

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SNAPPER GROUPER COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Hilton Garden Inn Outer Banks/Kitty Hawk
Kitty Hawk, North Carolina
December 8, 2025

Transcript

Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair
Amy W. Dukes
Dewey Hemilright

James G. Hull, Jr.
Trish Murphey
Charlie Phillips

Council Members

Dr. Carolyn Belcher
Gary Borland
Judy Helmey

Tom Roller
Robert Beal

Council Staff

John Carmichael
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Chip Collier
Julia Byrd
Dr. Judd Curtis
John Hadley
Kathleen Howington
Allie Iberle
Kim Iverson

Kelly Klasnick
Emily Ott
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Rachael Silvas
Nicholas Smillie
Suzanna Thomas
Christina Curtis

Attendees and Invited Participants

Rick DeVictor
Dr. Clay Porch
Sonny Gwin
Dakus Geeslin
Shepherd Grimes

Kristen Foss
Kathy Knowlton
Miles Dover
Monica Smit-Brunello

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Hilton Garden Inn Outer Banks/Kitty Hawk, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on Monday, December 8, 2025, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We're going to get going. All right. We are meeting in the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee this morning. The members of the committee are myself, Kerry, Amy, Jimmy, Trish, Charlie, Andy, and Dewey. All right, and so the first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any modifications to the agenda? All right. Seeing none, any objection to approval of the agenda? All right. I don't see any. Good to go on approval of the agenda.

Any substantive modifications to the minutes from September for the subcommittee? Any -- I don't see any hands on that. Any objection to approval of the minutes? All right. Seeing no objections, the minutes are approved. With that, are there any known items of other business that we want to talk about, and we'll get those on the list? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry, and I probably should have said that under the agenda part, and I'm settling in, but I have one item relating to the sale thing we've talked about, the day of the week situation, for Other Business, please.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I have that on the list. Any other items that people know of at this point? Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm sorry, and I should have said something earlier. Because Andy is not here. I think he has a proxy with Heather Blough, and she's online.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, thank you. I'm hoping that somebody on staff is watching for hands online. Okay. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I've got one, asking about, when we get into the discussion of the two-for-one permit, has anybody had any thought process with the Snapper Grouper 2, and anything, a possibility of doing that, or looking at that, maybe to --- For that to continue, without terming out or something like that, for use, if that makes sense?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure, and let's talk about that when we dive into the documents. Does that sound good? Okay. Anything else that people know of under Other Business? It's okay if we come back to this. All right. With that -- All right. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Mike, and he's going to dive into Amendment 60.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, and hello, subcommittee members. We're coming back to Amendment 60. Just to give a brief introduction, Amendment 60 is addressing several different items related to the commercial sector. The two major objectives that you identified for this amendment were to address commercial SG 1 permit issues, and then, two, to make regulatory changes that would increase trip efficiency for the commercial sector.

We've conducted scoping, and you can see a summary of the scoping comments within the September 2025 discussion document. There's a link to that in this meeting's discussion document.

and so, at the last meeting, you all reviewed those comments, and you provided some initial direction to staff, as far as actions and alternatives that would be considered in this amendment.

Just giving an update on what happened since that meeting, and so, as many of you are aware, as you are aware, the government shut down in between September and December, and our interdisciplinary planning team, IPT, that is comprised of several members of the federal government workers, and so our IPT was not able to meet in between September and December, between that shutdown and the other meetings that the council had going on in that timeframe.

After the federal workers were back to work, I did at least meet with my co-lead, Karla Gore, so that we could discuss what are some of the outstanding discussions that you all have, and that you all will need to address in this amendment, so that we can move it forward and make some progress at this meeting, but the way that that affects what is included in your document is there will be some items where we just need more time for the IPT to actually get some federal workers, some Regional Office eyes, on some of the language that's being used.

You'll see that, for example, in Action 1 and Action 4. We have an idea of what you want, what you're looking for. We just need the correct wording, and we need a little bit more time to get the correct wording in place before we can bring you formalized alternatives related to that, and so we are in the process of scheduling our IPT meeting for after this meeting. We are planning to do that in early January, and so we should be able to make a little bit more progress in between now and March than we were able to between September and December.

That said, we do have several discussion questions for you to be able to address during this meeting, and so the objectives for this meeting are to take a look at the initial actions that have been developed, as they are developed to this point, identify any necessary information that you all still need to be able to discuss some of these items, and then also address some of the discussion points that are here as you are able to today.

Then, finally, we will take a look at the amendment timeline. After you all have gone through today, and made whatever progress you will today, we can kind of evaluate if you think that you're in a position where a draft amendment in March, as originally scheduled, is the best path forward, or if you want to make any changes to the timeline.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry, and I didn't necessarily mean right then, but I am going to hop in, and it's frustrating. One of the things I'm concerned about is my understanding, and my civics is not great, but I'm pretty sure that what happened in November was just another continuing resolution, which means that -- Given the state of the world, there's probably not an outside chance that there will be another shutdown, and I'm wondering, and this may not be the appropriate venue for this discussion, but I'm going to just put it in everyone's minds here, that, also, in light of what we're going to talk about later with the innovation plan and how this council, this body, wants to take a little more risk.

I think what I would like to see in the future is, if the IPT team can't meet, then we just come up with what we need to come up with, and not rely on them with this wording. There was a time that happened, many, many years ago, and I know things have changed, but I don't think we can

stop forward progress every time they stop, and, you know, my frustration is because I want this amendment to go through so badly, and I feel like it's not on the front burner, and so I would just like that to be in people's minds for this week. Is there a way that we can mitigate some of the impacts when the government is shut down, and have, you know, staff say that we're just going to write this, and not rely on the input of the IPT team?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and, to an extent, there was a level of that. A lot of what -- I mean, this meeting was always scheduled to be an in-between, a discussion-oriented meeting to address some of these issues ahead of a draft amendment being developed, and you all review a draft amendment in March. That was always the plan for this amendment.

To an extent, it's possible to, you know, plan ahead and try to adjust for those things. That's why we're shooting to have this IPT meeting in early January, rather than bumping up against a potential another shutdown that would occur, I believe, like January -- The end of January is when that resolution expires, if I remember correctly, but some of this information we do actually need federal involvement with, because it's outside of the council staff realm.

For example, in terms of the permit wording, we really do need the Permits Office to -- To, you know, be able to check in with them and say is this -- You know, is the thing that we are trying, that the council is trying, to accomplish through this action, is this, you know, workable within the system that the Permits Office is running, and what boxes need to be checked from there, and to be able to accomplish that.

You know, we have the big goal. Like I understand the big goal that you all have laid out for the two-for-one, and for the revision of that, but I also know that there's going to be a process that we have to work with the Permits Office in order to get through that process, and we want to make sure that there is appropriate wording in the amendment, that they have what they need to do that work on their end, and that's something that council staff can only go so far with. We really need that input from folks at the Regional Office to get that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let's go to John first, and then to Jimmy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I just came over, and I want to, you know, comment on this, and I think we, as a council, we don't stop working during the shutdowns, but I think where the issue comes in is, as Mike was saying, there's some information that we don't necessarily have access to. To the extent that we have access, and we can get the information, and we have the time and resources, we can continue to do analyses and such, and we certainly do.

Sometimes we get into as the IPTs have -- You know, there's a lot of things going on at one time. We have some social and economic staff, and they have social and economic staff, and there's been a dividing up of who does what, and, when the shutdowns happen, they don't ours, and our people can be redirected to the things of the most priority to us, but, you know, often we don't have the ability to step in and do everything that we were relying on.

You know, I think the intent is there, and I think we should, in light of where we are with the guidance from the agency nationally, from what we've heard at the CCC, and continue to hear

from, you know, the national leadership about getting the job done with a smaller, more efficient agency, you know, with fewer resources going forward, then I do think we need to embrace the spirit of what Kerry was saying and sometimes, you know, as a council, say, well, maybe we could get information, but this is what we have now, and you can use your judgment, I think, in most cases, with, you know, what you have now.

I think we're going to hear a couple of things during this week on some amendments that are priorities, that we really hope to approve at this meeting, that might come down to you deciding do you move forward with what you have now, or do you wait and get more information, and, you know, I think it's a gray area, because Shep will always tell us, well, you can't wait for some information you may get in the future, but, you know, where is sort of the line on that, where, well, maybe it's there, and it hasn't been analyzed, and are we going to get it analyzed, and is it worth waiting. You know, I think you're going to have to come to grips with some of that, but I think the intent of what you're saying is really important.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, to the discussion of our goal to eliminate the two-for-one policy, I mean, there's -- If you look at outstanding information needed in the presentation, I mean, we need to be -- If the Permits Office is operational, we need to ask for this information now, because to go forward, I mean, we need to know how many people have say purchased a permit, and are trying to obtain another one, because we're still under the old system, and, once we implement this, you know, what happens, and how many permits are in that situation? Where are they at in the old process when the new process comes in, and so there's lots of information we need, and I think that we need to ask it now, if they're operational, if we can get this information to go forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree that we need to ask it now, but I'm kind of with Kerry about -- Maybe we talk about this more during the workplan discussion at the end of the week, but how the council will continue to do their business if the government is shut down again. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and, just in case it wasn't clear, that was not a critique of what our staff was doing, or how you were spending your time during the shutdown. It was more to empower our staff, to say, you know, hopefully, and I'm not speaking for everyone, but that this body empowers you to say, well, we're just going to push forward and do the very best we can, because that's the attitude we're taking. It was not -- Please do not think it was a critique. It was meant to be an empowerment.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and so, jumping into the actions, first addressing the two-for-one policy, ahis is kind of draft language, and, as I kind of pointed out, with the inability for the IPT to meet, that is where we do a lot of the wordsmithing, and so there will be wordsmithing that comes when the IPT is able to get together, and we can do some of that, to make sure that it's the exact wording that is necessary for this action,

Just taking a look at the alternatives, any feedback that you all have on the range that's being considered, and my understanding, from the previous meetings and developing these, is, instead of having a two-for-one system, if you're -- If somebody is acquiring a permit, it would be a one-

to-one transfer. They acquire the permit, and they're able to exchange their acquired permit for one new permit. That's what would be looked at within this alternative.

You all have previously discussed that you weren't interested, at this time, of putting any add-ons in there, as far as other requirements that you would have associated with being able to get a different permit, and so one of the questions, one of the outstanding, you know, council discussion questions, that we will need to have some information on are -- I guess this is the big question, is what are the council's goals for the commercial sector in the absence of the two-for-one policy, and kind of narrowing down a little bit more.

How will the number of permits that remain in the fishery be determined, and, you know, process-wise, do we need to announce this type of thing with a control date, and we were thinking along the lines of if there are permit holders who have acquired, you know, one permit right now, and they're in the process of getting their second, but they have one that they're not using, and this process goes into place, and they would be able to, I guess, activate that single one, but that second one, that they didn't have -- If that's not quite into place, how do we set what the number of permits would be moving after this, in light of potential transitions that happen in that time?

One of the ways that can be used to kind of set that process is to say, you know, as of this date, the number of permits that are active, that's the number of permits moving forward, but we would need some information on either a number that you all are looking to set or a date at which you're looking to say this is the number of permits that will be in place moving forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Mike. That's lots of stuff to think about there, but, from my mind, when we implement the new -- We get rid of the two-for-one, and, whatever amount of permits are there, that's the amount of permits we're going to have. I mean, so you've eliminated -- The two-for-one was to reduce the permits, and so, at that point, the reduction stops, because we've eliminated -- We've stopped it at that point, and so the amount of permits -- Whether you've got one permit, and you were trying to find another one, you have -- That permit still exists. You have it. It's in the system, and you can then do what you want with it at that point. That would be the way I would like to see it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got lots of hands going up. I've got Monica online, and then I have Dewey, and then Charlie.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Hi, and good morning. It's nice to hear you all again. Due to weather-related travels and disasters yesterday for Shep, I'll be covering today's council meeting, and, just to let you know, Mike, you would not need to announce any of this with a control date. We use a control date to let the public know about certain restrictions that we're putting in place, in terms of usually related to permits, and so I don't think there's any necessity to use a control date here. We can figure out other mechanisms for letting the public know of what you're doing, but you wouldn't need a control date.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. I have Dewey, and then Charlie.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: In reading this, it says you have one year from your purchase of a single permit to find a second permit, and I believe that this process to do away with the two-for-one is going to take longer than a year for the implementation, and so I don't want somebody to speculate now, because it's going to take longer, and so I think that -- I don't know a timeframe to put less than a year from now that you're not guaranteed use -- I don't know the language I'm trying to say, but the heads-up part, and you have a year right now to find a second permit.

Once you have something, you're given a date, but it's going to take longer than that for this process to play out, no doubt, and so what happens in the meantime, so nobody goes out there, six months from now and buys a permit, and they only have a year from that six months, but yet we're not going to be finished with the process until longer, and so I need help in how to reduce that speculation, so that everybody is noted.

It could be something that goes out to all the five-hundred-and-some permits that are active, active meaning -- Not active fishing, but active, and giving a heads-up about this. I don't want nobody to be, you know, said, well, I didn't know, and something like that, but, anytime you're doing a -- I call it, you know, a pretty -- It costs a lot of money for a single, that I'm sure somebody is going to do their homework, I would think, but how do we cover ourselves, and also the public, fishing public, to say, hey, I've been given a heads-up that we know this is going to take longer than a year to fulfill what we want done, and so, in the meantime, you better not go buy a permit if you don't think it's going to be done in that time to have a second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dewey, and Mike captured some of that language. I guess I would say, you know, back to the group here, what is in the announcement? Like what are we telling people, to like be on the lookout, and we might be making changes to this, and so I guess just think about that, and like what are we telling people, because I think it's kind of letting them know that we're working on this. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and maybe something like the council is in the process of nullifying the two-for-one permit, and we're doing away with it, and through that, through this period, and through the council process, it's going to take some time, but, at the same time, you only have a year, if you purchase a single permit, to look for a second one, and I'm not good with the language, but I'm just -- I know what the intent is.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dewey. All right. I have Charlie, and then Jessica Stephen.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and Dewey pretty much nailed what I was thinking about. We can't -- You know, we're basically -- We're doing status quo until we change it, and so we can't just say, if somebody buys a single permit in six months, because it's not -- We don't have a determined timeline on when it's going to get through, and so I can't imagine somebody buying a permit that doesn't already have the second one lined up.

That would be really bad business, and so just letting them know that we're moving that way, but, still, I wouldn't spend \$50,000, or whatever the number is, on a permit that I might lose because I couldn't find a second permit, but, yes, let them know that we're going that way, because more than likely it's going to change the value of the permit, and so it would be good for the permit holders to know there's going to be some changes, but I -- We, obviously, can't just put that on

hold, because it's already in the regs. We've got to do what the regs say, but, yes, a notice, but I don't know that we can really do anything to protect somebody if they might -- From bad decisions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Jessica Stephen.

DR. STEPHEN: Can you guys hear me?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

DR. STEPHEN: So I just wanted to clarify, and so, currently, with the two-for-one, if you are buying a single permit that is not registered in our permitting system at all, we only register when you have both permits and initiate the transfer, and so any kind of buying of a permit individually is only between those two business holders, and not recognized by the agency, and the permit remains in the name of the person who had it before. I don't know if that helps to kind of change the context of this conversation, but there is no way currently to buy one permit and then wait for the other one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry, is it to that?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Go ahead.

MS. MARHEFKA: Hi, Jessica. It's Kerry, and so what you're saying is the only time that you all register the sale, or the transfer of a permit, is when someone comes to you two permits in hand already, and that, if there are people out there that are telling us, well, we have one permit, but we can't find another one, those people then are not necessarily in danger of that one year, this one-year expiration, that we're worried about?

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, and that's correct, and so, if they found a permit, right, there's no way to transfer it without the second one, and so it's probably a business arrangement between them and the permit holder. In our system, it still remains as the original, or, you know, the current permit holder's permit. When this would go into play, they could then just immediately transfer that permit and not have to wait for that second permit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That's amazing. That actually clears things up. I do think it still may be worthwhile figuring out, with the agency if there can be a letter that goes, on the chance that people don't know that this is happening, but I think it should be very, very clear that -- It should say something like the council is considering, and not the council is doing, because, you know, seats change, votes change, and information comes to light, and so it just needs to be really clear that, you know, everything is speculative in this space right now. This is, unfortunately, the side effect of tackling this, and talking about this, is it creates a sort of speculative business environment for a little while, and hopefully that will lead to stability in the long run though.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thank you. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Sorry, and that was a mistake on my part. I should not have my hand up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Monica. Okay. Jimmy, then Kerry.

MR. HULL: Yes, and so this discussion is exactly what we have to be having, right, and so that information, that the permits remain in the name of -- No matter what private deal has been made, nothing changes until they come with two permits in the system, and so that -- Like you said, that clears up some concerns, and so that somebody is not really -- They may have a personal engagement with somebody that, you know, that permit I want, once I find the other one, and then I can get it transferred, but you can't really get it -- You know, so it's really not in the system, like in limbo someplace, and so it stays just -- So, once this is implemented, that's what you have.

Whatever the Permits Office has listed is what it's going to be ended up with, but individuals need to know that they don't need to be getting into these arrangements knowing that things are changing, and so that's where the -- We don't have to give a control date, by law, but we do need to give them this information that where we're headed and how -- I know that's where we're at, is we need to figure out the wording for that, and what to say.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got a list of hands here, but I'll let Mike jump in.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and so, listening to some of the discussion here, so there's been -- You know, kind of scoping is kind of a pre-announcement of these types of these actions, and so there's at least some public indication, but it sounds like you all would like something that's a bit more direct.

That being the case, that may be something that I guess might be best served for when this amendment is a bit further along, and the end -- You know, the end date is clearer in sight for when this would be done, so that you all can give that type of indication, but I guess I would -- I would throw that thought out of do you all want that type of announcement coming sooner, or do you want it coming later, or do you want it at multiple timeframes? How would you like to indicate that?

Then what I'm hearing from the discussion here is that it's not a set number of permits that you want to necessarily include, and it's more of the number of permits that are in existence on a specific date, and that would be the implementation date of this policy, when it goes into place, and that is -- Is that correct? I'm seeing nodding heads. Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, but we also have a list of hands, and so I'm going to go to the list of hands, and maybe you could address that as well, what Mike just said, and so I have Kerry, Charlie, and then Dewey.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and that's why I -- I raised my hand to make the point that I think that, one, early and often, as far as communication, and I don't think we should wait longer. We're talking about people making \$50,000 to \$100,000 business decisions, and, as much as we think, when that kind of money is at stake, people are paying attention, but this isn't the easiest process to pay attention to, and so early and often is how I feel about that.

I raised my hand initially to address the question about sort of the number, the target, the goal. It is something we've gotten in trouble with, with this two-for-one, because the body previous to us did not lay out when it was supposed to end, and so we don't want to do that to another council.

I think where it gets tricky is, in my mind, obviously, it's not about a number of permits. It's about -- One of the things that we've discussed as a council as a whole is this level of commercial effort that exists right now is what we feel is appropriate for where we are right now. We don't want to expand commercial effort, but we also want to stop it from shrinking, and so, in my mind, what we would say is it is the level of effort.

It is the number of permits that happens on implementation date, but maybe, between now and March, we all go away and think a little bit more about any guidance we would provide to the people that are here ten years from now, going what the heck were those people thinking, and, you know, when can we add more permits, and when can we not, and, in my mind, that is tied to some level of health of the stocks that we're fishing, and so I don't think we're going to solve that today, but I think that's something we should probably work on for our future selves.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Great comments. Charlie, then Dewey.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so, just kind of make sure that I'm clear in my head, right now, if somebody buys a single, and they don't have another single, and this is going to be say a year-and-a-half down the road, to keep that valid for a transfer, whoever the original owner is has to make sure that stays valid, renew it. If this goes through, and say, a year-and-a-half down the road, the original owner has renewed it, and then they can turn this permit in as a single, and it's renewed as a single.

The other way would be, if they don't want to wait that long, they buy another permit, and then they can get another single, or corporate, however they want to set it up, and so I'm just making sure I understand the exact click, click, click here, and so that makes sense. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's how I understood it as well. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I'll start the first one. The level of valid permits right now is how many there should be when this is finished, and the second thing should be we should be sending out two notifications, because I don't want nobody to misunderstand, or say I didn't hear, and maybe one by mail and one by email, in case they're saying, well, my email don't work, but, just to make sure, I would say two times, the first of the year and then middle way through, what we think is middle way through, something like that, and just to be clear. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Dewey, for capturing all that. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I think I'm going to actually ask this question again, because now I'm a little fuzzy, and I'm hoping Jessica is still listening and can weigh-in on the phone. If buying an SG 1 permit is not recognized in the federal system, then how is the federal system able to track if a new owner has one year from the date of expiration of the permit to acquire a second permit? If that could be explained, I think that would be helpful for me.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Jessica Stephen, are you still there?

DR. STEPHEN: Yes, I'm still here, and so I think I'm going to have to double-check with the permits staff on that, but I think it would be when they're submitting both of the permits that those agreements for the purchase would have that. I have to double-check if that's actually something that is used within our system, and so, if you give me a few moments, I'll check with them and get back to you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for looking into that. All right. I feel like we've answered all the outstanding questions, and had some good discussion, and so I'm going to turn it back to Mike, while Jessica is looking that up, so that we can continue moving through the document.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, and I just noted, within each of the actions, there are a couple sections for outstanding information needs. These are pieces of information that you all have requested, and that we're going to need to get in the development of this document. We don't necessarily have them today, but that's more or less a staff note, an indicator to you all that staff are aware that these are needs that we need to that we need to fulfill in developing this amendment.

There will be -- I believe there's a presentation later on within the council meeting about where the Permits Office stands on their system and being able to provide an up-to-date number of SG 1 permits, and so that will be something that you all can have a discussion about later on in the meeting, but, for now, we're going to move down to Action 2.

This one is going to be probably a bit more of a substantial discussion, and so this is the action that would establish a framework for dynamic trip limits that would vary throughout the season based on the track to catch and the time remaining in the season, and so this is the step-up or step-down action, and we kind of have a draft form of an alternative that we could use in Alternative 2.

There would need to be some discussion about the specific percentages, and that would be a potential place where we have several alternatives looking at different percentages of the ACL at which a step-down would be put into place, but there are a couple of discussion points that we wanted to get, from the subcommittee, some information, some more information, about what you're looking for out of this, in order to develop these alternatives.

First of all, we've compiled a table. You see Table 1 that has all of the species that have species-specific trip limits. That is the group of species that you all said you wanted to focus on for this action, and so you'll see it kind of slowly scrolling through. Within this table, you have the trip limit that is listed there, and you also have -- For the last three completed seasons, you have the percentage of the ACL that was caught, the commercial ACL that was caught, and, if there was any in-season closure, the in-season closure date that was is indicated there in parentheses below that percentage.

In looking through this table, the majority of species in the snapper grouper fishery for the commercial sector are not getting close to the ACL, such that a step-down would be of great benefit to the fishery in those aspects, and so we did want to come back and ask you all, and is a step-down the only thing that you want considered in this action?

There have been talks about some type of step-up format, if you want to have, you know, a framework that would step-up or step-down, and so just kind of getting a better idea of what you

all want out of this action would be a good indication, and noting some of the species where the ACL is being met have fairly low trip limits, and so stepping down -- For example, red snapper being one of them, and stepping down a seventy-five-pound trip limit, and you don't really have much further down to go with that, and so kind of taking into account the number of species that are approaching their trip limit and the trip limits that are associated with those species, whether there's any wiggle room to have a step-down that would have, you know, some type of viable extension of the season, that would make sense there, and seeing if there's any different direction that you all want to go with this action. I guess that's one point to make. There are several other discussion questions, but we can make that as the initial question and then hit some of these others after you all have had some discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I see hands going up online, as well as hands in the room, and, once again, what we're trying to answer right now is do we want to -- In addition to step-downs, do we want to do step-ups, and I think we do, and so I have Heather, and then Charlie, and then Kerry.

MS. BLOUGH: Hi, and good morning, everyone. Heather Blough here. I'm happy to be stepping in for Andy and Rick this morning. My hand was actually up for the last action.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think that's okay. Go ahead.

MS. BLOUGH: Okay, and I just wondered if the goal is to -- If one of the objectives might be to freeze the permits at the current level, would we also want to consider criteria, or trigger, for revisiting the number of permits if they fall below a certain level through attrition? That's something we do in the Gulf shrimp fishery, and so, if we start at the current level, and then, through attrition, you know, we get reductions, by 25 percent or whatever, in the Gulf shrimp fishery, we convene a panel of folks to take a look. We have a pool of permits set aside that we could redistribute to new permit holders under certain conditions, and I just wondered if that's something that the committee would be interested in us exploring.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it sounds good. Mike is capturing that information there on our list of bullets. Yes, and it sounds like a great idea. Back on the other action, I know Mike is still typing that, and so do we want to consider also a step-up, in addition to a step-down? Charlie, then Kerry.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, the step up would be like if we went from a thousand-pound trip limit on vermilion to 1,500, and I think that's mostly what we want to do. I don't know that we really want to do any step-downs, because we're not -- We've already -- I think, when we set these numbers, we pretty much -- I would think we probably had a pretty fleshed-out conversation on the minimum amount of say snowy grouper that we could catch on a trip and make it semi-viable, and so I don't know that we want to try to say, pink porgy or some other fish, or go down from fifteen fish to ten.

I think trying to keep it as clean and simple for the fishermen, and the managers, is going to be where we need to go, considering staff and effort, and I would like to keep it as simple as possible. I think it would be better for everybody. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I'm going to throw a question out there before going to Kerry. I thought that we were considering step-downs in order to lengthen the season, and so that was my

recollection. I agree that we should do step-ups too, but I thought that it was more important to at least have some fish available, and have the season open, and that's why we would consider the step-down, but, Kerry, what was your recollection?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and that's exactly how we got in the spot, I think, and so I know you want it clean and easy, Charlie, but I don't know that we can, because, for instance -- I agree with you that species with small trip limits, like gag, red porgy, snowy grouper, we've idealized -- You know, we took the time, and we came to where we came to with those, and, for those, step-ups make sense.

For something like vermilion snapper, if you recall around COVID, we were given -- We were allowed to go from 1,000 to 1,500 right, and that worked out very well, but it automatically went back to 1,000. Something like vermilion snapper, obviously, based on the amount that's caught, what I was thinking is what this gets at with a step-down is it allows the season to remain open as much as we can all year, but it gets at these boats that can stay out longer and have more capacity than some of the smaller boats, and so it gives them the flexibility, without having to do like the craziness of permit stacking or anything like that.

As much as we want to keep it clean, I think there are different needs for the different species, depending on is it a species that you're catching thousands of pounds of, or a species you're catching fifteen head of, and so I know that goes against what you say, but would you consider maybe being more flexible in how we approach each species, and that we do it a little more tailored?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie, then Dewey.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, I'm flexible. Watch me bend over. No, and my bones would complain, but, no, I'm not locked into anything, but we started this so we could catch our ACL, and the only way we're going to catch our ACL, and know we're going to catch our ACL, is try to incorporate the step-ups, and if we -- If there's some instances where we think it works for the commercial, because this is a commercial amendment, to change a trip limit from 200 pounds to 150 pounds, or whatever, but we watch things change every year, you know, and nobody thought that the golden tile longline was going to stretch out as far as it did this year.

I mean, the tide, water temperatures, and whatever happened, happened, and so I get really, really skittish about trying to say let's end everything in December, because so much changes, that we just have no control over, and, you know, I've heard people -- Jimmy, for instance, says that, once I've sold that fish, that money is in the bank, and I don't have to worry about it. I may not be able to catch it in December, but I've got my money, and my crew has their money, and the public has access to that resource, and so I get really worried about how to do that balance.

I'm not saying don't look at it. There may be some instances, but we really -- Other than maybe amberjack and vermilion, that could have step-ups, I'm not sure, you know, what else practically could have step-ups, and so, no, I'm not locked into anything. I love drawing outside of the box, as you well know.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Dewey, then back to Kerry, then Mike.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Looking at the present situation over the last couple years, I don't see an instance for a step-down, but, for the step-up, one thing that I'm wondering is how fast can a step-up happen? Do we have to go through as a council? Can we give that authority to the Regional Administrator over something, because, you know, when we look at these numbers here, we might be on track for snowy grouper this year to leave 10,000 pounds on the table, and that's \$70,000 or \$80,000, and every dollar counts, and so I don't see --

I guess you could have it in your toolbox, but I don't see a whole bunch of use happening nowadays for step-down. I'm like Charlie, and it's to catch the ACL, and, if it affects one person, that can increase the trip limit increases, and they're able to do that, then more power to them. There's not many folks left.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I do think -- There's been a lot of discussion, especially amongst the AP, over the past -- I don't know, and ever since I was on it, and Jimmy and I were on it together, of still trying somewhat to not lose market availability at the end of the year, such that something else comes in, and people are like, oh, why am I going to go back to that vermilion snapper from North Carolina, when I can get it from Mexico, and so I hope we don't lose sight of that.

The two things we're balancing, in my mind, are market access, which means as close to a year-round fishery as we can get, and meeting the ACL. We absolutely have to meet the ACL, and so, when we're talking about these things, those are the two things I have in mind. I do think that a step-up makes sense for everything, with the exception of do we take a second to talk about whether or not a step-down makes sense for vermilion, and maybe amberjack, and, everything else, we do a step-up. I don't know. I don't want -- I just -- I don't want it to get to December and no one is going fishing, selfishly on my part, you know, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just listening to the discussion, I did want to -- It kind of hit a little bit on some of the questions that I had listed later on, and so I wanted to go ahead and bring those up, to maybe incorporate them into this discussion, and so one of the bullets, this last one, was are current trip limits being considered for change, other than incorporating a step-down, and so we wanted to get a picture of are you all thinking of changing the trip limit say, you know, for vermilion snapper?

Are you thinking of increasing the current trip limit, since you are then incorporating a step-down that would prevent it from going over the ACL, or are you talking about, for everything, keep the current trip limits and just add in step-down or step-up, whatever direction you're going, and so that's one thing, because that really affects how we end up developing these alternatives, or do you want alternatives that would explore these different things, and so I just wanted to get an indication of that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I've got hands going up, and so I'm going to go to Jessica Stephen, then Heather, then Kerry, then Charlie.

DR. STEPHEN: Hi, and I have the answer to the earlier permits question, and so I did check with permits, and what I said initially holds true. You need to have both permits in order to transfer it. Both permits have to be within a valid or renewable status, and I think that's where the confusion of the one year came through. If you remember, a permit, after it expires, has one year of expiration before termination, and so, if someone was searching for a second permit, and had a business agreement with someone, that first permit would need to be renewed, or would be terminated.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Heather. All right. I don't hear anything from Heather. I'm going to go to Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: All right, and so, Mike, to your last question, I will throw out to this committee, subcommittee, would we consider possibly changing -- The only species I think we should consider changing a trip limit for would be perhaps vermilion, in my mind. Black sea bass, we're not going to -- That's convoluted, because we're dealing with that in 56, and so, how those two things interact, I'm unclear. I forget how far we got along with discussing what that would look like in 56, or did we do it in 37? Sorry, and I'm losing my mind a little. Mike, can you answer that, real quick?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, in 37, no changes to commercial trip limits. That is something that you all said, if you wanted to do it, it could be on the table in 56, but you were not prepared to do it in 37, with the timing of that action. You wanted a little bit more information and exploration of those alternatives than what 37 allows with its timeline.

MS. MARHEFKA: So maybe I'll make a motion, just to have discussion. Do you think that's too early, Madam Chair? All right. **I would move that we consider every species, with the exception of vermilion snapper, instituting -- Maintaining the same trip limits, but consider step-up for the second half of the year, on a species-by-species basis, as far as like how much that step-up happens. If a percentage to be determined later of the ACL is not met, and, for vermilion snapper, we consider increasing the trip limit to -- I'm just spit-balling here, so we can talk about it, to 1,500 pounds. I'm trying to decide if, even at that, we need a -- With a step-down -- Well, just for the sake of argument, with a step-down after a percentage TBD is met in the first part of the split season.** Sorry, Mike, and I know that was really ugly, and let me make it clear, what I'm trying to do, is to stimulate discussion and help us like narrow down what we're really thinking.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, Kerry, and we had to add some more there, to make sure we got it all in there, and can you read this motion, and make sure it captures everything that you were intending, and then we'll need a second. Would you like to read the motion?

MS. MARHEFKA: **Well, Amy just made a good point that it should probably say every species in the above list, and not necessarily every species in the entire FMU.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do you want to read it now?

MS. MARHEFKA: Sure. **I move that we consider every snapper grouper species with a species-specific commercial trip limit, with the exception of vermilion snapper, to maintain the same trip limits, but consider stepping up, based on a yet-to-be-determined percentage of the annual catch limit. For vermilion snapper, consider increasing the trip limit to 1,500**

pounds with a step-down and, Mike, maybe add, and sorry, with a yet-to-be-determined -- When it hits a yet-to-be-determined percentage. Okay. Forget what I just said.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We added with a step-down if landings reach a yet-to-be-determined percentage of the annual catch limit. All right. Charlie, are you seconding?

MR. PHILLIPS: A question, and then I might.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. Go ahead.

MR. PHILLIPS: Kerry, if you would let me help you wordsmith this a little bit, and I agree with your concept. **I don't -- I think we can just say step-up for everything, and then, when we get to vermilion, then vermilion goes up 50 percent, and then our time-to-be-determined would be after six months of the season, you know, and then we see where we are in the ACL, and then we decide if we go back to our current trip limit.** That may be a little cleaner, and so, if that wordsmithing suits you, I will second it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are you good with that, Kerry?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and do you want it in two motions now, or still all in one motion? One motion? Whatever Charlie said, I'm very happy with, because I think conceptually we agree.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie, do you think that captures it?

MR. PHILLIPS: Would it be called a step-down, or would it be called just a return to current regulations?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's a step-down, because -- The reason I say that is because what I think Kerry is intending to do here is change the trip limit to 1,500 pounds, and so then that wouldn't be return to the trip limit, because then you're stepping down to 1,000, or whatever, some other amount, and so it's not returned to the trip limit, because she's suggesting modifying the trip limit, and so she's saying then, after a certain percentage is met, and/or six months have elapsed, something -- That's going to trigger something to happen, and she's talking about stepping it down, so that it could stay open. You're talking about a step-up, and that's why this is confusing, and she's talking about stepping down.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I think we're still getting to the same bottom line, except I was thinking stepping-up at the start of the season, and then reverting at midterm, if we need to. She wants to go to a 1,500-pound trip limit and then do a step-down, which, you know, bottom line, is going to be the same number, and so I can live with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I've got hands though. Do you want me to go to online, and then come back over here? Okay, and so I have Heather, Monica, then Dewey, and then Tom.

MS. BLOUGH: Thanks, and so I like where Kerry and Charlie are going with this. In terms of, because there's not likely to be a one-size-fits-all approach, right, to making this happen for all these different complexes and species, I wonder if there would be interest in simplifying it, by specifying in the amendment the objectives, right, like we want to extend the season, or ensure our

ability to catch the total limit, or respond to market conditions, are the three I've heard, and then maybe put some bookends around, you know, we wouldn't want a trip limit lower than a certain level for certain species, or higher than a certain level, if we're stepping up.

Put those kind of bookends, and then delegate to the Regional Administrator the authority to monitor the catches, and kind of do the implementation part consistent with the objectives and criteria, and it would provide a lot more flexibility than setting fixed percentages and trip limits in the amendment. This would, obviously, be more of an administrative burden, I think, for us. We would have essentially two quotas to monitor for each species, and figuring out like when to increase or decrease the limit, but just something for folks to consider.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to let Kerry respond to that, but, also, Charlie, now that the motion had been edited, are you seconding the motion?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, Madam Chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. All right. Back to Kerry to respond to that.

MS. MARHEFKA: So, if I'm understanding, Heather, what you're saying, it's that we're -- Just say the three objectives that we just covered, or the two I remember, which are maintaining market access and reaching the ACL, and then you're suggesting that those are the criteria that the agency then uses to decide how and when to implement the step-ups and step-downs, and, if I don't understand that, right, please correct me, because I'm not comfortable with that. I would like us to determine numbers, and have it be pretty written in stone.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Heather.

MS. BLOUGH: No, and I was suggesting you just put the objectives, and the criteria of no changes greater than this amount, and then we could work to make that happen, but it would be an administrative burden on our part, and it's fine if you prefer to specify all of the details per species in here as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I know that you're not in the room, but folks are nodding their head no, and so I appreciate the idea being thrown out there, but it seems like a no right now, and so I have Monica, then Dewey, then Tom.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: This is -- Now that Heather made those comments, and then Kerry has weighed-in, the more specificity you can put in there, the better it is, in terms of not having to then publish a proposed rule for comment, for public comment, and so the idea is, the more flexibility you give the service, the more likely it is that we might need to take public comment on it before we could institute the step-up or step-down, which then defeats your idea of you would like to get this in place rather quickly.

On that end, I would urge you to put some definite sideboards in there, some parameters of you can do this if this happens, and that sort of thing. You might be able to, you know, build in a little bit of flexibility in there, but, again, try to be specific, so at least the public can take -- Give comment on it when you're, you know, implementing this particular amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I also have my hand up though, for one other thing, and that is, when I've seen these kinds of things in the past, in terms of increasing or decreasing catches, sometimes it gets to be, well, do you really want this done if there's like one week left in the season, or two weeks left in the season, or maybe that's a very important time to get it done.

I'm not sure, but during -- In your discussion in the future in this, you might think about, well, okay, we would like this step-up or step-down -- Particularly in the step-up situation, I think, we want this to happen if there's, you know, at least two weeks left in the season, or something like that, because, as you can, you know, imagine, the service is going to be monitoring a lot of these quotas, to see whether they need a step-up or step-down, that sort of thing, depending on what you implement in Amendment 60, and so just kind of food for thought. Think about the timing of these step-ups and step-downs, in terms of the length of the season. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Can you put the motion where I can see it here, please? When will the yet-to-be-determined percentage of the annual catch limit -- When would that be determined?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just jumping in here, it would be determined within the amendment. We just don't -- We wouldn't be going through that today, to determine the percentages. I think this is a place where staff would kind of take direction, and I do -- If you pass this motion, I would then have follow-up questions, process-wise, on what you all would want to come back to you, but it would be determined within the amendment.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Okay, and a follow-up for that. Looking at -- So every species, or the ten species except for vermilion, you would keep the trip limit the same from the start until you get to a certain percentage, and then you would want the increases, and is that what you're saying? Is that what this amendment says?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That's a good point, Dewey, and so I don't think it's clarified in there. In my mind, it would be you would get to a certain date, and, if by that date in the season, you weren't at a certain percentage, then you would increase it.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: We're going to determine that in the future with this amendment?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I'm particularly interested in snowy grouper, and, for the last two years, or maybe three years, we've left a good amount on the table, and we also set it up, in Amendment 27, where the first half of the snowy grouper -- 70 percent of the thing gets caught in the first half, is allowed to be caught, and the second half is down to 30 percent, but yet we're still -- We're seeing that we leave fish on the table in the first half, and fish on the table in the second half, and so I wonder if we don't start out the year by increasing it twenty-five pounds, or fifty pounds, and I don't know what that number is, and that would be based on something.

Therefore -- You know, and I suspect our landings kind of decrease in November and December, and I'm just thinking out loud, and so I'm just wondering if, that particular species, if it wouldn't be advantageous to increase it somewhat, based on our trips, and looking at the last two or three years, of increasing it starting January 1 to get us to that point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So a couple things, and so this would be the amendment to do that, if you want to consider it, but, the way that the motion is worded, it's not allowing that, and so the motion would have to be edited. Just putting it out there.

Also, doing a time check, we are five minutes before the end of the subcommittee. I just spoke to the chair, and so the plan would be to try to adjourn the subcommittee at noon. Then, when we come back, we'll go into closed session, and then, if there is time today, at the end of the day, we will come back and go back into this commercial subcommittee. Okay. That's the plan, and so I'm going back to my list of hands. I have Tom, then Charlie, then Kerry.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking for a point of clarification, just some rationale on the 1,500-pound number for vermilion snapper.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and, as I said earlier, we were at 1,500 pounds during COVID, and it worked great, and the only reason it went back down is because that 1,500 wasn't implemented as a result of council action. It was implemented as a result of COVID era weirdness, and so there was no mechanism at that time to keep it at 1,500, and, as the council always does, the council got off-track doing things that weren't related to the commercial fishery, and it was never -- We never had the time to move it back to 1,500.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just to follow-up, and so I imagine that would be particularly for multi-day trips, and is that the focus of that, or is this --

MS. MARHEFKA: I guess I don't -- I mean, yes, there -- I mean, vermilion is one of those things where, yes, a lot of -- The boats that are the thirty and forty-foot boats, the traditional more bandit boats, are out there catching 1,500, is who's out there catching this.

MR. PHILLIPS: Back to Dewey's point, and that was kind of where I thought we were at our last meeting. We were going to start with step-ups, and then step-downs, and so, yes, if there's some snowy grouper, or amberjack, or some other species, and maybe we set our threshold as, before we can even consider say a start-of-the-season step-up for these species, it has to be say we're catching under 90 percent of the ACL over the last three years, or something like that, before we even consider it, because, if we catch more than 90 percent of the ACL, we probably don't have much wiggle room, or much certainty on what we do, and so I agree with Dewey. There are species we probably need to start the fishing year high, and then, halfway through it, we look, and then, if we go back to our regular numbers, then that's what we do. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. So, as I go to Kerry, something to think about here, because normally we would vote on this motion before we adjourn the committee, but it seems like -- We're having a great discussion, and so it seems like we're talking about other species to add, and we're

talking about other, and I'm going to call them criteria, for when we would implement this. All of this is great. This is exactly what staff needs. I'm just not sure how to handle this particular motion. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: You don't even give me the chance. I was going to actually say that I probably jumped the gun on the motion, but I'm not mad at it, because we had a really good discussion. With Charlie's permission, I think maybe the best course of action is to withdraw the motion, because what I think we really do need to do is go through species-by-species and just be more thorough about it.

I think one of the reasons I jumped the gun is this thought of we keep slowing down and slowing down and slowing down, and I want to have as much information for these guys to take out of this meeting as possible, and be as specific as possible. Of course, we don't have much time left, but I realize this motion may not be appropriate, and I'm happy to withdraw it, and to formulate a different plan to attack these species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. After having a Roberts Rules conversation over here, the motion belongs to the committee, and it cannot be withdrawn, and so you could pass it, and then, when we come back to the committee, hopefully this afternoon, fingers crossed, we can also give staff direction on things like Dewey saying, to add snowy, and talk about it, and Charlie has got also this criteria, you know, that you would implement, like look at the past three years, figure out where we at 90 percent, yes or no, if no, and so I think you could also give staff direction, when we come back, on how to do this. This one is really vermilion specific, but it has that caveat in the beginning about don't change any other species. I guess that's the issue here, but John has come to the table.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Before John goes, before you have further consideration of this motion, it was talked about adding in a time component, and so I did just want to make sure it's okay with the motion maker and the seconder that this addition was put in, this language, by a specified time in the fishing year. Is that okay with the motion maker and the seconder?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes? Okay.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I feel like we've had a lot of good discussion, and I feel like we have an idea, as staff, of what it is you want to accomplish. You want to look at places where fish are being left on the table, and you want to have some way that you can adjust trip limits during the season, if it turns out catch rates aren't as fast this year as they've been in past years, and so I think it's a matter of us looking at when this has happened.

We can look at some years for species where you've left stuff on the table. We can look at like snowy grouper, where you're consistently leaving things on the table, and I think staff, and the IPT, could come up with some potential numbers to fill in these to-be-specified things that lets you look at it, and could say, you know, here's some opportunities here, and maybe, with snowy, you start earlier, and maybe there's others you start with a higher level, and, if you're at a certain point by a certain date, you go back to your normal level. Others, it sounds like you're interested in going the other way.

If you're not to a certain percentage by a certain point in the season, then you want to relax it some, so they can try to catch those fish, and so I feel like if -- You know, if you approve the motion with what you have, and there's a lot of guidance, and a lot of discussion, I think staff could just plow into the numbers a little bit, come up with some situations and things, and let you consider how you want to craft the criteria, so the agency can have the guidance they need to actually just do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and so then I'll go to Charlie, and then I would like to vote on this motion, and so then, when we come back in the subcommittee, I would like to talk about that guidance, and make sure -- So we had some good wording here from John, but I want to get that captured in writing, make sure we're all good, and any other components of this type of direction that we want to provide. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Madam Chair, is it possible to table this motion until a time certain when we open, or reconvene, and then we don't have to vote on it, and then we can keep wordsmithing it, as needed, and would that be cleaner?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I think we can do that. A motion to table is not debatable, and so we have selected tabling until a time certain. It sounds like the time certain would be when this committee reconvenes, whether that's today or another day, but hopefully today, and so there is a motion to table this motion. We need to approve the motion to table.

All right, and so, if you are in favor of tabling this motion until the committee, subcommittee, reconvenes, please raise your hand. All right. We have six in favor. Any -- Heather is a yes. Are there any against? Any abstentions? All right. The motion carries, and so we will be tabling this until the committee reconvenes. I will be passing this back to our chair, to tell us about lunch and when to come back.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I hope we want to try and reconvene, even if it's briefly during this meeting, because I don't want to lose the momentum we have and come back to another meeting and pick this up, because I would be hesitant to tell staff to dive into this if you guys might say, you know, we thought about it for another three months, and we're not going to do this at all, and so let's try to settle this at this meeting, so we know what to do for you to keep things moving for March.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, and, yes, we will reconvene this subcommittee at five o'clock today, or after, or after closed session, or we'll reconvene after Habitat is closed, and so we'll reconvene. We'll have to just work late, but let's -- We're working late early, and so that tends to be a little better, and so let's reconvene this at five o'clock, after Habitat, and you all come back after lunch at 1:30 for closed session.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We are starting back in the Subcommittee. I was going to tell you, one more time, who is on the subcommittee. It's myself, Kerry, Amy, Jimmy, Trish, Charlie, Andy, and Dewey are on the subcommittee.

All right, and so we left off with this motion that we had tabled, and so we tabled until a time certain, until the committee reconvenes, and so most of the motion is okay. However, the first part

of the motion says to consider every snapper grouper species with a species-specific commercial trip limit, with the exception of vermilion, to maintain. Okay, and we had some discussion that we might want to change some of those trip limits. This -- I don't want to postpone that, and this document would be the vehicle to do that.

It's almost like what we're really doing here, and there's a table in the document, and it's almost like what I think we're doing, but I want you all to have more discussion on it, is to take that table, which was, I think, Table 1, and then you would be figuring out, kind of when you start the fishing year, what is the trip limit going to be, and if we want to modify it, and, you know, Dewey mentioned snowy, and modify that.

If we're going to do a step-up, at what point would you consider the step-up? Is it at a certain percentage? Is it a certain time period? Is it both? Then what would you step it up to? If you were going to step it down, in order to lengthen the season, when would you look at that, and what would you step it down to, and it seems like we need to look at this species-by-species, which would then be, and it's fine, just kind of sub-alternatives in the document.

With that being said, and I tried to recap what we discussed, I think we should vote this motion down, and then we should maybe have some direction to staff, and we can pull some of the items that we like out of here, because we have some of the vermilion items in here, but then any additional direction that we could give on some of these other species, so they can set up the sub-alternatives in the document, would be helpful, and so is everybody good with that?

With that, I'm going to call this question on this motion, that we will consider untabled here at this time, and so, those against this motion, raise your hand, I guess. All right. I see six against. Any in favor? Any abstention? The motion fails.

All right, and now let's dive into pulling out the pieces of what we want, and we will use that as direction to staff, and so we're going to let Mike try to type it, and so, if you'll give us a minute, we'll try to type up the direction, and then maybe you guys can help edit it after we get it typed up. Okay. Go ahead, Amy, while we're typing over here.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm going to confuse Mike, but, just to confirm, in Table 1, those are all the species that have the specific commercial trip limits, or are we missing some in this table, while we review them one-by-one?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I intended, and believe, that they are all of the ones with species-specific trip limits. There may be some complex trip limits that I did not include, just because those are grouped, and, obviously, scamp and yellowmouth grouper is a complex, but it is not quite a complex yet, but it will be a complex soon, and so that's why it's included there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so grab your binder. It's in there, and so Mike is going to continue typing up the direction, and then we'll come back and edit it. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't really want to get in the weeds, but I'll have to. Gary told me it was okay. Down the road -- We have the numbers we have right now. Down the road, let's say we've got a species that's coming close to its ACL, but, three years down the road, we have a species that, for whatever reason, is maybe -- It's not an easily sellable product, or the price dropped, or it's hard to

catch, but, for whatever reason, you know, bluefish, angelfish, you know, moonfish, or whatever, and I'm making up names, and it falls where we're only catching 80 percent of the ACL. Are we going to have some kind of a catch system in there so that we can add species later, as needed?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't see why not yet, but you might have to decide with, like which species, which path it's going to follow, but let us get some direction typed up here, and then we'll come back to this discussion.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I don't see us having a whole new amendment. I'm looking for say some policy, some options, say if something, you know, drops, and then Andy can say, all right, we're not catching our ACL on this, and it falls into this parameter, and so now we can, you know, pick the trip limit up, and hopefully catch our ACL, but it won't be a new amendment. We're just going to have some kind of a mechanism in there so we can adjust, you know, on the fly, so to speak.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: A mechanism with the Regional Administrator that gives him the authority, kind of a wide girth of something like that to do. All right, and I'm just looking for changes that can be done, and not something that takes three meetings, and all this extra stuff, but, at the same time, we need to be asking him what could be his leeway, or their leeway, to be able to do it. What do they have to have that we need to give them to have the leeway? We know what we want, but what extra sideboards do they got to have to make it happen?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. We think we've got some things defined there, but we hit a snag, and I feel like we have a question for either Monica or Shep. I know Shep wasn't online earlier, when Monica was helping us, and so this is the action where we're talking about these dynamic trip limits, and we're trying to talk about -- You know, you would initially define what the commercial trip limit is, and so you would either start with the trip limit that we have now, you would start the fishing year with the trip limit that we have now, or, like in vermilion, or like with snowy, you would change it.

You would go ahead and have an alternative that would change that initial trip limit. Then you would establish a threshold percentage and a time of the year with which you would do the step-up, or consider the step-up, and then you would also have to define that trip limit that you're going to step up to, and then you would do the same thing for a step-down, and so let's say that, you know, you want to do step-downs, and it could be different for different species, but just -- You know, let's say that you have something that says, when you hit 90 percent of the quota, and it doesn't -- You know, either you can do it by percentage or by time of the year, but let's say it's 90 percent.

Then you would say, okay, well, it's vermilion, and we now want you to step the trip limit down to X, and so all of that is written there, but here's the question for Monica or Shep, and so Monica talked earlier about a procedure, and so, once we establish the time period, the procedure, and then the trip limit to step up or down to, how does that trigger it?

Mike and I were over here talking about the ABC control rule, and other things, and Monica said that you would have to advertise this change. I don't think you need to advertise the change, but it's almost like this document would define the process with which it would happen, so that it could be, in air quotes, automatic, if you will, and so it doesn't have to be like adverted in the Federal

Register, and like go through this whole process, but I guess that's part of what we're asking. Kerry, do you want to try to speak to this?

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, I'm not going to -- I mean, that was not my recollection of what she said, in terms of this. It was if we were following Heather's suggestion, which was a little more - - Not ambiguous, and I'm trying to think of the right word, but --

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Cumbersome.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and it was definitely cumbersome, but she's going to speak, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica has her hand up. Go ahead, Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, and so let me clarify. I think there are ways you can structure this action so that it would not have to go back out for public comment. My thoughts were, if you pretty much tell the Regional Administrator that here's what you can do, and like, if X happens, then you can do Y, or maybe a little range. If A to B happens, then you can do C. You know what I mean? Try to make it as narrow, as possible in terms of the amount of discretion you give Andy.

You don't want to give the Regional Administrator all the discretion, right, in terms of he's got so much discretion that he's going to have to go out and take public comment on it, and so I think that, if you think about that in what's the kind of process, and the procedures you want to set up to allow him to kind of take the same kind of actions of like, okay, we've reached, for example, the annual catch limit, and so we're going to close the fishery. We don't go out for public comment. Why? Because we've already been out for public comment. The public has had an opportunity to comment on that, and so, if you set up your process and procedure in this amendment, that will allow the public to comment on that procedure, or process, in the amendment.

The long and short of it is, the more narrow you can keep the lane for the Regional Administrator, the less likely you're going to have to go out for public comment on that specific action. Does that make sense?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Monica. We were having a separate side conversation, side question, here at the front. Okay. Thank you for that explanation. That was helpful. Then, looking at this direction for staff here, it sounded like there were two species that we were wanting to change the initial trip limit, and so we want to make a trip limit different than what already exists.

It sounded like one of them was vermilion, because we had a motion, and then it sounded like the other one was snowy, and so I would like to get some discussion, so that we could talk about what we want that initial trip limit to be, and then, if you had an idea of what you wanted it to step up or step down to, because it sounded like those were the two where we might want a different initial trip limit. So, Dewey, can you talk about snowy again?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, but, before I feel comfortable about making this decision on snowy, and there might be a couple others, I think we need to see what the three-year -- We need to see what the three-year has been happening, and the direction we're going, and if, looking at that, it can be, and I know this is a heavy ask, you know, by the months, to see how it's shaping out.

It's like three or twelve months looking at something, because you only get one bite at this apple, you know, because, right now, you know, you've got a greater amberjack, and you've also got triggerfish that are under the stuff, but, you know, I don't know, without looking at the data, and the way we get the data through the SERO quota monitoring, but it don't show you weekly, to keep track of it, and so I'm kind of difficult in saying exactly how much with snowy grouper. I know it's, you know, 10,000 pounds, or different things like that, and so, Charlie, speak up, or, Kerry, speak up about -- You know, until you make that decision, I need to see it better.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike, and then I'm going to Charlie, and I have a question for you, and then back to this side of the table with Kerry.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I think, to an extent, we can -- I think what you're getting at, Dewey, is that we would need some level of decision tool developed that would show, at different trip limits, what the projected length of the season would be, you know, under those scenarios. I think that's something that can potentially be developed as part of this amendment process.

I am going to -- You know, just noticing how the discussion is going, and the variety of actions that are going to need to be included to address this, this is something that is going to take some analytical time, because we're talking about, what, fifteen or so -- Just spit-balling, fifteen or so different species, and not all necessarily getting the same treatment here, but, you know, they're each getting their own look, in their own way, and so this isn't a simple thing. It may be simple for one species, but, when you compile fifteen, it can take some time, and so we may need some meeting time to go through it. We also may need some analytical time for the IPT to develop the variety of actions that are being requested here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mike. So, Charlie, before we broke, when we were talking about this this morning, you also had something that you mentioned that was another kind of tool that we would use here, that was something like look back over the last three years -- You know, before you're giving the Regional Administrator the ability to just make the change, there were like a couple things that you would be asking the RA to look at, and so it was like what percentage of the ACL has been caught, what time of year is it, but then you also had a third one that was like what was the average something over the last three years, and can you bring that up again?

MR. PHILLIPS: That means I'm supposed to remember what I did?

MS. MCCAWLEY: From this morning.

MR. PHILLIPS: You're in trouble. No, but I think the only tool we're really going to have is maybe an ACL average, you know, per year, so we can know is this species even something we want to spend our time on? You know, stuff -- We know snowy is in there, and we know vermilion is in there, and I would kind of like to see what amberjack looked like.

UNIDENTIFIED: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. PHILLIPS: That looks like we've got wiggle room there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: This is how we came to the idea that we needed to step up, is because we weren't meeting these.

MR. PHILLIPS: We may want to go ahead -- I would have my step-up at the first half of the season, because, if you end up with a cold-water event, or whatever, where you can't buy a fish, there's a -- Even if you step it up the last half of the year, there's a good chance you can't catch it anyway, but, if you start up, it's a whole lot easier to back off than it is to try to take up, especially since the last half of the year is going to -- You're going to have weather issues, hurricanes and everything else, and so I would try to move as much -- Front load as much stuff as I could, and then, when you hit the mid-year mark, see what it is, and then decide whether you want to go back to the original, or whatever number you want to do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Got it. Okay. Kerry, and then back to Dewey.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think, in the interest of time, and knowing -- Sort of getting a better picture of how this is all going to play out, and helping Mike to get where he needs to get -- This table is incredibly helpful, and I think it can also help us eliminate a few things. I don't think you need to analyze everything on this table. For instance, I don't think we're going to mess with the red snapper, anything with red snapper, right now.

I don't see any reason to -- Any of the species where we're already hitting 100 percent of the ACL, we don't need to mess with, and so that's, I believe, golden tile, at least the golden tile longline, and, the golden tile hook-and-line, the same thing, and so I think I think what we should do, in the interest of time right now, is to look at this table, and make sure we truly have the species in here that we want to analyze for this, give Mike general guidance, so that he can build the tool, and then we'll use that tool, Charlie, to look at your last -- Like, when we get together next time, use that tool to look at -- Sort of does a step-up make sense, like you said.

I just want a real quick question before -- I know Mike, you're probably dying. You're like just let me go, but, real quick, because you can answer this question for me. Can you remind me if -- I'm pretty sure if this -- It's a split season for like vermilion, and, if we don't hit the entire first half of the season ACL, it gets moved to the second half of the season, but it never then, at the end of the year, goes to the following year, correct? Okay. I'm done then.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and I guess my question, in relation to what you just said, Kerry, is, by don't want to mess with the species that you listed, the red snapper, golden tilefish, those species that are getting close to their ACL, that is just in terms of adjusting the initial trip limit, or is that in terms of also the consideration of step-up and step-down, all like the whole gamut, all those things? Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so what Kerry is saying is you're going to take those species out from consideration from a step-up or a step-down, and, so far, that list just includes red snapper and golden tile. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, because the point is -- Let's remember why we're doing a step-up. We're doing this to help achieve the ACL in the species we're not achieving. We're not trying to manipulate any other -- If we're hitting the ACL, we don't want to manipulate that at all. It's the job as designed, and the fishery is constrained. Everyone is getting their fish, and so, in my mind, we don't want to mess with that. It's just the ones where we're not hitting the ACL.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, I thought that, for step-downs, I thought one of the things that you all wanted to look at is if you were hitting the ACL, and let's say that the season closed early, that what you were trying to do was possibly consider a step-down so it lengthens the season, and so I agree with you on the step-up portion, but, on the step-down portion, can you think about that component, while I go to Dewey? Okay. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: The only thing with the step-down part is there's a lot of species where the trip limit is so low that you can't get no lower than crumbs, all right, and so there might be some that's a thousand pounds, vermilion or something, and extend the season, but something else is Charlie was talking about frontloading the first half, and it might not be so advantageous to the people to the north to upload that front half.

That's why we're going to look at the decision tree of what's caught over the twelve months on something that gives you the picture, and so like I'm just thinking out loud, and no blueline tilefish, no gag, no golden tile. Wait a second. You're going too fast up there. No golden tile. Scroll down. Probably -- I don't know much about hogfish. It looks like it's pretty close.

That's just me thinking, and I don't know these fisheries, and so mutton snapper doesn't seem to be a poundage problem, and something else goes on there, but, you know, there will be something we could not look at, because you're getting close there, and so that's why -- Someone else might know the other species, but I think that showing that picture throughout the year, and a three-year looking at something, is going to help you how much to frontload something.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so I'm going to go back to Kerry about the step-downs, and do you think -- We've been having this discussion, and we're focusing on the step-ups for things that are not meeting the ACL, but the previous discussion, at previous subcommittee meetings, was about a possible step-down to try to lengthen the season. Is that still something that you all are interested in? If it's not, we can take that component out, take that analysis out, but I just didn't want to leave it without having that discussion.

MS. MARHEFKA: In my mind, I think -- I see the confusion now, but, in my mind, the step-down was going to be associated with something like vermilion, where we were increasing the trip limit here. The ones that already have the trip limit, we've had this discussion. Like we just did snowy. We just did -- I forget, but we've already had those discussions to tweak it to make the season last as long as possible, and so, in my mind, I think maybe we could remove step-down then, because we've already done that, and just go -- Gosh, we've come full circle. Charlie, you saw this coming this morning. It could have saved us hours if I had shut up, and so, yes, I think we could remove it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so I'm looking around. I saw heads nodding, and it looked like in agreement. Okay, and I see more heads nodding in agreement that we're going to remove the step-downs from this particular action, and focus more on the step-ups for this for the species that are not meeting the ACL, and we already made a list of some species that we don't want to consider, and might put a line through them, which it seemed like it was red snapper, golden tile, blueline, and hogfish. Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: So sorry, and I just want to be clear. Amy and I looked and compared -- This table is not all encompassing of species with trip limits. It's fine. If anyone else feels differently,

and wants to go and look, there's things like banded rudder, almaco, and there's the complexes. For me, I will just say I am comfortable with this table as it exists, but, so it's clear for the record, this is not an inclusive table of species that are trip limited.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so it looks like that the hogfish that we're removing is the Georgia and North Carolina component, and not both of them, because we are low relative to the ACL on that other east Florida and Florida Keys stock. Charlie, and then Amy.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, before we get too far down the road, I still want to figure out what would be the vehicle to add fish in later that may not fit inside of the box right now without us having to go back and do another amendment. I know I'm not asking for much.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: By "adding in down the road", you're talking about say years down the road, after this is already in place?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and, I mean, if we've got -- Yes, and if we want to add jacks or something.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Go ahead.

MS. MARHEFKA: This is exactly one of the things we've talked about in the innovation plan, and I don't know that we do it in this vehicle, but we set up a framework that is specific -- That is not specific to the species, but a framework mechanism that lays out, when this trigger happens, when a species, just say for three years doesn't mean it's ACL -- For three years, if a species in the snapper grouper complex doesn't meet its ACL, it triggers the framework action, so that we don't even have to go through a full amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and we're typing. Amy.

MS. DUKES: To that point, I think, if we're going to do it so broad like that, we need to be thinking, years down the road, when some of these fish go through a stock assessment, and the ACLs go up, that we might need to include the step-down as well, in order to try to keep that fishery, and I'm just saying.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, when we get a new assessment, Amy, don't we generally make, as part of going -- You know, say our ACL went to 500,000, instead of 700,000, and don't we generally change our trip limits anyway in that amendment?

MS. DUKES: Valid point, sir.

MR. PHILLIPS: So, you know, we don't -- Again, if we can -- It's going to be complicated enough, and I would keep it as simple as possible, especially, you know, for us fishermen, and Andy's office.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have it captured that we want, and I'm going to call it a framework, for doing this in the future. Okay. I think we've captured everything that we need on this particular action. I'm looking around the table. All right, and I think we're good to leave this

action. I think we've had some good discussion on this. We've pulled some things out, and we've tried to narrow it down some, and then we've also talked about establishing a framework, which is kind of blowing our mind over here, but we have the direction about what the goal is to try to get to here, and so, with that, I think good discussion. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I had something further to add, and not to this. I think you're there, but I wanted to bring up and talk about the SG 2, and just wondering when that would be the time to do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can I put that under Other Business?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so we're going to hit Action 3. Action 4 is going to be brief, just because the short story for that is the IPT needs more time to work on it and develop and craft that language. I think I have a pretty good idea of what you all are thinking, but I will check in on Action 4 before we end.

Action 3, you all were talking about establishing an incidental out-of-season trip limit for the harvest of deepwater species, and so, deepwater species, kind of first step there is what are deepwater species? What are the ones that we're going to include in this?

Initially, we included all the species that are, you know, in the management plan that are considered deepwater. You also talked about those that have like discard mortality rates above a certain threshold, and we're talking about species that, if you throw them back, that they are probably not surviving that trip, and so what we're starting off with are blueline, golden, snowy, the deepwater complex, and then kind of the odd species that are -- Well, the odd species are the deepwater complex and wreckfish. That's kind of what's in this assemblage.

One of the questions to you all is, is this entire group of species what you're talking about as far as wanting a deepwater incidental allowance? Are you considering a smaller subgroup of these species, and like blueline, golden, and snowy are kind of like the main ones. Wreckfish is kind of its own unique animal in this, but what are you all thinking, as far as any type of out-of-season limit that would be considered here, from a species perspective?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and I see hands going up. I guess I would also ask are we sure we still want to do this, because I feel like this is kind of dicey, and so I'm going to go to Dewey and then Charlie.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is this an ask from the AP, or is this an ask from data, logbook data or observer data, that shows there's discards out of season with these fish, because I wonder -- I'm not really looking forward to this, because there's a lot more fish to fry than this right here. We're trying to -- I'm just not in favor of this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That would be helpful. Charlie, your thoughts on it, and then back to Mike.

MR. PHILLIPS: Dewey basically nailed it. I don't think we're going to get the bang for the buck for the effort and all the time it's going to take to do it. I just -- I hate throwing stuff back, but I just don't think we're going to get the bang for the buck, and I would rather staff be working on other stuff.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Just addressing what Dewey asked, as far as where this came from, I think this was one of the ideas in the early part of this process that got thrown out, as far as how can trips be more efficient, and one of the ways is that you don't have to have to throw as much back, and so, establishing some type of incidental allowance, that was the big idea that was thrown out.

Then, as that got narrowed down a little bit, the thought came of, well, maybe we only really need to have it for deepwater species, and so that was the direction that was given most recently, and so that's where it is right now, but, yes, it's up to you all if you would like to continue having this in the amendment. It does not need to continue, if that's not a direction you want to go in.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It seemed like heads around the table were nodding that, no, we want to take this out, and so I'm looking around, to make sure everybody is good with taking it out of the document, out of here for consideration, and so it's a no go, I think. Okay. We're considering that direction to staff, and, as soon as we get that typed out, we're going to the next action.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: All right, and then, finally, there's an action included to revise the gear and stowage requirements. This is something where you all were talking about specifically for longline gear. I think the main question, and I've kind of had some conversations with council members, but I do want to make sure that it gets on the record.

The longline gear that's being discussed here, we're not talking about any type of like pelagic longline gear. The longline gear that we're talking about is bottom longline gear that would be -- It's already an authorized gear in the South Atlantic, but what's being discussed is the potential for that to be used -- If it's used in other capacities, for it to be able to be onboard and stowed, and for that fisherman to then also be able to target snapper grouper species outside of those that are defined right here in the FMP right now, that highlighted group of species.

Those are all that can be possessed right now if there is longline gear onboard, and so is that the case for you all? Are you thinking that, if there is longline gear onboard, that that vessel should not be constrained, in the Snapper Grouper FMP, to only that group of species, that they should be able to have a wider variety of species onboard if that gear is onboard and it's stowed while that group is not being fished for.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think that's what we're saying. I'll go to Jimmy to explain, and then Charlie, and then Kerry.

MR. HULL: Yes, and I agree that that's our intention, and there's some details that have to be probably worded in here that -- You know, while you are harvesting these other snapper grouper species, that currently are not allowed with longline gear, that's when the gear has to be stowed, because, if you're not harvesting them, and you're -- For instance, in our case, we would be running back inshore to shark fish, and then you can pull the gear out, and prepare to use it in the shark fishery, and so it's -- The wording, I think, is important, that you have to stow the gear while you

are fishing for or harvesting the other species in the snapper grouper complex that aren't listed here as authorized with longline gear, and so you have to stow your hooks, for instance, all down below, unbaited hooks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thanks for that, Jimmy. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Most of the wreckfish boats, or a lot of them, also have golden tile longline endorsements, and so I could easily see them going golden tile fishing, and maybe the tide is too bad, or maybe fish aren't biting, the water is cold, whatever, and they need to just go on offshore and go wreck fishing, or vice versa, which is, you know, totally different than shark, and then a lot of these boats -- You know, you're not going to really -- I think I've heard that some of the guys tried to longline wreckfish early on, but they just -- They lost so much gear that it was ridiculous.

That's just really not feasible to longline out there, but you're twenty miles away from the golden tile bottom, or possibly closer, and so it's really easy to change fisheries and go golden tile fishing, and so you may be able to pull a trip together when you're not, but yes, being able to fish different species with different gear, as needed, could really help productivity.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think -- Amy is going to talk in a second, I think, but I think they can already -- I don't think wreckfish is an issue here. I think they can already do that, but I don't want to get bogged down on that, because I have a question. Jimmy, talk to me. I know your intention, and I am fully supportive. You want to be -- Not you necessarily, but people to be able to snapper grouper fish, and then like shark bottom longline, and make a trip.

Not knowing enough about longline gear, but knowing a little bit about this council's history with bottom longline gear and removing it for any other species other than that, and there was a reason we did that. It's an effective gear, right, and, knowing some of the people I know in the fishery who are bad actors, is there a way to craft this so that we're not enabling people who are going to be bad actors to use that gear actually to bottom longline for other snapper grouper species other than these?

That's just the only thing that gives me heartburn. We know that -- You know, I agree with what you're saying, as far as like, if you're harvesting those species, your gear needs to be stowed, but then keeping in mind how often are they being encountered by enforcement while they're actually harvesting, and so is there some -- Is there a way we can do this, that you know -- The way you know more about the gear, and how the fisheries operated, that I don't understand, and you know way more than I'll ever know.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Well, I think that -- I mean, the way he's got this worded so far, while harvesting species that are not currently allowed for possession while having longline bottom gear, the longline gear must be stowed. I mean, that's all you really can do, and then you are relying -- How do they enforce any other law? Intercepts.

I mean, they're going to -- I get intercepted offshore, and, all of a sudden, here comes law enforcement, and they're coming over and seeing what I'm doing, and so I don't know how -- I mean, how do size limits and trip limits get enforced? Intercepts. It just goes back to that. I mean, I don't know how we can do anything other than do what we're doing here, and describe what has to happen, and abide by it, and I don't know that we can do anything for those percentage of bad actors. You know, law enforcement has to deal with them.

No, I don't think that there's much else you can do, other than state it the way it's supposed to work, and then those people, if they're going to be bad actors, hopefully they get caught, but it will certainly go a long way in making these trips, you know, more economically viable.

You're using -- You know, in our case, and so I can just use me as an example, and so red snapper, which used to be a -- The seventy-five-pound limit was a bycatch, but we're -- You know, we're starving to death, and we're targeting that, right? We're using spinning rods to target snapper, and so, obviously, we're not using longline gear, and so then, once we catch these small limits that we have, we need to go address another fishery to put some fish in the boat to make a living. You know, this is something that I would really like to see get done, and I don't know that -- What you're asking for is how can we make it to where you're not going to have bad actors, and I don't know how you can do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I've got a long list of folks. I'm going to go to Mike first, and then I'm going to go back to the list.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and, just bringing up some points that have previously been discussed, as far as how to -- How to affect this in a way that discourages bad actors as much as possible, and one of the points that's been raised is to be quite specific on what "appropriately stowed" means, you know, defining like hooks are unbaited, or, you know, however the gear is, and I might need some help from a guy like Jimmy, or from some of the fishermen that are on the subcommittee, to craft like what does it mean to be appropriately stowed, in the sense of there should be a level of time consumption.

It shouldn't be something that they can just, you know, slip it in, and, you know, if they see law enforcement coming, that they slip this thing off, and then it's not there, and so there should be a level of it's somewhat time consuming, but not so much that it's burdensome, and so finding a good balance there.

Then another suggestion that was brought up was kind of, you know, some form of hail-in to the -- You know, not hail-in as in the traditional sense, but like a call-in system of I'm switching gears, of calling into law enforcement and informing them that you're switching gears from, you know, to or from a longline gear, and so having some form of system set up to do that, and so those are two suggestions that have been brought up to this point, and, if it's the direction of the subcommittee, that's something that we can, at the IPT level, continue to explore.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy, did you want to respond to that?

MR. HULL: Yes, ma'am, and so, you know, bottom longline gear, longline gear in general, is all about hooks, and lots of hooks, and so you would need to list that all of the hooks, unbaited hooks, need to be stowed below deck, and in my case, it would be, you know, zip-tying bundles of hooks,

unbaited, and stowing them below deck, and the time -- To answer your question, the time it would take for someone to pull that gear out, untangle it, cut their bait, and get all those hooks baited up, is a substantial amount of time. I think that that would definitely solve the problem of somebody being able to quickly change gears, you know, and be sneaky about it. You know, the unbaited hooks have to be stowed below deck.

As far as the hail-out and hail-in, I wouldn't be opposed to that, but what mechanism? I mean, are you going to text them, or call them, or let them know ahead of time, before you leave the dock? I mean, I have cameras on my boats already, and so, I mean, that's the other option. I'm not opposed to -- You know, we have nothing to hide, but the -- So, yes, I think you just listed that, somehow, if there's a way to figure out, with law enforcement, how can we notify them that, this trip, we're potentially going to go with two different types of gear.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I have Dewey, Amy, Charlie, Kerry.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Along with the hooks, another part of the gear is a spool, and a spool can be something that's used to set more than a short bottom longline. It can be a bandit reel spool that has been crafted, like Jimmy uses, to sit a mile or two of gear for shark fishing, and so, along with the hooks, there should be no spool on the deck. It has to be stowed, and so you have to unscrew the thing, pull it off of your washers, put your thing back on, and that has to be stowed below.

Therefore, there is no way that you can be longlining, because your gear is stowed, along with your unbaited hooks zip-tied, and I'm sure -- I can't remember, because it's been since 2006 since I've sharked, but is there a hook size that you have to have, or a circle hook, or anything like that that's pertaining to shark fishing?

MR. HULL: Non-stainless circle hooks.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Okay, and it's a -- What size?

MR. HULL: We're using 16/0, but I don't think there's any --

MR. HEMILRIGHT: No, there's not, and so it would be both your gangions, leaders stowed away, and any type of spool -- Any type of spool over, and I don't know, but, you know, a modified bandit reel spool, and I'm trying to think. You know, common sense would look at it and tell you, but we can't use common sense, and so a modified -- You know, a spool that holds monofilament, or cable, or something like that. You know, bandit fishing, you have small spools this wide, and then modified for greenstick fishing and other things like that, especially inshore shark fishing. Jimmy probably changes out spools, and so that's what you would have stowed below, and not on deck.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I have a ton of people in the queue, and so then just a time check. It's almost 6:00 p.m. We still have items under Other Business, and we're trying to get through this document and cover those other items. We're getting close to what we need here, maybe on this action, and we're having good discussion on it, and we're answering these questions, and so we're in a pretty good place here, but I'm going to go back to the list of hands. Amy, Charlie, Kerry, Jimmy.

MS. DUKES: Madam Chair, in the absence of time, I will just simply say Charlie was correct. I was wrong. You cannot have those wreckfish, and so I appreciate you pointing that out. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: To that point, if you wanted to catch wreckfish, and then go catch golden tile, you're not using a little one-mile school. You're using a full spool, and so I would, and I know it's not our favorite enforcement method, but a VMS will tell law enforcement are you pulling a longline, because you're going to be pulling a longline at pretty much the same speed you might be dragging a shrimp net, two or three knots, and where you're not going to be bandit fishing doing two or three knots, and so that may also be an option for people that want to use multiple gears, and, if you don't want to have VMS, then just don't use multiple gears, and so I would put that in the list as possible options. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just a quick question for Jimmy. Other than shark fishing, is there another -- We already know you're not -- We're not adding pelagic gear, and just bottom long line gear, and so other than -- Is it just people that would operate in the shark fishery in this, because that narrows it down. That helps us decide how to approach this, because there's no issue with that. We just have to figure out how to make sure it's clean.

MR. HULL: Yes, and that's all I see that this is going to -- People that are multi-permitted snapper grouper, and they all -- In my area of northeast Florida, from Cape Canaveral up, there's several of us, and more coming.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you have anything else on this, Jimmy? You were next in line.

MR. HULL: I agree with what Dewey said of stowing the spool in our case, because it's a green stick spool, is what it is, and we change spools. They hold not quite a mile of 800-pound mainline, but somebody that maybe has a more permanent deck-mounted spool, like what Charlie is talking about, a traditional golden tilefish, you really can't stow the spool. You would have to figure out another way to dismantle the operation of it, but you can certainly stow the spools on what we're using, which is considered a short bottom longline.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mike says he thinks he has what he needs here. This has been a great discussion. I think we're ready to leave this action for right now, and then I'm going to turn it back to Mike to talk about the timing, and what would be next here, and see what you guys think about timing.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so the original plan for this was for you all to have a draft amendment that you would be considering to go out for public hearings in March of next year. Given the direction that the discussion has gone, and the time that we need for analysis of the items that have been requested, I would recommend an extension of at least a quarter, to give us the time to bring back the analysis and give you some more fleshed-out language in the alternatives, especially as we're diving into like the trip limit information that you all have requested and looking at that on kind of a -- You know, mostly a species-by-species basis.

That's something that we could probably use some additional time to bring back to you, but I would put it back to the subcommittee to see what you all are thinking. Do you want this to be -- Do you want us to push for this, or do you think that it's okay to give an additional quarter, so we can gather that information and get it all to you?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. What do you all think about the timing? Okay. All right, and so it looks like we're okay with it's going to slow down just a little bit, because the IPT hadn't had a chance to meet, and so is it just slowing down by one meeting, Mike?

DR. SCHMIDTKE: My initial thought is one meeting. I do want to talk to the IPT, and, if we have concerns that would delay it further, we can bring those to you in March, but my initial thought is one meeting should allow us an opportunity to discuss and get through, you know, putting some actions together.

There may be some things on the analytical end that come to you say in June, when you're considering approval for public hearings, that may take a little longer, but that would give us time to, you know, kind of dive into crafting some of the language, and bringing you some level of analysis, and then, if you needed more information, you can make that request, but, yes, my initial -- My initial look would be let's -- It would be to extend by one meeting, and so you would be considering -- Your step of approval for public hearings would go from March 2026 to June 2026.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. It looks like folks are okay with that. I'm going to dive into Other Business, so we can wrap up this subcommittee. Kerry, the first item that you had under Other Business was commercial trip limits, sale of the fish, and can you talk about that a little bit more?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I can't remember -- Remind me, and this body has not spoken about it, or we did, right and so you guys know the whole thing with the sale on Sunday, and we talked about that, and so I think what we're trying to do is get guidance on whether or not we need to actually have an action that amends the wording in the rule, versus whether or not we've said enough, and done enough, that the council's intent is clear, and I guess, if we need to have an action, we're going to have to figure out where it's going to live.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree. I'm looking to Monica I think on this, because I think that Monica was the one that told us we needed to fix this basically in rule, and do some clarification, and it seemed like it needed a clarification in a couple of different places, but, Monica, I don't know if you're still out there, or Shep.

MR. GRIMES: To change the current reg text, you need to go through a rulemaking, through a framework or some mechanism, but, yes, it needs its own action.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, as a suggestion, this is one of the items that will come up in the AP report, because they did discuss this, but it's not on your on your agenda for this meeting, and so this will come up in the Snapper Grouper Committee, under AP items not on the agenda. Kind of in the follow-up discussion to that may be a time when you all could address a little bit more on what you want to do with this action, where you may want to put it -- At that point, you'll have gone through a few of the other snapper grouper items, and so maybe you'll have a clearer picture on where this might fit in a potential workplan.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. Sounds good, and then, Dewey, you had an item about the SG 2 permit.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I was just wondering, even though it don't look like it will be in this amendment, about what's going to -- You know, the SG permit was an avenue to give people access to some folks that didn't get SG 1s, and the way I believe it's written is, as people pass on, that permit goes away, and I'm just curious, and is there any thought around the table of somehow allowing that to be done different, sold, into the future, because it does give some folks access to 225 pounds.

That's also another avenue that some people use, not only for their livelihood, but also to get more seafood to the consumer, and I'm just wondering if we could go to the AP, at the next AP meeting, if folks around the table have thoughts about that, to go to the AP and ask them their thoughts on it, and what folks think, because that's -- I think it's around maybe 115 now, or a little bit over a hundred permits there, somewhere thereabouts, and, you know, when folks die off, then that's gone, and I'm just wondering -- You know, it's not like it's tens of thousands of pounds, probably, but I'm just wondering, and can we have an analysis of how much that's used, the landings of it?

I think, you know, it said there was a hundred-and-some permits, or landings, but I'm just trying to feel like -- Does anybody think it's worthwhile to change that, and I do, and I'm just wondering if we could look at that into the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I think I was around when this was done, and I - - From what I remember, a lot of it had to do with like lobster fishermen down in the Keys that were catching a few fish, and they -- We wanted to keep letting them catch those fish, and I think they could pass it on to a family member, so it could stay in the family, but it was not supposed to be sold, and so I'm hesitant to change that, even though I had somebody tell me, six months ago, somebody had one that they were trying to sell, and I thought, don't mess with it, and totally stay away, but I -- It was set up as a mechanism to keep letting people fish like they were, as long as they were fishing, or pass it down to a family member.

I think it's been working the way it's supposed to work, the way it was set up. Now, do we want to consider changing it? You know, we can always change stuff, but I'm -- If we do, it's just going to probably take fish away from the other SG 1 permits, because you've only got a pie that's so big, and I guess that will be another discussion, but, if you want to send it to the AP, and see what they think, and give them the history of it, I don't have a problem with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I would agree to send it to the AP, and get some more info from them, but I have heard, from guys in south Florida and different communities, where this permit is really important to the fishermen in that community, and to supply product into the markets, and Ira, for instance, in his area, even way up from the Keys, and so I think it's worth having the AP discuss it, and maybe potentially coming back to us and saying, hey, we need to keep this around, and not let them fade away, and how can we do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and so, with that, when we decide to go to the AP, make sure that the presentation is the background, as Charlie remembers it, and I've been told, and just, you know, make sure the history is there, and a full understanding for the AP to discuss, and, at the same time, it's also going to give maybe the last four or five years of catch history, or something like that, and is that possible, Mike, to give them how much it's used, or anything like that, as some background of the validity of the permit and what's going on? Thank you.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: That information will be available once we get -- Once the permits database is up and running and available for use, and so we don't have the up-to-date right now, but, as that becomes available, then, yes, we would provide that.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: A follow-up, and isn't that supposed to be soon? I think somewhere -- Well, I've been hearing soon for a long time, but hopefully maybe we'll get an update on that, and maybe somebody will update us here. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. With that, I'm going to adjourn this subcommittee. Thanks for staying extra, and I'll pass it back to our chair.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 8, 2025.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
January 16, 2026

mon 12/8/25

Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee

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

Dr. Clay Porch

Sonny Gwin
Darius Geestlin

Kristin Foss

Kathy Knowlton

~~Patricia~~ Miles Dover

Monica Smit-Brunello

Rick DeVietor

Shep Grimes

SG Com-Sub
mon 12/8/25

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director

✓ John Carmichael
john.carmichael@safmc.net
843-302-8435

Deputy Director - Science

✓ Dr. Chip Collier
chip.collier@safmc.net
843-302-8444

Deputy Director - Management

✓ Myra Brouwer
myra.brouwer@safmc.net
843-302-8436

Citizen Science Program Manager

✓ Julia Byrd
julia.byrd@safmc.net
843-302-8439

BFP Outreach Specialist

Ashley Oliver Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net
843-225-8135

Admin. Secretary/Travel Coordinator

✓ Rachael Silvas
Rachael.silvas@safmc.net
843-571-4370

Fishery Scientist II

✓ Dr. Mike Schmidtke
mike.schmidtke@safmc.net
843-302-8433

Quantitative Fishery Scientist

✓ Dr. Judd Curtis
Judd.curtis@safmc.net
843-302-8441

Communication and Digital Media Specialist

✓ Nicholas Smillie
Nick.Smillie@safmc.net
843-302-8443

Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator

✓ John Hadley
john.hadley@safmc.net
843-302-8432

Staff Accountant

web Suzanna Thomas
suzanna.thomas@safmc.net
843-571-4368

Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist

web Kathleen Howington
kathleen.howington@safmc.net
843-725-7580

Fishery Social Scientist

✓ Christina Wiegand christina.wiegand@safmc.net
843-302-8437

Fishery Scientist I

Allie Iberle
Allie.iberle@safmc.net
843-225-8135

Citizen Science Project Manager

Meg Withers
Meg.withers@safmc.net
843-725-7577

Public Information Officer

✓ Kim Iverson kim.iverson@safmc.net
843-224-7258

SEDAR

SEDAR Program Manager

Dr. Julie Neer
Julie.neer@safmc.net
843-302-8438

Administrative Officer

✓ Kelly Klasnick kelly.klasnick@safmc.net
843-763-1050

SEDAR Coordinator

web Emily Ott Emily.Ott@safmc.net
937-479-6171

SLC Com-Sub
 Mon 12/8/25

First	Last	Suffix	Position	Affiliation
✓ Trish	Murphey		Chair	NC Division of Marine Fisheries
			Vice-Chair	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
✓ Jessica	McCawley			Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
✓ Robert	Beal			GA DNR Coastal Resources Division
✓ Carolyn	Belcher			
✓ 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
	Warner-			
Deirdre	Kramer			Office of Marine Conservation OES / OMC
TBD	TBD			U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Representative

December 2025

Attendee Report: Council Meeting

Report Generated:

01/02/2026 02:52 PM EST

Webinar ID

690-222-395

Actual Start Date/Time

12/08/2025 10:20 AM EST

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

First Name

Aines

Alex

Barbieri

Luiz

Barrows

Katline

Bianchi

Alan

Blough

Heather

Boots

Benjamin

Borland

Gary

Brouwer

Myra

Bunting

Matthew

Cermak

Bridget

Crosson

Scott

Degan

Jacqui

Drexler

Michael

Dukes

Amy

Dyar

Ben

Farrell

Delaney

Floyd

Brad

Foss

Kristin

Geeslin

Dakus

Gore

Karla

HEMILRIGHT

DEWEY

Hadley

John

Helies

Frank

Helmey

Judy

Hildreth

Delaine

Howington

Kathleen

Iberle

Allie

Iverson

Kim

Keppler	Blaik
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Kolmos	Kevin
Larkin	Michael
Law	Alexander
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Levy	Mara
Locke	Charles
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	Kerry
Masi	Michelle
McClair	Genine
Mehta	Nikhil
Merck	Nicole
Murphey	Trish
Newman	Thomas
OCain	Elijah
ODEN	JEFF
Ott	Emily
Padgett	Kathryn
Palmrose	Kristin
Phillips	Charlie
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reichert	Marcel
Reynolds	Kris
Roller	Tom
Runde	Brendan
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Smart	Tracey
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spurgin	Kali
Stasser	Katie
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Vara	Mary
Walsh	Jason
Walsh	Mick

Walter	John
Westwood	William
curtis	Joe
gwin	earl sonny
peters	sophonda
sandorf	scott
thomas	suz
vincent	matthew
zales	bob
Allen	Shanae
Atkinson	Seth
Baertlein	Heather
Bailey	Adam
Baker	Scott
Banks	Kesley
Barile	Peter
Binion-Rock	Samantha
Bogdan	Jennifer
Bruger	Catherine
Chandler	Alexander
Coleman	Heather
Cushner	Sascha
DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
Dunn	Courtney
Glaser	Danica
Guyas	Martha
HKLNdcltSsjAQdiDatg	ItcEDCXvOzBwWesnJ
Heyman	William
Humphreys	Aaron
Judy	Gabrielle
Keener	Paula
Markwith	Anne
Matzen	Eric
McWaters	Mark
Miele	Valentina
Moir	James
Muffley	Brandon
Neer	Julie
Nuttall	Matthew
Owens	Marina
Pace	Sara
Porter	Mark
Reed	John
Rettig	Adam

Ricken
Rodgers
Sawicki
Sedberry
Seeley
Stewart
Turley
Vecchio
Wamer
Warren
White
Williams
cox

Joshua
Phil
Kim
George
Matthew
Mark
Brendan
Julie
David
Camilla
Geoff
Erik
Jack