

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SNAPPER GROUPER COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Villas by the Sea Resort
Jekyll Island, Georgia
March 2-3, 2026

Transcript

Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee

Jessica McCawley, Chair	James G. Hull, Jr.
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair	Trish Murphey
Amy W. Dukes	Charlie Phillips
Dewey Hemilright	Andy Strelcheck

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Gary Borland	Robert Beal
Judy Helmey	Tom Roller

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Attendees and Invited Participants

Rick DeVictor	Kristen Foss
Dr. Clay Porch	Kathy Knowlton
Sonny Gwin	Michael Paul Thomas
Johnny Marquez	Nikhil Mehta
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Dr. Jessica Stephen	Lara Klibansky
Bob Zales II	

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Villas by the Sea Resort, Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Monday, March 2, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going. Welcome to the March Council meeting, but this is the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee. The members of the subcommittee are myself, Kerry, Amy, Jimmy, Trish, Charlie, Andy, and Dewey.

All right. Our first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any changes, or do we know of any other business at this point for the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee? All right. Any objections to approval of the agenda? All right. Seeing none, we'll consider that approved.

The next order of business is Approval of the Minutes from December 2025. Any substantive changes to the minutes? All right. Any objection to approval of the minutes? All right. We'll consider that approved as well, and then next up is a Law Enforcement Advisory Panel report. All right. Our AP chair is headed to the front, Major Michael Paul Thomas from South Carolina DNR, and he's going to give us the Law Enforcement AP report.

MAJOR THOMAS: Thank you for having me today. The LE AP met in Charleston on January 20th and 21st. I was actually not able to be there, and so I appreciate it. Scott Pearce from Florida, and he was the outgoing chair of the LE AP, and I'm the new incoming chair.

On Action Item 1, the removal of the two-for-one provision for unlimited permits under the SG Amendment 60, the LE AP did not raise any issues with this proposed action. One-to-one transfers would be quicker and more straightforward. Issues that have come up, the duplicate permits and whatnot, are more of an administrative nature, rather than a law enforcement.

All right. Action 2, trip limit efficiency, ensure there's enough time between when a trip limit change is announced and when the effective date of the change for public and LE officers' awareness. Obviously, as much awareness that we have in LE, you know, through North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, we could, obviously, enforce whatever changes occur better. Enforceability during the lag time, you know, obviously, we like stuff black and white. If there's a consideration of, you know, reducing any kind of lag time, it would help the law enforcement throughout all the states.

Market stability should be considered with trip limit changes, considering that some areas of the South Atlantic are being affected by weather more than others, and trip limit changes may disproportionately affect those areas, and then we suggested adding a column to the SERO ACL monitoring page that displays the trip limit that is currently in effect.

Action 3, gear stowage, there's a concern for potential ghost gear. Consider whether added trip efficiency would outweigh the risk of a potentially reduced enforcement of bad actors, and the concern over potential for highly-efficient gear being used illegally and decimating local populations. To avoid this, a VMS requirement could be considered for vessels with multiple types of fishing gear onboard.

A stowage requirement is, obviously, easier when officers are able to board the vessel, and we call it “on scene” and see the gear. The further the fishery is from shore, then the less site enforcement that we have, you know, are able to provide coverage for. A mandatory observer requirement could be considered to allow switching gear during a trip. Alternatively, tamper-resistant video cameras could assist with enforcement as well on those vessels.

Commercial trip limit sale, the council requested that AP discuss the issue and suggest acceptable forms of evidence to denote that an attempt to sell occurred and where the potential gaps could be in the system. LE AP members offered the following, that the best evidence that a trip was landed would be a trip ticket. It has to be filed whether the fish are actually sold or not. It may be best to approach this with individual dealers where the problem is occurring, instead of changing regulations, as it doesn't appear to be a widespread issue.

AP members did not feel they had enough information to make recommendations, and since then I have checked with -- Obviously, I've checked with the officers I work with in South Carolina, and we do not see this to be a widespread problem, and I also followed up with Georgia and Florida. Thank you. Any questions?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Any questions for the major? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Can you go back a slide to the multiple gear usage?

MAJOR THOMAS: Sorry, I couldn't hear you. Can you repeat that?

MR. STRELCHECK: So the concern -- The first bullet about ghost gear, so is the concern that potential like enforcement -- That they would dump gear, and you wouldn't be able to like enforce the actions, and that the gear is essentially lost and not attributed to the individual, the bad actor, that may have been using that gear?

MAJOR THOMAS: Yes, sir. That is a concern.

MR. STRELCHECK: All right. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions? All right. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I was just going to mention the VMS requirement. It seems like I read, or saw, a report where they were using VMS to discern whether somebody was actually -- I think they might have been longlining, trying to use live bait to longline fish or something, and they were using the VMS, and they could just tell by the way the boats were moving what they were doing, were they longlining, or were they bottom fishing, and could you expand upon just what you can look for and kind of see with VMS and what you can't?

MAJOR THOMAS: Yes, sir. I think we're going to touch base on some of that tomorrow with the VMS, but to answer your question, and not to get ahead of myself, but, you know, obviously, VMS does show a lot, but, for us to actually make a case that's going to hold up in court, we need to see that gear in the water. We need to see that fisherman working that gear. You know, planes are very helpful for some of our spawning management zones, some of our MPAs and whatnot,

but just because the vessels there on a VMS without having an actual officer -- Obviously, the perfect case is us doing the boarding while they're in one of the zones or protected areas.

You know, having a plane, and planes are nice, but they're also fast, and it's hard to get exactly what these fishermen are doing, and so we prefer -- You know, what it may do is it may create a pattern for us, and, once we create that pattern, then we can do different types of enforcement, whether it be sending boats out on days when we can get out or maybe using some aerial stuff that tends to assist us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so, in the briefing book, there is an attachment for a permits and call-in system presentation. I don't know if that was available at the time of the law enforcement meeting, but this is where a fisherman that wanted to use multiple gear would call in and inform law enforcement somehow.

I'm not sure exactly how, but you could give them your location, your intentions, you know, what gear you were using at the time, and all the information that you could possibly give law enforcement to try to make it to where you guys could then intercept if you wanted to, and, also, you would possibly have to hail-out and hail-in, say that you're at the dock, you know, but I think what you're talking about is if you have multiple gear onboard.

In my case, it would be, you know, we hook-and-line snapper, but then we want to go inshore and set bottom longline gear on sharks, and so that's the whole idea, and so how do we make that happen, where you can make the bad guys not use bottom longline gear for snapper grouper, and so, I mean, that's the issue, right?

If you knew who is out there with multiple -- That's going to potentially do it, by notification, their location, which could be done by VMS, or we could hail-in our lat and long to you, and, you know, where you're going to be using the gear, give you the lat and long of that, and then, if you have resources in the area, then you could intercept, and, as you say, I need to see the gear being stowed while you're snapper grouper fishing, and if you're running, then you've notified me that you're moving, that you're changing location and changing gears. Does that kind of -- If you could get that information?

MAJOR THOMAS: I mean, I don't see where any, you know, law enforcement would be opposed to anything like that, and how we make that happen, I'm not sure, and it would also go back, you know, to something that could reaffirm it is the tamper-proof cameras on the boats, if that was a possibility as well, but I don't think any law enforcement group, you know, in the South Atlantic would have any -- Would be opposed to that, you know, a hail-in and hail-out, or calling and saying, hey, we're fishing this gear, and then we could do spot checks based upon that too, just to confirm that, you know, the fishermen are doing exactly what they say they're doing, but I don't think we would be opposed to anything like that.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thanks.

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

MAJOR THOMAS: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Now we're going to go over to Mike to give us a presentation on Amendment 60.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Jessica, and so we're going to be going through this amendment in kind of a back-and-forth, semi-musical chairs type of fashion, switching between myself and then Jessica Stephen from the Regional Office, as well as Dominique Lazarre. They'll be giving presentations as well, and we're going to go through in kind of action-by-action, and really sections of actions.

You'll notice that there's some difference in numbering between the actions that are listed in the decision document -- In the discussion document and in the agenda, versus what was presented from the Law Enforcement AP. That's just a difference in the stage of development of where we were at the point when the AP met. We were looking at this from an angle of three actions.

By the time we got to this meeting, the IPT had met, and we had a subgroup of the IPT really dig in on the trip limit aspect of this amendment, and so we kind of chopped that up into three separate actions addressing the different types of ways that trip limits could be changed, and so you'll see that reflected in our discussion document here.

To begin with, I will pull up the discussion document, and just briefly highlight some of the information that's included there, and so you have your subcommittee report from the last meeting, as well as the overall Snapper Grouper Committee report, just kind of a review of what has been discussed to this point. You can reference those materials.

From an information perspective, I do also want to highlight one thing that I forgot to put into the discussion document, but it is available on the website, that information that Chip has put together in previous meetings regarding landings, and trends related to that, and that is in the information from the September of 2025 meeting, and so, if you want to take a look at that, you're able to reference that. I have it pulled up here, in case we need to check on that as the discussion proceeds.

What we're looking to get out of this meeting is we're going to have some preliminary analyses, some information about the different actions that have been developed. We do have an initial draft purpose and need for you all to take a look at, and what we're looking for this meeting to accomplish is for you all to provide some direction to staff on any edits or additions to the actions and alternatives that have been drafted thus far and what changes or information you would like to see ahead of this document, of a draft document, coming to you in June.

That is when you all would review that for consideration to approve for public comment, and we would potentially hold public hearings over the summer. Then, along with that, any additional information that is necessary, and then, after we've gone through the discussion, make sure we check in and make sure you all are okay with the timeline that we have moving forward.

First, taking a brief look at the purpose and need, it's included there in the discussion document, and I can give a moment there for you all to read through it., and really what we're looking for here

is just to see if the statements, as they've been developed thus far, if these reflect kind of the intention of this amendment at this stage.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. Thanks, Mike. I don't have exact good, eloquent wording right now, but I think maybe the only thing that might be missing is, in addition to flexibility and adaptability, is long-term stability or something, something that more relates to the two-for-one, new entrants, sort of, you know, those discussions we've been having, and I'm happy to think about it more between now and Full Council, but I think we should add something.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds great. Any other thoughts from folks as you're reading the purpose and need? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and maybe it's just some clarification that I need, but it says bottom longline, but at times there are people that were -- Could go out for mahi top-water longlining, and it seems like, you know, it's just kind of the rule of thumb is you couldn't have longline gear on the boat, period, if you were going to catch snapper grouper, and so I just want a clarification. Could you have mahi top-water longline gear on the boat, or is it longline gear period, unless we do some kind of gear change stuff?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I can double check that while one of the presentations is going on, but I can make a note. I think bottom longline was what has been discussed so far to this point, and I think that that's what is already included in the snapper grouper fishery, because it's a legal gear for certain parts of the fishery, but I can, I can check on that wording for you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Charlie. Anything else on purpose and need here? Andy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Oh, you said -- I thought you said Amy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Go ahead, Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair and Andy. I am so sorry. Amy and Andy are very close in nature. I did -- I'm not exactly sure of the wordsmithing, but "replacement fisherman" in the need statement is just a little off for me. I'm not sure what we can come up with, but we can definitely be thinking about it. Jessica is pointing. Sorry.

DR. STEPHEN: I'll speak to the replacement fisherman. We tend to use that term because we're in a limited access permit system, and so you're not getting more additional new permits. You're replacing the existing fishermen on those permits with different fishermen, and so we tend to use that word to indicate what's going on. Now, those replacement fishermen could be new entrants to that fishery as well, but we wanted to stay away from the trigger word of "new", particularly how it might involve other agencies.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that. Thank you, Amy. Andy, would you like to go?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and thanks for that, and I'm having a hard time reading from an angle, but one of my suggestions is we at least draw some language from the seafood competitiveness

executive order revising and rescinding, for example, regulations that are deemed overly burdensome. I know this was part of some of your strategy with regard to addressing that executive order, and so I don't have any specific language here, but I just suggest that maybe we tie some of that in, and you can bring it back during Full Council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds good. All right. These are great points. Anything else on the purpose and need at this time? All right. Back to you, Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, and I'll give a brief overview of Action 1 before turning it over to Jessica for her presentation. Action 1 is your action to consider removal of the two-for-one policy for the snapper grouper commercial unlimited, or the SG 1 permit, and, as you've discussed thus far, you're looking at two actions. One is to either keep it the way it is, and the other is to go to a one-for-one transfer type of system.

There are some notes that are included in the discussion. These have kind of been accumulated over the course of the meetings thus far, and so you can reference those, just to get an idea of what you've already discussed to this point. As you requested in the December meeting, there was a letter sent out from the council to the SG 1 permit holders. That was sent out at the end of January informing them that the council is considering a change to the two-for-one policy.

We have a few outstanding information needs related to numbers and types of permits, and we're looking forward to hopefully getting those sometime soon. We'll try to have those incorporated as soon as they are available, and we'll get those into the -- Those analyses into the amendment, so you have those available for your decision-making, and so, at this point, I'm going to pause and pass it to Jessica. She'll present some information on the permitting process, and then we can come back for some discussion related to this action.

As part of Jessica's discussion, when we were going through this at the IPT level, you all had brought up, in the last meeting, some type of process to kind of evaluate, as attrition occurs over time, you know, when potentially there would be something to not continue the decline in the number of permits, and so what was discussed among the IPT was potentially including a trigger for a permit pool at some point.

Just process-wise, you don't necessarily need to fully define that this is what the permit pool would look like. You could potentially just put in some type of trigger into the action of, if the permits hit below this certain threshold, then the council will consider the establishment of a permit pool, at which point, you know, if that occurs, the council would then have to have the conversation of do we want to establish a permit pool, but it doesn't need to necessarily be fully defined at this stage of what that pool would look like. It would just kind of have the trigger included to direct the council to have the conversation at that time, but Jessica is going to go over kind of that process, and then we can come back to it with the discussion.

DR. STEPHEN: All right, and so I've got this presentation broken down to about three or four different spots. At the end of each one, I have questions that you can ask then, and so I'm trying to kind of give you information a little bit piecemeal, so we can talk about those questions before moving on.

The first thing is I was asked to give an update on is where we are with our permitting system. Unfortunately, the first statement is not quite true, and so we're really close to launch. We had a last-minute bug that delayed us for February, but we anticipate it to be very shortly that we'll have it released, and then those Freedom of Information Act pages will once again be available. They will show information in real time, and so, if you want to see who had what permits, that data will be available on it.

Just to give you a feel for where else we're going with the permitting system, in this new system, we have a lot of enhanced validations that are going to be added to the permits. That means the information coming in is going to be a little bit cleaner, which will make our analysis easier in the long run, and it will help the fishermen understand where something went wrong, instead of having a bug come at you at the end of your application process.

We're going to continue doing ongoing work where we're looking at some of the past data that we had in it, making sure it's accurate and set up for analysis. This does mean, as we're doing that ongoing work, there might be a little bit longer timeline than you are used to from us, in order to get the information from permits for any of the amendment analysis, and then, next up after that, we have a bunch of enhancements that we want to do for the permitting system, based on different management actions we went through, and so we'll be starting to build those out next.

Before we get too far, what I wanted to do was a permit refresher for everyone, and just so we're all on the same page of how the permits work and how they apply in particularly SG 1 and SG 2 permits. As a reminder, we issue permits to a specific person on a specific vessel, and that means that every vessel has the same permit holder on it, and so you can't have two permit holders of different names on the same vessel, and this is critical as we get into other discussions, such as vessels that are leased and other information moving forward.

Our permits can be held by an individual or more than one individual, a business or more than one businesses, or a combination of both of those, and there's four key date terms that are really important when we're thinking about a permit. The effective date is the date that permit becomes effective for harvest. When we create that, there's always an expiration date put in. The expiration date is typically a year. There are some instances where it's shorter or longer, depending on when the permit was received and the permit holder's birth date.

Then we have the end date. Once an end date has been populated, you can no longer fish on your permit. It is typically the same as the expiration, unless there's something that causes that permit to end early, and then the termination date only applies to limited access permits, and it's really important when we talk about the permit pool and how we move forward with it.

To that point, we have both open access permits and limited access permits. Typically, throughout the agency, all permits start as open access. There are very specific Magnuson requirements that would make those permits then become limited access. When we're talking within our permits system, only those limited access permits are allowed to be transferred, and that's because they are numbered, and they are finite in their existence, and so we track the history of those permits.

If a limited access permit was not renewed by that expiration date, and so in essence one year after the effective date, it can no longer be used to harvest fish. This is what we often refer to as renewable status, and so you'll hear us talk about valid and renewable statuses. It's renewable

because that permit holder can take action to renew that permit, put it into a valid state, and then fish on it again. If they go a year in that expiration status, or any of the other renewable statuses, that permit will terminate, and termination means it's removed forever from the pool of permits.

We've had a lot of questions lately on permits being leased, and vessels being leased, and so I wanted to add a slide that talked a little bit about this. Permits cannot be leased, but we often have vessels that are leased within our permitting system. If you're going to lease a vessel, and you can think of it as similar as how you lease a car. Somebody else owns it, but you are using it. We require a lease agreement. That has to have certain information, such as start and end date of that lease, and that may be different than the start and end dates on the permits, and the information comes through.

When you put in your vessel lease, it has information about the vessel owner. We'll also refer to them as a vessel lesser. It has to have information on the specific vessel, and then the vessel lessee, who becomes the permit holder, and so, when we're looking at permits, and who has rights to that information, only the permit holder has rights to seeing the landings records associated with that, and they are the ones who are responsible for the reporting to the agency.

As we've seen a bunch of discussion about permits being leased, there's been a lot of confusion, and so we wanted to kind of lay this out so that people understood what business practice they were getting involved in, and who that permit actually belonged to, and the landings history.

A little bit more on the permit side. Permit transfers occur when we see a change in the vessel, the permit holder, or, in the limited access world, the permit number, and so, if you look at our SG 1, there's SG 1-300, and that's a specific number that tracks that particular permit back through time. When we have transfers, they can be transferring it to another vessel, and that could be the same permit holders just transferring among their different vessels.

You can also have the permit transferred to another entity. It may stay with the same vessel, because the vessel and the permit were sold to another entity, or you can have a combination where that permit is sold to both another vessel and another entity, and so anything along those lines triggers what we call a transfer status within our permitting system.

What is not considered a transfer is if a business owns a permit and they change who the shareholders are in the business, or who the owners are in the business. This requires a change of information request to us, or, if they're doing a permit renewal and they change the business, then we'll see it under the renewal, but, because the main entity of the business is the same, it is not a transfer, and this will come into play when we talk about the SG 2.

Again, permits are ended when they're not renewed before the expiration date. They're also ended if the vessel that they were on was sold to another entity. This typically only comes to our awareness at SERO when we see that same vessel coming in for a different permit request with a different owner or a different permit number on it, and it also can be ended when a vessel lease agreement ends.

Likewise, if a vessel owner who had a vessel lease agreement requests -- Puts in a request for a permit for a new vessel with a different permit holder, that ends the original permit under the lessee, and so we've definitely had instances where there's not been communication between the

vessel lesser and the vessel lessee, and the lessee did not know that they were then fishing on an ended permit, and I say all this because there's been a lot of confusion on vessel leasing, and we want to really get some information out there. We'll be releasing a Fishery Bulletin soon that goes into a little more depth on this information, and we'll be updating the permits frequently asked questions.

Okay, and let's get into the snapper grouper permits. I'm going to start with Snapper Grouper 2. Remember that a vessel can only have an SG 1 or an SG 2 on it. They cannot have both permits on it. The SG 2 were set up as more of the incidental catch, with the 225-pound snapper grouper limit on it. There are very strict transfer limitations within the SG 2, and so the SG 2 permit can only be transferred to another vessel of the same permit holder, and so a lot of the scenarios I described before do not apply to this permit.

The SG 2 cannot be transferred at all to another permit holder. What we have seen is that scenario I talked about where the ownership of the business changed. Because our SG 2 rules do not have any discussion about a percentage of change in a business invalidating the permit transfer, we have seen those that have businesses get by the transfer rule because they're selling the business in its entirety.

For the SG 1, this is the unlimited pounds per trip for snapper grouper. This too has some different permit transfer limitations, and so the SG 1 does not require a two-for-one if you are transferring it to another vessel of the same permit holder's name, if you're transferring it to an immediate family member, or if you're transferring it from your name to a corporation name, with the caveat that all the shares held by that corporation must be either that permit holder or his immediate family members, and so, in essence, the two scenarios above. Then, each year when they give us who owns the business, if at any point in time a non-immediate family member is on that, the permit will not be renewed, and so it does put into this one strict restrictions on the ownership of the business and how those transfers are there.

Under the two-for-one transfer scenario, you must require two SG 1 permits that get merged into a single SG 1 permit. For our accounting purposes, we tend to merge it to the lower of the SG 1 permit number. That's not always the case, but it's typically the case, and one thing we want to be clear, because we've heard this a lot since discussion has started, is, if we remove the two-for-one, that would not mean that we're going to merge back out, or split back out, those previously merged permits. All right, and so I'll stop here for permit questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Jessica, if there's a law degree in fishing permits, you certainly have earned it. I had two questions. The first one was relating to the snapper grouper unlimited and the immediate family member corporation situation. I just want to make sure, and I think -- I've talked to Kevin in the past, that one of the issues I think that we're facing now, with people like myself and other individual permit holders, is, if you incorporate, even just for protection, liability reasons, and you name your immediate family members as corporation members, that it is then -- Say it gets passed down one more generation, and like my grandchildren don't exist yet, and so that would be the end of the line, and is that a correct interpretation of an issue with that sort of thought process?

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and so, when we're looking to see who those immediate family members are, and how you prove that and go through that, we end up typically talking to a lawyer along the way, because some of that information is really hard to verify and validate, and so, in our typical limited access permits, and so not the SG 1 or SG 2, we don't have transfer rules requiring that, and so that makes those a little bit easier in order to do the one-for-ones, and so that's -- At some point, I think I'll talk about considering, when you remove the two-for-one, potentially removing some restrictions like that as well.

MS. MARHEFKA: Excellent. Thank you, and then my other question did not come up here, and it's certainly not something we've talked about in this round, but was a big issue in the past, is catch history, and I was wondering if you could speak quickly -- I'm sure my other fellow commercial council members know better than I do, because they, I think, wheel and deal a little more than I do, but, the catch history, does it remain with the vessel or the person, and it is something I wonder -- We haven't talked about that at all, and is that something we need to consider if we go forward with this two-for-one?

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and so, when you're thinking about catch history, it largely ends up becoming the purview of the council on what they want to do, and so, the different programs I've been involved in that are utilizing catch history for some reason, it has sometimes been associated with the vessel, no matter who has owned the vessel, and there have been other times it's associated with the permit holder, no matter what vessel it's been on, and so flip sides of the coin.

Very rarely have I seen it with a person sort of distinct from the permit holder. We might have instances when we were doing historical captain permits, in some of our other fisheries where that applied. For the most part, the first two are the scenarios that apply. With the information within our permit system, we should be able to track back that information, no matter which scenario is chosen.

The big caveat is you as a permit holder only have access to landings you have done, right, and so, while we might be calculating off a larger history, that doesn't mean the permit holder or the vessel owner, depending which way we're going, would necessarily have access to that information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Yes, and I agree with Kerry. We almost need a law degree in our pocket, but what I heard, and you can correct me, or enlighten me, was, if an individual has what we call a single permit, they can turn it into a corporate permit, so long as that individual is the shareholder, but, five years down the road, can those shareholders sell it to Jack Smith, or is it limited, and they cannot sell it to anybody but maybe a family member, and so I'm just trying to be clear.

DR. STEPHEN: So, for the SG 1 permits, if -- Let's just say you were a person who had your name on it, and you incorporated it, down the road five years, it could only be given to immediate family members. and however that's defined, and apologies that I don't remember how we're defining it in SG 1, but, a lot of times, immediate family members is husband, wife, parents, and children, and siblings, and then that's the end, and so not nieces or nephews or information like that. I'll admit that I looked in the permit database to see how this worked, and we actually are tracking it.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay, and so now it appears that we can have two levels of, quote-unquote, corporate permits, which is another reason to make them simplified. Okay. Thank you.

DR. STEPHEN: You're welcome, and those two levels of corporate holders have very different rules, which makes it more confusing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you, and I'll third the lawyer part, because I've had a lot of calls, and I'm no lawyer, and I didn't stay in a Holiday Inn Express last night neither, but I give my opinion, and I make sure that they call you all or whatever, because it is very confusing. My question is we have some folks that are getting out of the fisheries up in northeastern North Carolina, and selling their boats, and trying to figure out what to do with the rest of their, you know, different things they're doing as they get older, age out.

If you have a single permit, SG 1 single, on your boat, and you sell your boat, and you keep that permit, can you go put that permit on a no vessel ID and keep -- Or do you have to put it on another boat, whether it's a ten-foot aluminum skiff, and how does that work out for that individual? They can't go lease that permit, because it's not leased to a vessel, correct? Okay, and so I think you've had calls about that, probably.

Now they've got that permit, and they don't have a vessel, and they can put it on a no vessel ID, and keep paying the money to renew it. Now how do they -- If they were to buy another vessel, a ten-foot aluminum skiff, and I'm using that example because that's kind of the way it works in the Northeast, and you take that permit, and you put on that ten-foot aluminum skiff, and then you can go -- Well, you still can't sell it, because it's a single.

They're just kind of holding on and waiting until something might happen here, to whether they keep leasing it, or, well, not lease it yet, because they can't. They're going to keep -- Okay, and I'm learning. They're going to keep it on the shelf, so to speak. They're going to keep renewing it, and then maybe, at the appropriate time, and hopefully sooner rather than later, it comes about, then they'll be able to sell that permit, if they so choose, and so, right now, the only thing they can do with that permit is put it on a no vessel ID on the shelf and keep it renewed.

DR. STEPHEN: So the no vessel ID is an HMS permit only feature. Within all SERO's permits, if you sold the vessel that you had your permit on, and remember you have the one year of expiration status, you have that one year to put it on another vessel, or else it will terminate and be removed for good, and so the SERO permits don't have a no vessel ID.

That is a very HMS thing. We had to modify our system to incorporate that, which is why we get a ton of permits on ten-foot skiffs, and so the problem with the two-for-one is you're waiting for someone else to find another permit, and you don't want your permit to terminate prior to that, and so that's oftentimes why we see that, and, because you have a permit, you would still be required to do the reporting requirements under that permit, even if it was on a skiff or inflatable raft. We've had a variety of different things come through.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So the single, and I'll be quick, and so that single, that that person no longer has a vessel for, they have one year to do something with it, and, after that time of one year, it goes away, and they're not able to renew it and just hang it out. They've probably got to go buy an aluminum skiff and put it on there, and then they keep renewing it, even though they don't go fishing or whatever, and so that makes it -- Okay. I didn't know that the no vessel ID was only HMS.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and it's only the HMS Atlantic tuna and then the shark and swordfish directed and indirected, and so the tri-pack for them.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other questions before we move to the next section? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. Thank you for that presentation. I'm going to back you up beyond the SG 1 and SG 2 to the actual PIMS 2.0. I'm very excited for it to come out, and so thank you very much for all the hard work on that. A long time coming. You mentioned the enhanced validations. I just want to make sure that I understood, and so it's, in essence, as an individual is filling out the electronic form, and, if there is an error, it's going to help identify that error earlier in the process or throughout the process.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and that's correct. When we launched the original permit system, which I'll remind everyone that we launched during COVID, and so we didn't have as much of ground-truthing and checking from users that we typically were able to do, and so, when we did it, there was certain information, and so, if you are signing in there, and let's just say we happen to collect birth date as one of the information fields.

If you get it slightly wrong, it will now say we thought you were this person, and are you sure this is correct, and so, in the old permit system, it didn't give you that warning, and then you look like a brand new entity, and so that creates analytical problems for us, and so we've gone through with -- My branch in particular has gone through the permitting system and identified a lot of these enhanced validations that we think will make it easier for us moving forward.

Another one is we used to have county typed in, and we're trying to work towards a drop-down menu. That's a little bit more of an enhancement coming up later, but we kind of discuss the problems that just spelling a county slightly wrong is more difficult for our social scientists and economists than to do their work, because they're going to have to go in and manually fix those, and so those are the types of enhanced validations we're putting in.

MS. DUKES: Thank you. One more. In your enhancements to the permit system, and so what's up next, are there any indications that there's going to be an I forgot my user ID function, in addition to I forgot my password? That is a common question that we at the state level get, and then, to that, I think one of the things too that we're hearing a lot of, and we're getting, and we're able to answer for constituents, is, if they printed to their permits through the online system, oftentimes the permit number has not been printing. It's not been carrying over. All the other

information is there, but permit number, in the upper-right-hand corner, has not been there recently, and so just food for thought.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and so I appreciate the permit number not being there. I'll go back to Kevin and let him know that. We hadn't heard that coming back to us. With the username and password information like that, we are under federal guidelines for security. We're going to eventually move to multi-factor, which is not going to necessarily make it easier, but we have done -- My team in particular tends to get a lot of permits calls, and so we've actually been given the same information permit staff has. If they get ahold of one of us, we're able to either reset and tell them where it's going to.

What we've seen often too is the email and the password, and so not sure which email they used moving forward, and so multi-factor authentication should actually help to solve that, when we move towards it, because it uses things like login.gov or id.me, if you've used any of those, and so once that entity is created and linked to our accounts, it's going to be moved through that mechanism.

We as the agency are not allowed to see the passwords, and I will admit, when they stopped allowing me to see it from my group, we got a lot more calls. We got careful talking to fishermen. Sometimes when they write down their password, they accidentally hit the space key at the end, or they forget a little i and a capital L look exactly the same, depending what font you're on, and so we've given them kind of suggestions that we use over with our catch share system of how to create passwords, so that they're kind of hints and reminders of don't do this, because you might have trouble that you forget where a space is within it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so my question is can you explain, in the case of why we have to lease a vessel, why the agency made it to where you have to lease a vessel instead of a person leasing the permit? It seems like it would be a whole lot better for everyone if we could just lease the permit, rather than tie it to a vessel, for all these different problems that it creates.

DR. STEPHEN: So there's a couple ways in which that came about, and so the first thing is they are vessel permits, which is why they're connected to a vessel, but one of the main things to understand is that no region in fisheries leases permits, and we are one of the few regions that allows vessels to be leased in order to put a permit on them, and I think it was because we allowed those vessels to be leased that we have a lot of confusion within this.

Other concerns, generally speaking, when we're looking at some kind of permit, or something that has value to it, is, when you start disconnecting the ownership of it to the people actually on the water doing the job, and so, when you start leasing permits, you could end up in a scenario where you have most of the people owning the permits that aren't actively involved in the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Great discussion. I know. Great discussion. I don't see any more hands. I'm going to pass it back to you, Jessica.

DR. STEPHEN: All right, and so now we're going to move on to the where are we now, and so, with the information that we're doing to get the new permit system ready to launch, I was able to

get access to some of the new data, and so I have some information for you. I will put it with a couple of caveats. The data I have right now is fairly preliminary, and so I had to generate it a couple of weeks ago to get it into the briefing book.

One thing I did notice is that I'm having a little bit trouble matching logbook data to some of the permit data. I did not have the time, as of when this presentation was submitted, to dig into it, and so that's next on our list, to figure out why we're having some mismatches. Typically, you're going to mismatch when someone types a vessel name in wrong into a logbook, and keep in mind that right now our logbooks are paper, and so it could be how it gets scanned in or how that penmanship is recognized. We also still had a few errors within the permit system, and so some of the differences might be due to that, and then we had some matching errors when I was looking at the two permits, and so that's information we'll dig into for the amendment, but we don't have available for you right now.

That said, the information we do have is still considered preliminary. We're still adjusting, particularly in the community level, to make sure that information is correct, but, when I took a look at it based on my experience and knowledge with permit information before, what I saw is that the values I'm generating are in line with what I would expect. There's nothing drastically different, and so, while these are preliminary, I would say they're in the ballpark, but, if you see adjustments later in the amendment, understand why those adjustments are happening.

One of the questions we were asked is where are these different permits located, and so, for this question, what I was using is what we call the vessel homeport state. In your permit application, we get three pieces of information. We get the permit holder's mailing address, physical address, and homeport state.

Depending on the question asked, we'll use a different one to answer questions. For where the vessels are located, the vessel homeport state is the most appropriate one, and, not too surprising, the majority of both the SG 1 and SG 2 permits are in Florida, with North Carolina as the second most frequent holder of those permits.

You will notice the last column there says non-SA, and so that's vessels that are not homeported in the South Atlantic. There's only a handful of those. Sometimes that comes through because they don't update their Coast Guard documentation from when they bought the vessel, and so it still lists the previous location, and so we're working on also -- That's probably an enhancement as we're moving into the new system.

One of the ones I would like to build in is ways to kind of compare the information they're giving us to the other information, and maybe throw a warning or a, hey, did you know that your vessel homeport is Virginia, and you're applying for our South Atlantic? For some of our other permits that go all the way up through New York and Maine, that's more viable, and expected, but not necessarily for some of these permits.

Because the business ownership really kind of plays into both the SG 1 and SG 2, we also looked at both those permits and how many of the permits are owned by either individuals or businesses, and so my caveat here is, if there are two entities listed on a permit, both the business and individual, and the business was flagged as a primary, that's where it got assigned, and so, going

through that, you can see that the SG 1 permits throughout time have been pretty evenly split 50-50, but we have seen a slight trend where we're getting more businesses.

This isn't unexpected. We've seen this in other fisheries. A lot of times, it is to separate that liability, by having the corporation from the individuals who hold it, and so, when we're looking through those, some of those businesses may be individuals who moved over to a business name, that has either the permit holder or immediate family as the ownership of it, the others could be someone who did a two-for-one and just put it into a business name, and so there are different ways we got to those increased business ones.

Under the SG 2, we see a little bit different scenario, and so we can see that we've had probably the same number of permits for quite a few years. It might even extend, I think, past 2020, where there's been twenty-three businesses that hold the SG 2 permits, and so that's a much lower percentage overall.

The other information we were looking for is how active are these permits in the fisheries, and so this is where we match the permit information to the logbook information, and so any vessel that had at least one pound of a snapper grouper landing in the given year was listed as a permit that had landings, and we can see, within the SG 1, we kind of have a latency over time, and that's been growing a little bit, but generally right around the 33 to 35 percent. This is slightly higher than what we've seen in other fisheries, but not by a large degree, and, when I say other fisheries, I'm typically comparing it to other commercial limited access permits.

Under the SG 2, we see a much higher degree of latency, and this should not be unexpected, considering how those permits originated and their limited transfer rules, and so there we're between 58 to almost 65 percent latent in any given year.

The next part of this is I'm going to hit some of the points that I might have hit earlier, just to think about questions to consider now that you've heard how permits work and see the numbers involved. Prior to the two-for-one, again, those permits that were merged will not be split back out, but one of the things you might want to consider is are there going to be people who have SG 2 permits that might turn in their SG 2 to get an SG 1, now that the SG 1 are no longer two-for-one, and, if so, what do we anticipate that means with effort shift or changes to trip limit analysis?

Other things we're thinking about is what types of transfer limits, if any, do you want to put into your SG 1? Do you want to retain some of the family ones that we had before? Do you want to do something different? For the most part, our limited access permits have no transfer restrictions. When we put a transfer restriction in place, it is very typically by a fishery, for a very specific fishery reason, and so I would encourage you to think about whether you want different transfer limits or not moving forward with the SG 1. All right, and so now I'll take any data questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. I'm curious if you have any concept in the attrition of the permits, and let's just say unlimited permits, over the last five years that you showed, or whatever timeframe you want to choose, and do you think it is mostly the two-for-one trade-in, or do you think it's a percentage, or what percentage would be that and what percentage would be non-renewals past their -- Like just let lapse, and then I have -- That's it.

DR. STEPHEN: Okay, and so I'm going to go a little bit off the top of my head, because it's been a while since I looked at it. Typically, what we see in limited access commercial permits is a decrease due to terminations of somewhere between around five or six a year, and so non-renewals, and so it's typically not that large of it.

That said, I haven't looked up SG 1. Because you would need the two-for-one, I might expect it to be higher if someone is sitting on an SG-1 that doesn't have a vessel, and doesn't realize that they've come up to their expiration and termination dates. They get letters, and information, but sometimes that passes someone by, particularly if someone has died and it's in part of an estate.

In general, what we've seen is there hasn't been a lot of decrease over time, but I would kind of guess, on my gut feeling of how I've seen the data, that it's probably the two-for-ones, is what we're seeing, and so it's doing its intended course, and, early in the history, you saw it go more rapidly, and then it has just really kind of slowed down for the last couple years, but that's information we can gather and put into the amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Let me ask you this also, and how about if a non-commercial entity gets a corporate permit, and goes fishing, and doesn't sell any fish to a dealer, and how -- Is there any way to track if they're even using that permit for self-interest, and they would also -- Since they're not selling to a dealer, there were no recordings, and they wouldn't be carrying an observer, and so I'm just asking the scenarios, because I hear stuff like that, but I don't know it to be, you know, true, and so I'm just asking.

Like when you saw these latent permits, and you saw here -- This is the people, the 264, that are renewed, and the presentation in 2025, in September, was some vessels that landed to federal dealers, and now what happens if you're a non-commercial, and you're just subsidized, or, well, not even -- Just catching the commercial limit, but not selling it?

DR. STEPHEN: So some of the restrictions we have in place are within the regulations, and so we have the requirement of the commercial logbooks, which is one mechanism to start checking things. We match that with the dealer trip ticket data, and so, if you start to see a mismatch there, that's an indication of that occurring.

It's been a while since I looked at the South Atlantic regulations, but there might be a regulation that, if you harvest under a commercial permit, you can only sell to a dealer, and, again, HMS is one of the ones that does some different things. It might be wrong, and it's been a while since I looked at South Atlantic.

DR. HEMILRIGHT: I'm not talking about selling.

DR. STEPHEN: So you're talking about keeping it for personal consumption?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, personal consumption, and it's not getting tracked through the system.

MS. MARHEFKA: It's in the logbook.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and it should be in the logbook, even like how they're disposed.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Okay, and so how would it be that you would see who fills out a logbook but doesn't sell to a dealer? That would be, I guess, my question.

DR. STEPHEN: So that's the match between the logbook and the tickets that the Science Center does, and so that's typically where we see that. I think it's more likely sometimes that we might see snapper grouper landed on other commercial permits, and so like dolphin wahoo or something that, where they didn't have the SG 1 permit, and those -- Again, if they're reporting it on the logbook, we can track it down and see.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One last thing, and is there anything that has to do with you have to have a Coast Guard decal sticker, given you're a commercial entity, and you're possessing a commercial permit, and you're fishing? Is there any regulation that maybe could be put in there, or in something we're looking at now, to where you have to possess a Coast Guard sticker?

DR. STEPHEN: So I don't believe that we --

MR. HEMILRIGHT: A safety decal.

DR. STEPHEN: A safety decal. I don't believe we have that as a current one. Again, the purview of the council could put any other requirements you want in to obtain the permit.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: All right. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry. To that, Dewey, I'm just -- There is no regulation now from the council perspective. However, if you're chosen as an observer, which is a requirement of keeping your permit valid, although how much that's enforced is a different topic for a different day, you do have to have that, and so there's a roundabout way of that, but I think what you're getting at is the recreational use of a commercial permit.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I've got Andy, and then Jimmy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Kerry already asked my question, and so I'm good. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so, if you look at the chart that shows the permit by vessel home state, and so, in 2020, there was a total of 536 SG 1 in the South Atlantic, and, in 2025, there's 504, and so we lost thirty-two permits since 2020, and so those were just terminated. For whatever reason, they were terminated, and it could have been --

DR. STEPHEN: Correct.

MR. HULL: It could have been they went in a two-for-one, and then one went away, or they just terminated, because, in the case that Dewey was saying, the vessel was sold, and they had a year to put it on another vessel, and they couldn't do it, and so then they lost it.

DR. STEPHEN: Correct, and so those are the only two ways to kind of go down in the numbers, is either you merge under the two-for-one or it terminates. I guess technically someone could surrender a permit. We don't see that often in the limited access permits. We see that in open access, and sometimes they'll surrender a permit.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other questions? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm sorry, and, Jessica, can you go to your question slide? Thanks. This question about the SG 2 permit holders possibly wanting to become SG 1 permit holders, I'm guessing that that's put there because that's a conversation you want us to have and not -- I'm just making sure there isn't a mechanism, right, and, if we just literally said the two-for-one is gone, that doesn't automatically mean that the 225 would be converted to an unlimited, correct?

DR. STEPHEN: Correct. Right, and so, if you just got rid of the two-for-ones, you would still have the SG 1 and SG 2. An SG 2 person would have to surrender their SG 2 in order to purchase an SG 1 for the same vessel.

MS. MARHEFKA: But they would have to purchase one.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes.

MS. MARHEFKA: Or get one by whatever means, but it doesn't convert anything.

DR. STEPHEN: Correct.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just wanted to make sure there wasn't something I was missing. Okay. Thanks.

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

DR. STEPHEN: All right. Now we're getting into the last portion of my talk for right now, and then we'll pass that off to a different topic, and so this is talking about, and thinking about, the limited access permit pool concept and how that would apply, and so, just kind of as a refresher, most of our permits start as open access. There's no limits on new permits. They go up and down throughout the different years.

When we move to a limited access permit, there are no new permits ever created. The way you obtain a permit is from an existing permit holder, and, while the agency only charges a nominal cost to process a permit application, that cost between the two business entities can be quite large, particularly in the SG 1.

Then permits are terminated, and so we expect to see a gradual decrease over time. One of the things with the limited access permit is that typically there's no mechanism that would stop the decrease or say I don't want to decrease beyond this point, and this is true of most of the limited access permits within the Southeast.

The concept came up about how do we do a limited pool, and so, in a limited pool, you would still not have any new permits, but someone could either obtain a permit from the pool or obtain a permit through a transfer, and then, if the permit was going to terminate, and so let's take that example where someone sold the vessel and forgot to put another vessel on before the expiration year was up. Instead of terminating, it would go into the permit pool, and that means we retain the same number of permits that we had when we established the pool.

Of course, you could also say the pool would be established when it gets below or at a certain trigger number, but, once set, that's the number it stays at. I want to reiterate that does not mean they're all fishing. It just means the number of permits that we have that are available.

So how do permit pool concepts work? The first thing they do is they set up sort of a sustainable number of permits, and so you want to be thoughtful in how you're adjusting to what number of permits you want to keep within the pool. It does stop that gradual decrease, but it does not eliminate permit latency in and of itself.

There are a lot of really good benefits to doing to a permit pool. You retain permits for if the fishery might expand in the future, and you also may be able to reduce barriers to entry to the fishery, and so barriers for those replacement fishermen, and one of the biggest barriers is cost, and so, if you determine that you might have permits coming from the pool at a different cost, or something that is different than purchasing from someone else, that could be an easement of a barrier to get new people into the fishery.

There's different elements when we think about a permit pool. You typically want an evaluation trigger. At what point do I start evaluating this fishery to determine that we need to move to a pool? What would then be the criteria for placing a permit into the pool? Does it happen just when they terminate, or are there other scenarios that would trigger that going into it? Once you have permits in your pool, how do you think about distributing those permits? There's different timing issues, there's different eligibility thoughts to consider, and then there's the actual methodology.

The next few slides, I'm going to walk through some of these different concepts. Before I get there, I want to give you examples of where we do have different types of permit pools. In the Gulf, we have the Gulf shrimp, which is a limited access or moratorium permit that did, in their Amendment 17B, set a trigger. When the permits got to this number, that would trigger action for the council to consider moving to a permit pool concept. We're very close to that trigger right now, but we have not hit it yet. and so their purpose was just to set a trigger, and not create the process for the pool within the current amendment, leaving that for its own amendment, because they didn't want to slow things down, and, as you can see from my questions, it takes a lot to think about how you want to create a permit pool.

In the Northeast, the groundfish state permit, and so this is state and not federal government, and they have -- The state owns the permits, and they lease them to qualified fishermen, and so they don't sell them, and they lease them out at a subsidized rate.

In the federal fisheries, we have the Hawaii longline entry-level pool. These are for their longline permits. When a permit is either revoked or surrendered, for whatever reason, what happens is it goes into the pool, and then those permits in those pools are set aside for what they call new entrants or indigenous fishermen, in order to keep them in the fishery and ease the access to the fishery. Then the other example I found, again, is another state-run pool. This is for Maine lobster. They have it where, after every five trap tags that are retired, one becomes available, and so it's a little more similar for your two-for-one.

Let's talk about what the triggers could be to create a pool, and so you want to set criteria that begins the evaluation. That trigger should be something with rationale based in the expectation of sort of carrying capacity to the fishery. How many vessels do you think would be needed to continue to prosecute the fishery where you're not too low or too high and in risk of overcapacity?

Different metrics that could be considered is looking at information like catch per unit effort, maximum sustainable yield, how many latent permits do you have out there, and what's your catchability within your fishery? Is the optimum yield one of your other measures? How have you had historical participation, and what do you expect for future participation with new entrants? You also want to consider your FMP goals and where overcapitalization of the fleet is occurring.

To that end, what are some of the potential mechanisms that you could use to put permits into the pool, and so we've been talking mostly about terminated permits, but you could also have death of a permit holder. Maybe, upon their death, it reverts to the pool, rather than being an asset that's distributed at death. It could be government buyback programs. Those will have to go through Congress, and so I don't think it's something we can do directly ourselves. You could also have business bankruptcy or a use-or-lose-it provision.

One of the things to think about is, if you put that permit out there from the pool, my guess is that you want to intend it to be fished, and so a use-it-or-lose-it provision could be a way of doing that, and so you might have a lot of latent permits that are sitting there, and, after a set amount of time of latency, you might consider putting them into the pool.

The next question you want to think about is who is that pool intended for? What's the intended purpose of it? Intended purposes could just be simply I don't want to have the permits consolidate anymore, and we don't want to have the number continue to decrease. You could also think about how it would ease entry to the fishermen, and so potentially it could be available through a greenhorn program, or an apprentice program. You might want to think about where your fishing communities are and reserve pools for certain communities that you want to continue to have fishing behavior occur within.

When you think about who qualifies it, this goes along with the purpose. Who could receive a permit from the pool? There are some groups that kind of do boots on the water. You might want to call it boots on the deck of the boat, but some example where they've showed that they have a viable fishing history, whether they're a captain or crew on a boat, and so they understand the fishery and they think they could be successful at it. Another thing you might want to consider is

that they don't have major fishing violations, and so these are different eligibility criteria that you could put into place.

You might want to think about restrictions on transfers of the permit pool. One of the things to think about is someone going to attain a permit from the pool to then just sell it at a higher cost, and so you might want to say that, if you obtain that permit, you must hold on to it for X amount of years before it can be transferred, or it returns to the pool. You could simply say no permit in the pool can be transferred and always returns to it. You could do, again, another use-it-or-lose-it provision. If you got the permit from the pool, and you're not using it, after X amount of years, it comes back to the pool.

Again, there's other concepts, like permit holder onboard, and so these are not in any way the full, you know, breadth of the choices you do. They're just different ones I've put out there that have come up in other fisheries or questions that you want to think about and be thoughtful in your way forward.

When you're thinking about distributing the permits from the pool, you also have to think about when you want to have that happen. Would it be a set time every year, so people could put in applications? Do you want to have it only when you reach X amount of permits? If I only have two permits in the pool, do I want to try and distribute them or wait till I have ten permits in the pool?

When you're thinking about how to distribute, how would people who qualified be selected? Do you want to have a lottery, or even a weighted lottery? There's auctions, and there's also kind of the idea of first-come-first-serve, and so, as you can see, as we're going through this, there's a lot of decisions to be made. This is why this would be typically put an amendment on its own.

Then, you know, could someone appeal that someone else got a permit from the pool and they did not, and so that's a discussion I'm still continuing to have with our appeals office, but it's something you want to think about, and, if appeals are possible, you want to be careful in your language to set up what is appealable and what is not appealable moving forward. All right. Any permit pool questions?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, basically a comment. I'm not right now at the permit pool question. There's been so much that's happened over twenty-six years of this two-for-one, and sometimes it's easy to take the incremental steps to readjust what was there, and, also, you know, these folks that have lost their permits, had they maybe had known that they could have put them on a vessel or something, and retained them, maybe we wouldn't, but I'm not anywhere in the permit pool questions, or just anything like that right now for myself, thinking about it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks. You know, it has some good possibilities. I don't see us losing a lot of permits real quick right now, and, even if we pick a number, whether it be 500, 520, whatever, even if somehow, in the next two years, we lose five permits, we can always go back and say, okay, we've got 500, and we want 520, and we can say we want to give away, or lease out or, you

know, have another twenty permits. We don't necessarily have to have a permit pool to do this. I just don't want to do a lot of work for a little bit of gain.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, to me, it comes down to what are your goals and objectives for the fishery, right, and what are you trying to achieve, and we've, obviously, seen this substantial reduction in commercial permits, and so at some point, you know, we can do analysis, we can do evaluation, we can determine what is the capacity of this fishery to go out and be economically viable, and, you know, do formal calculations, that we can also just set objectives and goals with regard to, you know, how many permits do you want to try to maintain for this fishery over the long-term.

The one challenge I guess I see with the permit pool concept, and maybe this is where my question is, Jessica, is your examples that you were able to provide, and I recognize they're not necessarily exhaustive, are pretty much commercially-dominant fisheries, right, and so are you aware of any fisheries where you have permit pools that are in a mixed-use fishery that has a large recreational component?

DR. STEPHEN: No, and I didn't come across any when I was doing kind of my research into it. I think it's typical sometimes the recreational side lags behind where the concepts are in the commercial, and so even -- You're right that even the commercial ones I picked don't have a recreational component to them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to add, in North Carolina, we don't have a permit pool, but we do have a commercial license pool that we have set up, if that's something else people would like to look at, and how we do it, and I think we have a total pool number of something like five-thousand-and-something, but, each year the commission decides which is going to be open or eligible, and I think, the last few years, it's been -- Actually, it's been kind of low, because we haven't really had a lot of interest, I think a hundred or something.

Every year we meet, and you can apply, and it had some of the eligibility requirements that you were listing on some of the several -- Like you had to show that you had worked in a fishery, and, you know, either as crew or, in North Carolina's case, we actually have a shellfish permit, or license, that's eligible -- Anybody is eligible. Any North Carolina resident is eligible, and that's sort of a step-up. You get in that, and you've proved you've been in the fishery, and you're working, and then you can become eligible for a regular commercial license.

I'm not -- As far as like just getting at recreational, I am not sure if this happens, but I think, if there is a recreational person that can show that he has worked commercially, he could probably be eligible, but that's kind of how it works in North Carolina, but that's a license and not a permit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is it possible when you looked at these, your permits analysis, the size of the vessels, because what I see a shift of stuff happening is from travel lift boats to trailable boats,

and a travel lift boat is one that you got to have a travel lift to pick it up and move it, and the other one is one you can go to a trailable boat and go to a boat ramp, and I'm just -- You know, that's going to also show, you know, whether you've got dockage or not, because the big thing for us in North Carolina is the dockage, and where you got -- You just can't have a forty-something-foot boat and expect to go dock somewhere, and so there's a lot of working things that maybe you could tease out in the future, just to look at something about the size of the vessel that's going to give you an idea, you know, and it would be interesting, the size of the vessels with the state things.

I think there's more data, and not that it's to be done now, but there's more data that's available that shows a clearer picture that we on the water can look at, and maybe give some comments of, you know, what we think. Thank you.

DR. STEPHEN: In our permit application, we collect an awful lot of information about the vessel itself, and all the different vessel characteristics, and so ones I've looked at in the past is vessel length, horsepower, hold capacity, and so we could look into any of those and see how information is differing by that.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I would just think that the length, because, with so many small trip limits, it really don't matter how much room you got, you know, if you can only -- If you can only get so much, but the length would be interesting. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I don't know that I have a question specific to the permit pool, although I think it's super interesting, and, again, hours. I could spend hours talking to you about it, but I think that the questions that are -- The conversation that's happened since then, and that we've danced around a little bit, that I think we're at a decision point where, coming up on this next action that Mike is going to make us talk about in a second, which is the nitty-gritty of removing the two-for-one, versus not removing the two-for-one, I feel like we're going to be at a little bit of a decision point of it can be really simple, really quick, really clean, and get rid of the two-for-one, and probably keep it as simple as something like that can be, or we get to what Andy was talking about and really delve into what our long-term objectives are for this fishery.

Then we have to think about other things, and like I'm sitting here thinking -- I can't stop thinking about this 30 percent of permits that aren't being used and what that means for the future, you know, people getting in who want to get in, what it means for the capacity of the fishery, good or bad, and so I guess what I'm asking the subcommittee is, is do we tackle this, and take the time to do it and craft what we think the future of this little portion of the snapper grouper fishery should look like, because everyone is dancing around, you know, recreational people getting commercial permits, and no one is saying it, but that's a question I think that's out there.

Jessica had put up there the use-it-or-lose-it, and that's come up many, many times. Again, for anyone listening, I'm not suggesting that those are things that we do, but our opportunity is either do that now, and really get into the depth of it, or be simple, get the two-for-one done quickly, and deal with those other issues later, but I do believe we're at a point where we need to have that discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Kerry, I agree with you, and I think that discussion is coming. We're going to have to have it, and, to Dewey's point of travel lift boats and dockage, the docks are going away, because they don't make enough money to stay in business. Now, if we can figure out a way for the commercial boats to catch more fish, that means they're going to pack more fish, ideally, and then that's going to mean that the boat docks should be able to make a little more money.

Is it enough to keep them in business or not? We're not going to know. We can think of all the scenarios, but, until it happens, we're really not going to know, and so I think those conversations are probably going to be a little further down the road, and we're going to just have to keep our hand -- Keep our finger on the pulse as best we can, but things --

Yes, I see the travel lift boats having a better path forward now, and the docks that supply them and pack them having a possibly better path forward, instead of just -- I looked at a shrimp boat yesterday that was washed up in the marsh on a bad wind, and now it has sunk, and the reason it was out there anchored in the river was because it didn't have a dock anymore, and there's more and more and more of that. We all see it, and so trying to make it where the financial chain doesn't break is going to be hard, and we're going to have latent permits.

That's just going to be the nature of the beast, and those latent permits are going to hopefully fill in the gaps of people that want to get into the business, and see a path forward, and maybe these larger trip limits are going to encourage them to do this without it being all of a sudden half of the latent permits are landing fish, and then we worry about closed seasons, and so it's going to be a dance, but I appreciate the conversation from the table.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I have Dewey, then Kerry.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: When you look at and think about something, this has been in place for twenty-six years. There's a lot of water underneath the bridge of stuff that has happened in twenty-six years that has restricted the ability of the commercial fishing industry to maneuver itself through lack of dockage, fish prices, lack of fish, and all these other things.

What I'm looking forward to is rectifying the two-for-one and incremental steps of seeing what has happened. There will always be, like Charlie said, latent permits or something like that. Now if, all of a sudden, there's a gold wind out there of millions of pounds of fish, then permits will get active again, and they will be landing fish and feeding America, but, right now, I just think that we need to focus on this two-for-one, getting it across the finish line, a few caveats that we'll discuss a little later into it, and the simplification of the permit process, as Jessica has explained to us here, and getting that across the line.

We shouldn't be changing the landscape like it was twenty-six years ago to spend, where you had to do the two-for-one. That was a big bite, and it stayed in place way too long, and so that's what I'm focused on, and hopefully everybody else is the same way. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Jessica, can you make an educated guess, and, if not, like spend a very short period of time educating yourself, and is 30 percent latent permit effort somewhere what you would expect for most fisheries nationwide?

DR. STEPHEN: So I'm not sure about most fisheries nationwide, but looking between the South Atlantic and the Gulf, I typically see close to 20 percent, and sometimes up to 25. It does depend commercial versus recreational, but we have kind of seen that as an average. The Gulf for-hire had a higher latency than I expected, and so they were closer to the 30 percent, but, typically, around 20 to 25 is what we see annually each year, and that doesn't seem to change that much in general, and there's reasons, right?

You could have your boat in dry dock for a year, and so one of the things, when you're thinking about latency, is how long is a vessel latent. If they're latent year after year after year, that's a different indication than someone who has taking their boat out for dry dock, or getting it fixed, or putting some improvement on it and back into the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I agree with the comments around the table, and I just would recommend I think we take a more simplistic approach for this amendment and then continue the momentum, in terms of the commercial initiative, with more in-depth conversations. I think the other aspect of this will be interesting, because we're alleviating some regulatory burdens potentially with this amendment, but that increases potential competition for those that exist in the fishery, right, and, you know, my main concern with this fishery overall is just the economic viability of the commercial sector and how that's going to work going forward.

If you need the fish, you need, obviously, the regulations that are going to be best suited to actually go out and harvest those fish, in order to ensure that sustainability, and so I think that conversation needs to continue to happen. We can certainly request more data and information to hone-in on kind of what's the optimal size of this sector and how we can reach that sustainability in the long-term.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, and so we're done right now with the presentations from Jessica, and, before we dive back into the document, we were scheduled to take a break at 3:30. Let's go ahead and take a ten-minute break. When we come back, we'll go back into the document and go back to Action 1.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, just to orient us here, we are in the decision document for Amendment 60, and so we've already gone through the purpose and need. You guys had some suggestions on that, and you saw some presentations, and so now we're going to dive into Action 1, and I'm going to turn it over to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so I just wanted to check back in with the Action 1 and the alternative language. You've heard quite a bit of discussion surrounding the permits, and how those operate, and what potential avenues you may want to incorporate into this action, and so I guess I wanted to check in to see are the alternatives as written -- Is this the way

that you all want to proceed? Do you want to add anything, make any edits that the IPT should go back in and make some changes to the language, or are there some specific discussion points that have not already been brought up that you want us to include in the discussion surrounding this action?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and I'm looking around the table, looking for hands here. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Mike, the only thing I would say is, in the alternatives themselves, just be careful to specify unlimited. It's at the top of the action, but not in the actual action wording.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and I thought I saw another hand. Charlie, do you have your hand up? Okay.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, not hearing anything else, we'll make sure we include unlimited into the alternative language there, but I'll next move us down to -- Really, it's Actions 2 through 4, and I'm going to briefly hit on each of these before turning it over to Dominique for her presentation on the analysis associated with these actions.

These are the trip limit actions, and what we did is, to hopefully clarify this a little bit more, is we separated into three actions the different types of changes that you all have talked about making to trip limits.

Action 2 is kind of your base trip limit, the normal trip limit, the year-long what it would start with, trip limits that are currently in place right now. This is not a step-up or a step-down, and those are addressed in later actions, and so this is just your baseline trip limit, without any step-up or step-down, and what we did, to kind of illustrate what these actions, or what these alternatives, would look like is we used vermilion snapper as our template.

We are putting each ACL, so to speak, and that would include separate seasonal ACLs as well, as you can see for vermilion snapper into separate alternatives, and, if you were to prefer a trip limit change, then you would select that alternative as preferred, and then, under the sub-alternatives, you would select which sub-alternative you would want as the specific trip limit moving forward, and so you can see that structure here.

We have one alternative for season one for vermilion snapper, and one for season two for vermilion snapper, and we have several different sub-alternatives. These are based on the analysis that Dominique is going to show you in a little bit. That's how we came up with these different limits, kind of looking at what that maximum level would be and then tiering it down from there in each of those seasons.

Action 2 is your overall trip limit. Along with that, we have kind of the table that was presented previously with performance relative to the commercial ACL. You can see different species that are included here and how they have interacted with the ACL. The other summary that we have, Table 2, is a summary of different factors and the affected species that could impact some of the considerations of changing a trip limit or incorporating a step-up or a step-down, and so we have several factors here.

For example, the first one being -- It has at least 80 percent of the ACL has been harvested in more than half, and that would be two out of the three most recent years, or seasons, and you can see the affected species, and then the potential effects of that, and so the premise being, for that factor, if the ACL is being harvested, then the trip limit may be appropriate for that species, and potentially considering a step-down or a step-up may not be useful for that species, because it's already approaching its ACL.

As you look through the different factors, you can see different levels, and the species that are affected by each of these, and so, if you want me to dive into that table with more detail, I can, but right now I'm not going to necessarily talk through each of those individual points. We can talk about them kind of as requested, and you can look at them on your own as we're going through the discussion, but that may help kind of frame which species you would like to consider for which types of trip limit changes.

The information on carryover you've seen before, and that's kind of a carryover of previous discussions, and so that's more for your reference than something that we'll dive into at this moment.

Action 3 is addressing the step-ups, and one of the things I want to point out for step-ups is that the IPT, as we kind of dug into this issue, especially considering a split season fishery like commercial vermilion snapper, where you have six months in each season, we kind of saw that there was going to be a limited amount of time when the stepped-up trip limit would actually be in place if you were doing an in-season evaluation and then stepping it up for the remainder of that season, and so we developed a couple of options.

We developed the first one, Option 1, being an in-season step-up, and Option 2 is more of a step-up from one season to the next, and so it would be kind of a post-season step up, where, if a certain percentage of the ACL wasn't harvested in one entire season, or, for a non-split species, for the entire year, then the following year would be a stepped-up trip limit for the entire year, and so there are a couple advantages and disadvantages of doing it one way or the other, but we did want to bring this kind of for consideration.

We would ask that, if you all are looking into step-ups moving forward in this amendment, that you would pick either Option 1 of do your step-ups in-season or Option 2 of do your step-ups in a post-season way, and then we can develop whatever species you want to do in that fashion, and the differences between those are kind of explained in the discussion there, but I kind of highlighted that already as we were looking at that language.

Then, finally, Action 4, that is the step-down action, and so, in this one, we've kind of already discussed step-downs. If the landings are above a certain portion, then step-downs would be used to potentially extend the season. We don't have a whole lot of fisheries where the ACL is being approached and there is a reasonably high trip limit where there would be enough space to step down, and so, rather than using vermilion snapper, which is not approaching its ACL in recent years, we looked at golden tilefish hook-and-line.

That's why we used that species for this example, because that one has been approaching its ACL in recent years, and it has -- Of those that are approaching the ACL, that species has the highest trip limit. We kind of moved aside golden tilefish longline, just because of the nature of that gear.

It's more of a mass catching gear than a hook-and-line would be, and so stepping down a longline might be a little bit less feasible than a hook-and-line style of fishery, but that's why we have a different example for step-downs than we do for the regular trip limit and the step-up.

Vermilion snapper was used as the example because that's been probably the most discussed species around this conversation of step-ups or trip limit changes related to the commercial fishery, and so, for all four of these actions, or, excuse me, for all three of these actions, the nature of this would be we would be looking, at the end of this conversation, looking to the subcommittee to see which species do you want in each of these changes, and then listing those out.

We have vermilion snapper for an overall trip limit change, as well as a step-up. We have golden tilefish for a step-down. Do you want to keep those? Do you want to add to those, and the presentation that Dominique is going to give will hopefully inform some of those decisions, so you can give that direction, and then we can bring back the information with the draft amendment at the next meeting.

What Dominique is going to go into is kind of the level of information that we would bring for each species that is included in these actions, and so she developed it for vermilion snapper and golden tilefish hook-and-line, but, whatever you add today, we would be bringing back in June a similar level of information for you to consider in your decision-making, and so I'll pause here and see if there are any initial questions before we get into the presentation, and we can get into like full-on discussion after the presentation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is the talk about the step-down for longline golden tilefish, and is that what you're -- Or hook-and-line?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Hook-and-line. We didn't want to go into longline, just because of the nature of that gear, and it's meant to catch a lot of fish.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Were there any other species other than hook-and-line golden tile that it looked like might be candidates for a step-down, or was it pretty much the hook-and-line golden tile?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So that was the species that is approaching its annual catch limit that has the highest trip limit and so, I mean, you can step down whichever species you all would like to, but it would be up to you of whether you want to step down, for example, you know -- I think gag is a 250-pound trip limit. Do you want to step down from 250 pounds? Is that worth it to you, but golden tilefish was the highest one, and so that one is like -- I guess, if you were going to do a step-down, that one is probably the most likely, and it kind of fits the most criteria, or it's the closest to the criteria that you would typically use a step-down for.

MS. LAZARRE: All right. Thank you, everyone. Again, my name is Dominique Lazarre. I'm a fish biologist at the Southeast Regional Office. I work in Jessica's branch, the LAPP, Limited

Access Privilege Program, branch, and so hopefully today some of the analysis that I'm bringing will help be food for thought in this discussion of Actions 2 through 4 for Amendment 60, and, just like Jessica did, I have a couple of spots between actions for questions, but, of course, as I go through things, if you need me to stop and ask some questions, feel free to go through and do that.

All right, and so I won't go deep into a discussion of what all the different actions and alternatives are, because Mike just did a great job of going through what those three different actions are that I'm hopefully providing some information about. I'll just get into the analysis itself.

All right, and so, before I jump into my analysis, I want to present some preliminary work that was done by Kyle Detloff at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and so he works pretty closely with SERO to monitor and project commercial closures for both the Gulf and the South Atlantic. Using 2024 trip ticket data, he put together the graphic that you see on the slide to help us understand kind of the proportion of the ACL, for a bunch of the species that have a trip limit, what proportion of the ACL was caught on a trip where the trip limit was met, versus trips where the trip limit wasn't met.

If we're looking at that figure, and it might be a little bit hard to see on the screen, but the rows correspond with the various species. Some of the species that have a split season, you can see there are two vermilion listed, to correspond between season one and season two for the species that have that split season, but you have the greenish bars, which tell you what proportion of the ACL corresponds with trip tickets where the trip limit was not met, versus the pinkish-red bars, where the trip limit was met, and so you can kind of see what proportion of the ACL for each of those species comes from trips where the trip limit is actually being met.

When you're looking at that graphic, the vertical dotted line is 100 percent of the ACL. If you're looking, there are only a handful of species where you're crossing that line, and so a couple where we're having in-season closures that put in place, or there are a couple where an in-season closure wasn't put in place, but the ACL was exceeded, and so anything that has a star indicates that an in-season closure was implemented. Anything that has a plus is an indication that the ACL was exceeded, but an in-season closure wasn't put in place, and so those are the species that might be up for a step-down.

As Mike already said, there might be limited room, in terms of being able to step-down some of those species because the trip limits aren't quite high, and so trying to step those down would be difficult, in terms of making sure that fishermen actually have enough poundage to make it worth their while to bring in that species.

Then we have a number of species that have a number next to them, and so, in Kyle's brief analysis using that 2024 data, that number indicates that number times the current trip limit for that species is what would likely be needed for that species to start meeting the ACL, to reach the ACL, and so, if you're looking at red grouper, there's a five next to it. That means you would need to multiply the current trip limit by five to likely reach the ACL, and so it's giving us an idea of how much wiggle room there is with the current trip limits of what we might be able to increase by. Then there are a number of species that have nothing next to them. Those are species that would require a 10 times or more increase in the trip limit to actually meet the ACL.

Again, Mike has done a really good job of kind of explaining how or why we picked various species as kind of model species for this analysis. We had a subgroup of the IPT get together, and, as we were talking, it didn't seem reasonable, or possible, especially from my point of view, to have a full trip limit analysis for all of the species with a trip limit, and so we thought about using Kyle's analysis to help us pick some of the species that we could use, and then use his work to help us determine what the upper limit of the trip limit increases would be for Actions 2 and 3.

For vermilion, again, some of the reasoning, or rationale, that we used for picking that species is, one, there haven't been closures in recent years for vermilion, and so there's still room in the ACL for more harvest, and, also, it's a species that's found throughout the South Atlantic.

There are some other species that we could look at that are mainly caught maybe in south Florida, or in one particular portion of the region, but vermilion snapper, luckily, is throughout the South Atlantic, and so it's hopefully a good example to be able to use for all of our constituents.

Golden tilefish, in terms of the step-down, has had multiple closures in recent years, and so, between 2020 and 2024, there are four closures, and then one year where the ACL was exceeded, but a closure wasn't actually implemented.

All right, and so now I'm going to start getting into the analytical work that I've done to kind of work us through this trip limit analysis, and so, as I mentioned earlier, hopefully, vermilion, or that we've talked about, vermilion snapper is a split season fishery, and so in my graphs moving forward, for both Actions 2 and 3, I'm going to be showing left and right, or top and bottom, season one and season two for vermilion snapper.

To orient you to these graphs, you have landings history for the last ten years for vermilion snapper season one, January through June, and season two, July through December, just giving us some context for what the current landing behavior is for the commercial sector, and, again, for the last few years, there haven't been closures in the vermilion snapper fishery, and then the other thing I want to point out is that season two, the second half of the year, has slightly higher landings than season one, in terms of overall magnitude, and so just giving us an idea of when that fish is being caught.

When I do the work to project a closure, one of the first things that I do is start looking at recent landings data, and so I'm trying to frame what the magnitude of landings is, or are, for the species of interest. With vermilion, again, splitting between season one and season two, and season one is on the left, and season two is on the right, and we're looking at a three-year average of landings by month.

Month is really the smallest time frame that we can look at at landing score, and so this is a three-year average with a standard error bar, so you have some understanding of what the variation over the last three years has been, and we use that three years because it's the most recent landing behavior, and we assume that this is the direction that the fishery is moving in, and we want to try to represent what's currently happening in the fishery when we're doing our projections for a closure.

If you look at the season one landings, they range from about 40,000 to 60,000 pounds per month being landed over the course of the six-month split season. Season two, about 50,000 to 75,000,

and so a little bit higher. Not drastically higher, but a little bit higher in season two as compared to season one.

There's also no major trend in terms of how many pounds are being landed in one part of the year or another. It isn't like, in June and July, you have the highest landings over the whole time series. It's a little bit up and down, but not necessarily a drastic difference between any of the months for vermilion snapper.

The next step in the process of trying to do a trip limit analysis is looking at the proportion of trips that are landing different poundages, and so I took a look at the commercial coastal logbook data, and, in this instance, I used the last five years of data, to make sure that we had plenty of trips to use to help describe the fishing behavior within the sector, and so, again, left and right, season one versus season two.

These distributions are showing you, based on the commercial coastal logbook, the reported landings per trip for commercial vessels that are landing vermilion snapper, and the bars are essentially showing you that 40 percent of trips are landing 100 pounds or less, and then, if you look at the far right side of those graphs, there are, you know, like between 11 and 13 percent, depending on which season, of fishermen who are landing between 900 pounds or more on an individual trip.

When we're talking about changing the trip limit, more often than not, we're assuming that people who are catching close to the trip limit are going to potentially be the ones who are catching the higher trip limit moving into the future, and so, as I do the projection, I need to try to figure out what that change in landings will be based on that proportion of fishermen that are catching at the higher end of the -- That are catching close to the trip limit, to use that as a way to scale up the landings to better project what the impact of the different alternatives would be.

I put this little graphic together to hopefully show how these different pieces come together. On the far left, you've got recent landings, and so we're taking that average, three-year average, monthly landings rate, and I divide that number, that average landings per month, by the number of days in the month to get a uniform daily catch rate that represents what people are generally catching within any given month of the year, and then I'm going to multiply that by some percent change.

In this situation for Action 2, we're talking about a trip limit increase, and so what's the percent change going to be if the trip limit is increased by two-times, or three-times, and, essentially, we're assuming that, again, the folks that are catching close to the trip limit, and so a thousand pounds or more, are going to be the ones who are taking advantage of catching that new higher trip limit.

In this instance, I calculate a percent change in what the landings would be if that group of fishermen starts landing the higher rate associated with the different proposed actions, and so you multiply those two numbers together to have a scaled up daily catch rate, and then I will cumulatively sum the daily catch rate, and so you have the little calendar to show that we're summing by day, until we potentially project a closure by comparing that cumulative sum by the ACL to see whether or not we're getting close or over that ACL value.

Again, just to reorient us to what the actual alternatives are that we're looking at in Action 2 for the January to June season, the no action alternative is starting, again, at that 1,000-pound gutted weight trip limit, and then, using Kyle's analysis, we put an upper bound of 3,000 pounds, based on his work, to say that 3,000 pounds is likely where you'll start to reach the ACL, and so we have 1,250, 1,500, 2,000, and 3,000 as our alternatives for season one, and then, for season two, because his analysis went up to 4X, we added a 4,000-pound gutted weight trip limit option for season two.

In the graphic from a few slides ago, I talked about that percent change, and so this is the scalar value, and so this is what we're multiplying the daily catch rate by to upweight that daily catch rate to account for what we would assume the increase would be for these different proposed alternatives, and so like 109 percent, and so 9 percent more than normal for the 1,250-pound trip, or, in Action 2, on the January through June side, the 3,000-pound trip limit, at 72 percent more than what you're currently landing, because of that increase in poundage for that small portion of trips that are catching between 900 pounds and more.

I also want to talk about the 900 pounds and more, and so, normally, when we're talking about changing the trip limit, I could have a hard line at just 1,000 pounds, and so only changing or looking at what the percent change would be for people who caught exactly the trip limit or more, but, in reality, they are probably fishermen who are trying not to go over the trip limit, and so they might not -- They might stop a little bit sooner, and so we put a 10 percent buffer around the trip limit to account for some of the people who would likely go for that higher trip limit, but didn't exactly catch that 1,000 pounds, and so a 10 percent buffer, meaning 900 pounds or above are what is going into that scalar value that upweights that daily catch rate.

I also want to highlight here that these scalars don't incorporate any additional landings that might occur if fishers that don't normally catch close to the trip limit start catching that higher trip limit, and so our assumption is that the majority of people who would be changing their behavior are people who are already catching close to the limit, and so this doesn't incorporate someone who catches generally 150 pounds per trip now catching 3,000 pounds, if the trip limit went up that high, and so it's, on my end, harder to try to figure out what that number would be, and it adds a little bit too much variation, I think, in the analysis to do that.

If you guys had ways to help me figure out how to do that, then I could try to incorporate it, but, for the sake of the analysis so far, we're just having kind of a 10 percent buffer around the trip used to upweight that daily catch rate to project what the season closure would be.

All right, and so now I'll show you some of the results. Again, to orient you to the tables, the top is season one, the bottom is season two. On the left for each row, you can see what the different alternatives are, and so no action through 3,000 pounds for season one, no action through 4,000 pounds for season two, and then each of these columns correspond with a different landings option, and so, the same way that I put a little bit of a buffer around that scalar increase, I also wanted to try to provide some information and context for variance in landings, because that average isn't necessarily the exact value that we're going to have.

Having a low, medium, and high scenario for landings, to account for a lower than average year, in general what we've been seeing in recent years, or a higher than average year, and so the low landing scenario is using a daily catch rate that's the average minus one standard error, the median is that three-year average, and then the high is that three-year average plus one standard error, and

so trying to just provide a little bit of variance to show, again, low, medium, and high, in terms of the landings that go into the projection.

The bars in the middle are colored, just because the next two slides show kind of a graphical version of this table, and I'm just showing you a graph for that average scenario, just so I didn't go into too many different graphs, but, basically, what we're seeing is that you would need to get to about a 3,000-pound trip limit to start seeing some closure for season one, and then you have a closure projected in the 2,000-pound scenario for season two, but that's pretty close to the end of the year for the average landings scenario, but, essentially, between 2,000 and 3,000-pound trip limit increases when you start to see a closure being projected for the fishery, and then that 3,000 pounds is where, in the low, medium, and high scenario, you see a closure being projected.

These graphs -- Man, it looks so much tinier than it does on my computer screen. Again, this is just trying to put a graphical representation of that closure table, and so each of these lines corresponds with one of those scenarios. The very bottom line is the no-action scenario, and then, as you go up, you're going towards the highest option for the landing scenario.

Each of the boxes tells you the alternative, the closure date that would be projected, and the number of fishing days, just to -- Like, as you're looking at this, you can kind of more easily see what the projected closures would be, and so, again, for season one, on average, you're only seeing a closure being projected if you go up to 3,000 pounds gutted weight trip limit. Everything else, you have an increase in landings, but don't quite cross the ACL, based on that initial projection.

For season two, it's good to remember that, again, the landings are a little bit higher in season two, and so you see more closures happening where, again, the 2,000 through 4,000-pound limits have a closure for that average landing scenario, the middle-of-the-road landings alternative.

When we use vermilion snapper as a model species, the IPT talked a little bit about the split season nature for the fishery, and there's this added provision that allows for a rollover from season one to season two, and so I did not incorporate the rollover into any of the analysis, again because it gets pretty complicated to carry it from one to another, but I did want to address the fact that there is rollover in discussing the analysis.

This table is showing you, again, that low, medium, and high landings scenario for the no-action alternatives, and so it's just giving you an idea of what proportion of the ACL in general are we catching by the end of season one, and what are the like potential pounds that would be rolled over in a no-action scenario.

If we're talking about a low landings year, we have about 33 percent of the ACL still left over that would roll over into season two, and, on the high end, you might have 11 percent that rolls over into season two, and so, even if we put some of these baseline trip limits in place, there might still be ACL left over from season one that rolls into season two that might prevent some of the closures that were projected in the season two portion of the analysis from happening, depending on how much rollover is left over, and so I just wanted to address the fact that we know that there is a rollover.

It's not included in the analysis, but I just wanted to highlight the fact that I know that this exists, and I wanted us all to be thinking about the fact that there might be some ACL left over and to

think about what that means if you're doing some sort of -- When we get into Action 3, a mid-year review to change the base limit, or to change the trip limit, mid-season, how that might impact things. All right. That was a lot, and so that's all of Action 2. Let's see the questions. Go ahead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Dominique. That's fun. I didn't know until very recently that I enjoyed data and math, and I'm jealous, because I bet that was fun to look at. I've been thinking, and I was thinking about your question about I think how to -- This is in my chicken scratch, but how to account for the extra effort that could come in if the trip limit increases, and I don't know if this is possible, and so just a suggestion.

One, in your initial analysis of the zero to 100-pound column, versus the 900-pound column, I assume that took in the entire breadth of the fishery, and so North Carolina to south Florida. I'm wondering if there's any utility in sort of truncating that, because, obviously, there's a portion, Jimmy, and I don't know, but south of you, where you're not going -- It's never going to happen, right? You're never going to have a high number of vermilion snapper, and so do you get a truer picture of who is actually going after the fish if you do that?

The second thing would be to account for increased effort looking at capacity that Jessica has for vessels, and so, in other words, there are some vessels in the fishery that cannot hold that much fish if we increase the trip limit, and so that's probably very nitpicky, and so I'm not sure that that's possible, but, I guess, and I don't know for you guys, but what it showed me is all those years ago, when we thought we were being so crafty with our split seasons, we didn't really need to do it, and so much food for thought there, and I don't even -- But those are just my two suggestions.

MS. LAZARRE: I'll just respond really quickly. I appreciate that, and so, in thinking about the way the data comes to us, and some of the matching errors that Jessica was dealing with, looking at the SG 1 and SG 2, that's part of why I haven't looked at how that influences this analysis. I have thought about looking at it at the state level. It gets more difficult, in terms of sample size that goes into what the scalar would be, and so I don't necessarily want -- I'm using five years of data, to make sure that we have plenty of trips to try to estimate a pretty good number associated with what that change would be.

The scalar is at the annual level, and it's not even looking at like the monthly level, and so I could look at it by state, but I really have to look at the sample sizes, to see how much variance I'm then putting into this analysis if I'm looking at fifteen trips, you know, or 100 trips, versus a thousand trips in a different state, and so it's something I can look at. I don't know how much of a difference it will make, but it's, you know, something I could at least try for one species, and maybe not fifteen, if I'm doing fifteen for the next meeting, but part of why I haven't done that is, with the logbook data in particular, you start parsing that data really small, and it becomes less useful to tell you what that picture is, and so I know it's not helpful, or like it doesn't feel good to know that you're not incorporating that, but it's not that I haven't thought about it. It's that there's a concern that the data -- There's just not enough data there to do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I keep thinking, you know, and let's say we increase the trip limit, and I'm just going to pick a number of 1,500 pounds. Are the boats going to catch the increased fish by staying out longer to get the 1,500 pounds? Are they going to add a crewman, so they can catch this 1,500 pounds quicker? Are they going to add a crewman so that they can catch the 1,500 pounds quicker and then spend another day or two chasing amberjack?

What is going to be, and I don't think you can model that, you know, and I'm not -- But I'm looking at all the possible paths that we've got looking at us, and so this is really nice. What you've done is really nice. I'm just trying to figure out how with all the rabbits could be run in the different paths.

I'm not so sure I could say, yes, this number is going to give me this closure date, because we're going to be fishing it this way, because I don't know how the fishermen are going to fish, and so I am a little bit cautious on top of the fact that, if we're going to put more fishermen that want to sell their permits, as Dewey was talking about, how many more boats are going to be in the fishery, and the latent boats, that haven't been fishing, because maybe they didn't think they could make any money, now think they can, and how many of those latent permits are going to go to work, and so I'm trying to wrap my arms around the whole picture. It ain't easy. Thank you.

MS. LAZARRE: It certainly isn't, and I just want to be clear that this analysis is really just scratching the surface. It's looking at a set of assumptions based on the best way that we can try to predict what might change, but, as you say, there are a lot of different things that could happen that we can't easily account for. If you do this trip limit increase for multiple species, what's the synergistic impact of that, and so I have to kind of look at things one species at a time, or try to figure out ways to incorporate more, but I hear your point, and it's a brain teaser to figure out how to try to incorporate more than we already do into this type of analysis.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I really appreciate the discussion, and Charlie and Kerry's comments. I certainly don't have a psychologist on staff to get into the minds of commercial fishermen, and try to figure this out, and that's, I think, the challenge here. I mean, I think we could analyze this. You bring up a lot of valid points.

You know, a couple other things I just wanted to mention, and this is where I think we have to just be cautious about overanalyzing things, right, and availability of fish, right? Even if the capacity is you're not landing the catch limit, and, well, if you even have the capacity in the fishery, or the fish available to actually land, right, and then you brought up, obviously, capacity on the vessel, effort considerations.

You know, going from a thousand-pound trip limit to 3,000, for example, and, well, did it take them four or five days to catch the thousand pounds? They maybe -- They can't be at sea longer than that, and, even if they ramped up some effort, they're not going to necessarily get to 3,000 pounds. They may get to 1,500 pounds, or some lesser amount, with occasionally a really good trip, right, when you get into the fish, and so there is a lot of challenges, obviously, with trying to analyze behavior, especially when you're increasing a trip limit. I think there's some value in continuing to, you know, consider these. I think my word of caution is maybe some incremental

changes would be better than some large changes, to see how the behavior of the fishery then adapts.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just one comment. I agree with Andy that incremental is better than some giant changes, but I suspect we're going to have some vermilion fishermen here for public comment, and, if you want to ask them some of these questions, that would be a good time to do it, and what's this going to do to their fishing behavior, their trip, and how are they going to react to it, because I've talked to a bunch of them, and, you know, they definitely want an increase, and so I suggested a lot of them show up, so you can speak with them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you, and thanks for your impressive presentation there of diving into trying to read what's going to happen, or could happen, but I'm the same thought process with Andy and some others to incrementally get into this.

You know, I think that, but there also should be an ability that, as you incrementally get into this, if, a year or two down the road, you see a way to increase it, if you need be, or bring it back. You know, also, this fishery will be stopped when its annual catch limit is caught, and so that's always -- That's always there, and it's pretty effectively how it gets stopped at that time period, and so I would not look into -- Just for minimal increases at a time, to see how it works.

MS. LAZARRE: All right. I'll keep on cruising, and so now we're going to get into Action 3. It's been a few minutes since we talked about this one, and this was a long discussion with the subgroup of the IPT, and so I just want to kind of highlight some of the kind of trigger points for Option 1 and Option 2.

Option two I'll talk about first, actually, just because it's a little bit more simple. Essentially, the step-up would happen in the subsequent year if, in the example of vermilion, the landings were below 75 percent of the ACL, and then the entire subsequent year would have an increased trip limit, based on essentially the analysis that I just presented. You would pick a trip limit that you're comfortable with, and that would be the trip that goes in place for the subsequent fishing season, or fishing year, depending on what species we're looking at.

Option 1 is a little bit more nuanced, and so this was trying to take into consideration the desire to have the trip limit increase over the course of the year, and so, again, with vermilion, this is a little bit more tricky, because of those two six-month seasons, and so you have limited time to work with, but, at the IPT level, our discussion was essentially looking at the midpoint of the season, looking to see if the landings were below 40 percent, and so, midway through the season, if you haven't even caught 50 percent, and 40 is a little bit lower than that 50 percent.

If you haven't caught it, then you would increase the trip limit, knowing that there's going to be, one, time for analysis, time for announcement, paperwork that needs to be filed, things that need to be done to get that trip limit increase put into place. We included a one-month lag between when those increased landings would actually start taking place in the analysis, and so the next couple of slides will be me going through the results for Option 1, where you have a mid-year trip

limit increase, with a one-month lag, when you start seeing that actual increase in the landings for the trip reporting.

We have the similar closure tables that I presented before. The actions, or the alternatives, are the rows. The columns correspond with low, medium, and high landings options, and then, if you're looking at season one, there are no closures projected, and so, essentially what we're seeing in this scenario is that the step-up occurs so late in the fishing year that you don't actually see a benefit from that step-up.

You don't get close enough to the ACL, because you're only implementing it partway through the year, and then, for season two, there's a closure in the average landing scenario close to the end of the year, and so, again, you're mostly getting through the year. You have that bump-up. The 4,000-pound trip limit increase is where we saw a closure would occur, but something that I wanted to draw your attention to is the high scenario. There's no closure projected for that.

When I started analyzing this data, I was really surprised, because, when we looked at the first round of data, the season two closures with higher landings options, you always got a closure, and part of the problem is that you don't trigger the 40 percent that would cause you to need to put the trip limit into place, and so you end up having --Essentially, the no action scenario is what you see in that high landing scenario, because you don't -- You're above the 40 percent, and there's no reason to step up the landings, and so the fishery continues on into the future.

With these step-ups, and then when we talk about the step-downs, it becomes really important to think about when you look at making that change, in terms of increasing your trip limit, and also what percentage you're looking at, as the value of whether you're above or below it, in terms of triggering the step-up to happen as well.

Similar graphs to what you saw the first time around, and this is the season one. Again, you can see that the line is the same for all of the scenarios, because we're in a no action scenario until we get to the halfway point, and, at that point, we check to see if we're below or above that 40 percent, and then, if you're below that 40 percent, the step-up happens, and the trip limit starts to increase, but we put a one-month lag on that, again to add that like bureaucratic buffer of paperwork and things, allowing for that trip limit to get into place.

Then, if we look at season two, again, you can kind of see that the timing of when the step-up occurs impacts whether or not a closure happens, and how close you actually get to the ACL, and so it's, again, difficult to think about like when that trip limit increase might happen and what percentage you should look at to initiate it, and then, again, with the split season, we're talking about doing this within a six-month period, and so it gets a little bit complicated, in terms of how much that step-up is really being implemented.

All right, and then this graph is just reiterating what I already talked about with Action 2. We don't need to go into it. It's essentially the same options, because you have the trip limit for the entire year. All right. Were there any questions about Action 3? Perfect.

All right. We're going to land this plane and get into Action 4. Okay, and so now we're talking about Action 4, and so, instead of talking about a step-up, we're talking about a step-down, and so, similar to how I talked about vermilion snapper, I'm providing a graph that shows the, you

know, kind of last ten years of landing history for the hook-and-line component of the golden tilefish fishery, and then the box is highlighting that there were closures implemented in four of the last five years, from 2020 through 2024, because we projected that we would reach the ACL, and so an in-season closure was put in place.

That 2024 date, an in-season closure wasn't put in place, but we exceeded the ACL, and so this is a scenario where a reduction in the trip limit might allow for that season to be prolonged instead of having an in-season closure implemented.

Again, I want to look at the landings by month, to see what the landing behavior is within the fishery, and so, on the left, you have the monthly landings for the hook-and-line component of the fishery, and you see these really high error bars, because of all the closures, especially in the second half of the year. The first half of the year, they're a little bit tighter, because the fishery is maybe a little bit more -- It's just opening, and so you can get more consistency in the beginning part of the year, and then the closure is coming in generally in June, July, and September, and it starts to ramp down the effort and landings that occur at the second end of the year.

Then the graph on the right is just the cumulative landing distribution, and so kind of looking to see how those landings increase over the course of the year, and, again, looking at that big error bar to see why we've had closures projected, because the landing levels, as you're going over the course of the year, seems like you're going to get close to that ACL, and that has triggered the closures that we've seen in the fishery, and so just really highlighting that there's a lot of variability, particularly in this fishery, as we try to project closures for a step-down.

Similar to the way we looked at vermilion snapper, we're looking at that coastal logbook data by trip, to kind of look at the distribution of pounds landed for trips, and so, again, more than 40 percent of trips are landing 100 pounds or less for golden tilefish, and then you've got kind of a bigger number of people who are catching that 400 to 500-pound limit. Around 20 percent of trips are catching close to that trip limit, but, when we talked about the alternatives for the golden tilefish fishery, the subgroup looked at a 50 percent decrease in the trip limit, and so going from a 500-pound gutted weight to a 250-pound gutted weight.

With vermilion, I looked at a 10 percent buffer around the trips that would be changing. This time, I went with a 20 percent buffer, because we're talking about between 200 and 250 pounds, and that, to me, seems pretty reasonable. That's where the new limit would be, where people would start making choices about whether or not they would be keeping fish, and so, instead of having a hard line at 250, or at 225, a fifty-pound fish, in my mind, seemed like a -- Having there be a fifty-pound buffer around that value was reasonable.

Essentially, with golden tilefish, you're looking at the trips that would likely be changing, going from their current landings to a 250-pound trip instead, are those that are currently catching between 200 and more pounds, and so about 35 percent of the trips would be affected by this trip limit change. Hopefully that makes sense.

Going back to my graphic, we're taking our recent landings, and we're getting our daily catch rate based on the number of days that the fishery is open in each month, and then we're multiplying that by that percent change, and so, in this scenario, because we're talking about a step-down, that percent change is going to downweight that daily catch rate, because, instead of being able to catch

500 pounds, now you can only catch 250. Instead of being able to catch 350 pounds, now you're down to 250.

In this scenario, obviously, there are some closures potentially still being projected, and so, in the kind of middle-of-the-road, in our low, medium and high categories for landing options, the middle-of-the-road option is like a ten-day difference when you have the trip limit reduced by 250 pounds versus the no action scenario, and then, again, we have kind of a weird result with the average landings plus one, and so that high landings scenario.

I was like, wow, and why is it exactly the same as the no action alternative, and it's because you don't get to a point where you can even trigger the step-down, because you've already reached your ACL, and so, particularly in the step-down scenario, it's really important to think about when you want to trigger your step-down to have it have an impact on the fishery to try to bring those landings down and extend the season for the full calendar year.

This is just a graphic to show that, and so the no action is the top line, and the 250-pound trip limit is right below it, and so you're still crossing that ACL, and there's still a projected closure, and a lot of that has to do with the date and the percentage that you're evaluating, whether or not the step-down should be put into place.

All right, and so, as I wrap up, I just want to highlight some of the kind of challenges that I was considering, especially in terms of the data side, to help think about this discussion as we move forward. One of the things that I learned, by talking with our Science Center counterparts who are helping monitor, especially the commercial fishery, and providing us with our landings every week, is that the landings estimates that we're getting and putting on the SERO website are not just the landings that have been caught on the trip ticket.

It's those landings plus some additional estimate for late reporting, and so, if we're making a mid-season decision to downweight the -- To put the step-down into place, we're doing it based on data that we haven't gotten all of the trip limits that might go into what we actually catch over the course of the year, and so the plot on the right, again, is from Kyle, and it's showing kind of the report lag time between when a trip happens and when the report comes in.

The majority of the reports are definitely coming in the first few weeks after the trip came in, but there are reports that even go beyond that 75 vertical line that he highlighted, and so we're not necessarily getting all of the trip reports, and the full accounting of the landings, for weeks, if not months, depending on the species that we're looking at, and then you have no idea what that value is, and so it makes it -- So we might be making decisions on whether or not to step-up or step-down based on, again, preliminary data.

Another thing to keep in mind is there's some additional monitoring that would happen at the Science Center. If we're adding, you know, like a new trigger point for a step-up or step-down, we're not just -- It's not just like a straight replacement of this was the ACL, and now we're looking at 25 percent of it. They have to do some additional work to add in the monitoring for the projections for that step-up or step-down. It's very different than just having the whole season be changed, and so it's just adding a little bit more work, especially upfront, to be able to monitor and project those additional step-ups and step-downs for however many species you consider for step-ups and step-downs.

It's also hard to assess the timeline between assessing whether a step up or step down is going to happen and when it will actually get put into place, and so a lot of our discussion at the IPT level is how long will it take, and things have been taking longer to be put into place in recent years, and so thinking about what that impact would be to make sure that, if we're putting something in place, the fishermen actually gets to benefit from it, and then the last bullet is maybe a little bit duplicative, saying that there's just a bit of an added admin burden from having to do these different things.

In conclusion, just some final thoughts to think about. If we think back to Kyle's graph from that first or second slide, that might be really helpful to look at when you're thinking about species that might require a trip limit increase and looking to see kind of, based on even that one year of data, what the likely increase might be to reach the ACL for some of the species that haven't been reaching the ACL in recent years.

Then just the reminder that implementing a mid-season trip limit has some burden, in terms of having to set it up, but there's also a big impact on what the analysis says based on the percentage that you're looking at, and so, whether it's 40 percent, 30 percent, 75 percent to trigger a step-up or step-down will make a difference, and then the date that you're assessing it also makes a difference, in terms of what the analysis will say, and so a lot of thought should go into place, if we do a mid-season trip limit step-up or step-down, for how and why we're looking at the landings on a particular date, and what that means in terms of how it might skew the analysis in one way or the other. I think that's all I have, if there are any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry, then Charlie. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I wanted to hear your question first. No, and I think I know the answer, but I have to ask it anyway. The fleet that's unloading the hook-and-line golden tile, is it the same fleet that's unloading the vermilion and the amberjack and the gray triggerfish, or is it, for the most part, a different fleet, because I'm trying to, again, get my arms around interaction between, if you change this, is it going to affect that.

MS. LAZARRE: I mean, that's definitely not something that I looked into for this, but I guess I could look at that logbook data and see how much overlap there is between unique vessels for different species that we're interested in changing, but I don't know off the top of my head.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, Dominique, that was so good that, in my mind, the exercise just changed from step-up and step-down to let's just change some trip limits and keep it simple stupid, and the make small changes that Andy spoke about, and so good job.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: You know, when you're looking at this, and I'll ask about it later on, a follow-up to Andy about what I was asking about the monitoring of the commercial industry, similar to the way the GARFO region does, of telling, you know, what's caught that year, what's caught that week, and which state, which species.

It would help us in this tracking, because I got -- When you look at this, particularly to the hook-and-line golden tile, there's a lot of things that -- You know, where the fish are landed at, whether it's Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, what time of year, and so, if you go doing step-downs, guys that have to go fifty or seventy-five miles offshore aren't going to be profitable enough to go when it's somewhere closer with lower trip limits, and so you're basically taking them out of there.

There's a lot -- You know, the distance from the dock, and when you get to your -- I was under the assumption that the way they manage the fisheries is through the dealer reportings, and so, that graph that you showed about days, I'm hoping that's not dealer days, or is it?

MS. LAZARRE: I believe it is. I can double-check with --

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So that's strictly from dealers that we're allowing them to go seventy-five days.

MS. LAZARRE: Or more.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Or more before the report. Well, why are we allowing that? I mean, as our fisheries get more -- It should be precise or something, and we're trying to see how to operate, we shouldn't be -- You know, if they're sixty days out, and some dealer continues doing this, then we can't manage our fisheries, and so why aren't we sending a letter to the dealers saying, hey, you need to stop doing this or else, and, you know, this is crazy. I thought that was from a logbook, and I didn't know, and so we've got to figure out a way to do better, because I'm sure it's not a hundred dealers out there that's landing golden tilefish, or catching, or receiving golden tilefish, federal dealers, and I doubt it.

It's probably just a handful, but to go seventy-five days, or fifty days, and what's the requirements for a dealer to report? Is it every Tuesday that a federal dealer has to report, and so, from seven days -- I just think we need to see if we can't do some -- Somehow figure out how to do better than that, especially when our fisheries are dependent upon timing., and we're asking our fishermen to be timely, and we're asking different things, but, to see something like that, I said that can't be dealers, but I was wrong. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: You do get a letter, Dewey. I won't tell you how I know that.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Obviously it ain't working.

MS. MARHEFKA: Shoot. My question. I had a question. Dominique, do you all anticipate, and this doesn't change, I think, where we're heading, but, out of curiosity, do you anticipate that situation with the long sort of lag of reporting, and not necessarily that people will report earlier, but we'll be doing it electronically, and do you anticipate that to add some increased efficiency into tracking in-season?

MS. LAZARRE: Can I phone a friend? I think Jessica might have a better answer than I do.

DR. STEPHEN: So you're talking about the electronic logbooks, and so we verify electronic logbooks, and they're due every month, against dealer trip tickets at every week, and so we tend to use the trip ticket data to do the in-season quota monitoring and things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, just so I'm clear on our direction, are we -- Are you looking for a list of the species that we want staff to break down? Do you want that now, and --

MS. MCCAWLEY: I mean, can you wait until we dive into the document, and so, right now, we're trying to see if we have other questions for Dominique.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? Okay. Thank you, Dominique. I'm going to ask Mike to take us back to the decision document.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, and so I guess, listening to some of the discussion that was kind of inserted among the questions, and sorry for the scrolling. I'll get us back up to the Action 2. Is the intent here, for the subcommittee, that you all would just be looking into changing the trip limits and not step-ups and step-downs, or do you want to maintain all three of those actions and develop all three of those?

MS. MCCAWLEY: What I heard was just revise the trip limits, but let me look around. Okay, and so I see heads nodding just revise the trip limit, and so are we completely getting rid of the actions that have to do with step-ups and step-downs? Okay. I see heads nodding yes. Kerry is talking. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, I mean, just simply changing the trip limit, there's nothing -- I mean, I thought that there was going to be something for a step-up, or you got to step it down sometime, if you need to be, and so is it to step up and leave it alone for a year? That's what it is, to leave it alone for the year? All right, and SERO has the ability to stop it when it's whatever like that. Then so what happens, and what's the mechanism? Is the mechanism to this amendment that, the next year, if you have to do something, that you have that ability to do something, or do you got to go back and make another amendment?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: If you're only changing the baseline trip limit, if you're only doing Action 2 and putting different species alternatives into Action 2, then that would be the trip limit moving forward. Like there would be a new trip -- So, for example, vermilion snapper, if you all chose Subalternative 2b, then that would be saying, from that point forward, the trip limit for vermilion snapper is 1,500 pounds, and that's what the trip limit is. There's no like stepping-up or stepping-down.

Now, under Action 3, if you go that post season step-up route that we developed, that would -- Kind of like the Option 2 format of doing that, then I think that is the place where -- If that's what the subcommittee is interested in, where, if you are below a certain threshold by the end of the season, and you're below 75 percent of your ACL at the end of the season, then, the following

season, you get a higher trip limit for that entire that entire time, and, if you continue to be low, then you continue fishing at that higher trip limit, but, if you start hitting your ACL, then it goes back to the original.

If you want it to be flipping back and forth like that, then that's a route you could go with Action 3. As it's been developed, that would be Action 3, Option 2. We would develop whatever species you want for that, but, if you just want to flat out change the trip limit from here moving forward, and that's what it is, and then, yes, if you wanted to change the trip limit like later on down the line, you would have to do another amendment. That is a framework-able action, if that makes a difference one way or the other, but you would have to do an amendment to change it sometime in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey, then Kerry.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I was hoping that there would be an increase in the trip limit that we looked at, but also giving SERO the ability -- I'm not asking for a micromanage every other day, but something in there that we don't have to go back and do another amendment, or a framework, which is, at a minimum, a couple meetings and some time, and so, even if that tool is in his toolbox, and they don't have to use it, or, I mean, if there's work shortage, or something like that, it might take them a little bit longer, but somehow that tool needs to be in the toolbox, I think.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and just to simplify what we've talked about for a very long time, we've always had these sort of two objectives, which is to come as close as we can to the ACL, and ideally you want to hit the ACL, but keep the fishery open for, as much as possible, for the entire year. That's what the AP has said for many, many years. That's the spirit of what we're trying to accomplish.

What's the simplest way we can accomplish that now, and, in my mind, that is change the trip limits, maybe in like not the most drastic we can change it, and then what Mike talked about, which is the ability possibly to look at it for the following year, if what we changed it wasn't enough, but I -- It sounds, to me, like there's not a lot of utility in these ups and downs. It's not that there's not utility in it, but we're asking an agency, that is already strapped, to do something that is really, really hard to do, and let's work together on this to try to achieve these two simple things, and I think we can do it without it being too complicated. I would suggest that yes, Mike, for Action 3, or Action 2, that what we're looking at is just a change of trip limits, and then we can get into what happens if we don't meet them that season after that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, my other question is are we getting rid of the actions that had step-ups and step-downs? That was my other question, and so it seems like people over here are saying yes, and so just can you incorporate that in your comments? I have, on the list, Amy, then Andy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair, and, to kind of piggyback with what Kerry said, yes, the commercial fleet has said they want to be able to maximize all the ACL that is available to them, and I understand changing the trip limits will get us in that direction. I am not necessarily excited about -- I think there needs to be more discussion about Action 3, and perhaps getting rid of those trip step-ups, especially if we do have the ability to add it to the following season, which then it

would be plenty of time for the Science Center to get everything organized, plenty of time to get that in front of the fishermen and let them know that they actually can have a step-up the following year. I think the step-downs in Dominique's presentation, and amazing numbers, and thank you very much, but I think the step-down, Action 4, is where I feel it doesn't have a strong utility in serving a purpose, but I would like more discussion about 3.

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

MR. STRELCHECK: I wanted to go to Dewey's comments earlier, and the purpose and need, which is, you know, providing additional flexibility as well, and I like the idea of, obviously, trying to maximize flexibility so that we don't have to continually come back and do a framework amendment, and another framework amendment, and another framework amendment. That, to me, is not a very efficient process, and so I've given some thought to this, and I kind of use the analogy of Gulf state management, right, where we've delegated authority to the states to set size limits and bag limits, within certain guardrails, as well as seasons.

You would have to trust the Regional Administrator, within some guardrails in terms of trip limits, to set those trip limits from year to year, but we could potentially establish a process where we could talk about this, for example, at a December council meeting, with adjustments then to follow after that meeting for the coming fishing year.

I know not all fisheries are on maybe a January 1 fishing year, but I'm just trying to think procedurally like how this could work, and I wouldn't want to be doing this just solely by myself, or whoever the next Regional Administrator is, and being informed through a process with the council, working with you, getting your recommendations, and we could make adjustments, both up or down, within some range of trip limits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so we've had some good discussion on this, and so let me try to help in Action 2, and I'm going to go back to what Charlie was saying. He's saying is now the time to talk about what species, and what trip limits, and I would say, yes, now is the time. You have an example there with vermilion for season one and season two. I'm assuming that you guys want to look at vermilion, and what do you think about those options there for season one and season two, and so back to you, Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, as far as the options, I would not want to go over 2,000 pounds. I think that's too much of a change, for several reasons. One, we've got too many possible paths of why fisheries landings are going to change. Two, I don't want to see boats trying to stay out for ten days, or two weeks, to get a full trip and then bring in poor quality fish to compete with good quality fish, and so that ends up costing the fishermen money, because you just have to sell it cheaper, so you can move it cheaper. I wouldn't want these very high trip limits, for those two reasons, and, if you want me to get into what species I would like to see, I can do that, too.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me try to interpret what you just said, and so, for vermilion, I think what you're saying is looking at that, yes, you want to increase the commercial trip limit, but it seems like Subalternative 2d you would remove, and Subalternative 3d and 3e you would remove, because you're saying max it out at 2,000 per season. Okay.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess, along those lines, and given kind of the discussion about doing things incrementally, and you can think on this, and I don't necessarily need an answer right now, but I would think about just general guidance for the IPT, because, if we're setting this up for several species, we kind of want a template, so that we can copy and paste over.

Given your comment, would you want to say develop sub-alternatives of trip limits that do not exceed two-times the current trip limit, and, like I said, I don't need an answer right now. You can think about it as you go through the species, but then we can kind of work off of that, and develop those sub-alternatives, if we have some type of guidance in that format, and develop the amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Back to Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I would agree that that could be a rough rule of thumb. I don't know that I would make it a solid hard line, because I don't know the landings on some of these other species like gray tile, or, I mean, gray trigger exactly, but, anytime you double a trip limit, that is substantial.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so it looks like we've got the alternatives for vermilion, and we have other hands up, but I'm also asking what other species are we wanting to look at? Are we wanting trigger? Are we wanting amberjack, and so can you talk about those species, and then I'll go to Kerry.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, Madam Chair. I would have vermilion, amberjack, pink porgies, triggerfish. I think that's the main ones I would be looking at, because --

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I got that list. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and it just may help to refer back to Dominique's table on page 3, because I'm finding that really helpful. I'm almost finding it's changing my mind slightly about the higher numbers, because, if you look at her -- Dominique, step up if I'm saying this wrong, but, the way I understand it, you look at say amberjack, and it's got the number eight at the end of it, and the way I understood it is it's eight -- It would take eight-times that trip limit to get the ACL, right, and so I think this table tells us -- I think this can be our exact reference for where we want to go. I'm not suggesting that we go eight times amberjack, but I would like to use this table to inform our decision.

Then the other thing I would just like to say, with the exception of groupers, which I think in a little bit are its own thing, because you have to think about localized depletion with groupers, and that worries me a little more, to think about a red grouper -- Not many people are hitting the red grouper trip limits, but, gosh, if you land on a spot, and they're there, and you're taking, whatever, five times, that could cause localized depletion for those groupers, given their biology.

I just encourage everyone to go back and look at page 3 of that table to inform this discussion we're having now. It makes me feel like -- I know we discussed this before the meeting, but would you be amenable to at least going back to the AP, and out to public hearing, with 3,000 for vermilion, just to have them talk about the market implications, so that we're getting a more rounded discussion on that, given it says four times for this table, and I don't love it either, for the same reasons you don't, but it's not just us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't mind getting all the expert opinion that we can get, whether I would necessarily agree with everything I hear or not, but, no, I don't have a problem, you know, getting it, but I still think we're going to have a lot of effort that we have not had before when we change the two-for-one and things like that, and hopefully this fishery can become profitable, because it has not been profitable, and, when it becomes profitable, people are going to get into it, I hope.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry, I have questions for you. Sorry. Okay, and so my first question is so what we're talking about here for trip limit modifications includes vermilion, greater amberjack, triggerfish, and red porgy. Are those the right species? That's my first question. My second question is the range of alternatives under each one of those, and so let's start with the species list. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: As far as range of alternatives, I think we could probably safely remove 1,250, because that doesn't really get us anywhere, or help with anything, and so if you want to make that -- Is that what you mean by range of alternatives?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I mean when we go -- So we're trying to figure out, like when we go to greater amberjack, and what are the trip limit numbers that you're going to put under greater amberjack, and what are the limit numbers you're going to put under triggerfish, and what about red porgy?

MS. MARHEFKA: Understood.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so but, also, are those four the right species, the only species, that we're talking about modifying under this action?

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm hearing you, and I'm just double checking. Hogfish I can't speak to, Jessica. I feel like that's a you question.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead, Mike, while Kerry is reviewing and then I'll go to Jimmy.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I do just want to remind, of the species that have been brought up thus far, red porgy is under rebuilding.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy, and then Kerry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and I think we should leave all these alternatives in there, because, as Mike was saying, this is going to be a template for all these different species, and some of them -- As you say, if you look at the analysis, they need large increases, potential increases, in trip limits to try to obtain the ACL, and so I would leave them in there. It doesn't mean we have to choose them, but you may have to choose them for -- Not for vermilion, but you may have to choose them for a different species. I would leave them in there for discussion.

I think that the species that we've picked, the vermilion, triggerfish, amberjack, and red porgy are a good start. If you -- By looking at the analysis that's provided, you can see how much of the ACL we've caught, and what's needed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just real quick to Mike's point, and I think Amy has a solution. I understood what you're saying that red porgy is undergoing -- Is in rebuilding, but we have an ACL that's built into the projections. There's no reason we can't try to hit the ACL, and so that doesn't -- That doesn't give me any pause, but Amy had a suggestion, I think, about how to come up with specific numbers for each species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, we had other hands, so I'm sorry, and so Andy, and then Amy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Go ahead, Amy.

MS. DUKES: No, sir, and please go.

MR. STRELCHECK: Triggerfish, I'm confused as to why triggerfish should be included, because we're not hitting the trip limit, and so are we thinking it's restrictive right now, but no one is bumping up against it?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think the thinking is, if someone is on the triggerfish, you don't want the trip limit to be the thing stopping them. I mean, when you find them, you want to catch the most you can catch. We don't have a -- We don't have any suspicion to believe -- We don't have a stock assessment.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, with that said, I mean, I'm surprised though that no one would be even bumping up against the trip limit now, right, and having some that were at least in excess of around the trip limit, from her analysis, and so that's why I mentioned that. The other ones, I guess to look at, and I don't know enough about, you know, how much is harvested. Red grouper, maybe there's a little room to look at the red grouper trip limit, and then you mentioned hogfish for the northern zone.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm going to go to Chip, and then back to Amy.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and I just wanted to caution on red porgy. If you look at the index of abundance, the last five years have been historic lows, and so I would caution on trying to increase harvest there, because, when you look at projections, it's trying to do what the long-term average was, and it appears that recruitment is -- Or the index of abundance is much lower than the long-term average.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering if -- You asked earlier about trying to figure out what those increased commercial trip limits should look like, and so, using vermilion

as an example, looking at what the current trip limit is, and increasing it by half of what that is, getting that 1,250 out of there, you would go to 1,500. That could be a mentality to use for some of the other species. If that is something that we can look at, unless we go one species by one species with throwing out some alternatives, and I'm just trying to ease that pain moving forward.

I hear you on the red porgy, but we're at fifteen fish, and so, if we were to add another seven fish, I mean, there very well could be issues, and so I'll have to talk to some other folks to get some more input on the red porgy, but the red snapper, or the red grouper, was one that was definitely some heartburn as well, but the index is showing a slight bump, but it might be a little early to say that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and Kerry made the point earlier that not only are we trying to catch all the ACL, but we are trying to keep things open as much of the year as possible, which I'm hesitant to bring it up, but if we -- Do we even want to have the discussion about possibly changing the trip limit on golden tile? Maybe make it 400, so we get another possible month or so, or is that just too much sugar for a dime, and I'm fine to leave it alone, but I just wanted to ask.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and what we're looking for here, what Mike is looking for, is some direction of like don't go more than two times above the existing trip limit, or something like that, when developing the range of alternatives, and is that something that we want? I'm looking for a little bit of direction here. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Like I say, it could be a rule of thumb, but I don't know that I would make it a hard-and-fast rule, because let's say, even though red porgy are in a rebuilding plan, is thirty fish going to kill us, versus fifteen, or even forty-five, and so why they've been doing what they've been doing, for literally decades almost, it's like -- I don't know that another thirty fish is going to be a deal breaker.

I severely doubt it, but, again, you know, like Amy says, looking at our list, and our multipliers and stuff, I just get really skittish when we were talking about making nominal changes, because, when we start making huge, huge changes, it just -- I don't think anybody can really know what's going to happen. I would feel a lot better about maybe a two-time, and then, if we have to come back and do another framework, then we will know a lot more when we come back, or, if there's a way that Andy can figure out how we can come in in December and say we need to do X, Y, or Z, then we can do that, but I get really, really skittish when we start making big, big, big percentage changes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got another suggestion here. Why don't, for each one of these species -- After talking to Mike over here, for each one of these species, can we give it a max trip limit that we don't want to go over, and so, for amberjack, what is the maximum that you would consider, and so amberjack, triggerfish, red porgy, red grouper, hogfish, and what is the maximum trip limit, and that will help staff fill out this document. Who wants to start? Charlie. Like is forty-five the max for red porgy? If you have any one of those species where you have a max, can you throw it out there?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I would say forty-five would probably be a reasonable -- I don't think there's any way we can hurt the stock at 45 fish for red porgy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Okay. I see heads nodding on forty-five on red porgy, and so what about some of the others? We have greater amberjack, we have triggerfish, we have red grouper, and we have hogfish. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, according to this, it would take eight times the limit for greater amberjack, and so if we double it and went to 2,400, or 2,500, and then, like Andy said, there is no multiplier on triggerfish. Where are we at now on trigger? I can't remember. A hundred? Or 1,500 max?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so is 1,500 high enough on trigger, or 2,000? I don't know. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Let's just go with the two. I don't think -- It doesn't matter if we make it 5,000 if we're not catching them, I mean, and so, if we want to put it on two, and some lucky fisherman can get on them and hammer them.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just as a reminder, trip limits are a tool that you can use to spread your catch out throughout the year. There is not a requirement that you have to have trip limits for every species, and so, if you don't view them as a useful tool, then that is something to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Red grouper and hogfish, we need a maximum or remove the trip limit. All right, and so, red grouper and hogfish, thoughts? Okay. 300. Hogfish, what's the max on hogfish? This is the Georgia to North Carolina portion, and so 1,000. Okay. All right. I hear 1,000.

All right, and we're going to try to move through Action 3, but I don't know how long we're going to be able to run this committee, and so we can try, because we've got a couple more actions in here. We've got a couple more actions in here, plus we've got to talk about the timeline, and I don't know that we can get all this done. We're already past our time for today.

All right, and here's what we're going to do. So we're going to go ahead and adjourn for the day. In the morning, first thing, we'll come back to the Commercial Subcommittee in the morning, and we will work on this again for another hour. If we do not get all the way through Amendment 60, through this document, then we will come back to it in the Snapper Grouper Committee, because it looks like there's some time in there, but we will start back in the subcommittee in the morning at 8:30. Okay. All right. Thank you. Thanks, everybody.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on March 2, 2026.)

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MARCH 3, 2026

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Villas by the Sea Resort, Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're going to go back to the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee, and so, one more time, the members of the subcommittee are myself, Kerry, Amy, Jimmy, Trish, Charlie, Andy, and Dewey, and so we did not conclude our business yesterday, and so we're going back to that business today.

We left off at trip limits. Instead of going right to trip limits, we're going to go to Action 5, because we need another presentation from Jessica Stephen, and she is time-limited this morning on when she can give us that presentation, and so we'll be doing that this morning. We have one hour this morning allotted for the subcommittee.

We'll see how much we can get done, and, if needed, we'll come back to the subcommittee at another point during this week, and so I'm going to pass it to Mike to talk to us a little bit about Action 5.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so, coming to Action 5, this is the action that is looking at revising bottom longline gear stowage requirements as well as revising the species limitation that is in place for bottom longline gear, and, before I get too far in, I do want to make sure I hit Charlie's question from yesterday.

The reason why we specifically note bottom longline gear is because that is listed as an authorized gear within the snapper grouper fishery, and, for gear that are not included in the authorized gear, which would include non-bottom versions of longline, and so, if you're talking top longline for mahi, for those types of gear, since that is not a trawl, that would have -- The bag limit would be your limit for commercial. Otherwise, you wouldn't be able to harvest snapper grouper species with unauthorized gear onboard, and so that's why we specifically went to the bottom longline gear, because that is kind of the focus. That's what the subcommittee has said is the focus of this action.

The alternatives that we have right now, if you take a look at Alternative 1, it shows the species limitation that is in place for vessels that have bottom longline gear onboard. Snowy grouper are listed, through the rest of these deepwater group of species. If the gear is onboard, then those species cannot be possessed. That is the current regulation.

What the subcommittee has discussed thus far is modifying the species limitation so that, if there is bottom longline gear onboard, then those species can be possessed only if the bottom longline gear is appropriately stowed, and "appropriately stowed" would have its definition. As we've developed it in Alternative 2, that would mean that hooks are not baited, and no hooks are attached to the longline gear on the deck of the vessel. If you all would like to make modifications to that "appropriately stowed" definition, then that's something that we can work on today within this process, but that is what's been brought up to this point.

One other point that you all have discussed thus far has been some form of notification system to allow law enforcement to more easily know who is switching gear and when gear is potentially being switched, if people are making use of this modified regulation, and so, for that type of system, we're going to bring forward Jessica Stephen, just to talk about how that would potentially be set up and what are some of the requirements that would need to be met associated with that system.

DR. STEPHEN: All right. Good morning, and so I'm going to talk to you today about a way we could do a type of notification system for this requirement, and so, as we get involved in it, one of the ideas as a purpose of any type of notification system is that you want to be able to alert law enforcement of what's occurring.

In this case, we would want to be alerting them that a fisherman would be using multiple gears on his vessel or switching between those gears at-sea. When we look through the different types of ways to do things, I believe, yesterday, they had mentioned there could be VMS, observers, electronic monitoring. If we're looking solely at a notification system, what I have to propose to you is what I think would be our best option in how to move forward with a call service system.

If you remember from our discussions about the wreckfish ITQ, we had talked about a call service system. We also have a call service system in place with our Gulf reef fish. What this means is that a fisherman, either at the dock or at-sea, depending on your choice, would be able to call the call service center.

We would pay them to operate twenty-four-seven. They would solely be taking information, and not answering any questions. When they get that information, they'll be entering it into a database through an online web service that will provide to them.

When it hits our database, once we know where that fisherman is fishing, we can send that notification via email directly out to law enforcement officers within that region. What's good about this is that we have the time recording of when the fisherman called, and so we know if they were doing it at-sea when they're switching gears. We have a way to immediately inform law enforcement. That is -- Immediate is a little bit of a caveat. If they're at-sea, and don't have email services, it might receive later than that. Then we have that record of that information, and so you provide a lot of information to see when a gear was being used.

One of the questions we want to think about as a council is when should that notification be submitted. As I alluded to earlier, there's two typical ways we could do it. We could do it prior to leaving the dock, or you could do it at-sea. If we're thinking about prior to leaving the dock, you do want to consider the pros and cons of that. One of the benefits is you can use your cellular service or a landline to make that notification, and so that's a benefit, that there's ease of access to that service.

One of the concerns there is that you might have fishermen who are going to declare every trip that they're going to be using both gears. If you want to think about the metrics of how you want to analyze how often a fisherman switches between those gears, that might be problematic if you're just doing at-the-dock notification. There are additional information that we could gain to tease out that information if you decide to go that route.

If you're doing it at-sea, it becomes a little bit higher of a burden on fishermen, and so, if you're at-sea, you're going to need a satellite, and, while Starlink and some of their satellite services have come down in cost, there is still a cost to the fishermen in the ability to do that, but, when you do that, you have a real-time indication of when the gear is being switched, and so that adds a little benefit on that part, on the information of only on this trip was the gear used to be switched, and this is how we designate when the switch occurred.

One of the questions you might want to go back to law enforcement is ask them when would they need to see a notification, and where is their preference with doing it, and so that might be dependent on when they're submitting at the dock or at-sea.

There might be a requirement that it's X amount of hours before switching gear, if you're at-sea, or a requirement that it's just immediately before the trip, if you're doing it prior to leaving from the dock, and so those are just questions you want to think about how this information could be used most beneficially to enforce the regulations.

On the scientific and management side, one of the things that we were considering is we will be eventually having electronic logbooks coming up. They provide a way to give information a little bit more detailed than we did on the paper logbooks, and so, if we were doing this, one of the ways you could use the at-dock notification and then still tease out when both gears were used is that you have separate gear or effort information, and the species caught under that, within your logbook for when you switched gears.

This also provides a lot more information to management about what species or what size species were being caught under each of the gears and how to move forward with that. It would also provide that discard information by gear, and so this is information that's helpful both in stock assessments as well as management actions.

I did want to go over what the administrative costs and burdens are moving forward, and so most likely the path forward would be to use a call service center. We already have a contract with that. I would envision that we could just incrementally increase the cost to it, and so that's a cost savings, versus doing an entire new contract for them. Our call service contracts tend to be on the cheaper side, because of the volume of calls. I don't expect a huge volume of calls to be coming in from this one, and so that's really a minimal cost for the government.

We would need to build out that database system I talked about behind the scenes, and so that would involve creating a backend database, creating a frontend, and user logins for the information. Out of that, we have a lot to build on, and so it's not going to be new development or new things. We have a lot of models we can build out for that. One of the trickier parts will be probably understanding where a fisherman is fishing, so that we can send that information to the correct law enforcement agents and not just cover the entire South Atlantic side, and so we'll need to figure that out as we move forward with this.

Currently we do have a couple challenges in doing the build-out. Right now, we require IT contractors to do it, because we've lost several federal staff members. Currently, I'm involved in a lot of other electronic programs. I've talked to this council before about that, and we've been finding it's a challenge right now to hire those qualified candidates that would accept a government

salary. We're typically below that that you find in private industry, and particularly for short-term projects.

We've also found that security clearances for contractors who are not already approved in the government have been going very slow. What this mostly means is I think I can work with other regions to find our resources, but we might have significant delays in when an effective date would go into place while we work out those agreements with other regions that might already have qualified staff that have met security clearances, and so now I'll take any questions you have about this system.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Jessica. I had a question. It might be a question for Mike though, and so I saw, in the decision document and you mentioned it in your presentation, Jessica, that, if the call-in system is required, it may delay implementation, and I know we want to, you know, try to keep this amendment moving, and you talked about some of the challenges, and so I thought that it was optional, so that the council could make a decision as to whether they would use some type of call-in or notification system or not, but, at the beginning of the presentation, I think that you said it was required, and so can you guys clarify whether we would be required, during this gear switch-off, to have a notification system, or is it up to the council that it's optional whether we want to do it or not?

DR. STEPHEN: So I believe it would be considered optional, and just build your rationale for it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you for that. Other questions for Jessica? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thanks Jessica. This is really important stuff for me, and so, in the current Gulf scenario, how do they indicate -- If it's at-sea, how do they indicate their location?

DR. STEPHEN: For the Gulf scenario, it's within our catch share program, our IFQ program. They're required to give us a three-hour notification prior to landing, and so a slightly different scenario, but the concept for how we're doing it is the same. They have three options within the Gulf program to communicate to us. Because they're required VMS units, we have a form through VMS, so they can submit, and they can also call us in. Most of our fishermen use satellite or Starlink phones, and then they also could radio home and have someone they trust with access to their account sign-in and go in through their own account, and so we allow those three mechanisms, and it's about split a third. All of our notifications are about a third through each of those.

MR. HULL: Okay, and what we're talking about here, with multi-gear in snapper grouper and shark, for instance, and so if I was -- I can just visualize this in my own experience, and so, if I was offshore, and I hadn't already notified before I left the dock that I intended to change gear, and my timing is very important in this, and so, if I go catch -- Let's just say red snapper season is open, and I go catch my limited red snapper, and I need to catch more fish than that, and so I want to go inshore and catch sharks instead on short bottom longline, and so, when I'm catching my snapper, all my gear is stowed.

Now I'm transiting inshore, because that's where I want to set my shark gear, and, while I'm transiting, that's when I want to pull the gear out. It takes time to cut a hundred baits and get them hooked and get ready to set your gear, and so in that transit time is where there's fuzzy math,

because, if I get intercepted, and I've got gear out, and I've got just snapper species onboard, it's like what's this, and so I think it's the notification that I'm getting ready to switch gears.

You need to know my location at that time, and could you just call that your lat and long in and not -- Without a VMS, but just say here's my lat and long, and send that information, and here's where I intend to go set my gear, when I change gear, so they know where you're left and where you're going to implement a new gear, a new fishery.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and those are all really good points, and I was also talking with some law enforcement yesterday about this, and so, based on what you've said, and the conversations with law enforcement, the way I think it could work, and this might need more conversation to understand business practices, is that you would do the notification -- If you were changing at-sea, you would do the notification before you started doing all the baiting and hooking of it, right, and so, because you're doing the notification, and we're recording a database, we have a timestamp.

We know exactly when that was made, and so, if someone encounters you while you're transiting and baiting, even though they might not be able to see that information at-sea, when they get back, they would be able to see that this notification was made prior to the intercept, right, and so that would then cover you with it, and so those were kind of the things we need to kind of discuss more, figure out what the, you know, pros and cons are there, but that's the way I could see it working.

Then it gives you that time, when you're baiting, to show that you've done the approved notification mechanism. One of the things I was curious about is what we would want to do as information, and so, obviously, your vessel, and information like that, is critical, but those two points you made up of this is where I'm intending to go fishing, and maybe even this is where I'm leaving from when I make the notification, and so we can talk more about how that would work and what fields would be required as we build out the amendment.

MR. HULL: Thank you for that, and I think the information -- Because I can put myself in that position and the position of law enforcement. You know, you're going to have to intercept one of vessels to actually make sure that they're abiding by the regulations, and, out in the ocean, if you don't know where I'm at, it's going to be -- It's just going to be luck, and so the -- If you know the location, then they can they can track you down and check you out.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and then a benefit of that location is, if we know where you're going fishing, we would probably have, from that, the subset of law enforcement that we should be informing, so that it's not spreading out across, and so that was one of the other challenges we were trying to figure out, is how we would determine who would receive the notifications.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions? Amy, and then Kerry.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. Jessica, so the idea would be prior to or at-sea, and could there be a potential for either-or, so, if a fisherman knows ahead of time he's going to want to do this great, and, if not, have the ability to be flexible and on the fly, like Jimmy was speaking of?

DR. STEPHEN: I would say there's a potential for either one. We would have to think about the pros and cons. The one thing I thought about the prior to the dock is that you could just say it every time, and not do it, and so then, if you're trying to figure out how many times that gear is

being switched, if you don't have a logbook component that says it, you might not know. The other thing is, you know, as we mentioned before, when you're going to, or where you're going to, to make sure that information is there, but I think both scenarios and a combo could work as we work out the details.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you have another question, Amy? Go ahead.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, and so, if they were doing it prior, and they said they were going to be using both gears, would you be able to use the separate effort for the logbook as a source of a validation for that, in case for some reason they say, yes, I'm going to do both, and the weather turns crap, and they don't want a bottom longline, they would say they did not end up using bottom longline, and did not switch gears on their electronic logbook?

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and so, if we were doing the prior to dock, I would really emphasize a separate gear effort reporting in the logbook, so you could start to tease that information out. I would suggest that we run it for a year or so and see what the results look like, how many people declared and then didn't do that, and use that evaluation to determine where you want to move to next. If we would see a slew of people doing that without information, your question is did they not report it and do it, or did they actually not ever intend to do it and just were covering themselves.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Jessica, I'm sorry if you said this and I missed it. Is building in the ability to text possible? A lot of us -- We were talking yesterday, those of us that aren't on Starlink, and are still on Iridium Go, and, honestly, I can't have a phone conversation, but texting is the most reliable method to communicate from offshore.

DR. STEPHEN: So that's a technology we'll still need to investigate further. The point is that it needs to get into the database, and so, if you're having the text coming through, who you're having to come to needs to be twenty-four-seven, or some automated mechanism, and, while I'm sure the technology is out there, I'm not sure we have the technology in-house.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just thinking of the pluses and minuses of different ways of doing things, but let's say, if I'm -- I want to go golden tile fishing, and I say I'm going golden tile fishing, I may be going to one point, but, as we're stringing out longline, we could end up a long way away from that point, and so how close of where you're going fishing is important?

I guess the secondary question is, if we say we're going to use both gears when we leave the dock, are you going to want to know our fishing area then, because, a lot of times, we just don't know. We get out there and, you know, another captain says, well, the water is cold here, and you need to go there, and the tide is bad here, and so we're making decisions on the fly a lot.

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and so, in response to your first question, I would want to talk with Dave Gloeckner more, but I think, within the commercial logbooks, we also have a gridding system, and

so we could use that larger gridding system to determine where you are. That should be enough for us for law enforcement to know who to send it to, and it should be an indication of where you're going to attain your fishing. To your second point, that is why I was a little cautious with the prior to leaving the dock, because you wouldn't necessarily have that information, and I think we need more robust discussion about what the implications of that would be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more questions for Jessica? This was her last presentation for us, and so I just want to make sure you don't have any questions for her while she's still here. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: With this discussion, there's a lot of added expenses that could be going on here, and, one, I don't know if the fishermen are capable of financing this. Two, I personally don't believe we need to go to this extent of what we're doing here. It's not like there's a million permits, and people fishing, and different things, but my question is do you know of how many shark fishermen, directed shark fishermen, are having landings? That's probably a pointed question, because we're looking to do multiple gears, and we're looking to be able to utilize your permits that you have, without having to go through this craziness that I'm kind of hearing here to get to your results.

Something else is, you know, our trip limits -- They're like you can count them on your hands almost, and it's like, you know, law enforcement is smart enough to know when somebody is doing something, and can look at dealers and see what's going on, and do we really need these call-in systems? Do we really need it for all this type of stuff, and so I'll let you -- Instead of me talking, because I just don't like the way this is going about all the things you've got to do just to damn go fishing, and you're worrying about the guilty people, and, well, how about the innocent people and all that they're going to have to go through, and so how many permits are being utilized in the directed shark fishery now? I'm under the assumption it's not very many.

DR. STEPHEN: I don't have that number handy, and I would have to do a similar analysis that I did with the Snapper Grouper 1 and 2, and connect it to logbooks, but we could do that before the next council meeting.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One follow-up is I would be in favor of a call-in before you leave the dock, and, I mean, when you get close enough for a cell range, or whatever like that, you call in say you're coming to a dock, and you're going to unload your catch. Now if, all of a sudden, Joe so-and-so just starts unloading all these snappers, and all these other things, that he has never done in his life with his directed shark permit, maybe there's something, but who is really going to go set a longline gear for red snapper when you're only allowed seventy-five pounds?

In shark fishing, I believe -- Do you have to have use a certain hook that you have to do, and that's like a 16/0, something like that maybe, a large circle hook, and how many people are going to use a large circle hook to go catch a red snapper? I mean, I just think we're -- I understand regs and stuff, but I just think we're going way down the road here to something that does not need to be done. A call-in and call-out system is what I would be for, voluntary, and then just the law enforcement is smart enough to check on it from there. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dewey. Kerry, and then Andy.

MS. MARHEFKA: Dewey, I'm not arguing about your base premise at all, but, just to be clear, it's not -- This is not just for shark fishermen, and it would be for any of the snapper grouper bottom longline guys that also are going to hook-and-line, and it would be wreckfish and the golden tile longline guys, and so just so you know it's not just the shark fishermen, and that's all.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I mean, right now, we're already -- I'm under the assumption that you're allowed to use buoy gear, right, and buoy gear has how many hooks on it, regulations? Is it ten hooks, nine hooks or ten hooks, and does anybody know that? Okay, and so you've already got a buoy gear that's got nine or ten hooks, and if you catch -- If you've got nine hooks, and other snappers or something like that, that means you're allowed to catch ten of something, if it's that many hooks, and so you've already got something there that has that possibility, whether it may be --

You know, maybe, under that buoy gear, you need to check to see if he put twelve hooks on there, instead of the amount, and so I'm just saying that I don't like the unintended consequences, but I like everybody being able to utilize their permits with what we've got left, but don't make it -- Some people might not have the ability to go -- If you're offshore, a satellite phone, or a meridian, or whatever else, and they don't -- They probably do, but I don't like to continue with further restrictions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dewey. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I'm just going to maybe repeat things, but say it in a little bit different way, in terms of I think the approach here, and so we're trying to, obviously, provide flexibility to the industry, which I think is a great thing, right, and how we do that is the question, and, to me, the approach is going to have to be a cost-effective solution, like we're, you know, discussing, right, and we can't have something that's going to be super expensive to the government or to the industry members, and it can't be administratively burdensome or burdensome to the fishermen, and then, lastly, it's going to have to be effective for enforcement, right, and so there's kind of three pillars to this that I feel like we're going to have to accomplish.

I think Jessica has laid out some good that ideas that we need to come back to the council with more details in March, or, excuse me, in June and discuss this a little bit further, in terms of how this could work, but I've certainly heard people loud and clear, in terms of at least what you're suggesting, and we can kind of refine this approach and come back with better ideas.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. I don't see any more hands. Thank you, Jessica. All right. We're going to stay in Action 3, or 5 here, and we're going to see how we can refine this, what additional requests we have, like Andy is mentioning, additional information needs before the next meeting, and so I'm going to turn it back to Mike to talk about Action 5. We do have a hard stop at 9:30, and so maybe we can try to get through this action, and then we'll come back to the trip limit actions, you know, at a later point in the meeting, but I'm going to turn it back to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, and so I think, from the discussion that's been had thus far for this action, including today's, and thinking about the timeline that we're currently on of having a draft amendment ready for June, I think two main questions have popped into my head, and there may be a couple more, one of them being confirming with the subcommittee that are you okay

with the definition of “appropriately stowed”, or would you like to revise that, and the second one being as far as a notification requirement.

What I can do is basically duplicate Alternative 2, create an Alternative 3, and then add notification requirement in Alternative 3, and so, if you if you decide to go that route, then you would select Alternative 3. If you decide you don't want a notification requirement, you would select Alternative 2, but, that way, we would develop both of those options in the draft amendment that you would then review in June and consider for public hearing, and is that an okay course of action, and could we address those questions?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and are we okay with adding that action? Okay. I see thumbs-up, and I see people nodding their heads yes, that they're okay with adding, and it's technically an alternative, and it would be for a notification system.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so, the notification alternative, we'll add that, and then the other question of is the stowage definition what you want it to be, and we've kind of -- There were ideas thrown out in previous meetings, and this is what we came up with at the IPT level, but, before we get into a draft amendment, I want to make sure that it's in line with what you all are thinking, and that requirement is hooks are not baited, and no hooks are attached to longline gear on the deck of the vessel.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm looking for some feedback on that. This is the first time you've seen this alternative written that way, and I'm looking around the room. Jimmy, you're the one that had been talking about this, and what do you think about this?

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that the definition of “appropriately stowed” is good, what we have here. I don't know what else I could do to appropriately stow it other than those options, or a mix of those options.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I'm wondering, along with this definition, if you've looked at any other council, or NOAA's gear stowage language or anything like that, which I think it would be in line with this, and I'm just asking. I can't remember it off the top of my head.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We've looked at a couple of others, in the sense that they're not all, I guess, geared and specific towards bottom longline, and that's where this one kind of becomes unique, but there are other places where there are stowage definitions for different types of gear. I think we had -- I think we had some form of a stowage definition within the most recent -- Within, I guess, two amendments ago for black sea bass, looking at the gear stowage with that one, and so I think we've looked at a few, but this is the one that we came up with for, you know, thinking of primarily bottom longline.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so then, in this new alternative that's going to be added that has to do with the notification requirement, it would help if we had an idea whether we're only suggesting notification prior to the start of the trip, or are we going to do an at-sea notification or what, and if we could have some discussion on what we're thinking, so that folks can come back with more information. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at the options, I think it would be cleaner just to do it when we leave the dock, and then, if we need to have our logbook split out into what gear we were using, and what we caught and that, it does a couple of things, and we don't have to worry about, like Kerry, and I've got Iridium too, and it's -- Sometimes it's -- We use text, because that works, but the phones are so intermittent, and so it's much easier to just do it when we leave the dock.

Yes, we're going to have some times when, yes, I might want to do this, and I might want to do that, but I get out there, and the water is cold, and they and they just change gears on the fly, and so we don't have to worry about a two or three-hour timeframe, because, a lot of times, if you want to do one year to another, it doesn't take three hours, or whatever, and so I think it's going to be more efficient just to do it at the dock and then, you know, work our logbooks and modify them accordingly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. Any other suggestions? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Probably just a comment, but the -- I think there's pros and cons to both, just doing it as you leave the dock, as opposed to doing it at-sea. I think for -- As I tried to explain in a real-life situation of what you would be doing when you're doing this, law enforcement is going to need to know more details, because, if you get intercepted, and so, if you make it at the dock, which is cleaner, I agree, and it's simpler, and less costly, potentially, because, if you're requiring me to get a better satellite phone system, that's a lot of money, or to go to VMS, and that's money, and, you know, it's easier, and less expensive, to do it at the dock.

If I'm in transit, as I explained, and I pull out all my hooks, and I start baiting things up, and I get intercepted, and I hadn't yet used that gear, and I'm just leaving my snapper fishery, you know, then you're in -- You have a problem explaining yourself, unless we can figure out a better way to explain yourself in that situation than the notification at-sea.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Jimmy. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I think that, once you've made that notification before you've left the dock, you put a stamp on something that that you're going to be doing both. Now, if you get out there, and you're not doing both, then that's -- You've already put that stamp on there that's what your -- Your intention is that you're going to -- I just don't want -- I want the fishermen to be able to use the ability, their ability, to use their permits.

I think the law enforcement is smart enough to realize, or see what's going on in looking at something, and so I don't want no more burdens on the fishermen than we've already got, and, if you have to go to VMS, that's about \$3,200 for a unit, and it might be more now, and it's \$65 a month, and, with Starlink, it's \$250, if you don't have nobody out there playing video games and all that other stuff a month, and the system to buy that is probably about \$700, and so it's very expensive to do that.

I just think, between law enforcement knowing what's going on, and they do, and the call-in, and calling back when you're coming in, I think it's more than sufficient of what we've got going on to be able to allow folks to do this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on this topic? All right. I think we have everything we need on that particular action. We're going to go back up to the trip limit actions, and we'll start back with the one that we left off in yesterday, that I think it's -- It's not the step-up. All right, so, when we left off yesterday, we were talking about which particular species, and this is just straight up a trip limit change, and no step-up or step-down, and this is just what do we want the trip limits to be.

The species listed there, in addition to vermilion, which has options in the document, and we're suggesting, under vermilion, to remove the 4,000-pound option, but keep the other options, and then the species, in addition to vermilion that we're suggesting, are greater amberjack, triggerfish red porgy, red grouper, and hogfish, the Georgia to North Carolina component.

We put some max trip limits there for consideration, but I wanted to come back to this today, to see if we wanted to provide specific options underneath that maximum, so that the -- We can have some more fleshed-out options, and those options come from, us versus the IPT, and so let's maybe start with greater amberjack. We put a maximum in there for 2,500 pounds, and what are some other options that you would like to see under greater amberjack? I'm sorry, and can you say that on the record, Amy? I did not hear you.

MS. DUKES: We're at 1,200 pounds now, and so I was trying to, in my head, go, right, we're at 1,200 pounds now, and we could go up to 2,500, and it was just more of an internal thought.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Got it. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That would just -- I'm sure that someone like Amy, or someone who is on the water all the time, has that information at the top of their head, and I actually have to look up, for some of these, to remember what the trip limit is, and so, to the extent that, on the fly, you can help us remember what the current is, that would be helpful.

While I have the mic, just in order to move things along, I think that, for amberjack, 1,500, 2,000, and 2,500 would be my suggestion, and I don't know what Charlie and Jimmy think. I think that covers the range. Red porgy, I think you could do fifteen, thirty, and forty-five. Again, guys, I'm just trying to make sure that we -- I like the idea of us coming up with the options, versus the IPT, just so please feel free to disagree with me.

Triggerfish is a harder one. I've been thinking about this a lot overnight, and that we're not reaching the current limit, and, 2,000 pounds of triggerfish, that would be a good day. That would be amazing. We're at 1,000, right, and so 1,000, 1,500, and 2,000. Red grouper would be -- Personally, I'm fine with just those two options. I don't think we need to add one just to add one, but that's me personally, and hogfish I cannot speak to, because I just don't have a lot of experience with that coming on our boat.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Kerry. Other thoughts about these options for these different species? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. Kerry, you know, I agree with -- These numbers are fine. I just refer back to the presentation of -- I know you do too, and those bars, and you can see where

the ACL would be met, and then they indicate the landings compared to when we've reached the ACL, and how much you would have to increase the trip limit to reach the ACL.

Like amberjack, it's eight-times, and, obviously, I'm not a proponent of increasing it to 8,000 pounds but it's -- At least you have something to go by with that, to say that, yes, we're not just throwing out crazy numbers, and we actually are trying to get closer to the ACL by doing this, and then the idea that, down the road, if this goes through, and we look at it at the end of the year, and then, the next year, you can say, well, what did it do, and did we get any closer, and, if we didn't, maybe we go higher. If we got too close, well, we may go lower, and I think that's kind of where I would be headed with this, but at least that presentation, and that analysis, gives you something to go by other than just coming up with something, and thinking of the market and how am I going to sell this, or this, that, or the other.

We're really trying to -- Our objective is to get closer to the ACL and provide more opportunity for the fishermen to make a living, and so, I mean, those are lower numbers than what is indicated here to reach the ACL, and that's good. That's a safe way to go, and I know the fishermen would appreciate having that, no matter what it is, and so I agree with them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry, and then Charlie.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry, Charlie, and just to that point real quick, my rationale, just so it's on the record, of not -- I think we talked about this yesterday, of not say taking that eight-time multiplier, is also looking at the other pressures that we're adding, or the buttons we're pushing on the fishery, like removing the two-for-one, and not understanding what the impacts of removing the two-for-one will be. In my mind, that is our rationale for being slower in this increase, and so I just wanted to say that for the record.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I agree with everything said at the table, and hopefully if we can figure out a way, and Amy and I talked about it, you know, for Andy to have some flexibility, once we kind of see where this is. Instead of going back to a framework, give Andy some flexibility to figure out what the catches are going to be to get to our ACL, and try to keep our season open most of the year, and maybe give him 25 percent leeway on changing the trip limits, but we'll just have to see how it plays out, but hopefully we can do something like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Mike is going to try to capture that. It's sort of in a different action, but he's going to try to capture some of what you're saying right now. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: If it's in a different action, we can talk about it then, but one of one of my suggestions is going to be trying to bring back at least some draft language to have people look at later this week, to see if we can't look at the flexibility that may be provided within the range of alternatives you're suggesting here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you have something that you definitely want to see in there, or don't want to see in there, so that we could tell staff, so they could work on that this week? Andy, do you have some suggestions?

MR. STRELCHECK: My suggestion is I'll work with my team and the South Atlantic Council staff to draft some language collaboratively.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do folks have other thoughts on that, and so anything else that you want to talk about before they write this up? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I think, for me, there's a lot of meat in what will be coming forward this week, and I do not want to -- I want to make sure that there's time to really think about that, because that is new language, a new way of approach that we have not even talked about yet, and, given that June is going to be the public hearing draft, I just want to ensure that there is fully enough time for us to understand, because it is a different approach, completely, than we've used before, and it is not something that we can digest quickly or discuss quickly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I agree. Any points that you can think off, off the top of your head, that you want to be considered, and so Charlie threw out this up to 25 percent, change the trip limit by up to 25 percent, and I assume that's both up or down. Okay. Yes, up or down. Any other thoughts on that right now, as they craft the language? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just it seems like HMS does this a lot in sharks. They set a default at the beginning of every year, and they look at the effort, and where they were, and, for different reasons, then they set, you know, whether it's going to be fifty-five head of large coastals, or sixty-five, or forty-five, or whatever, and so it may be worthwhile to look at what they're doing, at some of the guidance that they have of how flexibilities -- What flexibilities they have, and just a thought.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So a question along the lines of that option, and is that consideration something that would only apply for the species that we're talking about in this action that are having their trip limits changed overall, or is that for a larger suite of trip limits in the snapper grouper fishery, and like is it just vermilion, amberjack, porgy, triggerfish, red grouper, and hogfish, or is it a larger flexibility there?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and I've got some hands already in the queue. Amy, and then Dewey.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am getting a little -- I don't want this amendment to get bogged down with a lot of these changes, and, Charlie, you're right with this idea of giving the Regional Administrator some leeway. I think that applies more in Action 3 than it does in 2, and we haven't quite gotten there, this this idea of a new percentage. I'm just worried that we need to get into Action 3 before we have these type of conversations, because perhaps there's some changes and leeway there that could be more advantageous.

I do agree with the maximum trip limits for consideration here. I think the only other thing that we at one point had talked about was the fact that do we need to think about reducing any of the trip limits, to try to get that longevity in play for some of these species throughout the calendar year, and it was a comment that was made, but it could potentially just be a conversation, and that's it, but I just wanted to remind the group that we did talk at one point about reducing some catch limits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I forgot what I was going to say, and so skip it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: We may want to just keep it for these species right now, just to keep it simple, because I'm thinking about some of these other fish that we, obviously, close after six months, but we do that because, if we lower the trip limit any more, then it makes it unfeasible to even go for the fish at all, and so there there's other things in play other than just getting the ACL and just getting it to this, and I agree with Amy that I don't want to get it bogged down too much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Let's dive into the next action, and at least start that discussion, because I think that's going to help inform us here once we review that action, and so back to Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, and so this may -- I guess there's more of an initial question as we get into Action 3, and kind of recalling some of the conversations surrounding step-downs yesterday, and that's Action 4, but you can kind of address both with what has been developed in this morning's discussion, because, if you're considering giving kind of that leeway to the Regional Administrator, that would be one route to go to have, you know, that step-up and step-down flexibility.

What has been developed at this point is more of a -- I guess you can think of it as a finite step-up, or a finite step-down, where it's a specified amount of poundage that you would be increasing or decreasing, whereas, if there is a level of discretion within a range that's given to the Regional Administrator, then you wouldn't necessarily need, you know, that finite formulaic way of doing it, and so do you want both options on the table right now, or do you want us to work more in developing kind of the flexibility for the Regional Administrator?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair, and, in all honesty, I look at Actions 1, 2, and 3 being an and scenario, and so we've got the two-for-one going away, and so we're potentially going to have some additional effort and catch there, and then we're going to bring those trip limits up, to make those trips more efficient, and then Action 3 is going to be like maybe we hit the bar wrong in Action 2, and so we're going to give a little bit of flexibility to increase those trip limits here.

I think the question I have for the fishermen is do you want to see that trip limit within the current season, or do you want to see that trip limit the next season, and that's basically the difference between Option 1 and Option 2, and that's where I'm struggling. What do the fishermen want, within the season or the following season?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I love the way you just framed that, by the way, Amy, and that was helpful. I think that, ideally, in a perfect world, in the season, obviously, would be the choice every time, but, also, I'm a realist who understands the limitations of the agency, and don't necessarily want to put that burden on, and so, for me, what I think I would feel most comfortable with, and I want to see what comes out of what Andy is writing up, I think, before we can necessarily throw other

things out, but that's me personally, but, yes, if we had everything in the world, in-season adjustments all day long, every day.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mike, and then Charlie.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess some direction on the end season versus next season conversation would be helpful in us developing what this would look like for later on this week, because that kind of gives us a direction of how to how to write that that language. When we were discussing this kind of at the IPT level, people were, you know, weighing pros and cons one way or the other.

One of the things, along with the administrative, you know, difficulties that go along with an in-season change, one of the other kind of points that was looking -- That drew us to develop the post-season option was the fact that, by the time the in-season change occurs, it's not always the most advantageous time for the fishery to have a higher trip limit.

Like if you're changing over -- You know, if you're evaluating in August that you have a change that goes into place in September, you might have a month or two, depending on your location, of good fishing, and then you're hitting bad weather, and you have 2,000 more pounds on your trip limit, but you're not able to get out as often, because of the weather, and so that's one of those pros and cons, whereas, if you have it for an entire year, then you can plan out that this is when you're going to, you know, make the best use of that higher trip limit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and could you remind me, and do we have paybacks on these, because that might inform which way we want to go.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: You have paybacks on some, and I can get you -- I can bring -- When we develop this language, I can bring you a list of those that you do and -- Those that you do have payback, and the rest wouldn't, and so I can get you that list when we bring the language back.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry, then Jimmy.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think -- I mean, we definitely do for gag, and I'm pretty sure we do for most of the species that are under rebuilding, and so that would be, in this list, if we can go back to it real quick, and that would be red porgy, red grouper, and that's it, right?

I had a similar question to Charlie, which is, excluding those species that are under rebuilding, and I know it was in the earlier document yesterday, and I'm sorry that I don't remember, but there are credits, if you will, but I think those credits go to the following season, and not to the following fishing year, and is that correct?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay. Sorry, and, for the record, Mike said yes. I just want to ask, and are you allowed, under Magnuson, if you are not in a rebuilding plan, to credit the following fishing year?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: That would be carryover. That would be like carryover from one year to another, which you can do, but you would have to change accountability measures for that species in order to have it eligible for carryover. That's something that you all set up in your ABC control rule, and that would be tied to the ABC, and, in order to have carryover, you also have to have payback, and like that's one of the requirements that was there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and I'm in agreement with what's been said on -- You know, the in-season adjustments are just too difficult to pull off. We're going to be much better off to make the changes to trip limits for the next season, based on what we learned from what we just did. I mean, I'm more in favor of that, for sure.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. Mike, just from a clarification standpoint, the next season, in a split fishery like vermilion -- If there is quota left on the table for season one of vermilion in 2027, that is going to roll to 2028 season one, correct, or is it going to go from season one to season two?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: It go it goes from season one to season two. What we were discussing as far as that Option 2, that post-season step-up, what we were discussing for that is that, if there was a deficit in season one, that would lead to a trip limit increase, and then the trip limit increase would occur in season one of the next year, but, as far as the ACL amount, the ACL amount would roll over into the following -- Into season two, and season two does not roll over into anything else. It's only one into two.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that clarification, and so we're coming close to the end of our time here. We've had some good discussion, and maybe, when the subcommittee comes back, we'll come back -- Think about what we've discussed here, and we'll come back to Action 3 and think about what we want.

It seems like we're leaning towards not making changes in-season, and that we're leaning towards something the following year, and so post-season changes, but we need to think about some of these other questions, including what species, do we need to change accountability measures, paybacks, those types of things, in order to accommodate some of these options, and so just be thinking about that. All right. Anything else before we conclude the subcommittee this morning? All right. We'll go ahead and conclude the subcommittee. Thank you, Madam Chair, for this extra time, and I'll pass it uh back to you.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Jessica, and I think we have -- We're going to try to build in some time to reconvene before the Snapper Grouper Committee meets, like maybe for an hour, and so we'll look at that, and so that will be after Council I, and then we'll go back to the subcommittee, and then back to the Snapper Grouper, and so if everybody is good with that. We'll go ahead and take a five-minute break, or we'll do fifteen, just to get everything transferred back. Okay.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to reconvene the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee, and so we are back in Action 3, and this is the -- We left off on a discussion about trying to have some language where we would give NMFS the authority to annually adjust commercial trip limits. We're not talking about in-season, although that's the preferred, but we're not talking about that anymore, just because we think it's going to be too complex, and so I believe that this is post-season, and so the highlighted language there is what has been drafted thus far, and I'm going to turn it over to Mike to go through that language.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, and thank you to Karla, and she's listening in. She went and pulled together a bunch of different examples from around the country from different FMPs that we kind of picked language from to try to put this together, and so this is kind of what we've come up with initially, and you all can take a look at it and edit it as you need to.

We have, kind of in the first clause, that this alternative would provide the agency with the authority to adjust commercial trip limits for the species that you've highlighted in the previous action, and this is a potential decision point. If you wanted to shorten or widen the range of percentage that you that you would want, we can make alternatives with different percentages, or something of that sort, but 25 percent is kind of what was thrown out, and so that's what we initially put in here.

The trip limit adjustments, they would correspond to that fishing season, and so, in the case of a split season, if you're in season one, the trip limit increase would happen only in season one, if there were -- If that determination were made, and so then kind of the process of the agency filing for public notification.

One thing that we're trying to still work a bit on the wording for is the adjusted trip limit would remain would remain in effect for that entire season, or the fishing year, unless the sector is closed, but the point being that it's not going to go up and down within that season that it's in place, and like, once the agency announces this is the trip limit for this year, or season one vermilion snapper, then that's the trip limit until the fishery is closed, if the if the ACL is met.

Then just kind of a -- We saw, in I think it was HMS for sharks and tuna, that there was a section that noted some of the considerations that would go into the decision-making for the agency, and so, if you all wanted to have any specific items that you wanted to be weighed in this decision, then that's a place where we can kind of put this bulleted list. We started it, you know, kind of in the lines of the catch rates, and how they -- How the catch that year was caught relative to the ACL.

If there's some type of like weird factor that happened in a given year that you all are aware of, or that the fishermen are aware of, that there's some you know, weather event or something like that that should be factored into this decision, that's kind of what we were trying to get at with this characterization of any temporary variations in fishing behavior, or, if there are any other considerations that you want to overtly put out there that should be weighed in this decision, then that's this isn't necessarily an all-encompassing list. It's a, you know, including, but not limited to, type of list, and that's the intent of it.

This is what's here. Some processes have included a council meeting within that actual process in which the agency brings it to a council meeting before it goes into -- Before it goes into action, and I, you know, am posing that question for the subcommittee, if you all want that written in here, and I guess a potential pro is that there is that communication that happens at the council meeting. The con of that with this group of species is, if we scroll down here, there's a lot of differences in the start times. We have multiple, you know, split seasons that are in there, and so there would be a lot of factors there that would kind of have discontinuous type of scheduling.

That's up to -- That's not a requirement or anything. Some processes use it, and some processes don't, and so it's a matter of what you all want involved in your process, but that is what we have to put out. This is a table, and that's not in your document, that we put together, and so we can leave it on the screen as you need it, but, yes, as you want your discussion, feel free to let us know what you want out of this action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in terms of process, I would advise that -- I mean, just keep in mind that most of what we do in-season, in terms of accountability measures, or what National Marine Fisheries Service publishes and calls a temporary action, is something that we waive the prior notice and opportunity for public comment on, right, and we rely heavily on what's called an -- Well, the Administrative Procedure Act has three grounds, good cause, for waiving prior notice and public comment.

That is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest. We rely heavily on the unnecessary prong in the Southeast, because we outline very specifically what is going to happen. If you catch 500 pounds, NMFS is going to file the notice and close the fishery, or, if you catch, you know, a certain amount, NMFS is going to do this and change the trip limit. There's no discretion in that. It's already spelled out in the regulations exactly what's going to happen. Arguably, that that temporary rule is just a notice announcing factual information that has triggered the requirements that are already in the regulations.

When you stray beyond that, and you start providing discretion to the Regional Administrator, you add the process where the Regional Administrator comes back to the council, and there's discretion, and there's decision-making there. You haven't spelled out what is going to happen specifically in the Federal Register, and you don't have that unnecessary argument.

There are other prongs you can rely on to waive prior notice and opportunity for public comment, but, the more discretion you build in, the harder it is to do that, and I just want you to be aware of it, that, if you build in a lot of this discretion, so that the Regional Administrator can make these decisions, the Regional Administrator may have to publish a proposed rule in order to accomplish that. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to go to the committee, and so we pulled the draft language back up, and so a couple of points. One point that we brought up, that's there in the first paragraph, and so it includes the species that we talked about earlier, which was the direction that we gave to staff, and it also includes the 25 percent higher or lower, and so do we want alternatives where you do something higher or lower than 25 percent, and so maybe let's start with those species and that 25 percent. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm comfortable with the 25 percent. Personally, I would like to use some kind of wording of like, for example, if you look at vermilion snapper, if we chose 1,500 pounds, and 25 percent on top of that would be an additional 375 pounds, which gives you a total of 1,875, and the reason I went through that math exercise is thinking about what that looks like when you're on the boat, and I --

Personally, and I don't know what you guys think, but we like to measure things in terms of boxes, and three-quarters of a box is -- It's hard to make that judgment call, and so I wonder if we could say 25 percent or the closest 100-pound increment to that, because a box is 100 pounds. It's just much easier to judge whether or not -- Because, you know, we don't have scales out there.

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

MR. STRELCHECK: First, in terms of Shep's point, so we're still having a lot of discussion around this, and I'm not fully prepared, I think, to lay out some other ideas. We've actually started working on our own draft, that I wanted to share with Mike, but, obviously, we've only been out of the subcommittee since this morning.

With that said, I, obviously, don't want to go to proposed rule and final rulemaking. That defeats the purpose of this. We want to come up with an efficient process, and some of the things that we were at least contemplating is, okay, well, what is a trigger, and like, if you don't harvest a certain percentage of the quota the prior year, then it automatically triggers evaluation of the trip limit, and I like the idea of coming to the council and having a conversation over, well, then what's the adjustment going to be. The question becomes how much discretion is there, and what does that open us up to in terms of process issues.

We were looking at it from a standpoint of kind of the trip limits that we talked about during subcommittee, and providing a maximum bound, right, and so the Regional Administrator be granted authority to increase the trip limit up to whatever that poundage is, and it would have to be species-specific, and then there would be authority within that range to make some adjustments, after consultation with the council, knowing that the final decision still rests with the Fisheries Service.

I think the big question is, if we're going to -- If we're able to do that, and specify this range, and we can try to work on this language and share it, you know, later this week, is where it becomes more definitive from a standpoint of the actual rulemaking, so that we can avoid these discretionary provisions, and we can go to essentially temporary rulemaking and publish it without having to do proposed and final rulemaking, and so those are just some of the thoughts.

In terms of like the details down there, I think those are fine for the council amendment. I certainly wouldn't want to codify all that, because those are things that I think are decision points with ultimately looking at changes in trip limits, but certainly are factors that we would be considering regardless.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I would certainly welcome seeing that, and, again, if we were to do this in December, should there be a cold-water event in the summer that really slowed production down, then we could talk about that as an extenuating circumstance on what we would suggest the following, you know, year to be, or something. Again, we can reiterate we're seeking to get our ACL, but still stretch -- Use the trip limits to stretch it out for as much of the year as possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and I was having a discussion with staff, and so it seems like maybe we want to get the language in there that Andy's team is working on before we make a lot of changes here, and before we have a lot of discussion and get down a rabbit hole, and so we're thinking, unless you guys have anything else to say, to add right now, that maybe we pause and get that up, get the rest of the language in, and maybe we can come back to this, and we were just debating about when we could come back to it.

It might be Friday by the time we get all that language incorporated and can look at this again, and so, with that, if you guys are okay, I think we're good to go to the next action, Action 4, where we talked about removal of that action, but I'm going to pass it back to Mike, so he can talk a little bit about that action. It seems like we don't want it, but just so that he can go over it and we can make sure we want this removed.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I think we hit this a little bit earlier. This is the step-down action, and one of the things that we ran into when trying to come up with an example for step-downs is we had very few species that were hitting the ACL and also had relatively high trip limits. The highest one that we saw was golden tilefish hook-and-line, at 500, but the others were relatively small trip limits, that it may not be very beneficial or worthwhile for the fishery to fish at any type of lower level. I guess here, for this action, the question to the subcommittee is do you all still want any consideration of step-downs in this amendment, or just leave it to step-ups and consider the process kind of as we're trying to define with the agency right now?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm looking around the room, and so I see heads nodding yes, but what are you saying yes to? Are you saying, yes, we are removing Action 4, because we've selected different paths? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I would suggest we remove Action 4.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Charlie. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I'm the same thing. Remove Action 4. I kind of like what we're going with, the discussion with the Regional Administrator and the other things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Just looking to make sure. Okay, and I see thumbs-up. Everybody seems to be in agreement on that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess slightly in the -- This is slightly going back to Action 3, but in the sense of is it the subcommittee's intention at this point -- We're looking at developing the language of Regional Administrator flexibility, and you're not looking at those finite step-ups that were developed in the document thus far, and is that correct? I'm seeing heads nodding yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Everybody seems to be nodding yes.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so Actions 3 and 4, as they were developed in this document being pulled out, and then we're kind of working to replace those with another action that would -- That we would work with the agency on developing that language for that flexible type of adjustment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and I see heads nodding yes. Kerry, did you have a question?

MS. MARHEFKA: About this, I agree that these need to come out, and so we can bury that. I think I'm going back to the Regional Administrator discussion, and, right now, we only have in there the ability to increase the trip limit, if I'm correct, or we have both? Sorry. Then great. I'm happy. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so now we're going to go to the potential amendment timeline, and think about the discussions that we had here, but I'll let Mike walk through that.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and this may be -- Actually, now that I actually have it in front of me, this may be more of a discussion after you all have talked and seen the updated language, and it's more making sure that you're still comfortable moving forward with a draft amendment for public hearings in June, but, if that's the case, then maybe look at that language, and we might check-in after that.

I did want to, before we kind of leave the subcommittee -- We normally would have a subcommittee report that would be the first action item for the Snapper Grouper Committee. Given that we are, you know, kind of sporadically having this meeting scattered about, would it be okay with the subcommittee if we put that report together kind of in preparation for Friday, for that final discussion, and so that would go to Full Council, rather than going specifically to the Snapper Grouper Committee, and I'm seeing heads nodding, and so I will go -- Go ahead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: No, and that would be great. I had just talked to John and Chip about all that, and I would give opportunity to the Full Council to also weigh-in on anything, because we're kind of missing that point, missing that in the morning, because you won't have your committee report ready, and so, when you put it off until Friday, that will be the opportunity for the folks that aren't on the subcommittee to also comment on it, if that's okay with everybody. Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so we'll revisit this after we see language, but, as of right now, it seems like, based on the discussion that we've had as we've met these first two days, that we are trying to keep this on track for considering in June approval of the document for public hearings, because we talked about some other things that would slow this down, and it seemed like that we were trying to keep this on a track that we would approve for public hearing at the June meeting, and it looks like people are nodding yes. Okay. All right. Is there any other business to come before the commercial subcommittee? All right. Seeing none, we'll adjourn the commercial subcommittee.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 3, 2026.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
April 2, 2026

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✓ Amy	Dukes		SC DNR Marine Resources Division
✓ Judy	Helmey		
✓ Francis (Dewey)	Hemilright		
James	Hull	Jr.	
✓ Kerry	Marhefka		
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Tom	Roller		
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MON 3/2/2024

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✓ Trish Murphey

✓ Amy Dukes

✓ Andy Strelcheck

✓ James Hull, Jr.

✓ Charlie Phillips

✓ Dewey Hemilright

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Dr. Clay Poreh

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Tue ~~MON~~ 3/3/2026
 SG Sub-Comm: Hep

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✓ Trish	Murphey		NC Division of Marine Fisheries
✓ Jessica	McCawley		Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
✓ Robert	Beal		Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
✓ Carolyn	Belcher		GA DNR Coastal Resources Division
Gary	Borland		
✓ Amy	Dukes		SC DNR Marine Resources Division
✓ Judy	Helmey		
✓ Francis (Dewey)	Hemilright		
✓ James	Hull	Jr.	
✓ Kerry	Marhefka		
Tom	Pease		Seventh Coast Guard District
✓ Charlie	Phillips		
✓ Tom	Roller		
✓ Robert	Spottswood	Jr.	
✓ Andy	Strelcheck		NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region
Deirdre	Warner-Kramer		Office of Marine Conservation OES / OMC
TBD	TBD		U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Representative

Rick DeVictor
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 Kathy Knowlton
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March 2026 Council

Attendee Report: Meeting

Report Generated:

03/09/2026 07:29 AM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
535-165-571	03/02/2026 01:25 PM EST	3 hours 57 minutes	119

Staff Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Not applicable for staff	Council	South Atlantic

Attendee Details

Last Name	First Name
Bajema	Jordan
Barile	Peter
Bernier	Quinn
Bianchi	Alan
Brouwer	Myra
Bubley	Walter
Bunting	Matthew
Byrd	Julia
Curtis	Judd
DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
DeVictor	Rick
Degan	Jacqui
DiJohnson	Alex
Dukes	Amy
Emory	Meaghan
Farnell	Paula
Foor	Brandon
Foss	Kristin
Gibson	Daniel
Gore	Karla
HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Helmey	Judy
Hildreth	Delaine
Iberle	Allie
Jones	John
Kennedy	Todd
Kersting	Anne
Klasnick	01Kelly
Knowlton	Kathy

Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Leonard	Eddie
Levy	Mara
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	Kerry
Marquez	Johnny
McMahan	Trevor
Meehan	Sean
Mehta	Nikhil
Merrifield	Mike
Murphey	Trish
Newman	Thomas
Norcross	Jennifer
Package-Ward	Christina
Palmrose	Kristin
Pease	LT Tom
Phillips	Charlie
Records	David
Roller	Tom
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Smart	Tracey
Smillie	Nick
Spurgin	Kali
Starling	Savannah
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Stephenson	Sarah
Sweetman	CJ
Talia	Jenna
Thomas	Michael
Thomas	Suzanna
Vara	Mary
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Mick
White	Geoff
Whitmer	Morgan
Whitten	Meredith
Wolfe	Jordan
colby	barrett
collier	chip
gloeckner	david

gwin	earl sonny
marinko	jeff
plessett	eric
sandorf	scott
zales	bob
Bailey	Adam
Bogdan	Jennifer
Brewster-Geisz	Karyl
Carruthers	Tom
Clawson	Jessica
Coffill-Rivera	Manuel
Cox	Jack
DuBeck	Guy
Dubniczki	Hayden
Fango	Ginamel
Feldman	Lindsey
Finch	Margaret
Franco	Dawn
Gooding	Elizabeth
Hechanova	Riza
Howell	Scott
Hurff	Kieley
Kellison	Todd
Klibansky	Lara
Leach	Scott
Lee	Max
M Tornabene	Essence
Mackesey	Brendan
Mackesey	Brendan
Merck	Nicole
Merrifield	Jeanna
Neer	Julie
Noay	Jamiah
Peterson	Cassidy
Ramsay	Chloe
STARKS	CAITLIN
Sedberry	George
Seeley	Matthew
Stanley	Sydney
Turley	Brendan
Wamer	David
Westwood	W
Williams	Travis
Williams	Erik

Wiseman
Withers

Alyssa
Meg

March 2026 Council

Attendee Report: Meeting

Report Generated:

03/09/2026 07:33 AM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
535-165-571	03/03/2026 07:48 AM EST	9 hours 41 minutes	183

Staff Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Not applicable for staff	Council	South Atlantic

Attendee Details

Last Name	First Name
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Atkinson	Seth
Bailey	Adam
Bajema	Jordan
Barbieri	Luiz
Barger	Jeff
Barile	Peter
Barrows	Katline
Beal	Bob
Bernier	Quinn
Blough	Heather
Bogdan	Jennifer
Bonura	Vincent
Brantley	William
Brewster-Geisz	Karyl
Brogan (Oceana)	Gib
Brouwer	Myra
Bruger	Catherine
Bublely	Walter
Bunting	Matthew
Byrd	Julia
Califf	Julie
Carter	David
Cerny-Chipman	Elizabeth
Clawson	Jessica
Cox	Jack
Crosson	Scott
Crowe	Stacie
Cudney	Jennifer

Curtis	Judd
Dancy	Kiley
DeVictor	Rick
Degan	Jacqui
DiJohnson	Alex
Dingle	Julie
DuBeck	Guy
Dubniczki	Hayden
Dukes	Amy
Dunn	Russell
Dyar	Ben
Farnell	Paula
Feldman	Lindsey
Flowers	Henry
Floyd	Brad
Foor	Brandon
Foss	Kristin
Franco	Dawn
Gahm	Meghan
Garcia Moliner	Graciela
Gibson	Daniel
Gooding	Elizabeth
Gore	Karla
Gray	Alisha
Griner	Robert
Guyas	Martha
HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Hadley	John
Hallas	Sara
Hartig	Ben
Helmey	Judy
Hildreth	Delaine
Howell	Scott
Hull	Jimmy
Hurff	Kieley
Iberle	Allie
Iverson	Kim
Kennedy	Todd
Keppler	Blaik
Kersting	Anne
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy

Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Lee	Max
Leonard	Eddie
Levy	Mara
Locke	Charles
Lopez-Mercer	Maria
Mackesey	Brendan
Mackesey	Brendan
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	Kerry
McMullen	Ryan
Meehan	Sean
Mehta	Nikhil
Merck	Nicole
Merrifield	Jeanna
Miranda	David
Morrison	Wendy
Muffley	Brandon
Murphey	Trish
Murphy	Michael
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
Norcross	Jennifer
Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Package-Ward	Christina
Palmrose	Kristin
Pease	LT Tom
Phillips	Charlie
Prada	Martha
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reed	Steven
Reichert	Marcel
Richard	Andrew
Robbins	Megan
Roller	Tom
S	Emma
SAWICKI	KIM
STARKS	CAITLIN
Schmidtke	Michael
Seward	McLean

Shervanick	Kara
Silvas	Rachael
Smart	Tracey
Smillie	Nick
Snyder	Dave
Spratt	Paige
Spurgin	Kali
Starling	Savannah
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Stephenson	Sarah
Sweetman	CJ
Talia	Jenna
Thomas	Michael
Thomas	Suzanna
Turley	Brendan
Vara	Mary
Vecchio	Julie
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Mick
Walter	John
Wamer	David
White	Geoff
Whitmer	Morgan
Williams	Travis
Wilms	Olivia
Withers	Meg
Wolfe	Jordan
colby	barrett
collier	chip
elder	todd
fredieu	brian
gloeckner	david
gwin	earl sonny
marinko	jeff
plessett	eric
poholek	ariel
sandorf	scott
zales	bob
Bianchi	Alan
Brantley	William
Carruthers	Tom
Coffill-Rivera	Manuel

DeFilippi Simpson
Emory
Fango
Finch
Hechanova
Jones
Kellison
Leach
M Tornabene
Marquez
McMahan
Merrifield
Noay
Peterson
Reynolds
Sedberry
Seeley
Stanley
Westwood
Whitten
Williams
Wiseman

Julie
Meaghan
Ginamel
Margaret
Riza
John
Todd
Scott
Essence
Johnny
Trevor
Mike
Jamiah
Cassidy
Kris
George
Matthew
Sydney
W
Meredith
Erik
Alyssa