the preferred alternative would have no closures expected under Alternative 1, no action, or the preferred alternative for the time period of January 1 through June 30 for the hook-and-line component. I think that's all that I had. There's your preferred alternative. Any comments, questions, or revisions that we need to make to move this forward?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. It looks like people are saying, no, they don't want to make any revisions to this, and we've already selected a preferred here. Any more discussion on that action? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just for the record, the document, decision document, that you have before you talks about the change in, I guess, allocation percentage when you add in the new MRIP-FES data, and there's not much of a change at all. There's not a lot of recreational harvest in there, and so, when you look at the National Standard 4 directions about fair and equitable and those sorts of things, it would be good to discuss, I think, in the document, again, and I'm sure it's already in there, the fact that where these species are caught, and there's not a lot of recreational fishing out there, or maybe fishing effort, and just those kinds of things, because I can see somebody looking that and saying, wow, this is -- What do you mean there's only three-point-whatever percent to the recreational sector, and so just kind of a good discussion as to why that happens, and it's really where the fish are, and so that's my suggestion.

MR. PUGLIESE: Thank you, Monica, and, if I didn't clarify on the numbers for recreational, there is an increase in the recreational numbers of like 233, up to I think 249, when it gets into the future, and so there is also an increase for the recreational sector in this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Apologies, and I should know the answer to this, but, Roger, have we considered other alternatives for this action or just the two alternatives that are here?

MR. PUGLIESE: I think it was raised before, but what's gone on with this is it's basically taking the allocation, the scenario that was developed to come up with these allocations, that were the 2006 to 2008 50 percent and the 1986 to 2008 50 percent and just basically applying the new FES numbers, and so getting outside that bounds was really not necessarily considered and what the justification would be to move outside of there, and so, at this time at least, those were the basis - - It limited it only to those two, because you were trying to use the original no action and then applying it with the new updated recreational information, and these are the numbers that come out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So a follow-up to that. Obviously, we're looking at a small change, based on just updating the numbers based on FES information, and I think that's appropriate. In the Gulf, we've considered a number of allocation actions recently, and we've looked at a broader range of years in which to establish the allocation, and that's why I was asking my question, because, if you look at a broader range of years, does it dramatically change the percentage here or not, and I expect that it probably doesn't, but it might be good, kind of going along with Monica's rationale, to emphasize that as well, that the recreational sector is a small portion of the harvest, given kind of the geographic location of where these fish are caught, and that that harvest percentage has remained fairly consistent and stable over time.

The other, I think, comment is just, you know, the appropriateness of the years chosen, and so 2008 is fourteen years ago, right, and 1986 is much farther back than that, and so I think what I would encourage, going forward, is we look more broadly than just landings data and the years

chosen, and, you know, you have an allocation tool, to be able to better address kind of allocation decisions, but, in instances like this, I think it's appropriate to also look at reasons why, or why not, we might want to look at more recent years of data. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Yes, I agree that, to me, the more recent time series of data is a much better reflection of what is currently going on in our fisheries, and especially, as we look at the impacts of climate change on our fisheries -- I think you can skew the data if you go back too far, and I think going back to say 2008, like this does, is plenty much of a -- Is a perfect time series, but I also think that, the way these fisheries are running now, that you have to look and put a little bit more weight on the more current time series. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you have some ideas of some years? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I'm not necessarily proposing new alternatives at this point. What I was going to respond to is Tim's comment, and I think that it's going to be on a species-by-species basis and that incorporating more recent years, although valuable -- Keep in mind that the regulatory environment has become much more restrictive, and so, when you impose catch limits on both sectors, then you're essentially locking in allocations, unless they're underharvesting, or potentially exceeding, those catch limits, and so just I would not paint a broad brush that always using more recent data is important, and then there's, obviously, a lot of other factors that we really need to be looking at, including socioeconomics, bycatch, maximizing yield, and the equity comments that Monica made as part of NS 4.

MR. PUGLIESE: So, essentially, Andy, what you would like to see is at least that highlighted within this document, so that we justify the consistency of the recreational sector, and then, however, the opportunity, in the future, to look at additional timeframes, if needed.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I think it would be beneficial, given we have a narrow range of alternatives at this point.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. Are there any other comments on Action 2? If not, I can move into Action 3.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: How does it work in the future, given that we're using the Coastal Telephone Survey and the rare-event species that this is, and maybe, in the future, that our data shows a better methodology of accounting for the catch, instead of the rare-event nature, and how does that work into -- Like, right now, the PSEs for this particular species is probably over 50 percent, which, according to NOAA and the literature on the website, it shouldn't be used for management, and so, in the future, if there's ever, for this particular species, or deepwater species, a different methodology of accounting for the catch, and, in the future, you see that the methodology that we were using in the past was woefully inadequate, and the new methodology, in the future, of accounting for the catch, of preferably mandatory reporting, is different, and how will that change with the allocation, given that we were using, you know, numbers in the past that wasn't made --

You know, MRIP is not made for the rare-event species, and so I was just curious to how we're going to -- In the future, how could that shift stuff, or what would be chosen to do there?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: In response -- Thanks for the question, Dewey, and so I certainly agree that it's challenging with rare-event species, or species that aren't intercepted as frequently, and I think it would work similar to what we're talking about now, in terms of we are calibrating, you know, time series back in time, using a conversion from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey to the new Fishing Effort Survey, right, and so we can re-estimate, based on at least modeling, what the catches would have been under that new sampling methodology, and it's certainly not perfect, and so the same would be true of any new sampling program that comes online.

We want to calibrate that and adjust it to the current catch estimation procedures and then could funnel it into, obviously, allocation decisions, and, whether that goes up or down, in terms of the catch estimates, would be determined based on those new catch estimation procedures, and then the council would have to build a record, in terms of decisions about how to change the allocation, and that would also affect the science and the stock assessments that Clay and his group produce, in terms of estimating maximum sustainable yield and stock status, because they would have to include that information, as a time series, into those assessments.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you, and failing an alternative way to get more precise estimates of catch, of course, the council also has the option to work with the three-year running averages, and so it's a different way to monitor catch.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Anything else on this particular action? Okay. I don't see any more hands.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. That will move us on into Action 3, which is to modify the fishing year for golden tilefish, hook-and-line, and the longline sectors, and the purpose of this action is responding to industry requests to vary the fishing year for the commercial golden tilefish sectors and avoid oversupplying the market in the first part of January, and it would allow the commercial longline vessels to remain fishing for golden tilefish during Lent, when prices tend to be relatively high. The preferred alternative, at this point, is to modify the fishing year for the commercial longline component, and with a start year of January 15.

What we do have is some of the analysis that was provided, and the golden tilefish hook-and-line component closed early every year since 2015, and, in 2021, the season closed June 1 of 2021. In previous years, they had historically been longer. Table 2 provides the predicted landings by each month, and you see the projected landings from January through June for the fishery.

The analysis for the hook-and-line also provided no closures, if you look at Table 3 under the preferred alternative, and this is actually the proposed ACL right now, and so it's right in the middle of an analyzed range that was put in for perspective, but there is no closures under any of those scenarios, and that moves us on into the longline component.

Under the longline fishery, since 2015, the longline component has typically closed, due to meeting the ACL, as early as mid-February. Table 4 provides the longline commercial landings by month, and it shows the projection of January and February over time, and then, if you look at a longer time series, it was developed -- There had to be a methodology -- Because of the limited data, there had to be a methodology developed to provide a projection out into the future, and Table 5 provides that, and what you see is that the closure, under the longline sector, with the increased ACL, would probably occur in March of 2021, and so it technically is projecting it being pushed further into the season, which is what the desire of the industry was.

Under this, there's not expected to be any difference in biological impacts for this alternative across the alternatives and sub-alternatives. A later start for the commercial longline component would allow vessels to remain fishing for golden tilefish during Lent, when prices tend to be relatively high, and Sub-Alternative 3c may offer the highest economic benefits, followed by 3b and then 3a, in comparison to the no-action alternative.

It's noted that, the farther apart the two seasons are, the higher the likelihood of avoiding low prices, due to any of the issues of flooded market, assuming the golden tilefish are available and highly reliant at that time of year. Sub-Alternative 3c would offset the hook-and-line longline season, and further followed by Sub-Alternative b, as well as then Sub-Alternative a and no action. That's what I have with regard to analysis and with regard to the actions and where we stand.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We already have a preferred here. Is there any desire to change the preferred? Dewey and then Myra.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Could you scroll back down to, or scroll up, to where you had the hook-and-line season and its closure dates, or potential closure dates, and stuff like that, please?

MR. PUGLIESE: This is the projected closure dates. It was using multiple ACLs and determining when it would potentially be closed, and, under all the scenarios, it does not close.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: The closure dates, you're basing this on a January 1 through June season, because clearly the hook-and-line doesn't go to December. It closes beforehand.

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so these are projected closures, and, obviously, there is no dates, and so that fishery would remain open, under the increased ACL, the preferred. The fishing year for the hook-and-line component is the calendar year, and so I guess what we're saying is, once the new ACL is implemented, the hook-and-line sector would technically, based on this analysis and the information that was used to calculate these projections, that component would remain open.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm confused about that, because I think we're probably -- So, this year, the hook-and-line closed, and our portion was 89,000 pounds, and we closed in July, the beginning of July, and, according to this table, it shows that, at 82,000, there wouldn't be a closure, and at 100,000 there wouldn't, and, I mean, just -- It doesn't pass the smell test, because we would have kept fishing, if we -- You know what I'm saying? There is something off there, and I don't know

if that necessarily changes what we're going to do, but I think it's important maybe to look at that, because I don't know how that's possible.

MR. PUGLIESE: Mike did this, and so I guess one of the things is that, again, there wasn't the projection out, and so he had to create averages, and I think it's like 3,900 pounds, just applying month-by-month on that, and so that's how the projection was, I guess, added in here.

MS. MARHEFKA: I would just argue that maybe it's not a useful table, because I don't think it's accurate, if that's the only way to do the projections.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Any more discussion? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: In 2017, there was an ACL of 135,000 pounds, hook-and-line, and that part lasted until December 1, and, after that, when you had a decrease in your landings, when you had an ACL of 80,000 pounds, 83,000 pounds, it would shut down in, at the latest, August 14, and so I was just curious about, when I saw that, about projecting out landings, and another thing, particularly, in North Carolina, is we don't really get access, and I know fish in the bandit fishery, until June or later, because of shark migration and stuff like that, and so I just am wondering about, you know, totally in North Carolina, in the northern part, of getting shut out of it, potentially, altogether, because of the seasonality and the regional differences. That's all I was asking about. Thanks.

MR. PUGLIESE: As noted, it does have an increase of like 22,000 pounds in year-one, and so hopefully that's going to extend the fishery some.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on this action? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I agree with Kerry, and we can talk to analysts about the table, but it is confusing, based on what we saw this year, and even looking at data within the amendment, and, I mean, average landings by month, for the first six months of the year, are in the 10,000 to 15,000-pound range, and so we should be projecting closure dates, and we can correct that.

MR. PUGLIESE: We'll work with the analyst and sort that out and revise this into the subsequent document.

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

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. That will move us on into Action 4, which is to modify the recreational accountability measures for golden tilefish, and the purpose of the action is to modify -- Modifications to recreational accountability measures for golden are being considered to prevent recreational landings from exceeding the ACL and correcting for overages, if they occur, and the council does have a preferred alternative at this time, which is that National Marine Fisheries Service annually announce the length of the recreational season, based on catch rates from the previous season, and the fishing season will start on January 1 and end on the date that National Marine Fisheries Service projects the recreational annual catch limit will be met.

You all have started the discussion under other areas, and, right now, what we have is the two other alternatives, which are no action and Alternative 2, were ones that were focused on eliminating

existing triggers for the fishery on the system, with the issue that you have, presently, the need to have the fishery overfished, the ACL exceeded, and the total ACL exceeded, under no action.

Under Alternative 2, it was that the recreational landings would be exceeded only, to drive this, and, also, under the other considerations, the way this no action and the Alternative 2 is structured is that both the ACL would be reduced as well as the length of the season, given overages. What had been stated earlier is that the intent would be that the in-season accountability measures would stay in place for golden tilefish. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just a suggestion, Roger, and we should, I think, change the title of action, and maybe it's to modify post-season recreational accountability measures, just to make sure that everybody understands the in-season isn't changing, and it's just the post-season, or we put, right upfront at the top, that in-season is not changing, and I don't know, and we can keep the same title of action, if that's what you would like, but just to maybe move up in the discussion, a little bit earlier, that it's the council's intent that the current in-season accountability measure stays in place.

MR. PUGLIESE: Yes, and we had some debate, and one of the reasons that we actually eliminated it from the front was the way -- If it's being set, was really a post-season, and so that's one of the reasons that we had done that, and we do identify that the in-season would stay in place, but, I mean, I think whatever needs to be clear and consistent would be fine.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: So we can talk about it in the IPT, I guess. Sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. I think Mike Larkin has his hand raised.

DR. LARKIN: Just my comment was, you know, ten minutes ago, talking about those -- The council was talking about why did I only go half the year for those predictions, and it was really because of all the closures, right, because we have a closure, and we have no landings, right, and so, anyway, that's why it stops, is because we've had so many closures, and then, if you dig into the -- I think it's in the appendix, the details of the analysis, and I list all those closures, but, you know, you can see it's closed in July, for many, many -- For recent periods, but, anyway, no predicted landings were done from July through December, because the time period is frequently closed, due to all the commercial ACL being met, in the last ten years. I talk about that in the details in the analysis, but that's really why I didn't go on, because I didn't have any data, because of the closures, and so thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks for that, Mike, and so, going back to the accountability measures, I just wanted to get a clarification, on the record, that the current preferred is for the agency to predict the length of the season, and so there really is no need, theoretically, for there to be an in-season closure, because the agency would be predicting how long that season is, based on their information, and so I guess I'm confused as to why we would be retaining the in-season accountability measure under your current preferred, and so, if that is the intent, then it would be good to get that clarified.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm looking to the committee to make sure that this is the preferred that they want and what you want to do about the in-season accountability measure, and so it seems like we're wanting to remove it, if we stay with this preferred, and, if that's the case, I think we

would need a motion to make that intent clear. All right. Myra has had a suggestion that maybe we come back to this in Full Council, and after the looking at the table that we were talking about, and Myra sent it around, and so, in thinking about that table, and considering trying to be consistent across different species, maybe we need to come back to the in-season component when we get to Full Council, and so we'll make a note of that. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I just briefly talked with Rick DeVictor, because my recollection is the only other species that I can think of that we predict the length of the season is black sea bass, and I don't think we have an in-season closure for that, and so I agree. Let's bring you back some more information at Full Council. My only question is, is there any other species in which we predict the length of the season and we have an in-season accountability measure, and so I will double-check that before Full Council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. We will move on to Action -- Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Sorry, but, just in response to Monica's question, wouldn't red snapper be one of the other species where the season is predicted?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I guess so, but it's kind of different. Like we've already preset, if there's a season, here's the number of days you're going to have it, but I'll think about that, Mike. That's a good question.

MR. PUGLIESE: Okay. That moves us on to Action 5, which is to modify the recreational bag limit, and the council is considering lowering the recreational bag limit, to lower the chance of the sector having overages and exceeding the ACL. Over the last number of years, the recreational ACL has been exceeded, as well as, at some times, the total, and so, at the present, the council has a preferred, or multiple preferreds, on this. One is to reduce the recreational blueline tilefish bag limit to two fish per person, and the other is not allow retention of blueline tilefish by captain and crew.

The Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 could result in lengthening the recreational season, due to this reduction in recreational harvest, and it could lead to an increase in discards of co-occurring species. The analysis that was done provides -- There is a comparison between percentage of trips where captain and crew contributed to harvest and then where captain and crew did not contribute to harvest, and, if you look at Figures 3 and 4, what you see is a difference of the two areas. As you move to where the captain and crew is excluded, you see a different composition of catch between the different sectors, headboat, charter, and private sectors, and so it does seem to spread it out between the sectors.

In recent years, you have about 72 percent of the recreational blueline tilefish came from the charter mode, and the percent reductions are weighted by each mode, and, if you go to Table 7, this is showing the 71.6 to the charter, and MRIP's private is showing 1.9, and headboat is at 26.6, when you're looking at 2017 to 2021. Then, if you look at adjusted percent reductions, if you're looking at Alternative 1, of course, there is no reduction, no action. Preferred Alternative 2, the two fish per person, has an 8.5 percent reduction, and Alternative 3 would have a 35.1 percent

reduction, and the no retention of captain and crew would have a 3.7, and so those are the looking at the impacts individually.

Under the economic impacts, conversely, more restrictive retention limits would allow for a longer open harvest, and so the preferred alternative is estimated to result in an estimated decrease in consumer surplus of \$273,922, and Preferred Alternative 4 is an estimated decrease of consumer surplus of \$119,268. If you look at the reductions across, and so those are the ones that I just stated for the preferred, in terms of numbers, in terms of percentages, you're looking at like 8.5 percent and 3.7, which I think I highlighted earlier.

Slowing the rate of harvest and lengthening the season provides additional fishing opportunities for the recreational communities, and Alternative 3, having a 35 percent reduction, would be the most beneficial, followed by Preferred Alternative 2, which has an 8.5 percent reduction, followed by Preferred Alternative 4, which has a 3.7 percent reduction, and then no action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, once again, this is the blueline tilefish recreational bag limit, and we've selected two preferreds here, and we actually had a little bit of discussion about these preferreds when we were talking about gag, and is there any more discussion that we want to have on this? I think lowering the bag limit here could help lengthen the season, while also reducing harvest, and so any more thoughts on the preferreds that we've already selected? Mel.

MR. BELL: Just so I'm understanding this correctly, if our goal was to try to -- I mean, it's a limited number of fish. If our goal was to try to spread it out longer, or keep the fishery open longer, are those 2 and 4 the best way to do that, if that's what we wanted to do? If we were trying to make it more equitable across, or with, again a limited number of fish, if you wanted to sort of spread it out for folks, for access, are those the best way to go?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, the only other option would be to select Alternative 3 and 4, to just go from two to one, and that's the only other thing that I can see inside this action to change it. I mean, we're also looking at shortening the season, and so, in my mind, it's in combination. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was going to say that I think this came up initially because we were trying to constrain the catch a little bit, because they were going over so much, and so I think that was really what we were after.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: With this action here, and putting a May and June season, you're going to constrain the catch, like I said, where the fishery happens at, below its ACL, because the majority of the fish are from charter boats, and, during that season of May and June, unless something happens, it's mahi and tuna season, and so it's a double-whammy here. Now, if you were having the season in July and August, the two fish might be the opportunity to get, but that's when the season happens. When the 77 percent of the charter boats that you show here go fishing, or need to go, for that period of time, it's July and August, when there is no -- When the mahi are less, and the tuna are less, and that's kind of the doldrums of summer, and they go bang the bottom.

I am not, like I said speaking, but it's chance for them to harvest their ACL, and this is where the fishery operates, and the majority of the catch is from, and so you've got a unique situation that I

don't know if the double-whammy is the right thing for opportunity, but this could be paybacks from the overages from 2016 and on, and so maybe I need to be quiet, but it's something to think about, that, you know, maybe the two-pronged approach is too much, if you go with the May and June season, because this is where the numbers and data show that's where it's at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just to respond to that, there is a range of alternatives that we'll be looking at in the next action, and the combination of setting that fixed season with the accountability measures, and, if I have the authority to then set the season, you know, as long as the season doesn't close beyond the fixed season, right, and is within the range that you've selected, then I will have the ability to allow the harvest to continue, and so June 1 through -- Or May 1 through June 30 might not be the best option there, right, and we might want to have a wider season, but then have that accountability measure that allows for in-season management.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, because it seems like you're wanting to get too specific with the blueline and goldens, I mean snowy, and where the blueline is taken from, and suppose -- I don't know, and it's almost like twofold, like you almost need an area from north of somewhere, and here's your season, and south of somewhere is the blueline and grouper season mixed together, because, you know the folks in the northern end -- They would like an opportunity, probably, for fish in July and August, and not in May and June, and, you know, it's up to them to provide comments to that, but I worry, or wonder, about, you know, if you're trying to get -- You know, Florida is talking about wanting to realign, and, for them, it works for snowy and blueline to be in May and June, and, in North Carolina, where all of your majority of landings at this time are coming from, for blueline, that doesn't really work for them, because you will have an underharvest, and so it's how does that -- How does that conundrum fit to work to achieve both areas, and it's crucial to both areas, because you have the cooccurrence, and, north of Cape Hatteras, you don't have the cooccurrence, because it's just blueline tilefish, and that's been shown through the data, and it's been shown through everything else, and so I'm just wondering how to work through that regulation, or how to work through these preferred alternatives, to maybe meet two objectives, if that's possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: This is a question for Andy, and so I'm going to have Roger go to the season action here, since we're having a debate about that, and, yes, I agree with what Dewey is saying, that those months are important for Florida, because of snowy, and so I guess one of my questions is this is set to be final action at the December meeting. On this Action 6, could you still go in there and modify this so that you have a preferred for one portion of the area and a different preferred season for another portion of the area, or is that too challenging, to try to make a calculation, or, based on what we know so far, allowing two different seasons in two different areas, kind of like Spanish mackerel, just isn't going to work here, because of the amount of the available quota, I guess?

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I definitely would want to talk more about this, and think about it with my staff, but I think this kind of falls into the same challenge that we talked about earlier with the commercial fishery opening at different times for spawning, in that, if you don't set, or subdivide, then the catch limit, and specify like regional quotas, right, whatever area opens first

potentially could ultimately harvest the quota before that other area benefits from the opening, or a later opening, and harvest, right, and so, if we open Florida first, and then project that the season is going to close earlier because of that, then North Carolina might ultimately just naturally be faced with a shorter season, whereas, if you were able to come in and subdivide the quota and allocate it, kind of on a regional basis, like we've done for red snapper in the Gulf, that could avoid that, and each would be fishing on kind of a sub-portion of the overall catch limit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Given Andy's comments, it -- With MRIP, two fish can equal a hundred metric tons of mako sharks, or six discards of blueskins can equal 33,000 discards, and so, given that we haven't got that under the situation yet for these rare-event species, I don't know -- That is a possibility of a challenge, but, also, with Florida, it would have to be -- That May and June, that works for them, because of a cooccurrence of snowy grouper, which you saw, on bubble plots yesterday, how south Florida has become more interested in snowy grouper, which is a change from the past of things, and, you know, it's just trying to work through this and the tools of allowing the different areas to fish on different things where the fishery is, but yet you've got MRIP that could throw everything out of whack, and you could be stuck with North Carolina, you know, but that's where the biomass is, and it's shown, but yet that ain't where MRIP works at all the time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy, to that point, and then to Mel.

MR. STRELCHECK: Kind of linking an earlier comment that you made, Dewey, about just the data collection itself, and improvements in data collection, I think it was shown that the majority of the harvest in the recreational sector actually comes from charter boats, and not private boats, right, and so we're in the process -- We're in year-two of the SEFHIER program, trying to enhance compliance and improve reporting, and I think there's some opportunities there, if we get that system running well, to be able to then shape how we manage this fishery, and other fisheries, especially given the uncertainty in some of the kind of rare-event statistics and data, but we're still a ways off from that, but I think we can think about that, going forward, as that SEFHIER program continues to evolve and improve and the landings estimates get better and more precise.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: Where I was going earlier with Action 5 -- So, right now, one of our preferreds is two per person, and so that's why I was trying to think how to stretch these out, and so the issue that Dewey is describing is really one of kind of timing, because -- With the preferred we've got right now, through June, I guess that doesn't work, but the idea is, if you went down to one fish per person, the rate of consumption of those to the south would be half, and so there might be more fish still on the table, but, unless you move the -- Unless you move the timing in Action 6, that still doesn't help to the north, and so you would really have to have a combination with what we've got right here right now, and you would have to maybe use Alternative 3 in Action 5 and carry it with Alternative 2, and I don't know if 30 July gets you anything, or you have to go all the way to, you know, August, and so I'm just trying to work those together with what we've got.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish and then Dewey.

MS. MURPHEY: I just have a question, and I guess probably for NOAA staff, and this year was the first year you guys set a season, June 1 through July 28, and do we know what those landings are at this point, or is it still too early?

MR. STRELCHECK: We do have landings through the end of June, and I will look -- I will see if I can bring that up right now.

MS. MURPHEY: Because I was just wondering how that worked.

MR. STRELCHECK: Right now, we're at 22 percent of the quota, but we do not have July landings, and July, as kind of Dewey is pointing out, is a substantial month, typically, for blueline landings.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Well, anyway, I just thought if we knew that, but --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey, you were up next. Did you have more that you wanted to add here?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I was just going to add to the fact that, as of right now, you don't have July, and you still have 91,000 pounds left on the table, and it -- You know, it's just noted that May and June, up north, doesn't work for just having the blueline, because most of the charter boats are catching -- Are going tuna fishing or mahi fishing, unless something happens, and so, you know, them particular two months was -- It's not a lot of landings, and all the history shows that, and so I don't know, and I will quit talking.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me make a suggestion. My suggestion would be that we go ahead and break for lunch and let people think about this. I think we have kind of a conundrum here, to try to figure out what to set the season at, how to do this, plus maybe we look at the season first and then come back and talk about the bag limits, but I just feel like we've got a number of issues here, and maybe there's a creative way to think about this a little bit more.

Also, if we're going to make all sorts of changes to blueline, and do something crazy that's not in the amendment right now, then one of my suggestions would be breaking the blueline tilefish and golden tilefish into two documents, because this was set to be finalized at the next meeting.

There is no specific timeline that says that it has to be, but I think the golden tilefish folks have been asking us to finalize that piece, and so I don't want to hold up the golden tilefish portion while we try to figure out what's the best thing for blueline, and so just some things to think about over lunch, and, when we come back, we'll go back into this discussion of seasons and bag limits and anything innovative or unique that we can think about and do these two species say in the same amendment, and so, Mel, do you want to tell us when we're coming back?

MR. BELL: Thanks, Jessica. We'll just stick to the 12:00 to 1:30 lunch, and keep in mind, when we come back and get into this, we've got a hard stop today at 3:45 for the public hearing, and so use up some brain cells over lunch, I guess, and come back and help us with that, and so thanks. Go enjoy your lunch.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: After considering this over lunch, I think I have some ideas here, and so starting with the season, and then we'll talk about the bag limit, and so I don't think that the season for May 1 through June 30 works for the folks in North Carolina, but, not only that, I think that the May 1 through June 30, based on the season that we had this year, I think it would leave quota, recreational quota, on the table, and so it seems like maybe we need a four-month season that would be May through August, and so that accommodates both Florida and North Carolina, and it considers the cooccurrence of snowy grouper off of Florida, because, in the snowy document, we have this May 1 through June 30 season in that document as well.

Between the four-month season and then dropping the bag limit down, in the previous action, to two, from three to two, and then no bag limit for captain and crew, and giving Andy the ability to set that end date, and so you would also be looking at the accountability measure as well, then I think that that might work for everybody and keep us within the quota, and so that's my suggestion, is that, on this action here, you could -- You would have to probably have a new alternative to set the season May 1 through August 31 and, then change the accountability measures as well, but there's no option to set that open season for four months here in this action, or that would be no action. No action, I guess, would be the season that we're talking about that is still -- Then making sure that the in-season accountability measure, to set the end date, plus dropping the bag limit down in the previous action, and so I will stop there and see if either Dewey or Andy want to comment here.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Given that we're trying to look at producing concurrent species, the most optimal thing would be from Cape Hatteras south, for these seasons of snowy cooccurrence, but, if the only workable item, at this time, is what Jessica has discussed here, I think it would be doable, but I don't think we're going to be addressing the cooccurrence south of Cape Hatteras for snowy grouper, and that is a difficult thing, because that is something that needs to be addressed, because, separately, north of Cape Hatteras, is blueline tilefish and nothing else, for that bottom fish.

This is a workable item that I think we're going to have to agree to or something, but, also, I was wondering how do we get a look at the SEFHIER landings, even though self-reported, to get an idea of exactly how this fishery is prosecuted, based on these self-submission reports from logbooks, to give an idea in the future, because, somehow, we need to protect the cooccurrence of species, especially when this cooccurrence has to do with snowy grouper, because I personally don't see snowy grouper getting better as long as there is cooccurrence, particularly in recreational fisheries.

I don't see us getting any better whatsoever, and so how to decouple that, and some places you go fishing, and you're going to have that cooccurrence, and, in a majority, where there is a blueline tilefish landing, you're not going to have, to date, that cooccurrence, and so this is the only way, I guess, seeing putting forward, is something that you're going to have to sacrifice and looking at something and achieve some objective that Florida wants and helps there, but that doesn't necessarily address the cooccurrence that happens south of Hatteras that is documented probably through the deepwater survey that shows species there, and, also, recreational landings through MRIP, even though they have some issues with their PSEs.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm maybe not fully following you, Dewey, but, at least within this action -- You know, to me, we have kind of limited options, in terms of how to address this, and so what I was hearing from you earlier is the fleet north of Hatteras largely doesn't start targeting blueline until the July/August timeframe, right, and so Florida, obviously, ideally wants the blueline season to match up with snowy, and maybe even areas south of Hatteras, because of that cooccurrence, right, and the only other way I could see tackling this, besides kind of the regional management approach, which I'm not convinced works all that well for blueline, just given that it's a rare-event species, but would be shifting when the start date of both the snowy and blueline seasons, you know, line up, so that you potentially are starting that later in the year than May 1 and allowing for more opportunities for the north Hatteras fishermen to be able to harvest blueline during that, you know, summer time period. This, at least, gives that window of four months, and it doesn't guarantee that there's going to be a four-month season, and we would close the fishery when we project, obviously, the season to be met, or the landings to be met.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, I think, to-date, that you have enough information on the table that you're comfortable with doing that, setting a season, and not that it might not go until August, but I think that, this year, you'll see a little bit of it, but, also, keep in mind that it might be something that you have to look, which are not always -- They're accurate, but not always available to be looked at, is the mahi and tuna season, up in the northern end, dictates whether you're going tile fishing in May and June, and it's clearly linked together, and so the thing about, also, up north that's different is you come out of one inlet, and you have a few, particularly if it's charter boats, places that have dockage, or three places that have the majority of dockage, and you only have two boat ramps, which are limited in probably in the vessel size that's going to make it out there and go through Oregon Inlet that's going to go fishing.

You have a unique chance at looking at some data, to where just what occurs here, and there's nothing else, and no possibility, and so that's different than a lot of other fisheries that we have going down the coast, and Hatteras is also unique, because, out of that inlet, somebody is not going to run ninety miles to go catch three or four or ten blueline tilefish, and so, therefore, you have what's out front there, and you don't have, a lot of times, in this particular area to the north of Cape Lookout, where you have two inlets that encompasses the catch from Cape Lookout, which is probably to the Virginia-North Carolina line, seventy-five or eighty miles of area, that just comes out of two inlets.

Maybe, in the future, not to, you know -- It's to look at, and maybe through our state, of how these two areas can give a little more transparency to what's caught, coming out of the two inlets and the unique situation, as we move forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: You mentioned SEFHIER, and so we're a year-and-three-quarters now into implementation of that program, and execution of that program, and we've been working on enhancing compliance, and you've, obviously, seen some of those presentations at past meetings. I think it's an opportunity for us to at least start looking at the available data that's been reported to us, given limitations with regard to kind of where we're at in the program, and at least be able to validate, share back, obviously where we're seeing cooccurrence and reported landings on

similar, or same, trips, as well as kind of the shift that you're talking about north of Hatteras, and so that can help inform, I think, future management.

Where I'm cautious is, obviously, we're not at a point of generating landing estimates from it, but let me talk to my team and think about we can maybe start to figure out how to summarize some of this data and information that's coming in for topics like this that are coming up during the council meetings. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. I was just going to ask Andy that exactly same thing. How far off are we from, you know, maybe being able to, just for informative purposes, just to kind of look at the SEFHIER data, as it's coming in real-time, even with -- Can we just -- Is there the ability, at this point, even though it's less than a year, or a year, to just look at what is available and just kind of see what kind of information you can glean from that, because, as we move forward, that's going to be the information that really tells us a lot, and I didn't know if, in the future, there's going to be some online kind of monitoring, where that information is in a chart form or something, that's updated, just like our commercial and recreational ACL data, and it's monitored, and will there be a monitoring that's going on for the SEFHIER data?

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks for the question, Tim, and so this is the kind of challenge we have before us. With any new program, there's a ramp-up period, and we're, obviously working to improve the program and compliance. As that comes along, you know, we want to be able to share the data, maybe summary statistics at first, and, obviously, building toward landings estimates and more rigorous information.

Ultimately, when you get the program to the point where you feel like it's generating accurate, solid landings and statistics, then we need to essentially certify and compare it to the current data streams and adopt it for both science and management, and so there's this transitional period that then occurs, and I don't have a timeframe, obviously, on that, but my hope is that we could get to the future of SEFHIER at some point and be able to share the landings statistics, like you're talking about, whether it's in real-time or monthly or quarterly or whatever that timeframe is, but I would say, at this point, we're a pretty good ways away from that.

Just speaking to SEFHIER, and I know it's not related to tilefish, I think there's going to be an opportunity for us to come back to the council and talk about what's working, and maybe what's not, and if there's some changes and things that we would recommend to the program that could improve it and help us with this implementation process. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Then would we like to change our preferred here to no action? If so, we need a motion. Mel.

MR. BELL: Okay. **I would move to change our preferred alternative under Action 6 to Alternative 1, no action.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Motion by Mel. Is there a second? Second by Gary. Any more discussion on this? I feel like we're in the after-lunch lull here. Any more discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion?** All right. **That motion carries.** Then, Roger,

do you mind backing up to the previous action, just so we can look at our preferreds on that one one more time?

Okay, and so, on the previous action, which this is kind of what we were thinking pairs well with the action that we just took to select the preferred as the four-month season, this is reducing the recreational bag limit to two per person and not allowing retention by captain and crew, and so hopefully this would get us an almost four-month season, or closer. Mel.

MR. BELL: I'm fine with that, and I'm just asking, and is there any value in going to one, to stretch it more, or is everybody comfortable with two?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I asked that same question, and I will look to Dewey. Dewey mentioned that, I believe, in that area that he's talking about, north of Hatteras, that they really need the two, but I will let him explain.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was trying to address two issues, one to achieve the catching of -- Where the majority of the landings for blueline come from and that co-occurrent species. We have addressed the co-occurrent seasonality in Florida, but we haven't addressed it south of Cape Hatteras, which is kind of a -- I mean, like I said, I don't see snowy grouper recovering and getting worse until we account for that cooccurrence happening, and so, if you go -- If you look at the data from the catches, that July and August has predominantly, north of Cape Hatteras, since 2016, has been when the species is caught, and it has always had overruns of the ACL, from 125 percent to 330 percent of the ACL, thereabouts, and so I don't know if --

I don't know how -- I mean, given the flexibility that Andy has to set the season, and looking at the data, one, I would be worried about kind of heavy-handedness of going from three to two, or three to one, and you have extended the season, even though the season shows that the majority of it is only from July and August, and so I don't know, and they will have to do an analysis that going to one, I almost believe, would be too heavy-handed, and people, during that time period, I don't know would go out fishing for one -- For six blueline tilefish, since given that, a lot of the trips during that time period, that's all they're catching.

That's the reason why it's lucky that's there for them, but the tuna and mahi have moved on, or something like that, and it's the doldrums of summer, and so I don't know about going to one fish a person, because I think that would be a really economic reduction for the fleet.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Roger.

MR. PUGLIESE: If you look at the reductions that were identified before, I think that's like a 35 percent reduction, versus I think 8 with two.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: My only reason for bringing that up is I was trying to make sure, by the time we got to July and August, there were still fish on the table, and we didn't, you know, have a bunch of intercepts at two, but we're not really counting that quickly, and we're not really working in real time, necessarily, with MRIP.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: You know, something we're still working with is the blow-up factor of MRIP, and, to my date, there's nothing been put in place quickly enough, to my knowledge, of the smoothing effect, even in the forty-five-day period when you're counting the numbers and you see some astronomical, like there's management put in place, like say, hey, we're going to look at this number here and do a smoothing effect, based on the best available information, where we've gathered here to fix something quick, and, to my knowledge, I don't know of anything like that in place, and so that's why we're left dealing with the stuff we're dealing with here with this.

I also wonder when about would it be brought up about the cooccurrence of species south of Hatteras, and would that be in another amendment, or what would happen there, because that is vital, and this is two parts, because, if you look at landings in the State of North Carolina, we used to represent, and probably still do, but a majority of our fish to the north are larger fish that you would want to fish on, but you have that cooccurrence, during May and June, and the increase of recreational interest during that time period, particularly out of Hatteras, that have that effect, and so I don't know how to address that, even though we're not addressing it here, but have that for future actions to look at, some way possible shape or form.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I feel like I kind of agree with Dewey here that we need to, within the confines of what we have here, deal with this here, because we don't have a way, because blueline is a rare-event species, to really draw lines within the region, within the waves, because we just -- The data is just not at a resolution that we can do that, and so then, based on what Dewey is suggesting, and these estimates here, I would say we stick with the preferred that we already have here of the two-fish bag limit and no retention for captain and crew, and that would be my suggestion, which is already the preferreds that we have, but I will look around and see if there's anything else that we need to do on that bag limit action. It doesn't look like people want to change it. Okay, and so then let's look at the accountability measure.

MR. PUGLIESE: The bottom line is it's the same as golden, and so the issues we raised and the modifications that you would like to see would apply, and the only difference would be the start date in here is different.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Are we good with this preferred? It seems like people are nodding their heads yes.

MS. BROUWER: Just for the record, I want to make sure you're aware that this species is still operating under the CHTS currency for recreational estimates, and so we have not yet incorporated the fishing effort information for blueline, and there is a stock assessment that is currently on the schedule for 2025, but it may be changing. Chip is saying the assessment is currently scheduled for 2024, but it may be switching to 2025 for blueline tilefish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Questions? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: What happened with the 2024 time period? I thought that's what it was under, and had been under, since --

MS. BROUWER: That's something that is going to be covered in the SEDAR Committee, and I'm sure that you guys are going to have plenty of opportunity to discuss the changes to the SEDAR schedule then.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. It doesn't seem like we had any more discussion that we wanted on the accountability measures. We already have a preferred at this point, and there's a draft motion on the board to approve all the actions for Snapper Grouper Amendment 52. Mel.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to approve all actions for Snapper Grouper Amendment 52.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Motion by Mel. Do we have a second? Second by Kerry. Okay. Any more discussion on that motion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** All right. Next up, we're going to go into snowy.

MS. IBERLE: All right. We'll go ahead and get started on snowy, and so you guys have seen this background for many meetings now, and so I'm going to jump to this table. We got the SEDAR 36 update assessment in 2020, and it indicated the stock was overfished and undergoing overfishing. There is a current rebuilding plan in place, and it's a thirty-four-year rebuilding plan, ending in 2039. You guys reviewed the results of the assessment in March of 2021, and you received a letter on June 10 of 2021 to rebuild the stock.

For this meeting, we're going to review scoping comments that we received over the webinar, and then we'll review actions and alternatives and then approve all actions, and so that's what we're looking for for this meeting. Looking at the timeline for snowy, we just conducted public hearings last week, and we'll be reviewing those, and then it's scheduled for final approval at the next meeting for snowy.

To review what you guys did in June, we have on here that you accepted the addition of the OFL into the purpose and need. Again, like we talked about with gag, that will most likely be coming off, and the same with the language in Action 1, but I'll go over that. For Action 3, the commercial trip limit, you moved the action to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.

For Action 4, the recreational season, you selected Alternative 2, May 1 through June 30, as the preferred alternative. For Action 5, the rec accountability measures, you selected Alternative 3, which is that no in-season closure and uncoupling the post-season AM, as the preferred alternative, and then you approved the amendment for public hearings.

Like I mentioned, with the purpose and need, we did include the OFL in here, and that will most likely be modified. We had to add the word "recreational" in there, and that, again, was just a little snafu on my part, and so the purpose reads that the purpose of this fishery management plan amendment is to set an overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch level, revise the annual catch limits, annual optimum yield, and sector allocations for South Atlantic snowy grouper, based on the results of the most recent stock assessment, and modify recreational management measures and accountability measures.

The need for this fishery management plan amendment is to end overfishing of South Atlantic snowy grouper, continue to rebuild the stock, and achieve optimum yield, while minimizing, to

the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects, and so I do have a draft motion, and, obviously, the overfishing limit statement will come out of this, but you can approve as revised.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any discussion on the purpose and need statement? Would someone like to make a motion? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Sure, Madam Chair. **I move we approve the purpose and need statement, as revised.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Spud. Do we have a second? Seconded by Mel. Any more discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **The motion carries.**

MS. IBERLE: All right. That moves us to Action 1. Again, just like with gag, the wording in this action and alternatives is going to change slightly, and so be prepared to see that. It shouldn't hold us back from approving the action, since it's just wording changes, and it's not going to change any of the actual alternatives, and so, here, we have no action, and I'm actually going to use Table 2, and so we have no action would retain the current ABC and ACL.

Preferred Alternative 2 would set the ACL and OY equal to the updated ABC. Alternatives 3 and 4 would leave a 5 and 10 percent buffer, respectively. One thing that I did want to note is, during the IPT review, we noticed a typo that I made in the catch levels, and that has been fixed, but it's highlighted and changed throughout the document, and so I'll be pointing out what's been updated, and so, if you're looking at this compared to the document from the last meeting, that has been updated and corrected, and so those are your catch levels for Preferred Alternative 2.

Figure 2, which has been updated, shows you the -- Essentially the change in how the fishery is operating now and those preferred alternative total ACLs, and so the bars, the blue bars, are the total ACLs from Preferred Alternative 2, and the orange-dashed line is the average total landings from 2015 to 2019. Then Figure 3, which we reviewed in June, just shows you how the fishery has been operating, and green is commercial landings, and gray is recreational landings, and those are MRIP-FES landings.

Reviewing the updated effects, for biological effects, from the highest biological benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 4, Alternative 3, and Preferred Alternative 2. Note that Alternative 1 is not a viable option, as it does not consider the best available science, and, at lower ACLs, would result in fewer fish to catch, earlier closures, and higher regulatory discards. Higher ACLs, such as Preferred Alternative 2, would allow for more fish to be caught, resulting in longer seasons and later closures and lower regulatory discards.

For econ effects, the highest potential econ benefit to lowest, we have Preferred Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 3 and Alternative 4. It would consider that ACLs that allow more fish to be landed can result in increased positive economic effects if the harvest increases without notable effects on the stock. Preferred Alternative 2 is estimated to result in a decrease in net economic benefit for both sectors, due to a decrease in harvest from current levels.

Then, for social effects, the highest potential social benefit to lowest, we have Preferred Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, and so the ACL of a stock does not have a direct social effect, but rather likelihood of the ACL being exceeded and the AM triggered is what would

have an effect, and, in general, a higher ACL would lower the chance of an AM being triggered. With that, I will remind you that you do have your preferred alternative. Actually, I skipped ahead and completely skipped over our scoping comments, and so if you don't mind if I go over those before I hand it back over, and my apologies.

I have just a summary, since we did these last week, and I just have a quick summary, and I don't have a separate document, and so my apologies for not starting with these. We had eight online comments and one webinar comment. There were some that noted that they wanted to open the recreational season for tilefish and other deepwater species, including snowy, year-round. There were several comments not in favor of changing commercial management measures, and they noted concerns over the recreational sector catching more than one fish per vessel per day using multi-hook rigs.

There were several comments about the lack of rec accountability and possibly creating a recreational permit. There were also concerns over the average weight that was used in the amendment. There were commercial fishermen that felt that this average weight was too low, and there were also concerns over the ex-vessel price, that that was not an accurate representation of the ex-vessel price, and, when talking about the average weight, I did want to remind you guys that the average weight that is used in the assessment -- It comes into play in the allocations action, when you're turning the allocation from pounds gutted weight into numbers of fish, which is how the rec sector is tracked, and the average weight used is from 2016 to 2018, the average from SEDAR 36, and we used this because this data stream was used to project the landings going forward, and it incorporates multiple data streams to predict age structure, and so just to give you some background on that. Sorry that I kind of went out of order there, but I will turn it back over.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We have a preferred selected here. Is there any desire to change this preferred? I see people shaking their heads no. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I had a couple of questions about the average weight that is used, and you so you said, in SEDAR 36, the weight was used from what years, and what was the average weight?

MS. IBERLE: So the average weight was 8.93 pounds, and it was the average from 2016 to 2018.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One more question, and what was the data streams that was used for that?

DR. COLLIER: There is essentially three different data streams that went into that. The numbers of fish would have come from MRIP, and then the Southeast Science Center does an adjustment for pounds, based on a slightly different technique that's used from MRIP, and then there's also data from the headboat program, but that's probably a low level of landings coming from the headboat program.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So, basically, you had three data sources, and this was averaged out over three data sources?

DR. COLLIER: So that's going to be the data sources that went into it. If you're using the stock assessment, that also incorporates age data, length-at-age data, all those data streams that typically go into a stock assessment, and so they provide the numbers of fish as well as the weight of fish coming out of the stock assessment.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: What's the difference between the MRIP and the Science Center? How far off are -- It seems like that maybe there could be some disconnect between MRIP and the Science Center or something, and so how does that work?

DR. COLLIER: That's correct. There are some differences, in some years, between the Science Center and the estimates coming from MRIP, and the reason for it is just how they set up their resampling program, and we have -- The council has asked for an update on how to -- Which is the best way to go, which one is the approved method, and that was requested a few years ago, and I can't remember, and I believe there is a working group that's trying to address that, and maybe Shannon could talk about that more, or maybe Clay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I can at least talk a little bit, and there are differences between MRIP and the Science Center, and a lot of it has to do with just sampling sizes of sampled catch and pooling across different strata, to ensure that we have adequate sample sizes for estimating average weights, whereas MRIP doesn't necessarily have as rigorous of a pooling methodology to ensure that there's an adequate number of weights to generate that average, and so that's why you see some differences from year to year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and the average weights, in past SEDAR, it's my understanding were a lot higher that was put out, and so I'm trying to configure, in my mind, how we arrived at these average weights, and what I have seen were being sent to me from social media, and we don't see 8.9-pound fish, and so, as I said before, I don't see this changing, this snowy grouper outcome or look, whether it's climate change, movement, or taking out of the equation, until we get a better handle of the co-occurrent species in the recreational fishery, and so I'm just wondering what, in the past, changed that was of maybe a larger -- Or was there any outliers in the sample size that came from past SEDARs, to where we come down to this number, and it seems like it's going downhill, the size of the fish.

DR. COLLIER: That's correct, Dewey. The size of the fish was going down, based on the MRIP samples, and I think I pulled some data going back to like 2004, and there was like a forty-pound average one year. There were some years that it was over twenty pounds, and it's been going down in the last few years, and that likely has led to that overfishing status that snowy grouper has been labeled with, and overfishing is occurring, and so that's likely to cause that growth overfishing, and so you're going to get smaller and smaller fish, but, as the fish get larger, the recreational crowd should be bringing in larger and larger fish, and so you should start seeing that uptick over time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, but your rate of discards unaccounted for, ain't going to get you there, and it would be different if they lived in a shoebox and were able to grow up, but that's simply not the case, and I watch the commercial industry, and I know, north of Cape Lookout, probably vessels that landed snowy grouper, north of Cape Lookout, is probably down to six or eight vessels,

and it used to be a lot more, and so, as we're waiting for this to happen, I see almost a potential collapse of the commercial fishery, to where we can't go fishing for more than 200 pounds, and so you're getting at a point in time where, if it goes to the next assessment, you're looking at, here, dropping 60,000 pounds or something, or a forty-some percent reduction, and so, the next go-round, when it's done, it's going to be even worse, and then there won't be no fishery for commercial, because you can't go harvest, because of cooccurrence or different things happening, and so I'm just really concerned that we're going in a rabbit hole, and the data is there to kind of show all this stuff, that you're going to somewhere where there ain't going to be no snowy grouper commercial fishery viable.

It troubles me, and I don't know how to adjust it, or look at it here, but we're having all these indicators out there, and, you know, it's like -- It's a full plate, but I know where it's going, and I don't like the way it's going, seeing the industry and what the outcomes are, because it's clearly going in the wrong direction, because we can't get a hold of, you know, the limitations of a sector and the discards, when you're not fishing out of season, or that season is closed for something, and your cooccurrence, because these species, we know, looking at not only SADL, but other different things, there's not like cooccurrence everywhere up and down the whole coast, and so, most of the time, they're by a depth range. In some places, they're together, and them together places need to be figured out, how to do something about them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for that discussion. I am going to look around, one more time, to make sure that we're okay with this preferred that we have, and it looks like people are okay with the preferred, and I'm going to pass it back to you, Allie, to go to the next action.

MS. IBERLE: All right. Action 2 would revise the sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for snowy grouper. We're revisiting allocations since the recreational landings stream in the new assessment incorporates those updated recreational FES estimates. We've got Alternative 1 retains the current 83/17 commercial/recreational allocation. Preferred Alternative 2 essentially takes the formula that we used to get to 83/17 and recalculates it using the updated recreational estimates, and that results in an 87.55 and 12.45 commercial and recreational allocation, respectively, and then Alternative 3 uses the Comprehensive ACL formula, and that results in a 73.36 and 26.64 percent allocation.

Table 5 kind of gives you a summary of those percentages and the basis for the allocation. The method for Preferred Alternative 2 is the average landings from 1986 to 2005, but, again, instead of using recreational landings from CHTS, you're using MRIP-FES recreational landings, and then Table 6 -- Again, these numbers have been updated, and so that's why they're highlighted, and so this middle section of Table 6 is going to be your sector ACLs.

The commercial season for snowy is split into two seasons, and so you have the season allocations there, and Season 1 is allocated 70 percent of the total commercial ACL, and then Season 2 is allocated 30 percent, and that's how those numbers break out. Then the recreational ACL you're seeing in numbers of fish. Again, Figure 4 we saw in June, and it's just showing you where the commercial ACL is compared to average commercial landings from 2015 to 2019, and then we have that same figure for recreational.

For the biological effects, the highest biological benefit to lowest, Alternative 1, no action, Preferred Alternative 2, and Alternative 3 all have no significant biological difference between

alternatives. Also, consider that, when thinking about discards, any sector that receives a lower sector ACL could have increased discards. Preferred Alternative 2 decreases the sector ACL for the recreational sector, and so recreational discards could increase.

For the econ effects, for the highest potential commercial econ benefit to lowest, we have Preferred Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 1 and then Alternative 3, noting that all commercial ACLs will be constraining on harvest, based on five-year average landings, and then, for the recreational ranking, from highest rec economic benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 3, followed by Alternative 1 and then Preferred Alternative 2. Again, all of the recreational ACLs will be constraining, based on five-year average landings.

Then, looking the total economic ranking, and so highest potential net economic benefits, we have Alternative 3, followed by Alternative 1, and Preferred Alternative 2, and then, last, but not least, the summary of the social effects, and so, for the commercial sector, the highest social benefit to lowest would be Preferred Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 1 and then Alternative 3. Then, for the recreational sector, we have Alternative 3, followed by Alternative and Preferred Alternative 2. Again, we've got a preferred selected, and so I will turn it over for discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there discussion on this action? We already have a preferred selected. Do we want to modify this? I see people shaking their heads no, that they don't want to modify this. Okay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I have asked this before, and I'm still baffled, and so I want to ask it again. With the allocation, the shift is now going more toward the commercial, yet, under recreational FES, nearly all other species I've seen it go the other direction, where FES is driving the estimates up, and so the allocation should be shifting more to the recreational, and so can you share with us, or can someone talk through, and are the CHTS landings higher than the FES landings, or are the commercial landings also being revised, and that's why the allocation is shifting more to the commercial?

DR. COLLIER: I haven't looked in -- I'm sure there is some revisions to the commercial landings, but I haven't looked into that in some detail, but, when we're talking about the change from CHTS to FES, there is actually two different changes that went on. There is the change due to APAIS, and so the Angler Intercept Survey, and then there was also the change for the FES, the effort survey, basically the number of people that were fishing.

The change for the APAIS survey tended to decrease the landings for some of these deepwater species, because it was a rare -- They were rarely sampled on some of these intercept sites, and then the change for the FES did not overcome that change, and so it ended up being a net less -- Fewer fish were caught in the recreational fishery estimates, and that's why you're seeing that change for some of these deepwater species, and I believe golden tilefish was similar to this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy and then Tim.

MR. STRELCHECK: That's super helpful, and now makes sense to me. I guess the APAIS change happened around 2013, or 2012, versus then FES was more recent than that, and I didn't realize this was actually covering both of those changes. Then I think it was more a question for the council, in terms of just, once again, improving the record with regard to why we believe this

is fair and equitable. Obviously, you know, we are updating the same time series of landings used for the previous allocation, using the new revised data, but any other rationale that we can provide would be helpful for the record.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I just wanted to thank Chip for that as well. That was very, very helpful, and so, when we're looking at all of these rare-event, or deepwater, species, is that the methodology we use, is to look at the APAIS and the change in the survey method, to see if there is a net one way or the other, because I think that the APAIS would be the one that would tell you the most realistically what's happening, right, because it's a rare-event species, and it's an actual in-person survey, right?

DR. COLLIER: Well, no, and you would want to use the entire FES estimate. There is two adjustments made to the current version of FES, and so what they call it is a fully-calibrated time series, and so they're having to incorporate all these pieces of information into that full estimate for the recreational catch.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Don't go away, Chip. I'm just curious, and why did we terminate that time series at 2005? I mean, that's pretty -- That's a fairly old endpoint for that time series.

DR. COLLIER: Some of that was due to the significant change I believe in the commercial fishery. It went from a 2,500-pound trip limit down to a 300-pound trip limit, I think, in the beginning, or it was 100 pounds.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chester.

MR. BREWER: It may be in the charts and I missed it, but I would be interested in seeing, with these different allocation scenarios, or potential allocations, what actually happens with the numbers/pounds of fish and how that differs from what we currently have, if that makes any sense, and Chip is looking like I'm crazy.

DR. COLLIER: No, you're crazy, and I think Allie has the numbers up.

MS. IBERLE: These are the numbers for -- The rows I have highlighted are your preferred alternative. I'm not sure, off the top of my head, the current commercial ACL and rec ACL, and I know the rec ACL is right around 5,300 fish, and I'm not positive on the pounds gutted weight for the commercial sector, and I apologize, but that can give you a comparison of the reduction that you're going to see.

MR. BREWER: Okay, and then, following-up on what Andy was saying, it looks like the number of fish that recreational are going to be allowed to catch is going down by not an insubstantial percentage, under either 2 or 3, and so I am -- Excuse me. Under 2, which is our preferred, and they don't go down under 3, and I misspoke, but I am having a little difficulty understanding the

rationale for that happening, when the increases that we're talking about are coming about as a result of the -- I'm assuming it's the result of the realization that the recreational folks were catching a few more fish than we thought they were. No? Okay. Then explain it to me, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: So the recreational fishery was catching fewer fish in the FES survey than they were estimated through the CHTS survey. This is the outlier in all the other species.

MR. BREWER: Well, that explains it. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Gary.

MR. BORLAND: My counterpart here says I'm going to be opening Pandora's Box, but I would say that -- This is through 2005, the information, or based on through 2005 information, correct, and I would say, in the last seventeen years, that the recreational fisherman has targeted deepwater species more than prior to 2005, due to the fact that, as limits and stuff have changed, you see the recreational sector starting to do more of that fishing, to mix it up, right, and so, every day, they have to go do multiple things to stay busy all day, because of the different limits that are on fish, and so I think that data is probably -- I know we challenge all data, but I have a feeling it's not showing the true story today, and that's just a comment to the group.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I was just thinking of the discussion we just had, the question-and-answer, with Tim and Andy and then Chip and Allie, the way they answered and explained that this fish is a bit of an outlier, right, in terms of the other estimations of recreational catch that we've seen using the FES. If we could capture that in the discussion a little bit in the document, and maybe you already have, but I think it would be really helpful for council members, for the public, whomever, when we're looking back as well, to see why this was done. I mean, it's very different, and so capturing that would be really good.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I would also like to add that, you know, even though that time series of the landings may have been old, we are using an updated average weight of the fish, and is that correct, and so that timeframe of the average weight is 2016 to 2018 or so, and so, you know, it is not exactly that we haven't taken into account how that number of fish comes into play, using the current average size of the fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey and then Andy.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: To me, it's almost getting down to a red snapper issue without the quantity of red snapper in the ocean that the amount of fish that is allocated to the recreational industry is a two-day red snapper season, yet you're going to go out there fishing for other things, in cooccurring places, and catch the snowy grouper, and you're going to discard them, and they're going to be dead, unless you're successful in your venting or descending device methodology.

As I said earlier, and, you know, I might not be around the table to say it later on, but this fishery is going down more and more every stock assessment, and the weights of your fish are going down

more and more in certain places, and I would like to -- Which the different things of regional areas, to show the size of the fish, where there is less fishing on certain sizes and not decreasing, but this number right here -- If you're looking at that 2023, and it's 16,068 fish, and that's not very many fish, and the average size you're telling me that is 8.9 pounds, and that just simply don't pass the smell test for somebody, if they're savvy enough to go on social media.

You're not seeing eight-pound or nine-pound fish, and so, given all of that, this is a -- I mean, you're going to put something forward that the stock assessment says you've got to reduce it, and we know, by all indications, everything -- That you wouldn't operate your business on, that the information that we're going to be using, or going forward, is not accurate to -- It's best available, what we've got at the table, but 16,068 fish is not many fish, and so it is like almost a red snapper issue, without the amount of red snapper that's out there.

This is something that I see troubling for the commercial industry going forward, that our access is going to be taken away, because it's going to be -- We're looking, right now, at snowy grouper, and we're not catching -- There's a good chance that we won't catch our ACL this year, unless somebody gets hopped-up here in the next few months to go catch it, and so that would be one of the first times in a while that the commercial industry has not caught its ACL of snowy grouper, and we're seeing the aging of the fleet and the different things of the fleet changing and stuff like that, and so this is just -- I guess I'm sounding the alarm, or being the devil's advocate, that this is something else you need to be watching for, because these numbers, you know, are not what is happening out there on the water in the last five, the last ten, years.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I appreciate the discussion, because I think it reemphasizes the conversation we were having yesterday about having more holistic snapper grouper management, and so let's remove red snapper from the conversation, which we've done today, and we're talking about discard problems in our multispecies fishery.

That's not what we're talking about here, in terms of allocation, but I wanted to make a couple of points with allocation, and it gets back to what I said earlier, and this is -- You know, we have the allocation tool, which is in progress, that looks at a multitude of factors, and I think we need to get better, as a council, in terms of kind of discussing those factors, socioeconomics, biology, et cetera, and the range of alternatives is fairly limited, in this instance, and I don't recall the rationale for the years chosen, but certainly, obviously, historically, kind of the different methods that have been used in the past.

I made the comment, earlier, about more recent time series, but there is some limitations on recent data, and, in looking at snowy grouper, I think the first catch limits were imposed in 2004 for the commercial fishery and 2010 for the recreational fishery, right, and so there's a window of time, about six years, where the commercial sector at least was having to abide by catch limits, but the recreational wasn't, and then, after 2010, both are abiding by catch limits, and so that's going to at least constrain how much one sector can harvest relative to the other, because of how we specified the catch limits and then monitored catch, and I think it makes at least using more recent data more difficult, but maybe not invalid.

The last comment I will make is I agree with Gary, in terms of the dynamics of the fishery have changed, and I think Chester and others would agree that certainly there is more demand for deepwater species, maybe than ever before, and I think I would argue also, in the commercial sector, there is probably more demand for these species than ever before, because of the other problems we're experiencing, obviously, in other commercial fisheries, right, and so I think it's the pull-and-tug of that, and really just having this conversation about, you know, is this fair and equitable, is there other things that we want to look at here, in terms of allocating the fishery, based on what we know now, but it's been a good conversation, and so thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Any more discussion here on this preferred alternative? Spud and then Chester.

MR. WOODWARD: I think another thing, and we've talked about this at length, is just the high degree of uncertainty with those MRIP estimates, and, I mean, they're not even published now, which tells me they've got chronic PSEs higher than 50 percent, and so we're putting a lot of faith in a very uncertain estimate of recreational harvest, and then we're trying to basically divide the baby based on it, and that is -- You know, that plagues us in a lot of things, but I think it's particularly acute in this situation, and so you end up with an allocation decision that you want to be based on trustworthy information, but you've got highly uncertain on one side and much, much less uncertain on the other side, and it puts us in a difficult position to determine what is fair and equitable, when you have that kind of diametrically-opposed uncertainty.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chester.

MR. BREWER: One of the themes, while maybe not actually expressed, but I think that's kind of been running through is how do we handle these different numbers, and these updated numbers, is we saw a situation where it looked like the recreational people were going to be getting a lot more fish, potentially, because they've been catching a lot more fish than was thought, and we kind of came up with the theme of, well, let's let -- From the standpoint of the commercial guys, let's be fair and make sure that they're not being allocated a pound less than they were being allocated prior, even though the numbers, the percentages, of allocation may change.

When we're talking about being fair and equitable, if we do run into, and have run into, apparently, a situation where the recreational folks have been catching less than we thought, then it seems to me, from the standpoint of being fair and equitable, you use the same sort of thought process, even though it's the converse of what we've been using heretofore, and that is, if the recreational folks have been catching less, well, let's make sure that they still are essentially allocated the same amount of fish that they are actually catching, or have actually been catching, and the commercial guys -- In this case, they get a benefit, because they were catching, relatively speaking, between recreational and commercial, they were catching more. I realize I am probably a turncoat to the recreational side by making this statement, but I make the statement because of the questions of being fair and equitable and having put -- I wanted to put that statement in the record. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Given that we're having this discussion, and I ain't got too many more meetings to worry about being here at the table, what we continue to look at here -- I mean, there

is no doubt that the recreational industry, today, or the last five years, is harvesting more fish, and they're just not getting counted.

We're watching our stock assessment, which is mostly for snowy grouper, and it used to be a driven commercial fishery, almost collapse, with the size of the fish, unless you're in certain locations, because something is either dying or something is interacting and taking more fish out of there, and so what's going to happen in the future, whenever -- If the continuation of the advancement of recreational fishing, and we get a better accounting, whether it's mandatory or some new solution, and you're going to say, oh my god, we were catching double and triple this much, and now what do you do if you've got a 16,068-pound ACL and you were, back in the day, not -- The harvest or discards wasn't getting reported, and you've collapsed a stock.

The commercial industry got collapsed, because it got taken out of this much poundage, and, you know, how is that going to be fixed in the interim? Right now, you're going to give us a 16,068-fish count, knowing that that's -- You know, the only way to stop that is to not go fishing or have a closed season, where you can't even see or touch or smell a snowy grouper, and so it's like you're going down a slippery road, even though -- Heck, I guess we all go down them, but you're doing something here of a preferred that knowing --

Even though I guess it's best available, but knowing it ain't there, and so, in the future, this is going to get worse, and I worry about the commercial industry and what I've seen, from my area, or below my area, of what's going on with the fishery and how -- If you don't have at least a 200-pound trip limit, you can't go fishing profitable for that species, and the species is going away, or is out of that area, and you're having a catch of three-to-one of snowy to a blueline, if it's there, but, yet, you've got a 16,068-fish allocation, and MRIP still ain't there for the rare event, and, if it's over 50 percent, we're not going to publicize it, and so it's just like, man, where is this even part of Magnuson, that's one of the National Standards, which I don't remember which one it is, but it's about fair and equitable of the counting for harvesting of the resource, even though MRIP is the best available we have, and it's lacking as heck, and so where do we go from here, as we continue on and watching these different things?

It's just not because I'm watching the recreational, I mean the commercial, industry wave away with the thing, and age out, but it's like, I mean, we've clearly got things to work on here, and these numbers we know ain't accurate, but I guess, since it's on paper, we tried, and we went through the process, and we got it stamped by the SSC, and here we are, and this is where we're at today, but we know, around the table, that, in five years, if you ever get updated -- I guess that's what's allowed, but, yet, you already will have collapsed the commercial snowy grouper fishery and the infrastructure that is around will be sold, condos and marinas, and be gone, and that's something that, you know, I really worry about, but that don't help here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Okay. I still haven't heard a recommendation to change this preferred, and I think we've had good discussion. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Madam Chair, I recommend we just, grudgingly and reluctantly, accept what we've got and we move ahead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Spud. All right, and so we have a motion to move ahead.

MS. IBERLE: All right. That brings us to Action 3, which would modify the snowy grouper recreational season, and so we've got a reduction in harvest. Modifying the recreational season will help constrain recreational harvest to these reduced catch levels, and so your suite of alternatives is Alternative 1 would retain the May 1 to August 31 season. Preferred Alternative 2 would reduce the season from May 1 to June 30, and then Alternative 3 would reduce the season to July 1 to -- That should say August 31. There is thirty-one days in August.

Figure 6 shows you recreational landings by month from 2017 to 2019, and then that dashed-red line is the projected landings. We talked a little bit, in June, about the predicted season length, and we showed you, and I will show you in the next table, season lengths based on a three-year average and a five-year average, and so this table shows you -- The top section is three-year, and the bottom section is five-year average, and so that information feeds Table 9, and so this middle section here shows you approximately how many days until the ACL is met, and then we kind of expressed that in waves, again because of the uncertainty with this species, and we gave you an approximate wave length that it would be open. The blue column is based on that three-year average, and then the green column is the five-year average basis, and, again, the middle section is your Preferred Alternative 2.

Then, going over effects, and so biological effects, the highest potential bio to low benefit is Preferred Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, since we have the same season length there, followed by Alternative 1. A shorter season would result in a decrease in fishing mortality and, therefore, greater biological benefit, and, from 2015 to 2019, landings were highest May through August. A shorter season could result in higher discards, especially as fishermen continue to target blueline tilefish.

For economic effects, the highest potential economic benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 1, followed by Preferred Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, and so considering that a longer recreational season lends to increased economic benefits, and, if the ACL is not fully harvested, it can lead to fewer short-term economic benefits. Then, for social effects, the highest potential social benefit to lowest, we have Alternative 1, followed by Preferred Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, considering that a longer season provides greater short-term social benefits, but biological benefits to a shorter season provide long-term social benefits, and that social benefits vary among different communities, based on the participation in the fishery. With that, I will come back up, so you can see your preferred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. What are the thoughts here? All right, and so we just had a discussion in blueline, and the blueline season that we selected is a little bit longer than this preferred that we have here for snowy. We're trying to line these two seasons up as close as possible, and we're just not sure that we can line them up exactly, May 1 through August 31, just because of the small quota here for snowy, but I will just put that out there for discussion. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just for discussion purposes, maybe we could mention again, on the record, why we couldn't have a snowy season in July and August, what the reason for that was.

MS. IBERLE: So this is the table that shows you the season analysis, and so the season that you were talking about, Tom, would be under Alternative 3, correct? I think, from what I remember, we kind of had this as an open-ended action, and then it developed into wanting to see two single-

wave alternatives, and I think that's -- The direction to the IPT was to include an alternative for just Wave 3 open and then an alternative for just Wave 4 open, and then, from there, it was just selected as Wave 3 was the preferred, and so I don't think there's a limitation to having the July 1 through August 31, but it just wasn't the selected preferred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, am I reading that table correctly, that, if you selected no action, May 1 through August 31, that that season is selecting the July to August or May to June, and, I mean, approximately seventy-four or seventy-five days, because it's, you know, within a four-month time period, as opposed to a two-month time period, and, I mean, do we want to talk about the downside of selecting the exact same season that we selected for blueline here? Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess that comes to mind here is the difference in that blueline is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, and snowy is, has got it both, but I would think the preferred alternative, at this point, does overlap with snowy, and so this may be the best answer to deal with that cooccurrence.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That was kind of my thinking as well. Andy, do you have thoughts here? Gary.

MR. BORLAND: I just feel like these fish are caught at the same time, right, and so how do we not manage them together, and discard mortality, from 300 to 500 feet of water, is extremely high. I mean, the chances of anyone, on a descending device, getting that fish back down to that depth and surviving, are probably -- I don't have the data in front of me, but I would -- From a fisherman's perspective, it's probably not very high, and I think they have to be managed in the same timeframe. I don't know how you fit the allocations together in the same timeframe. That's a whole other subject, unless you manage them together, in the same amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess a more specific question for Andy would be do we then just change the accountability measure to match more similarly to the accountability measure that we had for blueline? I don't know, and I'll put this over to you.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, you could. I guess I was thinking more along what Gary was just mentioning, which is, if we're truly concerned about discarding one species, because the other is closed, and, I guess, in this instance, snowy, with blueline remaining open, the best way to address that is to match up the seasons. The only way I think you can do that though is then have an accountability measure that says, based on the shortest projected season length of both of those species, we closed the fishery for both, essentially, but you will potentially then not catch your catch limit, right, and so, if the snowy season is estimated to be shorter, then that would be the snowy and blueline season, and vice versa.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I hadn't thought about that. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Looking at the peak spawning season graph, the peak spawning season for snowy is May through August, and so you certainly wouldn't want to extend the season for all four of those months, and what if you did the blueline tile for July and August and raised the bag limit to three fish and only made it for like July and August and then made the snowy season for July and August, and would that help the blueline reach their limit, and then you would only be fishing for the two cooccurring fish at the same time?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That doesn't work for south Florida. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: More than likely, if you kept it the same, that would be what has happened since 2016, that the northern edge has blown their ACL, which is only 116,000 pounds, and so it doesn't work for up there. North of Cape Hatteras, as I'm a broken record, there is nothing but bluelines. When you get from Hatteras south is your cooccurrence, and down in Florida is your cooccurrence, and so it's -- You know, and the majority of your blueline catches is charter boats north of Cape Hatteras, and so that's the only thing there to fish, and there is no cooccurrence of grouper, and so that's just a conundrum of lining these things up.

Whatever can be done for the protection of the snowy is trying to reach the agreement, and, in them places where you've got to protect the snowy is where there could be some blueline cooccurrence, but, where there's just nothing but bluelines, there is no problem with the cooccurrence, because there's nothing else there, and so I guess we need some creative management.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Well, that's why I thought the preferred alternative kind of solved that. I mean, the cooccurrence was that May and June in south Florida, and we're not really having the cooccurrence in the July and August up above Hatteras, and so, to me, this does solve the problem. If, May and June, you have it open, in south Florida, for both snowy and the blueline, then you've taken care of your cooccurrence, but you've left the blueline open above Hatteras for the months that they are catching the fish, which is July and August.

Just looking at what I perceive as most of the recreational effort that I know, the guys that are skilled enough and have the equipment and know what they're doing and know how to stay safe in 600 or 700 feet of water, once the snowy grouper is closed, they're not going to 600 feet of water to catch a couple of blueline tiles, and so they effectively don't go there other than to target snowies, and that's when their cooccurrence occurs, that they just happen to catch some bluelines, but they're not going to go out there just to target blueline tile if they can't keep snowy grouper, and so, to me, leaving the blueline like we've already done, and going to Alternative 2, is exactly where we need to be solve the cooccurrence problem.

MR. BELL: I think, after hearing all this, we can't get the perfect alignment that maybe we're looking for, and so I kind of agree with Trish that Alternative 2 just seems to be the best we can do with kind of the options we have available to us, and I would just recommend sticking with 2 right now and moving on. That would just be my recommendation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I'm kind of in the same place. Let me just look around the table. We already have the preferred, which is overlapping with the blueline season, and not 100 percent, but it is overlapping here, and snowy is in worse shape than blueline, and we're trying to make some changes here, and, since we're already at one fish per vessel, the season is the only way to constrain the recreational catch, and so I'm just making sure that there's no desire to try to change this preferred. I see people nodding no. All right. Can we take a ten-minute bathroom break and come back, and we'll try to finish this document up before public comment?

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Come on back to the table. We're going to try to finish snowy. All right. We're diving into the next action here that is about accountability measures.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so Action 4 for snowy grouper is to modify the recreational accountability measures. We have the full action language here, but I'm going to use Table 14, and so no action -- Again, we have the current accountability measure, which has an in-season AM, which is triggered by the recreational landings reaching, or projected to be reaching, the rec ACL, and the current season would close, and the post-season AM is currently triggered by the rec landings exceeding the ACL, the total ACL being exceeded, and the stock labeled as overfished, and all three of those must happen for the rec ACL to be reduced by the overage in the following year.

Alternative 2 would have NMFS annually announcing the recreational fishing start and end dates. Alternative 3 would remove the in-season closure and rely instead on a post-season AM, which would be triggered only when the recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, and so we would no longer be tied to the total ACL or stock status, and then the recreational season for the following year would be reduced by the amount necessary. Then, finally, Alternative 4 retains the current in-season closure, and so, if rec landings reach, or are projected to reach, the ACL, the current rec season closes, and then uncoupling that post-season AM, and so, again, only dependent on the rec landings exceeding the rec ACL.

Right now, and I apologize that I did not put "preferred" in front of Alternative 3, but Alternative 3 is what you selected as your preferred in June. I don't know if that document is still up. Here we go, and so, as a reminder, and I haven't updated this, and I'm not sure if -- I apologize, and we made modifications for golden and blueline, but this is that original summary table, and so consider that, and then I will give the floor.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I just want to be clear that we already have a preferred here, and it's highlighted in blue, and so what we're talking about is if there is any desire to change the preferred alternative here. All right. I see people nodding no, there's no desire to change the preferred here. Well, maybe Andy has something. Andy, are you good? Okay.

MS. IBERLE: I forgot about the effects, and I will go over those really quick. For bio effects, it's difficult to rank alternatives, since they all contain attributes that could lead to both biological benefits and adverse effects. Alternative 1 has that in-season and post-season AM, but it might not be the most effective for a short season.

Alternative 2 would be functional for a short season, but it does have -- It does not have a payback if the ACL is exceeded. Preferred Alternative 3 removes the in-season AM, and it could have adverse effects, and the post-season would be more effective. Alternative 4 would retain the in-season closure and adopt the more efficient post-season AMs, and so just remember that a functional AM is critical for this fishery, as it's likely to be triggered, due to constraints on harvest.

For econ effects, the highest potential econ benefit to lowest, we have Preferred Alternative 3, Alternative 2, Alternative 4, and Alternative 1, and, just for econ effects, consider that the most

stringent AMs would likely result in the greatest potential for short-term negative economic effects, but long-term benefits.

Then, for social effects, similar to bio effects, it's difficult to rank these. Alternative 1 could lead to inconsistent closure dates throughout the payback portion of the post-season AM, but it provides long-term benefit of helping to prevent overages and correcting them, if they occur. Alternative 2, season length and dates would vary year to year and would not provide a reopening opportunity. Announcement would be provided in time for the recreational fishermen to plan trips though. Preferred Alternative 3, there is no in-season closure, and that would provide increased fishing opportunities within the current season. However, the removal of the two post-season triggers could lead to a variable season year-to-year, if ACL overages occur.

Then, finally, Alternative 4, the in-season closure could result in fewer fishing opportunities within the current fishing year, and the removal of the two post-season triggers could lead to a variable season year-to-year, if ACL overages occur, and so, when considering social effects, closures and season length and date variability can cause negative social effects. However, functional AMs provide long-term social benefits, as they ensure sustainable harvest.

As Jessica mentioned, I do have a draft motion. I made sure that the additions and modifications that we're going to have to the language of Alternative 1 doesn't prevent us from moving forward and approving the action, and so I just wanted to clarify that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Allie. There's a draft motion on the board. Would someone like to make that motion? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: **I will make a motion to approve all actions, as modified, in Snapper Grouper Amendment 51.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion, and it's seconded by Mel. It's under discussion. We've had a lot of discussion on all of these actions, and I feel like we're good here, but any additional discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that is approved.** All right. In the thirty-ish minutes that we have left, we're going to try to jump into wreckfish, and Christina will come up here and guide us through the beginnings of that document.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Well, I hope that everyone is still wide awake, because now it's time to dive into the wonderful world of wreckfish, and so, like Allie did, I'm going to skim through the background pretty quickly, since we've talked about this amendment a number of times, but, just as a refresher, this amendment is coming off of the wreckfish ITQ review that was completed back in 2019, and it endeavors to address some of the issues that were brought up during that review.

What the objectives are for this meeting are the wreckfish shareholders met late this June, at the same time that the Spiny Lobster and Golden Crab APs met, to discuss this amendment, and so the big part of what we'll be doing at this meeting is going over the input and their recommended preferred alternatives. We'll also be looking to improve that purpose and need and select preferred alternatives and then, finally, consider approval for public hearings. Staff is recommending that we hold public hearings for this at the March 2023 meeting, for two reasons.

One, this will give staff time to do a little bit of additional analysis. Working with data related to wreckfish can be a little challenging, due to the small size of the fishery and confidentiality concerns, and then, because this amendment is primarily geared towards the wreckfish shareholders, and you guys have already convened meetings directly with them, it seems appropriate to hold public hearings at a council meeting.

With that, I will just briefly remind you of the schedule. We are presenting this amendment to you at every-other council meeting, due to workload, and so you guys would see this again in March 2023, and then the goal would be to get everything sort of gussied up and ready to go for final approval by September of 2023. With that, I will move you into the draft purpose and need statement. The purpose of this action is to modernize the wreckfish individual transferable quota program, revise management measures, and update the goals -- We are no longer updating the goals and objectives in this amendment. Excuse me. That moved to Amendment 49.

Then the need for this action would be to improve program monitoring and enforcement, as well as data collection and management, provide more flexibility for fishers, and increase profitability in the wreckfish ITQ program, and, again, removing that part related to the goals and objectives, because that has been removed from this amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Would someone like to make a motion to approve the purpose and need, as modified? Mel.

MR. BELL: **I move to approve the purpose and need, as modified.**

DR. BELCHER: Second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. It's seconded by Carolyn. Any more discussion on the purpose and need? I know that we can't see it on the screen, but we made some modifications. It used to include language about the goals and objectives of the FMP, but that is no longer inside wreckfish, and so any more discussion on purpose and need? All right. **Any objection to approval of the purpose and need?** All right. **That motion is approved.** Back to you.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. That moves us into Action 1. Action 1 looks at revising sector allocations and the sector annual catch limit for wreckfish. Unlike the other amendments that you guys have been working on, this actually isn't coming off of a stock assessment. This is included in the amendment based on a recommendation from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, as well as the wreckfish shareholders, based on concerns that that recreational allocation might be too. Recreational wreckfish was originally intended as more of a bycatch fishery, and it's also rarely intercepted by the MRIP program. In fact, I believe there's been one intercept since 2012.

The current allocations, under Alternative 1, no action, are 95 percent commercial and 5 percent recreational. You've got Alternative 2, which would modify the allocation to 98 percent and 2 percent, respectively. Alternative 3 is 99 percent and 1 percent, respectively, and then Alternative 4, which would be 99.5 percent commercial and a half a percent recreational.

We did talk to the wreckfish shareholders about this, and they preferred Alternative 4 under Action 1, which would be that 99.5 and then 0.5 percent allocation. We asked them if they were aware of or had seen any increase in the recreational catch of wreckfish, and they indicated that, no, they

hadn't really see an increase, that it wasn't really a targeted fishery, or, rather, wreckfish are something that recreational fishermen happen to catch, particularly when the fish are migrating from Blake Plateau to spawn.

They did, however, note that the council should look at the recreational accountability measures, to ensure that say one MRIP intercept doesn't end up resulting in a closed wreckfish fishery, and so there is an in-season closure for wreckfish, but there is no payback, unless the stock is overfished, and this species isn't up for a stock assessment anytime soon, but we'll talk about that a little bit later, when we speak about cost recovery.

Then we did look at some environmental consequences and effects for this action, and we do hope to update this with more data, come the March meeting, but, ultimately, for biological effects, they're not really expected to be any different between any of those allocation alternatives, because, regardless, the total ACL established for the fishery still keeps them from hitting that overfishing level. In terms of economic effects, ACLs that allow for more fish to be landed result in positive effects. Similarly, with social effects, it depends a lot on the perception. Recreational fishermen may have a negative perception of loss of current allocation percentages, and then, finally, administrative effects are not expected to vary. With that, I will turn it back over to you guys for discussion over a preferred alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, and so we are trying to select a preferred here, and so, just to review, the shareholders were suggesting Alternative 4 as the preferred. What are our thoughts here about what we would like to make the preferred? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I haven't discussed this with anyone else, but I'm not comfortable with Alternative 4. That just doesn't seem fair or equitable to me. I think we know that there is somewhat of a, even if it's just bycatch, recreational component to this fishery, and I don't think - I think there's a lot of history about this fishery that I can go into, if necessary, but I think that, you know, it's not like we're trying to encourage a targeted recreational fishery, but, on the other hand, I would hate to see the ACL get shut down prematurely, if it's a weird intercept.

These are not fish that are going to survive getting thrown back, but, in light of the concern of industry, of whom I've spoken a lot with, I'm just going to throw this out there for discussion. I would propose Alternative 2 as the preferred. I would also like to say that, eventually, hopefully, we're going to have a stock assessment, but the assessment we do have now was paid for by the commercial guys, and so I think that that's something to keep in mind with, you know, their ownership of this fishery, their stewardship, if you will, of this fishery. Just for sake of discussion, I will say 2 and go on the record and say I'm not in support of 4.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I would be in support of 2, and I don't know how many MRIP intercepts it takes to shut the fishery down, and I'm wondering if Alternative 3 is kind of a middle-of-the-road between the two, and I thought we had discussed Alternative 3 in the past, and so I would be comfortable with either 2 or 3, and I will just put that out there. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Christina, I'm sorry if I missed this, but the recreational ACL is in pounds, and, with a lot of other, you know, species, we have it in fish, but, because we're talking about potential intercepts and the effect that could have with the accountability measures, do you know the average weight of these fish, and maybe we could find that out. I'm only interested

because how many fish would it take to reach the ACL? I understand they're pretty big fish, and so it might be worth just figuring out about how many fish that would be, in terms of numbers. Thank you.

MS. WIEGAND: I don't know the exact average poundage of wreckfish. We've been chatting over here, and thought they're pretty big fish, and maybe forty-ish pounds, and I'm guessing, and Kerry might also have a bit of an idea of approximately the size of a wreckfish.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I was just texting Mike Freeman, and my gut says fifty, but that's not super scientific.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Chester.

MR. BREWER: Well, I will be but a fond memory by the time this comes to a head, but --

MR. STRELCHECK: Chester, we think more highly of you than that. Well, some of us do.

MR. BREWER: I don't think that it really matters what the recreational allocation is, between any of these, because, if you have one intercept, you're going to shut the fishery down for the rest of the year, and that's just the reality of it, and so, I mean, why raise a bunch of angst by cutting this thing by, what -- Well, cutting it down to 0.5 percent, which is just silly, or even 1 percent, which is just a little bit less silly, and so, you know, if you leave it at 5, you're not really changing anything, and you're not going to have the angst that's going to occur, and, I mean, you will -- I don't know how many times I've read it, about how unfair NMFS and the council is to the recreational guys, and, lord, look at this, and we only get 5 percent of that fishery, and they get 95, and what's fair about that, and so I would just leave this thing alone.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Gary and then Spud and then Tim.

MR. BORLAND: I kind of second what Chester said. I feel like going backwards here is not fair and equitable, and I feel like we should leave the percentage the same. I feel like it's actually kind of low, and, like I stated before, on the snowy grouper piece, there are more recreational fishermen, although it's a small group, but there are more recreational fishermen targeting some of these deepwater fish today and going forward, due to other limits, and so I think we ought to get a fair share.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I assumed that, when there was a sector allocation established for this fishery -- You know, it talks about, you know, to curb some bycatch mortality, but I assume the other real purpose is to ensure that the commercial sector didn't become collateral damage of a wildly-erroneous MRIP estimate or something like that, because, you know, there's a part of me that says why do we even have a sector allocation in something like this, and, I mean, we're sitting here debating 1 percent, 3 percent, 4 percent, that kind of thing, but I am sensitive to the fact that, you know, if you've got that one intercept, and it, you know, got blown up, and then you end up with, you know, post-season accountability measures the next year, and it would constrain the harvest and that kind of thing, and so I guess -- It seems to be my mantra for this meeting, but we're just going to have grudgingly accept the imperfections that we have, but I agree. I think, if you change

it from 5 to 2 or 3, and, I mean, it's almost moot, in terms of what it's actually going to do, other than the optics of it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Well, it may kind of be moot, but, according to the data that we see out there -- Right now, they've caught zero, and I think it's important to recognize that, you know, the only reason we have a fishery in the first place is because somebody paid for a stock assessment, and so, you know, I think -- I don't want to belittle the fact that there's a recreational fishery because the commercial fishery paid for a stock assessment, and so I don't really think -- I think you're right, and I think you're splitting hairs, and so, if going to 1 or 2 percent makes the commercial guys that paid for the stock assessment feel a little bit better, then I don't have a problem with that either, and so I will be willing to support 2 or 3.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, first, Tim, we would have a fishery, regardless of the stock assessment, and certainly the industry stepped up to support that stock assessment, but we were setting catch limits and managing this fishery well before that. Regardless of that, a couple of things that have come up. The average weight, based on what I'm seeing, is about thirty-five pounds, averaging somewhere between thirty and forty pounds.

I asked, from the standpoint of just how much is the catch limit being met, and I recognize that it's confidential data, and so you don't necessarily see that reported on our website, but, in recent years, it has ranged from a low of 83 percent all the way up to 97 percent of the catch limit, and it will vary just depending on how much people are participating in the fishery, but I think that gives you also an indication of how close they're coming to their catch limit. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Also, if you note, in the document, prior to the Comprehensive ACL Amendment, it was 100 percent commercial. Would someone like to make a motion for a preferred here? You said discussion, and so was that a motion? It's fine, and were you intending it to be a motion? All right, and so that was a motion for Alternative 2 as the preferred under Action 1. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Mel. Let's go back and see which one 2 is. So 2 is the 98 percent commercial and 2 recreational, and so what do folks think about that? We've had some discussion on this, and we've been kind of all over the place on this one. Thoughts? Tim.

MR. GRINER: I would be supportive of that, and I think that does kind of capture that middle-of-the-road, or as fair and equitable as we can be. It doesn't need to be 100 percent a commercial fishery, which 99.5 is basically 100 percent, and so I think I can get onboard with Alternative 2.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I can go along with that too, but I think, just for gee-whiz, that would translate -- At an average weight of fifty pounds, that is 155 fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Maybe, just for the sake -- So this is going to go out to public hearing, and maybe some of that information, if it's possible to, you know, add into the document the number of fish, to the extent we can, and what it will do is generate -- You're more likely to generate good public comment when we have taken and -- You know, we indicated there's a possibility we are going to take action, where Action 1 is no action, and that could -- My argument would be it would generate some public comment, and we can find out how people feel about it, especially -- You know, we've heard from the commercial industry, from the recreational component, and we come back and we look at it again.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: At the thirty-five-pound average weight that Andy cited, that's 222 fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion here about selecting Alternative 2 as the preferred? We've heard some discussion on all of these alternatives, actually. Are there folks opposed to selecting Alternative 2? Let's go ahead and take a vote. All right. **Those in favor of making Alternative 2 as a preferred, raise your hand; those opposed. Are there abstentions? One abstention, and so the motion passes.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and then we'll cruise on down to Action 2. Action 2 looks at implementing the electronic reporting system for the wreckfish ITQ program, and, again, the purpose of this is to try to get those guys away from the paper-based coupons and create a system that is likely to increase timeliness of reported data, improve data quality, reduce the cost and time for management, and, in general, sort of improve management and enforcement of this fishery.

Alternative 1 would retain that current paper-based system, whereas Alternative 2 would implement the electronic system to track ownership, transfers of quota shares, distribution, transfer of annual allocations, and record wreckfish landing information, and so, here in Table 1, and, again, we've gone over this before, but you can just see some of the little differences between a paper-based and electronic system. Instead of having those numbered certificates, it would be a percentage that's done electronically. Instead of these 100-pound and 500-pound coupons, everything could be done in one-pound increments, and so on and so forth.

When we talked to the shareholders about this, they were supportive of Alternative 2 and moving to this electronic system, and the big thing we want to talk to you guys about here is how you want that system designed, particularly in terms of eligibility, and, when we talked to the wreckfish shareholders, their desire was to sort of maintain the current system, just in an electronic format.

When we move on to Action 3, we're going to talk about the wreckfish permits, but know that, sort of whether or not we keep that permit, what the wreckfish shareholders are looking for is to keep sort of that same system, where, in order to get the permit, you have to have shares, and so, essentially, the electronic system would become the wreckfish permit, in a sense. It gets a little nuanced, but, really, the point being that, in terms of how one can access the fishery, the wreckfish shareholders would like things to stay status quo, would like to have that system built into the electronic system, and so what we need is some guidance from the council that that's the way you would also like to move, and then we can sort of dig into getting this program designed and working through the codified text, to make sure that it accurately reflects the switch to the electronic system.

Then the shareholders -- We did talk to them a little bit about any requirements they would like to see to maintain shares, and they felt like, in order to maintain shares, an individual should have to also maintain their snapper grouper unlimited permit, the idea being that, in order to maintain shares, you have to have all the things that you're required to harvest them, and they did note that maybe a grace period should be built in, to allow individuals who may be looking to get out of the fishery time to sell their permit and shares to someone else.

In terms of environmental consequences, this an administrative action, and so it's not expected to directly affect the biological environment in any way. In terms of economic and social benefits, moving to this electronic system is thought to improve quota monitoring and would likely lower errors, once fishermen got used to using this new electronic system, and then, finally, in terms of an administrative impact, which I know we don't often talk about at this table, but we felt it was appropriate to include it here, given the heavy administrative nature of these actions, and managing this system sort of in one location is expected to decrease costs and actually increase management and analysis of the program, in the long run, and so it's really expected to improve the administrative burden, in the long run. With that, again, I will turn it back over for discussion of a preferred alternative under this action and guidance on whether you would like the current access structure to stay in place.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good questions. Kerry and then Chester.

MS. MARHEFKA: This one always confuses me a little, and as much as I've talked about, I can't -- Bear with me. Obviously, we want to go electronic, and no more dots for me, but my question is about the permit, the access, right, because there are some shareholders who have talked about wanting the possibility of being able to lease shares to folks that have a snapper grouper permit, but not necessarily -- They are not necessarily a wreckfish shareholder. I am getting live comment on that. If that's the case, is that encompassed in that bottom square of Table 1, where you talk about the permit? Like will we deal with this in the next action, or do we need to worry about this here?

MS. WIEGAND: We will talk about it a little bit in the next action, and my understanding is that that situation can be built into the electronic system, to allow that to happen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are you making a motion to select a preferred?

MS. MARHEFKA: I love how you read my mind like that. **I make a motion to select Alternative 2 as our preferred alternative.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. we have a motion. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Tim. Just to clarify, I think that you were suggesting specifically that someone need the snapper grouper permit, but not necessarily the wreckfish permit, just to be clear.

MS. WIEGAND: I don't want to speak for Kerry, and I believe that, yes, that's what you're suggesting, and we'll talk about the wreckfish permit in the next action, and so --

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

MR. BREWER: I pass.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Not directly to the motion, and I'm supportive of, obviously, moving into the twenty-first century with reporting. My concern, on this one, and I think this gets back to the comment about kind of the administrative environment, is we're saying this is going to reduce costs and time for management, and I don't necessarily disagree on the time for management, but I'm concerned about the cost of building a system like this, and maintaining a system like this, relative to kind of the current program and the cost recovery that would be deriving from this program, and so I would ask that, as we move forward, that there be a direct comparison of kind of the current cost of the program and the cost burden of kind of a newly-designed electronic program, because I think that's going to have to be a key consideration here.

Just to put this in perspective, and I'm ballparking here, based on the landings for wreckfish average price, I'm estimating about \$40,000 to \$50,000 in cost recovery would be generated for this program. The Gulf of Mexico IFQ programs on the order of \$50 million and generate one-and-a-half-million dollars to run those programs, and so we are orders of magnitude different, in terms of running the program, and I recognize that wreckfish wouldn't require the same amount of funding, but I don't think we'll be able to run the program on \$45,000 either. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good point. Any more discussion on this? All right. **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that's approved. That motion is approved.**

MR. BELL: Okay. Thanks, everybody. We're going to go and ahead stop right there in wreckfish, and we'll pick up tomorrow in wreckfish, and we've got a few other things to do in Snapper Grouper before we're finished tomorrow with that, but what we're going to do right now is go ahead and shift over to the public hearing mode, and we'll start the public hearing at 4:00, and that gives us time to retool here, and readjust, but good job. We're actually doing pretty good on schedule, overall, but we will plan on picking it up back in Snapper Grouper tomorrow morning, and so hang around for the public hearing here.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on September 14, 2022.)

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SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on Thursday, September 15, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We are going to dive back into the wreckfish amendment, and we are not done with that. We're only on Action 3, and I'm going to turn it back to Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Good morning, everyone, and so, diving back into wreckfish, we're on Action 3, which looks at modifying the requirement to possess a commercial vessel permit for wreckfish, and the reason this action is in the amendment is because we're moving towards that electronic system that we talked about under Action 2, and the wreckfish permit is seen as being sort of duplicative, and it's unnecessarily complicating the use of data by program analysts.

Additionally, the way the language is written right now, it requires NMFS to determine whether an entity is an employee, contractor, or agent of the vessel, which can be difficult without requesting a significant amount of additional information that's not typically requested of a permit applicant, and so there are three alternatives under this.

Alternative 1 would retain that commercial wreckfish permit. Alternative 2 would retain the permit, but would remove that complicating language about the shareholder needing to be the vessel owner, the owner or operator must be an employee, contractor, or agent of the shareholder, and then, finally, Alternative 3 would remove the requirement for the wreckfish shareholder permit entirely. You would still need to have that snapper grouper unlimited permit, however, to harvest wreckfish and, of course, shares.

I do want to go over the shareholder recommendations here. The shareholders indicated that they were comfortable with Alternative 3, which would be removing the permit, but they wanted to make sure that the current entry criteria remains in place, and so, again, with that permit -- In order to get the wreckfish permit, you have to own shares, and so that system could be built into the electronic system.

They did note that Alternative 2, retaining the permit, but removing that sort of agent language, might be overly complicating for the fishermen themselves, because it would preclude having multiple vessels fishing, and then it was also noted that it's going to be important to track who is leasing shares and making landings, to make sure that no one is sort of gaming the system, and they did express that the paper-based system works. They would prefer to move to an electronic system, but they don't want to sort of overcomplicate something that's already working, and so, really, their desire is to keep the current system in place and simply move it electronic.

In terms of environmental consequences, changing the permit requirement for wreckfish is not expected to have any effects on the biological environment. From a cost standpoint, and economic benefits, lowering the costs, by removing that permit, is likely to be beneficial, and then, in terms of administrative impacts, the actions are expected to be, you know, similar between all of the alternatives. The biggest impact is going to be associated with, you know, education, outreach, compliance, and law enforcement, as we educate fishermen to move into this electronic system. With that, I will stop and turn it over to the committee for discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Christina, and so just a reminder that we are trying to select preferreds in this document. Are there thoughts about this? I believe the shareholders said that they liked Alternative 3, and is that right?

MS. WIEGAND: They did. They said they were comfortable with Alternative 3, removing that permit, so long as the electronic system essentially became the permit instead, and so getting access to that electronic system.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thank you. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Apologies if you said this, Christina, and so I think part of the decision to select a preferred here would depend on the transferability of quota and allocation, and so, in the Gulf program, we have kind of three categories of participants. We have IFQ shareholders that have a permit, and we have permit holders that lease, or have allocation that they buy from shareholders, and then we have public participants that don't hold a permit, and, to me, restricting the harvest to only wreckfish shareholders really reduces the universe of participants, and, if that's the intent, fine, but quota allocation can be transferred to non-wreckfish shareholders for use, if that's the way we want to set up the system.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thoughts on this one? This is the challenging one. Kerry, do you have some thoughts on this one?

MS. MARHEFKA: I have a lot. I don't know if any of them are coherent, I mean, I think partially because -- Is this the moment to have sort of a philosophical discussion that I think needs to be had, or do we have this later, when we're doing the MSE? You know, I think about Alternative 2, which, you know, the shareholder must be the vessel owner, and, I mean, I'm sure, to some extent, the intent of some of these, in the past, this kind of language, has been to avoid having sort of an owner class and an absent owner, and I don't -- That is one of the things that very much troubles me about IFQs, or ITQs, or whatever you want to call them, is what we don't want to happen is to have a bunch of armchair fishermen.

On the other hand, I know the participants of this particular fishery, and I know how it operates, and it makes sense for this fishery, and I just don't know about -- I worry about precedent setting versus tailoring it for the people we know right now, and so that's not helpful, but those are the thoughts that are running through my mind, and I just think it's a very big discussion that we need to have as a group.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree, and it is a challenging discussion, and is the snapper grouper unlimited permit by itself enough, or do you have to have the wreckfish? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. It is a very unique fishery, in that there's only a handful of participants, and there's not very many -- There's not any, that I know of, that are young participants, and it's an expensive fishery to get into. It's a very specialized fishery. The gear is expensive. Everything about this fishery is expensive, and I just want to make sure that whatever we do doesn't end up making it more and more difficult for these guys to get out of this fishery and somebody to step in and take their place.

That's one thing that we really need to keep in mind, is let's not make this so burdensome, and so cost prohibitive, that, you know, a young person can't work his way into it, little by little, whether it be a little bit of allocation now and work building up his gear, building up his boat, until finally he can do this on his own, but it's a very specialized fishery, and there's only a handful of guys in it, and they're not young chickens either.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So, even with all this, we still need to think about a preferred, and I know we're still a year away from approval of this, because we're seeing it at every-other meeting, and

so we're going to see this, I think, three more times, which will give folks time to comment on it. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: With that said, I think that I would make the motion to make Alternative 3 our preferred, with the rationale being that that's what the AP members and the shareholders suggested, and that we get more comment and really come back together and think about sort of some of these bigger, long-term, philosophical issues.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great point, and so motion by Kerry to select Alternative 3 as the preferred, and it's seconded by Chester.

MS. WIEGAND: I just want to sort of, I guess, clarify something, and so I think that this conversation about eligibility and how people can get in and out of the fishery is incredible important. My understanding, from talking with NMFS staff, is that sort of, regardless of whether the permit, the wreckfish permit, is retained or not, those sort of eligibility criteria can be built into the electronic system, based on council guidance.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion here to select Alternative 3 as the preferred under Action 3. Is there any discussion, or any additional discussion, of this motion? **Is there any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion is approved.** Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I would like to make a motion to add a fourth alternative, and I won't wordsmith the language, and I think I will let the staff do that, but I would like to include an alternative that allows for harvest or sale of wreckfish with a commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper, but removing the permit holder must be a wreckfish shareholder.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're getting that on the board, and so motion by Andy and seconded by Kerry. Okay, Andy, and does that look like your motion there? All right. So this would add a fourth alternative to this particular action. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Just so I understand what this does, with this alternative, anyone with a snapper grouper permit would have the ability to just go lease some shares and participate, and is that what this does, and so they wouldn't have to have anything additional? They would just have to lease or buy allocation from an existing wreckfish shareholder, and then they could go at it?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It looks like Andy is nodding his head yes, and so is Kerry. Okay. Andy, do you have more?

MR. STRELCHECK: Did I get a second? I guess we did. Okay. My rationale for this one -- I mentioned earlier, in terms of how we structure the IFQ program, and so this would be consistent with how the IFQ program functions in the Gulf of Mexico, with the exception that we aren't allowing that third category that I mentioned, the public participants that don't have a permit.

The importance, to me, is this is a small fishery, and there are potential issues where a vessel may not be able to go fishing. People want to get into the fishery, but can't afford to buy the shares, and they could lease allocation to go out and harvest quota. A person that couldn't go fishing one year could lease their allocation and give others an opportunity to harvest wreckfish, and so I see

it as a viable alternative, and I'm not recommending it as a preferred alternative, but just something that's reasonable to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Andy. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: In addition to that rationale, I was talking to some fishermen yesterday, and there is starting to be a little bit of a fishery for barrelfish, and, when you're catching the barrelfish, you're interacting with wreckfish, and so it may also be an opportunity to have a small amount as a bycatch fishery, and so that would be another good reason.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good points. All right. Any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion is approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right. This brings us to Action 4 and Action 5, which I will sort of explain together, because they go hand-in-hand. Action 4 looks at modifying the commercial fishing year for wreckfish. This is in here in order to help reduce the administrative burden and system downtime related to an electronic ITQ program. Right now, the commercial fishery runs from January 15 through April 15, and Alternative 2 would simply switch that to a calendar year, with wreckfish beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31.

Action 5 looks at modifying the spawning season closure, and this is simply to better align the spawning season closure with the potential switch to a calendar year commercial fishing year that's proposed in Action 4, and so, right now, from January 15 through April 15 of each year, no person can harvest or possess wreckfish. Alternative 2 would switch that to January 1 through April 1, and, again, this is because the current electronic reporting system has required downtime, typically done from December 31 to January 1, and this is a program that includes, you know, the red snapper IFQ, grouper-tilefish, HMS's blueline tuna IBQ, and so this essentially prevents a situation where wreckfish would have to be shut down when these have to be shut down, and then vice versa, and those would have to be shut down when wreckfish is shut down.

When we talked to the shareholders about it, they noted that they were comfortable with Alternative 2 under Action 4, and so modifying the commercial fishing year to be the calendar year. However, they did want to keep the current spawning season closure the same, that January 15 to April 15, and they also asked the council to consider timing with the golden tilefish longline season, and, just as a reminder, you are considering this in Amendment 52, and the current preferred, if I'm remembering yesterday's conversation well, is still to have the golden longline endorsement holders begin on January 15.

Their reason for wanting to keep the spawning season closure the same is that this was set based on science, and the wreckfish shareholders felt there wasn't currently any science that would justify a change in that spawning season closure, and it was noted that the biological, economic, and social effects are expected to be minimal. The fishing year doesn't directly affect landings or behavior, and that spawning season is just shifting by two weeks, and so they're expected to be roughly equivalent alternatives. The need for the action is purely administrative, and so it is noted that Alternative 2, under Action 4, would likely reduce administrative burden, again avoiding those multiple shutdowns of the system.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so two actions here, somewhat related to each other, first modifying the commercial fishing year and then modifying the spawning season closure. What do we think for preferreds here? The shareholders suggested Alternative 2 under Action 4. What do people think about that? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sure. **I will move that we make Alternative 2 our preferred motion under Action 4.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Trish. It's under discussion. Once again, this is changing the fishing year. Any more discussion of this? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Wasn't there -- Is this kosher with the electronic logbook? Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, the new electronic system, and I would look to Andy for that, and I assume that this would work with the new system. Christina says that's why it was proposed. All right. Good questions. Any more discussion on this motion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion is approved.** Now we're going to go to the spawning season closure that is related to the previous motion, and it seems like the shareholders were selecting 1, no action. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: **I move that we move Action 5 to the Considered but Rejected pile of things.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Pile of things. Love it. Okay. Motion by Kerry, and it's seconded by Mel. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I recognize, right now, the fishing year is April 15 through January 15, and do we -- I know landings are also confidential, and so do we have any information to know how much fishing goes on from like January 1 to January 15?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I can just tell you, anecdotally, especially -- Amy is saying no. Amy knows. Amy would know. Maybe there's not a lot happening, but this is what I wonder. If golden tile gets moved to January 15, and the wreckfish guys can fish those two weeks of January, that is a white fish on the market that we need, and so I suspect that, if it's not happening now, which it's not, that it might change, if there is those two weeks without golden tile on the market, because those two fish very much, at least in my world, compete with each other for a market.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Along those lines -- I was thinking of it from the standpoint of, if there's not a need to open that timeframe, because they weren't fishing it, and not utilizing that, then, administratively, that would be a benefit to the program, and it's a hard turnaround time for us, early in January, to kind of get these programs up and running, and I think what we want to look at is just kind of the administrative downtime of the system and whether it's a sufficient window, if we add this program, because it's going to be more work, beyond, obviously, the current programs, but it wouldn't necessarily need to be fifteen days, or a long period, but it just might need to be longer than the twenty-four hours we essentially have now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds good. With that being said, are you still okay with this motion to move this item to the Considered by Rejected?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, because I think we would handle the administrative downtime in a different manner.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Just checking. Any more discussion on this? Once again, this is moving Action 5 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. All right. **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right. This brings us to Action 6, which would require all commercial vessels with the South Atlantic snapper grouper unlimited permit that were participating in the wreckfish portion of the snapper grouper fishery to be equipped with vessel monitoring systems. This was discussed at the original wreckfish shareholders meeting, back in October of 2020, or 2021, and time is blurring together a little bit, and, when they discussed the VMS requirement -- It was brought up by staff, and we asked them specifically if this was something they were interested in.

Some felt that it may be a necessarily evil, and there were concerns about offloading times and enforcement of those offloading times, and so the council had directed us to include it in the amendment. There are just two alternatives under it right now. Alternative 1 would not require the VMS system, and Alternative 2 would require the VMS system.

We haven't gotten deep into the details, but, when we talked to the wreckfish shareholders again at the meeting this last June, they made it very clear that they were not interested in a VMS program. They felt that there was really no tangible benefit to the wreckfish fishery, particularly because there are no marine protected areas near their fishing grounds. They felt that logbooks provide enough information to use for science and that VMS is not likely to provide additional information that is beneficial to management of the program. They also understood that VMS would not necessarily remove the offloading site and time requirement, and, with that not being the case, they were no longer interested in VMS.

Again, neither Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 are expected to have any effect on the biological or ecological environment. There could be negative social and economic effects, particularly related to the increased burden of purchasing, learning, and maintaining the VMS system, as well as concern about how those data may ultimately be used, and, finally, it would increase the administrative burden significantly, because it would require development of the infrastructure to monitor those vessel monitoring tracks. With that, I will turn it back over to the committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Christina. To me, I think the VMS was talked about because folks were thinking it would remove the hail-in and hail-out requirement, and remove other pieces, like maybe the landing location requirement, but it doesn't look like it would do that, and so, based on that, it seems like, since it won't remove those things, that the shareholders didn't want to go down this road of a VMS, but, Kerry, do you have some thoughts on this?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes. **I am going to move that we remove Action 6 to the Considered but Rejected section as well, for the same rationale that you talked about.** Also, I do feel like

implementing a VMS system in this document will be burdensome on our time. I think, if you look at sort of like a cost-benefit analysis of what we need to do, and how long we've been working on this amendment, to implement a VMS system that is going to have very limited benefits, it's certainly -- They're exactly right, and I think VMS is a great tool when you're enforcing closed areas, when it will help with hail-in and hail-out, but we don't have either of those situations in this fishery, or it won't help the latter situation, and so that's my justification for removing this at this time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Kerry, and so, once again, the motion is to send Action 6 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix, and that was seconded by Chester. Any more discussion? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: My preference would be to keep it in at this time, and not select a preferred. I think, based on the comments that I made earlier about the universe of participants, the need for VMS might change, if we expand this to a broader group of participants, and then I guess I'm going to put OLE on the spot here. Pat, any comments or thoughts from a law enforcement perspective, given your experience with IFQ programs and the use of VMS? He's not listening. I am asking, with regard to law enforcement, the use of VMS in IFQ programs, because there is discussion about removing this entirely from the amendment for consideration for wreckfish ITQ.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I would have to go with Andy in keeping it in there. VMS -- I've got a long history, with my past VMS program manager background, and it does provide useful benefits, particularly if this fishery should grow, and having that still as a viable option that can be looked at later might be worthwhile.

If you look back through the past briefs that have been presented to the council, the VMS program is not just a solely we've-got-you law enforcement tool, and there is lots of benefits, particularly in the Gulf. If you talk to a lot of those fishermen, today, on the benefits of VMS, there's a large portion that would keep it in their fleet anyway, if it weren't required, just because of the way they use it in their day-to-day fishing operations, keeping in contact with their vessel, seeing where their vessels are fishing, or where they're going, and so I would also recommend that it be kept for future consideration, particularly if the fishery does grow, which we are looking to potentially make that happen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Christina is going to share what the Law Enforcement AP said, and then we'll go to Clay.

MS. WIEGAND: We did bring VMS and the permit issue up to the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel in February of this year, and they also mentioned some of the benefits of VMS, particularly in terms of monitoring marine protected areas, and also safety-at-sea considerations.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you, and I would also add that VMS data is certainly much better than the area information that we would get from the logbooks, being much more precise, and so I would say it would be useful for us, especially for developing fisheries like wreckfish, to understand where the catches are all coming from.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Clay. I'm going to go back to Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: In light of what we're hearing, and the fact that we still have a year in this process, if Chester is okay with it -- **It seems like there is still some worthy conversation to have around it, and I will withdraw my motion.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. You have approval of the seconder, and so the motion is withdrawn. Then I'm going to assume that we don't want to pick a preferred here, and we just want to leave this in the document, and it looks like heads nodding, yes, don't pick a preferred, but leave it in the document.

MS. WIEGAND: Okay, and so is the intent -- Would you like staff to -- Is this something you want us to bring to maybe to the Snapper Grouper AP, to the public, to discuss, and would you like us to also start developing -- There would be additional actions needed with this, to work to develop a VMS program, things like whether or not you're going to require a hail-in and hail-out, and things like that would need to be discussed, and so is direction to staff to develop those actions to bring back to the council?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, yes, because the proof is in the pudding, right? Let's see the details, and I think that's when we're really going to flesh out whether or not this is going to be a useful tool for this fishery, and so, to the extent you can drill down into the details of -- As Tim pointed out, to me, you know, if this is coupled with these snapper grouper boats being able to lease wreckfish -- If they have to get a VMS, which could be a great barrier, a good barrier, to entry, meaning like people are serious to enter, and it also means, when they're snapper grouper fishing, what happens to that VMS, and so I think there's a lot in the minutia that, the sooner we get to, the sooner we'll know whether or not we want to do this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you for that discussion.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. That moves us on down to the offloading site and time requirements for wreckfish, and so wreckfish shareholders have expressed frustration over the current offloading site and time requirements. It substantially affects the efficiency of their fishing operation, particularly the turnaround time from when they arrive back at the dock, can unload, and get back out to the fishing grounds, if they have to sort of sit and wait for these offload times to come around. Additionally, they have said they rarely, if ever, see law enforcement there, and so they feel like, while the hours are in place, they're not actually benefiting law enforcement, because they don't ever see law enforcement at the dock.

Currently, wreckfish can only be offloaded between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. local time, and they have to be offloaded at the fixed facility of a dealer with a GSAD permit. Alternative 2 would extend those hours to 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Alternative 3 would extend the offloading hours to 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., and then Alternative 4 would remove the offloading hours completely, but would still require wreckfish to be offloaded at that fixed facility with someone with a GSAD permit.

When discussing this with the shareholders, they said their preference was Alternative 4, but they understood that, if the hours had to remain, their preference would be Alternative 3, which is the broadest of offloading hours. They did express that wreckfish seems to be only fishery in the South Atlantic that has these set offloading times and that it's unclear to them what additional benefit this is providing to the wreckfish fishery.

In terms of environmental consequences, again, the biological impacts are expected to be the same with any of the alternatives. In terms of economic and social benefits, those offloading times require a cost on fishermen, if it hinders their fishing activity, and then of course, for social effects, addressing a problem in the fishery always benefits perceptions of the management process. Then, finally, Alternative 2 and 3, which would increase that window for offloads, while providing a bit more flexibility for fishermen, would increase the potential administrative burden on law enforcement.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Christina. I will say that I'm not in favor of removing the offload requirement. Our law enforcement is adamant about that. I think Alternative 2 matches the Gulf IFQ, but I think that I would be willing to go with Alternative 3, which increases the number of hours, but, Kerry, what are your thoughts on this?

MS. MARHEFKA: I know I've been using my fair share of microphone time this morning, but I just have to -- Just in good conscience, and I know I'm not going to win it, but, in case we discuss this in other fisheries, but this is such an antiquated provision for how a fishery has to operate these days.

We have such a lack of infrastructure. There is so few docks that we can unload at. In our case, we have to unload at high tide, because we don't have the physical infrastructure to get the fish off the boat in any other way, and so, if you come in, and high tide is at 4:00 a.m., you have to wait, and, you know, that's a long time to do it, and it's just not -- Back in the day, when there were big fish houses, when that was the primary, you know, thing that was happening on the waterfront, it was much easier to do that.

We have to be so much more nimble now, as dealers, and as fishermen, and I hate this provision, and they're right. They don't see law enforcement, and, I mean, in Florida, maybe they do, but I'm telling you, you know, not to the extent up here that this should matter. I know I'm not going to win this battle, and so I was wondering if possibly there was any sense in adding a fifth alternative that would have the longer -- The 6:00 to 6:00 timeframe with that portion in Alternative 4 that allows you to unload anywhere with a twenty-four-hour notice prior to offloading, and so you're extending the hours, and you're giving more flexibility as to where, and does that make sense?

MS. WIEGAND: So that portion is already included under all of the alternatives, and so what you just described would be Alternative 2, which is the 6:00 to 6:00, which matches the Gulf, and then Alternative 3 has the longest hours, the 5:00 to 8:00.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Is there other discussion on this one? Tim.

MR. GRINER: I just wanted to echo what Kerry was saying. It's not just getting to the dock, but it's getting back in the inlet as well. The timing is getting to be crucial and more crucial, and the

flip side of that is, without these great big facilities to unload even a small grouper snapper boat - You know, sometimes we're meeting a refrigerated truck from the dealer at a remote place, or at a dock that we can get to, just simply so that we can get this product off the boat and get it on the market without wasting another twenty-four or forty-eight hours of time, and so it's really critical that we get in and get the fish off the boat without being hamstrung by waiting around for some arbitrary timeframe, and so I really think that a lot of thought should be put into removing the timeframe aspect of it, and especially if we end up going to VMS. Then I think it becomes really a moot point. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: These are great points, and I think I would ask Christina -- Does the Law Enforcement AP meet again before this would be finalized, so that they could have another discussion about this?

MS. WIEGAND: Myra, who runs the Law Enforcement AP, indicates that they usually meet in the spring, and so, arguably, we could have them meet either before or after your March meeting, depending on the schedule, but before you take final action in September.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That sounds good, and I think that would help. These are interesting points, and they don't have the tide issue in the Gulf, and so interesting discussion. Andy, do you have any thoughts here? Christina has some first.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say we did have the Law Enforcement AP talk about this earlier in the year, and they indicated that the offloading time requirements were beneficial for officer safety, and they had recommended the 6:00 to 6:00 timeframe, which matches what's in the Gulf, but we could certainly speak to them again and provide them some of the additional information that, Kerry, you and Tim have discussed today.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, there's five boats in this fishery, you all. I mean, the fact that we can't just -- I mean, if we're having a broader discussion about snapper grouper, which we're going to do later, I get it, but there's five guys, and there's multiple checkpoints at every way, including my little stupid paper coupons, to check how much fish they're unloading. I mean, sorry, but they're stupid. It's like taking the SATs over and over again.

I'm sorry, but fisheries are not a nine-to-five job, or a sunset-to-sundown job, and it's just not. We're not operating that way, and I would guess, if you go into law enforcement, you've got to assume that you're going to have some odd hours. I just -- It's five guys, just trying to like fight for dock space, fight a tide, and it's bananas to me. Sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Kerry. Good points. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, first, in terms of the coupon comment, don't blame me, and I was probably in high school when that was created, and so that tells you how old the system is. With that said, I don't feel strongly about this, and I do think it's important, obviously, to get law enforcement input, and I think Kerry has raised some great points. I think the other aspect of this is that, by moving to an electronic system, some of the things that have been stated about law enforcement not doing as many intercepts, or checks, might change, because, the way the system

at least works in the Gulf, we are sending notifications to officers, and they are getting more information to be able to do that work, and so the window of time, or whatever changes we would want to make, and I think I would leave it to the law enforcement panel and the discussions by the industry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree with Andy. Our law enforcement folks, and I'm sure it will come up at the AP meeting, but they said the same thing. Getting rid of the paper coupons, and using the electronic system, would make it easier for them to know when they can send someone to meet the boat. All right, and so then I don't think we want to select a preferred here yet, and we'll wait until after the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel, and I will turn it back to you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. That moves us on to our last set of actions, which look at implementing a cost recovery plan, and, again, this is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and so all of the sort of no action alternatives that you're going to see under here are not legally-viable options. We have to establish a cost recovery program. Another thing to remember is that the percentage of this cost recovery is not something that is set by the council. That's something that is set by the agency, once they sort of determine the cost of administering the program.

There are four sub-actions under this, which sort of do the who, what, when, where, and why of cost recovery, and so, starting with Action 8.1, this looks at implementing the program, and this sort of looks at who is responsible for cost recovery. Alternative 2 would implement the cost recovery plan, and the shareholder that's landing wreckfish would be responsible for collection and submission of the cost recovery fee. Alternatively, under Alternative 3, it would be the dealer receiving wreckfish that would be responsible for collecting the cost recovery fee, and so I think maybe the best way is to go through these one-by-one.

I am going to scroll down to the shareholder comments for Action 1, or for Action 8.1, excuse me, and the shareholders were most comfortable with Alternative 2, because they did not want the dealers being the ones responsible, especially with the current dealer permit being open access, and they were more comfortable with the shareholder being responsible for cost recovery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so there's a number of actions, or actually sub-actions, under this alternative, but we're going to try to take them one at a time, and so back to the action to implement a cost recovery plan for the wreckfish IFQ program. Just a reminder that this is the oldest program in the nation, and it did not have a cost recovery program, and that's why it has these exciting paper coupons, and so Alternative 1 is definitely not viable. Do you guys have a suggestion for which preferred you would like to see here? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I would definitely like to move that Alternative 2 becomes the preferred. If possible, and I don't know, via NEPA, and I would like to remove Alternative 3 altogether, for many reasons, and so I just don't know if you need that in there or not, and I don't think anyone is in support of it.

MS. WIEGAND: I don't think anyone is support of it, based on the wreckfish shareholders, and I guess I will look to Monica and Andy. I would say it's considered a reasonable alternative to keep in the amendment.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I will ask Andy, because he's involved with Gulf fisheries, but, I think, in the Gulf, don't the dealers collect this? If they do, it's a reasonable option to consider, I think, in this amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and the struggle I'm having is reading kind of the wreckfish shareholder preferences, and they seem to be different, and contrary, to how we run the system currently, and so my concern is the administrative burden of having to run two types of cost recovery programs, rather than trying to align them and simplify them, as much as possible, so that they're streamlined, and so I wouldn't recommend removing the alternative.

Certainly you could select preferreds, but I think it would be beneficial, whenever this comes back to the council, that we have staff maybe talk through how the cost recovery program works and gives you more information to better understand, you know, the process and any concerns the shareholders may have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: In the Gulf, is the -- No, because it's the same dealer permit, right, and so the Gulf dealer permit is also not limited entry, and anyone can get one? So that's the concern.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: **Understanding all of that, I will withdraw my motion, because I understand that it's still in the reasonable range, but go on the record clearly stating that there is little support, for various reasons, including all the ones that shareholders said.**

Real briefly, I will just give the example that I gave to the shareholders, so everyone knows what I am thinking. Let's say my company unloads wreckfish and, for whatever reason, doesn't pay the cost recovery fees that that fisherman is due, and, as a dealer, we don't pay it. My dealer permit is under my company's name, and nothing stops me -- If there's some action against me not paying that fee, nothing stops me, tomorrow, from getting a dealer permit in my own name and operating again and doing it again, and there's just no enforcement mechanism, and these fishermen are left out to dry, because the money was, you know, out of their chain of custody, and it sets up a bad thing happening.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Kerry. There was a lot of that discussion at the shareholders meeting, and so Kerry has asked to withdraw this motion. I forget who the seconder was, but are we good with --

MS. MARHEFKA: Because I thought part of my motion was removing Alternative 3. **If the motion is just to select Alternative 2 as preferred, then I keep that one.** I'm sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for the clarification there. All right. We can't remember if we got a second or not. Would someone like to second this? All right. It's seconded by Mel. Once again, this is to select Alternative 2 as the preferred under Action 8.1 and then not remove Alternative 3, and Alternative 3 is the way they do it in the Gulf, and so it would still be analyzed

here as part of the reasonable range of alternatives. Any more discussion on this motion? **Any objections?** All right. **That motion is approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so next is Sub-Action 8.2, which looks at collection of the wreckfish ITQ recovery fee, and so there are sort of three options for collection of this that are laid out in Magnuson. The fees can be collected at the time of landing, the fees can be collected upon the sale of such fish during a fishing season, and the fees could be collected in the last quarter of the calendar year in which the fish is harvested.

One thing to note here that we sort of discussed a lot with the shareholders is that, since, under 8.1, you chose the shareholders as the one responsible, and, in some of these, it is set up so that the shareholder is collecting from the shareholder. When they discussed this, they felt that Alternative 3 would be the best mechanism, because, oftentimes, there's a lead time on return from landing of wreckfish, and so Alternative 2 is going to be too much of a variable for the wreckfish fishermen, and so they preferred Alternative 3, which, again, was having fees be collected upon the sale of such fish during a fishing season.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Would we like to select a preferred here? Kerry, this kind of goes to what you were already talking about, about when the fees are going to be collected, and do you have a suggestion for a preferred here?

MS. MARHEFKA: **I would move that we make Alternative 3 our preferred.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so there's a motion to select Alternative 3 as the preferred under Action 8.2. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Tim, and so Alternative 3 -- The fees would be collected upon the sale of such fish during a fishing season. Any more discussion? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: My preference is Alternative 4, and I guess, to use as analogy here, kind of think of this like you're going and making a credit card purchase, or you're doing a landing, and you're having to pay a fee each time that you do that landing, versus you get the statement at the end of the month, or, in this instance, the end of the quarter, which the cumulative total of what your cost recovery fee would have been for that particular quarter, and so that's how we have done it in the Gulf, and I think it's been very successful, and it reduces the burden both on the industry members to submit those payments each landing transaction, as well as then it gives them just kind of a cumulative summary, in order to do that at the end of each quarter.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that. That was helpful. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I just have a question, I guess for Christina, and these alternatives say -- Well, I will go to Alternative 3, and it says the fees will be collected upon the sale of such fish during a fishing season, and I'm not clear who we're talking about selling the fish, and are we talking about the fishing person selling the fish to the wholesale dealer, and is that what is? Okay. That explains it. Thank you.

MS. WIEGAND: Keep in mind this is looking at just collection of the fee, and we'll move on, after this, to Action 8.3, which looks at the frequency of submission to NMFS, and so the collection of the fee and then submission of the fee are two separate actions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That was helpful. Andy and then Kerry.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess I need to talk to my IFQ team, because I'm confused as to why we would separate collection from submission, if the shareholder is the one that's essentially collecting from themselves, and maybe that's the issue here, is that, if it's the dealer, then it makes sense. If it's the shareholder, you're really not collecting anything, right, and you're just -- You know you're going to have to pay that at the end of a time period.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: All right. Level with me, because it's just better to know now. Is there a very high likelihood that this program is going to have to directly reflect what is happening in the Gulf?

MR. STRELCHECK: So, as a wise steward of taxpayer dollars, my recommendation is that we reduce the administrative burden on the government as best we can, yes, and I say that in jest, but, I mean, we have limited budgets, right, and so, if we can streamline the programs as best we can, yes, it would be ideal.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion on the board here to select Alternative 3 as the preferred. Any more discussion on that? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion is approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Next up is, again, that frequency of submission, and so this is when that cost recovery fee is actually submitted to NMFS, which I believe can be done through the simple pay.gov, and I'm sure you all have paid taxes in that manner, and this can be done in a similar manner, and so, under Alternative 2, cost recovery fee would be submitted annually, and Alternative 3 is twice per year, Alternative 4 is quarterly, and then Alternative 5 is every month.

Again, when the shareholders discussed this, they were comfortable with Alternative 4, and they felt that quarterly worked well with how shareholders currently structure their business, and it wouldn't be excessively burdensome on the agency. Again, Alternative 4 is that quarterly submission.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Christina. Thoughts on the frequency action? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Could you -- Can they go -- I don't know how this payment works, but, in theory, if the structure is four times a year, could they pay it more frequently, if they wanted to?

MR. STRELCHECK: I will have to get back to you on that. I don't know.

MS. MARHEFKA: Again, that goes back to the whole who is collecting it, the dealer versus the shareholder, because, if I was the shareholder, and I handed my money over to the dealer, personally, I would want to sit right next to them and watch them pay it right then, and so it just makes me wonder, if we're going to be stuck with this dealer paying it thing, and that's why I was asking that question.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Would we like to select a preferred? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was wondering about, and maybe that's in the slide, but what happens if it don't get paid? Do you get your permit renewed, whether it's from the dealer or from the shareholder, and it comes time to renew the permit, and they ain't paid their money, or they're not going to pay it, or whatever, and is there something in there where they do not receive -- Renew their permit?

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't know if we've made any cases for people paying or not paying. I can tell you that, when you haven't paid, your dealer account will get locked, and you won't be able to purchase IFQ species until such time that you do pay, and so that's incentive, oftentimes, for people to pay their cost recovery. Because it's going through pay.gov, I believe there is some sort of like collections process that we would have to go through, in the event that someone is willingly not paying.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do we want to select a preferred here? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sure. **I will move our preferred to be Alternative 4, based on the advisory panel recommendation, or the shareholders meeting recommendation.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. There's a motion to select Alternative 4 as the preferred under Action 8.3. Is there a second? Seconded by Mel. Any more discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion is approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Last, but not least, we move on to the what of cost recovery, and so this looks at how the cost recovery fee is calculated. Under Alternative 2, it's based on the actual ex-vessel value, which is calculated by multiplying the wreckfish landings by the actual ex-vessel price, which is the total monetary sale amount a fisherman receives per pound of fish for ITQ landings from a registered dealer before any deductions are made for things like transfer of allocations, bait, ice, fuel, things like that.

Alternative 3, cost recovery is based on the standard ex-vessel value, which is calculated by multiplying the wreckfish landings by the standard ex-vessel price, which is based on the average ex-vessel price for the previous fishing year and any expected price changes during the current fishing year.

I will say there was quite a bit of discussion about this at the shareholders meeting, lots of differing opinions on whether or not it should be the actual or the standard ex-vessel value. Ultimately, everyone sort of agreed to go with Alternative 3, the standard, in the hopes that it would avoid people underreporting to lower cost recovery and that it would make it easier to calculate for fishermen trying to predict future expenses.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just I've been asked some questions really about what does this mean and how much can it be and those sorts of things, and the Act says this fee cannot exceed 3 percent of the ex-vessel value of the fish, and so, here, you're determining what ex-vessel value means, and then that cost is collected to -- For the actual costs directly related to the management, data collection, and enforcement of the program, and so that's why, you know, you're given -- These fishermen are given a specific amount of public resource, in a sense, to harvest, and so, to do that,

Congress has put in that, well, okay, if you get that kind of a benefit, then you should be paying back some of the actual costs to implement the program, and so it cannot exceed 3 percent, and Andy could talk to whether that 3 percent is ever hit in the Gulf, or if it's less than that, and just kind of for information for council members.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Monica. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: The Gulf program, although much larger than a lot of the fisheries we manage here in the South Atlantic, is still relatively small in size, and so the 3 percent cost recovery is fully recovered in the Gulf of Mexico and hasn't been reduced since its inception.

For the standard price, versus the actual ex-vessel price, I might get this a little bit wrong, but, just for clarity, with the standard price, the way I understand it is kind of think of it more as like an average price across the industry, and so someone might sell wreckfish for \$5.00, versus \$4.00, versus some other price, and so, rather than one person paying 3 percent on \$5.00, and another paying 3 percent on \$4.00, they would take an average, at the end of a quarter, and everyone pays kind of that flat rate, based on your landed catch. This is another one that, obviously, from a preferred alternative standpoint, and I understand where the wreckfish shareholders are coming from, but it would be an inconsistency with the Gulf. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. That was helpful. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Maybe Monica can help with this too, and so the Act prescribes a percent of ex-vessel being 3 percent, and does it say, or speak to, whether or not the total cost recovery can be above the cost to run the program? Can there be a -- I mean, certainly it wouldn't want to be a shortfall, but what happens if the cost recovery ends up being much more than it takes to run the program?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: We haven't encountered that situation with the Gulf programs, but, in other regions, and think of Alaska fisheries, the cost recovery is reduced based on the estimated cost to run the program and everything that Monica just mentioned with regard to the Magnuson Act, in terms of law enforcement, and so there is a periodic review of the programs that is required, and that's our opportunity then to determine if the costs that we're recovering exceed the cost for administrating and enforcing the program.

Just to note, and I mentioned it yesterday, that this is a fishery that is, what, a 400,000-pound quota, I think, and I was told, yesterday, that ex-vessel price is somewhere around \$4.00 to \$5.00, or maybe a little higher, and so you're looking at \$50,000 in cost recovery, which is a shoestring budget to run a program, to be honest with you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just want to confirm that it's gutted weight that it's calculated from and there's not going to be any sort of like calculations, you know, extrapolating it to whole weight, and you're just working on the gutted weight at landing.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and it would be whatever the units are that are landed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do we have a preferred that we would like to select here? The shareholders selected Alternative 3. Do we have thoughts here? Tim.

MR. GRINER: **I would think Alternative 3 makes the most sense too, because everybody is going to have a little bit different relationship with their dealer, and some guys may have a relationship with their dealer that, you know, they feel comfortable leaving that dock knowing what their price was, and other guys may want to play the market a little bit and see what the dealer actually gets for the fish, and so the ex-vessel price could move a little bit, depending upon when they actually decide they want to finalize their deal with the dealer.** You know, some guys kind of do it on more of a consignment-type thing, where, you know, I'm going to -- We're going to share in what you actually sell these fish for and not just what you've given me at the dock today, and so I think some kind of standard makes more sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Was that a motion?

MR. GRINER: Certainly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so that was a motion to make Alternative 3 the preferred. It's seconded by Mel. This is the preferred under Action 8.4. We've had some good discussion on this. Is there any more discussion? **Is there any objection?** All right. **It's approved.**

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so that was the last action, but, before we leave cost recovery, I did want to note some discussion that was had at the shareholders meeting surrounding a stock assessment for wreckfish, and so I think we talked about this yesterday, and it was the industry that paid for the stock assessment, back in the early 2000s, I believe, and so one of the questions that the shareholders have had, and that this council has had, is can cost recovery money be used to fund a stock assessment for wreckfish, and it was recommended, by NMFS staff at that meeting, that, if that's something the council is interested in getting more information about, that they direct staff to write a letter to the agency specifically posing that question, and so I just wanted to let you know that that discussion was had at the wreckfish shareholders meeting and see if there's any action the council would like to take.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thoughts? Clay.

DR. PORCH: I would say this is one that is kind of akin to dolphinfish, and it's probably not the best candidate for a regular type of stock assessment, and maybe is something we should look at with a management procedure, a management strategy evaluation, and I think that would be more fruitful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Clay, I was wondering if you could elaborate on why they're so different to me, and I understand the reasons why dolphin isn't a good candidate, but I'm not following on why wreckfish isn't.

DR. PORCH: Wreckfish are widely distributed throughout the Atlantic, and so, you know, I'm not expecting a self-replenishing population, and we're not really -- At least we're not aware that it is.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more discussion on this? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: A separate topic, and I think direction to staff, and you heard me comment about, next time this comes back to the council, I think it would be good to have the IFQ team discuss cost recovery, and I think it would be beneficial for a follow-up discussion of VMS with law enforcement and the advisory panel, and I don't know if there's any other topics we would want to have people with expertise to discuss on the program.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great points. Christina is getting that on the board there. Okay. Anything else? All right. I don't see any other hands. When do we see the next time? Two meetings from now? March?

MS. WIEGAND: Two meetings from now, and so this would come back to you guys in March of 2023, and so I guess my next question for you all is where you stand about feeling comfortable approving this for public hearings? We had originally sort of talked about doing public hearings at the March 2023 meeting, though I know that you all sort of discussed a lot with this amendment, and you seem to want additional sort of public input, maybe more input from the shareholders, and so I guess I would ask for direction, in terms of do you feel comfortable holding public hearings, and, if so, how would you like those public hearings to be held, and I guess that's also something that could be discussed under Executive Committee or during Full Council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good questions. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I was going to say that it would be my preference that it be done during the council meeting in March, because, I mean, this -- Staff did a really good job, I thought, of putting all these different issues together to be discussed by the shareholders at their meeting, and we got a lot of input there, and so I'm just really not sure how much more input is going to be necessary. Our preferreds that have been chosen here are pretty much down the line, with one exception, of what was -- What the shareholders wanted to see, and so I would be very comfortable with just having it in conjunction with the March meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thank you, Chester. Mel.

MR. BELL: I think I would agree with that. I mean, just given the nature of the fishery and kind of the general public interest in it, I think we've gotten really good input from the shareholders at this point, and there's still some things we need to iron out, and we can do that some more in March, and then it will be a little bit more gelled, perhaps, and we can use the meeting as a hearing opportunity.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so it sounds like people are saying public hearing at the March council meeting, and I see heads nodding yes. Can we get a motion to that effect?

MR. BREWER: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Chester, and seconded by Kerry. We've already had discussion on this. The motion is going on the board to approve Snapper Grouper Amendment 48 for public hearings at the March 2023 council meeting. Any discussion, or additional discussion, on that motion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion is approved.** Let's take a ten-minute break. When we come back, we're going to go into amberjack, but, Andy, did you have something before we take a break?

MR. STRELCHECK: Just, real quick, before we take a break, last night, you heard a number of comments about the vessel speed rule for North Atlantic right whales. Today, we are rolling out an announcement that we're extending the comment period. That comment will end on October 31, and I will share an email shortly with council staff.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Perfect. Thank you. All right. We'll take a ten-minute break, and we'll be working on amberjack when we come back.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going in the amberjack document, Amendment 49, and I'm going to turn it over to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Jessica. Today, we'll be going through Amendment 49, and this is the document that is adjusting catch levels for greater amberjack and making some other changes to management measures and looking at the snapper grouper recreational annual catch targets. I do want to point out that the document that is in your briefing book has a second version that was uploaded with the recent documents, and so you should see a "V2" at the end of the version that you're looking at, and that's the revised version. We had to put a couple of additional things that the council will be looking at as we go through today.

The background information, we've gone through this quite a bit, and so I won't spend a lot of time, but, just as a reminder, this is coming based on the last stock assessment for greater amberjack that was completed in 2020, and there was also that assessment where they are not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring, for South Atlantic greater amberjack. The SSC provided their OFL and ABC recommendations, and those were used as the basis for forming catch levels that are considered in this amendment.

This amendment has six actions, and one of the changes that we had to between versions was taking out the action that the council removed in the last meeting regarding the recreational minimum size limit, and so we had those renumbered in the list of actions, but those include revisions to the catch levels, and, as we discussed for gag, the overfishing limit is going to be removed. The pieces of language that have the overfishing limit, those will be taken out when we get back and work on this in the aftermath of the council meeting, but Action 1 is addressing the ABC, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield.

Action 2 is addressing allocations, Action 3 addresses the commercial minimum size limit, Action 4 addresses the commercial trip limit, Action 5 addresses the April spawning closure, and then Action 6 addresses the recreational ACTs for the entire snapper grouper fishery management plan, and so Action 6 has a bit of an asterisk next to it, noting that it's not only greater-amberjack-specific, but it's for the entire FMP.

The amendment timing is included there, and we are at the bottom step, for the council, of reviewing the final draft amendment, which is included in your briefing book, and considering approval for formal review, and so the objectives for today's meeting are to review modifications to language that have happened since the last meeting, and those are in the purpose and need as well as Action 1 and Action 3, and then review the draft conclusions, which include your draft rationale, and just make sure that the rationale is saying what you want it to say in the amendment, and then, finally, there will be consideration of approval for formal review.

First, we'll come to the purpose and need. The purpose and need has some wording edits that are included there, and, just because of the late stage that we are in this amendment, we want to make sure that we have a formal motion to approve these edits, or, if there are any further edits that you all would like to make, we can get those squared away right now, and so I will pause here for you all to take a look, and, if you deem appropriate, a motion to approve the edits would be helpful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike, and maybe you just said this, and so we're removing the language for the overfishing limit? Okay. Let's just make sure folks have a chance to look at this, but, ultimately, we will need a motion to approve the edits to the purpose and need statements. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: **I make a motion to approve the purpose and need statement, as revised.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Trish. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Tom. Any more discussion on the purpose and need? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I just -- Can you back it back up, so I can see the purpose? It doesn't make the sense, the way it's there, where it says to revise sector allocations, commercial trip, and then "limits" is eliminated, but what are you revising about commercial trips?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The commercial trip limits, that would be an addition. The highlight is an addition there, and, the places where language is being removed, we have the struck-out language.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay. I understand. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. All right. Any more discussion on the purpose and need? All right. **Any objection to the motion to approve the purpose and need statement, as modified?** I see heads nodding no. All right. **That motion is approved.** Back to you, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so now I will move us down into the actions. Action 1 revises the greater amberjack acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield. The council has selected a preferred alternative here of Preferred Alternative 2. That would set the total ACL and annual optimum yield equal to the recommended ABC from the SSC, and so that's what the catch levels would look like underneath that alternative.

As you scroll through the decision document, you have a few sections here associated with each of these actions. First of all is a summary of effects, and these have been described in previous meetings, but they're there for your reference, and they're also described in more detail in the actual draft amendment document.

You have your Snapper Grouper AP recommendation that was provided at the June meeting of this year, and so, in regard to this action, the Snapper Grouper AP had recommended a constant total ACL at the lowest recommended ABC level, and then there is a brief summary of public comments that is included there, just noting which of the alternatives had the largest portion of comments in support, and then if there are any additional comments that were provided up to the point of this meeting.

Then, finally, we have the draft conclusion portion, and that's the place where I would ask that you all take a bit of a harder look, just to make sure that that is giving the rationale that you all want to give related to your preferred alternative under each action, and so that's listed there, and, related to Preferred Alternative 2 in Action 1, the council had this reasoning.

You all chose to maintain the relationship of total ACL and annual OY being equal to ABC and updating the values to the most recent SSC recommendation. That's what the -- That relationship was already in place prior to this stock assessment and this amendment, and so you all have decided to maintain that with the rationale listed there. I will pause here and see if there's any additional language that you all would like to add or edits to your rationale, or if there are any changes that you all would like to make to your decision.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. This is Action 1, and we can't see the whole thing on the screen here, but this is revising the amberjack ABC, total catch limit, and optimum yield, and no longer doing anything with the overfishing limit, and so that's been struck here. Right now, we have a preferred. Are we good with that preferred? There were some conclusion statements in there, and we want to make sure that we agree with the conclusion statements. Ultimately, we would need a motion to approve the actions and the modifications to the actions and alternatives here. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, ma'am, Madam Chair. **I will make that motion. I move to approve the modified action and alternative language.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Spud. Do we have a second? Seconded by Tim. It's under discussion. Once again, we already have a preferred here, and I'm not sure if there was any desire to change the preferred, and it doesn't look like it. I see heads nodding no. Any more discussion on this motion? Spud, we modified that a little bit, to indicate that this is for Action 1. All right. Thumbs-up. Any more discussion on Action 1? **Any objection to approval of this motion?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Next, we're moving down to Action 2, which addresses the sector allocations, and the council has selected a preferred alternative of Alternative 3, and this would allocate 65 percent of the total annual catch limit to the recreational sector and 35 percent to the commercial sector. The current allocation is 60 percent recreational and -- Is 59.34 percent recreational and 40.66 percent commercial, and so this would be a change from the current allocation.

The rationale that was associated with this is that this allocation is based on the approximate midpoints between Alternative 1, which is the current allocation, based on the Coastal Household Telephone Survey estimates for the recreational fishery, and Alternative 2, which is applying the same allocation equation, but just with the FES recreational estimates, and this one is an

approximate midpoint between those, and it also is close to the average of how the landings have played out from 2010 through 2019.

Those are some pieces of the rationale, and, again, the same sections as were described before are included, and more comprehensive rationale is listed at the bottom of this section, in the draft conclusion, and I do want to point out that, relative to actions concerning allocation, we have consideration of addressing National Standard 4, and that's been talked about a little bit earlier this week and so we do have a statement included here about how Preferred Alternative 3 addresses National Standard 4, but I would -- I am going to pause here and see if there's any additional changes, edits, that need to be made to the council's rationale or your choice of a preferred at this point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chester.

MR. BREWER: Mike, I'm sure it's here, and I think it may have been either in one of the charts that we kind of skipped over here, but could you compare the number of pounds that commercial - Is allocated to commercial under the current allocation plan and what their pounds would be under Alternative 3?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Actually, yes, and this would be it. Okay, and so, under the current allocation, using the total ACL that was taken in Action 1, your current allocation -- We would be looking at Alternative 1, these highlighted rows, and the preferred alternative are the bold rows right here.

MR. BREWER: It's close, but it's not quite identical, but it's pretty close to what they are currently getting in their allocation.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So current -- Sorry, and I misinterpreted the question. The current poundage for the commercial fishery -- I'm sure it's included in here, and it's in the description. Sorry. I would have to locate it within the document, and that would require a little bit of scrolling. If you give me a second, I can do it, but I know, relative, the commercial ACL poundage is going to be increasing, but it's going to be close to the same, relative to the current poundage that they would be getting under that allocation and the new total ACL.

MR. BREWER: That answers my question, and I don't need to know the exact poundage, but just from the standpoint of -- They're not getting hurt under Alternative 3.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and they're not getting less, in terms of poundage. Thank you, Chip. They've got 769,000, is where the current commercial poundage is, and so, relative to the commercial poundage, that would be shown right here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: As we've talked about before with National Standard 2 and that prong about reasonably calculated to promote conservation, I'm just going to repeat again that I think what's a helpful sentence, really, from the National Standard Guidelines is that a conservation and management measure may promote conservation, in the sense of wise use, by optimizing the yield, in terms of size, value, market mix, price, or economic or social benefit of the fishery, really, and so, if you want to discuss anything about that further, and I think you have discussed those kinds

of things, but we just always haven't talked about them, in terms of reasonably calculated to promote conservation.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks, Monica, for those comments, and, you know, one of the things that I think we could benefit from is a more detailed discussion, going forward, of net economic benefits, and, if you look in the document, Tables 4.2.2.2 and 2.2.4 summarize those for both commercial and recreational, and so there's tradeoffs here when you allocate, where one sector might be experiencing net economic benefits, versus another receiving positive benefits.

In this instance, when you sum those two together, it's pretty close, almost across all the alternatives. There's not a huge disparity, and so it really is how do you want to shift those economic benefits in your rationale, in terms of choosing a preferred, or the preferred that you've chosen.

The other thing I will note is certainly you have kind of utilization, in terms of harvesting the quotas, and, in this instance, there is opportunity for both the commercial sector to expand some harvest, but also the recreational sector, at least under some near-term projections, doesn't appear to be closing, based on the data and information available, and so you would be maintaining a year-round season, and there's no guarantee of that, but, obviously, that's providing kind of that maximum opportunities to go harvest the amberjack for both sectors.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there more discussion here on this action? All right. Ultimately -- Okay. We don't need a motion to re-approve this. We've already selected the preferred here, and there aren't any edits from the IPT, and so is there any more discussion on this action? All right. I'm going to pass it back to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess, Monica, just a question related to National Standard 4. Is the language that's there kind of satisfactory to addressing it, in the way that the council needs to?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think so, and then we can expand it with the council conclusions, based on what we hear at the discussion at this meeting, and so I think that's fine.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Then I will continue moving us down into Action 3, which addresses reduction of the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack. This is one of the actions that has changed since the last meeting. There was an additional alternative added, which is Alternative 2, reducing the size limit to thirty-four inches fork length. You all have selected a preferred of Alternative 3, which is thirty-two inches fork length.

There is no additional analysis associated with the new alternative, just because the commercial minimum size limits that are being considered are below the legal size limit, and so the information that's available is going to be the same as what you've been seeing. It's the commercial observer lengths for fish that have been observed as caught below the minimum size limit, and those are shown here, but nothing additional, as far as seasonal predictions or changes of that nature.

The summary of effects is included there, as well as your AP recommendation and public comments portions, and then, finally, we're at the council conclusion, and we will need a motion to -- Excuse me. We won't need a motion to make the changes. You all had already directed the changes, and I just noted those there, and so we would just need council direction on what -- On if

your preferred is still your preferred and if the rationale satisfies what you all would like to say supporting your preferred alternative here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we've had a lot of discussion about this action to reduce the commercial minimum size limit. We have a preferred here, a preferred alternative to reduce the commercial minimum size limit to thirty-two inches fork length, and the reason Alternative 2 is highlighted is because we suggested that it be added at the last meeting, and so it's already in the document, and it doesn't need to be added. All right. Any discussion? Any desire to change the preferred here? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I believe I was the one who asked that a thirty-four-inch size limit be recommended, and so, you know, there's tradeoffs here, and, obviously, lowering the size limit reduces the number of discards and allows for greater opportunity to harvest a legal-size fish. Reducing it significantly can affect, obviously, the selectivity in the fishery and, ultimately, the fishing mortality, because, the younger the fish is, and removed from the population, it's not going to produce as many eggs and ultimately contribute to the spawning stock. I heard some comments, but I haven't heard a lot of comments, about the health status of amberjack maybe not being as good as we think it is, and so I would lean toward maybe being a little more conservative in this instance and reducing it all the way to thirty-two inches.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is that a motion to change the preferred?

MR. STRELCHECK: It is a discussion topic.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Just checking. Got it. All right. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I appreciate that, Andy, and, you know, I'm kind of torn on this too, but, you know, part of me feels like, well, if you really want to protect the breeding ability, then, by taking a fish that's thirty-two, overall poundage-wise, if you take more of those, then you're going to be leaving more of the bigger fish, and so maybe you really haven't had a net loss in your actual production of the species.

I will say, from an economics standpoint, you know, we have had an increase in allocation here, or not allocation, but overall ACL, and it is a very -- It's become a very important fish on the market. The prices are supporting a lot of demand for this fish, and I think the higher-quality fish is in the smaller fish, much more so, at least the fish that we see, and I don't know about -- I know they're different in the Gulf, and I know maybe some of the fish in South Florida are a little bit different, but, up our way, the smaller fish are definitely a higher-quality fish. We get more yield out of that fish, and so, in terms of conservation and economic benefit, there is some argument to be made that that thirty-two-inch fish is substantially better than even a thirty-four or a thirty-six-inch fish, but, you know, at the end of the day, I think we're splitting hairs with two inches, and so, you know, I can go either way on it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: What I've heard from the fishermen is that they are throwing fish overboard and that the sharks are grabbing the fish as soon as they throw them back in the water, and so, by reducing that fork length, they would be throwing less food for the sharks back into the water.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: This is a hard one, and I think we might be having some regional differences here too, because I'm hearing from fishermen in South Carolina and North Carolina that are worried about the stock, and are requesting thirty-four, or not changing at all, but I have also talked to Jimmy Hull and the Florida fishermen who are having the shark issue and who have a better marketability, obviously, with the smaller fish and the less worms, and so I'm feeling very torn, because I do feel like, in the north, they want one size limit, and in the south they want another, and I'm not quite sure how to rectify that, personally, at the moment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Kerry. Dale and then Dewey.

MR. DIAZ: I am not sure this helps your discussion, but I did want to kind of let you know how things are going in the Gulf of Mexico. Since I've been involved with the council process, around 2008, amberjack have been going down in the Gulf. Unfortunately, our last stock assessment that we got said that it's overfished and undergoing overfishing, and I was actually worried that whenever everything -- When we got everything from the SSC, when we got everything back, that we would not be able to allow harvest, but we are going to be able to allow some harvest, but it's -- I think our annual catch limit is going to be 600,000-plus pounds, which, for the entire Gulf of Mexico, is not a lot of fish.

We are working on a couple of documents right now, and one is to do the annual catch limit and sector allocations, and then we're also starting another document to look at different regulations and seasons and bag limits and trip limits and things like that, to also help us manage the harvest. Like I said, I'm not sure it helps your discussion, but I'm glad to hear that you all are not having the same problems in the South Atlantic that we're having with amberjack in the Gulf. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Dewey and then Clay and then Mel.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Given that you've got two size discussions here, is it too late to have a thirty-three-inch in there? That way, you split it between the north and the south and the discussion purposes, and that's one way to -- Thirty-three inches gives each side a little bit, and it's in the middle, and get 'er done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Dewey. Dale, did you have another point that you were trying to sneak in there?

MR. DIAZ: Well, I don't know that it's relative to you all's discussion, but we've done everything. We've changed bag limits, and we've changed seasons, and we've changed the time of the year that we open seasons, and we've -- We have taken the tack of raising bag limits. We were criticized for raising the bag limit, the last time we did that, because the stock actually went down after we raised the bag limit, but the stock has been going down on everything that we've done in the Gulf, and so I don't know that that was the primary driver of that, but we certainly got criticized for it. Thank you. That's all.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dale. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you, Chair. I brought this up the last time we had this discussion, but you're talking about potentially here a pretty dramatic decrease in the minimum size limit, which makes about a six-pound difference in the average size of the fish. What that means is you have the same quota, but now you're going to fill it with a lot more small fish, and so, really, if you're going to change the minimum size, generally speaking, if we run the analysis, it also means you have to reduce the ACL, and so you really should be making these decisions separately, setting the ACL based on a much higher minimum size limit, that's actually been in the fishery, and then, after the fact, going back and reducing the minimum size limit, and so I would caution strongly against reducing it to something like thirty-two inches. In fact, even to thirty-four inches is pretty marginal, because you're still filling the quota with smaller fish. The quota should be revised at the same time as you're revising the size limit. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel and then Tim.

MR. BELL: I was just going back to the things that I remember hearing from the AP and other folks, and it seemed like, yes, there are differences, depending on where you are and in terms of your preference, but I did hear folks, despite the seemingly healthy nature of this stock right now -- There were folks that were concerned about doing things that might be a little less conservation oriented, and so I thought maybe the thirty-four was that we were trying to split that difference between thirty-six and thirty-two, and that sort of made sense to me, to add it when we added it, but I am a little cautious about -- Particularly after what Clay just said, going to thirty-two, I would be more inclined, myself, to go to thirty-four, if we were going to reduce it at all.

I think that, in my mind, is kind of a compromise with what we were hearing all in terms about concern about the stock, potential concern about the stock, and marketability and availability things, and so I would be more inclined to go with thirty-four, myself. Just, given what we've got, and it's nice to have a fishery that you get a report like that, and I don't want to see us, at some point, you know, snatch defeat from the jaws of victory or something, which I would just be afraid of, and so, anyway, I would tend to go with thirty-four.

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

MR. GRINER: Yes. **I would like to make a motion to change our preferred from Alternative 3 to Alternative 2.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Tim and seconded by Kerry. Once again, the motion is to change the preferred alternative to Alternative 2, which is a minimum size of thirty-four inches, and so we've had a lot of good discussion so far. Any more discussion that we would like to have on this topic? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. I'm supportive of this. I don't necessarily have an issue with the smaller size limit, but, you know, going back to Clay's comments of, you know, looking at it in light of the ACL, and I appreciate Andy's comments regarding trying to be more conservative here, in light of what we're hearing from our advisory panel, and I can reiterate some of those comments from my own experience, and just the fishery doesn't seem as rosy as the stock assessment looks like. If we were going to have a smaller size limit, looking at the breadth of this amendment, the fishery is going to look very, very different, and so I think that's a lot of -- In light of all the changes we're making, it's easier for me to support this.

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

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so, next, we will go to Action 4, which is looking at the seasonal commercial trip limits for greater amberjack. As a reminder, for the commercial sector, there is a split season. This was put in place fairly recently, and I believe the first year that it was implemented was 2021, and there is a first season that goes from March through August, in which the commercial trip limit is 1,200 pounds, and there's a second season from September through the end of February, in which the commercial trip limit is 1,000 pounds, and there was some recommendation from the advisory panel for a desire to increase the commercial trip limit, in the second season in particular, and so you all put in an action to consider what would potentially be changes to either of those limits.

The way that your preferreds are set up at this point, you would be keeping the Season 1 trip limit the same, at 1,200 pounds, and you would be changing the Season 2 trip limit to 1,200 pounds, and so you would have the same trip limit in each of those seasons. The split season would still be maintained, in the sense that there's a split ACL. There's a portion of the ACL that is given to Season 1, and, basically, that harvest is evaluated against that portioned-out piece of the ACL, and then it starts over with the second portion of the ACL, when Season 2 begins, and so that was put in to try to extend the commercial season throughout the year, considering regional differences and when amberjack are available, and so that's kind of some background information related to that action.

You currently have the preferred alternative that I described. The rationale associated with that is provided in your draft conclusion, and some of the pieces surrounding that rationale were for more regulatory consistency, a little bit less confusion from what the trip limits would be at different points in the year, and there is something to note.

Related to these trip limits and kind of that split season, the fact that the split season was put in so recently -- All of the analyses that are surrounding this action and season projections and such, those don't have the split season included, and the split season was put in specifically to extend the length of the commercial fishery, and so that's something to note as you have your considerations of, you know, how those analyses look and how they match up with your rationale, but that is the background information for that action, and so I will pause here and see if there are any edits to the preferred alternative or the rationale.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any discussion here? We have a preferred, and is there any desire to change this preferred? I am just looking around the room. It looks like people are nodding no, no desire to change the preferred.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Then we will keep moving through and move next to Action 5, which is looking at revision of the April spawning closure. Under the current closure, during April, there is no commercial sale or purchase of greater amberjack, and there is a harvest and possession limit for both sectors of one fish per person per day, or one per person per trip, and this is the same limit that is in place for the recreational fishery throughout the year, and so the commercial limit, in terms of possession, matches the recreational during April.

There is a difference in the minimum size limits between the commercial and recreational fishery. The commercial minimum size limit is currently thirty-six, and you all have selected, in your previous action, for a change to thirty-four inches, and the recreational minimum size limit is twenty-eight inches, and so there is still a difference in size limit that is in effect during April, and that makes those two fisheries not quite the same, but they do have the same in terms of a possession limit during that month.

The preferred alternative that you all have selected would close both sectors during the month of April, and so there would be no purchase or sale, harvest or possession, of greater amberjack during the month of April, and some of the rationale associated with that preferred alternative was that April is being closed in an attempt to protect spawning fish, and, with that being the rationale for the closure, the preferred alternative would have both sectors participating in that effort, and so that was kind of the background rationale.

There are some analyses associated with what the landings would look like with that type of change, but you have your draft conclusion listed there, and so I will turn it back to the committee to consider whether you would like to change your preferred alternative, keep your preferred alternative, or if you have any additional rationale that you would like to put forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. This is the April spawning season closure. Just to be crystal clear here, this preferred that we have would have this April closure applying to both the recreational and the commercial sectors, and I'm just looking around to make sure that that's what we are intending here with this preferred, and I see people nodding, yes, that that is their intent, and so no desire to change this preferred. Okay.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Then, continuing on to the last action, which is the recreational annual catch targets, the recreational ACTs -- They were included in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment, and these annual catch targets are not codified, and they're not used for any direct management purposes, and so Preferred Alternative 2 would remove all of these for all species in the Snapper Grouper FMP.

The council did note, in previous discussions, that, if use of an ACT were desired in the future, that the council could add an ACT back into the FMP on a case-by-case, species-by-species, basis, but you all have expressed the preference to take those out generally from the Snapper Grouper FMP and just put them back in where they're needed, and so, at this point, I will pause and turn back to the committee to see if there's any change in the preferred alternative or if there's any additional rationale to support it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Mike. Once again, this applies not just to amberjack, but the entire Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, to remove these ACTs. Are we good with that? Any desire to change? We've had a lot of discussion on this in the past. All right. I don't see any desire to change this preferred.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you. Before we get to the final, final step, I do want to point out that this amendment does incorporate the updated Snapper Grouper FMP goals and objectives. Those are included in the appendix for your decision document, and they're also included in an appendix of the draft amendment, and so I just wanted to point out that those are being incorporated into the FMP via this amendment as well.

With all of that being concluded, the last step here is for a motion to approve the amendment for formal review. There is a draft motion that is included there on the screen, and I'll make it a little bit bigger, so folks can see it better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shouldn't we do that at Full Council, since it's a roll call vote?

MR. CARMICHAEL: The committee approves it first.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right, and so apparently the committee approves it, and then we'll do a roll call vote on this at Full Council. Would someone like to make this motion? Mel.

MR. BELL: Yes, Madam Chair. **I move to approve Amendment 49 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic region for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document/codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Mel. Do we have a second? Second by Kerry. Any discussion? All right. **Is there any objection?** All right. **I don't see any objection.** All right. We're done with amberjack, and we're now going to go to the list of items for the Snapper Grouper AP meeting and make sure that we have everything on there that we are wanting them to talk about at their upcoming meeting in October.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so we have a list of topics that is included in your agenda overview, and we'll be working from that, and, actually, I will get it on to -- I will move it down to one page, so that it's all together for you and you're not missing anything. These are the drafted topics, prior to this meeting, for you all to review and to determine what should be discussed at the Snapper Grouper AP meeting.

A couple of things that I would like to note, and, number one, we have scheduled for the primary investigators for the management strategy evaluation for the snapper grouper to come to the AP meeting and gather input from the AP, and so that's one of those items that staff were requesting would stay there, so that we can keep those arrangements.

We are also in need of making sure there are AP discussions for Amendment 53, to make sure that those discussions are head, and that's gag grouper, and we'll make sure that those amendment stays on its time track, and some of these other amendments, depending on what's been discussed to this point, they may be more of updates.

Kind of coming into this meeting, we viewed Amendment 46 as being more of an update, because there is active work going on for that amendment that we don't quite need more AP feedback at this point, and we kind of know what they've been saying, for quite some time now, of complete that, but, if there is any additional AP feedback that's needed for these potential update amendments, then that can be stated, but, otherwise, those were kind of -- We're kind of coming into this with the mindset that these would potentially be updates and that, really, the main items that would be discussed are those here at the top, the MSE, the commercial electronic logbook

amendment, Reg Amendment 35, and Amendment 53, that those would be the bulk of that meeting.

We also do have some items included concerning the Florida Keys Sanctuary restoration blueprint and the proposed speed regulations. Our impression, coming into this meeting, before the change that Andy just let us know about of the comment period being extended, was that, for the speed regulation item, that there wouldn't be as much time for the AP to get feedback in that could get turned around, but, with the extension, that may differ.

The Florida Keys Sanctuary blueprint, that's something that we would be potentially looking for AP feedback, and that could be incorporated into a council letter concerning that, and so there's a lot there, and, timewise, we're looking at a two-day, two-business-day, meeting, with a half-day in the beginning and half-day at the end and full day in the middle, and we're looking at the dates of October 18 through 20 that we would be gathering them here in Charleston, and so I'll turn it to the committee, to see if there are any changes to the topics that would be included in that meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Not necessarily a change, but a thought about the Amendment 48, in that one of our actions now is to possibly allow snapper grouper permit holders to lease quota without a wreckfish permit, and it may be worth just going into -- For wreckfish, and it may be worth going into just a little more detail, because things like VMS and things like that -- They just need to know what they would be in for if they do decide to do it, and so just a little more than your cursory update, perhaps.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that sounds good. Mel, did you have your hand up?

MR. BELL: That was it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Got it. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thanks. The comment we got last night from Captain Derek Brown, who participated in one of the segments of the red snapper count, was pretty concerning to me, and I'm troubled that we've got folks out there who participated in that and are -- I will just call it bluntly, and he is disparaging the validity of it, and we haven't even got the thing back in our hands, and so I think it would be beneficial, if possible, to have the AP briefed, perhaps, on some of the more specifics of that survey, as well as us, at some point, because Judy and I have been texting back and forth, and she's like what in the world, and why are we paying people to go out and survey sand bottom, you know, and, obviously, there's a lot more to it than that, but I think it would be very -- To try to nip this in the bud by getting the folks the factual information about why that survey is being done the way it is, and so, if there's an opportunity to do that, sooner rather than later, I think it's important.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree, Spud, and Mike is trying to capture it here. To me, it's more than just a simple briefing, and it's more about the methods that they're using to collect the information, I believe. Clay.

DR. PORCH: I just want to reinforce Spud's point, and, obviously, there was a lot of misunderstanding that was evident from the testimony yesterday, in many, many different areas, and so finding ways to get our message out more effectively is important, but, in particular, to the point you raised about sampling away from the high-relief habitats that everybody is used to fishing on, and it was even brought up that, in the Great Gulf Red Snapper Count, that NOAA wasn't sampling in the areas where a lot of the fish were, but, actually, it was NOAA that --

I know, because it was me, that wrote the RFP that said you have to go sample in these so-called uncharacterized areas, because we had a lot of evidence that, although the density was low, as Andy said, there are fish there, and the area is huge, and so it turns out, when they did actually do, and there was a lot of resistance, even among the science community, to sampling out there, and, when they did, low and behold, two-thirds of the population is out there, and so it is important to sample areas where you don't necessarily think there is fish.

There is may not be a high density, and it may not be a good fishing area, but it could be an area that still holds a lot of biomass, and it changes your perspective on how to manage the fishery, and so getting that message out is really important, and the captain was very passionate that, oh, they're sampling in the wrong place, but they're actually doing exactly what they're charged to do, and it may turn out that, if they find no fish there, then they can rule out that there's a big cryptic biomass, but that's an important result, in and of itself too, and so getting that message out I think is really important.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was just going to add that that was a key point in the Gulf study, that a number of these red snapper were found over what they called uncharacterized bottom, which was sand and mud bottom, and so there were a lot more fish out there in these areas that people might not be fishing, because there wasn't a lot of structure there, and so it was an interesting and important part of the Gulf study, and so I think part of it is getting that message out there. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Do you think there's some way -- You know, sometimes, when you hold a meeting, only what comes out of that meeting gets transferred, and so you think there's some way to do like a one or two-pager of an explanation of explaining, and that's something that the South Atlantic Council could put on their website, or maybe you all have on your website, and I'm not asking for everybody to do a lot of work, but, I mean, just somewhere that you go to to reference it and a general overall idea, because I've been in it enough to understand that zeroes, even though it's frustrating for fishermen to have zeroes when you're hauling gear or doing something, and you're kind of wondering like what the heck I'm doing here, and so I understand, but maybe, somehow, a one-pager or something that can explain something a little bit, a general overall, to get an idea of some of the things that the fishermen touched base on and some of the things that you all are looking for or whatever, and I think that would help.

Somewhere that you could find that online or something would probably be the best way, and, that way, you can reference it to the council or to some website to look at it, and then they could maybe even transfer it -- Recreational groups or whatever could transfer it to their thing, as here's what we're getting from it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: My recollection was that there was a website for the Great Red Snapper Count in the Gulf, and then it kind of listed out some of what was happening, the timeframes, and then, eventually, there were little sheets made that were added to that site, with the updates, after

it was completed, and so I think it's a good suggestion, to have a webpage for this that people can go to. Clay.

DR. PORCH: I completely agree, and that's something that we, as an agency, haven't been the best at, getting our message out there, and we would definitely like to step up our game, working with the councils, to get information like that out there and take advantage of social media and other avenues for being more effective at delivering, you know, the facts of what actually is going on and helping people understand things like why we would sample in areas where there doesn't appear to be a lot of red snapper, because there is a huge area, but absolutely I think it's a great idea.

I know, at the Science Center, we actually increased -- We didn't have any staff that were working with the media, and we relied on the two people that were at the Regional Office, and so we've hired a few folks to help us there and get better at getting our message out, especially things like this, to help people understand, and so, yes, it's a great point, Dewey, and I completely agree.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: One additional point there that Christina just reminded me of is that Ashley Oliver, who is the Sea Grant fellow that's working with us, to go and spread the word about best fishing practice, and she's also going to be providing outreach for the South Atlantic red snapper abundance estimation as well, and so that's a place where hopefully we'll be able to get some more information out through Ashley and through her work.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. All right. Anything else, since we've added a gigantic list of items for the Snapper Grouper AP to talk about in their short meeting in October? I'm afraid to ask, but anything else that we were wanting them to talk about? All right. I don't see any more hands, and so I'm going to assume that we're done with this particular item of reviewing the list of topics for the Snapper Grouper AP meeting.

We have concluded the other items on the committee agenda, and is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? All right. I don't see any hands. All right. I'm sorry. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: On our agenda, it says topics for the golden tilefish endorsement holders meeting, and I know that we talked about that, I think on Monday afternoon, but I feel like we didn't come to a conclusion on Monday afternoon, and is the meeting going to happen?

MS. BROUWER: Thank you for bringing that back up, Laurilee. My recollection is that, on Monday, you guys said we talked about convening groups of stakeholders that hadn't been formally through the selection process to be a part of an advisory panel. You guys talked about the need to potentially add ad hoc APs, or sub-groups within existing APs, or creating focus groups, or working groups, or any of those things, and that you would consider the need to bring together this particular group of stakeholders as Amendment 52 moves along.

You know, we can definitely talk about convening that group of stakeholders. The next time that you guys are scheduled to talk about APs, and AP selection, will be in December, and so, if you wanted to, at that time, give us guidance to create an advisory panel, or a sub-group of the Snapper Grouper AP, just for the longline endorsement holders, or create a different working group, then we could do it at that time, and, you know, Amendment 52 is scheduled to be approved for final

action in December, and so, whatever this group recommends, or whatever discussions come out of bringing this group of folks together, it wouldn't be anything that can be included in Amendment 52 anyway, and does that make sense?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I thought we had a decision, earlier in the week, to not convene a group to talk about this, because it can't be included in this particular amendment, and am I misremembering that? It would be quite a hurdle to convene this particular group of endorsement holders. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I appreciate that, and I understand that this group, whatever comes out of it, it couldn't possibly be included in Amendment 52, but, you know, this body created the endorsement program, and, really, we haven't really gotten with them since they were created, and they're just kind of out there, and, you know, there's a lot going on with that fishery, and I think that it would be beneficial to us, and the endorsement holders, to get them all together and talk about some issues and potential opportunities.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica and then Kerry.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I don't disagree with that, and that makes a lot of sense, Laurilee, but the council has the authority, and it's given to them under the Magnuson Act, and so, to convene a group, a council-authorized group, together, you would really have to create some sort of AP, sub-group of the AP, or something like that, to bring them together within the council's authority.

The wreckfish ITQ holders have met before, and, ideally, that was to kind of scope Amendment 48, that you already dealt with, or you're dealing with, sorry, for wreckfish, but, specifically, for the longline endorsement holders, unless the council wants to create them as a specific entity, under an AP for example, the council really doesn't have the authority to bring them together.

They can get together on their own, and they could invite members of the Fisheries Service, if they are interested in different topics, and certainly that's been done before, in the past, with different groups here in the South Atlantic area, and so they're free to do that, but I just want to try to cabin what's going on with bringing groups together and making sure that, if the council brings them together, they do so under the authority the council has under the Act.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I agree with what we've been saying, and I think that, you know, until such time as necessary, that we're going to actually begin working on management actions, in which case I would feel much more comfortable going through the advisory panel selection process and creating a sub-panel than just bringing them together in a manner that, obviously, doesn't even sound like it would be legal.

There's nothing -- Some of their issues, quite frankly, are issues that are market issues that they should figure out amongst themselves, that it's not necessarily, I think, in our purview to manage, but they can still -- There's nothing stopping someone from going to someone who is an advisory panel member and working through the process that way right now, until we --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, they can also provide comment to the Snapper Grouper AP, or to this council. Laurilee, did you have something else?

MS. THOMPSON: No. I'm okay with waiting until December to bring it up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds good. Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? All right. I will turn it back over to Mel.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 15, 2022.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
October 14, 2022

SG Cmte - Tues, 9/13/22
8:30am - 4:30pm

Some of SG
moved up to
Monday
9/12 as had
extra time

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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2022 COMMITTEE MEMBERS continued

SG Cmte - Tues, 9/13/22
8:30 am -
4:30 pm

~~SG~~ Some of SG moved up to Monday 9/12

MACKEREL COBIA

Spud Woodward, Chair
Tom Roller, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher
Mel Bell
Chester Brewer
Gary Borland
LT Cameron Box
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Mid-Atlantic:
Dewey Hemilright/Joe Cimino
Staff contact: Christina Wiegand

~~Jessica McCawley, Chair~~
~~Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair~~
~~Robert Beal~~
~~Carolyn Belcher~~
~~Mel Bell~~
~~Chester Brewer~~
~~Gary Borland~~
~~LT Cameron Box~~
~~Tim Griner~~
~~Judy Helmey~~
~~Trish Murphey~~
~~Tom Roller~~
~~Andy Strelcheck~~
~~Laurilee Thompson~~
~~Spud Woodward~~
Mid-Atlantic:
~~Dewey Hemilright/Earl "Sonny" Gwin~~
Staff Contact: Mike Schmidtke

SEDAR

Mel Bell, Chair
Carolyn Belcher, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Tim Griner
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Staff contact: Chip Collier

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Chester Brewer, Vice Chair
Gary Borland
LT Cameron Box
Tim Griner
Kerry Marhefka
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Staff: Christina Wiegand

SHRIMP

Carolyn Belcher, Chair
Laurilee Thompson, Vice Chair
Gary Borland
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Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Spud Woodward
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Dewey Hemilright
Rick DeVich
Monica Duke - Success
LT. Patrick O'Slaughnessy
Jamal Ingram
Frank Helms

~~Robert Beal~~
Dr. Joe McCowley
Presents
Shanee Allen
Duchel

SNAPPER GROUPER

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SG Cmte - Tues, 9/13/22
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

*moved up and
had time
• Exempted
Fishing
License
Dues.*

✓ Mel Bell, **Chair**
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*Saw
Ranch*

*Frank Nellies
Ralee Oig
Dewey
monica
Lick*
*Dr. Clay Pad
Di. Jack
McCowan
LT Pat
O'Shaughnessy*

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS continued

~~Deirdre Warner-Kramer
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Representative
TBD

**SAFMC September
Council Meeting (9/12/22 -**

Attendee Report: 9/16/22)

Report Generated:

09/13/2022 06:04 PM EDT

Webinar ID

734-573-171

Actual Start Date/Time

09/12/2022 08:04 AM EDT

Duration

8 hours 46 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended

Last Name

First Name

Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Barber	Robert
Yes	Barrineau	Marina
Yes	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	Blalock	Steve
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Box	Cameron
Yes	Brennan	Ken
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Brown	Julie
Yes	Bublely	Walter
Yes	Caycedo	Mario
Yes	Cimino	Joseph
Yes	Cimo	Laura
Yes	Conklin	The Real Chris
Yes	Conley	Mary
Yes	Cox	Derek
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Fifer	Jocelyn
Yes	Finch	Margaret
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Gentry	Lauren
Yes	Glazier	Ed
Yes	Gooding	Elizabeth
Yes	Gore	Karla
Yes	Gray	Alisha
Yes	Hagan	David
Yes	Harrison	BeBe Dalton
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy

Yes	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	Hollensead	Lisa
Yes	Horton	Chris
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Johnston	Cyle
Yes	KELLY	BILL
Yes	Keener	Paula
Yes	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	Kramer	Rob
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Larkin	Michael
Yes	Lawler	Sean
Yes	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	Levy	Mara
Yes	Lyons Gromen	Pam
Yes	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	Masi	Michelle
Yes	Matthews	Thomas
Yes	McGovern	Jack
Yes	Mecchella	Jennifer
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Mitchelson	Theo
Yes	Morales	Harry
Yes	Morton	Sean
Yes	Mroch	Ray
Yes	Muffley	Brandon
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Neer	Julie
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	OFarrell	Halie
Yes	OShaughnessy	Patrick
Yes	Pellicer	Joseph
Yes	Penney	Zach
Yes	Peterson	Cassidy
Yes	Ponte	Marisa
Yes	Poston	Will
Yes	Privoznik	Sarah
Yes	Ralston	Kellie
Yes	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	Rawls	Kathy
Yes	Records	David
Yes	Reynolds	Jon
Yes	Rinaldi	Mike
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Rosenberg	Ashford
Yes	Ross	Erica

**SAFMC
September
Council
Meeting
(9/12/22 -**

Attendee Report: 9/16/22)

Report Generated:

09/13/2022 06:14 PM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Date/Time	Start Duration
734-573-171	09/13/2022 07:59 AM EDT	8 hours 59 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Addis	Dustin
Yes	Aukeman	Trip
Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Banks	Ben
Yes	Barber	Robert
Yes	Barbieri	Luiz
Yes	Barrineau	Marina
Yes	Beal	Bob
Yes	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	Blalock	Steve
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Box	Cameron
Yes	Brennan	Ken
Yes	Brodie	Russell
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Buckel	Jeff
Yes	Burgess	Erika
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	Calay	Shannon
Yes	Casali	Shelby
Yes	Caycedo	Mario
Yes	Cheshire	Rob
Yes	Christiansen	Heather
Yes	Cimino	Joseph
Yes	Conley	Mary
Yes	Cox	Jack

Yes	Cox	Derek
Yes	Cross	Tiffanie
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	Dale	Diaz
Yes	DeJohn	Frank
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Dover	Miles
Yes	Dudley	Jeannette
Yes	Dukes	Amy
Yes	Dunlap	Matt
Yes	Espittia	Jacob
Yes	Fifer	Jocelyn
Yes	Finch	Margaret
Yes	Fitzpatrick	Eric
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franco	Dawn
Yes	Friedrich	Tony
Yes	Gentry	Lauren
Yes	Glazier	Ed
Yes	Gooding	Elizabeth
Yes	Gore	Karla
Yes	Gray	Alisha
Yes	Griffis	Michael
Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	Hagan	David
Yes	Harrison	Alana
Yes	Harrison	BeBe Dalton
Yes	Hart	Hannah
Yes	Hawes	Rachel
Yes	Heffernan	Katie
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy
Yes	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	Herrera	John
Yes	Hildreth	Delaine
Yes	Horton	Chris
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Hudak	Sarah
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Johnston	Cyle
Yes	Jones	Carlisle
Yes	Jones	Tyler
Yes	KELLY	BILL
Yes	Kellison	Todd
Yes	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	Kolmos	Kevin

Yes	Kramer	Rob
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Larkin	Michael
Yes	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	Levy	Mara
Yes	Lorenzen	Kai
Yes	Lyons Gromen	Pam
Yes	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	Masi	Michelle
Yes	McGovern	Jack
Yes	McManus	Brian
Yes	McPherson	Matthew
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Morales	Harry
Yes	Morrell	Nick
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Neer	Julie
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	Ni	Andy
Yes	OFarrell	Halie
Yes	OShaughnessy	Patrick
Yes	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	Parker	Blaine
Yes	Pellicer	Joseph
Yes	Poholek	Ariel
Yes	Poston	Will
Yes	Ralston	Kellie
Yes	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	Rawls	Kathy
Yes	Records	David
Yes	Reed	John
Yes	Reeder	Kelly
Yes	Reynolds	Jon
Yes	Rinaldi	Mike
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Sancho	Gorka
Yes	Sartwell	Tim
Yes	Sauls	Beverly
Yes	Schueller	Amy
Yes	Schwanger	Chuck
Yes	Scott	Haley
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Sheridan	Nancy
Yes	Shertzer	Kyle
Yes	Simpson	Julie
Yes	Sinkus	Wiley
Yes	Spanik	Kevin

Yes	Spurgin	Kali
Yes	Sramek	Mark
Yes	Stam	Monica
Yes	Stam	Geoff
Yes	Staubs	Ben
Yes	Stemle	Adam
Yes	Stephen	Jessica
Yes	Stewart	Mark
Yes	Swanson	Chris
Yes	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	Switzer	Ted
Yes	Thompson	00 Laurilee
Yes	Travis	Michael
Yes	Tremain	Derek
Yes	Vecchio	Julie
Yes	Venker	Ted
Yes	Walia	Matthew
Yes	Walter	John
Yes	Waters	Lauren
Yes	Whitaker	David
Yes	White	Bobby
Yes	Wilber	Pace
Yes	Williams	Erik
Yes	Willis	Michelle
Yes	Withers	Meg
Yes	Wolfe	Wes
Yes	Wyanski	David
Yes	blough	heather
Yes	brewer	00chester
Yes	buie	jay
Yes	collier	chip
Yes	gloekner	david
Yes	kittle	christine
Yes	moore	liz
Yes	moss	david
Yes	sandorf	scott
Yes	vara	mary

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Date Diaz

Dewey

Rick Delicchio

*Monica Dicit-
Brunello*

Dr. Clay Pace

Dr. Jack McGovern

Frank Helms

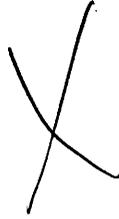
LT Col O'Shaughnessy

Jamal Diggs

web

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Representative
TBD

SG Cmtte 9/14/2022
8:30 am - 3:45 pm

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SAFMC September Council

Attendee Report: Meeting (9/12/22 - 9/16/22)

Report Generated:

09/17/2022 03:39 PM EDT

Webinar ID

734-573-171

Actual Start Date/Time

09/14/2022 07:07 AM EDT

Duration

11 hours 15 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Anderson	John
Yes	Aukeman	Trip
Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Barbieri	Luiz
Yes	Barrineau	Marina
Yes	Beal	Bob
Yes	Berry	james
Yes	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	Bonura	Vincent
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Box	Cameron
Yes	Brannon	Gettys
Yes	Brennan	Ken
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	Carrodegua	David
Yes	Caycedo	Mario
Yes	Cheshire	Rob
Yes	Christiansen	Heather
Yes	Cimino	Joseph
Yes	Cody	Richard
Yes	Conklin	The Real Chris
Yes	Corey	Morgan
Yes	Cox	Derek
Yes	Cox	Jack
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	Dale	Diaz
Yes	Dathe	Michael
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Dingle	Julie
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Dover	Miles
Yes	Dukes	Amy
Yes	Fifer	Jocelyn

Yes	Finch	Margaret
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franco	Dawn
Yes	Freeman	Matt
Yes	French	Patrick
Yes	Friedrich	Tony
Yes	Glazier	Ed
Yes	Gore	Karla
Yes	Gray	Alisha
Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	HARRELL	RYAN
Yes	Harrison	BeBe Dalton
Yes	Harrison	Alana
Yes	Hart	Hannah
Yes	Heffernan	Katie
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy
Yes	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	Herrera	John
Yes	Hildreth	Delaine
Yes	Horton	Chris
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Hull	James
Yes	Hunter	Bevan
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Jennings	Gary
Yes	KELLY	BILL
Yes	Kellison	Todd
Yes	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	Kerr	Daniel
Yes	Kesler	Holly
Yes	Kramer	Rob
Yes	Labocchetta	Mark
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Larkin	Michael
Yes	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	Levy	Mara
Yes	Lorenzen	Kai
Yes	Lowther	Alan
Yes	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	Marinko	Jeff
Yes	Masi	Michelle
Yes	McGovern	Jack
Yes	McManus	Brian
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Merrifield	Jeanna

Yes	Morales	Harry
Yes	Morrell	Nick
Yes	Morton	Sean
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Neer	Julie
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	OShaughnessy	Patrick
Yes	Oden	Jeff
Yes	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	Parker	Blaine
Yes	Pellicer	Joseph
Yes	Perkinson	Matt
Yes	Polston	John
Yes	Poston	Will
Yes	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	Rapp	Greg
Yes	Records	David
Yes	Reeder	Kelly
Yes	Renchen	Jeff
Yes	Reynolds	Jon
Yes	Rinaldi	Mike
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Rutherford	John
Yes	Sartwell	Tim
Yes	Schwanger	Chuck
Yes	Sedberry	George
Yes	Self	Ross
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Sheridan	Nancy
Yes	Sinkus	Wiley
Yes	Sitton	Brent
Yes	Smarrito	Michael
Yes	Smillie	Nick
Yes	Somerset	Carly
Yes	Spanik	Kevin
Yes	Spurgin	Kali
Yes	Sramek	Mark
Yes	Stam	Geoff
Yes	Stam	Monica
Yes	Stemle	Adam
Yes	Stephen	Jessica
Yes	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	Takade-Heumacher	Helen
Yes	Thompson	00 Laurilee
Yes	Travis	Michael
Yes	Unger	chad
Yes	Vecchio	Julie

Yes
Yes

Venker
Walia
Walter
Waters
Whitaker
Williams
Willis
Withers
Wolfe
Wyanski
blough
brewer
buie
collier
moore
moss
oden
sandorf
usina
vara

Ted
Matthew
John
Lauren
David
Erik
Michelle
Meg
Wes
David
heather
00chester
jay
chip
liz
david
jeff
scott
ken
mary

2022 COMMITTEE MEMBERS continued

MACKEREL COBIA

Spud Woodward, Chair
Tom Roller, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher
Mel Bell
Chester Brewer
Gary Borland
LT Cameron Box
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Mid-Atlantic:
Dewey Hemilright/Joe Cimino
Staff contact: Christina Wiegand

SEDAR

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Robert Beal
Tim Griner
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Staff contact: Chip Collier

SHRIMP

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Trish Murphey
Andy Strelcheck
Spud Woodward
Staff contact: Roger Pugliese

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher
Mel Bell
Chester Brewer
Gary Borland
LT Cameron Box
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey - *webinar*
Trish Murphey
Tom Roller
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Spud Woodward
Mid-Atlantic:
Dewey Hemilright/~~Earl "Sonny" Gwin~~
Staff Contact: Mike Schmidtke

SPINY LOBSTER

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Andy Strelcheck
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Staff: Christina Wiegand

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David Stormer (DE state rep)
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*Jamal Ingram
Monica Smit-Brunello
Dale Diaz
mauce Reichert
Frank Helus*

*Dr. Jack McGovern
Rick DeVito
LT. Pat O'Shaughnessy
Dr. Clay Ford*

SNAPPER GROUPE

2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mel Bell, Chair

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SG Cmte - Thursday,
9/15/22
8:30 - 10:30am

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SAFMC September Council

Attendee Report: Meeting (9/12/22 - 9/16/22)

Report Generated:

09/17/2022 04:09 PM EDT

Webinar ID

734-573-171

Actual Start Date/Time

09/15/2022 08:11 AM EDT

Duration

10 hours 21 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Addis	Dustin
Yes	Allen	Shanae
Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Barbieri	Luiz
Yes	Barrineau	Marina
Yes	Batsavage	Chris
Yes	Beal	Bob
Yes	Berry	james
Yes	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Box	Cameron
Yes	Brennan	Ken
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Bublely	Walter
Yes	Buckel	Jeff
Yes	Burgess	Erika
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	Campfield	Patrick
Yes	Caycedo	Mario
Yes	Cheshire	Rob
Yes	Cimino	Joseph
Yes	Cody	Richard
Yes	Coleman	Heather
Yes	Conklin	The Real Chris
Yes	Corey	Morgan
Yes	Cox	Derek
Yes	Cox	Jack
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	Curtis	Judd
Yes	Dale	Diaz
Yes	Dale (NMFS SERO)	David
Yes	Dathe	Michael

Yes	David	Andrew
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Dingle	Julie
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Dunlap	Matt
Yes	Duval	Michelle
Yes	Edmonds	Melissa
Yes	Fifer	Jocelyn
Yes	Finch	Margaret
Yes	Fitzpatrick	Eric
Yes	Flowers	Jared
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franke	Emilie
Yes	Freeman	Matt
Yes	French	Patrick
Yes	Friedrich	Tony
Yes	Glazier	Ed
Yes	Goldsmith	Willy
Yes	Good	Caroline
Yes	Gore	Karla
Yes	Gray	Alisha
Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	Harrison	BeBe Dalton
Yes	Harrison	Alana
Yes	Hart	Hannah
Yes	Hawes	Rachel
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy
Yes	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	Herrera	John
Yes	Hildreth	Delaine
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Jones	Carlisle
Yes	Karazsia	Jocelyn
Yes	Kellison	Todd
Yes	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	Kerns	Toni
Yes	Kramer	Rob
Yes	Labocchetta	Mark
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Larkin	Michael
Yes	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	Lee	Jennifer
Yes	Li	Yan
Yes	Lorenzen	Kai
Yes	Malinowski	Rich

Yes	Marinko	Jeff
Yes	Martinez	Adrian
Yes	Masi	Michelle
Yes	McCoy	Sherylanne
Yes	McGovern	Jack
Yes	McManus	Brian
Yes	McRae	G
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Merrifield	Mike
Yes	Merrifield	Jeanna
Yes	Morrell	Nick
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Neer	Julie
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	OShaughnessy	Patrick
Yes	Patrick	Donald
Yes	Pellicer	Joseph
Yes	Perkinson	Matt
Yes	Poholek	Ariel
Yes	Poston	Will
Yes	Powell	Jessica
Yes	Pugliese	01Roger
Yes	Rapp	Greg
Yes	Records	David
Yes	Reed	John
Yes	Reeder	Kelly
Yes	Reichert	Marcel
Yes	Renchen	Jeff
Yes	Reynolds	Jon
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Schwanger	Chuck
Yes	Sedberry	George
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Shervanick	Kara
Yes	Siegfried	Katie
Yes	Sinkus	Wiley
Yes	Sitton	Brent
Yes	Smarrito	Michael
Yes	Spurgin	Kali
Yes	Spurlock	Zack
Yes	Sramek	Mark
Yes	Stam	Monica
Yes	Stam	Geoff
Yes	Stemle	Adam
Yes	Stephen	Jessica
Yes	Surrency	Ron
Yes	Swanson	Chris

Yes	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	Switzer	Ted
Yes	Takade-Heumacher	Helen
Yes	Thompson	00 Laurilee
Yes	Tibulle	Sébastien
Yes	Torres-Pabon	Jashira
Yes	Travis	Michael
Yes	Vecchio	Julie
Yes	Venker	Ted
Yes	Waine	Mike
Yes	Walia	Matthew
Yes	Walter	John
Yes	Wamer	David
Yes	Whitaker	David
Yes	White	Geoff
Yes	Wilber	Pace
Yes	Williams	Erik
Yes	Withers	Meg
Yes	Wolfe	Wes
Yes	Wyanski	David
Yes	Zoodsma	Barb
Yes	blough	heather
Yes	brewer	00chester
Yes	buie	jay
Yes	collier	chip
Yes	moss	david
Yes	thomas	suz
Yes	thomas	suz
Yes	usina	ken
Yes	vara	mary