

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SNAPPER GROUPER COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Webinar

November 5, 2024

Transcript

Snapper Grouper Committee

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Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened via webinar on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, and was called to order by Ms. Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The first order of business is welcome and introductions, and so Mike has the committee members listed there for this Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee. It's myself, Kerry Marhefka, Tim Griner, Trish Murphey, Amy Dukes, and Andy Strelcheck, but he's over at the Gulf Council meeting this week, and so I believe that Rick DeVictor is joining us, and then Jimmy Hill and Charlie Phillips. The next order of business is approval of the agenda. Are there any modifications, or changes, to this subcommittee agenda?

All right. I don't see any hands. Are there any objections to approval of this agenda? All right. I don't see any hands yet. I forget how hard running a webinar is. All right. Next up is public comment. Mike, do you want to talk to folks about how they raise their hand to be recognized, if someone is wanting to give public comment?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and so, if folks want to give public comment, you can hit the hand-raise icon on your control panel. Give me a second. I just need to pull the file for that, and get it up, so you can see a visual. All right, and so here you see the webinar controls for the meeting. If you want to raise your hand, you're going to click on this hand icon that right now would have a green arrow. If you click on it, it will turn red, and then it will be raised, and then, when we call on you, you can be unmuted, by clicking on your microphone, once you're unmuted from our end. So, if anyone would like to make a public comment at this point, please raise your hand. We've got Dewey Hemilright with his hand up. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Mike. Go ahead, Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was just wondering, and is there going to be the ability, at the end of this, for public comment? I don't really have one right now, but, as this webinar goes on, I'll probably have comments at the end.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that question, Dewey. Yes, we can take public comment at the end, assuming that we have time, but, yes, it's on the list for later in the meeting as well. Do you want to wait?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thanks, Dewey. Mike, do you see anybody else?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: No. No other hands at this point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks. All right. Next up, it looks like we're going to do a review of the commercial issues in the 2016 to 2020 vision blueprint, and, Mike, I think you're going to give us a presentation. I would ask as you get going here -- Are you wanting to take questions throughout the presentation, or do you want to wait until you get towards the end of the presentation to take questions?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I have kind of a break point where we can take questions, and so I'll go through, until that break point, and then we can pause, and have questions, and go back, as we go through, and then we'll transition into more of a discussion type of format.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds great. I'm going to turn it over to you.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay. All right, and so welcome, everyone, to the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee. We're going to give a brief overview of the tasking and kind of some of the issues that have been talked about to this point. In June of 2024, this subcommittee was formed and given the following tasks. First, to review the vision blueprint, the points of it that are pertinent to commercial fishery management, and then to develop some topics that require further consideration, and to recommend next steps to the Snapper Grouper Committee and the council.

We see the subcommittee membership there, as well as on the side, and so thank you, everyone, for taking time out of your day to attend this meeting, and we're looking forward to some of these discussions.

Going back to the vision blueprint, for those of you that may not have been in this position with the council, I know I wasn't in my position with the council at this point, and so I had to do some review on this, but this was a long-term planning effort that was published in December of 2015, and it was developed collaboratively with stakeholders, using workshops that were held between 2012 and 2015, and the goal of this vision blueprint was to define the priorities, the goals, the strategies for achieving these priorities and goals for the snapper grouper fishery, looking at the timeframe of 2016 through 2020, and so it was a forward-looking effort that was going on to develop this.

The blueprint was developed with four main categories of goals for the fishery, the first being science, which deals with data collection, monitoring, assessment efforts, management, which is going to be our focus today, and this has to do with the actual management strategies that are used to maintain the fishery and rebuild overfish stocks. Communication, that would encourage stakeholder participation and engagement, and then, finally, governance, which would be improving the council's actual kind decision-making process, the way in which these amendments are constructed and moved forward.

Today, being that the focus of this subcommittee is for commercial management, we're going to focus specifically on the management section for these goals, but there, of course, is some overlap that comes into play, at times, with some of the science, or communication, or even the governance, and so it's not all exclusive management, but that's going to be our primary focus for today.

The full vision blueprint was included in your briefing materials. The council actually has a full webpage that's dedicated to it, and it has an actual vision blueprint document, but it also includes four appendices that have different pieces of information, and a lot of what you see here is going to come primarily from Appendix B, and so this is the complete list of objectives, strategies, and actions for each of those four goal areas that I highlighted in the previous slide.

The other appendices that are there are some of the higher-prioritized actions, and that would be Appendix A, and some of the lower-priority actions that were discussed in Appendix B, and then a description of the review and evaluation plan for the vision blueprint. We won't really be

exploring those other appendices today, but I just wanted to kind of highlight those pieces, in case you're interested in looking at those at another time.

For today's presentation, we'll be reviewing the management goals for the commercial snapper grouper fishery from the vision blueprint and discussing, at certain points, some of the council progress towards those goals. We'll use this vision blueprint as kind of the jump point for addressing some of the issues that are facing the commercial sector of the snapper grouper fishery.

In this presentation, I'll be looking to highlight commercial management actions from the vision blueprint, so not all of the actions, and not all of the priorities, from that blueprint are going to be presented here. We're really just focusing on those commercial actions, since that is the directive of this subcommittee. Some bullets, that are going to be shown in the next several slides, are applicable to both sectors, and so, if they were applicable to both sectors, then I included it, but some of these may have been primarily recreational priorities, but we'll kind of highlight those as we go, and you can use your judgment, as you move into your discussions, on which actions need to be prioritized moving forward from this blueprint.

First, one of the areas from the vision blueprint was sub-regional management, and so Objective 1 was two development management measures that consider sub-regional differences and issues within the fishery. Looking at a couple of the strategies underneath Objective 1, there was the consideration of different quota-based management systems, some consideration of things like state-specific quotas, or sub-regional management of deepwater species, and some of the species that were noted within those sections, that might benefit from these types of measures, were black sea bass, for state-specific quotas, being that it's a seasonal fishery in some areas, and that season can differ within the region, or the deepwater species as well, that can have some variation in the timing with which those species are targeted within the region.

Strategy 1.2 looked at identifying design elements for these different management systems, and so that was kind of hand-in-hand with that Strategy 1.1 of considering the management systems, but then also figuring out what are the ways that we can make these things work, and so looking at options like quota transfers by sub-region, sub-regional ACLs, or openings and closures, and then management boundaries based on the biogeography of the fishery, and so, if we have fish in different depths within the region, or if we have fish that move into different areas within the region, then considering that in developing some within-region management boundaries.

Then Strategy 1.3, under that same objective for sub-regional management, was looking at non-quota based management strategies, and these may have been possibly more recreationally directed, but I just want to note that some of these ideas may have some considerations in the commercial side as well, and so staggering spawning closures that consider the latitudinal differences in spawning activity, looking at regulations based on these sub-regional areas, rather than quota allocations, developing state-by-state regulations for either of the sectors, applying sub-regional management strategies on a seasonal basis, based on when the fish are available, and then some effort control strategies, such as alternating two-week windows for fishing by sub-region, and I think that one was more looking at the recreational sector.

Objective 2 dealt with managing access, and so developing measures that allow consistent access to the fishery for all sectors. The first strategy under this objective was to support development of management approaches that address retention of snapper grouper species. One of the items where

there has been some progress made by the council, and since this was developed, has to do with trip limit adjustments, such as step-downs. Mutton has one during its spawning season.

The vermilion snapper fishery, prior to Regulatory Amendment 27, had a step-down that was in place, and then establishing trip limits for species that do not have them. Under Regulatory Amendment 27, there were trip limits established for the other jacks complex, as well as in Amendment 55, and you all have approved a trip limit for scamp, a commercial trip limit for that species as well.

Next, a couple of the other action items under that strategy are consider aggregate trip limits for the commercial sector, for example a number of boxes with no size limit. Consider alternative approaches to managing traditional multiday snapper grouper bandit boats, for that fishery, such as permit stacking, multiday trip endorsements, sector or community shares, et cetera. This was also noted as an effort control action in Strategy 2.2, and so it's not listed in both places in the presentation, but just kind of noting that, in the vision blueprint, it was in a couple different places.

Then finally, evaluating the commercial retention of the recreational bag limit when the commercial season is closed, and that was in place, I believe -- No, I think I might have switched that. That might have been in place for greater amberjack, at some point, and then the most recent amendment for amberjack closed both sectors during the spawning season for that fishery.

Strategy 2.2 looked at supporting the development of these management approaches to address the amount of effort in the snapper grouper fishery, and so one was to evaluate the commercial two-for-one permit requirement, and that's something that's discussed several times over the last several years, and so that's in kind of your initial list of items that you're looking at.

Evaluate the use of days at-sea, evaluate the carrying capacity, or the level of overcapitalization, and I think some of that analysis was done in looking at the commercial two-for-one permit. Those two kind of go hand-in-hand, as far as evaluating whether there is overcapitalization of the commercial fishery at this point, and kind of the necessity of the two-for-one permit requirement, and then, finally, exploring options for a privately-funded buyout program.

The next strategy under managing access had to do with supporting the development of approaches that account for the seasonality of the snapper grouper fishery. There's been some work done from this side of things in the commercial fishery, and so expanding the use of split seasons for the commercial fishery. At this point, we have split seasons for several species from the commercial side. Greater amberjack, vermilion snapper, blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, and red porgy are some of the examples of those.

Consideration of seasons for cooccurring species, and staggering of the seasons, and so using something like depth as your criteria and then staggering your seasons for your mid-shelf and your deepwater fish. Adjusting the seasonal spawning closure for shallow-water grouper. Some of this was done in Regulatory Amendment 30, where there was an adjustment for the Carolinas for red grouper, but there may be other considerations related to this. Considering shortening by one month for this seasonal spawning closure, and that would allow fishing with a reduced limit, or a rolling closure throughout the region, trying to address some of that within-region variability in the spawning for those shallow-water grouper fish.

The next strategy under managing access looked at approaches that consider flexibility in ACLs, and so the possibility of shifting sector allocations in-season, the use of adaptive management for almaco jack and rudderfish, to slowly increase the ACL for those species. Sorry, I'm just going to -- Are you all able to see my screen moving right now?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I'm just making sure. I got a notification that it was paused, but that may have been earlier in the meeting. Okay. The use of adaptive management for almaco jack and rudderfish, to increase those ACLs, and that was specifically mentioned within -- Those species themselves were specifically mentioned in the vision blueprint, in that capacity, and then the idea of multiyear ACLs for multiyear cap specifications.

The next strategy looked at developing alternative approaches that would expand access, and so the possibility of investigating expansion of fisheries for underutilized species, trying to evaluate those species that may not be fully catching their optimal yield, so that those fisheries can be expanded, and that optimal yield can be caught, and then considering measures that would simplify the regulations.

The next objective looked at maximizing the social and economic opportunities for all sectors. The first strategy under that objective was to consider the development of approaches that assist fishery-dependent businesses to have more efficient and profitable operations, and so looking at things like market availability and developing management decisions, as well as considering non-traditional stakeholders, or businesses, for example chefs or marinas, and so not necessarily directly -- Not just directly the fishermen and dealers, but also those that depend on the fishermen and dealers for operating their businesses.

Considering how new entrants can be brought into endorsement programs, considering the diversity of harvest operations and decisions, and some fishermen are operating as owner-operators, and other fishermen are operating as owners of multiple vessels, things like that, and then consideration of establishing a permit bank to address new entrants, possibly helping to get more easy entrance into the fishery.

The next objective had to do with discard mitigation, and so trying to reduce and mitigate discards, and so the first strategy related to this was considering catch limits, seasons, and the biology of the fish to minimize bycatch of snapper grouper species. One aspect that was considered, and there's been some action on, was the establishment of spawning special management zones. Those are in place, via Amendment 36, for speckled hind and warsaw grouper, and we are in the process right now, if you'll recall, of evaluating those special management zones and seeing what their effects have been in those areas. We have -- One of the council's projects, that's been contracted out, is looking at that.

So, next, the use of time-area closures by region or by specific areas, consideration of a spawning closure for all snapper grouper species that have a low ACL, so it would be kind of grouping those low-ACL snapper grouper species and developing a spawning closure for that group. Setting a fishing season at the beginning of the fishing year, with known open and closed dates, setting a season for deepwater and shallow-water species by area, consideration of time and area closures for all snapper grouper species, either in a whole region capacity or in an area-specific capacity.

The next strategy under discard mitigation is considering approaches that address the impact of depth on snapper grouper bycatch, and so some consideration for full retention of deepwater species, or establishing a season for deepwater species, considering removal of size limits for deepwater species, and some of this was done for that deepwater snapper complex, via Regulatory Amendment 27.

Considering alternative electronic monitoring methods for all sectors, to get some better data to monitor the catch composition and location, as well as get some data on depth. Using zone-based management, set by depth, to have that consideration in discard mitigation as well. Then, looking at the third strategy, reconsidering management strategies that use size limits to reduce bycatch, and so reevaluate and change size limits on a species-by-species basis, considering some species that don't need size limits, and then some consideration of size limits varying by area.

The next strategy looked at developing management approaches that support best fishing practices. This has been done kind of on a larger-scale strategy point, via the expansion of the best fishing practices outreach program. There's also been the establishment of requirements for descending devices and circle hooks, and that was most recently adjusted via Regulatory Amendment 29, in 2020, and so some of the other strategies that were developed for best fishing practices, underneath that one, looked at promoting opportunities for research to reduce bycatch, considering some gear requirements for weak gear, or degrading hooks, and considering the development of a network with the commercial sector to communicate with each other and let each other know where these hotspots of bycatch species are, so that other vessels can try to avoid those hotspots.

The next strategy looked at developing approaches that use bycatch quotas and allowances, and so consideration of allowing a bycatch set-aside limit per commercial trip, considering a bycatch allowance of up to 5 percent for species that have low ACLs, considering multiyear catch specifications that would be kind of averaged for applying accountability measures, consider the use of annual catch targets to minimize commercial discards.

Then Objectives 5 and 6 looked at supporting management measures that incorporate ecosystem and habitat considerations, and then management measures that support optimal sector allocations. While these things can affect the commercial fishery, these are kind of larger issues than commercial-specific, and so that's a little bit beyond the scope of this subcommittee's initial tasking. That being the case, we're not going to dive into these objectives today, but, if you would like more information to be brought back on these items in a future meeting, then just let me know, and we can do that. At that point, we can pause here, and we can take questions, and, if you need me to move back to another slide, just let me know where you need me to go, and so I'll pass it back to you, Madam Chair, to field questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. That was a great presentation on what was kind of some of the commercial items in the vision blueprint. Do people have any questions, based on what they heard that they need clarification on from those slides? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Hi, Mike, and sorry, and you might have said this at the beginning, and I was sort of rustling around, and getting settled, and so I apologize if you said it, but can you remind us when the vision blueprint, the visioning, happened?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So the blueprint was published in 2015. The meetings, and workshops, that were conducted to develop that blueprint happened from 2012 through 2015.

MS. MARHEFKA: So, Jessica, if I may, to that point, I just wanted to keep that in mind for everyone, that I think the visioning was amazing, and awesome, and I definitely think there's stuff to pull out of there. I would just caution that the committee really think about how much has changed in the decade since that happened and sort of let's kind of try to focus really hard on what things look like now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and thanks for that, Kerry. I completely agree, in thinking about when it was done, all the way back to 2012. It seems so long ago, and, when I look back through the documents, I thought some of these things -- I don't know if they're as relevant now as they were at the time. Some of them I think are still relevant, but, yes, I had some of the same thoughts, that some of it seemed dated. Any other questions for Mike about those slides on the vision blueprint? All right, Mike. I'm going to turn it back.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Sorry, and we've got Jimmy with his hand up, and then Amy as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Mike. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Jessica, thank you. Yes, I agree with everything that was just stated about the timeline of this vision blueprint and the need of this committee to prioritize. You know, this is such a broad stroke of things, and, as you said, a lot of these things are being implemented now, and, you know, reducing this down to things that really would matter in this time of where we're at, that could make a difference, because this is -- There's just so much here, and, if we could just get a few things out of this, that we could get implemented, that'll make a big difference.

It's just I really feel like our objective should be to really -- It may be the stated objective is to, you know, prioritize these actions down to the things that are going to matter, and, for me, as a commercial sector, obviously, we are not obtaining our potential, through harvest of animals, food, or economically, and so, you know, we need to find things that will help the commercial sector reach its potential. I just wanted to say I agree with everything that's been said so far and some additional comment. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Jimmy, and, before we go to Amy, a couple slides from now in Mike's presentation, he's going to get into the list of topics that we've talked about most recently, and, when we try to figure out kind of what we want to work on in the immediate future, we could look at that list and then think about all of these items from the vision blueprint, to see if there are some items that we want to bring in, but it might be easier to start with that shorter, more recent list, and then add anything from visioning, but, with that, I'll go to Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just a procedural sort of question, for me to play a little catch-up, and so the vision blueprint was to go through a comprehensive review in 2020, and I'm imagining, with COVID, things may have been a little sidetracked with that review and then the adoption of the 2021 to 2026 vision blueprint. Can I just get some background on if that comprehensive review happened and what those steps looked like back then?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I may need to lean on some other staff, but, as far as I understand, there was not the review that got completed at that point, and there wasn't kind of an adjustment for a future vision blueprint for the current time that's been developed either, and so that may have been COVID-related, and then a lot of other priorities came about that there wasn't the staff time, and ability, to be placed into that effort, but I think Myra has her hand up, and she can probably speak to it more than I can.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great. Let's go to Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Good morning, everybody. Yes, I can sort of -- Just sort of take you back. From what I recall, in 2020, we sort of did -- I wouldn't call it an evaluation, because we didn't really have anything, any kind of performance measures, that were adopted, but we took a look at what had been accomplished up until that time, and then the council chose to move forward with two amendments, one for the commercial sector and one for the recreational, and, at that point, I think -- You know, that was the outcome of the, quote, unquote, evaluation, and then Reg Amendment 26 and Reg Amendment 27 came out of that discussion.

That's what I recollect, and s there was never, Amy, an updating of the goals and objectives past 2021, you know, and then the council went on to adopt the blueprint as the management, or at least the management portion of the blueprint, and I think the whole thing, as the goals and objectives of the Snapper Grouper FMP, last year, I think, or maybe 2022, when you adopted-- Or when you put together Amendment 49 that addressed amberjack.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Myra. Amy, did you have any follow-up on that, or any more questions?

MS. DUKES: No, ma'am, not at this time. I appreciate the input. It helps me sort of understand page 13 of the visioning blueprint, and sort of some of those next steps, and so thanks, Myra.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other questions about the vision blueprint? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Jessica. Not so much a question, but I just wanted to, for the people that are sort of newer, also talk about sort of my intention, when I started pushing this thing, and Jessica, along with me, I think knew how I felt. Sometime in 2020, also, I had a little moment on a council meeting webinar, because I think we had just gotten the gag assessment back, and it felt like all we were doing was always just reacting, reacting, reacting to assessments, which had been coming back where we had to sort of, you know, make cuts, and it felt like we were never stopping and doing management that was proactive.

It was always reactive, and so, in my mind, this, you know, where we are today came about as sort of that thought process of wanting to step back and be proactive, so we can do something to help the industry, you know, because we haven't looked at it in so long, and so, just so you know, that's where my mind was. That's just me, and I'm not saying everyone feels that way, but, as I started thinking about what we wanted to do for the commercial industry, it's because I wanted to be proactive.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Kerry. That was super helpful. Any other questions, or thoughts, about the blueprint? Okay. No hands. Mike, I'm going to turn it back to you to go through the next couple of slides.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, next, we're going to be moving into more of the subcommittee's tasking. First, we're going to look at developing the topics that require further consideration, and some of the potential deliverables that can come out of this for the December 2024 meeting would be a list of topics that you all want to have addressed for the commercial sector, a prioritization of those topics.

Kind of the three categories, the rough categories, that I've put into this, and we can adjust them, if someone feels like there's a better categorization, but there is address immediately, address as possible with other projects, and then address in the long-term, and then necessary information for the immediate priority considerations, and so, once you go through kind of that prioritization, letting us, as staff, know what information do you need to start having those conversations, so that we can gather that and bring it to you in future meetings.

I do want to note that there have been several analyses that were completed from previous council reports. For example, there were a couple papers on the two-for-one program, evaluating that, and some of that information might just need to be updated with recent years, but there are several pieces of analyses that are included in those papers, and so I do want to make sure that we make as much use of available resources as we can.

Then, after we go through this development of the topics and prioritization, then we'll get to a point where you all can then recommend what your next steps should be for this subcommittee, in terms of future meetings, and when you all would like to have your next report after the December meeting back to the council.

First, we'll move into this development of the list of topics. In the tasking that was provided, there was an initial list of topics that was made by the council, and given to this subcommittee, so that you all kind of have a starting point, using this information as well as the vision blueprint review information that we just went over, and so this is kind of the initial list, and, after going through your review of the vision blueprint, we can add to this list.

Right now, I think it would be the -- Kind of the path forward would be take this list. If you want to take anything off, we can take it off, or, if you want to leave everything on there, and just add to it, based on your additional thoughts since this was developed and looking at the vision blueprint, then we can add some bullets to this item. Then, after we get everything down on the screen, then we can have conversations about prioritizing, you know, that immediate, medium-term, and long-term type of plan.

I'm going to switch out of the reader view, so that I can do some typing, and, actually, I think I'll just go ahead and copy this over to a Word document, to make that a little easier. Okay, and I'll turn it back to the subcommittee now, to see if there are any additional bullets that you would like put on this, or, if you need clarification on some of the bullets that are here, or we want to add some detail, and then just let me know what you would like to see.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Mike, and so this was the list I was talking about a minute ago. I'll call this the more recent list of items that we've been discussing, and then we're trying to figure out kind of what are the immediate things, from this list and/or visioning, and/or things off the top of your head that might not be on any of these lists, and what are the immediate things, and then another category could be, you know, as possible, if possible, and then like a more long-term list, but there might even be items on here that aren't exactly in the council's purview, and so let me try to give an example, and I see hands going up.

Infrastructure, I wasn't sure if that meant working waterfronts, and so, while I do think working waterfronts is important, of utmost importance, I don't know what the council could do about it, unless there was some type of federal grant program or something, and I'm wondering if this needs to instead be handled on a more local level, a state level, a county level, et cetera, and so just trying to give an example of something that I'm not sure that it's within the council's purview, and I don't know that it would be on the immediate list, just because I'm not sure what the council could specifically do about it. but I would love to hear from others. Let's start with Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Jessica. Yes, and you said exactly what I was thinking. I think that, as much as infrastructure is a topic near and dear to my heart, I see no avenue for the council, at this point, to help with that improvement, and so I would remove that from what we're working on now, and I'm not sure if my next idea might just be a sub-bullet to ways to increase trip efficiency, or its own bullet, but I would love to have some discussion about -- We have, in the past, and Mike even mentioned before, have had sort of decreasing trip limits.

You know, you get to 75 percent of the quota, and the trip limit goes down, and I would be interested in exploring the possibility of increasing trip limits, such that, if you're not at X percent of the quota by, you know, the fourth quarter, then the trip limit goes up, some version of that. I would love to see some numbers surrounding when and what trip limits are constraining, or if they're not constraining harvest.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Kerry. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Madam Chair, and I'm thinking back what Kerry said a few minutes ago about we're consistently reactive to these single-species assessments, and we're hearing more and more about the climate change concerns, even though we -- You know, Mike talked about ecosystem-based management might not fit in here very well right now, and I think we're going to have to, or we should try to consider it in our management strategies, to try to get away from this reactive management that we've been doing, and I don't think there's any other way to do it, but, you know, look at, you know, the climate change and some kind of -- I know we don't have the models for it, but we're going to need to try to figure out how to incorporate it as best we can.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Charlie. I appreciate that. I'm wondering if climate change concerns, and something about ecosystem components or something like that, is kind of grouped together, and I guess I would also add maybe something -- Maybe there are some specifics, whether it's at this meeting, or at a future one of these subcommittee meetings, where we could kind of break this down more, and like is this also about people and what permits they need to harvest which species, as South Atlantic species move north, outside their range into another council's jurisdiction, et cetera, and so I'm wondering if there's some things that we can think about that would fall under these categories, and so think about that. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. These bullet points are definitely a priority for me. You know, all of these have to do with way back when the commercial sector was considered to be overcapitalized, and these were put in place to, you know, reduce the permits, and, in many cases, some of them may still be necessary, as the, you know, tying into everything that's been discussed, with climate change and shifting stocks and, you know, all of the things we're dealing with. but, you know, if you look at, as a commercial fisherman, trying to survive, and eke out a living from our natural resources, you have to have these permits, and we need to look at how these permits -

Who has them, how they're being used, and, again, there was a study as to a portfolio that was done years ago by the council, and it was a good document, and it showed the different permits that were necessary for fishermen to make it, and a lot of these issues, the two-for-one, the permit leasing, we need to continue to look at these and see if they need to still be in place.

They may still need to be in place, the two-for-one, as we look at our snapper grouper fisheries and how much biomass is there and the amount of effort that's there on the commercial side, and how we control it, but we're definitely -- The commercial sector has definitely been reduced from its overcapitalization determination years ago, and, you know, there is a concern about the future of the fishery, and new entrants being able to enter the fishery, and the amount of permits that you need to survive, because we're basically -- We're having to jump from one species to another to survive. We have such small quotas on many of our snapper grouper stocks, and so, you know, I like all of these bullet points.

I think they need to stay there. I like the one that was added, the step-ups from Kerry, and, I mean, there's other things we could add, but I have a hard time pulling any of these out right now, unless, you know, something else develops where they're just not something we have to consider, but that's it. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Jimmy. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair, and I'll kind of keep that Jimmy conversation going. Coming out of your Florida commercial fishing summit, those barriers to new participants in the industry was one of those sections that really is applicable here, for these conversations, and I really would think that we would need some more information from SERO regarding permits. I know that's a hot topic right now, and they don't quite have a handle on things, but I think we're going to need some education from SERO about permits in general.

What are the procedures that the permits office is using, for instance, to verify relationships of stakeholders and companies? What are they doing to ensure that stakeholders match the relationships to those officers with those, perhaps, permits, because I'm noticing that names are changing on permits, over time, and is that a legal process? Is that a loophole process? I'm not quite sure what's happening there, and so I think getting some information directly from the permits office on how they address some of these permit transfers would be helpful for our conversations as well.

I think I need a little bit more education on their practices. It's very clear, in law, where transfer permits come into play, with you have to provide documentation of ownership. You have to be -

- I think it's like a husband, or a wife, or a sibling, or something like that, or a parent, but it seems like these permits are being able to transfer with a little bit more ease than maybe it was intended to be, and perhaps things like, you know, power of attorneys are coming into play, where we're not quite educated on how that's happening, and I want to make sure that, number one, the law is being upheld, and then, two, just better understand it. That was a lot. Sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and that was good. That was helpful, and Mike was capturing a bunch of that information and some bullets there on the screen. Thank you, Amy. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, Amy, thank you for that. I think, with both the 225 and the two-for-one, it's important that we understand. We all know, and we all have stories, of where the system is being abused, and all that does is hurt the honest people who are really trying to get into the fishery, and so, yes, I agree. It's important that we understand that.

I also wanted to throw, out for my fellow committee members, and, Jessica, I had spoken to you about this, but, as we look at the two-for-one, in my mind, it's sort of not a yes or no question. We may end up saying that we still need the two-for-one for right now. I mean, I have no idea. I'm not predisposed to what our answer is, but if we end up saying the two-for-one is still necessary right now, I 100 percent believe, with all my heart, that there's still utility in us moving forward with some sort of --

Whether it's an amendment or a framework that lays out when the council does envision the end of the two-for-one, because it's the one thing that wasn't done well when it was enacted in the first place, and so I just want to make sure that we're all on the same page that two-for-one isn't just, yes, let's keep it, or, no, let's get rid of it, and that there could be a middle ground where we say this is the point in which we get rid of it. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that sounds great. I'm also wondering if the 225 -- If we're going to dive into the two-for-one, and kind of when does it -- When does it end, and what is the criteria for it being removed, and I'm wondering if the 225 gets evaluated at the same time. That was just one of my thoughts, but, also, I want to go back to one of the things that Amy brought up.

I had been looking at the bullet about examination of items from the Florida commercial fishing summit, and I have the report here in front of me. Really, the only one that I see that we could easily pull out from that, based on what falls within the council's purview, is the one that you already pulled out, Amy, which is the barriers to new entrants, and so I just wanted to bring that up.

Kerry, I know you were at the commercial fish, the Florida commercial fishing summit. I didn't know if you had anything else in mind from that. There were things that -- Some of the things in the top-ten were like imports impacting the market, working waterfronts, recreational data, water quality, Florida sustainability certification, educating consumers about Florida seafood, versus imports, things about lobbying, which the council can't do, about the farm bill, USDA relief, fisheries disasters, seafood labeling, and things like that. So, Kerry, did you have anything else that you were thinking of from the commercial fishing summit that we need to add to that list?

MS. MARHEFKA: Jessica, thank you. One of the things that you just reminded me of is I believe that, in Florida, you all have a minimum size limit for imports that matches what's on your state

regs. I don't know to the extent -- In my personal day-to-day seafood life, imports -- I'm not in competition with imports, and I don't know how much that shifted over the whole fishery, and maybe we're all not dealing with imports as much, or if that is still a problem, but I would be curious to figure out if, you know, are South Atlantic snapper grouper species still in competition with imports, and, if so, is it worthwhile for the council to consider mirroring a law like that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, that sounds great, and so what that is, Mike, is import minimum size limits. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Well, first, that's neat. I didn't realize that Florida had that matching of minimum size limits, and so kudos for you guys, but you just mentioned another outcome from your fishing summit that sort of actually resonates to a conversation that Kerry and I had last week regarding sustainability certification.

More of a question coming from you, Jessica, and that summit, but were the fishermen that were in attendance in favor of moving forward with some sort of sustainability certification? Just from context, South Carolina tried it, a couple of years ago, with the Wildlife Federation, specifically for penaeid shrimp, and our fishermen weren't necessarily wanting to take the next steps, because there was no, quote, unquote, guarantee that the value of their product would go up, and so more of a curiosity question than anything else.

MS. MCCAWLEY: This is a great question, and there is a lot to unpack here. There are other parts of the Gulf of Mexico that tried this, and so folks in Louisiana definitely tried this. It had some success. If you did this, and so we've already been talking about it here in Florida, and, in Florida, I don't know if it would just be FWC by themselves, or we would have to bring in our Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which handles like our Fresh from Florida program, et cetera, but there's a lot of nuances to this, meaning how are you going to determine certification, who determines it, and then are you going to penalize people against it, meaning are you going to go back to some of these people that you've certified that their business is dealing in a particular type of sustainable product?

Are you just saying that the harvest methods, or the management, and so meaning like the gear, et cetera, makes the fishery sustainable, and just what are all the nuances that go into this, and so some of the leaders from the commercial industry, from that summit, have been having some calls with Louisiana and other states.

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission also got involved in what was called Gulf Fresh Seafood, I believe was the marketing, and some of this also came following the oil spill, in trying to get information out, after Deepwater Horizon, that it was safe to eat Gulf seafood and what that meant, et cetera, but there's definitely a lot to unpack if you're going to go down this road.

I feel like a whole team of people could work on this, but, ultimately, I'm not sure if the council has the authority to deem something like this safe, or if this is something that comes back to the states, or it goes over to maybe an organization that deems it safe, because, you know, you have the whole Monterey Bay, and the red list, and all that other stuff, and the way that they do that certification program, that I think a number of states, including us, don't exactly agree with, and so a lot of pieces to unpack with that sustainability certification and kind of how you're going to do that, how are you going to enforce it, what are the penalties, et cetera. Back to you, Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you for that, and, yes, ma'am, I do realize it's a lot to unpack, and, therefore, I think it should perhaps stay on this list, but perhaps be considered a long-term priority, versus an immediate, or as soon as possible priority, because I do think it's important for us to continue having these conversations, but an action plan is likely pretty far down the road.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, sounds good. It sounds like we have an item for long-term there. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm sorry, Amy, and I will respectfully disagree with keeping it on the list. I think that when -- I think it's far out of the council's purview. I see states -- You know, if they want to have a place in it, states do have marketing arms. You have your Sea Grants, and things like that, but this is not an area the council has ever weighed into. If a fishery wants certification, they can seek it, or the participants of the fishery can seek it, through one of the many different MSCs or there's a zillion of them, but I think that tends to be more of a private -- That's a private business decision that businesses make.

I think, if the council starts weighing into that, and, Jessica, you laid out a lot of the reasons, and it just gets too hairy, and I just -- I don't think the council is the place for that. I think there's a lot of conflict of interest, and there's a lot of -- I just think it's not the place for us, and I don't want to give anyone -- It will freak people out, and so I would respectfully say, and it's just me, my opinion, is we leave it off, and we leave the council out of certification, because that's essentially, at the end of the day, a business label. It's essentially a marketing tool, honestly, and that's really all it is.

The council, by law, has to have these fisheries be sustainable, and that's the end of that story. Anything else is a marketing tool, and I don't think the council necessarily should wade into those waters. It's also very expensive, and it's very controversial, and, quite frankly, I'm not so sure it's necessary for this fishery, because what it does is it really opens up markets, whether it be European markets or big grocery store markets or things like that, and I'm not so sure that is the main sort of concern with this fishery.

A lot of the discussion that was had at the Florida meeting, which I was at, was really around shrimp, where that's an appropriate tool, but it's just me. I would be curious to hear what Jimmy and Charlie and Tim think, but I'd kind of like to move it off. I'm sorry, Amy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Kerry. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm inclined to agree with Kerry. I think that's just a can of worms that's just too much. I mean, a lot of the fish that are imported are fillets, and how are you going to turn it into size limits, you know, what their biomass is, and their fishery is, and, you know, it's going to be different than how we fish. I just don't see how we can get there from here, with the workload we've already got and so I know it's -- I'm going to say it's a noble thought, but I just don't think we can get there from here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Charlie. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree with not really having the council go into endorsing sustainable seafood, but I would add that we should encourage the agency overall to

promote that we have the most sustainably-managed seafood in the world, and how our science is the finest in the world, and it leads our management to sustainable fisheries. I think that's the message, the most important message, out there, but I don't think we can really -- It's just we've got too much to do to get into that, and I think the states are well on their way. I think Florida -- We're giving that some consideration now, and let's see where they go with it.

I would like to go back to barriers to new entrants, and especially the 225 permit policies, and put a bullet point in there that this could possibly be used as an entry-level permit to the snapper grouper fishery, if we see that we can have more entrants. If we do something with this permit, it could possibly be used as an entry-level permit, that a young person that wants to make a living as a commercial snapper grouper fisherman could probably afford to buy this permit, or, if there was some development of a permit pool, and this would be an entry-level permit.

I know we've talked about this 225 permit at the AP level for a long time, and the pros and cons of it, and it seems like there was discussion of a sunset on those permits. I'm not sure if that was ever implemented. I don't remember, but, for me, rather than get rid of it, it seems like it would be a way to reimagine it as, you know, an access tool for a young participant, because we've got to face the facts, that there's very few new entrants into the snapper grouper fishery, very few. I mean, I know of just a couple young guys that are considering entering the fishery, to try to make a living out of it, and they will have a really hard time buying, you know, unlimited permits.

I would also like to know how many two-for-one transactions have actually occurred recently. Is that happening, because I'm not sure that it's even possible to find two permits available to turn into one, and, if it is, it's very, very expensive, and so those are just a couple of bullet points I wanted to add to that. I know that's not taking away from our workload, but I think it's some important considerations. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Jimmy. Before I go to Amy, I'm going to try to add some things here for Mike to capture. So, under the 225 permit policy, there was another thing that I heard from Jimmy there, which is also one of the things from visioning, a permit pool or a permit bank, and he was indicating that maybe we need to consider that, and maybe there's a way to do that with the 225, and then, also, before we go to Amy, just to try to make a suggestion on the conversation that we're hearing about -- If you could scroll down a little bit, Mike, the sustainable seafood endorsement and those bullets underneath it. I'm thinking that what I'm hearing so far, but I want -- Amy, I wanted you to speak to this, is that that bullet, and its sub-bullets, go to a maybe not under the council's purview, or longer-term project, but could you speak to that, Amy, and make sure that you agree with that?

MS. DUKES: Yes, Madam Chair, and I very much value, and appreciate, Kerry's comments, and Charlie's and Jimmy's as well, and, yes, I do tend to agree that this is more of a state or an independent program, but I think, Jimmy, you nailed it. You talked about how the council should still be encouraging, as we already are, that sustainable seafood endorsement, and, when the council is tasked with ideas and concepts about imports, that's where maybe that conversation can at least still be a positive connection. I am completely fine with taking that sort of off of this subcommittee's discussions, in context, but it does still have a tie to the council, and I think that's what I was ultimately after.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great, and I think we might have used some comments like that in a comment letter from the council in the past, and I think that that's a great way to use this, but maybe, Mike, there's a way to move this one, along with the infrastructure one, to the not on the main list, however you want to do that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I'll make the not on the main list. I'll just highlight them with -- I'll just do red text, so we know that those are going to be pulled out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, sounds good. Then what else on this list? Let me try to spark some more discussion. One of the items listed on there is environmental equity and justice concerns. Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead, Rick, and then I'll go back to where I was going to try to get some more information. Go ahead, Rick.

MR. DEVICTOR: No, that's fine, and this kind of feeds into where you're going. EEJ, certainly there's a presentation to the council, right, and there's the implementation plan. SERO gave that report, and there's a lot in there, right, and it's divided into short-term and long-term. I think if we could go through that, the council and SERO together, and see where we're at on some of those, what are some that can be accomplished, and what are some that are underway, and certainly there's a lot there, like conducting research, like in-depth social science research and surveying crew members, for example, to find more information as to what are the barriers, EEJ barriers.

Then there's more short-term minor stuff, like writing in plain language and where you have your meetings and stuff, and so, anyway, I think that, for that one, we can certainly go through that and get some progress.

While I have the mic, just responding to the permits and SERO presentation, and Kevin McIntosh gave a presentation, in 2019, to the council, and maybe that can be shared around. I'll send that to you, Mike. You know, there were very specific questions from the council on that about renewals, leasing, buying permits to individuals rather than vessels, and so I think that that would be helpful to answer some questions, but, also, if the council has very specific questions too for the permits office, that would be very helpful.

Lastly, while I've got the mic, you know, we sort of jumped to the solutions here, kind of, or what we think are solutions, and so I think it's very important to keep talking about, you know, what are the issues to the commercial sector, and that's where I like where Florida's plan talked a lot about specific issues, like lack of working waterfronts, barriers to new participants, et cetera, and we probably have the same issues, but I think that that's helpful, and going back to Kerry's comments of like how things have changed since the last visioning, and so I think it's important to keep talking of how things have changed. It may be obvious to a lot of us, but it would be good just to put that at the forefront, because that's how we figure out the solutions, right, is what are the issues.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and those are great points, Rick, which also kind of got me thinking. Yes, I agree that kind of what we're working on here is almost like, yes, we've jumped to the actions. We're trying to think about what could be in a future amendment, but you're right that the whole kind of maybe where have we come from, what are kind of some barriers to success to the commercial fishing industry in the South Atlantic, and that's kind of what we posed at Florida's commercial fishing summit, is what are some of the barriers, and then what are some solutions to that

I guess I would also put out there that I think it is a little challenging to have those type of what is the vision, those types of discussions, in this venue here, on the webinar, and I'm wondering if maybe our next meeting of this group could look at say past information. We've talked about a couple different presentations here. There was a presentation, and I thought it was from John Carmichael, kind of about overcapitalization in the snapper grouper fishery, and kind of looking at specific species, et cetera.

I would love to see that presentation again, and I think that there was a nice report on that. We've talked about some presentations on looking at the information on the two-for-one, and so I'm wondering if, kind of jumping to next steps, if there's a way that we could have our next subcommittee meeting in-person, and look at some of this background information, and not just think about what goes in a plan amendment, and jumping right to that, and jumping right to timelines to those actions, but to kind of do more of what Kerry said at the beginning of this conversation.

How we got on this subcommittee in the first place is where do we want to see the commercial fishery, now and in the future, and what is preventing the commercial fishery, in the South Atlantic, from thriving, and what can be done to get to a successful commercial fishery in the future, and kind of Jimmy brought that up on this meeting today as well.

It's just kind of hard to have some of those discussions without maybe seeing some of these background documents, and having some thoughtful conversations, and then maybe using some type of brainstorming technique for us to get that information out, like at an in-person meeting in the future, and what do people think about that? What do people think about kind of stepping back a little bit and thinking about where we want to see the fishery in the next few years, and what are those barriers to success, and doing that in some sort of brainstorming type exercise in-person? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, Jessica, and I agree with you wholeheartedly. I think that our next meeting absolutely has to be in-person. It's just so much easier. I like the brainstorming idea. I have a couple thoughts, along with the information you've asked for. I'm wondering if it would be possible to pull, let's just say from amendments we've done, I don't know, in the past five or six years and so amberjack, gag, scamp, and I assume -- In fact, I've seen a lot of the information, and so I think it already exists, and it can just be copied and pasted, but some sort of analyzing of snapper grouper trips, and not necessarily cumulatively, because I think that is a new data pull, but pull out the table from the amberjack amendment that shows how many of the trip met the trip limit, that kind of thing, just for where we've done it recently, that already exists, for this first round, so that it's hopefully easier on whoever has to find that information.

Then my next question is how do we get from -- I mean, the two-for-one is a pretty clear action item, but how -- When do we start having like discussions about -- Are we going to talk about permit stacking and, you know, regional management, and those things are sort of big, esoteric ideas, and what is the path for figuring out if we want to talk about those? Is it through the AP first, or through us first, and then to the AP, and I'm just having a hard time figuring out the path.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great questions. I think I like the idea of us having this in-person meeting, to try to do more brainstorming on this, and look at some of these things. I think it's also kind of

looking at some of the recent actions that have been taken, I would say in the past four or five years, or since the visioning process, to try to meet the fishery where it is right now.

One thing that we haven't talked about today, that was in the visioning, and I think that we saw a presentation about this a few years ago, the council did, but it's been a number of years, and kind of about multiday, trips versus day-boat fisheries, and kind of how the commercial fishery might be changing, and is there a way, or should we restructure, and not on the permit side, but how you do trip limits, how you do things like that, in thinking about day-boats, versus multiday trips, and things of that nature, and so I'm just putting that out there is another thing that -- I swear we had some information, and maybe a report and a presentation on this, that we could see, as well as like kind of how the fishery has changed in the last few years, and how we as a council need to respond to some of those things.

To me, that also gets to how you have a successful fisherman, and Jimmy brought up, and I see he's next in line with the hands, kind of the portfolio aspect, and if we need to maybe do an analysis on this portfolio fishing, and how we can make that more successful, et cetera, but I still think, and it's just my opinion, Kerry, that this group, this subcommittee, maybe needs to meet at least one more time, to try to get at some of these things, look at some of this past information, and narrow it down into either short-term, mid-term, or not in the council's purview actions, or framework action, plan amendment action, or something, and then that, I think, could go to the AP. I would like to, and it's just my opinion, but I would like to put a little bit more structure on it first, before bringing it to them, but those are just my thoughts, and I'm happy to hear from others. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Jessica. Yes, and, you know, the bottom line for, if I look at myself, and my boats, and my business, to being successful in the future, is access to the biomass. I mean, we have to have these fish available, through the stock assessments and the analysis that's done there, of, you know, what we can catch, what we can pull out of the fishery, of the stock, and so, I mean, if that's not there, then everything we have here is you know pretty much moot.

We have to have access to these fisheries, which means they need to be sustainably -- Sustainable and rebuilt. Now, if we can help make them that way, through management actions, which we can, we should do that, but bottom line is, you know the science is -- The outcome of the stock assessments is going to drive everything, and so anything we can do to reduce dead discards, and reduction of wasting the resource and not harvesting, it is something we definitely have to keep in mind, and that's why we manage, and all those things are being implemented, and we're working on all of that, but, for me, it's access to the different stocks.

If they're closed, and they're overfished, then I don't have any access to them, and so none of this really matters, at that point, and I have to do something else. I have to jump into another fishery, which is where the portfolio comes in, and the permit process, where we have to have access to these fisheries.

To your statement that how has the multiday trips changed to day-boats, yes, in Florida, by all means, that's what has happened. You know, just about everybody is a day-boat, because you have such small trip limits that it's -- You can do it in a day, and we're closer to the fishing grounds, in many cases, but I've talked to others north of us, and they still run multiday trips, and guys down the Keys still run multiday trips, on different fisheries, but, overall, it seems that the boats have

gotten smaller, and faster, and the crews have gotten smaller, and so have our trip limits and access, and so it's good conversation. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Jimmy, and so, Mike, just to help edit some of what you just typed up there, is there a way to indicate, whether it's in that first main bullet about allows access, and I think what Jimmy is saying is they need some year-round access, you know, whether it's through portfolio fishing, by switching to different species, having biomass available in all times of the year, et cetera, so that they can run a business. That was one of the pieces, or another piece, of what I took from what Jimmy was saying. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks. I was just going to agree with having an in-person meeting. I know I've been quiet, just so I could listen and learn, you know, what all the issues are, especially from, you know, Kerry and Jimmy and Charlie, and so -- But I would be interested in having an in-person, just because I was kind of curious to hear more about the Florida commercial fishing summit, and, you know, you all are discussing other information that's out there, and that would just -- You know, I haven't been on the council that many years, and so I think it would really be helpful for me, and you know how I love a brainstorm, and so I definitely support an in-person meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds great. Thanks, Trish. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just wanted to follow-up to what you said before, and I agree that let's have the in-person meeting, refine our list, and then go to the AP. I'm onboard with that plan.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Sounds great. Mike, what have you got?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I was just going to -- Some of it has been discussed, but I was going to suggest that, before this goes back to the AP, kind of having that prioritization, and having a bit more fleshed-out detail of what the what the subcommittee's, and what the council's, thoughts are on the most important actions, moving forward, and trying to whittle down the list.

I think there's been a lot of great discussion here, and I wonder -- Is it possible to get -- I guess, do we have all of the issues down on the screen, and have people seen, you know, the issues that are important to them captured on the screen, and is there any way to start some of the prioritization today, or to possibly, in areas where we kind of have a broad topic, to have some actionable items to put under that topic, so that we can start to narrow down our field a little bit, and just kind of take one step towards narrowing down the broad field of the commercial issues, so that we can move this process forward a little bit today?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I thought the same thing. I can tell you, from my end, it's a little bit challenging for me to try to narrow down the list further today, because it's almost like I would like to see some of these previous presentations that we had from the past, on the topics that we were listing out, and then us have a discussion, us like the subcommittee have a discussion, of kind of a common understanding of where we are, and then have a discussion about what are the things that we want to start to tackle in the immediate future, to get to where we want to be, and so it seems a tiny bit premature to try to narrow the list down, without going back, for me, and looking at some of these historic presentations, and reports, and other stuff.

Then I would like to discuss it, kind of in-person with the group, and figure out where we want to go, meaning what are our ultimate goals for the commercial fishery, and, for example, like year-round access, and then what are some things that we think we could do in the short-term to get there, through an amendment et cetera.

Like the EEJ items, and I don't know that those are necessarily things that go in an amendment, and maybe those are lists of items that have to do with things like how we appoint people to advisory panels, and other things, and so I would like to talk about those things more, but I feel like I need more background information, and then to have a discussion with all of you, about kind of the vision for where we want to get to, and then dive back into kind of the action item list, but that's just me, and I'm happy to hear what other people think. Amy, and then Kerry.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair, and I completely agree. I need more information, before I can really proceed in prioritizing this list, and not only are these previous reports going to be helpful, and the presentations that you guys are going to share, but my concern is that they're going to be a little outdated, and are going to need to be refreshed.

If we're looking at a permit presentation from 2019, and although it will be informative, I'm wondering how much has evolved, and changed, since 2019 with these particular -- As I mentioned earlier, how the permit is being transferred, and how are stakeholders being identified, and I'm not so sure that some of that information may, or may not, be in that report, and so, until I see it, of course, I won't know, but I'm thinking we're going to need updated information as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and one more thing I would bring up, before going to Kerry, and then I'm hoping we can think and talk about what we need, and we've talked touched on it a little bit, and so the visioning was done kind of before COVID, and I think that fisheries, fishermen, the way businesses operate, and I think they changed, to adapt to COVID, and then I think that they've changed and evolved again, and so I don't know if some of this historic information, without being updated, is going to be reflective of those types of things that have changed since COVID, and then they will likely change again, and so just kind of having those conversations as a group, and any updated information we can provide in these reports would be helpful to me. Kerry, thoughts?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I could not agree more. I mean, 2019 -- What existed in 2019, and what exists by the time we get to this 2025, especially because of COVID, are going to be completely different, but, also, the fishery was already, you know, getting smaller in 2019, and so I suspect we're going to come up though against the same issue that we keep coming up against, with the issue that's going on with the permits database, which is really frustrating, but hopefully -- Is there -- Anyway, I won't I won't go there, but I worry that we're going to come up against that soon.

As far as information for the next subcommittee meeting, Mike, if you could add, if possible, maybe landings by state, for say the top -- I don't know if it's top five, or top seven, and, obviously, it doesn't need to be for all fifty-five species, but, you know, for the top appropriate number of species, because, if we're going to even consider, and I don't know that we are, but how can we make a decision about considering regional management if we don't have some idea of regional landings?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just to clarify, we're talking specifically commercial landings for these species, correct?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I don't think -- At this point, I don't see any utility in looking at recreational, and, real quick, since I'm back on, and, Amy, you might know the answer to this, but is there any way to determine how many people with snapper grouper permits are also their own dealers, because that is a portion -- That is something that has changed dramatically, I believe, since visioning, and, you know, it does affect how businesses are run, and I'm just curious. We're all operating so differently than we were operating in 2012, and that's just one data point I think of often.

MS. DUKES: To that point, Madam Chairman, and do you mind?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead.

MS. DUKES: I think those are sort of some of the questions that were going through my mind as well, kind of this operations of the fishery and how we're going to be able to use that for perhaps management decisions. I think that there are ways that we could perhaps work with states to look at the data, but if the permit is just being held, and not necessarily being utilized, perhaps as, you know, kind of a future commodity, that's going to be a little difficult, but it would be neat if the permits office and the states could work together.

I think you're going to have a lot of permits that you're going to have no clue, and so having a partial connection to whether it be an owner-operator with one vessel, or multiple vessels, or a complete separation of owner and operator, and it's going to be really complex to determine that and have a full suite of pieces of information to put together. I think you're going to have highlight reels, but not necessarily comprehensive work. Does that make sense, Kerry?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I think that's fine. I don't think there's utility in knowing exactly. I know, in my case -- I mean, you know us, and so you know that, you know, we own our own boat, and are dealers, but I can see how that would really be hard to trace, if you didn't know that, because they operate independently.

It's not so much that I think we need the discrete numbers. I just would love to have us all have an understanding of this is how the fishery used to operate, right, and there used to be one model of a fish house, and everyone unloaded at the fish house, and, you know, got their bait at the fish house, and all those thing, and sort of some sort of descriptive, qualitative way of saying, you know, now it's more likely that, you know, a man is unloading his fish, and selling his own fish kind of situation.

I think it just helps us understand the businesses of these, because what we're ultimately trying to do is take the amount of fish that we know this sector has and trying to make it so that their businesses can be as successful as possible, within our limits, and there's only so much we can do, so that we have a thriving commercial fishery. In order to do that, I think it's really important that we understand the businesses in general, as much as we can.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I agree with that. On this list of information for the next subcommittee meeting, Mike, I was just wondering -- So we have a bullet, up above, about the trips, the percent

of trips landing, the trip limit et cetera, and is that possible to have for the next meeting, and maybe that's what you mean by summary -- Okay. Summary of trips meeting trip limit, and then, on the two-for-one report, does that include the item that Jimmy brought up earlier about how many transfers have happened, not just over time, but how many have happened recently, et cetera, and does that -- Is that included? I'm just making sure, and I don't want to lose that either.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I can expressly write that. I'm not sure if that was done. Hadley, was that done in the one of the previous two-for-one reports that you worked on, kind of the question of how many two-for-one exchanges have occurred?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, it was, but it's at this point, and so it won't include, I guess, any COVID or post-COVID information, as far as a time series.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so I think, I mean, at this point, we could definitely produce the information that was presented in the previous reports. I'm not sure about our abilities to update that information right now, but we could definitely like kind of refresh everyone's memory on what's been done, what you've seen previously.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay that helps, and so, I guess, Mike, I would ask you, and how long do you think it's going to take to come up with all of this information, go through it, and figure out if some of these things can be updated, and some of them might not be able to be updated, because of what is happening at the permits office, and the lack of that information, and how long would it take to get all this ready, so that we could try to figure out even the timeframe when we could schedule the next meeting in-person, and so meaning is this something that could happen between January and March? Does it have to happen between the March and the June council meeting? How long do you think it would take, and what would be feasible for when do you think we could meet again?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Well, I definitely think if we're -- You know, we're talking -- It sounds like there's pretty broad consensus that you all want the next meeting to be in-person, I think a meeting in between January and March, at this point, would be very difficult to pull off, as far as like meeting logistics, and then also getting the information together, and so my target timeframe would probably be between the March and June meetings.

It's a little bit scary, because I know what April does, in terms of meetings with APs, SSCs, all that, but we can at least start looking at the at the schedule, to see where we could fit something in. That may need to be a like a post-meeting follow-up, via email, to get a more specific timeframe on that, because I need to talk to Myra about, you know, is this is this me looking up this information, and what other staff availability -- You know what are we -- How are we operating, as a staff, to bring this information together, and that would probably determine how quickly we could get this done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and that sounds great. I would also like to hear suggestions of do we just try to schedule this outright, on an available week, or do we try to meet -- Do we -- Do the subcommittee members come, I don't know, early to a council meeting, and we do this on a Sunday, or a Monday morning, before the council meeting starts, or something like that, and so I would like to hear, after you all have a chance to think about it, what would be best, and I too was

a little concerned, based on everything that's on the schedule, about getting a meeting in place between January and March, but hands are going up. Jimmy, and then Myra.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Jessica. I like the idea of having a subcommittee meeting at an already scheduled event, like where we're all there at a council meeting, and I think that makes sense. The staff is there, and we're there. We're already there, and try to utilize it, and multitask, if we can. I know we're all real busy, but I think it makes good sense.

I would like to go back up to a bullet point that we went past of regional management, and it may be something that we can -- I'm not sure exactly how far into regional management is -- I think it was an existing bullet point up there, Mike, but it's -- Regional management is going to be illegal against National Standard 4, I believe, of the MSA, and so that may be something we can get rid of, but I don't know if this -- How detailed we're going to get into regional management, but it is opposed by National Standard 4, and so it may be something that we may not need to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Jimmy. I mean, I think about kind of some of these regional quotas, about things that we have, like king mackerel, and that's allowed, and so maybe it's just we need to figure out how you would do regional management, and not violate National Standards, but lots of hands are going up. Mike, did you want to speak to that, before I go to Myra?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and, I mean, I hear what you're saying Jimmy. I think that the council would need to make the case, and we do have Shep on, if he has any disagreement to this, but there is the possibility, within a region, to have variable management, like between your state lines, for example, and there is that possibility. The council needs to make the case, in writing the amendment, to show that this is fair, and it very well could be fair, depending on the species, depending on the fishery.

You know, if you have a fishery where, one part of the year, let's say in the Carolinas, it's executed from, you know, the first half of the year, January to June, and, in the latter part of the year, it's executed in Georgia and Florida, from July to December, having a season that encompasses the entire region may not be as effective as having, you know, seasons where you have the northern part is open for one part of the year and the southern part is open for another part of the year.

That can still be seen as fair, because you're providing access to different areas of the fishery, and so there is some flexibility for council to consider that. It's just, as the council writes those types of actions, they need to show, in their analyses and their discussion, how it is fair and equitable to all the fishermen in the region.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that, and, before I go to Shep, I was thinking kind of Spanish mackerel and king mackerel. Spanish has an actual quota between the northern region and the southern region, and they're different, but then king mackerel is managed more kind of thinking about seasons, as the fish pass by certain areas, but, Shep, do you want to speak to this topic?

MR. GRIMES Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just going to basically echo a little bit of what Mike said, but it depends on what regional management ends up being proposed, right, and, I mean, regional management is just a term, a concept, and it's sort of ill-defined at this stage, and it could mean a lot of different things, and so it depends on what management measures come forward out of it.

I guess it raises the potential for discrimination against residents of different states, but it all depends on how it plays out, and so you couldn't just cross it off the board, at this point, and say that it's, you know, as a general matter, that it conflicts with National Standard 4. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and you kind of got to where I was going, that I don't think we should write it off yet. I think it's a viable option, and, of course, the devil is in the details but I think it's a viable option, and I would leave it on the list. Judd, did you want to speak to that, before I go to Myra?

DR. CURTIS: Yes, I did. Thank you, Chair. Another example that might be coming down, in the near future, would be red grouper as well, and so the last stock assessment was basically determined, by the SSC, to be invalid, because they had what looked like two stocks that had different trends in catches, and the indices, and so that might be another stock coming down the line, where once the center, and the SSC, review what is looking like is going to be a two-stock model, a regional management approach might be more appropriate. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Judd. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, and I'm going back, of course, to a potential way that we can accommodate an in-person meeting of the subcommittee, so I apologize for taking us back in that direction, but I was going to say that we can come up with suggestions for you guys to consider, when this topic comes up for discussion in December.

I think an in-person meeting is feasible before March. I think it would kind of spread out the work for us, right, as staff. Rather than preparing, you know, a giant briefing book for you guys for the March meeting, we could spread it out, and certainly, as Mike said, you know, having the subcommittee meet in the spring would be a lot of work, because of all our advisory panels that are also meeting at that time, and so that's what I'm going to offer, and, of course, reiterating that we will need some solid, I guess, date for when the permits office thinks that the data will be available, so that we can prepare what you guys want.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Myra. I'm not under -- I don't know that I fully understand what you're suggesting. Are you suggesting that we split this list of items that we want to see information on, and we have an in-person meeting between January and March and then another in-person meeting, to look at the remainder of the information, between March and June? Can you help clarify?

MS. BROUWER: No, no, no, and so I was simply um saying that it is possible for us to coordinate and put together a meeting for you guys in-person before March. I'm not -- I don't know what we can bring to you, and certainly, the information that does not require us to make inquiries of the permits office, we can definitely put that together. That's all I'm saying.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thanks for that clarification. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair, and, Myra, you're kind of hitting to where my brain was going. I don't want to lose momentum of this subcommittee, now that we we've got ourselves together, and we're moving forward, and we've got some great action items here in front of us. I

was actually going to suggest perhaps, although I do agree we need an in-person meeting, and we don't have all the pieces of the puzzle, perhaps, to have an in-person meeting, and maybe just having another webinar, in that first quarter of 2025, to review the information that is provided to us to, then determine what updated information would we need, and, if a lot of it is coming out of the permit office, getting a better understanding of when we're going to have that data available, and that would be really applicable, perhaps, before we have that in-person meeting.

I just want to make sure that, when we have that in-person meeting, we have all the variables that we need to be able to answer these questions, and, while I've got the mic, on that summary of trip meeting -- I'm sorry. The summary of trips meeting the trip limit, and was that also going to include some of that multiday bandit, versus single-day aspects that we talked about, and I guess, honestly, if we could just look at the summary of trips that are meeting that trip limit, and then the length of that trip, I think would be really helpful, to be able to see what are they getting in a single day, or multiday trips in a single day, or how many days are really going out, to look at those multiday trips, and I don't know. That may be a little too complicated, of course, but something for us to look at. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that, and, on this information for the next meeting I swear that there was a document about the day trips, versus multiday trips, and maybe that's kind of what you're getting at, but there was, I think, a previous report/presentation, from a number of years ago about this, and it would need to be updated, but it could tell us kind of where the fishery has come from. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think I would really like to stick to our guns of having the next meeting be in-person. I think that this is just really hard virtually. A lot of the information that we're asking for is information that exists, and, if we don't have it all at the next meeting, I think that's okay. I think the other thing that we can keep in mind is, if we can meet in the first quarter, then we can have something to go to the advisory panel, even if it's just very basic, for their April meeting, versus waiting until October, and so I just -- I hesitate to --

For some reason, it just doesn't feel as serious, and as grave, to me, when we're doing this work over webinar, and I think we're tackling really big issues, and I think we've already sort of, you know, adapted, and said, hey, we don't need to have these discussions at the Full Council, or at the Snapper Grouper Committee council meeting level, but I do think we need to meet in-person, whatever that looks like, mostly, from here on out, until the future. If we have to get down to nitty, nitty, nitty gritty stuff about permits, and transfers, that may change, but I would like us to have an in-person meeting between now and March, if possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that sounds great, and I was kind of thinking the same thing, especially if we're going to do some brainstorming, after we hear some of this information, and it just seems easier to talk about where we might want to go, in visioning, et cetera, in a brainstorming exercise in-person, and so we can certainly try to figure out, between now and December, some options for bringing this group together in early 2025.

I think that Myra was suggesting we could bring that to the December meeting and talk about it then, because, yes, I think that you've got some possibilities of maybe we do something on a Sunday, if that's possible, like maybe the day before the March meeting, and maybe then the day before the June meeting starts, like on that Sunday, et cetera, but, yes, I would like to give council

staff time to talk about it, think about it, and make some recommendations to us about when and how they think we should meet. Mike, or Myra, any responses to that?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, sure, and that sounds great. That is what I was intending, for us to sort of have a little huddle, here in the office, and, you know, it's a small group, and so I don't see it being very complicated. It's not like bringing an AP together, and so we could even meet here, at the council office, and I think we could find ways to accommodate and make it easier for everybody, doing something like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That sounds great. So then, Mike, what else do you need from us today, what else do you need us to talk about, or figure out, at this meeting right now? It seemed like there was a next-step slide in the presentation about maybe the report from this meeting, and it needing a quick turnaround, but I'm going to turn it back to you, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I'll go ahead and skip down to that next-steps slide, and so developing a report to get in for the December 2024 council meeting, and so I can work on typing up some of the notes from today's discussion, and get a draft out for review, and I'm trying to get it out by Thursday of this week, and then if we can get edits, and comments, in by November 12th, and this would kind of put us in position to get it up with the initial briefing book posting.

As far as information for today, it looks like -- It sounds like, from the discussion, that kind of the prioritization is going to wait until a future meeting, in-person, and so, really, the follow-up task, for staff, first off, is to figure out um the logistics of planning that in-person meeting. We'll email folks, and try to figure out times and locations.

In follow-up, I do want, before we kind of sign-off and get everything wrapped up, just to have folks look over the information steps, just make sure that there is nothing missing, that you want to see in your next subcommittee meeting, and we have in here the past two-for-one reports, and making sure we take a look at those, to point out the number of two-for-one transactions that have occurred. We'll see if we can update it, depending on the availability of information.

We'll try to look back at some past reports, and the one -- There was one mentioned about overcapitalization, that possibly John Carmichael had worked on, and so we'll try to look for that. We'll look through recent amendments, to look at analyses of trips meeting the trip limit, and also see if we can find a past report that has information on day versus multiday trips, to try to get a handle on the length of trips that are occurring for the commercial sector. We'll see if we can have -- We may have more recent information on that, and I'm not sure, but we'll look into it.

Then we'll do a deeper dive into the EEJ implementation plan and try to pull out from there some of the actionable items, some of the things that are in the council's purview, and being able to point out things that are management-action-based, versus those that may be more process-based, versus those that may just be general considerations that the council wants to keep in mind when making decisions.

There's a request for commercial landings, and I've put in, you know, the last five years. If you want different timeframe to define recent, then please let me know, but looking at commercial landings for some of the top species, and looking at a by-state basis, and then information about

permit ownership, looking at the percentages of owner-operators and multi-permit owners, working with the states, and with SERO, to try to get at this information, as it's available.

We can take a see if we have it in past reports, to try to get some type of timeframe fit to it, to see if we have transitions over time about what that permit ownership looks like for this fishery. I think we have seen that, in some previous reports, but we'll try to kind of pull it all together with that. Are there any other pieces of information that are needed, for that next meeting, that you all want us to pull together?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Can we just pull -- We. Sorry. That was pretty mean of me, but how about - - Would it be useful to look at information from 2022 through 2024, knowing that 2024 would be preliminary, of the species that are tracked on the NMFS ACL page, sort of, you know, what years we hit the quota, and what years we didn't, for just those species, so we can see what -- If we're leaving things on the table, or sort of those things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Mike is capturing that. Anything else, that's not on this list, that we want to look at specifically next time? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's mentioned above, but it would probably be good to bring it down, and, Mike, there was a presentation that Rick suggested we get provided to us from the permits office, and I know it's up above, but just so that doesn't get lost. It would be cool to bring that down. Thank you. Appreciate that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Amy. We grabbed that. Anything else? After you get that on there, Mike, could you scroll back up a little bit? Okay. Anything else that we need to see next time? Any other thoughts on things that we need to think about for the next meeting? Anything on that list, and I don't want people to feel like they have something to say, but they can't figure out when to when to say it here. No hands. Looking back -- Go ahead, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, I guess, one more question, as far as the information for the next meeting, just so we know how to plan it time-wise. Are you all looking for presentations on each of these items, or are you looking for compile the items, send them to you, and like your short blurb of a presentation in the meeting, but just compile the different reports, and provide them to you, so that you all look at them ahead of the meeting, and either format is fine, and it's just, if we're going to be presenting, and walking through all these different pieces of information, that takes more time, and we want to make sure we plan adequate time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great, and so, just from my perspective, and I hope others weigh-in, but I would love to see the report, and then uh some summarized PowerPoint slides, to kind of get the discussion going, and to see if people have questions, or interpretations, that they want to share about these reports, but, yes, I would like to see some background reading on reports, and then some summary slides, and that's just my preference. I don't know if others want to weigh-in here. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I agree, and, you know, get some information, let us be mulling it over, and not, you know, an extensive presentation but, you know, just the basics, so we can, you know, start throwing out options, and seeing what's doable or not. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Charlie. Does anybody else want to weigh-in on that? I'm looking back to our agenda, and I feel like we've had a discussion of some of the current issues, and we've somewhat prioritized the list, in that we've prioritized what we want to talk about at the next meeting, and we've talked about next steps for this group, and the next meeting. Anything else people want to say about what we've talked about today, or on other business, that they want to talk about at this subcommittee meeting? All right. No hands. Let's do another round of public comment. Is anyone wanting to give public comments right now? All right. I see Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. Looking over -- I think it's good, the list that you all have made, and I would also add if you would on -- On SERO's quota monitoring page, and I believe it was Kerry, or somebody, said about looking at the last couple years. If you go back and look, they have, on there, like back to 2012, and the snapper grouper fishery has changed a lot.

It continues to evolve, but I look forward to seeing what the outcome of this is, and I would hope that the in-person meetings you have would also be open to the public, in the future, and so I'm looking forward to it. I have a lot of thoughts on a direction, or potential, and some of it goes with what was outlined here today, but I'll continue to monitor it, and we'll see the outcome.

One thing about it is, as folks age-out in these fisheries, and this is a question somebody could answer, or comment, and what happens if you have a vessel, and a single snapper grouper permit, and you want to sell your vessel? The only person that could buy it is if they have to go get another permit, and so I'm wondering what folks are going to do, as they age-out.

Another thing I thought is how about, and I don't know this to be, but how about some type of income requirement to buy a snapper grouper permit, so that hopefully the snapper grouper permits will stay in the commercial industry. Just a little food for thought on them too, but thank you, and look forward to later discussions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dewey. Anybody else that wants to give public comment today? All right. I don't see any hands. Anything else, subcommittee members, before we adjourn the meeting today? All right. I want to thank everybody for their time, and participation, on this topic. I know these webinars can be challenging, and so I just want to thank everybody for taking time out of their schedule to join today. I think we've had some really good discussions, and, Mike and Myra, I appreciate all your help with this meeting today. I don't see any hands, and so, with that, we'll adjourn this Commercial Subcommittee meeting. Thank you, everybody.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on November 5, 2024.)

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BEYER

Bianchi

Brouwer

Curtis

DeVictor

Dukes

Foss

Glazier

Grimes

Griner

HULL

Hadley

Hemilright

Iberle

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Interest Rating

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