

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER ADVISORY PANEL

**Town & Country Inn
Charleston, SC**

October 17-19, 2018

Summary Minutes

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Members

David Moss
Jim Attack
Vincent Bonura
Richard Gomez
Deidra Jeffcoat
Gary Manigault
Jim Moring
Kerry Marhefka
Andy Piland

James Hull
Randall Beardsley
Dick Brame
Rusty Hudson
Robert Lorenz
Randy McKinley
Red Munden
James Paskiewicz
Dr. Todd Kellison

Council Members

Jessica McCawley
Chris Conklin

Mel Bell
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Council Staff

Gregg Waugh
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Chip Collier
John Hadley
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Kelsey Dick
Kim Iverson
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Observers and participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Town & Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, October 17, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, everybody, for coming. We have a few new faces today, and so welcome to your first meeting. I think there is three of you guys. Thank you very much for coming and taking the time out. We'll start off, as we usually do, we'll do a quick run-through of everybody. If you could just state your name and kind of the neck of the woods that you're from and what you represent. Richard, do you want to start on your end, and we'll work our way around?

MR. GOMEZ: Richard Gomez, and I represent the Key West Charter Boat Association, and I own a fishing business down in Key West.

MR. BONURA: Good afternoon. I'm Vincent Bonura, a commercial fisherman out of south Florida, representing Going Off Enterprises, Inc.

MR. LORENZ: Bob Lorenz, recreational fisherman from North Carolina, and I live in Wilmington.

MR. BRAME: Dick Brame, and I'm the Regional Fisheries Director for the Coastal Conservation Association.

MR. MUNDEN: Red Munden, and I live in Morehead City, North Carolina, and I'm retired from the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

MR. ATACK: Jim Atack, Oak Island, North Carolina, recreational for-hire and commercial spear fisher.

MS. JEFFCOAT: Deidra Jeffcoat, recreational for-hire, Savannah, Georgia.

MR. MOSS: David Moss, recreational fisherman from south Florida, Chair. Also, we have Dr. Todd Kellison who is participating via webinar, and so you might hear him chime in every now and then.

MR. HULL: Jimmy Hull from Ponce Inlet, Florida, commercial.

MR. MCKINLEY: Randy McKinley, Topsail Island, North Carolina, commercial, and I'm also a federal dealer. I pack fish for a few boats.

MR. HUDSON: Rusty Hudson, Daytona Beach, Florida, commercial.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Randy Beardsley, Daytona Beach, Florida, recreational.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: James Paskiewicz, lifelong yellowtail snapper fisherman out of Marathon, Florida, commercial, and I also act as a gathering point for seven boats on a daily basis.

MS. MARHEFKA: Kerry Marhefka, commercial dealer, here.

MR. PILAND: Andy Piland, charter boat captain, Hatteras, North Carolina.

MR. MORING: Jim Moring, Charleston, and I'm the owner of the Restaurant Amen Street Fish Raw Bar.

MR. MANIGAULT: Gary Manigault, Charleston, South Carolina, charter captain.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Thank you, all. Before we move into approval of the agenda, Jessica wanted to -- Our brand-new Council Chair, and so congratulations and welcome, and she wanted to say a few quick words.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, David. Yes, I am the new Council Chair, but I'm also the Snapper Grouper Management Committee Chair, and we have also with us Mel Bell. He's the Vice Chair of the Snapper Grouper Management Committee, and he is the Vice Chair of the council, and so I just wanted to take a minute and say thank you to you guys for your service, and thank you for looking at all the things that the council is working on and providing advice on that. It's very important to us, and I know that sometimes you guys think that we're not really listening to what you guys are saying or that we don't take into consideration what you all say, but it is very important to us.

I can tell you, when I go through the briefing book for the council meeting, one of the first things I look at is the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel report and the motions, especially the motions that come out under Other Business. I also look at the SSC panel report and things like that, and I think that other council members do the same thing, and I know that there's some concerns that sometimes when the report itself is given that we don't necessarily have a lot of questions.

Well, that is likely because Myra has been doing a great job of going into the amendments themselves and pulling out the discussion and the motions that the AP made and putting them into the amendments themselves, and so, when we have the particular actions that we're trying to consider, she's been pasting the information from you all's discussion into the amendments, and she reminds us that, look, this is what the AP said, and this is what the AP talked about, and usually that's when we start getting into the discussion about what the AP had concerns about or how the motion came about or what the motion was and those types of things.

Also, I can tell you that the items that you bring up during Other Business are very important and that we look at those things and oftentimes, in the Snapper Grouper Committee, under Other Business, we bring back the items that you all have been talking about, and we have a similar discussion, and, oftentimes, we say, well, wait, what did the AP say about this, or I've heard something about that, and so I do think that you all's comments and your work is very important to us, and I appreciate everything that you guys do.

Also, I can tell you that, starting at our meeting a couple of weeks ago, we also spent a lot of time in the committees making a list of the items that we wanted you guys to comment on, because I know sometimes it seems a little strange and like, okay, we're looking at this, and we don't really know what to do with it, and so we've been trying to be more specific at this past meeting about what we're looking for your input on, and you can certainly provide input on other things, but we're going to try to be more specific from here on out about what we are looking for you to comment on.

We spent a lot of time, and Myra is going to get into it, talking about you all's issues with the Permits Office and wanting a presentation both to the council and to you guys from the Permits Office, and we have a number of points that we want you guys to look at on that, and so thank you for letting me speak, Mr. Chairman, and I just wanted to say that I'm here the whole time you guys are meeting, and Mel is here also, and I think that we're going to have another couple of council members here, and so, if you have questions, we can try to get them answered, if you're wondering what the council was saying, but I just wanted to say thanks, and we take your input very seriously, and we try to look at all the things that you guys bring up, and we're going to try to be more specific about what we're going to ask you guys to look at, so that you guys can provide the most usable input that you can.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I'm sure there will be questions, and so thank you. We will do a quick approval of the agenda, unless anybody has anything to change or add, and we'll make a quick motion for that. Seeing no objections, we will approve the agenda. Then the minutes from the April 2018 meeting as well, and did anybody have any changes, amendments, additions, subtractions, divisions, multiplications? Seeing none, that is also approved. Then I will open it now for public comment. All right. We're moving quickly along. We'll move right into the Status and Overview of Amendments Under Review, and I will turn that over to Ms. Myra. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, David, and welcome everybody. I also wanted to just sort of apologize a little bit, because the briefing book -- I tried to have that to you guys two weeks ahead of your meeting, so you have plenty of time to look through the material, but there's a storm that kind of got in the way of that, and so that's why you only had a week to review the material, and so sorry about that. I hope that you guys had a chance to at least look through some of it, and we'll get started with Attachment 1a in your briefing book, and that's -- I try to do a very quick summary, so that you guys can keep up with all of the amendments and things the council is doing for snapper grouper management, and they do have a lot on their plate for that particular fishery all the time.

This attachment gives you a little blurb on each of the amendments. We're going to spend a little bit of extra time on the two visioning amendments, because there's been some changes, and I wanted to make sure that you were aware of the things that the council did at their October meeting, and then I will just give you a run-through of some of the other things that are sort of being developed, and we'll go from there.

The first one in the list is the Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26, and the AP has been discussing this amendment for several meetings now. In October, the council took a look at it and made some changes, and so I wanted to update you on that. For those of you new to the AP, this is an amendment that's been -- I guess we started it back in 2016, and so it's been under development for some time, and it's a result of the council's vision project.

They did a visioning project that started in -- Gosh, I can't even remember. 2012, I think it was, and we did a series of stakeholder meetings up and down the coast, and the council approved the vision blueprint for the snapper grouper fishery, which is essentially a strategic plan for that fishery, and so I will direct you first then to your Attachment 1b, and I will quickly go through that, and so, because I didn't have a lot of time to prepare the briefing book for you, what I did here is this is pretty much the same exact document that the Snapper Grouper Committee used

during their meeting a couple of weeks ago to discuss this amendment, and so that's why it looks the way it does.

It has a little bit of background, and I'm not going to go through that. That's for those of you who have recently joined the AP. The amendment has six actions. We started out with many more, and, over the course of the last couple of years, the council has pared it down, and so this amendment is looking at establishing a deepwater species aggregate, and then they want to look at specifying a recreational season for those deepwater species, and I will go through these actions one-by-one, so you'll see what I'm talking about here and which species are being affected.

They want to specify the aggregate bag limit for that deepwater species aggregate and remove the minimum size limit for three deepwater snappers that still have a twelve-inch minimum size limit, and the idea there is these are deepwater species, and they have a high release mortality, and so why have a minimum size limit, and so we want to do away with that and reduce the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the EEZ off of east Florida, because there were some changes there, and now there's a discrepancy in the minimum size in state waters and federal waters, and so we want to fix that. Then modify the aggregate bag limit for that twenty-fish aggregate.

The council is going to be looking at this amendment at their December meeting, and the intent is for them to consider it for final approval, and so we're just putting the finishing touches on it. We've done the public hearings, and we've done all that stuff. Here is your purpose and need statement. The council didn't have any changes there, and so, as I said, it's to address stakeholder input on recreational management measures for this fishery.

Here is Action 1, and so, under the no action, you're always going to have what's currently in place, and these are the various aggregates under the recreational snapper grouper fishery, and so we have this nice little color-coded table to sort of help you visualize it, and, like I said, we're putting the finishing touches on the amendment, and so this is going to change a little bit, and so this is what is currently in place.

The council picked their preferred alternative in October, and the deepwater species aggregate that they would like to establish would include snowy grouper, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, and wreckfish, and so these are all deepwater species. The other alternative that they considered was to have the three deepwater snappers included in there, and they chose not to include that. Apparently there were going to be some issues, because those three snapper species are actually included in the ten-snapper aggregate, and, if they included those three in the deepwater species aggregate and reduced the bag limit, that was probably going to impact some folks, especially I believe in south Florida, and so they went away from that, and so that is where we are, and so I have pasted the motions that the council approved a couple of weeks ago at their meeting.

I am going to kind of go through this quickly, unless there are questions, and, by all means, stop me if that is the case, and so, for the recreational season, you can see, in yellow highlights, to sort of just point out the changes the council made, and so, initially, they had one preferred sub-alternative for the recreational season, and so this is when fishing for these deepwater species would be allowed.

Right now, we have a recreational season for blueline tilefish and snowy grouper, which is May 1 through August 31, and so their preferred, Sub-Alternative 2b, would establish those months as the season for the entire deepwater species aggregate.

When they talked about this a couple of weeks ago, they directed us to add a sub-alternative, which they also picked as their preferred, to include January 1 through the end of February as another allowable period of time to fish for these deepwater species. They also said we would like to look at analysis, including the December through January season for the deepwater species, and so we're in the process of analyzing those data, and we're going to bring this back to the council in December, and they're going to decide which preferred to stick with, and it could be that they are going to go with both their preferreds, or they may go back to one or the other, and I don't know what they're going to do, but this is what they're going to be looking at in December. Any questions there?

MR. GOMEZ: I just had a statement. Captain Brice, President of our Key West Charter Boat Association, I don't think he will be commenting on this, but he is going to be writing something to me, emailing me something, tonight, and so, with everyone's approval, I would like to be able to read it tomorrow in reference to if he has comments on this subject or not, but I know he has things to say about the yellowtail.

MR. MOSS: Yes, that's fine with me, Richard. Just remind me, if you would, tomorrow when we get started, and we'll make some time for that.

MR. LORENZ: It's obvious, but I just wanted to make sure. The Preferred Sub-Alternative 2e, that would be the season, and it isn't in addition.

MS. BROUWER: Well, since they currently have two preferreds, they could, like I said, retain both preferreds, in which case you would have January through the end of February that you could fish for these species, and then you would not be allowed to fish for them from the end of February through the first of May, and then you would be allowed to fish for them again, but they could change their mind about that.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you. Just out of interest to me, because, unfortunately, with the hurricane and all, I couldn't attend the council meeting, and I don't need to know the representative, but what state did that come from, because it's kind of interesting to me, because I always loved the January/February season to go out. I can't pursue that fishery, but I remember the days when we could get snapper and grouper, and there is nothing finer than January through March to do that, and so just out of interest.

MS. BROUWER: My recollection is that the folks from Florida were talking about those months being very important for tourism, and they would like to also include that in the analysis for the council to consider.

I am going to move on, and, also, you have here a little bit of discussion, which is, again, what the council used to go through this amendment in October, and so this is all going to be updated based on the changes they've made, and you have here some predicted reductions in harvest, and I should mention that the recreational data are quite uncertain. We don't have a lot of data on deepwater

species in particular, and then, when you start paring it down and saying, oh, we just want these months, then your amount of information that you have available for the analysis is even smaller.

The other thing that you should keep in mind is there is a lot of -- I shouldn't say a lot, but there are regulations in state waters that are different than those in federal waters, and so you can have conflicting regulations that reflect in these numbers, and Chip is going to probably fill in some stuff.

DR. COLLIER: I do want to point out the 2c and 2d here are for the previous alternatives that were struck-through. The new alternatives haven't been analyzed yet, and so we're working on getting those numbers together. It's only been a couple of weeks since they did it, and so we're getting the data together and making sure the analyses are proper.

MR. ATACK: If the Preferred Alternative 2 goes through, does that mean, really, you would only have fishing in the deep water from May 1 through August 31, if it was Preferred Sub-Alternative 2b, and they would see like no fishing the rest of the time of year in the deep water?

MS. BROUWER: For that group of species, yes, that is the intent.

MR. ATACK: What other species would they be fishing for in deep water?

MS. BROUWER: The intent is that the council -- This is something that we've been talking about for some time and something that responds to stakeholder concerns, and so we already have recreational seasons for some of the deepwater species, as I mentioned, for snowy and blueline, and so it makes sense that, if you have it for those species, and you want to reduce bycatch, and so that would make the same rule for the whole grouping, and so that's the rationale behind that.

Moving on to Action 3 then, this is the one that still -- We're talking about still this group of species, and this one would set the bag limit, and so you have your no-action alternative that shows what's in place, and the reason the snapper aggregate is in there is because one of the alternatives in that previous action considered those three deepwater snappers, but we're going to that out of there.

Here are the alternatives that they looked at, and their preferred is to have it be three fish per person per day, but keeping the existing restrictions that are in place for golden tile, which is one per person per day, snowy grouper and wreckfish, which is one per vessel per day, and so those would stay in place, and so they're basically just keeping the same grouper aggregate that was already in place, but now it's going to apply to this group of species. Any questions there? Okay. Then, again, you've got some figures here, and this shows you the percent of trips that are reaching the combined bag limits for these deepwater species, and so you see that the majority don't even get to the three per person per day. As Chip mentioned, these analyses are -- They will all be updated based on the council's new preferred alternatives.

Then Action 4, the council's preferred is to take away that minimum size limit, and that's pretty straightforward, and then the same thing for triggerfish, and so their preferred from the beginning has been to reduce that minimum size limit back down to twelve inches fork length, and that would match what's currently in place in federal waters for the rest of the South Atlantic states and for state waters off of east Florida, creating less confusion and easier for law enforcement.

For this one, there is a chance that reducing the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish is going to increase landings and that you're going to reach the recreational ACL a little bit sooner, and so that's what we're expecting, and so you've got some more information here, in terms of economic stuff, and then Action 6 is to modify the bag limit for that twenty-fish aggregate, which is currently just a cap, and so twenty of that whole group that you see up here under Alternative 1, and the council picked their preferred in October, and they would like to specify that no more than ten fish within that aggregate can be of any one species. You can only have ten gray triggerfish, you can only have ten scup, whatever, and that's the maximum of any one species for that aggregate. Again, we will update the analyses and bring these back to the council, and that is it for this amendment, and so, unless there's any questions, I will keep going with my overview.

The next one that I wanted to update you on was the commercial amendment, and so this is the sister amendment that addresses commercial regulations, and so the council actually approved this amendment for review, which means it will be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service to begin the rulemaking process here in a couple of weeks, and they did make a couple of changes that I wanted to show you guys, and, also, the council had not seen the economic analyses for this amendment until this past meeting, and so this is new for you guys as well, and I wanted to just make sure that you had a chance to review that information.

This one is a little lengthier, and there is nine actions, and this one looks mainly at establishing commercial split seasons and modifying trip limits, and so they're looking at blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, greater amberjack, red porgy, vermilion, a trip limit for the other jacks complex, a size limit for almaco, and then Actions 8 and 9 are the same as in the recreational amendment, except for the commercial sector, and so I will go over them one at a time.

The council did make a little edit to the purpose and need, for the purpose statement for this amendment, and so, just for the record, I will read it. The purpose is to address commercial stakeholder input to enable equitable access for fishermen participating in the snapper grouper fishery and to minimize discards, to the extent practicable, while improving marketability for some species.

Action 1 does that commercial split season for blueline, and they kept their preferred, which is Preferred Alternative 3, and that is to retain the calendar year as the fishing year for blueline and then establish a 100-pound gutted weight trip limit from January through April and then bump that up to 300 pounds from May through December. This is what you've already seen. There is plenty of information in this document, if you want to remind yourself of the predicted closure dates and all that, and so here is some of the economic analysis that I was talking about that the council had just got to see in October, and so what I would pay attention to is these numbers over here.

This kind of ranks the economic benefits for the various alternatives, and so their preferred, which is Sub-Alternative 3a, ranks fifth in terms of economic benefits, and so the council had extensive discussion about this amendment, and, as you will see when we go through action-by-action, a lot of these actions are sort of like a meet-in-the-middle kind of way. It doesn't necessarily mean that it's the best, but it's one that is going to meet the purpose of the amendment to improve access to all stakeholders, and so one-size-fits-all definitely we've seen doesn't really work for our region, and so there is a lot of compromising and give-and-take that has to happen.

For snowy grouper, the council maintained, again, their preferred, which is Alternative 3, and that one would split the ACL into two commercial seasons and allocate it 70 percent to January through June and 30 percent from July through December. Again, and you've got the rollover between seasons and no carryover from year-to-year, the same way that vermilion currently works.

Here, again, you guys had a lot of talk about regulations for blueline and snowy having to sort of go hand-in-hand, to make sure that folks in the Carolinas and folks in Florida have an equal shot at getting some of that ACL, and so, again, you have tables showing predicted closures under the various alternatives, including your preferred here in bold, and then your annual landings and gross revenue and then, again, this economic rank that I was telling you about.

Action 3, this is one of the ones that they switched their preferred. As of October, they had selected Alternative 2 for their preferred for amberjack, and that was to split the ACL evenly, 50/50, between the two seasons. The fishing year for amberjack is different. It starts on March 1, and so you would have 50 percent March through August and 50 percent September through the end of February, keeping that April closure. Then they had selected a trip limit of 1,000 pounds in both seasons.

After discussing this and talking about the economic analyses, it was clear that this previous preferred alternative was going to not allow for the entire ACL to be caught, and so it was not going to be achieving getting fishermen the most money, and so they talked about, again, what's going to be the best compromise here, and they settled on Alternative 3, and so that's their current preferred. This one would divide it up a little bit differently, and so you would get 60 percent at the beginning of the year and 40 percent at the other end, and then your trip limits would be higher in the beginning, 1,200 pounds, and 1,000 pounds for Season 2.

You can see, scrolling down, the closure dates under the various alternatives and then right here is where their previous preferred, I believe, ranked eighth, in terms of economic rank, and their current preferred ranks fourth, and so that's definitely better for the fishing industry. Any questions there or discussion on that one?

MR. ATACK: I guess some of the data is not here that shows that the season had closed due to the ACL being met for some years. I mean, I remember going back, where we had the 1,000-pound trip limit, and then we were kind of keeping the season open year-round, and then it went to the 1,200, and then they had closures, because they caught too many, and so I'm curious about the data. Now we're saying with 1,200 and 1,000 that we're not going to hit the ACL, and so I don't know what has changed.

MS. BROUWER: Well, with amberjack, I guess my recollection, from the discussions that just happened, is Florida wants access to amberjack earlier in the year, because that's when they are targeting other things, like almaco and lesser amberjack and the other jacks. Then the amberjack don't get up to the Carolinas until the fall of the year, and so the idea of having the split season is to still allow Florida their shot at some of it, but then still leave enough so that, when those fish move up the coast and are available to the folks off of the Carolinas, the ACL will not have been caught, and so that was the reasoning there.

In terms of closures, I believe that -- Yes, we had a recent closure, and I believe it was last year, or maybe it was 2016, where the ACL closed fairly early in the year, where the folks in the Carolinas were not able to take advantage of the resource being available to them at that time, and so that's when we started having all these talks about how to kind of even out the playing field for everybody.

MR. ATTACK: Right, and that's where this Alternative 2b came from, was to make it 1,000 pounds, so that that wouldn't happen, but now we're at the 1,200 and 1,000, and so something has changed in the predictions on when we're going to close the seasons though.

MS. BROUWER: Well, I can't -- I'm having a hard time remembering everything that was said, but it was, again, one of those things where it was like, okay, this is -- It's going to have to be a compromise. It's going to have to be that it's going to give the North Carolina folks a better chance at getting more fish than they would have otherwise, and so this is where the council has to sort of do this little balancing act, and, even though it's not going to be the best for everybody -- I couldn't tell you exactly what has changed. I mean, the analyses that I'm showing you here, they haven't changed at all, and the only thing that we did that's different is look at the economics a little more closely, and so, beyond that, I don't know what else to tell you.

MR. MOSS: With this plan, we're likely to see a closure in the middle of the two seasons, and one zone won't be able to fish until their season opens, and it makes sense that you're just going to have this closure in the middle and then the other area is going to have access to that fish, correct?

MS. BROUWER: If you look at Table 7 here, the current preferred is 3a here, bolded, and so you're looking at -- It looks like maybe the first season would close in mid-June, and so you might be closed for two weeks before it opens back up, and then the second season, under the 1,000-pound trip limit, we're predicting that there would not be a closure, and so these are, of course, predictions, and we can't really predict if the catch rates are going to stay the same or if fishermen are going to change their behavior, but, yes, there might be a little closure there in the middle.

I will move on to Action 4, which is red porgy, and, here, the council's preferred is the same one that they had when you guys looked at this previously, and so that is to specify the two commercial seasons and allocate the ACL 30 percent to January through April and 70 percent to May through December, and, again, you have the rollover. You would remove the sale and purchase prohibition that's currently in place, and you would put in a sixty-fish trip limit during that first part of the year, and then it would revert back to that 120-fish trip limit from May through December.

The idea here is to turn some of those discards that we know are happening early in the year, when fishermen are targeting b-liners and gray triggerfish, and turn those into landings, and so they didn't make any changes there, and so, under -- You can see here, under the preferred, there is no predicted closure under that, either way that you split the ACL, and so we're not looking at it closing early. Then, in terms of dollars here, the preferred sub-alternative ranks second, in terms of net economic benefits.

For vermilion, this is another one where they changed their preferred. Their previous preferred was Alternative 2, and so that would have retained the January through December fishing year with the 50/50 split, and it would have kept the trip limit reduction, the same trip limit of 1,000

pounds down to 500 when 75 percent of the ACL is met, and then, for Season 2, it would have modified the trip limit to 750 pounds and removed the reduction. That was their previous preferred.

They talked about how trip limit reductions seem to really not have a whole lot of effect in lengthening the season. Maybe it will lengthen it for a week or two, but they are very administratively burdensome for the agency. They have to prepare all these packages, and fishermen have to get notified, and it's a big ordeal, and the ACL for vermilion is getting ready to go up, and I will talk to you about that a little bit more. There was the stock assessment that was completed recently that indicated that catch levels can go up.

The council reasoned that there is no need to keep that trip limit reduction, and they went with Alternative 4 as their preferred, and so that would retain that 50/50 split, and it would get rid of the trip limit reductions, and it would put a 1,000-pound trip limit for both seasons, and so, again, we're looking at -- This table here is for the -- We are looking at a closure maybe April 14, under 1,000 pounds, and no trip limit reduction, and then, for the second season, September 7, and then, in terms of the economic analyses, this alternative actually ranked number-one, in terms of economic benefits. Any questions on vermilion? Okay.

For almaco, they are looking at putting in a commercial minimum size limit of twenty inches fork length. They had a little bit more discussion as to why they wanted to do this, because we were like, well, minimum size limits don't really generally minimize discards, and it wasn't clear how this action sort of went to the purpose and need of the amendment, but then they had more discussion about it, and there is a need to improve marketability of the fish, and fish that are smaller than twenty inches are typically not -- They don't sell well or whatever, and so you are, in fact, reducing discards to the extent practicable, and you are improving marketability of your product, and so that's their rationale for going with that twenty-inch minimum size limit. They didn't change their preferred there.

Then, for the other jacks complex, they are looking at putting in a 500-pound gutted weight trip limit. This one includes almaco jack, banded rudderfish, and lesser amberjack. They did not make any changes to this preferred, and so, for this one, when you combine the trip limit and the minimum size limit for almaco, the analyses are predicting that there might be a closure in the middle of September, and so, in the past few years, I think we've seen closures -- By August, that fishery is shut down, and so this would probably stretch it out another couple of weeks.

Here is your economic analysis, showing that it ranks seventh, and then the other two we have already been through, and so this is removing those minimum size limits for the deepwater snappers, and that's pretty straightforward, and then for triggerfish, reducing the minimum size limit also for the commercial sector. That is it for these two amendments. Are there any questions?

MR. MUNDEN: Just one comment, Myra. It's very helpful to be able to look at the economic analysis when we look at these various amendments. I don't recall that much economic information being provided to the AP in the past, but I find that very helpful.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you for that, Red.

MR. HUDSON: Myra, with the entire amendment, since it's been voted up to go to NMFS to come out for another comment period, is there a rough timeline that you can give us before we see implementation of like the fourteen-inch on the triggerfish and going to twelve?

MS. BROUWER: The council gave us direction to prepare the amendment for submission, and so that's going to take us a little while to finish it up, especially since there were changed preferences, and so we have to tweak the analyses and all that and package it up and send it to NMFS. Then, from the time we send it to them, typically it takes about six months for regulations to be in place, and so we're looking at hopefully mid-2019 that these things are going to be effective.

MR. ATACK: You've got on here the expected change in revenue, and you also do the increase in private cost ranking, and is there a dollar value that we can put against the private cost rank, because, when you look at the gross revenues, a lot of them there is very little difference, until you get down to a certain point, and so, even though they're ranked one through twenty, really it's six through fourteen are a wash or whatever, but then the numbers for the revenue -- Can you also put the numbers in there to increase in private costs?

MS. BROUWER: Unfortunately, I can't answer those questions. I am not an economist, and I don't have a solid understanding of these analyses. The person in the Region who conducted the analysis actually came to the council meeting so that he could address any questions that came up, and so I apologize, but I don't know that I can answer those questions.

MR. ATACK: I don't know that we need the answer right now, but, in future tables, if you had that, you could see whether it's a \$1,000 difference or a \$50,000 difference, and it's kind of nice to see the gross revenue change in real dollars, but, if we had a way to quantify the increased costs, that would also be helpful, too.

MR. HADLEY: For now, we don't have a way to put a number value on quantifying the increase in costs for a commercial trip due to an increased bag limit or increased trip limit. It's more of a directional kind of increased costs or decreased costs kind of assessment.

MR. ATACK: Right, but you've got some number there in order to rank it one through fifteen. You have somehow put some number on there, and so you have some basis for that, and you do have it quantified somehow.

MR. HADLEY: There again, I wasn't the one who did the analysis, and so I would have to go back, but I would venture to say, as far as ranking one over the other, it's probably based on that change in revenue estimate that was provided.

MR. ATACK: That's not the way it's described, because it says increase in private costs versus increase in revenue. Cost is one thing and revenue is another.

MR. HADLEY: I will go back and look at that amendment, and I will have a better answer for you. Does that sound good? All right.

MS. BROUWER: Moving on, again, this is just an update. Regulatory Amendment 28 deals with golden tilefish, and so recall that, back in June, the council requested that the National Marine

Fisheries Service issue a temporary rule to reduce overfishing of golden tilefish. The latest stock assessment indicated that the stock was undergoing overfishing, and so the agency approved the temporary rule, and, when that happens, usually that means the council is working on an amendment to make those temporary regulations long-term, and so this is the amendment that would put the regulations to reduce overfishing of golden tilefish in place.

I have put in here what the total annual catch limit will be once this amendment is implemented, and we expect this to be in place by January 1, which is the beginning of the fishing year, and so your total ACL for golden tile would be 342,000 pounds gutted weight, and so it's a pretty substantial reduction from where it used to be a year ago, and so the commercial ACL, which is 97 percent of the total, would be 331,740, and then that gets divvied up between the longline component and hook-and-line component, and you can see what those poundages are, and your recreational ACL is specified in numbers of fish, and so it's about 2,300 fish, down from I think it was 3,019 or something like that. Any questions on that?

MR. LORENZ: I just had a question. That recreational ACL, when I saw that, I always thought that was just to deal with bycatch, but that is a real fishing opportunity number, right? Okay. It's tiny. I mean, who wants to go that far out for that, but okay.

MS. BROUWER: Now that you mention that, Bob, too, that's one of the reasons, I think, that the council is also looking at a recreational season for these deepwater species, because a lot of them have very tiny ACLs, and so the idea is to just sort of constrain the harvest and the effort to just a few months of the year.

Moving on, this Abbreviated Framework 2 is the one -- You guys have not seen this amendment. It was one that -- The abbreviated framework procedure is something the council uses in order to adjust catch levels when all that you need to do is change an ACL, and it has to be done quickly for whatever reason, and so, for vermilion and black sea bass, we have stock assessments that were reviewed and approved by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and that came to the council in June. At that time, the council said let's prepare an amendment to put these catch levels in place, and so that's what this does, and so we brought this back to them in October, and they discussed it, and they have approved it, and so this would put in place different catch levels for these two species, and here's a table showing for vermilion.

I have the ACLs that are currently in place, and so the ACL for vermilion is currently about 1.3 million pounds, and so it looks like it's going to be going up to about 1.5-and-change million pounds, and you can see the breakdown here of commercial and recreational, and you have both pounds whole weight and pounds gutted weight and then what the ACLs would be for the next five or so years, and then they remain at that level until the council modifies them.

For black sea bass, the catch levels actually go down, and so, currently, the total ACL for black sea bass is about 1.7 million pounds, which is divided into -- I think the recreational gets about a little over a million pounds, and the commercial gets about 800,000 pounds, and so you can see what those numbers are going to be once this amendment goes into place. For 2019, the commercial sector is looking at 327,000 pounds, and the recreational is looking at 433,000 pounds, and so it's a pretty substantial reduction here for black sea bass. Questions?

MR. ATACK: Why do they drop each year versus a constant number each year?

MS. BROUWER: These ACLs are based on projections, and so when they do these models that spit out all the fishing levels and ABCs and whatnot, sometimes there is -- The biomass is higher than the MSY, and so, over time, you're sort of fishing down this biomass, and your ACLs keep going down, and this is sort of how I understand it, but a stock assessment scientist in the audience can probably correct me.

We have several species that that happens. The council does have a choice. They can set an ACL at an equilibrium level, which means it's kind of a level that is sustained over time, and they have done that for some species, but they also can just go with the projections that ratchets down the harvest level a little bit each year.

MR. ATACK: Does that mean we're taking more fish than we should be the first year and the next year, and therefore we're depleting the biomass, and so then the ACLs drop because of that?

MS. BROUWER: No, you're not depleting the biomass. Sometimes you have like surplus of biomass that is above your maximum sustainable yield, and so, each year, you can fish less. Maybe I'm not making sense, but we have several species that this happens for. For golden tilefish, the council made the choice, when they set that ACL, before changing it back just now, to set it at that equilibrium level, and so it just depends on --

MR. ATACK: I just remember, in the old rebuilding plans, you would have a value, and usually the value would go up each year as the stock rebuilt, which gave you higher ACLs, and this is the reverse. It's almost like you're frontloading your mortgage and then your payments go up as you go in time, and so it just seems like we're taking more than we should be for that number to be dropping, and that was my question. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Right, but these are not under a rebuilding plan, and so these are not projections that intend to rebuild the stock, and so maybe that's where the confusion comes.

MR. MANIGAULT: At our last meeting, I brought to the panel that we have a discussion in regard to bringing the size limit for recreational in line with the commercial, and I wanted to know what happened with that, because it was thirteen for recreational and eleven for commercial.

MS. BROUWER: Sure, and so the council had that action actually included in the vision blueprint recreational amendment for some time, and you may remember that it was in there, but what happened was the assessment for black sea bass was delayed, and, because of the delay in the data, council staff were not able -- We were not going to have the data that we needed to conduct the analysis in time, and also this was when we were expecting all these revisions to the Marine Recreational Information Program that were coming, that are still coming our way, and we'll talk about that in a little bit, and so the council directed us to remove that action from the amendment to get the results of this assessment and then figure out what they're going to do.

They did talk about the size limit being a factor and sea bass having a lot of discards. We're seeing a lot of discards in that fishery, and that did come up during the council, and so it's something that they're aware of it. It just happened that that action -- Timing-wise, we just didn't have the information that was needed to conduct the analysis that was going to have to be put together.

MR. MANIGAULT: Am I to assume that they're going to revisit it at some point in time and it's not going to just go away? It just seems practical that the commercial size limit and the recreational size limit be in line with each other, because the recreational guys are at a disadvantage and, like you said, more discards.

MS. BROUWER: I imagine that the council does intend to look at more changes to management of black sea bass in the coming years. I mean, certainly this is a reduction here, and we're getting some indication that that stock is not doing well, and so I think the council is probably going to have to look at changing some things for sea bass, and I'm sure they're going to consider the size limit as one of those things.

MR. MANIGAULT: I am not trying to push the envelope or be difficult in any way, shape, form, or fashion, but I think that's because of the fact that those guys are harvesting them at eleven inches versus thirteen.

MR. HULL: Representing the commercial side, I would say that, if you didn't have 95 percent of your recreational sea bass being discarded that the stock would probably be a whole lot better than it is right now, and it doesn't seem to be helping the stock, because the next stock -- They're already taking a big reduction because of the results of the stock assessment, and so I think that, when you harvest a fish, you should be able to keep it, period, and not sit there and just discard to catch a size-limit fish, but that's my point of view. There is a lot to be learned about size limits and the results on a stock. I don't blame you for wanting the eleven-inch. Believe me, I've got it, and so I'm happy with that, and I want to keep it. I don't want to go to thirteen inches, because I will just be discarding more and more and more and killing fish for no reason.

MR. MANIGAULT: That's what we're doing on the recreational side, throwing them back.

MR. HUDSON: When we went from the 309,000-pound ACL, we were pretty much catching that every year, but we had all these bass pots and the whole nine yards, and so there were closures. A lot of times, it could be as early as late spring or summer, or sometimes it was late winter during that period, as early as 2008, all the way to when they banned the use of the pots, and then, after that, we plummeted. That 780,000-pound, now we were looking at a 234,000 or 243,000, and essentially -- Of course, I can't tell if this is -- Yes, that's gutted weight in the old numbers, for the 309,000, and so we're definitely going to be closer earlier with the black sea bass under the current trip limit, and, as to the eleven-inch for the recreational and that ninety-some percent discard rate, we are all for getting the recreational back in line with the commercial.

MS. BROUWER: One thing that happened this week is the Scientific and Statistical Committee met in this room the last couple of days, and one thing they did is they looked at the revisions that were done to the black sea bass, vermilion snapper, blueline tilefish, and red grouper stock assessments to include the revisions in the recreational estimates as a result of the changes in the MRIP program, and so the council is going to be getting the recommendations and results of that in December, and so you can probably expect there to be a little bit more discussion about what needs to happen, just so you know.

Moving on to Amendment 42, this is one that deals with approving additional sea turtle release gears for the commercial snapper grouper fishery and also adjusting the framework so that the council can more quickly modify sea turtle and other protected resources release gear and handling

requirements in the future, and so the council did not talk about this amendment in October. They are going to be looking at it again in December, and I believe the intent -- Well, don't hold me to it. I'm not going to say anything more about it, but I was going to tell you that I think we're having public hearings, but I can't remember at this point. There's a lot of snapper grouper amendments happening right now.

Then we have blueline tilefish, and this one I think we've talked about before. It's kind of been on the back-burner for some time. Recall that the SSC reviewed the results of the latest stock assessment for blueline tilefish, SEDAR 50, back in October of last year, and then they provided catch level recommendations only south of Hatteras, because that's how the assessment was conducted, and so there's been a lot of activity to try to figure out how are the management agencies going to manage the portion north of Hatteras, and so we have that little wedge north of Hatteras to the North Carolina/Virginia border that is managed under the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and above North Carolina/Virginia goes to the Mid-Atlantic. They are still trying to sort of all of that out, and then, on top of that, we've got all these MRIP revisions that just came down the line, and so this one is sort of on hold, and the council intends to continue work on it in 2019.

MR. GOMEZ: Can we go back to that sea turtle device just for a moment? You said there were some new ones approved, and do you know the size of those, by any chance?

MS. BROUWER: Let me get -- Christina is the staff person that's been working on that amendment, and so, if you give her just a couple of seconds, she can probably answer that question for you.

MS. WIEGAND: There were three new gears that were approved, and one of them is the collapsible hoop net, and this can be used in place of the dip net, once this amendment has been approved, and it has to be -- It's got to be capable of lifting a minimum of 100 pounds with a minimum diameter of thirty-one inches, a minimum bag depth of thirty-eight inches, and a rope handle length of six feet, or 150 percent of the freeboard height, whichever of those two is greater.

Then the other net that was approved is the small sea turtle hoist, and that one also has to be capable of lifting 100 pounds, with a minimum inside diameter of thirty-one inches, but it doesn't have a minimum bag depth, and that can also be used in place of the dip net, once this amendment is approved. Then the other one is a dehooker device.

MR. GOMEZ: With the collapsible, I would imagine that it closes in on itself and then it could be stowed very easily?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, it's supposed to reduce to about half of its original diameter.

MR. GOMEZ: I still don't understand why we need that at all, truly. I don't even get that one.

MS. WIEGAND: These are just additional options. It's not creating any new regulations, and so, if you're already in compliance, you'll still be in compliance once this amendment is implemented. These are just additional options.

MR. PILAND: Has there ever been a number provided with the frequency of interaction with sea turtles with fishing in our area?

MS. BROUWER: We do include -- I am picturing in my head this table that we include in our snapper grouper amendments that quantifies the number of lethal takes, but I can't quite remember what those numbers are, but we do have that information, and I can look that up for you.

MR. HUDSON: I have taught those classes for a couple of years, and this is an improvement for smaller boats, because it's easier to store this type of equipment, and it's easier to maneuver with. Believe me, there is a lot of folks that has complained about having huge nets and stuff built around your freeboard and the length of reaching out there and stuff, and some of these animals, besides sea turtles that we also deal with, with this careful handling and release protocol, are animals with zero takes and stuff like that, and so we're lucky that we're even operating, in some cases, under the Protected Species stuff.

MR. FREEMAN: How could it be mandatory to have this on a snapper grouper permit, but you don't have to take a class in order to learn how to use the equipment?

MS. BROUWER: I am not sure, Jim. I don't know. Christina is saying, from the back of the room, that the class is not mandatory.

MR. FREEMAN: That's what I'm saying, but why do I have to carry the equipment then? Why is the equipment mandatory if the class isn't? Why do I have equipment that I don't know how to use, supposedly? I know it's hard to dehook a box, but --

MS. BROUWER: Yes, that's definitely a valid question, and I don't know the answer. I can try to inquire for you.

MR. FREEMAN: The reason I'm asking is I have three snapper grouper, and I have one shark permit. I went to the shark class, and I tried to get my permits for my other boats, and I was not allowed to have them, for my safe turtle handling, on my other boats, because I didn't have a shark permit on those boats. I only had a snapper grouper. I sold my shark permit so I didn't have to go to that class anymore.

MS. BROUWER: I am just taking notes so I know to look for the answer for this. The next amendment, if there's no more comments or questions, is Amendment 46, and so this one you have seen various iterations of it. Right now, the way it's structured, it's going to be looking at a recreational permit and reporting for the private recreational sector, and so, initially, there were some actions in here that you probably remember for best fishing practices, and those are in a different amendment that we're going to talk about. Christina is going to go over that in more detail in a little bit.

For Amendment 46, the council is going to continue working on it in 2019, and we don't really have a very specific timeline. They didn't talk about it in October, and I don't think it's on the agenda for December either, but we're continuing to work on that one and develop that one for them.

Amendment 47, this is the for-hire permit modification, and so this is where the council was considering whether -- Either a moratorium or some kind of limited entry was going to be good for the for-hire portion of the snapper grouper permit, and so we developed an amendment, and we had hearings, and we were scheduled to do some more scoping hearings in October, and the council discussed this amendment and decided to suspend any further work on this amendment. Any questions there?

MR. GOMEZ: You know I have at least one, don't you?

MR. MOSS: Richard, before you go too far with this, because I have a feeling this is going to be probably a lot of discussion, and so one comment and that's fine, but I want to move through this, and I want you to be heard, and don't get me wrong, and so we might have to add this on to Other Business, because I have a sneaking suspicion that there's going to be a lot of comment about this one.

MR. GOMEZ: I realize that we win some and we lose some and that this will come up again, and so I'm not going to make this a huge issue, but I'm just curious why it died so quickly. I don't have the minutes for that meeting, and I tried to find them, but I wasn't able to.

MS. MCCAWLEY: There were a number of points that were brought up, and, if I can't hit them all, then I'm sure that Mel can come to the table and help me. We heard a lot of different viewpoints about this, and we had lengthy discussion, and we talked about how we've been discussing this topic for at least a couple of years, and the comments that we had gotten so far, including comments from the captains, were primarily negative, not wanting it.

Also, there were other people that felt like this was not the right time to do it right now, since the electronic reporting is not all the way through the process, and that it wasn't the right time. There was a lot of discussion, and, if you have more specific questions -- It was a very close vote, and the people that wanted it to move forward -- Some of those folks were wanting it to move forward just to go to the next round of workshops and then discuss it after that next round of workshops in December, and other folks said let's not do the -- The folks that didn't want it said let's not go through the workshops and there is already a lot of folks that don't want it and let's not move forward with this, and so a very close vote, and, ultimately, the decision was to not work on it any longer at this point, and not saying that it wouldn't come back, or not saying that this wasn't something that we would discuss again in the future, but just right now is not the right time, but, if you have more specific questions, I can certainly try to answer them.

MR. HUDSON: We're talking about Amendment 47 that was suspended, and 46 is the reporting, which will go in place sometime later next year, and, a year or two or three down the road, we'll have an idea of the universe, for a change, from North Carolina to the Keys, and I personally felt, based on the vote and the discussion the other day on 47, that you would need a referendum so that you had a majority, because it sounded to me like -- Everything I read, it was the majority that was against it, especially with no reporting in place at this time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: One more thing to add was that -- Like I said, this was a lengthy discussion, and it came up in committee and then it came up again in Full Council, the lengthy discussion, and we voted on it twice in roll call votes. There were a lot of things that were in that document that

people felt like could be addressed now and that you didn't necessarily need the permit modifications or a limited entry program to get to some of those things.

Like, if there are enforcement concerns, a lot of those concerns can be addressed now, and there were other things, everything from professionalizing the fishery, and there were some issues with the way the federally-permitted boats are fishing in state waters, lots of different things, and some of those things, frankly, if the council wants them addressed, they would have to be addressed by the state fish and wildlife agencies in the council's jurisdiction and not the council, and so there were some things in that amendment that you wouldn't necessarily need limited entry to accomplish, I guess is another way that we discussed it, but I will be here if you have more questions.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Jessica, and, again, Richard, I didn't want to cut you off, but I had a feeling that -- Because I know that there was a lot of discussion at various levels of that, and so I didn't want to monopolize too much time today with that, and we can certainly discuss it more tomorrow or the next day.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and so, moving on, I promise that we're almost done. Amendment 45 is one that the council is developing to make changes to the acceptable biological catch control rule, and this is to incorporate new guidelines that would allow to have phase-ins when you have a species that's undergoing overfishing, and so phase-in those reductions, and it would allow some carryover of ABCs, and so it's going to be a really rather complicated amendment, and so you're going to be looking at this in the spring. It's in the beginning process, and the SSC discussed it a little bit, and so you'll see this one again probably in the springtime.

Then Regulatory Amendment 31 is one that would look at changes to the accountability measures for the recreational sector, potentially getting rid of in-season accountability measures, and so you don't have in-season closures, and other measures that could make things a little bit easier for that sector, and the intent here is we all know the issues with the recreational data, and so the council is looking at ways to ease the burden of in-season closures, early closures, for the recreational sector, and so this is an amendment that would modify things not just for snapper grouper, but it's one of those comprehensive things. The council is going to be discussing it in December, but it's, again, in the very early stages of development, and so you will be seeing this one when it's a little further along.

Then you have heard about the South Atlantic for-hire electronic reporting amendment, and this one has been in the works for some time. The council submitted it a while ago, and we've been doing a lot of outreach. Several of you have met Kathleen on our staff, and she's been doing a lot of trainings and webinars up and down the coast. In fact, right now, they're in Florida, this week, and so the council was notified by National Marine Fisheries Service that this amendment had been approved back in June, and so NMFS is currently just developing the platform that they need to have in place in order to implement these requirements, and so we're expecting a final rule to be published in the near future. That is all I have for you, in terms of catching you up on what the council has been up to for snapper grouper. Any questions?

MR. MOSS: All right. Thank you very much, Myra, and, if it's okay with everybody, we haven't been going for too long, and that went pretty quick, and so we'll roll right into Regulatory Amendment 29 with Christina, if you're prepared.

MS. WIEGAND: Like Myra said, I'm going to go over Regulatory Amendment 29 with you, and this is the options paper that was presented to the council at the October meeting, and, since we were sort of short on time, we just included the motions that they made right in this document for you guys to see.

I am not going to spend too much time on the background. I know a lot of you guys have seen the actions in this amendment in some form or another, back when they were in Amendment 43 and then Amendment 46, but now they're all here, all of the best practices and powerheads actions, in this one regulatory amendment.

This all started out of the visioning process and fishermen expressing some concerns about fish that were being discarded and not surviving and if there was a way to sort of inform management and address best fishing practices in order to reduce the number of released fish and improve the survivorship of those fish that are released, and then, additionally, this also includes the alternative that would look at powerheads.

I will skip over the descriptions of venting tools and descending devices, but the one thing that I did include in here is what I have heard, sort of anecdotally from fishermen, as well as reading through surveys and stuff that have been done with fishermen, are concerns about the costs of descending devices, and so here I've got links to a number of different descending device options as well as the price on that website, and I'm sure they do vary a little bit, but those are prices that I found, and there is also links to sort of best fishing practices information, different websites and pamphlets that have been put together by FishSmart as well as some of the state agencies that you can access here.

For reference here, since we're going to be talking about discard mortality a lot, I've got a list of the last few SEDAR assessments that were done and the discard mortality rates for the commercial and recreational sector that were used in those assessments.

The council is going to be looking at this amendment in March of 2019, and they're not going to see it in December, just in order to give staff enough time to properly analyze and put together a full document for them to review, and then they will be looking at approving it for public hearings at the March 2019 meeting, and we would tentatively do those sometime in April or May, and then they would be reviewing those comments at their June meeting. That's the tentative timeline for this amendment.

I will go ahead and jump right into the actions and alternatives, and we've got a number of questions for you guys to address. This first action looks at specifying requirements for the use of descending devices or venting devices when possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit.

Alternative 2 would require a descending device to be onboard a vessel that was possessing snapper grouper species, and then we've got sub-alternatives under there for the private recreational sector, the for-hire sector, and then the commercial sector. Alternative 3 would require a venting device to be onboard a vessel, and then we have, again, got those three sub-alternatives.

The council did quite a bit of editing for this. First, they wanted to make sure to separate private recreational, for-hire, and commercially-permitted vessels, with the understanding that, in terms of using descending devices or venting tools, a for-hire vessel is likely to have different needs than a private recreational vessel, given the number of people onboard. They also moved this Alternative 4, which would have given the one or the other option for venting tools and descending devices. We've also added some definitions to these to sort of properly define what we mean by a descending device or a venting device, and these were pulled directly from the Gulf Council's policy on venting tools and descending devices, and so that's for consistency.

Let's start with the definitions, and I will read them to you, and we'll start with descending devices. This is going to mean an instrument that must release fish at a depth sufficient for the fish to be able to recover from the effects of barotrauma, generally thirty-three feet, or twice the atmospheric pressure at the surface, or greater. The device can be a weighted hook, lip clamp, or box that will hold the fish while it is lowered to depth. The device should be capable of releasing the fish automatically, releasing the fish by actions of the operator of the device, or by allowing the fish to escape on its own. Since minimizing surface time is critical to increasing survival, descending devices should be rigged and ready for use while fishing is occurring.

For a venting tool, this is going to mean a device that's capable of penetrating the abdomen of a fish in order to release excess gas accumulated in the body cavity when a fish is retrieved from depth. A venting device must be a sharpened, hollow instrument, such as a hypodermic syringe with the plunger removed, or a sixteen-gauge needle fixed to a handle. A larger gauge needle is preferred, in order to allow more air to escape rapidly. A device that is not hollow, such as a knife or ice pick, is not a venting device and will cause additional damage.

First, the council would like to know how you guys feel about those definitions, and the idea is to be prescriptive enough to make sure that the devices are effective while not being so prescriptive that we're just giving you guys specific makes and models that you have to buy, and there was also some concerns about venting tools that might currently be on the market, if there are venting tools available that aren't hollow or if there should be size limits on the gauge of needle used for a venting tool, specifics like that.

MR. MOSS: Thank you.

MR. HUDSON: Christina, we've already discussed this, about the venting tools, and the Gulf of Mexico had a mandate requiring the possession and the use of it, and they rescinded that mandate, although they still encourage people to have that as a tool in their toolbox, which is great. The biggest problem I have, unless the government wants to support the lawsuits of people in a crowded boat and getting stuck by mates, and that's a real problem that can exist, and so you don't want to create a liability for these people, but, when you have a smaller group of people, it's a different critter.

With the descending devices, just like the SeaQualizer, that one came out with the fifty and 150 range, and then they came out with another one that had even a deeper range, and we've already seen results from a fish released and that they're being re-caught in the deeper waters, and so the descending device has less liability and more probability of actually helping the animal, because you mentioned about hooks and ice picks. Well, you mentioned about ice picks, but, in the old days, people used to just stick their hook in the fish and throw it overboard to keep it from floating

upside down, and so that would potentially be the same problem, destroying other organs besides the bladder.

Essentially, as I also mentioned last time, President Clinton signed a safe-needle-type thing, so that you have a self-shielding needle, or a needle that will actually withdraw into the thing, and that would reduce some liabilities and possibilities, in six-foot seas, et cetera, of piercing somebody, but, again, I like the descending devices. I think there's a lot of brains around this table and other tables that could actually improve on some of these releases of multiple fish at a time or shark-proof situations and just being able to get it down below the one or two atmospheres that Mel talks about. That's a big deal for the fish to survive, and, the faster we get it down there and away from the sharks, it's a good day.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Rusty.

MR. HULL: Reading your descriptions of these devices, I think they are well thought out. I think that they're good descriptions. As far as my own use of these items, I use both of them, and I have created my own descending device with a sash weight and a hook, and it works really well. I have had to make venting tools that are heavy duty enough to vent bigger animals. These needles, they just break on these bigger fish, but I think, overall, if you're really going to use these things -- If fishermen are going to use these things, they are going to find the device that works for them and the species that they're using, but I think it's well thought out the way you've described it here.

MR. MOSS: I have one question and then a couple of comments. Number one, I agree with Rusty. I think the one that I would prefer seeing is a descending device as opposed to any kind of a venting device, and, Jim, to kind of go with what you were saying earlier, it's almost like people need a class on how to properly -- Especially from the recreational side anyway, to know how to properly vent a fish, because I think, in the long run, we can do more damage than good there with poking it in the wrong places and all kinds of things, not using the correct devices.

Numerous times I've been on a boat and seen a knife stabbed in the stomach and things like that, and so I think if we -- I guess, given the choice, the descending device is certainly the best choice. My question is, and it says in your definition that minimizing surface time is critical to increasing survival, and descending devices should be rigged and ready for use while fishing is occurring, but then, in the alternatives, it just says be onboard a vessel, and so, in the alternatives, should it -- I mean, I don't know if we need to make a motion to say that. Should it say that, or are you just wanting it to be onboard or how --

MS. WIEGAND: This could change, but the idea currently is to have these definitions codified, and so, in the definition, it says should be rigged and ready for use, and I don't want to speak too much for law enforcement, but my assumption would be that if that's the definition that's codified in the regulations, that, when they're looking for it onboard, they are looking for it to be rigged, because that's a requirement in the definition.

MR. MOSS: Not to put you on the spot, but to put you on the spot a little bit, are we saying that a descending device is only a descending device if it is rigged and ready to go? I am just asking.

MS. WIEGAND: I'm not a lawyer, and so I don't want to get too much into the firm legality of how that would work once this definition is codified and then law enforcement is trying to enforce it.

MR. MOSS: The only reason I'm asking, and not that I have seen this happen, but I have heard it happen, and a friend told me once, but a circle hook requirement, for instance, as long as -- I'm just using this as an example. Well, I've got circle hooks on the boat, and so that counts, right? I am just throwing that out there.

MR. BELL: I am also Chair of the Law Enforcement AP, and there was a lot of discussion on this, and so, from the law enforcement perspective, black and white is really good. Black and white is you either have it or you don't have it, and here is what it is, described adequately. The use it part, when you add the rigged and ready, then that has to be described of what does rigged and ready mean, and so that is why some of this is in there like that. It was concerns about enforceability, from their standpoint, and either having it or not having it, that is pretty simple. Whether or not you use it, or you use it properly, that's kind of up to the fishermen.

Now, what we were kind of wanting to make sure we sort of did a sanity check on with you guys is how this works from your perspective, whether you're commercial or recreational, how it works and how you think it would potentially be enforceable or adequate. Would onboard be adequate, realizing it's not perfect, and so that's where you get some of this wording in there, but it's -- Then I am going back to the needles.

When you start talking about the venting tools and all, they have some issues with that too, because, as soon as you start talking about hypodermic needles on a boat, a fisheries boarding kind of takes a different perspective, perhaps, if they find needles onboard, and that's why some of this language is in there, but we wanted you guys from on the water to kind of envision how this might work or what's practical or what's not practical.

MR. MOSS: Yes, absolutely, and that's the only reason I brought it up. Like I said, the circle hook thought came into my mind, and, of the two, again, if you're asking for a preference, I would definitely say the descending device, and I think most people here would agree it's probably the way to go, especially if we're going to make a requirement, and, just from a financial investment standpoint, if you are -- We have said it numerous times, I know, in this AP and at the council and all over the place. If you're investing what you invest as a recreational angler, and, Bob, you said it. To go out and make a trip, another fifty-dollars for a descending device isn't going to -- It's probably not leaving you at the dock.

MR. LORENZ: I will just weigh-in as a recreational fisherman. I do like what I've seen here, and what I particularly like is that we're open enough to something that I have used, and it's great for the black sea bass in North Carolina, and that's just four two-pound dive weights on a sixteen-by-sixteen orange crate that I was able to buy at Home Depot and put a fifty-foot rope on it. That is very quick, and it's very easy, and so, with this, I like the statement that to require onboard to have a descending device, and the ones as they are listed.

Perhaps with a venting tool -- As I said, I have fished with fellas that were doctors that weren't too good with a venting tool, and so it seems like preferred for the council is you have and you encourage the use of a descending device. I don't know if there would be people out there that

just for some reason are skilled in it and have used the venting tool that want that as an option and to figure out a language where that could be used, but that might get sticky if you want to require something like a certain device, like you want me to have a descending device on the boat, and the venting tool isn't as good, but I like what I see here, and I would like to see the focus be more towards the descending device. If folks like a venting tool, I guess that could be an option, but how you do that, I don't know, to make it something that's enforceable.

There again, when you say enforceable, one of the things I find with the laws is that we not make a regulation that isn't very easily enforceable. I mean, you can enforce the fact that it's on the boat. To enforce how it's ready, I don't know what that means, and I am a person who has never been boarded for fish by the U.S. Coast Guard, and I was retained for fifteen minutes one time five years ago, but that was by Homeland Security, and that was a whole different thing that they were after.

MR. ATACK: The other thing to think about is travel. If you're talking about having it rigged and ready to go, if you're traveling two hours from your fishing spot to your port, do you really need to have it rigged and ready to go for while you're traveling? It's similar to like when they go through MPAs. If rods and reels are stowed away, then they're not fishing in the MPA, and I think that's something we've got to think about.

The other thing is depth. I mean, do we really need to be using a descending device in thirty feet of water versus ninety feet of water, and so is there a depth limit that we want to draw, where it's required deeper than ninety feet? My other comments are on the venting device, and I would propose that we just scratch that from the amendment, venting devices. You can damage the fish, hurt the fish more, and you don't know really whether they're going to live or not, and it's a problem with some of these.

Even ones you descend, you don't know whether they live or not, and all you know is they are not on the surface now floating, but, when you look into the data for survivability and how it affects our rebuilding and what the mortality of the bycatch is, if you have different methods, which is the venting and/or descending devices, it kind of gets tough when the SSC looks at what's going to happen with our fishery for sustainability, and so my recommendation is not require a venting device and just require descending devices.

MS. WIEGAND: Just in reference to the depth requirement that you mentioned, I believe that, in one incantation of this action, one of the amendments it was in, there was something in there that would require it after a certain depth, and what we heard from law enforcement is that's almost unenforceable, and so that's one of the reasons that it's, in addition to law enforcement concerns, written as to just be onboard, and that would give fishermen leeway to use the descending device when it's appropriate.

MR. ATACK: I understand that, but that also you want to make it simple for people. I mean, if people aren't -- Where I live, if you don't go past twenty miles off the hill, you're not going to be deeper than sixty feet of water, and why do they need a descending device in sixty feet of water if they're fishing all day?

MR. MOSS: The counter to that is, where I live, you can easily drift in, within about two miles, from like 250 feet into about fifty feet, within minutes.

MR. ATACK: I understand that, but then you've got the other side of the coin where the people say why do we have to do this, because it doesn't really mean anything, and then you have people being compliant, and I'm just throwing that out.

MR. BELL: I will correct that I am actually Chair of the committee and not the AP, though I talk a lot at the AP. Yes, the thing about the depth, Jim, that's very logical, but the trouble with the depth is, and what we ran into that Christina -- It wasn't really so much law enforcement as it's law enforcement and actual counsel, General Counsel.

When you start talking about demarcation, they want lines, and, if you remember -- If anybody remembers black sea bass issues, the line, that is the problem. They have to have a line, and so let's say you said ninety feet. You would have to prescribe, in law, this line, and it would be horrible looking, but that's why, but you're absolutely right that --

MR. ATACK: I know we drew all those lines for black sea bass pots, and we know where they are.

MR. HULL: Just one further comment from me on this. I mean, I can think of lots of times where I used a venting tool instead of a descending device, especially with smaller fish. It's a lot quicker, and it's a lot easier, and it's effective. I know how to do it, and I actually do it, and so I think that you need to have both of these options available for everyone. Once you start using these tools, you get better at it, but you actually have to use them, and you can't take a venting tool and vent a goliath grouper. I mean, you've got to have a really big venting tool to do that, and so you use a descending device, but, if you're catching undersized black sea bass, it's a whole lot easier to vent that bass, and do it efficiently and quickly, rather than take the time to pull out whatever you use for a descending device to throw back one little black sea bass. I think you should use both of them, have both of them available.

MR. MUNDEN: A point of clarification. Under Alternative 2 up on the screen, if the council went with Alternative 2, then that would be required for all vessels, commercial and recreational and for-hire, that participated in the snapper grouper fishery. Then, if they dropped down to Sub-Alternative 2a, b, or c, it would restrict it to just specific vessels in various categories, and is that correct?

MS. WIEGAND: Correct, and so they could pick, from these sub-alternatives -- They could select Preferred Alternative 2 and then select any or all of the sub-alternatives, and so, if they selected all three as preferred, then it would be for private, for-hire, and commercial, or they could select specifically which ones they wanted.

MS. JEFFCOAT: When we had the snapper season, I worked with the Georgia DNR, and they gave me several descending devices, and it was just as easy to have that rigged and ready as it was to have a top line or a grouper rig or whatever I wanted, and so you have your nets, and you have your gaffs, and they're always right there at-hand, and so that shouldn't be a problem.

I am with Jimmy on venting the smaller fish, like sea bass. They do very well. Red snapper does not, and so they did much better with descending. We did a little bit of both. The ones that we vented, we had to pick back up, and they were usually smaller, and I put them in the live well until

they came back around a little bit and threw them back in, and so it's kind of a mix, but, when you're in deeper water, the descending device is definitely better.

MR. MOSS: Rusty, I know you had said something earlier about -- I don't know what you want to call it, but the hide-able needle or something like that, and, the more I thought about it, I've actually seen that product, I know, in some tackle shops, where they have a spring-loaded smaller needle, and that is available that you can have, but go ahead.

MR. HUDSON: What I was trying to describe is safe needles that met the mandate from 2004 and President Clinton's Executive Order, but the reality is that I worked with a metal group out of Apopka trying to develop this, with the dehooking people and stuff, but one guy got greedy from the dehooker group, and so I backed away from the whole thing, but, having seen it work, and Roy Crabtree said that you need to get that stuff out there, and I said, well, here's what it's going to take.

Now, here is another problem with using the needles. You are supposed to, as a protocol, clean them after every use, and I don't know of anybody that normally would be doing that if they've got backed up fish, five and ten redeyes up one side and sea bass down the other, and so that's a little weird too, but I have heard of people on the west coast, and it seems like they're putting a bunch of these smaller fish into a type of device and then getting them down and getting them past a certain atmospheric level, and then they're okay.

Having both onboard is great, but the one thing that I'm worried about is if somebody is riding onboard your boat and working as a undercover guy and you're not using the stuff, or you're deciding to just throw the fish back and watch it float off, and that could open up some other scenarios, and so trying to get people to use good commonsense out on the ocean and to be able to reduce the mortality.

It's like when I've seen people do catch-and-release with super lightweight tackle and fight something for an hour, and the lactic acid builds up, and there is other ways that people can make the fish survive better, and so you brought up the ninety-foot, and does that mean low tide or average? Doing the points, like Mel said, is a big deal, because at least law enforcement knows if you're on this side or that side of the line, in general, if they're in the neighborhood.

MR. MORING: I am still a little unclear as to the law is enforceable if you have a descending device in a bag in your tackle box, or does it have to be rigged and ready?

MS. WIEGAND: That is something we would need to get some specific legal advice on, because, right now, the rigged and ready requirement is in the definition that is required for a descending device to be onboard, and so I can get you a bit more information on exactly --

MR. MORING: From the law enforcement standpoint, if the language is rigged and ready, if I don't have mine rigged and ready, am I going to get written up?

MS. WIEGAND: That would be my understanding, yes.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: What I'm hearing is some mixed emotions about all of these things, but what is at the heart of the subject is that we're trying to get everybody to help conserve the life of many

fish in many different ways. By giving people the option of venting or using a descending device, whether it's ready to be used or not, the intent has to be there of the person to use it, and I think, as human beings, we kind of get stuck on, well, they want me to do it this way, and I'm just not going to do it, and so I think having options in two different tools, three or four or five or whatever brand names, I think it's a wonderful thing.

I actually think that the verbiage in there, saying ready to use, it would give law enforcement some discretion on how to act given the specific circumstances. I think that's important as well, that if the option is there and the officer has some discretion, even though it might not have been ready to use, but the individual looked like they are the type of person that would use it, had the circumstances presented themselves, I think that's a good thing.

MR. ATTACK: I just want to elaborate on -- I mean, when you use a venting device, and we really haven't talked much about survivability, but you don't know if 50 percent of them survive, and it's a much higher survival rate then with the descending device, because you haven't damaged the fish, other than how long you kept it on the deck before you got it back down.

Really, the factors are how deep was the fish, how long was it on the boat before you descended it or before you vented it and then get it back down, but some of the ones -- Just because you vented them in and got them in the water and you don't see them, that doesn't mean that they lived, and so there is a percentage of them that live that are vented, and there's a percentage that don't live, and the descending devices are certainly better, and so maybe the other option is to have it, like he says, as an option, but our outreach or our training to the fishermen is this is Preferred Option Number 1, and survivability will be 80 percent, and, if you go to venting, it's going to be whatever it is, 50 percent, and some guys want studies, because some of those fish don't die right then. They might die a day or two later, depending on how bad they got vented or infection or whatever set in.

MR. LORENZ: I would just like to say, quickly, that we may not have to over-science this. I think, with the recreational fishermen, you're going to get wide acceptance from this. You're not going to get any pushback, and you can simply put language in there that -- It's not in the tackle box and it's unpackaged and ready for use, and just keep it simple. They will use it.

MR. MANIGAULT: I just wanted to add to the definition that why don't we try rigged and readily available, instead of just rigged and ready, but rigged and readily available.

MR. PILAND: It's my opinion, just one man's opinion, that intent starts when you apply for your permit. When you apply for your snapper grouper permit, you intend to fish for those species as a whole, and, at that point, it's when you should have your equipment up to regulations, not when you've got a basket full of fish.

When I get my permit, I should be prepared for that fishery and not, like I said, after I get a basketful of fish. I have used the descending devices, the SeaQualizer specifically, and it comes with a small longline-type clip when you purchase it, and we keep it in a drawer. If we get a fish that we're going to release, we walk in there and pick up the SeaQualizer and clip it to our rig that we just caught the fish on and send him back home.

When we get about halfway down, the fish starts fighting against the clip, which he starts out at dead weight, and then he starts fighting against the clip, and then it releases. I have not had a single fish come back to the surface using that product, but I don't think that we should start requiring the equipment after we catch the fish. I made a motion several times in this audience that, if you've got a South Atlantic bottom-fishing permit, that you should be required to have the descending devices, but that's just my opinion. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: I appreciate that, Andy, and I think what anybody -- I'm probably speaking for a lot of people that I shouldn't, but a lot of the discussion here, as far as the rigged and ready, probably leans a little bit more to the recreational side, and I think somebody said it, that, look, if you've got it and it's out of the package and it's not still wrapped in plastic, you're probably pretty okay to go, but I agree with you. Once you make that commitment, and, like I said, you've got the boat and you've got the tackle, and you've got all that stuff, and your intent is kind of implied there, and you should probably be pretty ready to go.

MR. HULL: Andy, I agree with what you said, and I wanted to ask you a question, using that SeaQualizer. If you get some bigger animals that are blown up, are you adding weight? Are you having to add weight, or are you just using -- You've been able to bring down everything with your lead that you were fishing with?

MR. PILAND: In response to that, a thirty-pound snowy grouper takes about seven pounds of weight to send him back.

MR. HULL: So you're adding weight on your reel and your rig with the SeaQualizer, because like we have sash weights rigged with a hook on them that we use, and sometimes -- If we get a big goliath, we've got to add a couple more sash weights to get it down, and so that was my question, and so you are adding weights to the SeaQualizer, obviously, to get those fish down.

MR. PILAND: Yes, there's a buoyancy to most everything, all animals in the water, and so it would take a certain amount of weight to get them down. I've never had the opportunity to catch a goliath, and so I don't know what it would take to send him back, but, the big snowy, we normally don't use seven pounds of weight to catch them, recreationally, of course, but I do have a heavy weight onboard for that event.

MR. HUDSON: One thing I would do, Christina, with Table 1, I would put "commercially-available descending device options", so that people don't get confused, because like Jimmy is describing, and a few other people has described historically, they make their own, and sash weights -- What do they run, about eight or ten pounds, generally, apiece, and so those are still pretty available, particularly in the Carolinas.

MS. WIEGAND: I will make that edit. That's an important distinction. Thank you, Rusty. All right. If no one has any more comments on this action, I will move on to the circle hook action. This looks at modifying the requirement for the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks when you're fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species with hook-and-line gear and natural baits. Currently, right now, there is a line, and those circle hooks are required north of 28 degrees North latitude, which is, I believe, about twenty miles south of Cape Canaveral. There are a number of different alternatives under here, and I will try to get through them all without getting too tongue-tied.

Alternative 2 looks at requiring the use of circle hooks and just moving that line, and so, right now, there is one sub-alternative under Alternative 2 that would extend the requirement for circle hooks throughout the South Atlantic Council's jurisdiction, and you're going to see, under all of these, there is a line that's been crossed out, and the council decided to remove this option. It was originally set at approximately Key Largo, Florida, which would have matched where the circle hook boundary line is in the Gulf, but it was thought that that wasn't going to be an ideal line on the Atlantic side of Florida and could cause some negative interactions with fisheries down there, and so we would be looking for some advice on where perhaps a more appropriate line would be instead of Key Largo.

Moving on to Alternative 3, Alternative 3 would require the use of non-offset, non-stainless-steel circle hooks, and then, again, the sub-alternatives under here, there is the 28 degree north latitude line, where it currently is, another possible line, or throughout the South Atlantic EEZ. Alternative 4 would simply require non-offset, non-stainless-steel circle hooks to be onboard the vessel, and, again, you've got those three options for where to set that boundary line.

Alternative 5 would remove the requirement for the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks, and then we've got sub-alternatives for the recreational sector or the commercial sector or both, and then Alternative 6 would require the use of just non-stainless-circle hooks throughout the South Atlantic EEZ.

Those are the alternatives we have under this action. Like I said, the council would like some input on perhaps another line to use for this alternative for that circle hook boundary, information on other hooks that might be out there that, while non-stainless-steel, are corrosion-resistant, and, just in general, some of the pros and cons of this action.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Has there been -- I'm sure there has been extensive discussion on which species, in general, the circle hooks are meant for and are best applicable for, and those would be what?

MS. WEIGAND: There has been quite a lot of research on that, and, gosh, I don't know, off the top of my head, specific species. I know, in particular, there were concerns about the yellowtail snapper commercial fishery, which is why that line was originally set at 28 degrees north latitude, was to avoid some negative interactions with that fishery, where circle hooks tend to not work as well, and then, of course, I've heard significant anecdotal advice about circle hooks working or not working for different snapper grouper species.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: That was going to be my main species of concern as well, because that primarily is a sight fishery, and not that circle hooks don't work for them, but, for those who catch them at a rapid rate, it's a sight fishery, and most of them are lip-hooked anyway, and so thank you.

MR. MOSS: I was going to say that too, and I think that, and Christina just confirmed it, but that line of demarcation had a lot to do with the yellowtail fishery, and that's why it was set there, and that's also, I think, why they took away that doing it at the Key Largo line, because the yellowtail fishery -- Obviously, you participate much farther north than that.

MS. WIEGAND: Chip just mentioned that circle hooks are known to work well for red snapper, and then there are protected resource concerns.

MR. MCKINLEY: Has there been any discussion about triggerfish? I know I'm new to this council, but those fish just would be very difficult to catch with circle hooks, the way we fish for them. I mean, I'm not a bandit fisher. We do it hook-and-line and electric reels.

MR. HULL: I can respond a little bit to that. There's been a lot of discussion about it, especially people that don't fish for triggerfish that don't want to use circle hooks, and not only for hooking the fish, but for dehooking the triggerfish and busting their jaw and killing them that way, and so there's lots of different angles to the story of requiring circle hooks in certain fisheries instead of straight hooks for different species.

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

MR. HULL: We get considerable credit in stock assessments for the use of circle hooks, as far as discard mortality in certain species, but you could also argue what you're saying in triggerfish. We could get not credited, but we could get an increase in discard mortality if it's proven that they cause more discard mortality by using a circle hook on certain species.

Going back to James's question of have you studied which species we're talking about here, they haven't done a lot, but, to answer your question, there's been a lot of discussion about that, but having the requirement to use circle hooks has also helped, in a lot of instances, in the science and in the discard mortality numbers that are coming out of the science.

MR. MOSS: To piggyback on what you just said, it might be something to think about above a certain size hook, whether it's a -- I'm a south Florida guy, and so I don't fish for triggerfish, and I don't know, but whether it's above a 1/0 or a 2/0 or something like that, whatever the -- It might be something, and, Christina, maybe I will throw it to you, but maybe it might be something to look at, a certain size requirement, for the circle hooks, you know above a size to -- I don't know.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: This kind of falls into this category, I believe, and has there been any science substantiating the idea of if a fish has swallowed a hook, is it best to just cut the line and let that fish swim away or try and remove that hook, because I have caught hundreds upon hundreds of snapper and grouper that have hooks coming out of their rectum and that are alive and thriving, and so maybe, somewhere in this action to create a smarter fisherman, maybe there should be some awareness about that, and maybe a practice should be adopted to just -- If a fish is gut-hooked, cut it off and release it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The science that I'm aware of is that, yes, if you can't see the hook, you need to cut the line, and I can tell you that FWC has a significant amount of outreach materials, pamphlets and websites and videos, where that is our number-one message.

MR. LORENZ: One issue I would have with Alternative 4 is I don't think it's an alternative for any potential, quote, regulation. If all we need is circle hooks to be onboard a vessel, then why have a -- Don't make it a requirement or a regulation for circle hooks. It simply becomes a nice suggestion, and it's part of outreach, but I don't think it has any place as an alternative for what could be a regulation. Otherwise, just get rid of it.

MR. BONURA: I just have a question, and I was confused here, but, at our last meeting, we were talking about taking this off the table completely and getting rid of it, and now they're talking about moving it into Key Largo, and is that what we're looking at here?

MS. WIEGAND: The Key Largo line as an alternative was removed at the last meeting, and so one of the things the council would like to get some information from you on is, if you had to set a boundary for the use of circle hooks, where along the Florida coast, or the South Atlantic coast, would that line be most appropriate?

MR. BONURA: Can we just go back to cancelling the whole thing and cancelling the hook thing and let the fishermen decide what they need to use for their fishery?

MR. MOSS: That is Alternative 5 up there for them to vote on, and so I agree with you. I know that, at the last AP meeting, we had actually put that up there, to just eliminate it, and that's why, I'm assuming anyway, that that's why that's one of the alternatives and one of the options there.

MR. GOMEZ: I have to keep mentioning this. The yellowtail is a completely different animal from the rest. For us to use circle hooks, commercially or recreationally, there will be a lot more mortality, and so I would go with Alternative 5 myself, but at least -- If worse comes to worse, at least we would have to separate yellowtail from that circle hook rule.

MS. WIEGAND: I am going to go ahead and -- Given the concerns about the yellowtail fishery, is the current line at 28 degrees north latitude appropriate, or is there somewhere that it could be shifted up or down but would still take into consideration concerns with that fishery?

MR. BONURA: How about you ask the guys from the Carolinas and Georgia if they want it and put it at the border?

MR. GOMEZ: My comment on that is that it doesn't really matter where you move that line anywhere in the Keys, and even further north in other parts of Florida. It's still -- You're still going to create more mortality with the yellowtail snapper, period.

MR. MOSS: I think, Richard, that's why they put that line at 28 degrees. I forget where that works out exactly, and I know it's twenty-miles south of Cape Canaveral, which is somewhere near Fort Pierce, as I recall, which is kind of where they stopped. Not that they don't interact, but your interactions are certainly less up that way, and I know you catch them off of Port St. Lucie and stuff like that, but that neck of the woods is where you stop seeing them a little bit, although Robert Johnson has said that he has seen them up in Jacksonville, and so what does that mean?

MR. HUDSON: I have always felt that yellowtail was an exception to the rule for everything north of say Martin County or something like that, because we can't target them off of Daytona, historically, and I have a question for the folks around the table, because, like with swordfish, we have a 16/0 circle hook, non-stainless, and we can have an offset of ten degrees, whereas, if it's 18/0 -- I want to make sure that I'm quoting this right.

It's the 18/0 that is offset, not to exceed ten degrees. For 16/0 or larger, they wanted to keep them so that they were standard, as a point at the shank, and, historically, I started using circle hooks,

tuna hooks, back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and I would take the very smallest one, and I would offset it just a little bit, use a little squid or something, and I could fish in -- Mangos, for instance, at nighttime, and catch ten or fifteen pounders. If I got a sow on there, I could get it to the boat, and it wouldn't bend out.

It wasn't a stainless, and it was a non-stainless, galvanized, but that little bit of offset gave me vermilion and other types of porgies and stuff out in that deeper water, 130 or 165-foot, and so I would try to at least allow for an offset in some regions, because that gives you a little bit more catchability, and I didn't find a whole lot of swallowing the hook, and, just like I think Jimmy brought up about the goliath and the warsaw, and I heard it from Ben Hartig, you need to get a lot of them in the boat, and you can't descend them unless you've got a whole bunch of weight, and there's a lot of things to consider here, and it's not one-size-fits-all, and that's why I have always heard that the yellowtail guys need a little bit of an exception for the Keys with that straight hook thing.

MR. MOSS: Myra just confirmed it, and just to throw this out there, but, in red snapper, and Chip could probably confirm it even more, and I don't know if it's for other species as well, but there's like a 10 percent change in release mortality with circle hooks for red snapper, which is, obviously, where a lot of the science goes to, and so just informationally for everybody here. I know, again, yellowtail snapper is kind of the red-headed stepchild of all that stuff, and we understand that, and that's, again, why we have that line at 28 degrees, but, in the discussion, it's something to consider for every other species that we fish for.

MR. ATTACK: The current no action doesn't really specify offset or non-offset, right, and so then we've got these other options for offset, and I guess, if we went with the non-offset, does that give you any kind of a fishery benefit? Why is the offset versus non-offset even in there? I don't know. What is the reason for that, because, right now, it doesn't say either way, and so you can use whatever you want, as long as it's not a stainless.

MS. WIEGAND: My understanding is that there is supposed to be a greater benefit with non-offset circle hooks, in terms of release mortality.

MR. ATTACK: So that's why we're adding it as an alternative to -- Okay.

MR. HULL: Right now, we've got, in place, Alternative 1, which is non-stainless circle hooks are required when fishing for and possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit with the hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28 degrees. We've been living with that, and, if we get into these other alternatives and all of these other things, whether they're offset or non-offset, and start changing the lines of where it's enforced or not, I think -- For me, I think that the AP should recommend that no action, just status quo, leave it the way it is, and keep on trucking like we are, but I would like to maybe raise some discussion on that. If so, then I would be willing to make a motion for that, but maybe we need a little bit of discussion before I would make a motion. All right. I will make a motion. **I make a motion that the council choose Alternative 1 of this action, which is no action.**

MR. MOSS: We've got a second.

MR. BONURA: On that one, it's not offset or regular, whatever you want to --

MR. HULL: It's just as it's read.

MR. BONURA: The circle hook in general.

MR. MOSS: Correct, yes, and so it can be -- The use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks is required when fishing for and/or possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28 degrees north latitude, and so it could be offset or non-offset, whatever you like.

MR. MCKINLEY: Could you just maybe add anything over a 2/0 hook or a 1/0? To me, that would take care of the triggerfish. I mean, that's a small hook, very small, and nobody is going to use that for the bigger fish. You're not going to hook snapper, or you're not going to get them to the boat anyway. I mean, has that ever been considered?

MR. HULL: I hear where you're coming from, but I think, the more confusing that we make this, the more difficult it will be for law enforcement to enforce something if they board a vessel. I mean, right now, this is what they're having to enforce, and it's real simple, and we're able to catch triggerfish using the kind of hooks we want to use, but this is -- I think we've been living with this, and I think that, before you make it any more complicated and less enforceable, we ought to just leave it the way it is. I wouldn't want to change my motion at this time, but I would probably support you on another motion to address what you want to address in some other action.

MR. MCKINLEY: That's fine.

MS. MARHEFKA: Jimmy, I support the motion, but I just have a question for staff. Under the items to consider, there is the paragraph about the protected resources, about the biological opinion and the mandate to assess sort of the use of circle hooks to protect Nassau grouper, and is that currently happening? It sounds like that's where the key for this moving the line south came from, and is that correct?

MS. WIEGAND: No, not necessarily, and so, for the protected resources and the Nassau grouper, it's in the terms of conditions to consider whether or not moving that line -- While I'm not sure that was the original impetus for this action, that is something that we're doing with this amendment, is considering moving this line.

MS. MARHEFKA: I guess my question is, is there science -- Is someone doing the science to see whether or not circle hooks are better for Nassau grouper?

MS. WIEGAND: I am sure there is research out there, but, as far as what the agency specifically is doing right now, I'm not sure if they are specifically looking into circle hook use in Nassau grouper. There is a recovery plan in general out there right now for Nassau grouper.

DR. KELLISON: Can I weigh-in on that Nassau grouper inquiry?

MR. MOSS: Yes, go ahead, Todd.

DR. KELLISON: Hi, everyone. I would just say that I'm not aware of any specific work targeting Nassau grouper, in terms of like hook mortality, but it's my experience in the keys that they are sufficiently rare that it would be very difficult to do that kind of work. It usually takes large sample sizes to reach conclusions about different hook types, the effect of different hook types, on release mortality, and Nassau grouper are just not very common in the Keys, in my experience.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Todd. I guess the reason I was wondering is, if I recall correctly, when we did this in 17A, it really is all about the red snapper, and so I hate like thinking of something new, because I'm afraid it's the stupidest idea ever, but bear with me. What if the requirement was to use circle hooks -- Circle hooks have to be onboard when you possess red snapper or when red snapper season is open, but, other times, you don't necessarily have to have them onboard. I mean, right here in the items considered, it says that it may even negatively affect other species -- They may even negatively affect other species, and we're just doing this for red snapper, really.

MR. MOSS: The only thing that I will comment to that, and I know Chip is going to speak much better about this than I would, but, if we're getting a 10 percent credit, if you will, for the red snapper, and I'm assuming that includes discard mortality as well?

MS. MARHEFKA: When they're closed. You're right. See, I know it was stupid, and I knew that you guys would help me work through why it was a dumb idea, and there you go. That makes total sense, and you're exactly right.

MR. MOSS: Any more discussion about it? Okay. I will read the motion as it is. **The motion is the AP recommends Alternative 1, no action, the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks is required when fishing for and/or possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28 degrees north latitude. All those in favor; those opposed. It passes unanimous.**

MR. HULL: I guess my question is to Mel, and it would be has there ever been a law enforcement boarding or action where they have actually cited someone for not using a circle hook north of 28 degrees latitude?

MR. BELL: I suspect if that's the case that it's rare. I mean, I just know, from talking to our officers, and you guys amongst yourselves, have you ever had an issue with that?

MR. HULL: I get boarded almost every trip, and they have never looked at my hooks or anything like that.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Then we will move on. Previously, there was an action in this amendment that would have specified allowable rigs when fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species for the recreational sector, and the alternatives that were under consideration were requiring the use of a single-hook rig and/or requiring the use of a single leader, and there was discussion about doing this for deepwater species or red snapper, specifically, in previous amendments, but, at their last meeting, the council decided to remove this action.

Seeing no concerns, I will move on to now Action 3, and this is the powerhead prohibitions in the South Atlantic, which I know you guys have seen in a couple of different amendments, and there

are two alternatives being considered under this. One would allow the use of powerheads to harvest species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit in the Exclusive Economic Zone off of South Carolina. It's currently prohibited in federal waters off of South Carolina, and so Alternative 2 would just put South Carolina in line with the rest of the EEZ.

Alternative 3 would prohibit the use of powerheads for harvesting South Atlantic snapper grouper species throughout the South Atlantic EEZ, and, under each of these, we have sub-alternatives for the recreational sector and/or the commercial sector. The council would just like to know how this would affect fishermen and any sort of pros and cons of allowing the use of powerheads in South Carolina versus prohibiting their use throughout the EEZ.

MR. ATACK: Does anybody in this room use a powerhead to catch snapper grouper? I mean, I've never heard of it.

MR. BONURA: The commercial scuba divers, they're all telling me that it keeps them from being killed. If they powerhead a big fish, and they're a hundred feet under the water, and it's a forty or fifty-pound grouper or amberjack, whatever it is, and you could potentially die.

AP MEMBER: As a safety mechanism, I wouldn't have any issue with it. Does it make it illegal to possess one or would it make it illegal to use it on a species in the snapper grouper complex?

MS. WIEGAND: I know that a lot of these guys do carry powerheads for personal protection. You could still have it on you, but you just cannot use it to harvest snapper grouper species, and, if you've got a mutilated snapper grouper species on you, that's considered evidence that it was harvested with a powerhead.

MR. HULL: Can you refresh our memory on why only off of South Carolina this was in place?

MS. WIEGAND: If Mel wants to speak about it in more detail, I will let him, but I believe there were some user group conflicts and concerns about enforcing the prohibition in state waters while it was still legal in federal waters.

MR. HULL: Now I remember. Okay. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: Just one quick question then. How long ago did that go in place, because how many snapper grouper can you catch in state waters now?

MS. WIEGAND: It was Snapper Grouper Amendment 7, and so I would say the early 1990s.

MR. LORENZ: Okay, because, back thirty years ago, folks talked about, yes, a couple of miles off of Wrightsville Beach, you could catch gag grouper. Well, you haven't been able to do that for two decades, and so maybe this is an obsolete law.

MR. ATACK: The reason it was in the federal law was because they were saying that, well, the - South Carolina tried to make the law from their beach out, and they couldn't really enforce it in the snapper grouper fishery, because their state line is only three miles, and so they were concerned about what was going on in the EEZ, and so they got South Carolina law -- They got it in the South Atlantic.

I mean, I'm a scuba diver, and I'm a spear fisherman, and I've seen both sides of this for thirty-some years, and my concern about the powerhead issue is, the last few years, I've seen more and more large black grouper being harvested, in the eighty-pound to 150-pound range, with powerheads, and I know personally of some this year that were -- They went down and did three dives to get one fish, in 140 feet of water, and, when they got it up to the boat, then they shot-gunned it to get it into the boat, and so they're, I think, targeting some of the larger breeder fish that are out in the deep water, and, when you have fish that big that are male or female, they take -- I mean, what's that do to your recruitment down the road? There is also safety issues with that, whether they're using powerheads or not, but they're pushing out to deeper and deeper water, some of these commercial spear fishermen.

The other thing I've seen over the years is they will go into a wreck and go down there and powerhead every amberjack on the wreck, and you dive the wreck later and all you see is shells of a wreck, and so some of the practices they use is they will hook one of them, and then they will spin around them, and the other guy will be power-heading amberjack after amberjack until the whole school is gone.

I think, from a sustainability standpoint, I would like to not see the powerheads legal in all four states, and I think it would help some of the resources down the road. I have no problem with carrying powerheads if they need to defend themselves, but it's just another gear that whether we want to let them use that gear or not.

MR. BONURA: Basically, all I was saying was that -- The spear fishermen that tell me -- I don't spearfish at all, and so they're saying the use of powerheads is a safety concern, as opposed to spearing a fish that's going to drag you around underwater.

MS. MARHEFKA: This is not necessarily my opinion or anything, but I'm just going to play devil's advocate, because I was involved in sitting through the public hearings when this came up last time, and one of the arguments, if there was someone here using powerheads would make, and so I feel like it just needs to be made, and I'm not arguing for it, is that power-heading is a more - - It's a selective gear in a good way, and so, in other words, they can go down there, and they can see. They have a good idea whether or not the fish is legal size and whether or not it's a species they are allowed to harvest at the time, and they are harvesting on the same ACL as we are, and so they're constrained by that, just as we are. Again, I am not endorsing it, but, since there was no one here who uses the gear, I thought that should be pointed out.

MR. MOSS: You're right, and I agree, and I will play the other devil's advocate. To that other point, it's also a 100 percent take fishery, just like spearfishing in general is, which we're, obviously -- Certainly, in south Florida, we're seeing more and more free divers and things like that. At the very least, if you're fishing hook-and-line, there's a chance it could break off, and there's a chance it could go in the wreck, but, if you're shooting them, it's dead. I'm just throwing that out there.

MR. ATTACK: That's not entirely true. I mean, there are quite a few fish that are shot and they get away. I have come along and seen some with scalps on them, flesh missing, still swimming around, and some of the fish that are shot are not legal sized, and so there is -- It's not 100 percent. I mean, it's a high percentage, but it's not 100 percent. As far as whether you're power-heading

or if you're using a slip tip on a shaft, I mean, you can still get the same fish. I have done both over the years. Years ago, I used to use powerheads, and I don't use powerheads.

MS. MARHEFKA: From a market standpoint, I will tell you that the powerhead fish are much harder to market, too. I mean, they're blasted out, and so I know we have a harder time when one or two come across to us, and so just another point.

MR. MCKINLEY: I will agree with Jim that I think the powerhead does make the guys go after the bigger breeder fish, which is bad, and I probably represent about maybe ten guys with federal permits commercially fishing in Onslow Bay in North Carolina, and every single one of them, if you ask them, their biggest fear and biggest worry is spearfishing itself, and it's not so much the offshore, but it's the inshore stuff.

I mean, we've only got a limited amount of ledges and stuff, and, when they go down through there, it just changes everything, and so it is a very real concern, and I know this may not be the time to discuss that, but I just wanted to bring that up, and so the powerhead, I know, is definitely worse.

MR. LORENZ: Mr. Chairman, I would kind of maybe like to make a suggestion for us. It seems, in looking at this Action 3, it's a regulation in need of modernization, let's say, or reauthorization, and it seems like Alternative 1 is the silly part, letting it still be on the records, and so I would like to make a recommendation that, after sufficient discussion, that we as the AP take a vote on the alternatives, make a motion for perhaps Alternative 3, taking the conservation view that Jim does, or, if that doesn't work, Alternative 2, where we have had some statements about safety, but just make this the same in all the states, rather than have this regulation that's involved with one state.

MR. MOSS: Well, two things. Number one, if you want to make that motion, great, and, if you look at Alternative 3, it says that -- It doesn't say that you can't have the powerhead, but it just says that you can't use it for harvest of the species, and so that may be accomplishing what it is that Jim and some of the others want to do, if you want to make that motion.

MR. MUNDEN: **Mr. Chairman, I move Alternative 3 as the advisory panel's preferred option.**

MR. LORENZ: I will second.

MR. MOSS: Red, do you want it with both of the sub-alternatives as well, which is private recreational and commercial?

MR. ATTACK: If you don't do a sub-alternative, then really -- What's in the sub-alternatives, both of the sub-alternatives, is the alternative.

MS. WIEGAND: If you want Alternative 3, you do still have to pick a sub-alternative. There can be both, if you pick both Sub-Alternative a and Sub-Alternative b. That covers the recreational sector and the commercial sector, or one or the other, but you do need to select a sub-alternative.

MR. MUNDEN: **Mr. Chairman, my intent is for this to apply both to commercial and recreational, and so the motion should be for Alternative 3, Sub-Alternative 3a and Sub-Alternative 3b.**

MR. LORENZ: I second that.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Any further discussion?

MR. HULL: I am not a powerhead user, and I'm not a diver, and I know quite a few of them, and some of them sell me fish, and so I don't know what kind of -- I don't know how to make a decision on this at this time, whether to support it or not support it. I think I would probably have to abstain from the vote, just because I need to speak to some commercial powerhead users in my region and see what this would do to them, and so I probably would have to abstain from it, voting on this.

MR. GOMEZ: I've been just sitting here debating whether to even mention this, but I have mentioned it before. Everybody needs to make a living, including commercial divers, but when they are allowed to go and dive wrecks and commercially fish on wrecks, or any manmade structure, you're basically saying that this structure will never hold any amount of fish, because it is easy for a diver to clean out an area, whether it's spearfishing or power-heading. You're basically putting a wreck or a manmade structure to death. I mean, it just will never produce fish, and these are the fish that come there to breed, and so I'm all for commercial diving, but, personally, I think all wrecks and manmade structure should be off-limits to commercial spearing or power-heading.

MR. BONURA: I was going to say I fear the people that I talked to about this are from your area, Jimmy Hull, up that way, and I think maybe you could keep 3b out of there and have it for 3a only, where it's safety for the commercial divers, and maybe the safety for the recreational divers who might actually kill themselves with the powerhead.

MR. ATACK: There have been people shot by powerheads. Usually it happens on the boat and not in the water.

MR. MOSS: Any more discussion about it? We'll put this one to the vote, and I will read it. **The AP recommends Alternative 3, Sub-Alternatives 3a and 3b, under Action 3 to prohibit the use of powerheads for harvest of species in the South Atlantic snapper grouper complex in the EEZ of the South Atlantic region, and that includes private recreationally and commercially-permitted vessels. All those in favor, twelve in favor; those opposed, one opposed; abstain, four abstentions. The motion passes.**

MS. BROUWER: While we're on the subject, and spearfishing has been mentioned a little bit, and so I just wanted to update you on something the council did, and so they had a good bit of talk about spearfishing, and recall that you guys made a motion at the last meeting regarding spearfishing and some of the issues that Jim talked about, and so they discussed it in October, and they approved a motion, and I will read it.

It says: Develop a white paper to look into the extent of use of spearfishing gear in the commercial and recreational sectors of the snapper grouper fishery and existing ways to track its use and potential biological and ecological effects. Include possible ways to reduce effort by means of a

season. Also include how this relates to National Standard 5. They have given us direction to start looking into this issue that you all have talked about and brought to the council's attention, and I believe they gave us direction to bring this back to them in maybe March or June, and so I just wanted to make sure that you guys were aware of that.

MS. WIEGAND: That was all I had for Regulatory Amendment 29, unless there are any more questions, concerns, or comments. If not, I will turn it back over to you.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much. I guess we'll take a quick fifteen-minute break, and then we'll come back and try to wrap up as close to five as possible.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: We're going to keep moving on into Amendment 30, red grouper. I will turn it over to John.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. I will run over the Regulatory Amendment 30 and what the council discussed at their early October meeting. I will mention this document is slightly different from the document that you had in your briefing book. There was a request earlier to include economic information, and so I pulled what preliminary economic information that we have in the amendment and put it into this document, and so we'll go over that.

A little bit of background, as far as this amendment. Really, the reason this amendment came about was SEDAR 53 that indicated that the stock of red grouper is undergoing overfishing and not making adequate rebuilding progress, and, essentially, the rebuilding plan that is currently in place will not cover the revised rebuilding time for the species.

The council was formally notified of the red grouper stock status. We got a letter from NMFS dated September 27, 2017, and this starts the two-year kind of clock, so to speak, on when the council must prepare and implement a plan amendment with regulations to end overfishing immediately and rebuild the stock.

The council moved fairly quickly to end overfishing, through a revised ABC and ACL, and that was implemented via Abbreviated Framework Amendment 1, but it has not yet revised the red grouper rebuilding plan, and so that is Action 1 in this amendment.

You will see some familiar actions in here. The council started the -- They directed staff to begin the amendment in March of 2018. At the June 2018 meeting, the council decided to consolidate management measures addressing red grouper in the amendment, and these are adding the actions to change or extend the spawning season closure for red grouper in the EEZ off of the Carolinas, and so they pulled these two actions, one for the commercial sector and one for the recreational sector, from the two visioning amendments and put it in this amendment, to have everything in one place for red grouper.

Also at that meeting, the council directed staff to come up with wording for a commercial trip limit for red grouper, or an action that would implement a commercial trip limit for red grouper, and this was a direct response from an action from the Snapper Grouper AP, and so that was added as well to this amendment.

One other thing is it was noted that there would not be a similar trip limit or bag limit reduction action in the amendment, because a preliminary analysis in Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 showed less than a 1 percent change in landings for this species, and so basically there wouldn't be very much bang for your buck in changing the bag limit for the recreational sector, and so that was not pursued.

There are four actions in this amendment, one to revise the rebuilding schedule for red grouper, and Action 2 would modify the seasonal prohibition for the species, for the recreational harvest possession in the species in the EEZ off of South Carolina and North Carolina. Action 3 is similar, but for the commercial sector, and so it would prevent harvest, possession, sale, and purchase of red grouper in the Exclusive Economic Zone off of South Carolina and North Carolina. Then, as mentioned earlier, Action 4 would establish a commercial trip limit for red grouper harvested in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone.

One thing on expected amendment timing, and so this amendment was approved by the council to move forward for formal review at the December 2018 meeting. In the meantime, we had an IPT call on this, and there has been a data issue for 2017, and we will not have final 2017 data, due to a coding error, and that coding error is being addressed, but we won't have -- We essentially don't have a full dataset, and we won't have that until mid-November, and so this amendment will likely move forward for formal review at the March 2019 meeting, rather than December. 2019. Sorry. The March 2019 meeting, and the expectation is to still meet that September deadline.

Moving forward to the purpose and need for the action, I will very quickly go over this. The purpose of this amendment is to modify the rebuilding schedule for red grouper based on the results of the most recent stock assessment, minimize regulatory discards, and extend protection for red grouper during the spawning season. The need of this amendment is to rebuild the red grouper stock and achieve optimum yield while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects, and so I don't know if there are any questions or comments on that.

Seeing none, I will jump into Action 1. Action 1 would revise the rebuilding schedule for red grouper. Again, this is under the statutory deadline, and Alternative 1, no action, the current rebuilding schedule is set at the maximum time period to allow to rebuild, otherwise known as T_{max} . This is equal to ten years, with the rebuilding time period ending in 2020. 2011 was year-one of this rebuilding schedule. We're almost there, and we're not going to meet it, and so that's kind of where we are at the moment.

Alternative 2 is revise the rebuilding schedule to equal the shortest possible time period to rebuild in the absence of fishing mortality, and so this is T_{min} . This would equal six years, with the rebuilding time period ending in 2023, and 2018 would be year-one. Alternative 3 is revise the rebuilding schedule to equal eight years, with the rebuilding time period ending in 2025, and 2018 would be year-one, and Preferred Alternative 4 is revise the rebuilding schedule to equal the maximum time period allowed to rebuild, otherwise known as T_{max} , and this would equal ten years, with the rebuilding time period ending in 2027, and 2018 would be year-one.

MR. ATACK: I have one quick question. How can the year 2018 be the first year, when we haven't done anything yet?

MR. HADLEY: Good question. That was one thing that the IPT discussed, and 2018 was chosen because the revised ACL is in place through the abbreviated framework, and so it reduced the ACL, and so rebuilding has started.

As mentioned, the action is necessary to satisfy the statutory requirement that the council revise the rebuilding schedule for red grouper by September 27, 2019. None of the proposed alternatives to revise the rebuilding schedule are expected to alter the manner in which the red grouper resource is exploited, and a little bit of background information on Tmax and Tmin. They are set according to guidance found in National Standard 1. Tmin is defined as the amount of time the stock or stock complex is expected to rebuild to its MSY biomass level in the absence of any fishing mortality, and so, according to SEDAR 53, this is six years, and that is why Tmin is specified as six years in Alternative 2. The guidance for setting Tmax is as follows. If Tmin for the stock or stock complex is ten years or less, then Tmax is ten years. Hence, why Tmax is ten years in Alternative 4.

Really, when thinking about the different alternatives, the probability of success for rebuilding the stock would be highest under the longest time period to rebuild. Less time to rebuild would theoretically translate to higher biological benefits for the stock, but a lower probability of success for rebuilding the stock, and, also, it's worth mentioning that a standard assessment for red grouper is scheduled to start in 2021. The likely fishery management plan amendment that will occur will correspond with the SSC's recommended timing to re-evaluate the appropriate long-term recruitment assumption for red grouper.

The rebuilding schedule will likely be revisited at that time, based on the decision that is made for long-term recruitment, and so, in SEDAR 53, the assumption was long-term normal recruitment. As we've discussed before at some of these meetings, there has been some pretty serious recruitment issues for red grouper, and so the SSC will come back at that time and evaluate if a low-recruitment scenario should be chosen for the stock assessment. As far as the council's Snapper Grouper Committee action, the committee approved the alternatives and also selected Alternative 4 as their preferred under Action 1. Any discussion on Action 1?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: In the ten-year plan, there would be limited harvest or no harvest?

MR. HADLEY: There is harvest, and we'll get into some of the actions that would potentially further restrict harvest in Actions 2 through 4, but, throughout the plan, there is harvest that can be allowed.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I have to ask. All throughout the Caribbean, the red grouper will get produced by Mexico and other countries, and it still crosses our border freely, and it just kind of makes me wonder how can we get beyond domestic fisheries management and really start to get into the nuts and bolts of a more global issue here, because we're a very small part of where that species lives, I mean all of these species for that matter, and we need to get beyond what's happening here. Every fish that crosses our borders, it's competition for our wholesalers and our commercial fishermen and everybody that works really hard to make a living on the ocean, and so, I mean, how is it that we can help that, if we can?

MR. HADLEY: That's a good question, and, I mean, it's a really good point. It is very likely that our recruitment comes from other -- It doesn't -- The fish don't see those borders, and they can cross them, and our recruitment comes from spawning in other countries or what have you, and

we really, at this point, don't really have a mechanism, other than to manage what lies in our EEZ, and so that's kind of the situation that we're stuck with at the current time.

MR. HULL: John, if the council chose Preferred Alternative 4 with Tmax, that would stretch it out for that ten-year period. However, in 2021, there is a standard assessment, and so there could be some changes made shortly after the conclusion of that, and there could be some revisions, and maybe they -- 2021 was when the next standard assessment was -- Okay. Thanks.

MR. HUDSON: John, isn't our red grouper over on this east coast partially fertilized, or mostly fertilized, by the east Gulf red grouper, and then that is that sort of mixing area in the Keys? I know that there is this theory that hurricanes that wind up popping up there, and then it winds up flushing a lot of them over, and, after we had that one last year, and I think there is some of us that know that there were a lot of small and up to minimum-sized stuff showing up in our area immediately, and then all that stuff winds up off of the Carolinas, and so, that big couple of years of spike, there was always this idea that some of those red grouper had been -- They got there from that method, and so there's a lot of interconnectedness, for sure.

MR. ATTACK: Yes, and then sometimes there is no interconnectedness, and so the DNA studies and data would probably tell us that, like they've done with the cobia or the hogfish, and like the red grouper off of North Carolina, I think, are not coming from the Gulf, but is there any data that you all have as to how the stocks are, whether there is a Gulf stock or a South Atlantic stock, or where are our red grouper coming from?

MR. HADLEY: That's a good question, and I don't know if there is any discussion of that or if that's been determined, but it certainly is possible, and I know that several folks have mentioned that you're seeing those fish crossing over from the Gulf into the South Atlantic. As far as quantifying that and putting it into a stock assessment, that has not been done.

MR. ATTACK: So there is no really DNA work on that? Up our way, I think the red grouper are more local, and the spawning stocks were fished out a few years ago, and it's had trouble coming back, is kind of what we thought up our way, but we'll see.

MR. HADLEY: There may have been some work on that, but nothing that I'm aware of, off the top of my head.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: How far off are we on the last ten-year Tmax for red grouper and meeting the goals?

MR. HADLEY: It's pretty grim. This assessment showed that really there is no way that the stock is going to meet that 2020 deadline, and I will mention that there is an MRIP revision assessment, and that is very much up in the air. It was discussed by the SSC early this week, and so whether or not that's going to be accepted or in what form is questionable, but the results of that MRIP revision assessment for red grouper were even -- They were fairly grim. They showed even a worse scenario than SEDAR 53 showed.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Would it be safe to say that there would be more aggressive conservation efforts made this go-round?

MR. HADLEY: Potentially yes. There is additional conservation efforts in this amendment, and then that's to be determined as far as the timeline of that MRIP revision assessment for red grouper.

MR. MCKINLEY: I know in North Carolina, up our way, I don't think they come from Florida. We are just not catching anything. I mean, everything we catch is probably over twenty pounds, and that, in the last three years, has just completely gone away, and I know it's been discussed here, I'm sure, about lionfish, and we feel like that's probably one of the biggest issues with our fish up there, and the gag seem to stay inshore, and we never see the little red grouper in estuaries, and so I'm assuming they're out there and they are getting eaten, and, if that is the case, then none of these rebuilding things are going to affect that whatsoever, and I'm sure you all have discussed that, but, I mean, I just wanted to mention that.

MR. ATACK: Yes, we had some questions at the last meeting as to where are the juveniles, where are the younger red grouper, and, with red snapper, they have these class-one, year-one, blah, blah, blah, and these assessments and how many of them are out there, and, well, where are the red grouper and what do we know about the juveniles and the one-year or two-year class, and I don't think -- It's a very, I think, data-poor fishery, from that standpoint.

It's like, well, where do the young red grouper grow up, but it appears that, years ago, when the gag was the choke species, there was a lot of hammering of the red grouper, so they wouldn't close the gags, close the aggregate fishery, and there was a lot of red grouper landings off of North Carolina back a few years ago, and then, after that, the landings dropped, and so that was the result, but, also, like you say, the lionfish. I mean, we have some really big lionfish out there. We harvest a lot of them, and, if the juveniles are out there, they're getting eaten, and so that can affect the juveniles in those areas.

MR. GOMEZ: Down in the lower Keys, I think part of the crossover is due to miles upon miles of algae blooms, especially in the low-water reefs on the Gulf side, that basically covers all the holes and covers all the bottom, and all fish move out of those areas, and I wonder if you guys look at that at all when you're thinking about stock assessments, because there definitely is major movement. Once this algae moves into an area, it becomes kind of a dead zone, especially for grouper, because their holes are covered, and they move on.

MS. BROUWER: To that point, Richard, I would remind you that you guys have done a great job providing information that can be considered by analysts when they're doing their stock assessments. You put together fishery information reports, or fishery performance reports, and you did one for red grouper, and we're getting ready to do two this week, and so the analysts are using that information, and so all this information that comes up during the meetings that is, quote, unquote, anecdotal is still being considered.

As far as whether there is ongoing research on some of the things that you guys have brought up, as you know, it depends on funding, and it depends on personnel and all these things, but I can tell you that those recommendations and those observations that you guys are bringing to the table are being passed along to the folks that could potentially be the ones doing that research.

MR. HADLEY: I was just told that the Gulf assessment for red grouper is looking into ways to try to incorporate issues with red tide and how that has affected the red grouper stock.

MR. GOMEZ: I would definitely suggest that you look at these algae blooms along the bottom too and maybe consider that for future assessments, also.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. All right. If there's no further discussion on Action 1, I will move into the next action. All right. Action 2 would -- This should look fairly familiar, as this came from Amendment 26, Regulatory Amendment 26, or Vision Blueprint Amendment 26. It's to modify the seasonal prohibition on recreational harvest and possession of red grouper in the Exclusive Economic Zone off of South Carolina and North Carolina.

As of now, during January through April, no person may fish for, harvest, or possess, in or from the South Atlantic EEZ, any shallow-water grouper. There is the whole list there, including red grouper, and the council -- The Preferred Alternative 2 would maintain the same spawning season closure for the shallow-water groupers.

However, it would revise the timing of these restrictions only for red grouper, and this would be only in the Exclusive Economic Zone off of the Carolinas, and the Preferred Alternatives 2a through d, and the current Preferred Alternative 2a would be January through May, and so add May to that spawning season closure for red grouper in the Carolinas. Sub-Alternative 2b would be February through May, and Sub-Alternative 2c would be March through June, and this is a new sub-alternative, Sub-Alternative 2d, which was added at the council's last meeting, to extend the spawning season closure through June, and so this would be a January through June closure for red grouper off of the Carolinas.

A little bit of discussion. As I mentioned, this came from Amendment 26. The recreational data on red grouper are extremely limited, especially for the Carolinas, when you're looking at this data by area and month, and so there is a high level of uncertainty with the analyses that we were able to provide. However, overall, the estimated reduction in recreational landings of red grouper is less than 2 percent. This equates to a change in landings of approximately 300 to 600 pounds whole weight, or about forty to eight fish total, and I will show you Table 1 in just a minute.

Additionally, it was worth noting that an in-season harvest closure is predicted for recreationally-caught red grouper, due to the revised ACL that was put in place, and so any reduction in landings early in the season could possibly prolong the open harvest season for the recreational sector, albeit in a relatively minor manner, given the minimal projected changes in landings.

Alternative 1 -- As I mentioned, I added the consumer surplus estimates, in response to the comment earlier that it does help to see some of the economic effects and numbers in this document, and so, really, under Preferred Alternative 2a, you're looking at an approximate change of forty fish. The same thing for Sub-Alternative 2b. Sub-Alternative 2c would change the closure to -- It would extend from March through June, and that would be approximately a reduction of eighty fish, and Sub-Alternative 2d has not yet been analyzed, and so that will be forthcoming.

There again, Sub-Alternative 2b, this came from the Abbreviated Framework Amendment 1 that set the revised ACL for red grouper, and you can see here the projected closure dates, and so you're looking at a late summer closure date.

Public comment, really quick, there are a few comments on this action. A commenter from the Florida Keys maintained that every red grouper caught during the full moon in April is in spawning

condition and consider extending the closure through May. A commenter from Wilmington stated that shallow-water groupers in North Carolina spawn in the May/June timeframe and consider adjusting the spawning season closure accordingly, but potentially give fishermen an alternative to pursue during that closure, such as two gags per person.

One commenter from Hatteras expressed support for extending the closure on red grouper through May, and one commenter from Florida said that the spawning season closure could be revised to incorporate the months of May and June and potentially drop January and/or February. As far as the Snapper Grouper Committee actions, the committee approved the revised wording for the action, and then also they added the Sub-Alternative 2d, as I mentioned. With that, any discussion?

MR. ATTACK: Why are they just looking at this for the Carolinas? There is no data in this showing landings by state and what the projected reductions would be by extending the closure, and so this sounds like it's just for North Carolina and South Carolina and not Florida and not Georgia, the extended closure, right?

MR. HADLEY: I think the initial rationale for this was that it was a response to public comment saying that that's really -- The council has gotten several comments saying that the fishery in the Carolinas is doing particularly poorly, and so that's why you had the targeted extension for the spawning season closure off the Carolinas.

MR. ATTACK: All right, but there is no data in here showing what states the landings were in for the red grouper for the last few years and how we're short on the ACL and which states are impacted the most or which states have got the most landings.

MS. BROUWER: Jim, those data were included in, as I said earlier, the fishery performance report that you all put together. We had dissected all the landings by state and by month and everything, and, as you know, this amendment, Amendment 26, which is where this action was originally in, has been developed for the last two years. In fact, this AP, I think, approved a couple of motions with Alternative 1 as the suggested preferred, and so I think there was enough public comment indicating, as John said, that the issues were mainly off of the Carolinas for the council to discontinue considering any changes in Florida.

MR. HULL: Just a comment. I just find it hard to believe that, with any of these sub-alternatives, that you're going to save eighty fish from being harvested and that it's going to make a whole lot of difference as to the rebuilding of the stock. I mean, it's okay, and it sounds good and all that, but, if the fish aren't there to be caught anyway, you may not even save eighty fish, and so I don't know, and it just seems like it's a lot of -- There's not a lot of bang for your buck here.

MS. BROUWER: To that point, this action is not intended to reduce harvest in order to meet that rebuilding goal. This action was in response to stakeholders coming to the council and saying, hey, off the Carolinas, we're still catching red grouper in spawning condition in May, and so consider extending that, and that's the only reason this action was there, and so the reductions, I think, are going to come from what the council already implemented, which is that reduction in the overall catch levels.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LORENZ: With all that said, that Jimmy said and Myra just said, I was here over the past three years, and we got the feedback of people, primarily some charter folks, that were saying, yes, they are still catching gravid female red grouper during our season, particularly in May. However, I think it has backlashed a little bit, and I think the prohibitions through June really are going to get -- That would be pretty punitive, 2d, for what not contribute much to rebuilding, and, therefore, I commented very early on, when it was the deepwater species, when I did ask what state made that recommendation for having a January/February fishery for the deepwater fish.

I had stated that we would sure love to have something to fish for, and I can't fish for those deepwater, but I remember the day when you could fish for the more shallow-water groupers, and I would love an opportunity to fish January and February, and so I would look -- If you think you want to take care of the fish that are in a pre-spawn condition that are still in May and June, I certainly would love to see more of a -- I would like to hear more fishermen comment on the potential for a Sub-Alternative 2c for the folks that like to go offshore forty miles in my area can try a little bottom fishing, and let's see how we do.

We are not going to probably hit the grouper that hard, and then, come March, we've got wahoo start, and then in April we have dolphin, but, essentially, you're in a situation where, if you would like to fish offshore in the southern part of North Carolina, forget about it in January and February, and that probably holds true for South Carolina, which has to go the same distance, and so I would like something like a 2c, if the interest is to give the red groupers a little more time to spawn. Give us two months in the winter to try to fish. The weather and the distance is kind of going to limit effort anyway, as a conservation tool.

MR. ATTACK: I guess I would like to maybe see this Sub-Alternative 2d for all four states, as an option to then see what the numbers look like, if it's really not going to impact -- It's all four states, the whole South Atlantic, and the regulations are easier, and, if we've got a fishery in such dire straits, then any spawning stock in those other two states would help the fishery also, if we're not harvesting them in the same time period. I mean, this fishery is in really bad shape, and so can we have that as an alternative and look at the numbers?

MS. BROUWER: You guys are welcome to recommend anything you would like for the council to consider, and then they will give us direction to include or to not include.

MR. ATTACK: Right. Is there time for that still?

MS. BROUWER: Yes.

MR. ATTACK: Okay. **I would like to make a motion then to have like Sub-Alternative 2d, but have it include all four states and not just two states.** In other words, a closure from January through June for the South Atlantic for red grouper.

MR. MOSS: For just red grouper or all shallow-water?

MR. ATTACK: This is just for red grouper.

MR. MOSS: Okay. We have a second. It's open for discussion.

MR. HUDSON: Historically, in our region, we have never been able to target red grouper. Historically, you can target them in two places. More recently, up in North Carolina, from what we were going -- Like we were fascinated, a decade ago, when you all were catching so much, and then down in the Keys. Otherwise, it's like going out of Daytona and trying to find a yellowtail snapper. It's going to be happenstance, or a queen triggerfish. It's just not normally seen that often.

MR. MCKINLEY: My concern would be is, when you start closing down the red grouper like that, what would keep them from coming back and saying there is too much bycatch and discards of the red grouper, and so it would be time to shut down the gags and the scamp at the same time during those periods, which would be really detrimental to us?

I always understood that I thought that the January and February was the time that they would -- That it was when Florida caught fish or something, and, I mean, it was just different, but I would be real concerned about spreading that stuff out and putting it into June and then facing the possibility of losing gags or something in May and June, because there was too many discards.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So we're essentially saying we're going to remove the red grouper only from the shallow-water complex for those period of months, and can that be done effectively, with enforcement and all that?

MS. BROUWER: The council's intent is to only modify the length of the spawning season closure for red grouper, and so, originally, they had alternatives in there to address black grouper and other shallow-water groupers, and, in the end, it was decided that red grouper was the species that needed the most protection right now, and that's how that came to be, and so it's just red grouper, and I should say, to Randy's point, that I do recall that the AP did note concern about red grouper potentially becoming like a choke species, and so that's been put on the record as a concern from you guys.

MR. HUDSON: The reason we're into this May and June was because North Carolina guys talked about the amount of roe in the red grouper at that time. Down our way, in January, our gags are roed up, and we were trying to get April opened up for us, just so we could catch the tail-end of the gags moving north, but that's beside the point. The red grouper thing, that whole May and June thing, is geared toward that Carolina area, because of the high roe content at that time, and I don't know what else to say about it.

The other thing that I will say is that, when Ben Hartig started seeing those little red groupers after the hurricane, he got people to start tagging them, and so, if we start seeing tags up the line, then we've got a little better idea, besides DNA, which will be a good thing.

MR. GOMEZ: Speaking for the charter/for-hire group, I mean, we're already regulated enough when it comes to red grouper. We can't catch many, one per person per day, and so, for any more to be taken from us or prohibited for six months out of a year, that would kind of be a slap in the face for us.

MR. LORENZ: I think that's where we keep -- We've talked about this a number of times, but we always come up with -- There is these issues that all of a sudden it's almost below that 28 parallel becomes the different world, and so, if there's a need for some more conservation effort

for red grouper, maybe the priority is that there is a shut-down from fishing that is four months, and I think we may need to evolve to where, in a state of fairness, there is a progressive opening of the season, maybe, as we go north, so that, those of us in the Carolinas, maybe we can fish January and February on these fish, if you're going to keep it closed May and June to give them a better time to spawn.

Consequently, everybody south of us will get their four-month block where it's shut down for the purposes of spawning fish, and then that would eliminate some of what we see as -- This one-size-fits-all trying to make it a six-month season or a four-month season, that may not work well, one to either conserve the fish and the other one being unfair in allowing the resource for some of us in one end of the range or the other.

MR. MOSS: Yes, and somebody said it, and I think it was Rusty that said that, about the January closure down south and what that included, and I think that that's where all of this initially came from, was to try to fit, as you said, try to fit all these different states with really -- We will call it three different species and to try to at least somebody get a piece of that spawning pie, if you will, and I know that we've discussed kind of these rolling closures before for different regions, and it's been a really difficult conversation to manage. I think a lot of people are kind of for it, but it's just where do you put those lines and when do you put it, and there is a lot of moving parts to it, and so I probably just stated four problems with no answers, and so I apologize for that, but I'm agreeing with you.

MR. ATACK: Yes, and I understand that, but, I guess to put it in perspective, when we're looking at red grouper right now, they didn't land but 12 percent of the ACL last year, and so, I mean, if we don't make drastic measures on the red grouper, there's not going to be red grouper, and so I think, really, to be more conservative is going to help the fishery. I mean, you're talking 12 percent of the ACL, and so, if you don't do a six-month closure for all four states, and then if you don't do a trip limit reduction, then we're really not doing anything, because the ACL won't be met anyway, and the fishery is just -- Our management isn't going to change anything.

MR. MOSS: Richard, I completely understand what you're saying, and I know, down in the Keys especially, when you get the start of grouper season -- I mean, I joked with a couple of friends of mine down there that it's a wonder that all of these grouper don't have dents on their heads, with all the leads hitting the bottom at the same time.

If you extend that closure for another two months for just red grouper, I understand what you're saying, and I'm not saying that there's not going to be growing pains, but both sides of the coin too, exactly what Jim just said. Unfortunately, we're at a tipping point now where we've got to make some serious changes, and obviously what we've been doing isn't working, probably for really all three of those grouper species, but certainly for red grouper, and we need to make some amendments and give somewhere, and do you know what I mean? I'm just throwing that out there.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Is there any scientific data on what like a T_{min} would look like for a complete closure of harvest of the species completely?

MS. BROUWER: My understanding is that these rebuilding projections that John just presented to you, those are actually under F equals zero, and so, even with no fishing, the stock of red grouper is not going to rebuild by 2020, and so the other thing I will mention, and it's mainly a reminder

of things that you have brought up in the past, is you talked about the council possibly looking at spawning area closures for shallow-water groupers, like way back when, when we were talking about the closures that actually went into place through Amendment 36, which is the spawning special management zones, which were done to address protection for spawning fish, and the council put that in place, but I do recall some of you talking about, when and if we have enough information, that might be one of the things that the council considers, and so, yes, it's a pretty dire situation. There is only a limited number of tools in the management toolbox that the council can draw from, and that's where we are.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I haven't looked recently, because I don't really participate in the Gulf, but what was the Gulf red grouper landings last year, and how quickly did they meet quota, or did they?

MR. HADLEY: I would have to go back and look, and I don't have a good answer for you on red grouper landings. I know that their -- I'm not sure if it's been fully accepted or not, but at least the preliminary results from their stock assessment are looking pretty poor as well for red grouper in the Gulf, and so the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico are showing similar trends, as far as the health of the red grouper stock.

MR. MOSS: Myra is looking for that right now. Go ahead, Todd.

DR. KELLISON: Thanks, David. I was just going to note that I've just been sort of looking through the literature while this discussion has been going on, and so there's a paper from South Carolina DNR scientists that was published in 2007, just in terms of spawning, and so it was based on about 2,000 red grouper collected off of North Carolina and South Carolina, and they didn't find any spawning in January, and the spawning ranged from mid-February to mid-June, and there was still a pretty good percentage of fish in June, and so I'm just throwing that out there for this discussion about different spawning months.

I also found a paper that -- Earlier, there was discussion about connectivity with the Gulf, and the most recent genetic paper I could find was published in 2004, and so the genetic analyses have come a long way since then, but they found not very strong genetic structure in between the Gulf and the Atlantic coast, which is just an indication of some kind of genetic connectivity, which I think could be maintained at a level that was found in that paper, could be maintained with a limited amount of like migration between the two regions, which could be larval supply or older fish, and it could have been recent or within the last fifty or hundred years even, potentially. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Todd.

MR. GOMEZ: This is just -- I am just curious about something. You know, I saw all the pictures on YouTube and different places, where we could see all the dead fish washed up on the beaches, and did anybody -- I'm sure that you know how many, or you have an idea if red grouper was affected tremendously or not, and were there a lot of dead red grouper on the beaches? I'm just curious.

MR. HADLEY: I don't have a good answer for you. I haven't heard any reports on that matter, but it's certainly quite possible that that had a significant effect. Also, the earlier question, if I

could, regarding the Gulf landings, Chip just looked up the landings, and it looks like the commercial and recreational sectors are a little over half of their ACLs, and so it's looking like the Gulf side isn't hitting their ACL as well.

MR. MOSS: We had a motion on the floor, and Red seconded it. **It's to include all four states in Sub-Alternative 2d for red grouper only, and so that's a closure for January to June. All those in favor, eleven in favor; those opposed; those abstaining, five abstentions. The motion passes.**

MR. ATACK: On the Gulf landings, they had an ACT that was around five-million pounds up until 2014, and, in 2016, it went up to 7.7 million pounds, and that's when their percent landing dropped, percent ACL, and they were kind of hitting it prior to that, 5.6 million versus 5.6 million, and so, in 2016, they landed 4.6 million, and so they still -- They got quite a bit of landings, compared to what we have.

MR. HADLEY: Moving on to Action 3, a similar action, and this is moved from Amendment 27, but this is to modify the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest, possession, sale, and purchase of red grouper in the Exclusive Economic Zone of South Carolina and North Carolina. Under the current conditions, there is a January through April commercial closure for shallow-water groupers from the South Atlantic EEZ.

Preferred Alternative 2 would maintain that closure, that spawning season closure, for shallow-water groupers, with the exception of red grouper. There again, this would be specifically targeting red grouper from the EEZ off of the Carolinas, and this would revise the timing of the spawning season closure restrictions as follows. There again, it's the same sub-alternatives that you saw before, and there is Preferred Sub-Alternative 2a, January through May, and Sub-Alternative 2b is February through May, and 2c is March through June, and 2d is January through June.

As mentioned, this was moved from Amendment 27, and there is an analysis that was provided that required the back-filling of landings in North Carolina and South Carolina for the closed time period using landings from 2007 through 2009, since this was the last period that the fishery was open, and the landings are -- The projected reduction in landings are relatively high, since this analytical approach does not account for the potential redistribution of peak effort to May, following the implementation of the spawning season closure in 2009, nor does it account for potential declines in catch rates May through December if the fishery were opened earlier in the year.

In a nutshell, it is likely that the projected change in landings that I will present are an upper bound for the reductions that may occur in the closure months, if the closure months are modified, and I will go on down to Table 3 here, and so here is your three sub-alternatives. Again, 2d has not yet been analyzed yet. However, the projected decrease in landings from Preferred Alternative 2a, approximately 8,000 pounds whole weight, and this is about 15 percent of the annual landings, ex-vessel value of about \$30,000. 2b is about just short of 5,000 pounds whole weight, and 2c is approximately 9,300 pounds whole weight of red grouper.

Looking at the public comments, this is essentially a -- One commenter from North Carolina thought that red grouper should be managed as a bycatch fishery until the stock rebounds, and he suggested no changes to the spawning season closure and a 100-pound trip limit, and extending

the spawning season closure for one species could result in increased regulatory discards of fishermen targeting legal grouper. Two commenters from North Carolina supported the preferred alternative and suggested a small trip limit to help rebuild the fishery, which was approximately 200 pounds.

One commenter expressed concern for conflicting regulations in the Carolinas versus Georgia and Florida and suggested no changes to the seasonal closure, but a 100-pound essentially bycatch trip limit, and then one commenter from Florida said that the spawning season closure could be revised to incorporate the months of May and June and potentially drop January and/or February, and, there again, the Snapper Grouper Committee actions were approved the revised wording for the action and the alternatives and then also added Sub-Alternative 2d to encompass January through June. With that, any comments on Action 3?

MR. ATACK: I guess I would like to make the same motion that I did for the recreational, where it includes all four states on Sub-Alternative 2d, so we can evaluate it and look at it.

MR. MOSS: Do we have a second? Second by Red. Is there discussion? I'm going to go out on a limb here and feel that everybody feels the same way about the commercial side that they do the recreational. I'm seeing a lot of head nods. All right. Nobody is going to say anything, and so I guess we'll just put it to a quick vote then. **All those in favor, ten in favor; opposed; abstain, five abstentions. It passes.**

MR. HADLEY: All right. Moving on to Action 4, this action would establish a commercial trip limit for red grouper harvested in the South Atlantic EEZ. Currently, there is no commercial trip limit for red grouper harvested in the South Atlantic EEZ. The council selected Alternative 2 as their preferred, to establish a commercial trip limit for red grouper harvested in the South Atlantic EEZ, with Sub-Alternatives 2a through 2d.

2a would be seventy-five pounds gutted weight, 2b would be 100 pounds gutted weight, 2c would be 150 pounds gutted weight, and then they selected Sub-Alternative 2d as the preferred sub-alternative, which would be 200 pounds gutted weight.

The committee provided direction to staff to include this action at the June 2018 council meeting, and October was the first time the committee saw the wording of the action, or the analysis, and, initially, the committee discussed a 100-pound gutted weight trip limit, Sub-Alternative 2b, to encompass red grouper bycatch on commercial trips off of the Carolinas, but the committee ended up choosing Preferred Sub-Alternative 2d to accommodate commercial trips in the Florida Keys as well as south Florida, where red grouper seem to be more prevalent or more abundant.

Between 2015 and 2017, a total of 2,447 commercial trips harvested at least one pound of red grouper, and most of these trips had relatively low catches of red grouper, and so 77 percent of the trips had seventy-five pounds or less of red grouper. Under Alternative 2 and its sub-alternatives, the landings of red grouper are projected to be reduced between 11 and 36 percent, and this is including the change to the spawning season closure from Action 3.

Here is just a -- This figure shows the percentage of trips by landings bin, so to speak, and so, over here on the left, you have the percentage of trips, and, on the bottom here, you have red grouper landings on commercial trips. As you can see, many trips have a relatively low amount of red

grouper that are landed. However, there are several trips that do land upwards of -- Over 200 pounds, and so this is sort of a percent distribution.

In looking at predicted landings and percent reduction due to implementing a trip limit, looking at Sub-Alternative 2a, that's the most restrictive trip limit, and so that would be a seventy-five-pound gutted weight trip limit. You're looking at a projected reduction of approximately 36.4 percent, and that's about a \$65,000 reduction in ex-vessel value, due to reduction in red grouper landings. Alternative 2b, you would have about 28 percent, looking at about a \$50,000 change in ex-vessel value. Alternative 2c is 17 percent, looking at about a \$31,000 reduction in ex-vessel value from red grouper, and then Alternative 2d, the 200-pound trip limit, you're looking at about an 11 percent reduction, and this would be about a \$20,000 reduction in ex-vessel value from red grouper landings.

As mentioned, and these comments are fairly similar to what you just saw before, but the commenter from North Carolina mentioned that red grouper should be managed as a bycatch fishery until the stock rebounds, and they suggested no changes to the spawning season closure and a 100-pound trip limit. Two commenters stated support for the preferred alternative in Action 3 and suggested a small trip limit of 200 pounds to help rebuild the fishery, and another commenter expressed concern over conflicting regulations in the Carolinas versus Georgia and Florida for the spawning season closure change and instead suggested a 100-pound bycatch trip limit.

As a reminder, one of the reasons for putting this action in the amendment was the Snapper Grouper AP motion that you all made at the April 2018 meeting to consider a bycatch commercial trip limit for red grouper, and that was unanimous, and then, as far as the Snapper Grouper Committee action, they approved the action and range of alternatives that were included and ended up selecting Sub-Alternative 2d as their preferred. With that, I will turn it over for any discussion on Action 4.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Looking at the numbers, it seems to be about 10,000 pounds were harvested by probably one to three fishermen that target red grouper, and so I mean, really, what we're looking at here is 10,000 pounds of stock really worth cutting the legs out of three fishermen, because that's what it seems to me. I can't be 100 percent sure on that, but I would say, with the low number of trips that were exceeding 200 pounds of red grouper, roughly a \$45,000 difference in between what the impact is going to be of the trip limit, and I don't know that it's worth that for the fishery overall, to gain a 10,000-pound mark, at \$4.50 a pound average to the boat.

MR. MOSS: Any other commercial fishermen want to chime in or make a motion or anything?

MR. HULL: At our previous meeting, we suggested a bycatch trip limit, and the council chose Sub-Alternative 2d as 200 pounds gutted weight, and I stand by that. The purpose and need has been fulfilled.

MR. ATACK: I guess when you look at it, if you do a 200-pound trip limit, it really will not affect anything. The real reduction, I think, is in the ACL. I mean, typically, we do trip limit reductions to extend a season, so that -- Some people would rather fish year-round, rather than have the season cut off in June because we hit the ACL, and so, in this case, by reducing the trip limit, you're not really extending the season. Do you know what I mean? Right now, we can't catch the ACL, but, if the fishery rebuilds and we have an ACL of 60,000 pounds, and then we start landing fish in a

six-month season, then the season might turn into a three-month season or a four-month season and close in October or November. That is maybe what happens down the road, but picking smaller trip limits right now really is of very little impact on the fishermen if you went with the 150 or the 100, because most trips don't hit that limit, because the fish aren't there, and so the real choke on this species is going to be the ACL, when you hit the 60,000 pounds and the season shuts down.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Going along with that, that was the reason why I made the point of it probably is a small number of guys that are good at that fishery and land more than 200 pounds per trip, and it kind of weighs on me, as a specialty-type fisherman, that if a rule came down that wasn't going to really make a whole lot of difference in the grand scheme of things, and it kind of targeted me and what I do best, that's going to hurt.

MR. ATACK: Right, but it might not be that. It might be that, every once in a while, somebody gets a big trip, and they just happen to get on the fish and then what that would mean is that, when they hit their limit, they would stop, instead of keep fishing on an area that might be an aggregate area of spawning.

MR. MOSS: All right. If nobody wants to make a motion about anything, anything else, John? That was the end of it?

MR. HADLEY: That was the end of it. If the group doesn't want to make any motions on Action 4, that's about it. The only other action that the committee had was to approve the amendment for final approval, potential final approval, in December. As I mentioned, and that's just -- Due to data issues, that needs to be pushed back to March of 2019, but, there again, the intention is still to meet that statutory deadline of having something in place by September of 2019.

MR. MOSS: All right. Thank you very much. It's definitely appreciated. Obviously, I think that everybody can agree that there's a lot of work to be done with red grouper, and so we'll all keep our fingers crossed there. On that happy note, we'll call it an evening, and we'll come back tomorrow morning at 8:30. We'll reconvene tomorrow morning at 8:30. Thank you, guys.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 17, 2018.)

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OCTOBER 18, 2018

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened in the Town & Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, October 18, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Good morning, everybody. Welcome. I hope everybody had a decent enough breakfast and got some sleep last night. We're going to move right into Regulatory Amendment 32, yellowtail snapper, and, with that, I will turn it over to Ms. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Good morning. Thank you, David. Yesterday, I sent you guys, via email, another little tidbit of information on yellowtail that I did not have available when the briefing book was posted, and so I'm going to bring that one up as well, and so, if you have it on your laptops, that's the one I'm going to be referring to, and that doesn't have an attachment number. The file is just called "AM32SAYTSDATAREPORT", but, before I do that, let me give you a little bit of background on this amendment.

This, again, is the document that we used with the Snapper Grouper Committee to discuss this amendment a couple of weeks ago when they met here with the council, and so the intent of this amendment is to reduce the probability of in-season closures for the commercial sector, and so, as you know, yellowtail snapper has been closing early. Back in 2016, the council changed the fishing year for that species so that it begins August 1, and that was a suggestion that I believe came from stakeholders and the AP, and the rationale behind that was that, if the commercial sector met its ACL in-season, the closure would happen when yellowtail are spawning, and so there would be a beneficial biological effect by switching the start of the fishing year.

The council went ahead and did that, and that was effective in August of 2016, and we have been having closures early since then, and so the council was approached, and FWC came forward and said, after the hurricanes, those guys in south Florida and in the Keys have had a really tough time and we need to do something to quickly make the situation better for that sector while we consider long-term management for the species, and so some of you who are new today may not know that the council, before all of this, was considering more long-term approaches to managing yellowtail, including potentially combining the ACL with the Gulf of Mexico.

The yellowtail snapper stock is assessed as a single stock, and so the two councils, the Gulf of Mexico Council and the South Atlantic, divvy it up. They use a formula to allocate the acceptable biological catch to their respective jurisdictions, and they each manage their chunk of the yellowtail stock, respectively. There were talks about how could they perhaps combine it, perhaps do some sort of in-season allocation shift to where some of the unused portion that was allocated initially to the recreational sector could be switched over to the commercial sector, and it got -- There were a lot of alternatives, and it was a little complicated, and so the council said let's put that on hold and let's deal with this immediate issue and provide some relief for the situation, as it is now, and then we'll pick the other amendment back up, and that one is Amendment 44.

That is a little bit of background. In June, they gave us direction to begin work on this amendment, and we did some scoping. We did it via webinar, and then, in October, they reviewed the scoping comments and the preliminary analyses that we had prepared for them, and so there were only three people that commented, and James is one of them, and, basically, the alternatives are -- The one that folks preferred as a short-term solution was for the commercial sector to not close until the total ACL was harvested, and so that was the one that got support from stakeholders.

Here are the alternatives. Right now, they are split, as you know, and the commercial gets their portion, and the recreational sector gets their portion, and each of them closes when they reach the ACL. Alternative 2 would make it so that an in-season closure would not occur for either sector

until the total catch limit is met, and so, if the total catch limit -- Both sectors would close when the total catch limit is met. However, there was some concern that this would not be perceived as fair or that it would somehow not be equitable for the recreational sector, and so the council asked us to put together some alternatives that are going to make it more balanced, and so Alternatives 3 and 4 is what we came up with.

An in-season closure would not occur for the commercial sector if the commercial ACL -- An in-season closure would occur if the commercial sector meets their ACL and the total ACL reaches 80 percent of the total, and so that was a way to make it more equitable between the two sectors, and then Alternative 4 is just another alternative for their consideration, and it just says, simply, that it wouldn't close until 70 percent of the total ACL is met, and so those are the two additional alternatives that we analyzed.

This is where I am going to switch to my other file, and so this is the analysis that was revised since the council meeting, and so I got this three days ago. Here are your landings, commercial and recreational, in pounds whole weight in the South Atlantic by year from 2012 through 2016, and here you have the percentages of the ACL that have been harvested in each of those years.

2016 is a weird year, because that's when the fishing year changed, and so, if you see up here, the first four rows of the table are calendar year, and so it's easy to calculate, but here, in 2016, the fishing year changed right in the middle, and so that's why you have these "N/A" over here. Here is just a graphic showing the same thing. The dashed line here up at the top is the ACL, and that was put in place in 2012, and so, really, it should go from here on forward, but you have the commercial landings are in blue, and the recreational landings are in green, and the total landings are the solid black line, and so you can see that we have not been meeting the total ACL yet.

These are the monthly commercial landings for 2013 through 2016 and then the projected future landings, and so this is where I believe -- The analysts who conducted these analyses, they go back and calculate daily catch rates, and that is what they use to project into the future based on those rates, and so that's what this red line is showing you, and then you have color-coded by year, 2013 through 2016, by month.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So the projected numbers for 2017, as far as I'm concerned, they look very accurate, because I followed that year very, very closely. A post-Hurricane Irma event led to an amazing production cycle in the months following the storm, and we did see a drop-off from an unusually high harvest rate, and we've seen that baseline continue through the end of the summer, and, as we pick back up, we are harvesting pretty much at that baseline rate, and so that's a pretty fair representation of where the fishery is, and I would like to really streamline what's in front of the panel here and what's in front of the council and help really understand what we need as a yellowtail fishing community, and I think it will be eye-opening for everybody, and so, when you're ready, I will let you guys know.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, James, and, just for the record, did you say 2017, the 2017 -- As far as 2017 goes, yesterday, when John was talking about red grouper, he explained to you guys that there had been an issue with 2017 data through the Science Center, and that issue is being addressed, and so 2017 information has been removed from this particular analysis, because the data that were initially included, and that's why I forwarded this to you all, because the analyses that the council saw that are included in the other document that I just projected include 2017, but

it's only partially complete, and so, rather than do that, we removed those data, and that's what this analysis that I am projecting right now is. It includes all of 2016 and none of the 2017 data.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So the dashed line is -- I mean, I have seen the landings, the way that they've been posted, and I've seen the charts, and that is almost dead-on what has been reported.

MS. BROUWER: Which is great to hear, and so those are what the landings -- What we expect the landings would be if you use the catch rates from 2013 through 2016, and so, yes, it's projecting forward from 2016 onwards.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: In an event that's in the past.

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so you use the past information to --

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I really feel like there's already been some calculation there, and there is some vision as to what is actually happening as well.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, I get what you're saying now, and one of the things that will be interesting to see is, once we do have all the completed 2017 data, compare what the projected landings are to the actual landings, and that's when you know whether you have done a good job with those projections or not, and so we'll probably do some of that before this analysis gets all packed up and finalized.

MR. HUDSON: Myra, with the recreational, we know they've got the two-month waves and the forty-five-day delays and the QA/QC process is usually half a year after the year is completed, and are you going to be using like a running average for the recreational to combine with the commercial to do in-season closures, like a two or three-year running average on the recreational, because that's so hard to get your mind around without some kind of reporting system there.

MS. BROUWER: Right, and for that reason, we are -- That is another reason why we're presenting this information only through 2016, because we do have final recreational 2016 data, but we don't have 2017 final recreational data, but, in terms of averaging it out and how the actual analysis is done, I can't really answer that question, because I haven't done this myself.

MR. HUDSON: Now, with the calibrations that have been done and the changes there, and I haven't looked at yellowtail to look at the PSEs across that thirty-eight years, but I'm sure that this is all going to be kind of fluid for a little while. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, it is, and my understanding is the recreational estimates for yellowtail, based on the revisions that MRIP just undertook, are much higher, and so the council is going to have to be addressing all that all at once, coming up in the next several months.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: In a post-hurricane event, FWC did reach out, and they wanted to get the commercial sector's view on where yellowtail is currently and where we need to take it, and the initial response from me personally was combining the recreational and commercial ACL would look like a nice alternative if both sectors closed at the same time.

From that, we moved forward into the scoping, the public scoping, and all of that, and still I was onboard with that. I took that information, and I spread it among my peers, and what we ultimately decided is that this fishery currently is being managed properly. The recreational sector should never close. Tourism is a huge part of our economy in the Florida Keys, and there is no reason that, twelve months out of the year, a commercially and recreationally-harvested species should be taken off the table for the recreational sector.

Commercially, we have a hard allocation that we're only two years into following that program, and it's working for us. We like it. It allows guys that yellowtail fish year-round the opportunity to truly maintain their vessels, to bring them out of the water, to get the bottoms done. If you have a family, it helps you take a trip, maybe, because you're not worried about what you're missing in an open fishing season. I think that we need to continue and move ahead with no action, because this fishery is being managed properly.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, and thank you for saying that, because you actually voiced some of my concerns as a recreational angler, but, to that end, let's let Myra finish with the presentation, and then we can make the motion, if that's okay with you anyway, to make the motion at the end of this, and I certainly would be happy to hear that motion.

MR. ATACK: When is the spawning season again for yellowtail? I know, in 2018, the commercial closed on June 5, and I know we talked about that, if it closed, it would close for spawning, and what is the spawning time for yellowtail?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: From my knowledge as a fisherman, they spawn anywhere from late March to the end of August, based on what I've seen. There will be timeframes in the dead of winter that, if the weather circumstances are right and we're in a pattern that we've had warm weather and the fish have been feeding, I will see small masses of fish, migrating male fish, that are fully ready and capable to go, and I'm not saying that that holds true from mass to mass, but I have seen that in January, and so it's really hard to say when, but, historically, before yellowtail fishing really evolved, ten years ago, from the end of April to the end of July.

MR. MOSS: I was going to say that, typically, even recreationally, we see them, and it's basically a summer thing that we notice for the spawning, summer as we know it anyway in south Florida, which is nine months a year.

MR. ATACK: Right, and so the current closure takes advantage of some of that, or cuts down some of the take on some of that spawning time.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: As far as the marketability is concerned of that species, the summertime typically hasn't been the best time to market that product, when you see the high volumes of the three-quarter to one fish enter the marketplace, and the price really plummets, and, as a wholesale dealer, this past year, and the year prior to that, to the boat, I never went below \$2.25, where we were hitting consignment in years prior to that in those months, and so I think that's a big deal when you place a value to the species along with management.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you. These are all great comments and great suggestions. We'll have to bring some of this back up when we do the fishery performance report this afternoon, because it's really good information, and so hold on to those thoughts. One more thing that I was going to

show you is here is the recreational landings, and it's the same sort of thing. You've got the total landings in black, the projected landings, in red, and then the actual annual landings -- I'm sorry. The black is 2014. It's by year. It's 2014, 2015, and 2016, and then the projected landings are in red.

Then there is this table here, which is the one that you are probably most interested in, and so here is a table showing you the various preferred alternatives here on the left, what the combined ACL is, and you've got your recreational ACL, your projected landings, and whether there would be a closure or not, and so this panel here on the table is all recreational sector. Then the same thing for the commercial. Your commercial ACL, the projected landings under the various alternatives, and what the projected closure would be.

You can see that, under no action and Alternative 4, which is the one that would close the commercial sector when landings reach 70 percent of the total ACL, you have got the same projected closure date, and so there's really no difference between Alternative 4 and the no action alternative. The commercial sector closes when they reach their portion of the ACL.

Then Preferred Alternative 3 is the one the council has currently selected, and so, for that one, the projected closure for the commercial sector would be the beginning of July, and so that would keep the fishery open an extra month than it's been closing in the last couple of years. It's been closing in early June, and so it would extend it for another month. The recreational sector, as you can see here, would not close under any of the proposed alternatives, and then, over here on the right, you see what the percent of the total ACL that would be landed under the various alternatives and your total landings under each of those.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would like to add that this is an excellent illustration of why no change would be very good. I mean, the numbers -- We're right in line with pretty much straight up and down the chart with what's currently being harvested and when closures will occur, and I think we avoid a lot of the confusion about combining an overall ACL, and I think it will make the recreational sector really feel more comfortable about what they are entitled to, and I like that idea.

MS. BROUWER: A follow-up question, if you don't mind, and so, when we were discussing this internally among the staff, the 2017 catch rates seem to have gone up. I mean, the yellowtail fishery, as you pointed out, has been ramping up, and it's steadily increasing, and so, if those catch rates continue into the future, these projected closures are probably going to happen sooner, and so that's one caveat that we want to make sure that everybody realizes, is that these are the numbers that we have based on that chunk of time, 2013 through 2016, but, if things keep ramping up, then you're going to see earlier and earlier closures.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: In response to that, I think that, if that were the case, and I am not certain that it will be the case, based on what I am seeing as far as the current catch rate goes, but, if that trend were to continue, I would lean toward a future stock assessment, showing that the biomass is in a healthier state, and we would probably end up with a little bit more allocation overall that would really justify and substantiate where science has taken us throughout this management process, and I'm a firm believer that we will get to where we're going as long as we stay on the path.

MR. ATACK: The check on that really is 2018, and look at this year. I mean, you're talking about 2017 stuff, but we closed June 5, is actually when it was closed, and the projected would have been June 23, and so it's pretty close.

MR. HULL: James, I yield to your well-stated comments as a yellowtail fisherman, and, looking at the projections, which is all we can really do, and we can guess about if things are going to be different, but you would only gain maybe 140,000 pounds of fish and a few weeks and cause a lot of -- Open up a can of worms, basically, and so basically you're going to rely on a future stock assessment, but, if we're catching these fish and the stock is doing -- If you're consistently having a great year every year, hopefully the science will show that and you'll get an increase in allocation, which will make up for it, rather than going down this road, but there's a lot of things that need to fall into place for that, but, again, I yield to you as being a stakeholder in this fishery, and I can agree that it would open up a big can of worms, but I know that, in the Keys, as you say -- I agree that they need to have access recreationally continuously. A lot of the restaurants and fish houses that I know down there, it did really hurt them not to have that local yellowtail in the market for the tourists that were going to restaurants and not fishing, but I yield to what you said, and it was well-stated.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Jim, and, in response to that, if I may, real quick, there are things that I would like to bring to the table in Other Business that would help alleviate that problem, and it's something that we'll talk about, because there needs to be room for that as well.

MR. GOMEZ: James, thank you for that. In reference to the recreational sector, we too could wrap our hands around no action, and I do want to read something from Brice at some point. I don't want to jump ahead and keep interrupting, but, at some point, I need to read something from our president, but I wanted to ask you a question, James, if I may.

One thing we're noticing, and I want to know if you're seeing any of this also, is, in any commercial industry or charter boat industry or whatever fishing business, you always have a small group of bad actors, and one thing that we're noticing more in the lower Keys is that some of these commercial guys are trying to get more of that ACL or targeting smaller fish and going about it so quickly that they don't really take the time to release those smaller fish, and then those smaller fish are being released dead after the fact, and we're seeing a good amount of frigates obviously diving on dead fish, and I'm just wondering if you're seeing that also, and maybe we could open that up for discussion and ways we may be able to solve that.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Richard, that's an excellent point. The way that the yellowtail snapper are harvested, there are bad apples, without a doubt, and sometimes, when you're on a mass of feeding fish that are over or under the size limit, you will have fish that need to be tended to immediately, and, on an individual level, some people don't care as much, and it's sad, but, if we look at the current closure rate and when we're experiencing that closure, we're going to alleviate two months of the year, maybe even six or eight weeks or ten weeks, if we see a closure a little bit sooner, and a lot of those guys that have those methods are part-time fishermen that only go when either the lobster traps are on the water or on the hill or they only go when the yellowtail are easy to catch. That has typically been May and June and July, and they will. They will go after that smaller fish, because they're easier to catch, and it is a concern. That is another reason why we don't want to extend the season further into the spawning period, and we won't see that.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Richard, now would be the time, if you want to read that email, but go ahead with your comment.

MR. GOMEZ: All right. Let me just say one thing in reference to that. James, you're in a different scenario from us. For us, we have the bar, which is an outer reef that extends about fourteen or fifteen miles southeast of Key West, and then seventeen-point-something southwest of Key West, and so, when these bad actors are fishing, they are generally fishing on the main reef, and so they're very easy to see, and it's easy for us to know what's happening, because that's where, historically, our smaller fish are, and so we're seeing more commercial fishermen fishing on the reef and targeting the smaller fish, just because it can happen quicker, although they're smaller fish, and, as long as they meet the size limit, they're easier to get, but I can read that, unless you wanted to comment on that first.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would, and you are correct, to a certain extent, but those fishermen have been targeting those small fish, and we call them the drone-type fish, that just eat without any reservations, and that's been going on as long as I've been in the fishery. The harvest of those small fish, that's where the poundage comes from, and it's a little bit more aggressive type fishery, and, yes, I think your concerns probably fall a little bit more on the side of enforcement, and, if we had a little bit more help when these things are going on, instead of one guy pointing at the other guy and saying that this guy is not doing it right and cause a problem within our own community, I think we could maybe ask for some better enforcement strategies.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay, and so this is from the President of the Key West Charter Boat Association, Brice Barr, owner of the Double Down, and, as I read into this, you're going to think about what I just said to you guys about the bar.

He says: I appreciate the opportunity to address the Snapper Grouper AP on behalf of the Key West Charter Boat Association. As recreational fishermen, we are worried about the ACL and the accountability of yellowtail snapper in Regulatory Amendment 32. Key West is arguably one of the best places to target yellowtail in the South Atlantic.

The decreasing size of the fish and the new MRIP data considerations are big concerns. It is well known that the commercial quota is being reached faster and faster each year, but our concern is that the size of the fish is not being considered. The commercial sector is catching the same poundage each year, but the fish are smaller. Key West has a seemingly endless supply of excellent bottom that holds varieties of bottom fish, and we used to only see commercial and recreational vessels on the outer reef that we call the bar.

The last few years, we are seeing more and more commercial vessels in the shallower reef areas targeting smaller yellowtail snapper, as they are easier to catch, and the quota is being met faster. There is competition between commercial boats with no trip limit, and so the fishermen will attempt to catch as much as possible to get their share of the ACL, which is another reason that the ACL is met earlier each year.

The commercial vessels can catch the smaller fish faster, and, yes, they have to catch more of them to make the poundage, but these fish do not require the resources, meaning power chumming, to produce more poundage. The vessels target the smaller yellowtails because they are easier to catch

than the larger, smarter ones. The mortality rate of these smaller fish is significantly higher, as the smaller fish have to be handled and measured before they are released, usually dead.

The sustainability of the species relies on us to remain within the ACL of each sector. Most of the recreational anglers will stick to the bar area as catching ten fish per person is much different than attempting to get the piece of the commercial ACL pie. We are also concerned with the new recreational MRIP charts that will show that there is possibly more recreational trip catches than previously thought.

We feel that giving the recreational ACL to the commercial sector, whether you choose to leave recreational open year-round or not, could be detrimental to the for-hire business as well as the recreational users. If the commercial stays open year-round for the next couple of years, the next stock assessment in 2019 could show them in danger of overfishing, and then they could be closed earlier for both sectors. We all have friends and family in the commercial fishing industry, but these ACLs are in place for a reason. Just closely consider that there may not be as many yellowtail snapper left on the table as thought, because the recreational numbers are truly unknown.

The yellowtail snapper is one of the most important and reliable food fish for the recreational sector. Any recreational angler has the yellowtail snapper as their solid fallback Plan B. A potential closure of this species so that the commercial sector can have a larger ACL is not the answer. Please consider waiting until the next stock assessment in 2019. That's it.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much for that, Richard, and we'll, I'm sure, reference that again, and so keep it close at hand when we get to the fishery performance reports. That was kind of the end, right?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and so, at this time, I can pass these observations along to the council, or, if you guys want to make a motion, now would be the time to do it.

MR. MOSS: Go ahead, James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would like to make a motion that no action is taken at this time and that we continue to manage this fishery in the manner that we have been currently.

MR. MOSS: I have a second from Jimmy, and we'll open it for discussion right now, though we've had a decent amount already, if anybody else would like to comment.

MR. HULL: I would say that what Richard said lines right up with what you said, basically. It's between both sectors, and so no action is the way to go.

MR. MOSS: As a recreational fisherman who often fishes the Keys for yellowtail, I will chime in as well and say that I would agree with this. I would prefer that no action be taken. It's nice -- As Richard said, yellowtail is -- As it is for a lot of the guys up north, it's kind of the bread and butter for the Keys for a lot of recreational people that will head offshore. If we get our dolphin or catch a sailfish or something like that on the edge of the reef, then there's always yellowtail on the reef, whether it's in the patches in the wintertime or on the edge of the reef or whatever, and, if there's ever a time when that's not available, then there's going to be a lot of unhappy customers.

While I know that there is an effect of possibly not having as much available at the restaurants, I think that probably feel it a little bit more in the pocket of people not going down to the Keys in general, recreationally speaking anyway, when yellowtail is closed. The Keys are kind of an interesting -- It's an interesting animal that a lot of the recreational people that fish the Keys obviously aren't Keys residents. We come from all parts of south Florida and southwest Florida and so on and so forth, and so there is definitely a lot of money spent going over there as a recreational, non-resident fisherman of the Keys. Again, I know I'm not saying anything that hasn't been said, but I'm just voicing my agreement with this. Go ahead, James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Also, to the gentleman that wrote that email, in regard to the smaller fish and the way that an illegal, undersized fish is being handled on some of these boats, I kind of felt like there may be a lead-up to a minimum size increase discussion there, and I have had this discussion with my peers, and we would not be opposed to that.

The problem lies when you are dealing with that fish that's eleven-and-three-quarters to thirteen-and-a-half or fourteen inches. You are going to be handling so many more illegal fish if the size limit was thirteen inches. Every one of those fish that you caught that was between twelve and thirteen inches is now laying on the deck or being handled by hand and going over the side and has to be measured, and so you may have a high mortality rate within that twelve to thirteen-inch fish that previously was a legal fish and was going to the marketplace and was counting against the ACL. We might end up with more dead fish with no value, and so that's kind of an answer to that concern.

MR. GOMEZ: Thanks for that, and so, no, we're not leading there, and I understand exactly what you're saying. We're just mainly trying to protect the fish that are allotted to us being used by commercial fishermen, and I get the whole mortality thing, and we're okay with the size limit, but we wouldn't mind also seeing a little bit larger size limit. It wouldn't hurt us any, but we're just mainly trying to protect the fishery, and it's a very strong fishery. I mean, there's nobody that can deny that the yellowtail fishery is definitely -- I am not seeing any overfishing, even though we're catching more fish each year. There doesn't seem to be any shortage, and I think that has a lot to do with how often they are breeding.

MR. MANIGAULT: I don't really have a dog in this fight, but I guess my concern is I'm hearing mortality rate, and I'm hearing possibly a law enforcement issue, and my concern is are we going to get boats fishing in the wrong place, possibly? Is that what I heard, commercial boats, on some of the bar reefs or whatever?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: These fish migrate up and down the Keys, and, when that particular size range hits the bar, the guys are there to catch them, and it's normally an eleven-and-a-half to fourteen-inch fish, and the majority isn't the eleven-and-a-half variety. You might see a dozen fish out of a hundred that need to be released, and, if you are speed catching fish -- Two men can put a hundred fish on the deck in eight minutes, and so, if some of those first fish that hit the deck did not get tended to immediately, you might have issues with survivability of that fish, depending on the temperature of the day and how much the fisherman cares.

It's really a charge to the fishermen that are on a mass of fish that may be 50 or 60 percent illegal fish. One, we can't invest the kind of feeding practices that we do to harvest a fish that's 50 percent illegal. The yield is not there, and we can't justify the use of the chum to keep that school at the

back of the boat and catch them if we're throwing every other one of them away, and so it's kind of a self-regulatory process, meaning it's just not worth it to have that fish at the back of the boat feeding, and that fish -- If you're catching a 50 percent throwback rate fish, the ones that you're keeping are about 0.6 pounds, and it's just not worth it. You've got to be in that 80 or 90 percent range if you're on that small mass of fish to even justify the practice.

MR. MANIGAULT: I guess my concern is the stock itself, and my concern is the law enforcement side of it, what could possibly be done, and/or what you're experiencing in this whole entire process, and what could we do to try to prevent some of it? There's got to be something that we can do.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: That's like saying don't fish for deepwater fish because you might have to use a descending device to send a fish back, and it's completely unknown whether that fish is going to survive or not, because of a shark, because of other unforeseen circumstances. I mean, I get it, and I don't think it's a bad thing, but it kind of goes with all the fishing practices. You're going to have some sort of negative impact if you're harvesting something that has to go back in the water.

MR. MUNDEN: I have a question for the staff. When are yellowtail snapper scheduled to be assessed again?

MS. BROUWER: The assessment process has begun. My understanding is there's going to be a series of workshops coming up, and I believe the assessment should be completed sometime summer-ish of 2019, maybe in the fall. November, Julia is saying.

MR. MUNDEN: A follow-up comment. I know that the council put a lot of time and effort into developing, and the staff developing, this amendment. It may make more sense, rather than just a flat no action, is to recommend that action be postponed until results of the next stock assessment is made available to the AP and the council.

MR. GOMEZ: James, you're hitting it pretty much on the nail. I mean, professional fishermen fish professionally, and so many fishermen that are sitting on a school of smaller fish maybe aren't as professional at it, and it's the professional fishermen like yourself that will realize that, if I'm sitting on a mound of small fish and I'm using up all this chum, it's not feasible for me, and so I'm going to move on to larger fish, and you as a professional know where to find those larger fish, and so it is a self-governing kind of thing, for the most part.

MS. BROUWER: I just wanted to -- Not make a suggestion, but also tell you that the option of suggesting other actions for yellowtail that the AP may be interested in the council pursuing, we already have this amendment that we've begun development, and so, if there's any other management measures that you may want to suggest that the council take up, now would be a good time to bring those up.

MR. ATTACK: I heard earlier comments about the fish stock in the Gulf and in Key West are the same, and I'm not real familiar with the management measures for the Gulf side and what percentage of the stock is landed in the Gulf versus Key West, and it would be good information to know, because, really, if you're looking at a fish stock, it's good to know the whole picture, versus just a sliver of it or a part of it.

The other comment I would make is, when we do these closures based on ACLs, then those closure dates swing back and forth, and usually it's contradictory to what you want from a management standpoint. If the stock is doing well, then you're going to close much sooner. If the stock is not doing well, it takes longer to catch the stock, and therefore you're fishing down more on the spawning time and depleting the stock better, and so would we be better off with a set spawning period closure for the commercial? I mean, I'm not in the fishery, and it's not my dog, but I'm just looking at what we've seen with different fisheries over time when the stock assessments lack what's going on with the fishery. Then the stock assessment catches up and the ACLs change, but we see closure dates swing back and forth more quickly based on what's going on with the stock and the fishing.

MR. MANIGAULT: I am just a little uncomfortable, because it seems as if -- I could be wrong, because I'm kind of new at this, but it just seems as if this species is going somewhat unchecked on the law enforcement side, and it seems as if those captains should, like you said previously, know that, okay, this is not going to benefit me, and maybe some law enforcement guy needs to be around saying, hey, listen, you can't do this.

I am just uncomfortable in my gut about that, and that's all, the whole entire -- I am just concerned about that particular fish in itself, because it's a big thing, and it seems like it's a big fishery down there for you guys, and they may be prolific, and I don't know, but I am concerned about the law enforcement side of it, somebody doing something and instead of just letting them run amuck and to stay on a particular reef to catch a fish that they know is undersized.

MR. MOSS: I will kind of respond to that, and, James, I'm sure you can chime in too, but it's not necessarily a law enforcement issue, and what they're saying is they're not necessarily doing anything illegal. What they're doing is just catching a load of fish, and a lot of them are undersized, and they're keeping the ones that are legal or right at that size.

The other thing to remember too is, with the Keys -- The Keys is kind of an interesting little -- I don't know what you want to call it, but there are so many different areas, and there is protected areas, and there is different zones. I mean, the law enforcement there, I wouldn't wish that upon anybody, of the things that you have to know as a law enforcement official down in the Keys, because there is protected areas around light houses, and there is the Keys Management Zone, and there is all these different things that go on down there, and, to say that law enforcement in the Keys, in general, is understaffed would be a gross understatement.

Again, what these two gentlemen are referring to isn't -- It's not that they're doing anything illegal, per se, and maybe you can call it, I guess, unethical, because they're just sitting there hammering smaller fish, and they're legal, yes, and they're throwing back a ton of them, but they're throwing them back, and so they're within their rights, but, ethically -- What they're saying. I mean, I'm not speaking to that, because I don't commercial fish.

MR. HULL: Gary, I would say that it would be like you off of South Carolina being on a black sea bass bite and you're throwing back 80 percent of them to catch those legal-sized bass. It's the same thing as that. That's not illegal, and you are having to do it, and it's a little different situation, because there is a lot of yellowtail down there, but it's just -- If you were a commercial fisherman,

you're not going to sit there and waste your time to do that. You're going to go after something for your time that you can harvest.

Are there bad actors? Sure there are, and there are probably bad actors on the recreational side that would sit there and do that also, but it's not illegal to do that. In every species, we have trip limits, or size limits, that we have to deal with, and we're discarding, and so, if we could get rid of discarding, we would all be a whole lot better off, wouldn't we, but we're not there.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would just like to add that you could say the same exact thing for the vermilion fishery.

MR. MOSS: One other thing I will add to this, and then we'll -- I think we're all thinking the same thing, but one other thing I will add to this is, if you take last year and the consideration of it, especially after Irma, and, Richard and James, you guys can speak to this, but there wasn't much of a recreational fishery right after Irma, and so it kind of has a double effect, in that I would be surprised if this was an accurate accounting for recreational landings, because nobody was going down there, and there was nowhere to stay, nowhere to launch a boat, nowhere to do anything, and, again, most of the recreational fishermen that fish the Keys aren't residents. There is quite a few, but most of them are coming from elsewhere.

What that would do, if you kind of -- I don't want say switch allocation, but, if you allow commercial, who are residents, who can stay down there, they're going to do exactly what these guys said, and they're going to keep fishing and keep fishing and keep fishing, and you're going to have a closed fishery when you have these hurricane events like we had last year with Irma, and what was it, like a month or a month-and-a-half before anybody could really go down there recreationally, and certainly in your neck of the woods, Marathon, I know it was a lot worse, and Islamorada was --

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To that effect, there were a number of charter boat captains that switched. They found an available South Atlantic permit that ended up going commercial fishing because of the lack of revenue that was being generated on the charter side, and they were harvesting legally, and I bought from three or four of these guys, and a couple of them are still acting commercial fishermen, and so they have made a transition from one side to the other, rebuilding their charter boat business, and it's taking time, and so there is certainly still some outfall from Hurricane Irma and what that did to the fishery, as far as where the pressure is being applied and when and how.

That would still lead me to go in the direction of no action, and we need to take some time to really make sure that this fishery is going to level itself out, and maybe this should be discussed when we're talking about the health of the fishery over the last five years and the direction that we feel that we're going. Jim, I would like to address what you're saying about a spawning closure, because there are some pros and some cons to that that I would like to address, but I think maybe in that next section we will do that.

MR. MOSS: All right. We've had a lot of good discussion about -- Go ahead, Jim.

MR. ATACK: I think Myra is going to explain about the Gulf and -- Or not.

MS. BROUWER: I'm not quite sure what you were asking, but, if you're asking how much of the ABC is managed by the Gulf and how much by the South Atlantic, that division is 75 percent South Atlantic and 25 percent Gulf.

MR. ATTACK: Yes, and, at one time, we were looking at trying to manage it as one species, and we talked amounts, and so I guess that kind of died.

MS. BROUWER: So it hasn't died yet, and it is -- As I was saying earlier, it's something that is still potentially going to be considered in a different amendment, because it's more of a long-term management. You have to negotiate with the Gulf, and it just takes a longer time.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To further address that, Jim, there are a certain number of people that have the Gulf snapper grouper permit that kind of use that as a fallback if their season close to home wasn't very good, for whatever reason, and this is a very, very small section around the Dry Tortugas that is viable for yellowtail snapper production.

To completely join that ACL, it is very touchy, and you come into contact with a lot more VMS issues. All Gulf boats have got to report when they leave and all that, and, in the South Atlantic, we don't currently have to do that, and so there's a lot to be considered when trying to combine that ACL, and I think it's been a good decision thus far to not incorporate the two.

MR. GOMEZ: James, you just answered my question, but I was just curious how many pounds of fish are actually coming out of the Gulf, but the poundage that is coming out of the Gulf is generally the Tortugas area, and is there another area that I am not aware of?

MR. MOSS: With that, let's go ahead, and I will read this one more time. **It's recommend Alternative 1, no action, for yellowtail snapper. All those in favor, fifteen in favor; opposed; abstain, two abstain. The motion passes.**

MR. GOMEZ: It's kind of off topic here, but, for James, I had a question for you. Say the yellowtail closes and the spawning time in June, July, and August -- What are the effects, do you think, of the chum being pulled from the water in that time period?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: What we've seen over the last two closures is very little effect, if anything. It's been positive for the fishermen, and you've got to remember that there is still a fairly heavy recreational presence in June and July. Most of the people that live in the Keys, that's when they get a chance to go on the water, because we have such nice weather, and so there are -- The fish tend to spread out more in those months, and so, where you would have feeding stations from boat to boat up and down the Keys, those fish will kind of spread out, and it just takes a little bit of time to gather them back together to your feeding station, and I don't think that we're going to see any real negative impact as far as fish going hungry and not -- The life cycle changing much, and I don't think we're going to see too much. I mean, initially, I thought that was going to be a big problem, but I don't think it's going to be much of an issue.

MR. GOMEZ: Thank you for that, because that was a thought I had, was, because of the chum in the water, I feel like it's producing an ecosystem for the fish, which is healthy in the biomass of fish, and we're growing the yellowtail in the Keys, and so I was hoping, if you didn't have the chum -- If that would be a negative effect that would be bad.

MR. MOSS: I can tell you, recreationally, they start showing up in force when they're not being fed by the commercial guys. We had that issue this year. We'll move on then with the input for biennial evaluation, Attachment 5, or did we have more there?

MS. BROUWER: (Ms. Brouwer's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. MOSS: Okay. I didn't know if you wanted to do that in the fishery performance.

MS. BROUWER: Yes.

MR. MOSS: We can open it up now. If you want to recommend any other management measures, we can do that now, for yellowtail.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I really feel like, right now, we need to move forward exactly as we are with a hard allocation to the commercial sector and recreational sector and really take a look at our future stock assessment and generate a future management plan based on that.

MR. GOMEZ: I can only add to that that one thing we don't want to see is any more closures due to spawning or any other reason. Especially in the lower Keys, we do have enough closed areas already, and, for us day fishermen, the charter boat industry, the more closures nearby, the further we have to go, and it becomes an economic situation.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and so the next item that I had for you guys is a little bit of an update of accomplishments under the snapper grouper vision blueprint and, also, what I would like to do during this item on the agenda is to get the AP's input on prioritizing items that have not yet been accomplished or we haven't yet started on, and so, to just refresh everybody of what the blueprint is, this is something that the council embarked upon back in 2012 to try to reach stakeholders throughout the region to put together a strategic plan and a vision for the snapper grouper fishery.

The blueprint was approved in December of 2015, and then the council set out to sort of address the short-term items, things that were not going to take a whole lot of time to get developed, and that is what gave birth to the visioning amendments that we talked about yesterday, but there's been many other activities that have addressed objectives and actions that are included in this blueprint.

In December, the council is going to sort of take another look at it and see where we are and see what remains to be done, and the blueprint included activities from 2016 through 2020, and so we're doing a biennial checkup, evaluation if you will, to see where we are, and so what I have for you is -- I will just remind you of what the council's vision is, and then we're going to do a quick summary of progress on all the various prioritized activities, and, like I said, I will show you what's left, and then hopefully we can get everybody's input on helping the council prioritize or pick items that you guys think are important that need to be addressed sooner rather than later.

The council's vision for the snapper grouper fishery is right here. The snapper grouper fishery is a healthy, sustainable fishery that balances and optimizes benefits for all. Based on that vision, the council set out to, under four broad strategic goals, develop objectives, and, under each of those objectives, there are strategies and there are actions, and so, first of all, under the science goal,

which is up here in the blue box, the science goal reads: Management decisions are based upon robust, defensible science that considers qualitative and quantitative data analyzed in a timely, clear, and transparent way that builds stakeholder confidence.

That is the broader goal, and, under there, we have two objectives. The first one is to promote collection of quality data to support management plans and programs, and Objective 2 is to encourage development of mechanisms to effectively engage and collaborate with stakeholders on research, data collection, and analysis, and so, in the last couple of years, we've made a good bit of progress under this broad goal. As you know, the council developed a charter vessel electronic reporting amendment and a pilot program, and so there's been a lot of outreach and training and engaging of charter captains to participate in the pilot.

Also, there was communication with other regions. The Mid-Atlantic Council conducted a pilot tilefish survey, and there has been discussions at the council level on data collection for species that overlap council jurisdiction, such as blueline tilefish and some of these species that also -- To address shifts in distribution due to warming temperatures and such.

Our Citizen Science Program, which you'll be hearing about a little bit more later, is a big item that has been developed over the last couple of years that addresses a lot of the things that stakeholders brought to the council that they said they wanted done, and we also spent a lot of time developing the MyFishCount app, and a lot of you are familiar with that, which is a pilot on reporting for the recreational sector, and we've been using it on the mini-seasons for red snapper, and there is a portal and a mobile app that were developed as a result of that program.

The fishery performance reports that we've been putting together, with your help, and not just in snapper grouper, but in other fisheries, has been a really huge help as well that has addressed a lot of the issues that stakeholders brought back in terms of getting fishermen to contribute to the management process and getting that anecdotal information from you all and experiences on the water that are going to inform discussions at the council level.

On the ecosystem side, there has been a lot of tools that were developed for the Fishery Ecosystem Plan, and that's an ongoing thing. There was a cruise in 2018, this past summer, aboard the Research Vessel Okeanos, and that was to map deepwater ecosystems, and all this sort of thing is answering things that stakeholders brought to the council that they said they wanted done in terms of characterizing habitat for sustainable fisheries.

Then there has been a good bit of cooperative research on red snapper, and some of you have been participating in that research, and so, in terms of what is left, and these are some of the things that are going to be longer term, and some of these probably need to be fleshed out a little bit more, and some are things that the council doesn't really have a lot of -- Not involvement, but there is only so much the council can do. They need to engage other agencies, and it's not just up to the council to do some of these things, and so evaluating fishery-dependent and independent programs, and that's a very broad thing that's going to take some time to do. Evaluate the SEDAR process, also that's sort of being done on a continuing basis, and the council, I think, is going to have to flesh that out a little bit more.

Validation of data collection programs, again, that's an ongoing thing, and sampling resources to support data programs, alternative sources of funding, and then considering an industry research

set-aside funding program, and, of course, that's a very tall order, and so all of these items are what is left to do under the science goal.

The council has been most busy addressing items under management, and the goal there is to adopt strategies that rebuild and maintain fishery resources and adapt to regional differences in the fishery and consider social and economic needs of fishing communities, and so we heard a lot from stakeholders about regional-type management. Of course, as fishermen, you guys know the issues that the council has to grapple with in terms of the one-size-fits-all type of management. It doesn't always work, and it's a tough thing to try to balance things out at that level.

There is three objectives under this goal. They are to develop management measures that consider sub-regional differences and issues within the fishery, measures that allow consistent access to the fishery for all sectors, and ensuring that management decisions help maximize social and economic opportunity for all sectors.

They are really broad goals, and we've accomplished actually quite a bit, and so, in Amendment 37, recall that the council changed the management boundaries for hogfish, and that was in response to research that indicated that they were three different stocks, one in the Gulf of Mexico and then two off of the Atlantic, and so we did that through Amendment 37, and those boundaries were changed for that species, and then management was changed accordingly, and so we have separate ACLs and separate management measures for those two hogfish stocks.

Of course, the blueprint amendments that we talked about yesterday are addressing some of these short-term items like commercial split seasons and trip limits and bag limits and all that sort of stuff. Amendment 46, which is one that I mentioned yesterday, that one is ongoing, and that addresses recreational permits and/or a stamp and recreational reporting, and so this is something that this AP has been very vocal about, trying to come up with ways to identify the universe of resource users to tailor management, to have more focused management.

Another thing the council did was they requested and contracted a former staff member, Kari MacLauchlin-Buck, to conduct a socioeconomic characterization of the commercial snapper grouper fishery, and she presented that to you all back in April of last year, I believe, and so she put together a really complete picture of the commercial fishery, commercial snapper grouper fishery, and she did a portfolio analysis and had a lot of really good information, and so this is going to be coming back up for discussion at the council level, and they requested that the characterization be brought back to them in December, and some council members are interested in sort of renewing talks about tailoring management to -- Remember we talked about the traditional bandit boats, and we're trying to not really use that term anymore, but I know it's been used a lot in discussions, and there is issues with using that term, but, nonetheless, the council is, again, wanting to renew those conversations, and that's going to happen in December.

Best fishing practices, we talked a lot about that yesterday, and that's another thing that stakeholders were very adamant that the council needed to look into, and we are looking into it. Citizen science and MyFishCount, I've already mentioned those, and so here's what's left under management, and so there is quite a lot of very ambitious things.

Species-specific-quota-based management, looking at design and management elements for such a program, and so quota transfer by sub-region, for example, or sub-regions that set their own

quotas and their own openings, and so this is going to require, if the council were to embark on something like that, a lot of cooperation with agencies, and it's going to be quite a heavy lift, and so we haven't yet gotten started, but it's still on the list.

The staggered spawning season closures is something that we brought up yesterday, and we attempted to look into it when we were developing actions for the recreational sector and the commercial sector for red grouper and the shallow-water groupers, and we found out that it's not as easy to try to analyze something like that, and so, for now, it's still on the list, and we have not completed looking into that particular item.

Regulations by sub-region that are not based on quota or allocations, I'm not even quite sure what that means, and that's a very broad thing. State-by-state regulations for either sector, everybody talks about that, and that's going to take some time, and using bag limit step-downs as opposed to using AMs for the recreational sector, that is something that, if the council were to want to look into it, we could do that, and so that's for you all to consider, if that's something you think the council should look at.

Also, a charter boat limit, instead of a per-person limit for recreational, and that was brought up as an item they wanted to evaluate, and there is the item on alternative management approaches for multi-day boats. Again, some of you have been -- You have come up with creative ideas, and have brought those to the council, and so we expect that there is going to be some more talk about potentially permit stacking or multi-day endorsements and that sort of thing.

Evaluating the retention of the bag limit when the commercial season is closed, this is something that stakeholders sort of complained about for a long time, and, again, it's something that is doable, and the council could potentially, if you all think that they should, look into that in the next couple of years.

Adaptive management to slowly increase almaco and rudderfish ACL, there was a good bit of talk about the jacks complex in October, and the council, in fact, approved a motion to evaluate whether the jacks should be split apart, so that you could have a separate ACL for almaco as opposed to those three species that are lumped together, and, again, that's something that everybody says that, yes, that would be great, but we just don't have the tools right now. None of those species are assessed species, and we're in the process of revamping the control rule to figure out what an appropriate ABC would be, and so there's a lot of moving parts, but, again, the council recently had talks about that particular group, and that requires some evaluating.

The multiyear ACLs and catch specifications is probably going to be addressed in Amendment 45, which is the one that looks at revamping the control rule, and so that's already sort of in progress, and then considering non-traditional stakeholders in management decisions, and so restaurants, ecotourism, bait and tackle businesses. Again, this is something that could be done if the council wanted to sort of characterize that sector of the users, stakeholders, for the snapper grouper fishery. They could do that if it's important right now for managing the fishery, and then considering the diversity of harvest operations, and, again, the characterization, at least for the commercial sector, there is a little bit of that that was addressed in Kari's report.

A permit bank to address new entrants, I'm not sure that that is something that people want to address any time soon, but it is on the list, and considering the number of days allowed to fish for

the recreational sector or time-out periods for no fishing, it's something that could be considered. The council held a workshop ahead of their meeting in October to discuss specifically potential management approaches for the recreational sector in our region, and so these things may come up if recreational folks would be interested in that sort of thing.

Moving right along, communication is another of the strategic goals, and that is to employ interactive outreach strategies that encourage continuous participation and support two-way engagement between managers and stakeholders while building a greater understanding of science and management.

There is two objectives, one to develop approaches that provide streamlined and timely information to increase awareness and stakeholder engagement, and then two is to improve awareness and understanding of fishery science and research and how these inform management. Again, a lot has been done to achieve these objectives, and we have done a lot of remote listening stations when we do our public hearings, as opposed to doing in-person, and folks are getting a lot more comfortable using webinars and that sort of thing and coming to listening stations. We do question-and-answer --

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

MS. BROUWER: There was a question of what is a listening station, and so sometimes, rather than the council staff traveling to a location, and so let's say we're doing scoping for yellowtail in the Keys, and it's a small portion, and we don't need to go up and down the coast for this, because it's just based in south Florida, and so what we do is a local council member -- The council member from Florida may be there in person, and then they host, out of a library or a community center or a hotel or whatever, the meeting for stakeholders to come and comment, and then a staff person gives the presentation remotely.

We are available online, and we provide the presentation, and we answer questions, but then the council member is there in person to receive comments from stakeholders, and so that has worked really well in some regions, and, of course, it's a case-by-case thing. Some amendments lend themselves to that sort of thing and some not so much.

We have improved our website. We have been doing a lot of work there, and Cameron Rhodes and Amber have done a lot of work in that regard to try to make things more accessible and more user-friendly and provide the information that stakeholders are interested in or provide links to resources where they can find it.

The MREP, Marine Recreational Education Program, is something that some of you, I believe, have participated in, and it's a really solid program to bring fishermen to the table and teach them about fisheries management, stock assessment, and there is so many different parts of that program, and it's been expanding. The workshops are usually in Florida, and sometimes here in Charleston, and like I believe the management one is coming up, and I'm not sure exactly where that one is located, but the council has been very supportive of that program, and staff participate, and we are always attempting to recruit people and let people know that this is available to fishermen.

Informal port meetings for education purposes, we've had a couple of these, and we've been doing, like I said earlier, the training for the charter boat electronic reporting. We have a YouTube

channel, and we have a forum for commercial fishermen, and I don't know how many of you are utilizing it, but Cameron Rhodes, our Outreach Specialist, is the one that runs that, but that is available.

Then I have covered all of those, and so lots has been done, and there is still a few things left to do. The stakeholders have wanted us to work with agency partners to provide notification of ACL monitoring updates, and so I think people get frustrated when they get online and the ACLs have been updated and nobody told them, and so there is some frustration there.

What I can tell you is that the Southeast Regional Office is -- Actually, all of NOAA is revamping their website, and it's going to be completely different, and so there is a lot going on there, and it's all getting ready to change, and so hopefully the level of frustration is going to go down. I'm sure there's going to be kind of a transition period when we all get familiar with how to use the new website, and so it will be fine eventually.

Incorporating a real-time calendar for fishery closures for both sectors, I haven't done that yet, and we could. Using website analytics to evaluate effectiveness and access of materials on the website, that's something that's easy to do that we could provide those statistics to the council, if they ask us to spend time doing that. Then an advertising campaign highlighting council activities and success stories is another idea that was thrown out there that could be undertaken.

Outreach strategies related to connection between habitat and fisheries, again, we can tackle some of these things, but we just need to prioritize them. Targeted outreach about the council process, including the role of the SSC, expanding the use of educational webinars on stock assessment and data collection. Again, part of that is being addressed through MREP, and then developing training for new AP members, and this is one that you all might want to weigh-in on, if that's something that you think would be useful.

Then, finally, and I'm almost done, and this is the last goal, and this deals with governance, and the goal is to commit to a transparent, balanced, and timely decision-making process that allows flexible, yet well-defined protocols and strategies for managing the snapper grouper fishery. There is two objectives, and one is to create an accountable and flexible decision-making process for development and evaluation of management measures, and the second one is to build capacity to streamline management efforts and better coordinate with management partners.

Progress, we have a new abbreviated framework procedure. People express frustration for how long it takes for some of these regulatory changes to take place, and some of these amendments take years to put together, and then it takes the agency another six to nine months, sometimes, to implement the regulations, and so we now have this abbreviated framework procedure at least for the snapper grouper plan that allows the council to make quick changes to fishing levels, and so, if there's a new ACL that needs to be implemented, we have this sort of abbreviated way of putting that in place, and we have used that recently with red grouper, and we're getting ready to use it with vermilion and black sea bass.

We have now a lot more online comments, and we have comment forms and public comment at AP meetings and at SSC meetings, and council members are getting used to checking those online forms, and the public is getting used to using them. It's really easy. You can even upload PDF forms, and they are being checked constantly.

The council staff and the Southeast Regional Office staff actually met together in June of 2018. We felt that it was important for -- We work so closely together, but there is always going to be a little bit of disconnect, and we're far apart from each other, and we do a lot of conference calls and that sort of thing, and it was a very productive meeting to try to make sure that we are all on the same page and utilizing the resources that we need and what other resources we need to do our jobs better and provide what the managers need.

Roger can tell you about all of our ecosystem partners, and there are lots of them, and, of course, the Citizen Science Program is very all-encompassing, bringing a lot of agencies together to cooperate on some of these things, and then MyFishCount, which I've already mentioned, and so, as far as what's left for this one, we still need to develop mechanisms for evaluating decision-making processes, to ensure consistency and accountability.

Stakeholders were very vocal, saying, hey, the council puts all these regulations in place, but then there's really no mechanism to tell them how well they're working, and that needs to be put in place, and so, consider how scientific information is incorporated into the management process and provide flexibility, I feel that some of that is already being addressed, as I mentioned, through changes to the ABC control rule and things like that. Again, that evaluation process, that still needs to be developed, and establish working relationships with non-fishery entities and agencies for future marine management issues, and so this is all ongoing and kind of at the agency level sort of thing.

Here is what the committee and council requested from you all. How should the council solicit input from stakeholders on the blueprint, and how should the council prioritize the items that are left to address under each of these strategic goals? As far as Number 1, initially, the council had wanted to do another round of port meetings, where council staff go to locations throughout the coast and present that, hey, this is where we are, and this is what we want input on and all that.

It's very time consuming, and it's expensive, and, so far, we haven't come up with a schedule for how we're going to be soliciting input on the blueprint. Do we need to solicit input on the blueprint? These are all things that you guys can comment on that I think would really help the council give us direction for how they want us to proceed in the next couple of years.

Then, in terms of prioritizing items, what I figured we could do is you could probably talk about items that are still left under the management goal and the communication goal, and so what we've done is put them all together in a little table, and so that's going to be a little bit easier for you to visualize. Then we have divided them up into items that we feel are more long-term items and remaining items that could be accomplished on the short-term, and so we're talking the next two to three years.

Perhaps we could take a little bit of time just sort of looking through this list and then coming up with the AP's recommendations, and I don't want this to be a very formal process, where we're going to come up with ranking, and I think the council just wants to know where you guys are coming from and what do you see the council doing, in terms of management for the snapper grouper fishery, and what are the important things that they need to be tackling next.

MR. HULL: Before we dig into that, I would just say wow. That's a lot of stuff, and I think the first thing that -- Just quickly, it's going to take a lot of resources, meaning money and time and effort, particularly funding, to make a lot of these things happen, and so that would be asking the lawmakers, Congress, to give the Southeast more money. You need a lot more money to do a lot of these things.

Then the other thing would be, as far as the education of most everybody, fishermen, but also AP members and people that are involved, the MREP -- I learned so much from that, and it's a very good program that everybody should go to, because then you can spread your knowledge beyond with that program, and it's really good, and everybody should attend that, and so that's all I have to say on the overall view of it, but I look forward to digging into some of the items that you have highlighted.

MR. LORENZ: There is only one thing, and, again, it will segue off what Jimmy said, just the need for money and more effort, but I would love to see it up there to start to track this, because it will go beyond my lifetime to get it all in place, but one thing I think is missing with a number of these problems, and I had to write it down, but it would be the pursuit of research and the cataloging of reports on the life cycles of these fish, these snapper grouper.

We have so many of the issues that are either remaining or desires of many of us that could be better approached from the management situation if we knew what the life cycle of these species are, and a lot of them have come up already, and I know I tend to hone-in on those, like the Florida factor, below the 28th latitude, and that becomes a whole different world, due to depth, and that makes the one-size-fits-all seasons and things sometimes seem a little unfair, because, when you're below there, so many of these species, like the deepwater, are much easier to get to.

Where I am, at fifty to seventy miles out, nobody in their right mind is going to go out there in a twenty-four-foot center console to pursue these species, and so, therefore, they get conservation almost out of time, distance, and the amount of money it takes to pursue the fishery, which makes me feel that some of us up in the north end of the range, with the exception of maybe Hatteras, don't have an effect, but one thing that could answer this is if we would get to know the life cycle.

I would wonder, as you open or have a very available fish in places like southern Florida, do they maybe colonize our area? There could be endemic populations and this colonization, and I tend to feel, with the Gulf Stream, and that's just me personally with a little bit -- Enough scientific training to be dangerous, that that possibly occurs, and so some of these issues -- It might open something down south, and we don't get an opportunity, yet what would really replenish our fisheries the most would be close some and let some go, that sort of a thing, and so I would like to put that forward.

Again, trying to get the money, some of us, to do our thing, and so like more has to go into -- We need to know these life cycles of these fish, and, until you do, some of these management issues are going to be very difficult to make in a very fair manner, because we don't know all the ways that we get the fish. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: What I would say to that, Bob, is the council is always requesting more information. I mean, it's something that we have to depend on our agency partners at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and academic institutions. I know there is always research

recommendations at the end of every stock assessment that SEDAR puts together, and we are addressing some of those things that you mentioned, through what the council is doing at the ecosystem level, doing ecosystem-based management and engaging other agencies to try to bring all that information together and establish connectivity and all that sort of thing, and so that's kind of ongoing.

It's just such a lengthy process, and it requires a lot of funding, and the council -- I feel like we have to be patient sometimes, really patient, until some of the information that's needed to inform management actually comes, but it does help to be vocal and to continue to say, hey, we're going to need more of this information, and this specific information, and I would say that the fishery performance reports that you guys put together are filling some of those gaps already. I mean, we may not have peer-reviewed literature that we can say, hey, this is how the life history of Species X is in our region, but we have information that you all provide that is better than not having any information, and it's not peer-reviewed literature, but, nonetheless, it's very important and very valuable to the management process.

MR. ATACK: My opinion on some of this is like the management area sub-regions might be paired with the staggered spawning seasons. I mean, some of this spawning season staggering right now, you can't do it with certain species, because they are so overfished, or the stock is at such a low level. When you get more abundant stocks, I could see maybe staggering the seasons, but, if you did a regional, then you could pair that, and it would be easier to do a certain season in Florida and a certain season by area closed.

The charter boat limits, I mean, we did a little bit of that, I think, with the cobia, and that's not real high on my list, but the other thing is, when we did the charter/for-hire amendment, which we kind of just stopped, the limited charter/for-hire moratorium on permits, and I think there was a lot of public comment against that, but could the council, when something like that occurs, really just do a survey to every permit holder and get their opinion, versus -- You sometimes wonder if you're hearing the squeaky wheel, but what percentage of those people is that squeaky wheel? Is that 5 percent of the permit holders that really didn't want it, and then we make a decision to do away with it, because the ones that are happy with it aren't really very vocal, because they think that that's what's going to happen?

Some of these questions, could we survey? Is it very expensive to survey the stakeholders? The biggest stakeholders in the charter/for-hire are the ones that have the permits, and so should we just survey all of those? That's a question, and I don't know what the cost is involved, and, if you get that survey, then you can use that the way the public comment forum, versus you're seeing all these comments that are copied and pasted. Thank you.

MR. GOMEZ: On that, that first one, the quota transfer, are we speaking about possible IFQ quotas, like individual fishing quota things?

MS. BROUWER: No, and so I think this -- Again, the council had these discussions a number of years ago, and I can't quite remember how it went, but I think this is talking about if the South Atlantic region were to be divided, and let's say the Carolinas and then Georgia and Florida, and this is an idea to have transfer of quota between two potential regions, and I think that's what they were trying to get at. Again, this would be to alleviate the issue of access that we have in the South Atlantic because of the way we're oriented latitudinally.

MR. GOMEZ: I think that might not be a bad idea. Then one more question. When we're talking about the long-term again, consider a permit bank to address new entrants, and what does that mean?

MS. BROUWER: I'm not quite sure, and so I think that idea came up when we were talking about Amendment 47, most recently, and so there were some options in there to have a bank for potentially new entrants if the council were to move to a limited-entry program. Clearly the items in the blue box, I think, are items that I think are going to require the council to dissect a little bit more, and they are pretty broad, and so what I prefer that we focus the discussion on is on everything in the green, and, again, to try to tell the council that, hey, if you pick five or six or seven of these, and these are the ones that we suggest, this is what you can focus on for the next two years, and that's kind of where I'm hoping we will end up.

MR. MUNDEN: Looking at the first three items under long-term items that we need to address, it reminds me very, very much of the last fourteen years that I was with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, and I represented the State of North Carolina Marine Division Fisheries on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the New England Fishery Management Council have a lot of -- Oftentimes, it's called joint fisheries management plans with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Actually, they are not joint plans, but they are complementary plans, and so, in the example of summer flounder, it's a fisheries management plan that's developed jointly by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Mid-Atlantic Council, and the New England Council.

The National Marine Fisheries Service has input into the development of quotas and allocations and whatnot for the EEZ, but they allow the states, through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, to manage those quotas, and so NMFS kind of backs off and says, okay, we're going to allow you to harvest so many pounds of summer flounder of bluefish, and you guys can decide among yourselves how you want to allocate it.

Where I'm going with this is that I am very, very much in favor of state-by-state quotas, state-by-state allocations. One of the nice things about state-by-state allocations is you can transfer quota between states if the two states agree, but what makes it really difficult, in my mind, for the South Atlantic Council is that we don't have the same working relationship with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission as the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils have.

One you decide how much quota is going to be available for harvest, and it gets to be real interesting, when you start to divide it up, as to who gets what share, and, generally, at the Mid-Atlantic and New England Council level, it's based on historical landings, and, of course, if you go back in history much beyond the 1990s, the landings were not very accurate, and so the states that had good recordkeepers, or good records, like North Carolina, oftentimes had justification for getting a larger share of the quota than states who didn't keep good records, and so it's a good tool, but it's going to be very difficult to accomplish, in my mind, at the South Atlantic Council level.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Red, and I will chime in with a couple of these. The staggered spawning season closures, I know we've talked about that, and, Jim, you kind of alluded to it regionally, or

working regionally, and I think it's a very good idea, and we were even talking about it, I think, yesterday afternoon with red grouper and the different spawning times in different areas. Logistically, I know it gets very difficult, but it makes all the sense in the world, just with temperature variances and the way seasons work and things like that.

The bag limit step-down accountability measure for the recreational sector, I would like to have a little bit more information as to how that works, or would work, because I know we don't always get, I guess, the most current information, if you will, as far as what the recreational landings are, and so how would that work, and what would be the turnaround time for something like that? How does that work for the following year, and where do the step-downs work, and I would definitely like to hear more about that.

The charter boat limit and setting a per-person limit, I've heard actually both sides of that from a couple of charter boat captains who would prefer -- Some of them would prefer it as a per-person limit, because, if you're only taking out two people, then you only have to worry about a limit for two people, as opposed to -- Just using dolphin as an example, if they only have to catch twenty dolphin, as opposed to sixty, to say that I limited out that day, a lot of these guys would much prefer that. That's not speaking for everybody, but I've heard that a few times. That's all I've got.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: In order to boost awareness with stakeholders, is a Facebook page, a group page, is something like that a viable option for the council, to just kind of -- As things are real, they just kind of get posted and just stream the -- Is that a possibility?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, absolutely, and so are you talking specifically to keep them engaged in this item or --

MR. PASKIEWICZ: No, just to boost overall awareness of what the council is doing and to increase stakeholder involvement.

MS. BROUWER: Absolutely, yes, and we do have a Facebook page, and we do have, like I said, a YouTube channel, and we try to -- Any presentations and things that are for the public, we put them on YouTube and on Facebook, and we do have the forum for commercial, and we don't have anything similar for recreational, but that's something, if the council wants us to go that route, we can certainly do all of those things.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: On the charter bag limit and the boat limit per individual limit, has there been any preliminary discussion on what that would be? Would it be -- I mean, just shooting from the hip, I would say it would be like whatever three individuals would be, and it would kind of be a mean. I mean, that's kind of interesting, but would that help boost more trips, maybe, to kind of stimulate business in areas where one person wants to go on a charter, to kind of have some fish for their family for an extended period of time, and that might boost an individual trip rate, and I don't know, and would that have an impact, as far as overall take?

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so all of those things would have to be explored if this was an idea that stakeholders thought the council should spend some time developing, but, right now, no, nothing has been discussed.

MR. GOMEZ: Can you scroll down a little bit? Consider non-traditional stakeholders -- The one about having a certain time that the recreational sector was closed, and, I mean, I wish we would just throw that right out the window. That is just crazy talk, but I do agree with what you were saying about the others, and I don't have enough knowledge about the spawning -- What was it called? Can you go back up? The staggered spawning. I would like to hear more about that.

MR. MOSS: Thank you for saying that about the time-out period. We actually -- I was part of that workshop that took place just before the council meeting, and, yes, that was one that didn't go over so well, at least not with me, and the difficulty is what's the time-out period, because, as Bob has said, in the, quote, unquote, hot time in the Keys -- What is winter to everybody else is the busiest time of the year for a lot of these guys, when the people off of northern South Carolina probably aren't fishing nearly as much, recreationally anyway, and then reverse that in the summertime, and so that would definitely be -- I don't know how you would do that.

MR. GOMEZ: Who would have considered that, and what would the reasoning have been? Maybe you can enlighten me, or maybe you don't want to.

MR. MOSS: I don't remember who specifically -- It was on the agenda when we spoke about it, and I don't know that any one person brought it up, and the idea was -- It's one of those things that, in theory, it probably sounds good, no hooks in the water for a period of time and give the fish all a rest, and it sounds great on paper, and I even said, in the workshop -- I joked around with my friends that, if they just closed down everything for a year, everything would rebound so well and blah, blah, blah, blah, but it's not real. I mean, it's not realistic, I guess.

MR. LORENZ: I remember, in some of those discussions, and I think there was a tiny bit of validity in it, and it was the issue with the bycatch, that you are out there trying to protect a certain species, like the red groupers, and you're going for others, and so what if you just closed it down a month, so you're not hooking anything, but you're right that that's not going to work, or are people going to fight it like there's no tomorrow, and I will segue that with just one thing there, maybe for simplicity, and I hate to do this and kind of put somebody out, but we have to consider non-traditional stakeholders in the management decisions, such as restaurants and ecotourism and bait and tackle businesses.

From what I know, and from the people who have sat here on this committee that are there, and David Snyder, who was from Georgia and owned a restaurant, their main statement is not unlike you hear a lot of some of the commercial fishermen speaking, and particularly the recreational and charter boat people. Everything on them depends on something decent being available all year, and that's what it's all about, or at least during -- Certainly during their peak season, and so tackle is going to do good as long as somebody is fishing, and the ecotourism is the same way. They just need somebody take them, and the restaurants is -- We know that David has mentioned that I just need something local to put on the table, and so they're kind of served by the rest of us, and, if you specifically start going into folks like that, I think it may just add more complexity to all the people you have to listen to, because, when you ask for an opinion, you're going to get it, and then you have to follow-up, and so just a little caution there, and I think they're covered by the rest of our interests.

MR. HULL: A lot of these are no-brainers, and we need to consider them. The one that I would like to ask you about is use multiyear ACLs/catch specifications. Use multiyear ACLs.

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so that's something that was brought during these port meetings, and people said it would be better if, instead of having an ACL, an annual catch limit, we had a longer period of time during which a specific limit was effective. I think that is something that if I -- I don't know if John Carmichael maybe can speak to that more, but there is -- I believe, in the revisions that the council is going to be doing to the ABC control rule, perhaps an option for multiyear ACL specifications, or I know it's been brought up as something that the council could potentially look into, but here is John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Sometimes the answer gets by what people mean by multiyear. I mean, the council has always had the ability to set ACLs for several years at a time, and they often do. One of the things that has come up is the idea of, if you have a projection and it shows some change in the landings over time, say over three or four years, we would be averaging that together to give one fixed ABC, and thus the ACL that would be used in those four years, and so that's something that we're working on in the ABC control rule.

The reason we have to do that is say the ABC is increasing over time, and you take the average, where the average is going to be higher than that first year, and that would be a problem in the Act, and so now we're trying to give the council the ability to ask the SSC to average it, but they're definitely trying to do it, and the intent is to set something that doesn't change every year, whenever possible.

MR. HULL: Okay. Now I get it. That makes a lot of sense to me to set an ACL that is, instead of knee-jerk reactions of, okay, like we increased black sea bass by a million pounds and then, within a very short period of time, we're unable to catch it, and, instead of all these ups and downs, you're setting more of a level ACL over a -- The knee jerk, you get rid of that, and, yes, that sounds pretty good.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We were actually looking at that for both ways, because the other thing is when you have an ABC that needs to go down, and so there is provisions in the Magnuson Act that allow the council to now phase-in those changes, and so that's another thing that, again, we need to address in the ABC control rule, because, in the first year of phasing-in a reduction, they could technically have an ACL higher than that original ABC. Again, that's doing the same thing, but just when you're faced with reductions, and so, yes, trying to get away from those big changes, those knee jerks, and smooth it out a little more.

MR. MCKINLEY: That fourth one down there is interesting to me, the permit stacking and the multiday endorsement, because, before, I saw some stuff about separating maybe the day boats from I guess the bandit boats, and so there's been discussion on that, and could you go through some of that and just maybe fill me in on a little bit of that?

MS. BROUWER: That hasn't been fleshed out, and it's one of the things, one of the items, that the council actually considered early on, when they were putting their Vision Blueprint Amendment 27 together, and so we took it out for scoping, and we put some options out there, and it's not that the council doesn't want to pursue it, but it's that they felt that it wasn't something that they were going to be able to implement in like two years.

That is why they requested -- They contracted to have this characterization of the fishery, because they thought, okay, well, if we're going to do that, we need a better picture, and there was a lot of questions about latent permits and how many permits exist and do we need the two-for-one, all those questions that have been coming up at this AP and elsewhere, and the council said, well, let's just do a description of how the fishery currently is now, so that we can better figure out the changes that we need to make, and so these are just examples of things that have come up in discussions of permit stacking and the multiday endorsements, and I believe Vincent may have brought some of those ideas up, and so perhaps he could speak to those a little bit more, but certainly, if this is something that you all feel the council needs to spend more time discussing in coming months, now is the time to suggest that.

MR. BONURA: I guess we've got to change the traditional name there, the bandit boat name, to something else, and is that what we're trying to do here? Maybe we could call it -- The problem I've got here on my end going fishing is it takes one day to get the boat ready and get ice on the boat and water and fuel and groceries and everything, and you go out fishing, and it takes four or five hours out, and then you can catch your trip limit of say 500 pounds of golden tile, and call it possibly one day or a half-day, if it takes one-and-a-half days, maybe, and coming in is a half-day, and then unloading and cleaning the boats is a whole other day, and, I mean, how many -- I'm at like five days here for 500 pounds of fish, and it's \$2,500 in fish, and you've got \$1,500 in expenses, almost, and you pay your mate how much, a couple hundred bucks for a week's worth of work, and it doesn't really make any sense.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I also think something that needs to be considered in the discussion, and I do think that it should be discussed by the council, is that the environmental impact and maybe the carbon footprint, so to speak, of multiple trips, fuel consumption, and that stuff is being burned on the water, and it does have an environmental impact, although it is within reason.

Permit stacking could be a useful mechanism to help limit that, and certainly there would need to be some parameters set of how many permits can you attach to one vessel, and maybe there should be some historical landings on the permits that are getting stacked for certain species that are being targeted, and I don't think any of that data is without -- It's well within reach, and I think that it could be obtained, and I don't know how negative of an impact it would really have on any one fishery, and so I would like to see it discussed.

MR. BONURA: That's a good one there, James, on the carbon footprint and the boats. Instead of sending two or three boats to catch the fish, that one boat can catch and one crew that can then take care of their family and kids and everything else. It's expensive to have a family and actually fish for a living there, and I think the other thing would be too of what if your vessel broke? What if you could put a couple of permits and team up with another fisherman, and, instead of having two boats, you could put his permit and your permit on one boat and then fish with each other, and you're helping a couple of families out there.

MR. GOMEZ: One thing we're talking about is so if Vincent decided that he wanted to get a bigger limit, he could get another permit. Therefore, actually, make a viable living, because it sounds to me like Vincent is like just a few fishermen that are still trying to traditionally put a catch together and be commercial fishermen and make it viable for themselves, and, as we keep limiting these fish, people like Vincent will be eventually forced out of the business, and so, if that's what we're talking about, I think the charter boat industry could probably get behind that,

and I think it's a way to solve a problem that is going to pretty much take people like Vincent off of the table eventually.

MR. MCKINLEY: That seems to be getting into stuff that really doesn't sound good. That's almost getting into the IFQs. I mean, if you've got the money to buy another permit -- That just is pretty wild to even consider that kind of stuff, to me. I'm all about it, though. I would be a lot more for looking into the latent permits and what's going on with that and eventually going one-for-one, because I'm all for the individual operator, and that permit would be worth a lot more money if it was one-for-one than this two-for-one and to get rid of the latent permits and stuff, but, to start putting it into having more permits for one boat, that gets into -- If you've got the money, you can do it. If you don't, you don't, and that just doesn't sound good, to me.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Along with that, Randy, I think that the council would have to adopt a target number of permits, and so, once there is 400, there is 400, and then I think trading between what's left and -- I think it would equalize itself, and I think the value would certainly stabilize, and the argument is very valid that, if you have the money to have the permits, then you get a bigger piece of the pie, but it still remains a publicly-controlled natural resource, which I think is the goal here, and I also think it may add a little bit more professionalism in the industry with guys that are good at it, and they go out and they harvest in a responsible manner, in order to achieve a certain goal. I mean, definitely there would be some cons involved with it, but definitely I would say it needs to be looked at.

MR. BONURA: That, and I would say that there would need to be a certain quantity of permits that you could put on your vessel. You can't just go get like twenty permits and put them on your vessel, and maybe call it three or something like that.

MR. HULL: I didn't understand it as where you would buy another permit. I understood it as like, okay, Vincent and I are in the same community, and we would just join our permits together on one boat and do it that way, rather than buy it. Who knows how you would really work it out, but the idea is to allow a traditional trip boat, let's call it, that's not a day boat, a trip boat, which you have up here a lot of those, and you have them in the Keys. Kind of in between we don't, but to still be able to harvest with these smaller trip limits, to be able to harvest enough fish to make it worthwhile.

MR. MOSS: I think that's the fear that Randy brought up, Jimmy, is that, in theory, Vincent's idea sounds great, but you've just got to be careful if you open up a can of worms, and what is the accountability for that?

MR. FREEMAN: That sounds like an absolute nightmare for the Permits Office. They are already a month-and-a-half or sometimes two months behind, and now you're going to start stacking them and then try to take them back off? What a mess. That sounds like a nightmare.

MR. ATACK: It's kind of two different issues, I think, and I guess we're supposed to give the council what we want as the priorities, and one thing is multiday boats, and, if we change trip limits or per day, and do you know what I mean? Like, in North Carolina a few years ago, we had a day limit for hogfish per day, and then, when the regulations changed, the council went away from that, and then North Carolina mirrored that same with the possession limit in North Carolina, and so, a few years ago, North Carolina was limited to 150 pounds of hogfish per day.

If you did four days, you could have 150 pounds per day, and one day was 100 pounds, and so it was like 450 pounds or something was the trip limit for a four-day trip. That's kind of what I think the first line was talking about, is whether we should -- Then, if you're out for more than one day, could you have -- Instead of a trip limit, if it's two days, you would have 500 pounds plus 500 pounds for certain species. If we want the council to look at that, that would be something we would say, yes, we would like for them to spend time on that. If we don't, then we just say let's put that to the long-term or the back-burner, and the permit stacking is a whole different thing, I think, and that gets really complicated.

Is it really catch shares at that point, because now this boat can catch twice as much as that boat, and, moving on, the other things on here, I don't see real high priorities and really spending a lot of time on many of these things. You talk about the staggered spawning season and the bag limit step-down, and I'm not sure that's a real high priority. The charter boat limits, I think most people are going to say that, if they have the per-person limit, why do we need a different one for the charters, and I don't know that we spent a lot of time on that.

The bag limit for commercial and, if the commercial is closed, can the bag limit -- That reduces bycatch, and we talked about that, and I don't know if that's a real high priority, and so a lot of these things can be moved to the long-term or the back burner. They've got a lot to work on already.

MR. MCKINLEY: I just wanted to say that -- I mean, really, for our fishery in North Carolina, there is not really many day boats. They're all the multiday boats. Just like he said, to get out there and do it, it takes a few days, and, the guys that are left, probably they're doing the day boats, and they're all aging out, and that's one of my biggest concerns, is the fleet is aging out, and they're not going to be replaced.

MR. BONURA: There could be another option that I thought of, and that would be a weekly trip limit. If you catch your -- Actually, it wouldn't be a trip limit. It would be a weekly limit, if you catch it all in one day or you catch it all in a whole week. Then the whole thing -- I mean, does it matter when you catch it, if you catch it all in one or two days and then sell all your fish the rest of the week?

MR. MUNDEN: Just to briefly add what Vincent has brought up, to add to that, in North Carolina, for example, with our summer flounder fishery, we establish a time period so a vessel is permitted to land a certain amount of summer flounder during a week or a ten-day period. A larger vessel can go out and take that amount in one trip, and it also allows the vessels that need to make day trips to make several trips during that week or ten-day period, and that allows you to address the needs of both the day-trip boats and the larger vessels, and so it's worked out very well in North Carolina for the summer flounder fishery.

MR. BONURA: On the topic too, I'm a very different fisherman here. I'm a wholesale dealer as well, and so I fish in Key West, and I live in Broward County, and I sell all of my fish between Broward County and Jupiter. I go to the Keys for -- Call it a week. I catch fish, and I run in and out, and I do a trip or two or three, and I take orders at all the restaurants and retail markets up and down the coast until I have a quota that I need to fill to take care of all my customers. With these

trip limits, it's really difficult, because you're running in and out, and you're burning up fuel and time that you don't need to.

If you could catch what you needed for your customers -- Running up the road, it's another four days of work on the road after I've been fishing for -- Call it a week's worth of work in the Keys, and, in that week of work, I've got three days' worth of travel time, and I could have had this all finished and done three days earlier.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would just say, for the weekly stuff like that, that gets at -- For North Carolina, our weather dictates us. I mean, we may have one week out of the month that we make a couple of trips and make everything that we make and for three weeks we're sitting at the dock, and so putting that on us -- Those things just kind of hurt. I mean, our trips are so limited in North Carolina, due to weather.

MR. GOMEZ: Wouldn't that multiday endorsement be a better idea than permit stacking, if you were able to get the limit each day you go out and prove how many days you were out? Then people like Vincent and yourself would be able to bring in more fish, because you were dealing with a daily limit rather than a trip limit.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would just respond that none of us are -- I mean, he's talking about targeting golden tile, which for us is a seventy or seventy-five-mile run, and, at my age, I'm not going out that far to target 300 pounds of fish, and so we're after everything. We're after everything that's available, and that's why it's so important for us to have everything open, the triggers, the pinky, the grouper, and it's an assortment of all those fish, and so, if we go out and catch ten or twelve boxes of that assortment, that's a good trip for us, and so what we've got in place now is working fine for all that.

MR. MOSS: The only other thing I will throw out there, and I know, Myra, you kind of hit on the forum for the commercial side. I've got to be careful here, but it's not a terrible idea to have that for the recreational side, but it might be a little bit of a Pandora's Box. Then the other thing I would say is -- My brother-in-law actually brought this up when I went out fishing with him last week, but a little bit more involvement in social media.

If you're not on social media and engaged in social media anymore, you're really missing the boat. I know that there is a Facebook page, but Instagram and all those other outlets of social media. From a recreational perspective, if you're not broadcasting on that stuff, whether it's closures or whether it's information, whatever the case may be, you're really -- Anymore, anyway, you're really missing a very large audience.

MS. MARHEFKA: To the communication point, I'm sure you guys already know this, but there are very economical ways also to do text alerts, which I find incredibly helpful. People can opt-in on their own, but I think that's really one of the best forms of communication. It's short, brief, and cheap.

MS. JEFFCOAT: This is kind of back-tracking to what you all were talking about with the multiple permits and everything, and the one question I had is actually for Kerry. How does that affect your market, when you have so many different species coming in at one time?

MS. MARHEFKA: It's great. I mean, I'm in the same boat as Randy, or Mark is, as far as the way that -- We do have a traditional bandit boat, and not a huge one, but it's a traditional, multiday bandit boat, and, because we have access to multiple species at a time, making a trip is -- It's not as easy as it used to be, but it's totally doable.

Having multiple kinds of species for the market is wonderful, because my restaurants have lots of needs, and so, personally, we're good, but I do understand the needs of boats that are doing different things, and so I find myself sort of conflicted, and it seems like something that may be worth more discussion. I don't know that we should narrow down on the solution being permit stacking. I think Red's idea really spoke to me. I mean, I think, if this something we're hearing from a lot of people, I would totally support more discussion about it, but keep the toolbox open, as far as how we address it, but, personally, we don't need it to change.

MR. BONURA: I would say it's good to have the variety of fish, which we catch more than just golden tilefish, but, on some of the trip limits, you can't -- If you've got three restaurants that want fish and four high-end retail markets that want fish, and they all want your fish, because it's quality and good product, and you can't provide it to them, and so you're cutting back their orders -- If they want 100 pounds, and you're like, well, I can only get you fifty, or they want 150 or fifty or whatever, and you're cutting back orders, and you're leaving money on the table.

MR. MOSS: All right. We've had a lot of good discussion, and I think there's a lot of people that probably need a little bit of a break, and so what have you got?

MR. BONURA: I had one more thing. Since we needed to change it from the traditional bandit boat, could we put a motion to change it to a trip fishing vessel?

MS. BROUWER: That's fine, and I don't know that we need a motion for that, and, in fact, the council members were also talking about that that's really not a good way to characterize these boats, and so I think, if they give us direction to start looking into management approaches for those larger trip vessels, if you will, we will make sure that we come up with a better description for those vessels, and so I get it, and I will make a note of that.

MR. MOSS: All right. Let's go ahead and take a break. It's 10:47, according to my watch. Let's go ahead and break until 11:00, so that we can try to hit lunch right at 12:00, if possible.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: We're going to start off with the fishery performance report for yellowtail. All right. Dr. Chip is going to come up and help out with the -- We'll start off with yellowtail, and we're probably not going to get all the way through it. We'll go until noonish and then take a break, and so we'll get started, and I will turn it over to Dr. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: The background information that we've provided you in the past has been a pretty long document. It can be fairly dry, and it's kind of scientifically written. As opposed to that dry document, what we've tried to come up with is a new tool for you guys to use, and hopefully it's a little bit more interactive and might spark a little bit more interest in it, and so this interactive tool is a web-based tool that you can just go onto the internet, and you can just click on it.

It's listed in the agenda and overview, and I believe it's in the overview section, and the link is provided there. I believe we're allowed to have twenty ports open on that site at one time, and so it should be able to handle everybody here at one time without any issues, and what you can do is, over here on the left, you have your option of the two species that we're going to be talking about today, golden tilefish and yellowtail snapper.

I believe the picture of the fish stays up for most of it, so that you know what species you're working on. For some of the data, you can adjust the range of years that you're looking for, and that's going to consistently stay at whatever range you select. Obviously, life history isn't going to change too much depending on the years that you have, and the life history information is going to be based on the information that was listed in the most recent SEDAR stock assessment.

Some of the information we have displayed in the past has been some life history information, and we also have index of abundance data, and so that's going to be in the most recent stock assessment, and that hasn't been updated since the stock assessment. We have yearly landings, and they will be going from 2000 to 2017, and we have monthly landings, and this is where this scale bar up here probably matters the most, under the monthly landings.

You can look at different time periods to see, in the monthly landings, how things change, and we also have economic values, and so it's basically the price per pound for fish, and we don't have some economic values for the recreational sector yet, but we do have economic impacts for both the recreational and commercial sectors, and, down here, we also -- You have the ability to combine these two things if you want to look at combined recreational landings and combined monthly landings. The economic impacts, you can't do combined. Our economist has said that we should keep those separate, because they are not necessarily an additive thing.

Going into the information for the life history section, I give you an extremely short blurb about the species, the habitat that they are found in, and then the maximum age, and so the maximum age for a yellowtail snapper is about twenty years old. Here is the average growth curve for a yellowtail snapper, and age is down here at the bottom, and you can follow it up, and so a ten-year-old yellowtail snapper is about, I guess, nineteen inches long, total length.

There is also a length-weight relationship, and many people ask us about that, and so, at about fifteen inches, that's going to be about a one-pound fish. Then another question we get frequently is the maturity of the female fish, and so that's provided here as well. At fifteen inches, it's about 100 percent maturity, and actually going down to about thirteen inches, or fourteen inches, they're about 100 percent mature.

That is going to be consistent between the two species. The index of abundance, this varies, depending on what is listed in the stock assessment, and, for the yellowtail stock assessment, they had four different indices of abundance. On the top-left, it's the commercial index of abundance. The top-right is the headboat index of abundance. When they did this assessment, MRFSS was the recreational data that was used, and so they developed an index of abundance based on MRFSS, and then there is also a dive survey that they do off the Keys, and it's called the National Marine Fisheries Service and University of Miami Reef Visual Census, and that one is provided as well. Each of these have different scales, and so those are provided, and the standard error is what was listed in the stock assessment.

Going into yearly landings, what I have provided here is -- We will start on the commercial, and you can look at the annual values for the commercial, and that's going to be a solid black line, and it's going up over time for yellowtail snapper. This red line is the ACL value that's been in place, and we also provide the state-by-state landings for yellowtail snapper, and we actually aggregated all states together. If you pull out other states, they become confidential, due to the number of people that are reporting.

Then we also have the number of releases, and the number of releases are also coming from the most recent stock assessment, and you can see it stops in 2010, and that was the last year that was included in that stock assessment.

Going over to recreational, one thing that you will notice is the red line goes away for the recreational, and reason for that is these are the new MRIP numbers, and that old ACL was in old MRIP numbers, and those two are not comparable, and you should not be comparing these numbers to the old ACLs, and so those are removed, and you can see the trend in landings over time. Once again, state-by-state landings for the recreational fishery and the number of releases in the recreational fishery. I will point out that these recreational fisheries are in the old MRIP currency. Actually, they were in MRFSS currency, and so really old money.

We can go into monthly landings, and so this is -- Since I was still on recreational, it's still doing the recreational sector here, and we can see how this will dynamically change, depending on what years you select in there, and I believe, if you select less than three years, I have asked it to not do that, just to prevent any confidentiality issues.

Going back to commercial, you can see the commercial, and a lot of the harvest occurs in March, April, and May, May and June, and I know we're used to seeing commercial data in monthly data, but, in order for me to do a combined analysis, I had to aggregate the commercial data into waves, and, for this one, you can combine both the recreational and commercial and see the overall season for that.

Economic values, once again, as I mentioned before, we only have economic values for the commercial fishery, and you can see the ex-vessel dollars for yellowtail snapper, and then you can also see the ex-vessel price for yellowtail snapper. Then, going into economic impacts, we have the economic impacts for yellowtail snapper, and we have the sales, the income, and then the number of jobs. For this one, it only goes back to 2013, and that was based on a recommendation from the economists. They don't like to take these numbers going too far back in time, due to changes in the sector and different things, but I can't speak too much for that. I am not an economist. If you guys want me to do anything or you have any questions on it, please let me know. It's in your overview, and so go past your agenda, and there is a link that is provided in there.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I think that we were charged with talking about how the last five years -- What the catch rate is and what we've seen over the last five years and what that is going to look like in relationship to the data that we've collected in the past and what is illustrated here, and I think that, under our current management plan, we're going to see a complete shakeup of production levels in different months, and I feel like we're going to get into a very steady pattern, again, with the management plan that we have.

This, again, is one of the reasons why I suggested that we stay the same, because we're starting to really level-off and get a baseline production week-in and week-out and month-in and month-out. We're going to see spikes, and we're going to see valleys, but, when this data is processed in another four or five years, and we have all the data in from 2016 through 2019, or 2018 even, we're going to see crazy, crazy numbers, as opposed to what we're seeing now, as far as when these fish were harvested and in what amounts, and so I'm anxious to see that and be a part of that.

MS. BROUWER: Like we've done in the past, I guess I want to give the AP a chance to ask Chip any questions on the background information that we have provided, and do you see anything weird, or do you have any questions about this information? Then, once we make sure everybody is comfortable with it and there is no more issues, then we can start talking, using the list of discussion questions that was included, and I know that there is going to be limited participation by AP members for yellowtail snapper, since it's concentrated in south Florida, but I would like to just go in order.

James has already started it off, and so, first of all, are there any questions for Chip on the information that you have in front of you, and, as he said, you can access this from your computers using the link that's in your overview.

MS. PASKIEWICZ: Chip, how is the release data? If you can go back up to the release chart, how was that compiled, and what was the basis of that?

DR. COLLIER: For the commercial sector, it's going to be based on the logbook reporting, and so I think it's 20 percent of the commercial fishermen are asked to report discard logbooks. Not everyone that is part of that actually reports their discards, and so they actually do have to do some manipulation, and then, also, some fishermen actually report a discard logbook for every time they're going, even if they're not selected, and so they have to weight these different things based on the fishermen, and they do it on essentially a stock-assessment-by-stock-assessment basis.

If we were just relying on recreational data, we could probably get that annually, but, the commercial data, they do it on a stock-assessment-by-stock-assessment basis. As far as for the recreational sector, that's going to be based on the B2 from MRIP, which is the discarded fish as well as discards from the headboat.

MR. FREEMAN: As far as the discard logbooks, didn't that just start a couple of years ago?

DR. COLLIER: That's one of the benefits of going back to this system. The discard logbook has been used for a while, but, when you're doing the stock assessments, what they try to do is try to get a longer time series than what is necessarily reported, and that's the benefit of using the stock assessment. You have a group of scientists that get together in a room and figure out ways to go back in time and calculate these things, and so I'm not exactly certain which year the discard logbook started, and I will have to go back and check on that, but, Kerry, do you remember?

MS. MARHEFKA: It was before I left, and so 2006 or -- I mean, I think it was -- That was harsh, man. I mean, I'm already feeling old, but it was definitely in the 2000s, because I believe we started it in response to the great red porgy debate of 1998, and I believe that's how it came about, if I recall correctly. I think it was the early 2000s, and it's been a while, for sure.

MR. HULL: I can just speak to the value of the fish to the consumer and to the businesses that I'm in. I mean, we're paying to have fish sold to us out of the Keys -- We're paying, for large fish, \$4.50 a pound, or \$4.75 a pound, and some of the fish -- I see that the boat-adjusted ex-vessel boat price here, some of the heights are like maybe \$3.20, and I don't know what size fish those are, but the price of this -- The value of the species, once it hits the dock, it just keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and so it's a very valuable product for the economy.

The end user, in some cases, is paying as much as \$7.00 a pound for a whole fish out of the showcase, and so it's just these economic numbers that you're seeing here at the boat, the vessel price, that's the starting point. From there, it just keeps expanding and getting -- When you finally get to a serving on a plate, it's even higher, and so I don't know if you can incorporate that into the value of the product or not, but it's much higher than what you're seeing there for the ex-vessel price, I can answer you that.

DR. COLLIER: That's where the economic impacts come into play. Right, John? That takes into account exactly what goes on, and what you're saying right there is -- In the commercial sector, you can see that it has gone up significantly over time, but it doesn't break down to a single per pound.

MR. HULL: Okay, and so you cut captures there. Okay.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: From a dealer standpoint, I would say, looking forward to about that about 2015 mark of nearly \$3.20 a pound, I have kind of charged myself with valuing this species, and this is pretty much the only species I deal with, and they're the highest mark, and so we catch an average one to two yellowtail, for the most part, and the boat price is between \$3.75 and \$4.25, and so a \$4.00 mean on a one to two yellowtail is going to be your current boat price.

That's for me, and that's my fish house, and I operate it more like a co-op than a money-making type of fish house, and I keep overhead really low, and so I'm trying to value this fish at its absolute highest point to the boat, and I just -- It kind of hurts me when my competitors want to bring the value lower, because it's less financial risk for them to buy more pounds at less price, and it just doesn't make any sense, because this resource needs to be bumped up all over the country, all over, and so it's kind of a touchy situation for me, but I can tell you that those numbers are going to continue to rise, and it is more of an economical -- It's more important to our community than ever, having this yellowtail snapper be a viable and healthy resource.

MR. HULL: A follow-up on that. The yellowtail snapper economic value, as far up as 2016, is above \$6 million. That's what that is showing you? Okay. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: If you refer to your Attachment 6a, this is sort of an outline to keep the discussion a little bit focused, so that we can prepare the fishery performance report that will ultimately include everything that you guys offer during this discussion, and so we can start from the top and just keep on going around the table, and give everybody an opportunity to weigh-in on each of these questions, and we'll go from there.

As far as catch levels, James has already touched on this a little bit. When and where are the fish available, and has it changed? Any observations in terms of the size of the fish? We've already

heard a little bit about that. If you could just sort of maybe expand on that or just talk about it a little bit more.

MR. GOMEZ: I haven't really been a fisherman for a number of years, and I own four charter boats, but I don't get on the water. I am pretty much running the business, and so I'm curious if - James, have you seen smaller fish up your way because of this whole targeting thing, because, quite frankly, Brice kind of enlightened me a little this morning. I wasn't really aware of that.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Richard, to answer your question, I really don't see much of a change in the overall harvested size of the fish. What I am really noticing is, due to back-to-back-to-back-to-back relatively mild winters, basically since we had that really harsh winter, and we've had very mild winters, we've seen yellowtail fishing at its best in October or November or December or January or February, all the way through winter, and we catch big fish.

Mostly, it's extra-large fish in that timeframe, and so, moving past that, into your more typical spawning months, if we continue to have a mild winter all the way into February, we have caught a lot of the biomass that we would have caught further into the spawning season, because of the mild winter. Their metabolism isn't as slow, and they're still feeding with the warm water, just to keep their bodies going, and so I think environmental impact is a big part of why we're seeing a little bit of a shift of when we're catching the fish, over the last five years specifically, and we're not catching -- At least from I would say Mile Marker 40 to 75, and so a thirty-five-mile stretch of reef, I am seeing good, large fish almost year-round, and my guys don't like to catch the small fish. They don't bring the same amount of money, and it's just -- It's not what we target as a group.

MR. GOMEZ: That surprised me a little when he was talking about targeting smaller fish, because I know smaller fish get -- You get paid less money, but, also, I noticed, after every single hurricane, and including George and Wilma, the yellowtail have been larger, and definitely hungrier, and have you ever figured out anything on that subject, because I know it happens, and, when you were discussing it after Irma, and this really happens, and it's true, and these fish are big, and they are hungry.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Richard, without a doubt, and I really stand by my stance that we need to see what we're going to be accomplishing long-term and see how these -- Maybe in the lower Keys they are harvesting a smaller yellowtail, and we're going to have to see how that really affects the stock in the coming years. Will it affect -- I know that, in the Florida Bay, you can go throw a chum bag anywhere and the three or four-inch yellowtail will swarm the back of the boat.

In my opinion, that's a very good sign of what's going to come down the line in future years, because we do have a good recruitment of the yellowtail snapper, and I do believe that harvesting that smaller size range is a sustainable practice, and I hope that I'm right, for the future of our industry, and, like I said, I am excited to be a part of this.

This has been my main focus for my entire career, is yellowtail snapper, and I have had input with other panel members through the years, other organizations, and this is just the first time in my life that I've been able to kind of take a step back and help give something back to the fishery that I love so much.

MR. MOSS: I will chime in with that from a recreational standpoint. It's been -- On the five-year average, if you will, it's been pretty consistent, and, as James said, it's been a year-round fishery. Not that it's not, but it's really been with the milder winters, and we're catching fish all year. You're not seeing the fluctuations, although, this summer, up near Islamorada anyway, it was like a lot of clean water, and it was tougher fishing, it seemed, for yellowtail this summer, for whatever reason, more so than in years past. It's not that they weren't there, but it just wasn't like it has been, I guess, and I don't know if you guys had cleaner water down by you as well or how that was.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Absolutely. Had the season been open in June and July, I think we would have seen historically low numbers for those months, and it's all part of the shift of where we are currently with the fishery, and I think it has a lot to do with why our ACL is being met earlier and earlier and that we're catching everything. We probably wouldn't have gotten too much deeper into the overall production, even in those two months.

With that being said, I think, Jim, you were asking about a closure, a spawning closure, a hard spawning closure, for yellowtail snapper, and the problem I see with that is, if we do shift a climate pattern to where we get into a stronger, colder winter regiment over a period of time, then we're probably only going to catch our ACL in the spawning months, and, if we didn't catch it in September or October or November or December, in the first part of our season, then we're going to need to be able to put those numbers up at the end of the season, just to maintain a viable, healthy fishery as far as an economic standpoint goes to the fishermen. Yes, we're harvesting the fish in the spawning period, but we need to have that option open if we had a very poor winter, is kind of my response to that, just to keep the guys that fish for yellowtail viable.

MR. MOSS: Also, to that, and correct me if I'm wrong, but, from the commercial side, it's -- I mean, they spawn almost all summer long, and so it's not like you're constantly pounding them during the spawning season. You're just hitting the beginning of it.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: With a cold winter, they are not necessarily going to engage in that spawning process as early as they would if we had a more mild climate.

MR. GOMEZ: For the people that don't fish for yellowtail and don't have that as part of their fishery, clear water versus dirtier water, and we call it dirtier water, but it's actually water that isn't influenced by the Gulf Stream, and so that water fluctuates in our area, and it could be out far past the reef, or it could be well over the reef, and, when that happens, the fishing is more difficult, and you're going to see lower numbers whenever the Gulf Stream is swept over the reef.

MR. MOSS: Running through some of these, has the size of the fish changed, and I don't think so. Not from what I've seen from, again, the recreational side. Has there been effort shift? No. People that have fished for yellowtail still fish for yellowtail. The one thing I will say, and, Richard, you kind of brought it up, of the effects of the bigger fish after hurricanes and things like that, and it might be a little bit of a chicken-and-egg thing, but it could also be because there's a lot less -- Typically, anyway, after a hurricane, there is a lot less recreational pressure down in the Keys, because a lot of the Keys ends up getting closed down, and so, again, the non-resident fishermen, such as myself, that live in Broward County and stuff like that would go down to the Keys to fish, we flat out don't for usually a month or so after any kind of hurricane event, not the

least of which being because there is no place to stay and the restaurants aren't open and things like that, and so I don't know if that has an influence of more bigger fish being available.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I might sound a little funny with this one, but, in a typical feeding scenario, the big fish dictate how it's going to go, and if, after an event like a hurricane, there isn't an abundant natural food source or there isn't an abundant artificial food source, like boats fishing, those fish are going to be hungry, and they will dictate who gets to feed first, and obviously, being the bigger fish, they come in and push the small fish out of the way, and they run the school.

Now, I have seen those fish do the same thing and come in front of the smaller feeding fish, the ones that want to commit suicide, if you will, and they will get in front, and they will back up, and nobody eats. I mean, call me crazy, but I see this behavior fifty days a year, and so they're just kind of in charge, and maybe after a hurricane they put themselves first on the feeding list.

MR. GOMEZ: I don't think it has much to do with less impact on the fishery. That kind of makes a little more sense to me, and I don't think it has to do with less impact.

MR. MOSS: There again, as James stated, there is, like he said, less food in the water, and there's less of all that stuff when that happens, and it could very well be that those bigger fish are hungrier and they say, up yours, I'm eating, and, as a result, I'm dying, I guess. All right.

Moving down, social and economic influences for the commercial sector, has the price and demand for yellowtail snapper changed? Has the demand for charter/headboat trips targeting yellowtail snapper changed? I'm going to run through them all, and then you guys can comment on them. What communities are dependent on the yellowtail snapper fishery? Have changes in infrastructure affected fishing? How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the yellowtail snapper fishery? How have recent hurricanes affected the fishery? I think we've kind of hit on that last one already a couple of times, but maybe the first five or so, if you guys want to comment on that.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would like to. Like I stated earlier, when I met with representatives from FWC and we discussed how we were going to bounce back after the hurricane, I felt it was very important for the fishery immediately to have its -- Not be shut down, and that would have been optimal for a one-year scenario, but, like I said, stepping back and really analyzing where we are and the direction that we're going, it's very important to have this fishery managed the way that we are currently.

Price and demand for the fish, I think more awareness has been brought to quality, and I flat out won't buy from boats that don't take care of their fish. I mean, we're one-day boats, and you could say, well, a one-day fish could never be bad, and, believe it or not, they can look -- Yellowtail snapper is a beautiful fish. If you don't ice it properly and brine it properly, it's just not going to be the same quality, and maybe some awareness at the point of production to help boost quality, overall boost the price point of the fish.

Further into that, working waterfront has definitely been a challenge, and guys that want to fish five or six days a week, they are doing it maybe out of private property, and it's a challenge to get all of your equipment on a daily basis back to the boat, and so, if you don't have a fish house to go tie up at, you're carrying ice around, and you're carrying 400 or 500 pounds of chum around in

the back of a truck, and you have to ice your fish to and from the fish house, and so it's a process to keep these guys going without working waterfront, and I don't know how we could fix that, because the property values are so high in the Keys, and, really, nobody likes to see a fish house anymore. I mean, people love to see it. Like the general public, they love to come see boats unload and stuff like that, but the perception of commercial fishing still isn't as high as we would like it to be, and so there's that.

MR. GOMEZ: A question for David and James. Just going right down to the very bottom, for us in the lower Keys, that Gulf Stream is not swept over the reef as often as it used to, and so our yellowtail fishery is very, very strong, and a lot of the reason is because we are fishing in that dirtier water more often, and I'm just curious if you guys are seeing that also.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Historically, as the yellowtail fishery has evolved, if you will, over the last ten years, that clear Gulf Stream water, the fish used to prefer to feed in that, in the manner that we harvest them. They would be able to relax behind the boat, let's just say in fifty-five feet of water, and they could see from top to bottom. If a predator was anywhere near, they would have a good warning, because of the visual aspect. They could see what's going on.

I would have masses of migrating fish travel in that blue water, and they would show up -- In a hard-moving east water, they would show up, and they would look like they had never eaten before, and, as more and more people adopted the mechanism of harvest that we currently do, I believe we have spread the fish out from Key Largo to the Dry Tortugas. I feel like the fish shift, but I don't feel like they migrate in the same way that they used to, and so we're seeing them feed in that dirty water, and we see those shifts where the water changes over the Keys, and fish will be feeding in those water changes, and so, anytime you get that clear water now, you're pretty much guaranteed to have a slower harvest rate. I don't know if that completely answers your question, but I just feel like the fish are everywhere all the time, and there is really no need for a massive migration.

MR. MOSS: Like I said, near Islamorada, where I fish a lot, this has kind of been a little bit of a wonky year, with having a lot of clean water in the summertime that you don't normally have quite as much, and usually the -- Bigger fish, of course, in the wintertime, but the fishing is a little bit easier, for lack of a better term, in the summertime, and, this year, it was a weird yellowtail bite, for whatever reason, environmental shifts and things like that, but it was definitely a lot more cleaner water for longer periods of time in shallower, where you would normally get the smaller fish.

MR. GOMEZ: For us, it was kind of opposite that, but, when you speak about a hard east current, for us in the lower Keys, a hard east current, you might as well not even bother yellowtail fishing, as a recreational fisherman. Certainly you could put a catch together in a hard east current as a commercial fisherman, but, for the most part, commercial fishermen would stay at the dock on a hard east current, if they were thinking about yellowtail fishing.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Like I said, when we first started this evolutionary process with the yellowtail harvest, we had a much better feed then in the east-moving water than we do now, and you are absolutely correct. Within the last few years, when you have that crisp, clear water moving to the east, it is -- You can put a catch together, but it's harder, and some guys decide to stay home, and others keep going.

MR. MOSS: To go back to the infrastructure changes, it has absolutely affected -- I know a commercial fisherman that I know is having to -- There is no dockage anymore, really, especially as you get north of the Keys, and, Vincent, I'm sure you can attest to this. Some of these commercial fishermen are trailering boats to and from various areas, almost literally selling fish in a parking lot to distributors and suppliers, because there is nowhere to go anymore. Any dockable real estate, certainly in Florida, which is obviously where all this yellowtail stuff is, is gobbled up and sold to the highest bidder, which I guess it's a good problem to have if you own any of that stuff, but there is hardly anything left, I know, and I'm sure it's just as bad down in the Keys.

MR. BONURA: I guess in Broward County there is zero commercial docks anymore, none, zero, and we have -- Like you said, I have purchased fish in the Publix parking lot, or behind Publix, or anywhere, wherever you're at, wherever you've got to meet.

MR. MOSS: All right. We'll move down to the last couple. Management measures, is the minimum size limit appropriate for the recreational sector and the commercial sector? Are there new measures that the council should consider or existing measures that should be changed? Then the perceived effects of environmental conditions on yellowtail, and we've kind of hit that a little bit, and I know, Richard, you were talking about some of that stuff yesterday, with the red tides and algal blooms that we're having, but we'll tackle the first few first with size limits.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: When we did speak about the possibility of an increased size limit, I've kind of been an advocate for that for several years now. A thirteen-inch size range would kind of eliminate the long-migrating yellowtail from being targeted, and that fish is literally 0.6 pounds. Maybe some skinny ones are a little smaller or whatever, but that size range fish isn't very marketable, and so I would be for a size increase, but then that brings me right back to my point that, when you're on that twelve to thirteen-inch fish and you can make a living at that, you're going to be handling a lot more fish that have to be discarded, and I'm just not sure that that would be the right thing to do, and so, as much as I think it would be good, I think it would have some negative impacts as well.

MR. MOSS: I completely agree with you. It sounds good in theory, a little bit higher size limit, but, again, like with the headboats and stuff like that up there in the summertime, when they're catching a bunch of those twelve-inch fish, especially on a partyboat in the summertime that has thirty or forty people on the boat, with yellowtails flopping all over the deck, and you throw back a twelve or twelve-and-a-half-inch fish, and you're throwing back fifty and sixty of them, I think it has the exact opposite effect of what we're all trying to do here, and so I'm happy with the twelve-inch size limit right now. Any measures that the council should consider or existing measures that should be changed?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I'm not sure if this should be proposed under new business or in this, and so I'm just going to put it out there now. The commercial sector would like to ask for some data to be collected about how many mangrove snapper trips have historically happened in June and July, and, I mean, really, with that number, divide those trips -- Multiply those trips by 100 pounds and take whatever that number is, if it's 100,000 pounds, and close our yellowtail snapper fishery at that mark and have a bycatch of 100 pounds per trip of yellowtail snapper for the guys that are mangrove snapper fishing.

A hundred pounds is more than adequate as bycatch for a mangrove snapper trip, whether it be one day or two days or whatever, and it helps pay the fuel, and it helps pay the crew and the bait and whatever. These fish are not being released in less than -- The mortality rate of some of those smaller fish, that's definitely an issue when you're night fishing, and it will keep people engaged. Yellowtail fishermen that otherwise would be tied up at the dock would be more apt to go out fishing, and so there would be less of an economic impact on those yellowtail boats to get out there and fish for mangrove snapper in the two-month closure period.

MR. BONURA: That's what I was going to actually say, is something similar to that, and so what if you had like a trigger point on the percentage of the ACL where it went from unlimited to say a 500-pound trip limit if it hit say 80 percent of the ACL or something like that?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Once again, I think that that's possible, but, I mean, personally, I think that we should figure out how many trips are being made. I mean, with 20 percent of the ACL left, you're still looking at -- That's a 300,000-pound mark, and that could be beneficial. It would be 240,000 left on the quota, and so, if it did work at 100,000 left, we would get almost our full season in yellow-tailing and then have that buffer, because I don't think that we want to make it to where you can target the yellowtail, and I think that's what we want to limit, is the going out and targeting the yellowtail when they are supposed to be closed.

MR. HULL: I have a question for you, James. I am trying to understand what you said. I think that you said that, at 80 percent, thereabouts, of the ACL being met -- At that time, you wanted to close the yellowtail fishery except for a bycatch fishery, and is that what you --

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I believe that's what Vincent was saying, or a trigger mark to where you go to a trip limit.

MR. HULL: What was your recommendation?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I am not fully supporting that, because it may -- I mean, it's kind of a two-phased thing at that point. You are slowing down the production of yellowtail. Are we slowing it down so that we don't have a closure, or are we slowing it down to let the guys that aren't allowed to yellowtail fish to have a bycatch while they're mangrove snapper fishing, and mine was kind of a one-dimensional thing, and I think that Vincent's proposal was kind of multidimensional.

MR. BONURA: The thing I was saying was to have a trip limit implemented, kind of like the b-liners, to hopefully keep the ACL open all year.

MR. MOSS: I understand what both of you are saying, and, James, you hit on a good point. When you're doing the mangrove trips in June and July, when the guys are doing the dedicated night fishing, and sometimes, before the mangroves really get worked up, you're catching the yellowtail, and, rather than throwing them back and stuff like that, to ensure that at least you've got something -- That we're not, again, just throwing dead fish into the water.

I don't know what the best thing is to do there, because I understand that Vincent is trying to accomplish the same thing, and kind of the easy way to do it, I guess, is to have the 80 percent stop within the trip limit, but I also understand what you're saying, is that that may not coincide with the timeframe that you want.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: The yellowtail ACL would probably be met still, and then we have three weeks or a month or five weeks or whatever, to where there is no bycatch provision for the guys that are mangrove snapper fishing, and so that's why I said that mine was kind of one-dimensional, and this one -- I mean, although it wouldn't be a bad thing, and I've discussed this with a lot of my peers, and I think the overwhelming consensus is, the guys that want to mangrove fish, they want to be able to bring home their yellowtail.

MR. BONURA: Okay, and so how about, instead of 500 -- I mean, I just threw that as a number, and I just threw that out there, but you could do 200, 250, 300, 150, whatever you decided.

MR. MOSS: I am kind of speaking for you, James, but I don't know that the poundage number is the issue. I think it's more the timing of it and making sure that you have that kind of June through the end of July, when they're out there doing the mangrove -- You know the full-moon mangrove hunt. That's what you want to make sure that --

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Yes, absolutely. I'm kind of trying to represent the mangrove snapper fishermen, and there's not a whole lot of representation here for them, and I know for a fact that some of my yellowtail fishermen that put in zero effort during the closure would elect to try to mangrove snapper fish.

Fishermen are kind of funny. They get stuck on one thing that they become good at, and then they won't try to go catch another species, even though it's super viable, but that's beyond the point there. I would be open to discussion on any of it, to be honest with you, but, with the data that I've collected and with the response that I have, I would like to see the yellowtail shut down and a bycatch implemented.

MR. GOMEZ: For us in the lower Keys, it's pretty much a give-me that a yellowtail fisherman is going to be out there catching the gray snapper when it's time, and so it surprises me that you say that some of these yellowtail guys stay at the dock, but I could certainly wrap my hands around them being able to keep 100 pounds of yellowtail during that time, because, I mean, mostly they're going to be catching gray, and why continue to toss back a yellowtail, even though there's going to be a lot less of them, because the grays have taken over the area, but why not be able to bring those in too, a certain amount of poundage?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Certainly -- I mean, I do communicate with fishermen in the lower Keys, and, to be honest with you, the gray snapper fishery has been much stronger in the recent years in the lower Keys, and what we're seeing in the middle Keys, primarily, like I would say from Mile Marker 40 to 75, is we're seeing a mix of twelve-inch mangroves and twelve-inch yellowtail, and it's been really complicated to put a catch together.

We're not seeing the bigger mangroves, for whatever the reason is, and we're seeing the measurer-class mangrove snapper mixed in with the smaller yellowtail, and measuring every single fish as it comes aboard is a little bit frustrating, especially when every other fish is a small yellowtail that you have to discard.

MR. GOMEZ: I didn't know that, and so, for us in the lower Keys, it has been very strong. What was always a nighttime fishery now is done in the daytime very easily also, and so we're definitely not having a problem finding big grays when it's time, and a lot less yellowtail.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: That is a little bit of a shift from the three years previous. We had seen good numbers of mangrove snapper at the end of July and August and into September and October even, in a daytime fishery that was off the chain, if you will, and I feel like it will come back around again, and these fish will move and do what they do, and I'm kind of just speaking for that nighttime guy that's been having some issues.

MR. MOSS: Actually, to what Richard said, now that you mention it, it was a really good mangrove bite during the day. It was almost like the yellowtail bite turned into a mangrove bite in the summer this year, for whatever reason. To that end, do I hear a motion?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: **I would like to make a motion to -- At the end of the yellowtail snapper closure, leaving 100,000 pounds left on the quota for a 100-pound bycatch for boats engaged in mangrove snapper fishing.**

MR. GOMEZ: Would that affect our recreational? Then I would second that motion.

MR. MOSS: No, this is strictly for commercial.

MR. GOMEZ: Second.

MR. MOSS: Any discussion on that?

MR. BONURA: Don't you think that it needs to be at a percentage, when it hits a percentage, as opposed to 100,000 pounds, and what is the percentage there?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I understand that, and, along with that, what happens if we're not meeting our ACL and the yellowtail hasn't closed? We just stay open right through, and so I think that stopping it at a percentage leaves the targeted yellowtail trip on the table, and I am trying to get away from that a little bit and trying to leave it there for sure. If there is a yellowtail closure, then for sure the mangrove snapper fishermen can have a bycatch, and that's my intention on this proposal.

MR. BONURA: All I'm saying is 100,000 pounds is a percent of the ACL, and so what -- Is it 8 percent? Okay, and so call it 10 percent. Maybe at 10 percent of -- It's 6.2? I think you need to have something in your motion about a percent.

MR. MOSS: I would agree with him, only because if we -- Especially if in the next couple of years the stock assessment changes and the ACL changes. Then you're going to want that left over to change, I would assume.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: So I propose that we have a 90 percent -- When the yellowtail ACL reaches 90 percent, that we -- But the problem there is that it doesn't ensure that it's going to be open, and that is what I kind of intended my motion to be.

MR. MOSS: No, I get that, and therein lies the difficulty of this, because I know that you want to have like a couple-month window, if you will, but I also understand what Vince is saying, is that if the ACL does fluctuate, you want to have a commensurate amount, you know what I mean?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: How do we slow it down is the next portion of this then.

DR. COLLIER: What I heard James say was he wants staff to look at what fishermen typically catch or how many trips are going out during the mangrove season, mangrove fishery season, and apply a 100-pound trip limit to that and then subtract that to the ACL.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Yes, especially if we could get those number of trips and get some historical data, maybe 2015 and before, before we had closures in June and July for yellowtail snapper, and then we could see what was historically landed, and we would know what would be an adequate trip bycatch limit, and then we could -- **Maybe my motion is to have some research done on what a bycatch scenario would look like for June and July based on historical landings.**

MR. BONURA: How I see what you're trying to do is to have a 100-pound trip limit for them in June and July, basically, is what you're saying, because, if it hits the trigger say earlier in the year, in May, and then closes on the hundred-pound by June, then it's not accomplishing what you're trying to do here.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Correct.

MR. MOSS: The only thing, and, James, you can speak to this probably more so even than I can, but where you get into the danger of having the hard months with that is we've talked about the kind of environmental shifts and the fishery not being available, but you hitting that time period at different times. As we've said, yellowtail has been biting through the winter, like it hasn't been in the past and things like that, and you've just got to be careful when you put these hard months on it with something like that.

MR. HULL: The only way that the council would have to be able to do that is to take a certain -- Formulating what amount of the total ACL you want to pull and give it to that timeframe of June, July, and August. I mean, they're going to have to pull that from the total ACL, whatever it is, the number you come up with, and say this is dedicated at a 100-pound trip limit during this timeframe, and you're going to come up with that by researching historical landings during that timeframe to come up with that number, and that's the only way they're going to pull that, and it would be the simple way to do it, if they can do that.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Correct, and I would offer that as a baseline, and then, if we are not -- If our season is going to continue into June and July anyway, the provision doesn't come into play, and I think that that would be the important part, and a trigger certainly would help that, but it is kind of a touchy scenario, because we do want -- If we need the full twelve months to harvest our ACL, we should probably have it.

MR. MOSS: All right. I will re-read the motion and see if this encapsulates what it is that you're trying to do. **Recommend the council explore a bycatch allowance of yellowtail snapper in the mangrove snapper season, looking particularly at pre-2015 in June and July.** Is that acceptable? Richard, are you okay with those changes, because you were the seconder. Okay.

Any more discussion on this one? All right. Let's put it to a vote. **All those in favor, fifteen in favor; opposed; abstain, two. The motion passes.**

The last few questions on here, and then we'll break for lunch, are, again, we kind of already discussed some of the -- Have you perceived any unique effects of environmental conditions on yellowtail snapper? We'll move down to the last few. What are your observations concerning the timing and length of the spawning season? We discussed that, but we can mention it a little bit more. Do you perceive that abundance has changed over the past five years? If so, how? What have you observed in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Apparently they're all on the bank over there off of Key West. What else is important for the council to know about yellowtail snapper?

MR. HUDSON: The last couple of years here, and I would like to hear from the yellowtail people about it, a particular problem, and possibly just only when you're chumming, and day or night I don't know, and time of the year I don't know, but the sharks, the amount of sharks, the species of sharks, the timing, and just how bad is it, and do you have to move? I mean, we're having our share of problems on the whole east coast of the United States, and so we just kind of want to hear from you all about the Keys.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To answer that question directly, we have seen shark populations and shark interactions skyrocket, and, fortunately, our method of production is not really impacted that much by the sharks. The yellowtail do not get frightened by the sharks, and they actually go wild when the sharks are close.

We have a problem when we are catching bigger fish and they are out of pluck range, and they dig down, and the sharks eat every single one of them, and it is extraordinarily frustrating when the sharks are around, and I will not even attempt to catch a black grouper, because it becomes a meal for a lemon shark. Bull sharks and lemon sharks are primarily what we see on the reef, and it's very frustrating. To hear some of the concerns of some of the fishermen in other fisheries, and the shark fishery specifically, they have -- Typically, the guys that do it in Florida, they utilize the entire shark, and every part of it has economic value, and they have taken a real beating here recently with closures.

MR. MOSS: I'm glad you brought that up, Rusty, because the shark issue, from everybody that I talk to, almost across-the-board, is getting to be a huge problem, and that's something that I guess is difficult to quantify. Well, it's not difficult to quantify, but the amount of fish that never even make it to the boat to be released, again, on the recreational side, that don't count towards anything, because, even if you are told about that, did you catch them? Nope. Did you release them? I never caught them to be released, but he's gone, and it's getting to be a much bigger issue.

MR. GOMEZ: Of course, we're seeing that also, and, for us, it kind of works well, because we can almost guarantee that big fish if someone wants to target them, and I think the bigger question is what do we do about it, because, as this continues, as the population continues to rise, I feel, personally, that we're going to see more shark attacks in the future.

MR. HUDSON: Just a comment. I've spent over two decades on the HMS AP as the shark person, and the problem that we have, and John Carmichael can tell you, is we don't have enough money, and we don't have enough analysts to be able to do the stock assessments that we need to do, and

we have to do it species-specific now. We used to do complexes, with like bull and lemon and things and then tigers and whatever, but now we've got sandbar explosions, and we've got so many species. We've got the dusky and the sandbar that come up through your area about January or February, and so, some of our guys that are able to fish in the sandbar fishery in the Keys, they will catch them coming, and then they will catch them going back to Mexico to overwinter, but these are adults.

They are all full-grown animals, and they are playing havoc on a lot of our rebuilding plans, and I think that's something that has to be thought about from the council level and tell HMS that somehow they need to be able to increase the allocation, because we have shrunk the shark fishing fleet down to almost nothing, and so the explosion of sharks is a definite thing that has gone on from the benefit of twenty-five-plus years of protection, and, in state waters for Florida, they have been closed for shark fishing, except for one shark per person, since 1992, March, and so I think the yellowtail prosecutes a lot closer to the shore.

I remember, in the 1970s and 1980s, listening to the nighttime yellowtail guys all the time, but I would be offshore fishing muttons and stuff like that, but, still, thank you for that information, because we meet twice a year, and somehow we've got to get stuff in the queue, and the only thing we have in the queue coming up, besides finishing Gulf blacktip, is going to be Atlantic blacktip. It's going to take a year-and-a-half to do that, and then it will take a year-and-a-half to do management changes, and you get a fair amount of blacktips down your way too, and so, that being said, you're going to still have a lot more shark interactions for several more years.

MR. MOSS: Even talking to a couple of the guys that I know that fish the Tortugas, it's super bad over there as well. I mean, they're telling me that sometimes it's as bad as you will get one out of every three fish to the boat, at certain times. Perceived abundance, has it changed over the past five years?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would say, speaking for the fishery as a whole, my perceived abundance has remained fairly stable over the last five years.

MR. MOSS: Same. Then anything in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Everywhere?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Again, with the previous discussion, we've seen shifts here and there, but they're everywhere.

MR. MOSS: Is there anything else important for the council to know about yellowtail?

DR. COLLIER: I had one question for you guys. Given that yellowtail snapper are reef-associated or live-bottom, and there is a fairly significant outbreak of coral disease down in the Keys, are you guys seeing yellowtail shift away from the reefs that have coral disease and going to deeper areas, or are they still sticking around those reefs?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: That's a wonderful question. I don't get in the water. Really, I mean, I've been a top-down guy my entire life, and I do have a report for you. A friend of mine recently got in the water on one of the yellowtail spots that I've been fishing since I was diapers, and he told me that the life on that bottom was incredible. He said, the new coral growth there, that he hadn't

seen anything like it in his entire life, and he's been in the Keys for a really long time. He said that he never would have imagined, with the number of boats fishing that particular location over the amount of time that we have, that there would be such pristine bottom, and I was flabbergasted. Like I said, I don't get in the water, but he said that it was amazing and beautiful.

MR. GOMEZ: I would like to know where that is, but I do get in the water, and maybe you could tell me later, but I do get in the water, and so what I notice is the reef system is in horrible shape, but what I see is that the fish continue to populate the areas, because it's a protective area, and lobsters still crawl under dead coral now, and fish still congregate there, because that's where everything is, and that's where they feed, and that's what they use for protection, and so I don't think fish will leave the skeleton of the coral reef, but it's quickly becoming skeletal.

MR. ATTACK: As a diver, I dove before and after hurricanes for thirty years, and this is post-Irma is what he's talking about, when he looked at it, and you all may not realize, but, when hurricanes come through, there is a lot of scouring, and there is a lot of purging, and the water comes through. I have seen rocks as big as this table and five feet thick flipped upside down in a hundred feet of water, and so, when hurricanes come through, I mean, it's a bad thing from one standpoint, but, from another standpoint, all the sediment and stuff that has settled out gets all flushed out, and so sometimes that can help a reef rebuild. All the seagrass is gone. I mean, it looks like somebody came through with a sandblaster. You will see nothing, no sargassum and no kind of -- But, in a couple of years, all that stuff kind of grows back.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: That's exactly right, and this was his first dive, and I want to say it was thirteen months post-Irma, and so this was recently, and he was amazed, and he felt so amazed that he wanted to share it with me, because he knows that I fish that bottom quite frequently.

MR. MOSS: Anything else on that? Okay. Chip, thank you very much. It was much appreciated, and we'll go ahead, unless there's anything else right now, and we'll break for lunch. We'll be back at two o'clock to jump into golden tile. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: We're moving on with the golden tilefish fishery performance report. Take it away.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, David, and so we'll go through the same exercise we did this morning for yellowtail, and so, again, I would direct you to our little shiny app thing that has the summary of information, and so life history, like Chip said this morning, we have just a little blurb, and obviously tilefish are bottom dwellers. The maximum observed age for this species is fifty-four years old, and so long-lived and slow-growing and restricted habitat. Here is a curve showing the total length at age, and, again, as Chip explained this morning, a lot of this information comes from the latest stock assessment.

Here is a length-weight relationship, and so you've got the whole pounds on the Y-axis here and total length in inches on the X-axis, and the female maturity, and so, just in general, there is not a whole lot of information on some of these species. They don't get sampled very often, and there's not a lot of life history information that's just abundant out there, and so this is just what we have that's been included in the assessments.

MR. ATACK: Are they hermaphroditic, when they switch sex?

MS. BROUWER: No, these are not like some grouper species. They are gonochorists, or they are separate.

DR. COLLIER: There is actually some question on that, whether or not they actually switch sexes. There is some PhD work that's been done, and they questioned whether or not they do switch sexes.

MR. ATACK: It made me think about it when you're showing 100 percent of the proportion mature versus length. Once you hit your seventeen or eighteen inches, they are mature, 100 percent of them, and so, if they don't switch, if they're female from thereafter, where they would be another, I guess, size or age where they would switch?

DR. COLLIER: Whenever we do something like gag grouper, that definitely switches sexes, I will have another graph on there that would show at what size they typically turn to male.

MS. BROUWER: Here, we're showing the index of abundance, and here you have the years from 2000 to 2015, and this is the MARMAP index. Unfortunately, golden tilefish are caught with the short bottom longline gear that MARMAP uses to sample the tilefishes, and there's been -- That survey was suspended for some time, and so my understanding is they're going to resume that survey this coming year, which is good news.

MR. HUDSON: Did you say short longline?

MS. BROUWER: Short bottom longline, I believe. Yearly landings, here are the commercial landings by year from 2000 through 2016, and the red line is the ACL. Recall that I believe this was Regulatory Amendment 12 that implemented a higher ACL in -- I can't quite remember when it was, 2012 it looks like, or 2013. Here is your state landings, and so Florida/Georgia has been aggregated to maintain confidentiality, and so that's in the orange, and North Carolina and South Carolina are in the blue, and your ACL is the red line, and so your scale here goes up to 800,000 pounds. We don't have any information on commercial releases of golden tilefish, and mainly this indicates that there were no release data that were used in the assessment that we were able to translate here for you.

DR. COLLIER: For this species, in the assessment, it was assumed that discard mortality was 100 percent, and, therefore, all landings -- Released fish and caught fish ended up in the landings in the assessment, and so what you see is landings that we have displayed earlier is the information that's reported by fishermen, and it does not include the discards, but, in the assessment, they put the two together.

MS. BROUWER: Continuing with the commercial information for golden tilefish, here is your mean landings by wave, and, as Chip explained, the reason he did it by wave is so that, when we combine commercial and recreational, those data can jibe together. This is from 2000 through 2017. The economic information, here's your ex-vessel value on the Y-axis, and so this scale goes up to -- This is two-million over here, \$2 million, and it goes from 2000 through 2016. Here is the price per pound, and the top value up here is \$4.00. Economic impacts, here are the sales, annual sales, and so maybe you all could talk about what happened here, and here is your income figures

and your jobs, and so clearly 2015 was not a good year. Moving on to recreational, we will go back to --

MR. ATACK: I had a question. If you go back, it's \$2 million for ex-vessel, but then you're saying it's \$21 million for the economic impact? It's like an order of magnitude of ten, and I didn't quite understand that.

MR. HADLEY: That's a good question, and so the main -- When you run the economic impacts for the commercial sector, the main input is the ex-vessel value, and so that's why you see those variations. They basically track changes in the ex-vessel value, but, yes, that correct. The model that NMFS has put together basically runs it from the fisherman to the end consumer, and so that's why you see that increase from the ex-vessel value up to kind of a total business sales estimate.

MR. HULL: Some of that would be from boat price to fillet, which boat price is whole fish, but the whole fish can go as high as \$8.00 a pound in a retail market, and so that's double there, and then fillet -- We sell the tilefish fillet out of our retail for \$24.95 a pound, and so, I mean, the first price at the boat is the starting point, and the value just goes every time you --

MR. ATACK: Right, but there's also a yield on it, and so half the weight is lost, and then it's doubled, and then it's --

MR. HULL: That's why I told you the whole price, too. That is to compare apples-to-apples, but, his formula to come up with that, he would have to tell you more about it.

MS. BROUWER: Switching to recreational, here are the yearly landings of golden tilefish from 2000 through 2017, and, as Chip mentioned, for yellowtail, I believe this dataset includes the MRIP numbers. The new MRIP numbers are included, and that's why we don't have the ACL displayed, because then you can't really compare with the current ACL, which is based on the old MRIP numbers. Your monthly data looks like this, and so this is broken down by wave, and we don't have economic values for the recreational sector, but here is the impacts, and here is the values for income and for jobs.

MR. ATACK: That's a pretty big change from 2016 to 2017 on the impacts.

MS. BROUWER: Here are your combined commercial and recreational annual landings, in pounds. Here they are broken down by state, and so you've got Florida at the top, in the orange, Florida/Georgia combined in the green, North Carolina in the turquoise, and North Carolina/South Carolina in the purple.

Again, we're trying to pretty much cover the same topics, the same questions, that we had for yellowtail. Of course, if there is anything additional that you wish to contribute, based on your observations and your experience on golden tilefish that you think the council should know -- Are there any questions on the data, before we get into the discussion?

MR. FREEMAN: Can you scroll back down to the 2015 mark, where it shows that rock-bottom?

MS. BROUWER: I can't remember which figure the --

MR. FREEMAN: I think it was on the impact. There it is.

MS. BROUWER: Right. Notice the scale is from \$9 million up to \$21 over here.

MR. FREEMAN: That was one of our best years. Is that part of the P* or something, Rusty?

MR. HUDSON: I am looking at the landings here, and 2012 was when we got the bump-up from the 2011 stock assessment, and, in 2014, we divide up the hook-and-line from the longline, and does this have the hook-and-line in it also? Then, for 2015, that year, we wind up shutting down the longline on February 19, and so they had caught their 406,000 pounds in a month-and-a-half, and so that was pretty strong, because I think the weather was decent and stuff like that, and so they're not really going through a whole lot of extra expenses, whereas the hook-and-line component stayed open until December 8 of that year, and so 2014 is the first year of the split, and we've been fishing the bigger quota ever since 2012.

MR. ATACK: The ex-vessel value, go back to that one for economic value, and you can see, in 2015, it was \$1.8 million. 2015 is \$1.8 million, and you have \$9 million as far as the impact, and so the multiplier is a lot different on that year from the ex-vessel versus the total impact.

MR. HADLEY: I am just looking at the dataset that I used, and I think that was an input -- It should have a "1". It should be \$19 instead of \$9 for that year, and so that changes a lot, and so it's down, but, if you look at the ex-vessel value -- Yes, the "1" makes a really big difference there, especially at the very beginning, but, if you look at it, the landings vary there, and you did have a drop from 2014 to 2015, and the ex-vessel value went back up in 2016 and 2017, and so there is a drop there, but it should not be that pronounced. I apologize for that.

MR. ATACK: Maybe you have the same thing going on -- If you did it with your recreational, and push the button on the left for recreational, and then see the economic impact from 2017? It dropped from over \$5 million down to less than a million in one year, and so is that a digit also off, maybe?

MR. HADLEY: That was not. I saw that when that came out, and that is an artifact of basically the effort data, and so the recreational effort data is what ends up driving those recreational economic impacts. I have to go back, and I can pull up a different dataset, but I think, in that year, there was a spike in for-hire trips, according to the revised MRIP data, and those tend to have a very high multiplier, and so that will kind of throw the data in a different direction. On the recreational side, the economic impact estimates are as good as your effort estimate, essentially, and so that's what it boils down to, really.

MS. BROUWER: I just got a message from Dr. Kellison. I misspoke when we were talking about the sampling for tilefish. It is the long bottom longline survey that samples golden. It's the short bottom longline that samples blueline and snowy. Any other questions on the background information?

MR. HUDSON: (Part of Mr. Hudson's comment is not audible on the recording.) Basically, what I'm saying is, in 2004 and 2005, where it got real low in one of your commercial things there, they had the million-pound quota those two years, but they only caught about a quarter of it, and so it never closed in either of those two years, and then the quota drops down to below 300,000, and

then, after that, they're doing 100 percent each year, just about, and being closed down pretty consistently. Is that where you see like 2003, 2004, and 2005, and the historic stuff only goes back to 2004, and so that was the roughly quarter-million pounds landed.

MR. MOSS: Anything else on performance? Then we can move into the questions. Nothing? All right. We will move on to the questions. Over the last five years, when and where are the fish available? Has that changed? Has the size of the fish changed? Have there been effort shifts to or from golden tiles, and what do you see in terms of discards in the commercial sector and the recreational sector?

MR. HULL: I will start it out with basically as a purchaser of the fish from fishing vessels. On availability, of course, unless you're down in south Florida, where they have a hook-and-line component to it, we rely on the longline fishery, and we just -- The fish aren't available for the market, because we don't have enough fish for them to catch, and so it's a very short season, and it's not available for the consumers in our area for a very long period of time.

MR. FREEMAN: As far as on the first one, if they're available and has anything changed, no, the fish are there. We're still fishing the same way. You have conditions that change. Last year, probably on average, it was -- Just this year was probably average, and we averaged about six-foot every day, or sometimes worse, and we didn't have very many good days. The tides and the thermocline and everything, that just changed, but the fish are still there.

Has the size of the fish changed? It depends on where you want to fish. This is what I spoke with Ben Hartig about and everybody else. Rusty probably could correct me, but, whatever it was, around that 2015 mark, I believe they kept saying that all you have to do is catch a mature fish. Well, you're catching all the large fish. Well, that's the most valuable fish. That's what you go after. Why would you want to catch the smaller recruitment fish that's coming up? That's your next stock.

There was a big to-do with Ben Hartig and all about this, saying there was no small fish left. The very next year, I think it was 2016, Rusty, and I'm not positive though, we went in -- They had to create a new size for peeweels. It's the most small fish we have ever caught, and we can move the gear. Just tell us what you want. What do we need to catch to make this right, because I have been saying this, but what we're seeing on the water does not reflect what is coming back, as far as from the Science Center, and, when we went and had this done, and they had a brief assessment done on this, and they ended up cutting us in half, roughly, and they took us down to 200,000, or 234,000, whatever it was.

When they said -- Ben Hartig and Charlie Phillips said be careful what you wish for, because we're pushing for this, and we were like, no, we're going to get an increase, and instead they cut, and so it's just something is -- If we need to show more smaller fish in there, we can show smaller fish, and it doesn't matter. The cooperative research, which I took part in two-and-a-half years ago with Dr. Helies, on our second set, just our second set, we caught more fish in the one set than MARMAP caught in the last seven years combined. Dr. Kellison can confirm that, and so I don't know. I don't know how we close this gap.

As far as the hook-and-line component goes, that first year, or actually really probably the first year or year-and-a-half, the reason it went through December is because of effort. As that hook-

and-line component grew, now you have more effort put into it, and that's why they're also meeting theirs earlier and earlier and earlier. The fish, like I said, nothing has changed. The fish are there, and there has been no real shifts from it.

The only other shift there has been from the golden tilefish has been new people that have bought permits coming in that were under a misconception thinking that it's easy to do, and they, unfortunately, have learned the hard way that it's not quite so easy, and, each year -- I don't think we've ever had one year where all twenty-three permit holders have actually fished that year at one time. I think it usually sits around the seventeen mark, and so I don't know how we can close this gap and how we can do it. I mean, our average season is anywhere from mid-February to maybe -- Depending upon the weather, we may get into April, but, for the most part, it's usually by the end of March we're done.

MR. MOSS: I think Todd is on the line here and wanted to comment.

DR. KELLISON: I am on the line, but I didn't have a particular comment.

MR. MOSS: All right. I apologize. Never mind.

MR. HUDSON: Everything that Jim had to say down there is very accurate, and the peewee thing came about with I think a two-pounder, Jim, was the minimum, or the size on that, and here is the thing. With that Oculina, the original expansion, from the closed area, it came all the way up to Cape Canaveral, but it went out into six-hundred-plus foot on the northeast end, because of the fact that law enforcement wanted straight lines back then, and, that being said, there is a certain amount of that fishery, back when I first started fishing it in the early 1970s to the early 1980s, I would be in 550 catching mediums and stuff, and so you have to almost be back just a little bit more inshore of that to be getting these peewees, the type that you have to have a smaller hook to catch and stuff like that, but that was being used against us a little bit, and that was saying that we don't have the recruitment.

Then we started seeing the recruitment across the next couple of years, because some people particularly tried to go and find a little bit smaller ones in certain areas, and that recruitment hasn't yet really been able to appear in a proper stock assessment. What they did, they did that update, and they, quote, found an error from the 2011 stock assessment, and they should have stopped the presses then, but they kept on going and made changes and added a multinomial and did all kinds of stuff.

That is where we got chopped, and Ben told me, well, you'll have to wait another six years, and then all that recruitment will show up, and so I guess that's where we're at. Either that or the stock assessment they're going to start for golden tile will involve industry, but it won't even be completed until 2020, and we're talking 2021 or 2022 before you implement.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just another point of data. Mark was someone who was a hook-and-line person that did not ever target traditionally in the past, and does more so now, mostly because the market has developed. We get fish from Jim, but that's another avenue for us to have fish, and, for us, it's another avenue for us to have a small fish that is marketable to us. If we sell to a smaller restaurant, they can't necessarily handle a huge golden tile, because we sell whole, and so that's just one. It's not huge, and he's not catching a ton, but he is a traditional hook-and-line guy that

has definitely shifted some effort and will go target golden tile, when, ten years ago, he would have never done that.

MR. BONURA: Going over the questions on the board, as far as the hook-and-line component in the Keys, it would be the fish are pretty much available all year long. There is all different sized fish and in depths of water, like they were saying, and effort shift would have been -- I think, now that the hook-and-line component is available, there has been an effort shift here and there, with the closure of yellowtail on a couple of guys, and lobster guys and this and that, that are going out. In the past probably forty years now that I've been doing it, after the closure of the SMZs and the jack fishing kind of closed up some here and there, and pretty much that's about it for those questions on the first catch levels there over the past five years.

MR. FREEMAN: Just to close down that, as far as discards, the only discards are just the ones the sharks eat. In this fishery, you're sitting out anywhere from 585 to as deep as -- We make it out to 1,100 foot, and it's just mud. There is nothing else there, and there is no bycatch. I mean, if you get close to a wreck or some form of a structure, you may get some snowy here and there, but, for the most part, it's just your hammerheads and your sandbars eat your fish as they're coming up, and that's a problem with every fishery.

MR. MOSS: All right. Social and economic influences for the commercial sector, how has price and demand for golden tilefish changed? How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting deepwater species changed? What communities are dependent on the golden tile? Have changes in infrastructure affected fishing opportunities? How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes, and how have recent hurricanes affected the fishery?

MR. HUDSON: During that closed area for spawning grouper since 2009, the white meat sector, as they like to call it, and we've got golden tile, and we've got snowy grouper, and we've got yellowedge, and we're running out of white meat.

MR. MOSS: Anything else? I'm assuming all the other economic influences are going to be the same as when we were talking about yellowtail, as far as infrastructure. Kerry, you could probably speak better to the communities that are dependent upon it than just about anybody here.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think Jim would be better, but, for us, definitely the market has been built. The market is there, and, like Rusty said, the restaurants -- It's a very valuable white meat that I can sell just as easily as I can sell grouper, and the price is going up, and so the restaurants are definitely relying on it greatly, and, as a result, so are we, for sure.

MR. HULL: She covered it. The demand and the price both is increasing.

MR. BONURA: I would agree with all of that as well. In Broward and Palm Beach Counties, all the restaurants that I sell to are very, very happy with the product, and I probably have about eight or nine places who are trying to have it on their menu full-time, if possible.

MR. MOSS: From a recreational perspective, I don't fish for it, and I don't know a ton of people who do, but I just kind of have my ear to the ground, and I haven't heard much in the way of change one way or the other. People still go out for it when they do deep-dropping and stuff like

that, but not -- I don't think it's a huge targeted fishery, from a recreational perspective, and I don't know if some of the charter boat guys -- Richard, do any of your guys go for it down there?

MR. GOMEZ: Hardly any at all, Brice being one of the few that does more deep-dropping than most of us in the lower Keys, and there is just a very small handful.

MR. MOSS: Again, for the recreational side, when they do deep-dropping, it's usually a collective of they will get tiles and rosefish and all the other -- Queen snapper and whatever else they get out deep, because they will be drifting, and we all know, by us, it's a steep incline, and so you could hit different depths pretty quickly.

Management measures, unless anybody has anything else about social and economic influences, are should trip limits be adjusted? If so, how? How has the use of buoy gear affected the fishery? Are there new measures that the council should consider or existing measures that should be changed?

MR. FREEMAN: To go back up, to answer the last question, have the recent hurricanes affected the fishery, I would say probably -- We really haven't noticed nothing out of the ordinary. However, going into the next -- As the future assessments take place, could we kind of look to see if there is possible influences from the Okeechobee, when the lobster opened up, because it seems like, when those happen, the fish don't bite at all around that same timeframe. I don't know if that happens with other fisheries, but I know in the deepwater that seems to be happening.

MR. MOSS: Yes, it definitely happens near-shore, and I'm surprised and disappointed to know that it happens out that deep, but I guess it makes sense.

MR. HULL: Just on that same category of social and economic influences, the bullet point about have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the golden tilefish fishery, well, the only way that fishermen -- In particular, if you're a longline boat, there is only a couple of species that you can longline, and so we're talking that you either have to be a shark boat or a golden tile boat or if you would happen to have a pelagic longline capability, and so it's pretty tough to adapt when you only have a couple of choices with that particular gear type. It's been very tough on longline golden tile fishermen to survive, and they have had to be very -- Have other avenues to fish, and, if they don't, then they're going to disappear.

As far as communities, like restaurants and markets, that depend on them, I mean, we have to, again, have other choices available to make up for the shortcomings of a closed tilefish fishery, and so, again, you have to have lots of options available, just like in the recreational sector. I mean, you need to have options. Something needs to be open. You have to have access to some type of, in this case, a white-meat fish. It's tough to adapt for the individual longline boat though when they don't have many other fisheries that they can prosecute.

MR. HUDSON: When he was naming off the longlines and stuff like that, of course, pelagic longline is what it is, and it's been banned off of Florida since 2001, but the bottom longline, for several years now, has been banned south of 27 degrees, 4 minutes north, St. Lucie Inlet, and so the bandit fishery, or the guys that are able to fish like that, they're getting to fish a lot of bottom, except for one that I used to fish, and that was the Humps, and that's now a deepwater marine protected area, and so that was always a pretty good spot back in the day.

The other thing I heard, and I would like to see if there is some response to it, because I heard it from one of the high-liners for wreckfish, and then the reason why is because somehow rosefish is one of the bycatches, but he claims that they go too soft too quick, and I didn't know if that was something that other people noticed, that they couldn't really hold them too long in the ice, or it didn't command as good enough value, and I'm not that familiar with rosefish, myself.

MS. MARHEFKA: I can't really speak to how soft they go, but I can tell you that, when we can get them, we can easily sell them, and we don't hold them very long, because they are not plentiful, but the chefs love them, and so I don't know that we've had to really make them -- You know what I'm saying? It's not like snapper that come in all at once and you've to hold them and shuffle them around. These come in and they go out, but they are desirable, for sure.

MR. HUDSON: That's what I was trying to get.

MR. MOSS: The two times that I have ever had, recreationally, rosefish, twice in my life ever that I have caught them, and they were eaten that evening, and so it didn't last long enough to get soft. Trip limits, should they be adjusted? Has the use of buoy gear affected the fishery, and are there new measures that the council should consider or existing measures that should be changed?

MR. FREEMAN: We have gone around and around about the trip limits over the last few years, and we've talked with Ben and with Charlie and all, and, I mean, for the commercial longline sector off of my area, and then for the South Carolina/North Carolina area, I mean, it's a minimum of a fifty-mile run, as high as -- I believe, up in the Carolinas, that you guys are running eighty or eighty-five miles or something like that.

It just is more -- The season is already so short to begin with, and it's not going to make a difference if you lower it. It's not going to extend the season. They have already done the math on that, and so, by adjusting it, all it's going to do is -- I mean, we're only fishing less than two months anyway for a whole entire year, and so all it's going to do is cut any profit that there is by reducing the catch allowed.

MR. BONURA: On the hook-and-line component, one thing I always thought about in my head, and I'm not sure if this would ever happen, but, if we got a quarter of the ACL, why don't we have a quarter of the trip limit, which would up it from 500 to 1,000 pounds?

MR. MOSS: You are welcome to make that motion, if you like.

MR. BONURA: On the hook-and-line component of golden tilefish, I would make a motion to up the hook-and-line trip limit from 500 to 1,000 pounds, because we have a quarter of the ACL, and I think we should have a quarter of the trip limit, which is 4,000 pounds for the golden tile longline sector.

MR. MOSS: Is there a second anywhere?

MR. GOMEZ: I will second it.

MR. MOSS: Okay. I've got a second. Any discussion on it?

MR. FREEMAN: I don't hook-and-line, but what's the -- When has their quota been caught and how fast?

MR. BONURA: It's been about 10,000 pounds a month, average, annually for the past four years, three years.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am trying to get to the page that shows the closure dates, but I think my concern, as someone who relies on that product, would be us having a period without it that we don't have now. You guys are going to catch up your share of the quota a lot quicker, and then we find ourselves without that white meat at some point, but that's obviously our -- We have competing interests, maybe, at that point.

MR. BONURA: With that, I would think we're going to catch them anyway, and I don't think it's going to speed up the process, but it's just going to make it to where we don't have to work until two o'clock in the morning to wake up at five and go back out. We can stay out two or three days instead of going in and then having to wake up two hours later and go back out and catch them again, because the fish are needed on the plates, and so it would make it easier for the fishermen. The fish are going to be caught.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: What I am hearing is, in the way that you harvest this species, you are taking two trips in succession, back-to-back, before you hit the market with that 1,000 pounds of fish, and is that correct?

MR. BONURA: That is correct. On the big boat, we were doing about two trips, because that's all we could do in a week. On the little boats, we were running out between four to eight days in a row and then going up the road.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: In response to that, with prior discussions that we've had about stacking permits and such, would you say that, for this species, that would alleviate the need to do that?

MR. BONURA: That would be correct. That would help a lot.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have that the golden tile hook-and-line closed in November of 2017, and so that's really nice, because that gets us both -- This time, I am wearing both hats. That's a species that Mark can target, and, again, we're talking, for us, it is the distinction of a white -- Wreckfish, grouper, and golden tile.

To have one of those species in -- It was November 29, and so it pretty much got us through the year, and so it gives us something to target, and it also keeps that product in the market. I could not support something that allowed that to close earlier, because I think then you're just going to have a bunch of fish on the market at the same time you have a bunch of other fish on the market, and it's not going to do great for your price either.

MR. MOSS: Thank you.

MR. HUDSON: That November/December is the latest they have closed, and the earliest was August, and you start winding up doubling up, and, if you're starting in January, or even March, and stuff like that, you're going to wind up being shut down probably by May.

MR. ATTACK: Kerry, that was 2017. In 2018, there is a lower ACL. It got cut in half, and that's why it closed on August 14, and so part of the reason the trip limit is set where it is, is to try to extend the season, so you have fish for more of the year. If you start changing those trip limits, now you'll be back -- You might be closing it almost when the longline does.

MR. HULL: Vincent, I think that the way you described it, the way you would approach it, you're a very controlled fisherman, and you would control your harvest, but a guy like me -- If you gave me a bigger trip limit, I'm going to go and get everything I can get back-to-back and just get all I can get when I can get it, and so I wouldn't be able to support it, because of guys like me.

MS. MARHEFKA: Another argument I would make, and, again, I feel bad, because I do see where you're coming from, and I'm not unsympathetic to it, but it also, I think, shifts that kind of effort from a guy like Mark that is doing multispecies, and that's one component to someone who is going out and just hitting that, if there's 1,000 pounds, and so having a species that is available for the guys that are doing the traditional multispecies trip I think is really important, and I forgot that this year is much worse, and so I'm even more -- We're talking May or June, and that would be scary.

MR. FREEMAN: Especially for the Carolinas, because, in their fishery, they're going after blueline and snowy and golden on the same trip, and, at that rate, golden would close probably before the blueline and the snowy closed, and that's the deepwater species. You've got to try to -
- What may work best in Florida may not work the best for the whole picture.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: With the 25 percent of the sector allocation, what is the number of pounds that we're looking at?

MR. BONURA: That's approximately 80,000 pounds on the hook-and-line ACL.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: That would be for this year?

MR. BONURA: Yes. It was 135,000.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: You say that you fish that relatively year-round?

MR. BONURA: For the most part, yes. Pretty much. I mean, we fished it the whole season the past couple of years.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I mean, I'm trying to adapt to what other regions are being forced to do, and you're coupling that with other species as well and targeting a gamut of open fish at the same time?

MR. BONURA: Yes, and, if we catch our groupers while we're out there, whatever else we can do, maybe hit the amberjacks on the way in a little bit, and then turn around and do it again.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Okay. I mean, I'm kind of seeing both -- Obviously, you kind of have a set schedule that you would like to follow, but, again, I think I'm having the same feelings as Jimmy Hull is feeling about the turnaround is not going to be a 500-pound turnaround. It's going to be a 1,000-pound turnaround in two days, and you might be hitting the market every week with a lot more fish, and, typically, that doesn't always work the way that we hope it will economically.

MR. HUDSON: Since 2017 and 2018, of course, they have lost half their allocation that they had under this emergency rule, until they pop up with just a little bit more with the new rule that we just finished commenting on, Regulatory Amendment 28, but that 50 percent cut that both sectors took really truncates the season availability of golden tile, and, I mean, it might raise the price a little if it's coming at the right time, but the fact that you all keep some on the market is pretty cool, from the hook-and-line guys.

MR. BONURA: I don't think you're going to catch more fish. If we catch like an average day, it's probably a 300-pound average a day, and so all it's going to do is make it easier on your human body to just stay out an extra day or two, instead of having to go in. I mean, if you catch 300 a day, you're out of there in a day-and-a-half, or, at 1,000, you're out three days and then coming in.

MR. MOSS: All right. Any more comment on that particular motion?

MR. BONURA: What if we met in the middle at 750?

MR. HUDSON: The only thing that I have to say is, whether it's twenty-two or twenty-three endorsement holders for the longline, that's a closed group, and you all are in open access, and what's going to stop anybody else from wanting to jump in there at 1,000?

MR. MOSS: All right. Let's go ahead and put this one to a vote.

MR. BONURA: Either that or re-do it to 750 for the hook-and-line endorsement.

MR. MOSS: I'll tell you what. We'll vote on this one and see where it goes. Then, if you want to make another motion, we can. I will read it as it is. **Recommend that the council consider increasing the hook-and-line trip limit for golden tile from 500 to 1,000 pounds. All those in favor, two; those opposed. The motion fails two to nine. Those abstain, five abstentions.**

MR. HUDSON: Keep in mind that there is a stock assessment in the queue, and it will involve industry, and there is nothing prohibiting you from being there, and what comes out of that is going to really shape the future for the next five or ten years, anything you want to do, whether it's going to be a closed group or open access or a bigger trip limit, but some thoughts have been to start in like April and go through whatever, just because they didn't want to overlap with the longlines, and so all kinds of stuff.

MS. BROUWER: Just to that point, to make sure that everybody remembers, the council did consider changing the start of the fishing year for hook-and-line in Regulatory Amendment 28, and, because the ACL was going to be reduced so much, it ended up being that it wasn't really going to work out, and so they went with no action for that, but it was analyzed, and it was considered.

MR. HULL: I just wanted to go to another bullet point there and ask if there is anybody here that has used buoy gear for tilefish, and, if they have -- You have?

MR. BONURA: Yes, and we are basically using that exclusively right now, and so what are your questions about it that you've got?

MR. HULL: I just didn't know if anybody was using it, and so obviously you are.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am pretty sure there is a couple of guys up off of North Carolina, or northern South Carolina, that are doing it as well. Little River. I think some Little River boats are using it as well, and so it's definitely happening.

MR. FREEMAN: I think most of Scott Buff's boats are doing it, if he was here.

MR. ATACK: Yes, I was going to say that. Scott's boats are all using them.

MR. BONURA: I think I heard about a half-a-dozen guys up in the Carolinas are doing it, and there's probably two or three in the Keys doing it, that I know about.

MR. HULL: I am going to assume that the buoy gear fish count against the hook-and-line? Okay.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To speak to the idea that a 1,000-pound trip limit would possibly open the door to maybe some new effort coming into the area, if I was in your shoes, I would be fearing that more than anything ever. I mean, I think that, to me, it sounds like you have a nice niche in what you're doing right now, and you are managing it fairly well, although it is hard on your body, and I think everybody here has a lot of sympathy for that and really admire you for the amount of work that you put in, and enough to really be here and to speak about it, and it says a lot to the testimony of your character. I get it a lot, but I would really fear that it would open the door for a lot of extra competition.

MR. BONURA: I appreciate that. Thank you. I know a couple of the boats down there that were participating in the hook-and-line sector down there, and a good amount of them have all quit and gone to the Gulf of Mexico, because you just can't make the money you need to make out of the trips, and you can cross over the 83-line and catch whatever you need to catch to make your specific trip actually pay to help out to -- I mean, pay for having kids and homes and everything else that you've got to pay for in life.

MS. MARHEFKA: Forgive me if this is a stupid question, but you're down in Florida, right? You said you were in Broward, but you fish out of the Keys?

MR. BONURA: Yes, I'm in Broward County, but I fish out of Key West, Florida.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just because I am not as familiar with your area, when you go out to do a golden -- You are doing a targeted golden tile trip with whatever deepwater species you may happen to catch, and are there other fish that you can fish for? Sort of like Mark will either start out and work his way in, or vice versa, but is that not the same sort of thing that you can do? Are

there other closer-in species that you can catch as part of that trip to diversify? I am just trying to learn, because I don't like --

MR. BONURA: We try to. We go in and anchor up on the reef and catch mangrove in that time of the year or do whatever you can do, but, at the same time, sometimes you're up all night trying to make an extra hundred dollars, and it's not even worth it, really. You can get a good night's rest and then get back at it there in the morning.

MR. ATACK: There was some question about what buoy gear is and how is it differentiated between longline gear versus buoy gear versus bandit gear. Some people don't really know what buoy gear is and why it's classified as hook-and-line versus longline.

MR. MOSS: I would have to throw that in Vince's lap. He explained it to me one time, and I would try and mess it up brutally, and so I will toss that back to him.

MR. BONURA: Okay, and so the definition of buoy gear is a vertical drop line with a terminal end, and you cannot have over ten pounds of weight on your terminal end and ten hooks fished vertically with two feet of line per one foot of water that you're fishing.

MR. MOSS: Does that explain it?

MR. BONURA: If you guys wanted, I could draw a picture, if you would like.

MS. MARHEFKA: I forget, and I have been explained the -- Like your soak time, how long are they, and I forget how you keep track of them. Do they have the radio things, or like how many do you put out a time, and those are all my questions.

MR. BONURA: Well, you can put out as many as you would like, if you can handle it. There are different ways to track them, eyesight mainly, or AIS buoys or trackers on the buoys, and, I mean, we put them in the water and put out about fifteen balls and then turn back around and head up it and count them all and then haul them back up and do it again, and so it's pretty much you're on your gear constantly all day long.

MR. ATACK: Typically, you're in how deep water and how much line, and are the hooks separated, or can they ride up against each other?

MR. BONURA: Well, typically, golden tilefish, in general, or the groupers, whatever you're fishing, between 500 to call it 1,000 feet of water, and, the hooks, you clip them on your mainline, however far apart you want, up to thirty feet from the terminal end of your gear.

MR. MCKINLEY: Vincent, I just had a question. How far -- I mean, you're down in the Keys, and so you don't really have that far to go for that, do you?

MR. BONURA: Well, we fish west of Key West, and so we can run up to almost eighty miles.

MR. MOSS: Any more questions or comments or concerns about golden tiles? We'll put that one to bed. Okay. What we'll do is -- We're moving along at a pretty good pace, and so thank you, all. Go ahead, Vincent.

MR. BONURA: There was one other or a couple of different things, which I think we had talked about it in our last AP meeting, on the rules and regulations for removal, if you guys remember that. Your gear moves when you're out fishing. It's moving, and, if it's not, you're not catching as much. You catch them better when the gear moves, and so, if you deploy your line legally, you're only allowed two feet of vertical drop line per one foot of water, but, if it's blowing -- If you've got an east wind, if it's blowing east, and you put your gear out, and say it's 750 feet of water, and so you're allowed, technically, 1,500 feet of line, if that gear drifts into say 600 feet, you are technically illegal, which to me makes zero sense whatsoever, having that to where you're worried about, if you get pulled over, are they going to write you up for something.

MR. FREEMAN: If you are eighty miles west of Key West, does that fall under the South Atlantic? If he's fishing eighty miles west of Key West, isn't that the Gulf?

MR. BONURA: That probably would be in the Gulf. You can't pass the 83 line. That's the fence.

MR. MOSS: Vince, do you want to make a motion to remove that two-per-one requirement?

MR. BONURA: Yes, and, if I wanted to do that, could I also add in one more thing that we'll talk about here? The hooks within the terminal end are supposed to be within thirty feet, and you're allowed ten hooks, and so, I mean, if you're clipping on your hooks onto your rig, they can move. The clips can move, and so you could technically become illegal on your hook end as well, on having that thirty feet of line for the hooks.

MR. ATACK: So you are required to have the hooks within the thirty feet of the bottom? Is that what it is? So the hooks can't be coming up the line? Is that what it is?

MR. BONURA: Right. Exactly.

MR. ATACK: I guess the intent there is to make sure you're fishing on the bottom versus the water column?

MR. BONURA: I am technically not sure what their intent was.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: A large swivel on there wouldn't prevent that hook from coming past that, and maybe some sort of a connecting device there that would keep your hooks where they're supposed to be, or would that be counterproductive?

MR. BONURA: I guess that could work. I mean, you would have to have that in there on your mainline, yes, but that could work.

MR. ATACK: How do you keep the hooks from moving now? What do you do?

MR. BONURA: I clip the hooks on the mainline and that's it, currently.

MR. ATACK: So they're allowed to slide on the line then, when you do that?

MR. BONURA: Yes, they can slide. If you get a fish on that can pull it, it could slide, yes.

MR. HULL: Just a question. On your mainline, are you retrieving that on like a -- What kind of spool are you using to retrieve your mainline in?

MR. BONURA: I actually retrieve the gear type on the bandit reels that I use.

MR. MOSS: All right. So, if you want to make a motion, and you're welcome to do what you want, but my recommendation would be to do them as two separate motions. Go ahead, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: I don't mean to interrupt, but it's relevant. I think this issue was brought up to the council, and it was included. We were asked to put together a list of regulations that were unnecessary and could be removed and pass that along to Headquarters, and so the council spent some time compiling that, and you're right, Vincent, that Brian was there at your last AP meeting to compile that, and I believe that you and him had a lot of conversation to make sure that he included it correctly in there.

I was just checking with Jessica and Mel to see what the status of that is, because I know it's been documented, and it's been -- It's on the record, and so I just wanted to put that out there, to make sure that you knew that that was already included in there, and I don't know the status of it, and I can find out and get back to you guys on that.

MR. MOSS: So maybe we could hold off on a motion, and we could find out, and maybe even tomorrow, in Other Business, you could bring it up again.

MR. BONURA: That would be a good idea, because I've talked to a bunch of people who said what's going on now is working, and so it's working currently, what we're doing.

MR. MOSS: Just a quick question. Have you even been stopped and hassled about drifting into shallower depths and having too much out?

MR. BONURA: I have been pulled over, yes, and we did haul back about half the gear, and they just counted the hooks, and that was pretty much it, and the lead, that ten pounds, which, to me, that's -- It totally makes sense. It's a ten-pound lead and ten hooks and one vertical drop line. It's as simple as that.

MR. MOSS: Yes, and I was just curious, and I didn't mean that to influence your thought process there one way or the other, and I was just curious. All right. Anything else on golden tile, before we wrap up that discussion? Okay. What we'll do now is we'll take a quick break, and then we'll come back, and Amber has some things that she wants to go over with the scamp release app. I've got 3:12. Is 3:30 okay with everybody?

MR. FREEMAN: Just real quick, on Number 5, what else is important for the council as far as golden tilefish, just working together cooperatively, any kind of cooperative research we can do, anything that we can take part in. It will be very important for the upcoming assessments.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, and I didn't mean to have everybody kind of walking away as you were saying that, and I apologize, but Myra heard it, which is the most important thing.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: If everybody could take their seats, we're going to move on into the -- Amber is going to talk about the scamp release app, but Myra wants to give a quick update though. Let's all take our seats, please.

MS. BROUWER: If I could just give you a quick update here regarding Vincent's issue with the buoy gear specifications, I checked with Mel and Jessica, and the council did have a list of items that they wanted included in a letter that has already gone to NMFS leadership for items that could potentially be removed from regulations. That item pertaining to buoy gear was not included in that letter. However, it is still part of the list that the council intends to address, and so I just wanted to make sure that you all knew that, that we have a record of it, and there is the specific language that's in the regulations that Vincent and Brian looked at to make sure that it could be corrected in a way that would alleviate the issue that Vincent explained with that particular gear.

MR. ATACK: Are you going to send us like copies of the old verbiage versus the new verbiage?

MS. BROUWER: You mean the proposed changes? I am sure we could send that around, but, like I said, it has not yet been addressed, but the proposed changes have been noted.

MS. VON HARTEN: Good afternoon, everybody. For new AP members, my name is Amber Von Harten, and I am the Program Manager for our Citizen Science Program that's been in development over the last couple of years, and so I just wanted to give you a quick update about what has happened since your spring meeting, and, also, I'm going to break up the monotony of a long day of discussions with some play time on some tablets for you guys to look at the scamp release app that we've been developing, and it's part of our pilot project, our first citizen science pilot project.

Unfortunately, I only have three tablets, and so I have one for this side, and one for this side, and one for that side, and so you all will have to gather around, but I'm also going to project it on the screen, so you can kind of see as we walk through.

If you recall, and for those of you that are new, we have a Citizen Science Advisory Panel that is made up of five different Action Teams that have been helping us develop all the different program components for the Citizen Science Program. We are wrapping up the work of the action teams right now, and we'll have everything completed by those groups by the end of the year. The main thing that we've been working on the last several months is the council appointed some members to an Operations Committee for the program, back in June, and those were the group of people that helped us develop some draft standard operating policies and procedures for the program. The council will be receiving that draft in December to look at and adopt, and that will be how we carry out the program moving forward.

Also, back in June, the council adopted the program's research priorities, and so these are the different research needs that the council has that they felt could be addressed using citizen science, and then also, of course, the pilot project. We finally got the funding back in March, and so right before your last AP meeting, and we've been working over the summer with a Project Planning and Design Team to develop the layout and the function and everything to do with the app, and I will talk about that in a second.

I just wanted to kind of flash this up here, just so you kind of understood what the A-Teams have been working on. On the left column, that's the different topical A-Team areas: Data Management, Volunteers, Projects & Topics Management, Finance & Infrastructure, and Communications. Several of your AP members beside you are serving on some of these A-Teams, and so these are all the different products that the A-Teams have helped us develop for the program, and so a lot of the templates that we'll be using to develop projects and also to address data management and data standards, and a whole host of other things, but I just kind of wanted to let you know that this is -
- A lot of work has gone into this, and we could not have developed this program and all the different components that are going to help support the program without the work of the A-Teams.

Like I said, their work will be complete in December, and we'll have the draft SOPPs to the council in December as well. We are continuing to develop partnerships with other organizations and agencies, mainly right now working on developing an MOU with the ASMFC, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, in terms of a fiscal partnership, discussing some of those things with them, and then also working with some other groups to help develop some projects.

The good news is we just found out on Monday that that project up there that says "FIS 2019 Historical Photos Project", we did get funding for that, and so that's a really great project, and I'll be working with Rusty, and that one is going to be looking at some of these historic fishing photos from the Daytona Beach area and the for-hire and headboat sector, and these pictures go back from the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and there's a lot of really great data in those pictures, because you can actually look at the species in those pictures and get information about species composition. Then, also, we're going to be using some open source software to do some length analysis on some of those species and develop some methods for how to actually get lengths of some of those species.

Kind of the citizen science twist on the project is that we're going to be doing crowd sourcing to do all the analysis, and so we're going to have an online platform that is called Zooniverse that you can upload all the photos, and anybody in this room, any member of the public, once they've been through the training that's online as a part of the project, can help us identify fish species, and we're going to have a validation team of expert fish ID people to kind of validate the species identification and then hone-in on one key species to develop the length analysis methodology, and so it's going to be a pretty cool project, and we're very excited, and it meets one of the research priorities that we identified early on.

MR. HUDSON: Of course, I know we're not going to jump right into it, but the idea, later on, could be the CPUEs for certain kinds of fish, the sizes of the fish that you see, and that may become important later on down the road too, because there is a seasonality involved, and every picture is dated by professional photographers.

MS. VON HARTEN: Yes, and this project is -- Ken Brennan, we'll also be working with him at the Science Center, and he's been trying to get funding for this for a long, long time, and so we're really excited for it to happen, finally, and this is going to provide the -- One of the reasons this is kind of important is it's going to provide a snapshot of fish that were being caught in that sector prior to any fisheries surveys that were in place, and so those surveys didn't come online until the 1970s, and so we're going to be able to fill in some of that missing data about what the fishery looked like back then, and so it's kind of neat.

This is one of the things that came out of the SOPPs, the draft SOPPs, and this is kind of the proposed organizational structure that we're going to be getting some feedback from the council on that kind of talks about the different supporting advisory committees and oversight boards that have been recommended that need to be in place to support the program, and I wanted to show this to you, because what's being proposed is that we have -- This box here, the advisory committee, what we're proposing with that is that that committee is kind of our connection with our existing APs, and we would like for that advisory committee to be made up of the chairs or a designee from each of our species APs, so that we're making sure that we're engaging with all of our FMP folks and meeting the research needs of each of those different species.

I have been coming to you guys for the last couple of years and kind of giving you updates, but there has not really been a formal mechanism in place for you guys to directly give us input for the program, and not all of our species APs meet every year, and so we want to make sure that we're keeping in touch with everybody and understanding some of the research needs that could be met through citizen science, and so that will be another opportunity for you guys to get involved in the program, if this gets approved.

The pilot project, you guys have been hearing about this, and so I'm not going to go into much detail, but, for the new folks, essentially what we've been doing is working with fishermen and scientists to design a project that will collect length data on discarded scamp grouper. We chose scamp grouper because there is going to be an assessment starting next year, or starting sooner than that, I guess, but we're hoping to get some of the initial data into consideration for use in the stock assessment, and we're going to be using a mobile app to collect that information.

We pulled together a project design team to help us with the initial app design, and that was made up of fishermen and folks from the Science Center and North Carolina Sea Grant, and, of course, our app developer, and our data partner is ACCSP. They stepped up early on and said that they would like to take on the data management for this smaller project, and then, if you all remember, we've also still been working with the folks at Cornell and the Citizen Science Association, kind of as our citizen science expertise, and then, also, Jennifer Shirk is doing a research study about the process that we've been using to develop the program and how it can support projects down the road.

MR. HUDSON: Amber, something came up at the ACCSP meeting, and I am going to just ask you. With Harbor Lights Software, the app developer, is Citizen Science in the South Atlantic going to own the patent, or the rights, to that software, or is Harbor Lights?

MS. VON HARTEN: It's going to be ours. There is not a patent, but we will own the app, yes. This is just to show you that the A-Team helped develop some specific products for the pilot project, and so we have a training plan and a communication plan that we're going to be using that the A-Teams developed for the project as well as some of the basic orientation materials that we'll include in the training plan as well. Now comes the fun part, and so I'm going to pass out these tablets, and I don't know how you all want to gather around and do this, and feel free to get up and move around.

Remember that we were trying to keep this as streamlined and as simple as possible, and so the app is just very clean. We also tried to design it in a color scheme that you could see easily

offshore, and so dark backgrounds and lighter text, and even you can see this with polarized sunglasses on, so that it's kind of user-friendly in that way.

To use the app, you will have to set up an account, which you would just contact me to do, and then you would log in, like we just did, and you can start an entry one of three ways. You can do it by clicking the camera, and you can take a picture of your catch, if you brought a scamp onboard, and, again, remember that we're only asking for information about scamp that you're releasing, and so, obviously, it would be undersized, or it was out of season, something like that. That is the information we want to get.

You could take a picture or start your entry that way, and you can also start an entry -- Say you took a picture of one and then you kept fishing and you didn't want to report it. You could go to your photo gallery, and that's what the second button is, and start an entry that way, or say you want to just type in the information and you want to manually enter your information. You can click the third button, and so we're going to click the third button.

It takes you to the data entry screen, and so you want to identify what kind of trip you're on, and so recreational, charter, headboat, or commercial. We'll say that we're on a charter, and then you go to the date, and the calendar pops up, and you pick what your date is, and we'll say it was today, and then the release time, and so what time did you throw that fish back in the water, and so we'll say it was -- It will automatically default to the current time, but you can change it by just dragging the little thing around.

Then we want to know how big the fish was, and so how big was our fish? Say it was thirty-six inches. The other thing is this little question button. If you click on that, it will remind you how to measure the fish, and scamp is reported in total length, but we want fork length. The reason is because -- We talked about this with a lot of the scientists, and also the ACCSP folks, and that is a standardized measurement, is the total length. Also, because the filaments on scamp are kind of -- They can be uneven, and so -- The regulatory measurement is total, but we want fork length. That is just to remind people, because we know that might be a source of confusion, and, if you don't want to see that measurement reminder again, you can check the little box, and it won't show up again.

The next thing is you can enter your location. Again, these are just the broad -- None of this will ever be shared, and it will always be aggregated into larger regions, and it would not be -- Click the first button, and it's just like Google Maps, and you can drag, and then you just drop your pin where you are, and it will record, or you can click the second button, the little raindrop-looking thing, and you can manually enter it, if you would rather do it that way. Then we do want to know what depths you caught it in, and so that was a big scamp, and we're going to say we caught it in 125 feet of water.

Those elements there, that's what we are requiring you to report if you use this app, and, again, all of this is voluntary, but those are the main elements that we want. There is some additional elements down here that are optional, and, again, we're just trying to see if people are willing to submit additional information about their hook location and hook type and then what did the fish look like when you released it.

Hook location, we'll say it was in the jaw. What kind of hook were you using, and we'll say circle, non-offset. Then the condition on release is a checklist, and you can check whatever of these conditions you want to check, and so, seeing that it was a big fish and it was caught in deeper water, I am going to say that we descended it, and it wasn't dead, and we did remove the hook, and so nothing else needs to be checked.

Then you just hit the right button here, lower-right, and that's the save button, and it looks like an old floppy disk, for those that remember that, and then it takes you to the summary page, and your entry is there. Now, obviously, if you are fishing way offshore, it won't be able to upload it, and so you will have to remember to hit the "record" button when you get back in cell phone range, but you will know the entries that you have recorded, because you will see this little check-box here. All of these that have checkmarks on them have been uploaded successfully.

(All of the questions and answers for the presentation were not audible on the recording and were not transcribed.)

MS. VON HARTEN: The other thing that we decided to include, just to kind of see -- Because we really want to make sure that people are remembering to use the app, because scamp is not very commonly encountered, and we're only asking for you to record discards, or releases, that you get used to using it every time you go offshore, even if you don't encounter a scamp, and so we have this "X" button up here that you can click, and that's called the no-encounter report, and so all we're going to ask you there is what kind of trip you were on and what date, and you can tell us whatever comments you want. You can tell us how many other fish you caught, or you can tell us what a beautiful day it was, or you can say whatever you want in that comment box, but just to have an opportunity to know that you went out fishing and you didn't encounter any scamp.

MS. BYRD: One of the things that is really limited data in the assessment is discard length, and so we don't know the size of discards, and they're not coming in at fish houses to sample, and so getting the length of discards is going to fill a hole. There is no other data in the stock assessment, or very limited data in the stock assessment, and so that's why the lengths are kind of what they're focused on. It's going to fill a hole where we don't have a lot of other data for the upcoming scamp assessment.

MR. ATTACK: To me, that's confusing, because you're saying no encounter, and you might want to say no discard, because then people would say they went fishing and they had no discards.

MS. VON HARTEN: Or no release of scamp, yes. Then they could still include, in the comments, that I did catch scamp, but they were within the size limit and so I kept them. Any other thoughts or comments? This is the time to tell me that you don't like the colors or you don't like the icons or something looks confusing, all those kinds of things, and I hope that, once we're really ready to do some beta testing, that I can send you guys the test link, so that you can play with it on your own phones.

MR. ATTACK: When do you think that will be?

MS. VON HARTEN: Hopefully in the next couple of weeks. We're pretty much almost done. The last few things is there is some API stuff that has to be developed at ACCSP, but we're hoping to launch in January for data collection.

MR. ATACK: January will be closed.

MS. VON HARTEN: Right, but that's good, because, any scamp you would be catching, you will be releasing.

MR. HULL: I was in looking at the history of an entry, and I went ahead and took a photo, and it automatically went right to the one -- I must have chose what I was looking at, and so it --

MS. VON HARTEN: Once you have uploaded a record, you cannot add a photo. You have to make sure that all of your data is complete before you hit that "record" button and it uploads it. Otherwise, you can't edit it. Again, a lot of this is going to be just in the way that we train people and teaching them the reminders and all these different things that you have to do.

MR. GOMEZ: You know, in Key West, pink is the preferred color.

MR. ATACK: What about type of scamp? When we discard a scamp, are we going to say what kind it is? There is more than one type of scamp.

MS. VON HARTEN: I'm sorry, Jim, but I don't know what you're talking about. What other types of scamps are there? Like the nicknames for fish, like broomtail and -- Those are separate species, and the last thing that we hope to add on the measurement reminder is an actual image of a scamp, and that will be included in the training, is how to make sure that you're identifying the correct species, because there can be some confusion. Okay. That's it.

MR. HULL: It's nice.

MS. VON HARTEN: Okay. Good. Like I said, I might be in touch later this month, for those of you that might -- Even if you're not out fishing, just playing around with it and getting an account set up and seeing how that process works, because the accounts will all be managed through ACCSP. That's the other nice thing about them being a data partner, is everything is secure, and your privacy considerations have all been taken care of. The project can indefinitely go on, and I think the hope is that, if this does work, we can expand it to other species and call out for other species as the data is needed.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: My question would be why wouldn't you just start off with a bunch of species? That way, you could see if it was going to take off. If you just had everything in there, it seems like it would work exactly the same way for every species. I mean, I know you're trying to collect data and fill holes for a specific species, but it seems to me like it would let you know sooner if it was going to take flight, period.

MS. VON HARTEN: I guess we want to make sure we have the kinks worked out first, with the app itself and the actual functionality of it, before we just add a bunch of stuff, and we want to be targeted with the information we're asking for, because, again, like I said, this was tied directly to an upcoming assessment, and so there is the whole SEDAR schedule of assessments that are coming up, and perhaps we'll start targeting more of those, and, like I said, we had talked about maybe shallow-water grouper could be like the next grouping of species that we might test out, but, yes, we definitely talked about that. We didn't want it to be too overwhelming, and, actually,

all the species are -- All of our federally-managed species are already loaded into this app, on the backend, but it's just that scamp is the only one that's being flagged.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I kind of feel alienated from even possibly using the app, because I have zero interaction with this species, and so I kind of -- If yellowtail had been included in it, and it's going to be up for a new stock assessment in 2019, and I feel like it would be pretty awesome to have some of that information be able to be injected at the same time is all.

MR. LORENZ: I will just help Amber out a little, because I'm on one of these teams, but, James, one of the things we talked about is -- What we were getting all along was we needed something for everybody, and think of this as designing a racecar, but we haven't put it on the test track, and so it was simply something to bring the kinks out, to actually try it, and this was just what was selected. Actually, I think it's called a pilot study.

MR. GOMEZ: Like the electronic reporting, you guys have made this very easy to use, and we appreciate that.

MS. VON HARTEN: That's it, and so, hopefully -- Like I said, I will be in touch, and we'll have this launched in January, and we'll be doing a big push, and then stay tuned for the other project, as we get that going, and that funding will hopefully be here in the spring.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much. As Richard said, it's great that -- The ease of use, especially when you're on the water, and it will make everybody's life easier as we move forward with this stuff, and so it's definitely good stuff, and thank you very much, and thank you to the people that are involved with that and pushing it forward.

We will have modified democracy here, I guess. The only thing -- Well, the two things left on the agenda is the discussion to inform request for Southeast Regional Permits Office presentation and then Other Business, which, obviously, we'll do Other Business tomorrow. I don't know how in-depth we want to go with the permits, and it's going to kind of be up to everybody, and so we've got about forty-five minutes or so left. Do you guys want to do that tonight, or do you want to start it tomorrow? Feel free to chime in. Do it tomorrow? Everybody wants an early happy hour?

MR. HULL: Tomorrow. If we're going to have to be here tomorrow anyway, let's just do it tomorrow. If we could bust it all out of here tonight and get out of here tonight, do it tonight.

MR. MOSS: The presentation itself I don't think is very long, but it's going to be how much we want to talk about it, and so it's going to kind of be up to the people that are dealing with the permits. Study up tonight, and we'll adjourn for tonight. We'll be back here at 6:30 again tomorrow. Sorry. 8:30 tomorrow. We'll pick it up with the permits and then move into Other Business, and so that's it. Good night. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 18, 2018.)

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OCTOBER 19, 2018

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened in the Town & Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, October 19, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Good morning, everybody. If we could all take our seats, first and foremost, travel orders. If you have paperwork, Kim asked if you could please get it to her, if you can, today. She will make everybody's life easier, and thank you very much for that, except for her own, I'm sure. With that, we're going to move right into the Southeast Regional Permits Office presentation, and so I will hand it over to Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, David. Good morning, everybody. This is the last official item on the Snapper Grouper AP's agenda for this meeting. Remember that, in the spring, you all had requested that we look into getting somebody from the Permits Office to come to one of your meetings and present to you information about the permits system, and you had some questions about renewals, and I sensed a lot of frustration.

Since then, we have received calls from folks that were expressing confusion and frustration about the Permits Office and the way they operate and the information that they provide, and so we passed this along to the council, and they requested that we come back to you and that we have a conversation about what specifically we would like the Permits Office to provide in the way of a presentation.

The plan is to request that somebody be sent to the council's meeting in March and present to the council first and answer some of these questions that I am about to go through here on the screen and then anything else that the AP would like included in that presentation. Then we'll request that that same presentation be given to you all when you meet again in the spring of 2019. What I would like to do is just go over the questions that the council is asking and then jot down any additional things that you guys would like for us to ask the permits office to include in a presentation for the spring.

Up on the screen, this is part of the overview that you have in your briefing book, and so the council wanted to know what exactly is done to track individuals who attempt to obtain or renew a permit when there has been a violation on a previous permit, and so that is -- Keep in mind that some of these things are kind of bordering on law enforcement and NOAA General Counsel type of issues versus things the Permits Office can do, and so we'll -- It's okay if we kind of go over some of those things, and there is some gray area there, but we'll try to distill something, and the idea is just to make sure that it's focused and that your questions are answered.

They also wanted to know, if the permit were to be tied to an individual rather than the vessel, would this be more helpful in tracking violations, and, again, this is something -- It's a question that's probably more for law enforcement. If someone has an outstanding violation and is caught fishing without a permit, is there a way to track that individual attempting to obtain a new permit and prevent them from getting one? That is sort of -- It's similar to that first bullet.

It was also noted that there has been customer service or training complaints from fishermen. Also questions about whether a permit could be issued on a multiyear basis, and I don't know if that's something that you all are interested in, and some of these things are -- I think the council would probably have to request or amend their FMP or their permits requirements, and then the agency would have to figure out how to make this happen.

What would happen if a permit were revoked in a limited-access fishery? How do renewal schedules affect the number of active permits? How does NOAA General Counsel know when to revoke a permit and what is the process? These are very general questions the council discussed, and so, if there's anything else or anything specific that AP members would like for us to include in that request, I will go ahead and jot those down here on the screen.

MR. HULL: One thing that I think could be very helpful, and the personal experiences that I've had renewing my permits, which, unless you have multiple permits and you have to go through the renewal process, like I do, every year, and keep up with multiple reporting and permits, then you would understand where I'm coming from with this, but the Permits Office gets about 500 pounds of mail a day, and it gets piled up, and then it's first come, first served, and they go to the bottom of the pile and pull it out with the limited staff they have.

Say that you do something -- Finally, three or four weeks into the process, you've mailed it off or whatever, and they get your package, and they start going through it, and they find a mistake, where you didn't check something right or you didn't do something, which is easy to do when you're doing all this stuff with everything else that you're trying to do between everything else you're trying to do, and so, in the past, they've taken it and they've sent it back to you. Then you go until you get loaded into the hopper again, or, if you're lucky, you have a relationship with one of the agents there and maybe they will look out for you.

One of the last times this happened to me, the agent actually let me correct it by electronic means. I either faxed it or we did something, and it was just like what a relief that was, you know, and so just something little like that, maybe being able to make corrections by electronic means, either by fax or by email, but just training for them, so that they change whatever their method of operation is so that they'll do that freely, if they can, and I think that would speed up that problem, and so I would open that up for discussion from others, if they think that's a good idea to try to request that.

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, that has happened to me more than one time also, and it is a little frustrating, and, in fact, it happened to me to the point where I lost two Gulf permits like six years ago on one of my boats, because it got so frustrating, the back and forth, and I did do some paperwork incorrectly, and it was sent back, and then, of course, I sent it back to them, and one thing led to another, and I really didn't realize the importance of these permits until now.

As I was going through the struggle, I finally said, you know what, forget about it, because they forgot about me, and so, finally, I let them forget about me, and, therefore, I lost two important permits, but one other issue I have, and I don't know how you guys feel about it, is I don't believe there has ever been one time where I have to call the Permits Office and I don't deal with someone that is very rude and condescending to me and treats me like I don't have the intelligence to get through this process unless I am pushed along by someone of higher intelligence, and they kind of make me feel stupid on most occasions, and I'm just trying to say, sir, take it easy, or ma'am, and I'm not trying to frustrate you, but why are you speaking to me like that, and this is a constant. I

mean, every time I have ever called, that's been a problem for me, and I don't know how you guys feel about that.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: With the lengthy timeframe that we experience in the renewal process, I would think that, for vessel owners that intend to keep a permit status the same on the current vessel, that it would be possible to be issued a renewal bill that you pay and send back with your corresponding -- The current registration, and you still send the same information back, but you don't have to go through the process of checking everything and writing down everything.

All the information should be still in the system if you're not putting it on a new boat, and I think maybe an initial survey saying -- Like when they would send your renewal notice and you check a box saying that I'm going to keep everything the same as the previous year, and then mail that back, and then you get a bill. It's very -- Streamline the process, and I think that would be very, very helpful.

MS. MARHEFKA: To Richard's point, I have to tell you, the three times I have ever had to call there, I have hung up feeling exactly the same way he feels, and for me to feel -- I mean, it's very hard for me not to say that I know exactly what's happening and I've been doing this for so long, and they are so rude and condescending when you call.

If you get the first person -- Now, we've had a situation this year where I think Mark had not submitted a couple of logbooks, and that was jamming things up, which happens, and the permits people knew that those were holding up -- I mean, the logbook people knew it was holding up the permit, and they were very good at getting them scanned in right away and getting them right over to Permits, and I am so pleased with that. I am pleased that they now -- I noticed this year that they have system where you can actually type in your permit number and see where you are and whether it's received or it's processing or it's been sent out, and they have improved that way.

It's still pretty archaic, the way they do it, and it really could be done so much easier, to fill out the same paper forms every year, but they absolutely have got to talk to -- I don't know if these are just people that are low on the pay scale doing a call center thing, but he is right that they are rude. They are very -- It's the worst customer service I face on a regular basis, and I'm not asking stupid questions.

MR. FREEMAN: If you have multiple permits, it seems like we would be able to line it up where you could renew all your permits at the same time. I know, with Jimmy and myself, we've got different ones going on, and you may have to do one in May and one in August and one in December, and it just -- I sent them in at the same time asking, and they said, no, we can't do it that way, and they sent it back to me.

If you could like that up where it would be -- With people that have multiple ones, it would be much easier, and there is no reason at all. They list what sections you're filling out, and you list your email address and your cell phone number, and I have never been called or emailed by them one time. They just send it back to you. It would be -- Like you said, Jimmy, within a matter of just minutes, you could correct it and email it or fax it to them, and it would be done, and your permit would be sent to you.

With this, for the most part, our boats -- Yes, you may have to rebuild every now and then, but, for the most part, your boat stays the same year after year after year, and I understand if they could send you a notice saying, hey, send in your email or your documentation and everything in the current year and have your logbooks done and email it in and check off that everything is the same, and it should be done. You could do a multiple year -- If there is that much of a burden that they have in the office, you could do a multiple year, two or three-year, renewal permit, and that would alleviate a third of the mail that you've got coming in.

MR. MCKINLEY: I will agree with that, with the customer service and stuff. My permit was delayed this past year by about five days because I had checked correctly what I was supposed to about my state commercial license, and the guy had no clue, and he had to go ask somebody. When I finally got them on the phone, he was wrong, and I got the permit very quickly, and so that means that they weren't even -- I mean, this was some outside help that they had hired, I guess, to help process these.

I have got a couple of points that I wanted to make that I know that it really doesn't -- But it would help address some of these questions that are up here and maybe some questions, and so one of them would be is when and why are they going to address the latent or inactive permits, so that, eventually, they will probably go for the one-for-one instead of two-for-one.

Then address the corporate permit, which is sort of like a -- It gets around that two-for-one, but, if all those things were done, then it would help streamline this, or it would be only a certain amount of permits and have a handle on it, and these people -- If you tied the permit to the boat and to the owner, then it would help some of these questions that are up here, and so that's what I would like.

MR. GOMEZ: I agree with James there on that two or three-year federal permit, and that would definitely ease up their burden a little bit, but I think we sent our applications into St. Pete, and then the logbooks, for us, is Miami. I lost those permits because, of course, my shoddy paperwork, but, because of that transfer from St. Pete to Miami and them having to coordinate and them getting me so frustrated every time I had to deal with them and making me feel badly and lowly, and that back-and-forth process is what caused me to lose those permits, and I don't know if we could change that little system to where Miami gets logbook and St. Pete gets the app, but sometimes that could be a problem, I believe.

MR. ATACK: I have had some experience talking to both the logbook people and the Permits Office, and they've been pretty nice when I've talked to them, and so they're not all that bad, but they --

MS. MARHEFKA: You're not a commercial --

MR. ATACK: I do submit a commercial trip report, because I do some commercial fishing also, and I have multiple permits. One thing, in their defense, when I call, is there's an issue with their answering machine service, and they actually say it on there, that they have an antiquated -- We may not get your number, and so, if you don't hear back from us, call us again. Maybe they can get an upgrade on their answering service and it would help their customer service with that.

MR. HULL: If we could request that they would pre-load the renewal application, and so pre-load it with everything that they have, and then, if we need to make a change, we can make the change,

and then all we have to do, basically, is provide the active registration and a couple other things that I can't think of right now, but everything else would be pre-loaded. If nothing is changed, then we write the checks out and send it off.

If that would be something that would be very helpful there, because, when you're having to continuously re-write all of this stuff, page after page, and they changed it the last year or so, and we had to do some financial things and some other -- I mean, it's on and on. We're so oppressed with all of the things that we have to do to be a commercial fisherman that it's ridiculous, and so we need help.

That would help a lot, and, if they could handle the corrections, and I will say that, the last time that this happened to me, the girl was very helpful, but I knew her by name, and she knew me, and I don't know if they do this all the time. She said, if you will send this to me this way, I will get it done for you now, and so they can be helpful, but, as soon as she hung up with me, who knows what she had to deal with next. I don't know.

There is other problems. I mean, we have been put into a situation where, with the permitting, you have to buy a corporate permit, and I've got every type of permit you can think of to try to do what I do, and I have to have these things to do what I do, and then you have to deal with you buy a corporation, and then you don't know -- You buy a corporation, you buy all of the responsibility of that corporation going back into time, and so I've bought corporations where you find out later on that they didn't do income tax reports and they didn't do this and that, and then you go, hey, you're invalid now until fix all of this stuff, and so then you're sitting there doing -- I mean, it is just absurd what they put us through, and so we need to have some help, and they could help us.

I'm sure they're understaffed, and I'm sure they don't have enough help to do anything like the rest of you all, the agencies that we're dealing with, but just pre-loading the app and doing things electronically could certainly help a lot, and then being a little nicer, and, if they're able to do that, offering to do it and helping the applicant by saying, hey, if you do this this way, and occasionally you will get one that will take the extra minute or two that it takes them to do and then help you out. Thanks.

MR. MUNDEN: One of the things that I think would help with the presentation would be for the National Marine Fisheries Service to give an overview and the history of the whole permit program. For example, when was the program established, how many permits were issued, what was the criteria for those permits, and one thing that has always blown my mind is the two-for-one exchange, and I've had a number of North Carolina fishermen say that I'm not interested in serving on the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel because they took my permit, and so I would like to have that history before you get into these specific issues that have already been brought up.

MR. FREEMAN: At the last meeting, I told a story about wreckfish and how all my personal information was sent to another fisherman. They sent it to the wrong address, and they returned it, and so I renewed my other boat wreckfish permit, and I kept checking and kept checking, and it should have been processed, and they never received it, and so I called, and she was very rude to me.

After about twenty minutes of explaining that, she told me that it was sent to a PO box, of which I don't have a PO box, and it happened to be down in the Keys, to Scott Baath, which is another -

- He used to have a wreckfish permit, but he doesn't have a wreckfish permit. He sold his permits to Charlie Phillips this last year. They had sent all my permits and everything to him, and so how does this keep happening?

I mean, that's -- They had him as the owner of my boat, listed with my corporation. What if that was a snapper grouper permit? Wreckfish is open access. Who would own that snapper grouper permit at that point in time? Technically, it's his name. Once again, if somebody is having to log all this stuff in by hand on their end, if this is already pre-loaded, it would be there, and you just go through your boxes and check it off and it would be done. If you're training new people, and you're already understaffed, and so now these people that have been in the office are trying to do their work plus check on other people's, and, I mean, it just seems like -- There is only five people in the wreckfish industry and they keep screwing it up, and I can't imagine what happens in a king mackerel or a 1,300-permit --

MR. MANIGAULT: I know this may seem a little elementary, but I guess one of the hardest things to do is call an organization and explain your situation to them and get off the phone with them and the next day having to call somebody and getting someone else and having to explain that same situation again to that person. It's definitely stressful, but what I would like to possibly suggest or find out is, is it possible that they can assign agents to commercial fishermen by either alphabetically or by state or by something, permit numbers or something, to kind of simplify things so that they could just deal with one particular person, instead of getting on the phone and having to explain it time after time after time after time with someone else? It just helps continuity-wise on both ends, and it would seem like, to me, that it would reduce stress on both ends.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am just seeing that the for-hire guys do it all electronically, and I'm looking at the process, and so I would ask, maybe at the presentation, maybe they could go through how they do the for-hire renewal process and maybe talk about whether or not that would be possible to phase-over for the commercial guys, because it's fancy, and it's not four pages of paper stapled together that you have to mail, and I would like to say that, for me, there is a cost, additional cost, to the permit process for me, because I get very nervous about getting it lost, and so I always send my permit overnight, and then I have them overnight it back to me. Then, if there are any issues, that they send you back the paper and they need you to fix one thing, then I have to overnight it back again, and so I think, normally, I spend an extra like \$150 just in postage.

Now, granted, you don't have to do that, but I am not trusting the U.S. Postal Service with the thing that makes my livelihood, and so electronically just cuts down on so much, and so, if they can do it for the for-hire, maybe it's time for them to look into phasing it in for us.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To further address what Gary had mentioned, there's a lot of places that have continuity on their computer screen, where an agent can quickly brief themselves on what this customer had called in for the last time, and maybe brief themselves immediately on the situation and say, oh, I understand that you're having this issue and let me see how I can help. I mean, realistically, that would be if some of these other easier solutions were going to be kicked aside. I mean, we have to gain some ground somewhere, because this is a very frustrating situation.

MR. PILAND: The electronic renewal process for the permits that I hold is -- There's a chance that it's still a pilot. I volunteer for pretty much everything new that comes down the road, to help improve it, and I was just telling her about it, but it is working for me and the other captain that I

know in Hatteras that is using it, and we're both pretty much as computer ignorant as you can be, but, like you were asking, your name is in there, and you've got a password, and it's pre-loaded. Is everything the same? Then you click yes. If there's a document that you need -- For instance, this year, a small business portion, the small business organization certification, I had to submit that, and I can do it online and send it back through the same emailing. If my vessel documentation was still -- This year, it was still in the file, and so I didn't have to send that, but, last year, I had to fax my vessel documentation. It was painless to me compared to what we have been having to do.

MR. ATACK: The other couple of things I meant to mention is I noticed that they've changed the North Carolina, and it's probably the whole South Atlantic, but the e-ticket does not have near the information that the old trip ticket used to have in North Carolina for when you sell your fish. I mean, it's just a blank sheet of paper now. All it is is you handwrite in every species, and there is no species with codes next to it, and it's bizarre that they've kind of gone backwards on that, but you still have to do the triple-reporting.

You've got your paperwork at the fish house when you sell, and then you've got to put your VTR number on it that you are going to fill out when you do your trip report that you send to Miami, and then they have to do electronic reporting that the fish house does, and so it's like three different places that the same fish gets reported, and it would be nice to know when that's going to go electronic, so that they line up, versus having to do triplicate work.

The other thing I've noticed is that, if you do make an error on your trip report that you send into Miami, they used to do a pretty good job of highlighting what's wrong with the report. Now you get a piece of paper, and the other side is your copy of what you sent in, and it's like -- You don't always understand what it is that they didn't have on there or wasn't filled out, and it takes a while to figure it out, or you may have to call them. That used to be nice, when they would highlight it, and it was very clear as to what they were missing or what was invalid.

MS. MARHEFKA: Myra, just another thing that I might want them to know, when we talk about the possibility of going electronic, is we're one of the holdovers, and this has been going on for years and years, where we have not -- We would like to incorporate the boat, for liability reasons and all of that, but we don't want to do it right now, because we don't have really -- We have never had thirty days, and they say it will take up to thirty days if you go to -- You have to turn in your permit and do all the paperwork, or at least that's what Monica used to say, and it may have gotten faster, but I would think that, if everything was electronic, a process like that could happen much quicker, and, really, we need to do it. It's been on our to-do list for ten years, but the thought of sort of surrendering our permit for a month and taking that income away -- We just haven't been able to do, and so electronic permitting may also help people like us out in that situation.

MR. HULL: To follow-up on what you said and what I said earlier, be careful what you wish for with the corporation part of it, because then you're opening up another can of worms with a different state agency that you're having to deal with now, and you're talking about thirty days with the SERO, and I'm dealing with North Carolina right now, and it's -- You can be thirty days, and it's the same thing. They've got a pile of mail sitting there, and you're at the bottom of the pile, and it's to correct things on a corporation that I had to buy in North Carolina to obtain access to a permit. It just can get worse, even worse, when you start --

MS. MARHEFKA: Maybe we'll just live with it. We don't have a lot to sue for anyway, and so, if they want the Amy Marie, if someone wants to have it, they can have it.

MR. HULL: They have got us to where it just gets worse and worse. Try to keep it as simple as you can, because, with the corporate thing, then you're dealing with that. If there is a problem there and a delay, it's just -- It's awful.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would agree. This whole corporate thing is -- I mean, I elected to do my permit when I got the two and made it into an individual, because, if something happens and the State of North Carolina dissolves your corporation, your permit is gone, and that's scary, and there should be some way that we can somehow incorporate something to reduce liability and yet maintain it, and so I think that it is time to look at that whole corporate deal with these permits.

MS. BROUWER: I don't want to interrupt your discussions, but it sounds like we're getting away from permits and talking more about management or reporting issues, and I just want to make sure that we bring it back to what do you want the presentation to include. What would be useful for you guys to hear in the spring and questions that you want answered and that sort of thing? I mean, I will certainly pass along, and the council will hear about your frustration and your experiences with the Permits Office, but just let's -- I just want to make it clear that the Permits Office doesn't deal with some of the things that you're talking about, the two-for-one and issues with corporations and things like that. That is not Permits who has to deal with that. The council would have to elect to make changes to how the permits work, but, I mean, it's still useful information, but it's sort of deviating a little bit.

MR. ATTACK: Is that why you're not writing the comments down about the logbooks? I mean, logbooks are associated with the permits, and so why can't we also write down our concerns about the logbook thing?

MR. MOSS: Myra has done us all a favor by kind of transcribing a lot of the stuff that we've said, but she's absolutely right, and that was my fault for allowing it to continue, but this is more suggestions of what we would like them to present to the council and not necessarily our complaint department, if you will.

I understand that there is a lot of issues, and, fortunately for me, I don't have to deal with it like you guys do, but feel free to bring this stuff up. If you want to bring it up in Other Business, that's fine, and that would probably be a better forum for that, but, as far as like logbooks versus permits and things like that, let's hold that until Other Business.

MR. GOMEZ: Just adding to Red's thing, I agree that knowing how this works from beginning to end, but also include the process where that application reaches that first destination and what is the process and why -- Maybe it would explain why these people seem so frustrated and not easy to speak to. Maybe they are so overwhelmed, and, if they are, we do have some great suggestions on how they could streamline that a little bit.

MR. FREEMAN: The biggest thing, for them, if they're going to make a presentation, is to let them sit back. They deal with this every day, and we're expressing our frustrations, and I can't imagine what theirs must be. Let them -- They may have a totally different idea on something that we're thinking, and it may be much more streamlined and much easier. If they could present

something like that to us, and then if there could be a process where we could kind of work together in a workgroup or something to develop something to make this easier, but they may have -- Like I said, they may have a much better idea on streamlining this than I may.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Maybe we could ask them to explain what their governing body is as to why things are done the way that they are, and maybe their hands are tied into being unable to make changes to the process. Maybe it's above their head, and so maybe an explanation of how the orders come down to process the paperwork.

MR. MOSS: Anything else here? Like I said, a lot of -- I understand, or I try to anyway, the frustration of what a lot of you guys have to deal with, and I don't want to say that that's on the back-burner, but Myra is absolutely right. It doesn't pertain necessarily to what they're trying to accomplish here, and so the next item there is Other Business, and so feel free to unload there.

MR. HULL: Can you go back to your original bullets that you had provided, because everything that we have listed there -- If you were to do what you just did on those last bullets, which said explain how or explain why, if you put that in front of all those bullets, you're pretty much doing what I think you want, and so what is done to track, explain, could, and maybe, if you just did that to all of those, then we're getting what we want, and the council may be getting what they want.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and I'm sorry. What I was just trying to clarify is that some of the things that we are asking the Permits Office to explain or clarify are not things that their agency deals with. That's all, and I just wanted to make sure that we kept those separate, so that I can capture things that need to go to the council or things that need to go to the Science Center, as opposed to permits.

MR. HULL: Roger.

MR. MOSS: All right. If nobody has anything else here, we can move on to Other Business, and, like I said, some of this stuff -- Feel free to restate some of these things in Other Business, if you want to bring it up, and this is the time.

MR. MORING: I've got something that's old business. I want to revisit Amendment 29. Is that now?

MR. MOSS: Yes, bring it up.

MR. MORING: My thought is that all this data is -- **It's going to be generated from these descending devices, and I know that there is talk about having some of monitoring system, and I wanted to make a motion that they have a monitoring system to figure out how many more people are using these devices and how well it's working, and there should be fish saved here, and to have a formal motion to have a plan to monitor this and get feedback on how many people are using them and how many more people use them, and maybe there is more education that needs to be used, because I have talked to some of the fishermen, and some of these people don't want to do it, and it's going to save fish, and I would open that up for discussion.**

MS. BROUWER: Jim, I just want to make sure that I have captured on the screen -- The motion would be to recommend that the council evaluate the use of --

MR. MORING: **It would be to develop a research and monitoring plan, and I guess that would probably be the best thing.**

MS. BROUWER: Again, just for clarification, are you suggesting that the council maybe include this as part of Regulatory Amendment 29?

MR. MORING: Yes, and kind of create an informal workgroup to develop a research and monitoring plan to measure compliance rates or how effective these devices and the use of devices are -- If the mandatory possession policy works.

MR. MOSS: I will read this and then see if we have a second for that, and then we can have some discussion. **Recommend that the council develop a research and monitoring plan for descending devices, compliance rates, et cetera, and include that in Regulatory Amendment 29.** Do we have a second? We have a second, and so we'll open it for discussion now.

MR. HULL: I could possibly support it, but I think that, to do something like that, we need to talk about it, and it would probably require some type of reporting by the people that use the descending devices, and so they're discarding, and they're using descending devices, and so then they would be reporting their discards, and I use the -- I kind of envision that's what you're talking about, to get that data from the animal that they descended, right?

MR. MORING: Right.

MR. HULL: So they're going to have to report that somehow, and so I think that that word would have to be put in there or some way to monitor. You mentioned monitor. Well, the only way you're going to monitor it is if you're getting some information somehow, either by observation or by reporting.

MR. PILAND: I recommended to the charter/headboat people, when they were building the app, that they put that information on our report, under discards, the use or non-use of descending devices.

MR. MOSS: We were just reminded that the MyFishCount app actually has a thing on there to list whether or not you're using a descending device. Now, granted, it's kind of an unofficial measurement, I guess, if you will, because they don't use it as far as the MRIP numbers and things like that, but it's a start, and perhaps that was even included in the MRIP survey, and I'm just throwing that out there.

MR. ATACK: I guess the intent is, if this goes into regulation, that descending devices are required or whatnot, and it would be good to actually see a high percentage of the fishermen using them. If you don't either monitor or survey or check with the people, you don't know what percent are using.

I think, when the red snapper mini-season was open, one of the mini-seasons, there was a very low percentage of descending devices used on the released red snapper. I remember seeing that on the

report, and so the intent will be, if we can get high compliance, then you will get a benefit to the resource, which would then benefit the fishermen down the road, with ACLs and all that, and so that's the big debate, is how do we make sure that that's working or not working? If it's not working, then what have we got to do to make it work? How do we reach more people and make sure they understand how important it is?

MR. LORENZ: The only issue I would have with this is I would just question the value at the point of reporting whether you use it or not at the point when it is a regulation. For someone who is not going to use it, are you actually going to document that you went against the regulation? I mean, you could easily lie, and so I would go, at this point, to certainly continue to survey who uses them, especially since we don't have the license yet, and get that back, but I think the focus now would be -- It would cost more money, but it would be a greater amount on these various species of real scientific work on just what happens to the fish when they are released via a descending device, and then publish that to the fishermen to start getting more and more buy-in for it, but I always worry about the value of something when you make something a regulation and then you ask -- You know, it's did I go through the red light or not, and it's like, no, and so --

MR. MOSS: I think, and I'm probably speaking for him, but I think the intent was to try to get some information as this goes through to become a regulation and to try to ease that -- If you want to say push through, so that we have a little bit more concrete evidence that, look, these people are using them, and this does work, and we're getting the buy-back and so on and so forth. I am probably speaking for some people, but I think that was the intent.

MR. MORING: It will encourage compliance.

MR. MOSS: Yes, and, if you have the data to show that you're getting the buy-back, if you will, on the allocation, and if you're getting the -- If the release mortality rate is going down and things like that, then the idea is that it encourages compliance.

MS. WIEGAND: I was just going to let you guys know that, like Myra said, they do ask for information on release treatment in the MyFishCount app, and, in the decision document that is in your briefing book, there are some charts that show you venting tool and descending device use for the last red snapper season from November of 2017 through August of this year, which is about when I put together this document.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I would like to ask which sector, primarily, you would be interested in gathering the data from. I mean, I assume that it would be both commercial and recreational, and possibly the motion may be a little vague as to the exact point. Maybe, through current discard requirements, and I'm not really familiar if there is a section that requires you to list if you did use a descending device, and maybe that may be a start with everybody who is required to report discards, that if you did use a descending device that it was listed in that report.

MR. HULL: Yes, that's a good point, James. I mean, in the commercial sector, if you are chosen, and there's a percentage of us that are chosen to report our discards with our logbooks, but it doesn't have anything about treatment in that. Now, on the recreational side, with what you all are developing, which is great, which ties right into where I think you're coming from, Jim, is -- I mean, you have it. I think what you're asking for is available, if they will use it, if they will know about it, and I think it's more like how much use are you getting already, and you need to promote

more use of this system, which already has treatment for recreational anglers to very easily get on there and do what you're asking.

Then it's monitored, and it's already set up, and I think what you're asking for is there, maybe, in that sector, and it's there for our sector, but only so far that we do have to report our discards, but no treatment is there, and that may be a good point too, to have treatment on the commercial discard books.

MR. MOSS: It is there, but it's only on the -- I shouldn't say only, but it's on the MyFishCount app, which, again, doesn't go too --

MR. HULL: But there is, on the discard log, there is a what condition was the fish in, and so there is -- It doesn't say whether we used a descending device or vented or whatever, but it says what was the condition of the fish when released, live or dead or whatever, and so they do have that much going.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think one thing that would be useful here, maybe, is if you re-wrote this a bit to say ask that the council request that NMFS collect information on use of these devices in the logbook, as Jimmy just mentioned for the commercial guys, but also in the MRIP program, because the difference between getting it through something like MyFishCount is, while it's interesting and it's been useful for things like in a short-term fishery and to understand the people that are using it, that information can't be expanded out to say how many people in the fishery overall are using the devices, but, if this question were part of the dockside intercepts in MRIP, then they would be able to expand that out and actually say, well, of the people that fished in the ocean in what state or what have you, or what fishery mode, they could really start telling us how much this is being used.

That, to me, would get to where you guys were going, and it would be more direct, because the council doesn't really do research and monitoring plans. We set priorities, and the agency has to do research and monitoring, and so it would be kind of convoluted to get there, but you ask us to say request this be added to the surveys, and then the council can write a letter to the agency and try to get the ball rolling.

MR. MORING: I think the more people that realize that this is working and we're saving fish -- How do you get that feedback out to everybody? The people that are reluctant to -- This is another thing you've got to do, and do you know what I mean, but, if it's saving fish, it's a good thing that you've got to do.

MR. MOSS: Absolutely, and we'll give Myra two seconds to re-write this, and then, Jim, just make sure that you're okay with the changes, and then we can keep moving with that.

MS. MARHEFKA: Myra and John, would it also maybe be appropriate for this panel to recommend this monitoring and the use of descending devices and their effectiveness as a higher priority in the citizen science?

MR. ATACK: Really, this is kind of like compliance, just like circle hooks. I mean, we get a benefit from circle hooks, but how many people are using them? I mean, descending devices, how

many are using descending devices, and how many people are venting, and so, if we can ask them to put that in the surveys, that would let you know.

MR. MOSS: I will re-read it real quick, Jim, and then just make sure that you're okay with it. **Recommend that the council request that NMFS address descending device usage through existing programs, commercial, for-hire logbooks, and MRIP.**

MR. ATACK: (Mr. Atack's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. MOSS: Well, I mean, it's a pretty broad -- I guess it could. We can kind of dwindle down into the nitty-gritty of it, but -- Are you okay with it thus far, Jim?

MR. MORING: I would like some language put in there that you would measure compliance rate effectiveness of the descending device mandatory possession.

MS. BROUWER: What did you want me to --

MR. MORING: Have some kind of -- **Some type of information giving feedback on what the compliance rates and effectiveness.** The logbooks and -- As much of that information gets out to the public, I think that -- If everybody else is doing it, then maybe I should do it. If it's saving fish, then, yes, I should be doing that. A lot of recreational fishermen, it's kind of like this is another thing I've got to do, and I'm not sure about that, but, if it's saving fish, I think everybody -- If there is feedback that it's actually working and saving fish, if this many people are using it and they saved this many fish, if that information is available, how do we get it out to everybody?

MR. MOSS: There is definitely no pressure like peer pressure, right? Myra, the only thing is -- We're going to include that on the end, and, with Jim's permission, maybe include information on compliance rates and devices used, type of device used. Are you okay with all of that on there, Jim? I know we kind of butchered this up a little bit for you. Jim, as the seconder, you're okay with that, with everything there? Okay.

MR. LORENZ: Just make the point that, without licensing and that sort of a thing, that that will be an extrapolated number. When you say a rate, because it has to go against a base of how many people are fishing, which we don't know. That would be rough, for now.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am fine with the motion, but I just want to make sure that, Jim, you understand, again, that the council can't actually itself go out and figure out what the effectiveness of these are, and so, really, what we're wanting -- We can't really do anything about asking -- Like you're wanting state agencies, and you're wanting scientific studies, is really what you need to find out, to really have a good number of whether or not these things are working, and the council can't do that, and so why I was suggesting that we --

MR. MORING: My idea is just we encourage that to be done by whoever needs to be doing it, as a group.

MS. MARHEFKA: Gotcha.

MR. LORENZ: With that, I would second Mr. Moring's motion, if need be.

MR. MOSS: All right. Any more discussion on this motion? **I will read it as-is. Recommend that the council request that NMFS address descending device usage and release treatment through existing programs for both commercial and for-hire logbooks and MRIP, including information on compliance rates and type of device used.** Does that fully encapsulate everything, Jim? Okay. We will go ahead and put it to a vote then. **All those in favor. It passes unanimous.** Any other Other Business?

MR. HULL: I will try to make this quick. Everyone at this table, no matter what sector you're in, you're probably suffering because of a loss of access and production of our natural resources, and I think that we could probably all agree that science is the basis by which management happens to us and how we manage our resources, and so science has to come first, and I think we also realize that we're not getting enough science quick enough for management to happen to us so that we can have better access and manage our resources better, and I would also think that we can agree that, and know that, the problem is there is not enough analysts, and there's not enough work being done on basic things, just like ageing of fish, so that science can happen, and this is all because there is not enough money coming from Congress to our science to make us, as stakeholders, have access to our resource and the people that we represent, which is the citizens.

I was just thinking that, often, you see letters from congressmen, signed by congressmen, and groups to the government requesting and supporting things, and so I would just like to put forth, for discussion, the idea of us putting together, as a group, the Snapper Grouper AP, a letter requesting funding for the Southeast Science Center to address our needs, and we would send it to -- If we could do that, first of all, and you would have to tell us if we could do that, and, if we all agreed and we all signed onto it from the state we're from and who we represent and our sector, it has some weight, and we would send it to the committee or whoever in Congress controls the funding for our agency down here.

I just wanted to throw that out there. Is it going to do any good? It might not, but it might, and I don't think it would take that long to do, and I think we wouldn't even have to -- I think we could develop this, possibly, by email and send it to everyone by email, and we could all look at it and read it, I think, and say, okay, this is good, and it's short and sweet, and I will sign onto that, and then we figure out who to send it to and we send it.

The next meeting, we send it again, and, the next meeting, we send it again, and we just keep pounding the whoever -- I am sure it's some sub-committee somewhere, because you either go to Washington in person and pound the halls and ask for this or you can -- This is some way of doing it, but I would just like to try to do that, if we could.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To ask a question about how you would like that to be structured, would you be suggesting that the panel approach the council and say we would like you to draft this letter, or would we have like some sort of a Christmas tree type, where everybody in the AP writes an individual letter saying this is who you represent and these are your specific issues for a specific fish and have this information go to the council and maybe a couple of different members in the council draft something, and then we have one overall letter of recommendation saying this is all the needs that we have throughout our region and we want this money, because of all of these things.

MR. HULL: Thanks, James, and that would be wonderful, but I think that my thought initially was just to get the ball rolling and as an AP. Just us, and you represent your -- If there is any group that you're with or yourself personally, or I'm in the charter business, and I represent the Georgia charter fishermen and the citizens of Georgia that have access to their resource through my charter business, some short statement. I think, from the AP, and then if we can expand it and make it bigger and -- There is certain advocacy problems within -- I know that staff can't advocate, and I don't know if the council can advocate, and I don't know, and I don't know if we can. It's probably dead right there.

MS. MARHEFKA: I know the council cannot. I don't believe that the council can lobby, and so I think we would probably have to get legal guidance on whether or not, as an official advisory panel, without going through the committee and then to council, we would be allowed to speak, because, in essence, we would be speaking on behalf of a level of the council, and we may not be able to do that. We can absolutely as private citizens get together and do it, and we absolutely should, but I just think that we would probably have to find out if --

MS. BROUWER: That is why I wrote what is on the screen. I think we as staff could at least help you figure out how this could be done, and we could talk to NOAA General Counsel and get some advice and bring that back to you, and then you guys would need to coordinate amongst yourselves, maybe Chair and Vice Chair coordinate with everybody else, and funnel it through you all, but what we could do -- What I could offer to do is to bring information back to you to get that ball rolling, as you said.

MR. MUNDEN: I would have a problem signing-on as a member of the advisory panel, where everybody would feel obligated to put their name on the letter. I would not have a problem with members of the advisory panel working with the staff to come up with a draft letter that each individual could send to whomever, and I think that would be a much more appropriate approach. You know, I'm Red Munden, and I serve on the advisory panel as a conservationist, and I'm concerned about funding levels and so forth.

Oftentimes, when issues come before the various regulators, they are flooded with form letters, and each one counts as a comment, and we could take a letter or a document that has been drafted, and, as you say, we could send it to -- We could flood a different office every week or every month, but I would really be concerned about the whole panel saying, the AP, that this is our position.

MR. HUDSON: What Myra had wrote up there, to request additional funding, is not clear, because, if they just want to increase people's salaries, that's not going to work. We need prescriptive funding that is line-itemed somehow so that we know, when we get to the next section to advance science and research needs, we know what those needs are going out, and John could tell you for sure, out to 2022 almost right now. That is our guide for the science, is SEDAR, and whatever else the State of Florida and other types of avenues are being constructed.

That means, just like how we have priority fish now, looking at that kind of an approach, we need priority science and research, and our guide is the SEDAR stuff. Stuff in the queue for next year is probably pretty much funded, and the stuff in the following years is possibly in a position to get kicked even further down the road, and how many of the things on the list ain't been done? We need to be very descriptive in whatever communication, and it needs to be prescriptive on the

funding and not just generic give them more money. If that was the case, just like Sam Rauch told me, we need catch shares on everybody, so that they can fund NMFS.

MS. BROUWER: If I may, just to help along what Rusty just said, the council does develop a list of research needs, and that goes to Congress every couple of years, I think, and I'm looking to John, but there is already a wish list for things that we need in our region, and so just so you know that's there. It does come to you every so often for you to review as well.

MR. ATACK: Can we see that list that was last sent and then see what was approved and what wasn't approved and what the financing was?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To add to what Rusty and Red mentioned, maybe, in the action portion of a letter, and maybe not a form letter that everybody would adapt to, but maybe the action portion of the form letter would ask for one specific type of funding, to where you could inject who you are representing along with that, so it would be more at a personal level, and then it wouldn't just look like one generic document going out. It may carry some weight in a different manner.

MR. HULL: I just wanted to get the ball rolling on it and see if we can get something going here. **I would like to make a motion. It would start with right where she's got that request that staff obtain information for the AP to send a letter to request additional funding for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to advance, and this is where you could get a little more specific, to advance science, specifically needed -- I know ageing is a big thing, but we could get into that further, but just to get the ball rolling and get staff the go-ahead to help us develop this letter.**

It's just to try to get it going, and I like Red's idea, where we could do it individually, and just however we can do it, and, as I say, this shouldn't take too long to do it if we don't get too deep into it. It just should be a simple request, and they may never see it. I mean, but we can try, right, and, if we keep doing it, maybe they will pick up on it, but I know that I don't have time to go to Washington and march the halls, and I do some political work, and this is what those guys all tell me when I talk to them. It's like, hey, you need to request all of this, and you need to keep hitting us, because that's what you need, because they -- Just like MRIP expands an intercept, when they get this, they expand it, and they go, if these guys feel this way, and they represent -- Think of all the people we represent at this table. That's a lot, and so, anyway, that's where I was at, and I appreciate all the input on it, and I think it will be something that will maybe be beneficial to us. If nothing else, we tried.

MR. MOSS: As you said, Jimmy, and I like this, and it's a great idea, and I would probably take some of what Red said as well and everybody do kind of their own letter, and, if we can at least get the initial information from staff and then get into the weeds a little bit in the body of the letter, as far as where those funds should go and so on and so forth. As Rusty said, you can't just say we need more cash.

MR. HUDSON: Myra, you mentioned the wish-list that goes out every couple of years, and does that go to the CCC, or does that go up through NMFS channels and stuff like that, and is there a way to review to see how many wishes were granted?

MR. CARMICHAEL: The council's research?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, the South Atlantic research needs.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Our research needs, yes. I mean, Myra mentioned that, and we do that every-other year, and we approve it in odd years, and so we'll be looking at it next year, and the normal process is we draft it up in the spring, and you guys tend to see in the spring, the APs, and the SSC sees it in the spring, and the council approves it in June or September, depending on the level of comments, and then it goes to the agency later in the year.

The council asked that the agency regularly report back on progress, and so, every council meeting and whenever they do things, the council asked to be included, and the plan actually says give us a report on what's being done, and so they get various things that come back to the council. Like, most recently, the agency submitted some information on the sampling effort within the SERFS, the independent reef fish survey, which was addressing one of the requests in there, and occasionally research needs are done which will reflect back upon that, but I would say there's not really a documented bit-by-bit blow-by-blow of everything that has been addressed, and it's certainly something the council has requested the agency be more forthcoming about, and not only just within the Center, but just about -- Some of these things are really at a higher level than just the Southeast, and to be able to tell more directly how does what the council says go to what the region asks for and then actually comes out at a national level.

In general, the feeling of the council is that we've had to do this for a number of years, since the Act was reauthorized, and the feedback is kind of lacking, in terms of what you said, like what has really been addressed and how are these things being addressed, and there is always money concerns, but it doesn't cost a lot of money to at least give you feedback on what is happening, and so, in some cases, we kind of do know, and some things are kind of direct, and, other things, it's really harder to tell.

DR. KELLISON: I just wanted to say, and this goes back to the discussion about descending devices, but it's also more broadly, but one of the reasons for my participation on the advisory panel is to listen to concerns or research needs that are identified by the panel and to communicate those within the Center, and so, specifically, in terms of the discussion of the need for research on descending devices, I can do that, but I just wanted to clarify, again, that that's sort of one my roles here, and so I'm happy to take concerns and pass them along.

Then, with the discussion about the research needs and priorities, the council's research needs and priorities, John, you just mentioned, I think, that it does come out every other year. We definitely pay attention to those and try to act on them. The last document that I think I have seen is the 2015 one, and was there a 2017 version?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, there was a 2017 version that would have been submitted in the fall of 2017. I will send you a copy, in case you haven't seen it.

DR. KELLISON: Thanks. That's on me for not having it, but I will definitely track it down. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Todd. Okay. Let me read this and see if we have a second. **Request that staff obtain information for the AP to send a letter to request additional funding for the**

Southeast Fisheries Science Center to advance science (i.e., ageing, life history, et cetera) and research needs in the South Atlantic region. Alternatively, the AP could develop a form letter that each member could send to their congressman as a private citizen.

MR. HULL: For me, that's fine, to get the ball rolling.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Do we have a second? We have a couple of seconds. Any more discussion? All right. Let's put it to a vote then. **All those in favor. It passes unanimous.**

MR. ATACK: I have a comment or a question on this. It would be kind of nice to know orders of magnitude or somehow qualify us. I mean, we're going to be writing a letter, but, for the science needs that we request, and say that is say \$5 million, and I have no idea, and it would be nice to know, and, if they come back with funding for \$2.5 million of the \$5 million, therefore half of what you're trying to do you probably can't do, but, if we're going to be asking for more funding and more money to do this research and the science and the data, how short are we are what the Science Center needs to do what needs to be done? I mean, can anybody share that information?

MR. HULL: Let's just get started on this first, probably, and then I think we can get further deep into the weeds forever, but, if we can just get help from staff, and I will work on this and develop as much time as I can with you, and then, by email with everyone here say, hey, here is this letter that we have developed and what do you think, and let's just do it that way, so we can try to get something formed, and who knows what it will grow into, but I think we do need the help from staff to get this started, and then it's going to take a little bit of effort on our part to read it and comment and be willing to do it, but it could help us out, or maybe it won't, but I think we need to start simple and not get into the weeds about how much do we need and if we got too much then -- I mean, let's just get the letter going and ask for some funding and see where it goes from there.

MR. LORENZ: I am going to agree with Jimmy. Jimmy, I've been sitting here thinking that I wanted to do this myself, and there is precedent with that within a group like this and with the South Atlantic, and a very similar route was followed to push a little for citizen science, and it wasn't a tremendous amount of money, but that was done with many of us that were fishermen, commercial and charter and private, to get that started, and so this is something that I have wanted to do.

I have had the idea in my head, and I would kind of like to work with you, and I would like to do a first draft, and I would like to take the shot at making it where we would kind of be able to present it as private citizens within the confines of who we are, a group that, by qualifications, advises the South Atlantic Council, and then maybe we work it with you and David just review that and see what you think and pass it on and maybe to Myra to say that, okay, this would work within the South Atlantic system or not, and we can find out where we want to go, but I will take a shot at a first draft, thinking that everybody would be comfortable with it, and you need to throw something out there to throw darts at it, and so, when folks see it, you've got to critique it. Don't be nice, and so let's make this work.

MR. HULL: Thank you. That's great. That's all we can ask for, or that's more than we can ask for, and let's do it.

MR. ATACK: Yes, I hear you about getting in the weeds, but I think it would be nice to know what was asked for and what was given and what wasn't given. I mean, that's not really in the weeds. That's just the broad brush. Are they getting half of what they need? Are they getting 90 percent? Are they getting 10 percent, and how big is this budget? I mean, so you have an idea, because it's going to come from the national level down to the region to this area, I think, and so we should be able to get that information, or somebody should have it.

MR. MOSS: Well, I think, in that statement, the first statement, request the staff obtain information for the AP to send a letter to request additional funding, I think, as Jimmy has kind of said, we need to have all that information beforehand, what we're getting and what we think should be appropriated for it and so on and so forth. Just like you said, if we request \$5 million and only get \$2.5 million -- Hopefully, if we get that information of what's being done now --

MR. ATACK: Yes, and I guess I'm thinking that answer could be answered right now by somebody in the room, because they do have the list they asked for last year, and what did we get versus what we asked for?

MR. HUDSON: Is Myra going to be able to be on point for any emails for this, to circulate the groundwork of this private letter?

MS. BROUWER: Sure. I mean, I will have to check with my supervisor, and, depending on other council priorities, but that is my job.

MR. HUDSON: Then, as we're putting together the ideas from each and every sector, the idea of funding won't really materialize, at least directly for the council and the science, until we actually see what we're going to focus on as a group and as a private citizen. Then, of course, there is a lot of other funding that we can't actually calculate, the analysts and whatever that's all part of the NMFS budget. We're talking council talk right now, and so it's our priorities that we're trying to say this is what the sectors, in the near future, needs in order to have a better future. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Understood, and I think what Jimmy is doing here is kind of the first step in a long, drawn-out process, and so I understand what you're saying, and I think Jimmy understands what you're saying, and I will speak for Jimmy a little bit here, but I think we need to first start requesting that -- We all know it ain't going to happen tomorrow, right? If you ask for \$5, they ain't going to give it to you tonight. I think we need to start that process of trying to get more funds devoted to the science of all this stuff and then, if somehow our Christmas dreams are answered and we get this stuff, then it can go down into the weeds of where it's going.

MR. HUDSON: One last thought on that. The South Atlantic Council operates off a grant that I believe is having to be renewed or if it's been renewed, and I don't know, and then there is a whole lot of focus that goes around that, and so funding, but my idea is -- Are we talking the next Snapper Grouper AP meeting before we make any moves on anything hard, or by working by email we might be able to do something before then?

MR. HULL: We don't know. We haven't even started. We're just trying to get out of here, and so, I mean, just to a quick example of where you need funding, is ageing a fish. MARMAP doesn't have enough funds to age fish, and you talk to Mr. Carmichael over there, and what is the most basic thing that they need? Ages. It's that simple, and it's that basic. They need money to do

some of the basic, simple things, and so that's where I would like to leave it and try to get this started, rather than just sit -- Because I'm going to have to get a machete out in a minute and start cutting weeds.

MR. HUDSON: But, like you said recently, we have an overabundance of red snapper otoliths that they can't possibly even keep up with ageing, but we have a paucity of samples of a whole lot of other species, and so the collectively getting more data is a longer-term thing. Short-term stuff is I think what Jimmy's sort of goal is, to get the attention, even if we have to keep doing it once or twice a year.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Really, I'm only going to reiterate what the initial point here was. It was that science is really the foundation for what drives our entire management plan, and I would be one to think that an infinite amount of funding wouldn't be enough to get science aligned to where we need it, as far as accuracy goes and all the things that correspond with that, and so, I mean, I would like to leave it as-is, and let's get it started.

MR. LORENZ: Just as a final -- Just so everybody realizes, there will be two steps to this process, and, to answer what Rusty said, I think it would be a great idea if we kind of have among us pretty much fleshed out almost a presentation of what we would be comfortable on -- What we think the large needs are that we need, and it would be that initial request or the wish list.

Remember that behind that comes the real work and the hard work, where you do need, in Washington, someone to champion this through to you, and so one of us to get senators and some House reps behind it, and it will go through the appropriations process, and we don't even have time to get this on the bill for next year, because that appropriations process is going to start in February to April of this year, and they're kind of wrapped up, and this is in Washington in June, and this stuff has to funnel all the way from -- Gregg sat down, and this starts from him all the way up, and so we're looking at next summer, probably, before we can ask for money.

MR. WAUGH: Good morning. I asked Mike, in the back, just to make sure that somebody has made clear that the councils can't lobby, and so let me just mention a couple of things that are going on. Obviously there is an election coming up, and we -- The councils, the eight councils, coordinate on national issues, and so a lot is going to depend on what happens in that. The committees can change, and the leadership can change, and so, once all that dust settles, we will know who is where.

Also, 2019 is the last year in our -- We get five-year funding cycles, and so we and all the other councils are in the process of putting together our request for the next five years, starting in 2020, and that might be a good time and spot for you all to weigh-in. I'm sure that John has pointed out that we have our list of research needs, and that is sort of a document that the council uses, but, once we have some of those things, we can certainly share those with you all, and those will be public documents, but the way to be effective at this is for us to identify a champion in the South Atlantic area.

The Gulf has been successful, and other areas have been successful, because they have people in places, and they work on them, and that is where you all, as private citizens, can be very effective, and so, once things settle out and we know who is where, then you all can be very effective in reaching out to your folks, and there are some now who are starting to take some attention and

understand that the Southeast does not equal the Gulf of Mexico. There is a South Atlantic portion, and so keep up the contacts with them, but, again, I just wanted to reiterate that the council can't lobby, and so we can make our needs known, and then it's up to other groups to do with that as they may. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Thanks, Gregg, but can -- As an AP, can we do what we want to do and have staff potentially help us a little bit on this, or no?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, we can help you all, and we can help provide you all the council's needs. I think we need to be careful in terms of drafting any letter that you all would then, quote, unquote, lobby with. That we can't do, but we can certainly provide you all background information on the council's needs that have been identified, and certainly you all can provide your recommendations on needs, like you're doing to the council, and the council can incorporate that, where it isn't already on the list, into the council's list of needs, but, yes, we can give you help in documenting what those needs are.

MR. HULL: Politically though, up the line, where you say a champion, I mean, how do we identify the people that we need to really be hammering? I mean, I think that's the point too, and, if we know who to hammer, because there are obviously certain people that are doing this, and those are the people we need to know about.

MR. ATACK: Then, in the April meeting, could we have the request list to look at, the AP? Okay.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think, eventually, we're going to need to actually write this letter ourselves, and I don't think we can actually do it sitting in this meeting together, and so I will volunteer that, if we get down to that process, I am happy to be the person to take the first draft at things, once we all decide where we want to go, but I don't think we're going to be able to do it sitting here, are we?

MR. MOSS: I mean, we can, but we can't, because, remember, we are all technically private citizens, and none of us are employees.

MS. MARHEFKA: That's what I'm saying. I don't think we can do it on the record sitting here.

MR. MOSS: That, I don't know, but --

MS. MARHEFKA: We would probably all do it sitting in the buffet room or whatever, but --

MR. MOSS: Correct, and Bob had actually kind of semi-volunteered to do up a first draft.

MR. LORENZ: Kerry, I will copy you in that, and that was my statement, that, initially, I was just going to send it to two people, but we'll have four, and then you all decide how we give it to Myra and --

MS. MARHEFKA: That's fine. I don't need to. I'm sorry. I missed that. Mark was asking me questions, and I was zoning out.

MR. LORENZ: I know how to protect people, and I know all the lobbying --

MS. MARHEFKA: No, you sound much -- I just didn't know that anyone had volunteered, and I'm fine. Believe me, I have plenty to do.

MR. LORENZ: You don't want the copy first? You get to throw the first dart.

MS. MARHEFKA: No.

MR. MOSS: All right. I guess let's go ahead and vote on this motion, since we already had a second.

MR. HULL: You already did.

MR. MOSS: That's right, we did. Never mind. We're not going to vote on this again, because we approved it unanimous. One thing that I did want to bring up, Myra, is if we could go back to the permits stuff, and it was just brought to my attention that -- Somebody had sent me a text and asked if there maybe could be explanation on how permit leasing worked. I don't know if that was in there or not, which is like vessel leasing, according to him, but I'm just passing on the information.

The other thing is the council has asked us to look at -- In the October meeting, the Snapper Grouper Committee requested that the AP provide input on whether to remove almaco jack from the other jacks complex. Input?

MR. HULL: Well, yes, I think that it would be really good to pull almaco jack from the other jacks complex, because, when you have a complex like that, you're shutting down almaco, which, for us, we have access to a lot of almaco, and banded rudderfish can shut down almaco, or vice versa, but I think that you have to have a separate -- For them to do that, they're going to have to have a separate stock status for almaco, to pull it out of there, and so I don't think it's going to happen unless you can get the science to do it, and we already know that there's not -- The science isn't going to happen to do that, and so I think, yes, it would be a great thing to have it separated.

MR. HUDSON: Basically, quickly, the banded rudderfish, at times, the landings are like the almaco jack, and it would be nice to have individual quotas on each, or at least see the numbers through the years, because the lesser amberjack is a thousand or 1,500 pounds. I mean, that's the only other thing there, and so I have heard people like Jack Cox talk about the sushi value of the banded rudderfish for him and some folks in the Fort Lauderdale area, and then, of course, the almaco jack, we've got a lot of guys our way that have been doing pretty good.

MR. MCKINLEY: I would agree with that. It would definitely benefit us to remove that from that complex.

MS. BROUWER: You don't need to make a motion. I mean, you can make this as a recommendation, or you can just say that you support the council looking into it. Just a little bit of background is recall that, fairly recently, the council had looked into potential trip limits just for almaco versus the whole jacks complex, and so we brought that to the AP, and we analyzed it. 75 percent of the landings for the other jacks complex come from almaco, and so, if you put a trip

limit for the whole complex, it's essentially putting a trip limit on just almaco, and, as far as the ACL, those are data-poor species, and there is no stock assessment that's been done on them.

The ACL for the whole complex was put together by coming up with individual ACLs for the three species, and so those do exist. They are just not tracked independently of one another. Obviously they are very tiny, and so, as far as the council changing the ACL, there would need to be either a revision of that ABC through the SSC and changes to the ABC control rule, or there would need to be a stock assessment, and so I just wanted to make sure that everybody understands where that is right now.

MR. ATTACK: Thank you. My question is, if we -- I am all for this, looking at it to see what the numbers are, but we made a motion, the AP did, to put African pompano in the fishery management plan, and that might be one complex that you could put them into, or, while you're doing these other data analyses on the banded rudderfish and the almaco and all, do the African pompano and see what the landings and evaluate -- I mean, there may be more landings on those commercially than some of these other jacks, and I think it's a fish that is commercially sold and harvested from the EEZ under just a state commercial fishing license, and there is also a lot of recreational landings, and so I would recommend, if we do that, to go ahead and evaluate whether to add the African pompano to the complex at the same time.

MS. BROUWER: I'm sorry, Jim, but are you suggesting that African pompano be added to the jacks complex and almaco be removed?

MR. ATTACK: Or have their own separate ACL. I mean, based on the landings and all, we could decide whether to add them to it or have it as a separate -- If you're going to have almaco as a separate, it could be added at the same time, but I would like to get it included into the snapper grouper fishery management plan.

I don't know how many people are real familiar with them, but we've talked about it before, and I know we have some new members, but this is a fish that is a very valuable fish, and it's a good-eating fish, and it's targeted commercially and recreationally in our area. Thirty years ago, there were no African pompano, and the fishery has come back, and it's a lot of free divers and commercial divers and regular spear fishermen, and a lot of fishermen target them. They will do live-baiting, and it's a very desirable fish.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Any other discussion on that? All right. Then we will continue on. Is there any other Other Business?

MR. FREEMAN: I just kind of wanted to open up possibly discussion or bring it to the attention of the AP that one of our AP members was removed, and, to the best of my knowledge, this may be the first time it's ever happened, from our council, and I don't think a lot of the majority of the AP members even know that he was removed, but Scott Buff, who was I thought a contributing factor among the AP, is no longer with us, and is there anything the AP can possibly do to look at something, a possible at-large seat or something, that we could bring to the attention of the council? I mean, he's a member of -- He owns numerous snapper grouper permits and a retail business and a wholesale business, and he sits on many workshops, and it's just a question. I don't know.

MS. MARHEFKA: Randy, obviously, Scott was in your seat, and, as I approach this, I don't want to -- Whatever we're talking about, it's not personal towards you at all. From my position, it has more to do with sort of a long-standing precedent about how this AP has always -- The council has always worked with the AP and how the process has gone and it's not at all -- You are lovely, and you have been very helpful this meeting.

To clarify, I don't believe he was removed. I believe he was not re-appointed when his seat was up, which, obviously, I have all the respect for the council, and it is their absolute right to put on this advisory panel whoever they want to put on this advisory panel, but I will say, when I found out that Scott was not re-appointed, I was pretty shocked, because I have now -- This year is my twentieth year of being involved with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. I started in January of 1998, at a Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel meeting. That was my first day of work.

The history and the way it has always been, to my knowledge, is, as long as there were no enforcement issues and an advisory panel member came to meetings and contributed, which, my goodness, I would give up my seat for Scott. Scott knows -- What he has in his pinkie about the snapper grouper industry is ten-times more than my knowledge, and I was saddened to learn that he was removed, because his knowledge was so vast, and because he came to every meeting, and because he always contributed.

The only reason I am sort of jumping on this is not necessarily Scott-specific, as much as I think Scott is wonderful, but I want to know, going forward -- You know, one of our jobs, as AP members, is to go out there and convince people to be part of this process and to really just sell the whole idea of the fairness of the council process once you're involved, and, for me, this is the first time I have seen something that feels, in my gut, very unfair to an individual member, and it does not sit well with me, and it makes me sad, because the one thing this council has always been is very -- I kept using the term "gentlemanly" yesterday, and that's not the right -- I guess I shouldn't say that as a lady, but this council has just always operated in a certain way that made me incredibly proud.

Again, it is the council members' right, and I know that, to absolutely put on whoever they want on the advisory panel, and I have no doubt, Randy, that you have wonderful experience too, and so it's more about the idea that I could come to this meeting, and I could do everything right, but maybe an opinion that I expressed or something wasn't popular with someone, and that could be the end of it, and how do I go out and tell other people to be involved in this process if that is an issue? You are going to get more and more disenfranchised people.

I would just like to state that -- I don't want to pick a fight with anyone, and I respect this process so much, and I have always respected it, but it just -- It's unsettling to me, and I'm not going to lie. It's very unsettling to me, as someone who has been part of this, again, for twenty years.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me try to speak to this a little bit. I appreciate you all's concerns, and we can certainly talk about it as much as we can, because the appointments to the APs happen during the council's closed business, and we're not supposed to talk about that. I can tell you that the council looks at the number of APs that people are on, and so they try not to use the same person over and over and over again, and it kind of depends on their expertise, but I can tell you that Scott was put on a different group, and so he was put on the SMZ Workgroup.

I feel that Scott was instrumental in the commercial visioning amendment that we worked on. He had a lot of good input on that, and I think that we were trying to then take that input and put him in a different role, so that he could use that knowledge and add it to this SMZ Workgroup that we're working on, and so he was not re-appointed, as you say, and that was a good point, and it wasn't that he was removed. It was that he wasn't re-appointed to this particular body, but we actually put him on a different body.

MS. MARHEFKA: With all due respect, do I need to worry about being removed from this, because I am also on that SMZ Workgroup, and I believe I might still even be on the Marine Protected Areas Advisory Panel. My husband, for years, was on about four or five at a time, and I have never heard of anyone on an advisory panel being tagged to a specific thing we were working on, especially someone with as much knowledge -- If those are all new ways the council is approaching things, then I would just like to know that, because I would like to choose.

This is an important process, to me, and I have given a very big part of my life to this, as my family has, and so, if the council is going to change the way they look and appoint AP members, I would like to know, because I would like to make the decision about sort of where my time is best served, because I am on multiple advisory panels, and I want to stay on all of them, and I contribute to all of them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I appreciate that, and so some of those groups we haven't met in a long time, and so we've just kind of left some of the people on those groups, and then, if it looks like we're going to meet those groups again, then we'll go back and look at that list. Like that MPA group, we haven't met that group in a while.

Sometimes we do put people on multiple groups, but I can tell you the number of applicants that we get for this particular advisory panel, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, is more than we get for any other, and, I mean, there is a list -- It probably has more than seventy or eighty people on it, and so I think that the council members -- We really rely on the council members from the state that has the open seats to be the ones to bring the expertise for what members they would like to see on the particular advisory panel, and so we're relying on people from that state, and, really, we're trying to think about what kind of things are in the process.

We also look at attendance to meetings, and not necessarily what people say, but just did they attend the meeting, and now you can attend meetings by webinar, and that used to not be the case, and so we look at things like that, and we try to think about is there some expertise that might be missing on this particular body or the other APs, and then we try to fill that in a little bit.

I don't know exactly -- You brought up a good point. I don't know the point about trying to -- It says in the handbook that we will try not to put members on multiple APs, but we haven't ever gone through that and changed it, just like there are a number of you in here that are on multiple APs, and some of you are on this SMZ Workgroup or the MPA Workgroup, and I'm not sure how long that was in the handbook, but I don't know if it's a new thing or if it's something that we just started talking about in the past few years, and I'm not sure. I would have to look into how long that had been in there, and so it's a good question, and I will have to look into that more.

MR. HUDSON: Two things. One, Chip did tell me that Scott was going to be tagged as commercial North Carolina on the SMZ, and they had just met this morning, that I was

participating in, and there's about twenty of us on there, but I couldn't talk, because I'm in this meeting, which is an overlap problem, but, in the SOPPs, which you all were doing at the council meeting, it's says, in general, we keep people constrained to like one AP, but, because of the words you used, "expertise", that seemed to play into stuff, and so this SMZ is supposed to be a more expertise role, and then that has a trickle-down effect to the stakeholders, in general, is what Chip was explaining to me, and so I thought all that was pretty good.

MR. ATACK: I got on this AP in 2010, and I was on the Spiny Lobster from 1997 to 2010, and so, when I went to the Snapper Grouper, they kind of talked to me that you're not usually supposed to be in two APs, and so I gave up my Spiny Lobster to be on the Snapper Grouper, even though the Spiny Lobster doesn't usually meet that often, and so I know, back to 2010, that was the verbiage that I had gotten, and so I don't think some of that is new, as far as multiple APs, and that's the decision I made, was to give up the Spiny Lobster and go to Snapper Grouper.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, that's new to me, but the last thing I will say, and then I will let this go, is one thing I just think the council members need to consider is this process is incredibly complicated. The bar for learning is very high. Every time you get a new person sitting at this table to learn something about SEDARs and assessments, and even how the process works and what the AP can do and what the AP can't do -- Every time you get a new person, and I'm not saying that you shouldn't have new people, but you are taking away a lot of institutional knowledge.

I think, when the term limits or whatever you want to call them, are instituted, I think that's a great idea, and that period of time gives someone long enough to be here and to really learn how this works and to become -- It takes a long time to learn how to become an effective advisory panel member, and so, to not let someone really see the full utilization of that entire process, I think it's a disservice to all of us, because you cannot underestimate how hard it is to sit at this table never having been part of the council process before, which is incredibly confusing, and so I would just ask that the council really consider the importance of -- If someone is showing up and someone is participating and someone has really taken the time to do this, I think the reason needs to be pretty darned high why they would not be re-appointed before their term was up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for those points. I appreciate that.

MR. MOSS: I just want to reiterate -- Randy, unfortunately, I know you might feel like you're sitting a little bit in the crosshairs, but --

MR. MCKINLEY: I was going to respond, but I think it would be appropriate to --

MR. MOSS: I just want to make sure that you understand that this is not a reflection on you. I think everybody here would agree that you have had great contributions for these three days, and I hope that you don't take this as a personal affront to you and think that your contributions haven't been heard or appreciated, and that's not the case at all, and it couldn't be farther from the truth, and so I just wanted to make sure that that was on the record.

MR. MCKINLEY: That's what I was going to say today, is I just wanted to, again, thank the council for giving me this opportunity to serve, and I'm more than honored to represent our North Carolina commercial fishermen and all the stakeholders to the South Atlantic, and I acknowledge

that I have a lot to learn, and I am willing to do it, and it does take time, and I did attend my first - I was on the Cobia Mackerel Advisory Panel for one meeting, and I have attended the -- What is it, the MREP? I attended the very first one that was ever had in Tampa, and I have not been able to make it back to the management part, but I look forward to serving, and I know I can represent our North Carolina fishermen.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Not to discredit anything that Scott has done or his expertise or anything like that, but I would like to add that, as a new member to this panel as well, that I came on this panel in hopes to add something, another dynamic, that maybe isn't being added currently, as a younger fisherman, especially one who has spent my entire life in basically one fishery and knows the ins and outs of that and am very passionate about that.

I think it definitely adds a new dynamic to the panel to have new members, and I definitely don't want it to be at the expense of a very valued member, but, at the same time, I hope that the council does everything within their power to make sure that the people that come and are able to sit at this table know what it is that they're doing and what they represent and how important that it really is.

MR. MOSS: I think that that is appreciated, and, again, I want to reiterate, for yourself and for Randy, the new blood is definitely appreciated, and I don't think that that's the genesis of both Jim's and Kerry's frustrations. Absolutely anybody that has been on the council or as the advisory panel as they come in as new members -- For me, I know my first meeting was -- It was a very welcoming experience, and everybody was really good about it, and it's been great, and I think that -- Well, I don't want to speak for them, but I can tell you that, in speaking for them, that their frustration doesn't lie in having new members at all, and absolutely the contributions were appreciated for these three days.

MR. GOMEZ: James, I'm kind of a rather newbie, too. I've been with the AP for a little over a year, but you were needed, and you're a very welcome sight here. Your knowledge of the middle Keys and the lower Keys and fishing in general, not just yellowtail, but, just listening to you the last couple of days, you're definitely needed, and I certainly welcome you wholeheartedly. The Keys have not been represented well enough, in my opinion, and I'm so happy to have you here.

MR. MOSS: Any other Other Business?

MR. GOMEZ: Just getting back to that snapper grouper moratorium for a minute, you know, I've heard from the recreational side, from a certain group, shared by Gary Jennings, I believe, their reasoning behind not supporting a snapper grouper moratorium, and one of the main reasons that I heard was -- It seemed a little silly to me, and I think he had stated that he didn't want to have a problem when it came to booking a charter boat because of moratoriums put on federal permits. Now, understanding that not everybody in this room probably agrees with the moratorium, but I would like to hear from anybody that disagrees and just kind of try and educate myself in their reasoning behind that, and so, if I could open that up for some discussion.

MR. MOSS: When you say moratorium, you're talking about the limited entry for the charter?

MR. GOMEZ: Correct, snapper grouper.

MR. MOSS: Okay. I saw some confused looks, and so I just wanted to make sure. Yes, we'll open it up.

MR. MCKINLEY: The only thing I would say is that, at my age, and I'm fifty-seven. In ten years, if I really don't feel like I want to go to the hard work of commercial fishing, which is hard work, that I could maybe switch over to charter, and I wouldn't want to be denied that, because of that, and I could get it now, absolutely.

MR. HULL: I would respond to that by just saying, on the record, that it's open access right now. If they go down that road, they will put a control date of some type on it, but I would get it as soon as possible, if you have any idea of doing that.

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, I would say that also, because this is going to continue to come up, and, us in the lower Keys, we're not going to let this sleeping dog lie for too long.

MR. ATACK: I guess, as an advisory panel member, I think we voted unanimous to go forward with this back in the spring, and it's a bit disappointing to come in here in October, after the September meeting, and find out that the whole thing has been shoved to the side and shut down, and maybe the reason for that was the public comments that were against it, but most of the public comments were against it, I guess, but, a lot of times, the people that are -- Some people get upset, and maybe it's a very small percentage of the actual -- Like the squeaky wheel complaining about it versus if you did a survey of all the charter/for-hire holders, the 1,400 or however many there are, but find out what the majority of the people really wanted, and a lot of people were maybe not making public comments because they thought it was going forward.

Some of the ones that were concerned, which may have been a very small percentage, complained and made public comment, and so I think, sometimes on the public comment areas, you may not really hear what's really -- What the majority of the people really want to do. It's hard to probably maybe get some of the ones that are for it to speak up and put that input in, but it is disappointing that, as much work was done that the council and the staff did on this, that, at this point, it just got shut down.

MR. LORENZ: I have no dog in this fight, other than I'm a customer of that group, and I was a little surprised at it too, because I talked to charter people, want-to-be's and those that are in and captains, and it was 50/50 split down the middle, and so, again, as Jim reiterated, it was like, why not get it out for scoping and let this whole democratic process go on, and I was a little surprised that it shut down so early.

MR. BONURA: I was just thinking that don't they already have a control date on the moratorium of June of 2016, June 15, I believe?

MS. BROUWER: That is correct.

MR. HULL: They do, but they change those. I mean, they could still choose that one, if it ever goes down this road, but usually those get adjusted as they go along, or something happens, but they generally move them.

MR. GOMEZ: Besides hearing from Randy, is there anybody else in this group that is against that? I am kind of curious to know, and I'm curious to know what James thinks about it, also.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Richard, that's a very good question. For me, participating in the fishery my entire life, I have had my charter/headboat permit for more than a dozen years, in hopes that, if I ever needed it, I had it already, and we see a lot of turnover in the Keys, and we see new people that want to make a go of it, a lot of younger people. They think that they can jump right into the fishery, and most of them find out that it's not very easy.

I think having the opportunity to get in there and grab a piece of that business is a good thing, and we have a growing -- Believe it or not, in Marathon, we have a growing tourism base that we may need to have more opportunities for access in that charter realm. As a commercial fisherman, I do know that that adds added pressure, and so, at this point, I would really abstain from an actual opinion on the matter, because we don't really know -- I mean, working waterfront has limited the entire commercial and recreational effort, and we're governed by that. There are just so many dock slips available to actually run a business out of, and so, personally, I'm not exactly worried about the number of permits.

MR. GOMEZ: Part of the problem that we feel is that there is so many people that are entering the business that are not governed well because of this open access federal permit, and it's just a - I mean, for us, we feel that we've been overrun by small boats and backyards, and we're trying to slow that down, and so that's kind of where we're headed with it.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Without a doubt. I feel you on that point, and we could sit here and talk about enforcement and the legality of running a business out of your property, your home property, and maybe that needs to be defined a little bit better, and, when the time comes, if you still feel like we have too many charter/headboat permits active, then we could maybe -- You could take another stance on a local level and really define what people can and cannot do out of their homes, as far as insurance goes and stuff like that. I mean, there will be other ways to make your point more valid and eliminate some of those guys, maybe not exactly on this platform, but that's just a gut feeling.

MR. ATACK: In business, people get in and out of business all the time, and so, if you put a moratorium on it, the people that get out of it, those permits will be available. For people wanting to get in, those permits could be obtained. The other issue, main issue, I thought with this whole thing was, when you got your reporting for-hire, that if the people aren't compliant with their reporting, then they won't be able to renew their permit the next year. It would have been nice, I think, to finish going through the process and finish out this amendment and get kind of the bugs worked out or the questions answered and the kinks out of it and then put it for a vote.

I guess I am willing to make a motion that we bring this back to life, or continue work on this again, to the council and finish what was started. There was a lot of work put into this. I think it was shutting down or stopping work on it, and I think it was a little premature, and, if we're really wanting to know what the stakeholders want to do, then maybe we should survey every stakeholder, the 1,400 or the 1,800 or whatever there are, and see if it's 80/20 or if it's 90/10 or if it's 50/50.

MR. MOSS: We have a second.

MR. GOMEZ: For me, it was all about being a little bit premature. I understand that this is a very complicated issue, and it's going to take time to work out, and I was just disheartened when it dropped off the table so quickly, and so I would like to third, fourth, and fifth that motion.

MR. MOSS: Jim, do you want to say the date as to when they start redevelopment of this? Myra asked me if you wanted to attach a date to that.

MR. ATACK: I guess, at the December council meeting, it would be nice for them to, I guess, re-vote on it. I guess they voted it down in September, right?

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so I just wanted to -- If you just leave it open-ended, they could re-start work on this ten years from now, but, if you say in 2019, or as soon as possible, or some kind of qualifier, that gives them where it should lie in their list of priorities.

MR. ATACK: **I guess I would recommend December, or as soon thereafter.**

MR. MOSS: Is the person that seconded, third, and fourth this okay with that?

MR. GOMEZ: Yes.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Any more discussion on this?

MR. HUDSON: Myra, on the comments that had been submitted to Amendment 47, based on stuff I've read and heard, because I really didn't get too involved with this personally, but it seemed like there was a large volume of that total, and the total, compared to the number of for-hire boats, was small, as far as I'm concerned, if you're talking a hundred people with thousands of permits, and so, Richard, I really know that, if you've got people that are for it, they need to get onboard with their comments if they re-start this.

You've got to remember that the council, seven to five vote just recently, had to pull the plug on the scoping meetings that were supposed to go on last week and stuff like that, and so all that will have to get re-started, and now you're talking 2020 or 2021, potentially, and I don't know. Regulatory amendments can move fast, but then, if you have resistance -- Resistance, when it comes to a limited access, is a big deal, unless you're using a weighted referendum, so the minority wins, you have a problem, and so it's something to think about.

MR. GOMEZ: That's been the problem that I've been coming up against for all the fishermen in the lower Keys charter/for-hire. They all support it, but they support it quietly and let the small, small group of individuals fight the fight for them, but I will push it and continue to hope that we get more people involved in this whole process, because that's the problem, and that's why we lose so many battles. They cry about it later rather than working hard to fight it now.

MS. JEFFCOAT: There were a lot of changes with the council this last time, and some of the biggest supporters are no longer there, or were not appointed, and so this is a new group that we're dealing with, and so I think we need to really look at how we approach this to benefit us, those who support this the most. With that big change in the council, I think that we've got a lot of work to do.

MR. HULL: Just one comment, from my observation. As long as the charter/for-hire sector is connected to the private recreational, you are always going to be the minority, and you're going to always lose the pressure on this one, because they just -- You're outnumbered so bad by them, and they do not -- They want to keep that together, whereas I, as a charter boat permit holder, would like to be separated and have my own charter boat allocations to deal with and reporting and on and on and on.

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, I agree. We didn't like it then, and we like it even less now, and, as we move into the future, it's hurting us more and more. I don't know if it would be appropriate to make a motion in regard to that.

MR. LORENZ: Just a quick one. Could you put in there, for Jim's motion, to bring that up in December, because I know and hear what all goes on in the Keys, and it's very verbal groups there in the charter industry, and you have no more a wild and wooly group than up there, and so you can get good feedback from up -- Those people will not keep their opinion to themselves, and so that's a good place to introduce this again. It will be held in Kitty Hawk, and that Dare County group is interesting, and I will counter against what you said that they are totally aligned with the recreational fishermen. They're their own thing.

MR. MOSS: All right. Any more discussion on this particular motion? Then, Richard, if you want to make another one after, that's certainly more than fine. **I will read it as stated, and it's recommend that the council consider re-starting development of Amendment 47 in December of 2018, or soon thereafter. All those in favor, fifteen; opposed, one; abstain, one. The motion passes.**

MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Did you want to make another motion, Richard?

MR. GOMEZ: I think Jimmy is better at wording that, but I will if I have to. Jimmy, would you like me to handle that, or could you?

MR. HULL: I'm not ready to make a motion for sector separation yet for the charter/for-hire. I just expressed my opinion on that a minute ago, and I think it's open for a lot of discussion, and I don't think that it's going to happen, and so I'm not going to make a motion on it right now.

MR. GOMEZ: Well, there's no way to find out unless we make one. **I would like to make a motion to separate the charter/for-hire from the recreational fishing group and create their own ACL.**

MR. MOSS: Discussion? Keep in mind that we've only got about an hour-and-fifteen minutes left.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Absolutely. Would there be any initial requirements as far as -- It really seems recreational, to me. I mean, do you have any clarifying verbiage that you would like to add to that?

MR. GOMEZ: In my opinion, we're not recreational. We are professional fishermen, and we are a commercial industry that fishes for fish, but we also fish for tourists, and this is what we're doing for a living, and we make our living at it. We are not doing this as a recreational sport, and we are professional fishermen.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I couldn't agree more, and you are absolutely correct, but the people that you serve are coming aboard your vessel, and you're abiding by the recreational limits for those people, and I don't really understand the difference if you weren't supportive of a charter/headboat bag limit for the boat. Along with this, I think would be very important to establish what the limits are going to be for each species for that particular vessel. Then, at that point, you can run the numbers out and saying what it's possible that the charter fleet is going to put across the dock.

MR. MOSS: One other thing, and James kind of started to hit on this, but I just want to make sure -- Are you including headboat in with the charter boat, or do you want that separate, as part of the -- It's your motion, and I just want to make sure that everybody is clear on it.

MR. GOMEZ: I would think that headboats should be put in that charter/for-hire group, yes.

MR. ATACK: I think the reason he wants to do this, or people want this, is, right now, MRIP shuts down the recreational seasons or takes or whatever. With the charter/for-hire reporting, you will know, like the commercial side, what is being landed there, and then, if they have their own ACL, I guess they may not be shut down based on MRIP. They would be shut down on the landings, via the for-hire.

Prior to the charter/for-hire reporting, you really couldn't do this. It would be really hard to do, unless you do IFQs or catch shares or something like that, and so I think that's the reasoning behind his motion, and, how it could work, you could still stay with the same bag limits, and you don't need to have boat limits. It's the recreational people are abiding by the bag limits, but they've got a professional service that's taking them out to fish the resource.

MR. HUDSON: Some of the people at the council meeting, the public and whatever, had felt like the reporting mechanism for the charter boats going in place -- Remember, headboats already have had reporting for a lot of years, and so it's the charter boats, and I think South Carolina has had their own thing, and the other three states are having to catch up, and so we don't have a real idea of the universe, and you have a real problem down there with people that aren't part of the universe going out into the federal waters.

NMFS and Commerce had always, I have heard, described the for-hire fleet as a commercial entity operating on a recreational allocation. If there is a separation of that sector, as you say, you would have your own ACL, but that would be relevant to the entire fleet, and, unfortunately, you don't have a lot of data when you don't have reporting, and that's a big problem, and I know you can't get the whole giant private guys to report collectively under the things, but you could get a subset, and that is something that's been suggested in the past that could move forward later, but that's not even in the queue right now.

MR. HULL: Rusty, points well made. That's the crux of the problem, and, also, with you, Jim, it's just -- For me, it's being tied to MRIP. In the commercial sector, if our reporting was done by

MRIP, we would all be shut down right now on everything, and so that's the point, is to get separated from that flaw, that huge flaw, which is the accountability via MRIP for a for-hire sector.

If you could get separated from there, and I think the council -- We would have to hear from them, but I think that's the -- Kind of what we're talking about and what Rusty said, the reasoning that, okay, we're not going to go all the way with this right now, and we're going to get the reporting in place and get that started, and then I think -- But we need this amendment to keep it alive, and I think the reporting is the way they're going first, and then possibly you may be able to get some more down the road, once the reporting is completed, or at least that's the way it looks like to me, but that's the main reason is to get separated, is so that you have your own accountability and you're counting your own production and you're controlling your destiny rather than a system that is MRIP controlling your destiny, basically.

MR. LORENZ: As a private recreational angler, and, of course, a customer of the for-hire industry, I could not support this at this time, and just in the realm of fairness, because, to me, it's putting the cart before the horse. It would be extremely unfair to the recreational angling community, and it would start almost a war within the sector against the for-hire community and their customers.

The main problem I -- I don't have a problem with this long-term, and I agree with Jimmy. We need to further develop Amendment 47, where this can be a subset of it, but you do not know how many of us are out there. Yes, it is a mess in reporting, and so how will it be done fairly to get it started? I think it would be a very unfair thing to the recreational angler that will get them totally up in arms, and it will be a mess. Right now, we know, and we've tried for years to try to get the recreational angling stamp or permit, and it has not come about. Until that comes about, this is premature, and, for that reason, I couldn't support it.

MR. MANIGAULT: I would like to commend the Department of Natural Resources for the State of South Carolina for that program, because, when we go out, we give each client a card on a lanyard to keep up with their actual catch, and we report basically every day, as required, by them, but I know, one time before, and I don't know whether or not this is going to fit in, but we had talked about reef permits also too, and so that's just something to throw in there to think about of how could we address that within that whole entire sector, even if it applies, and I was just thinking about it, and we had talked about it one time before.

MR. GOMEZ: I'm not sure how that would be unfair if the recreational had their own ACL and charter boats had theirs, but, if you look back to the beginning, when all this started, when charter boats for-hire were able to sell fish, sell fish as a byproduct, and the commercial fishermen, and correct me if I'm wrong, but the commercial fishermen wanted us separated, because we were getting into their quotas.

They finally were able to do it and put us in with the recreational, and, from that moment forward, we weren't allowed to sell fish, and we've been losing small battles ever since, and we continue to fight to get our own quotas separated, because we are in with the recreational ACL, and we've lost a lot of our ability to produce fish and keep them, and certainly we've lost a huge amount of income when all of this began and we were forced to leave the commercial portion of this industry, as far as selling our bycatch.

MR. MUNDEN: As several members have pointed out, we need more information, and so I think that this motion, if it goes before the council, they could look at it and say, no, we're not doing that, and we've got other things to do, and so I think this motion is premature, and I will not support it.

MR. HUDSON: Like I said, the headboat has been pulled out of MRFSS and MRIP and all that stuff for quite a long time, and we work with it quite well, in the sense of their reporting mechanisms and volunteer stuff that was in place since the 1970s, but, except for South Carolina, with their charter boats, the other three states, and I think we're premature, like Red says, and that this whole thing needs the information base, and we don't have that right now. Getting that is, I think, having the horse in front of the cart, personally.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Along with both of those sentiments, I would like to ask. What would the feeling be once you did have your own ACL in a separate sector and, as a group, you started reaching those numbers, maybe a little bit earlier than you would anticipate throughout the course of your fishing season, and you did state that you are professional, which I completely -- I uphold that statement, but what happens if you, as a group, try to slow down production in order to be able to fish the entire year. Would that compromise your integrity as a professional for-hire captain if you're not going out and catching the fish for your customers, in order to stay in business twelve months of the year?

MR. ATACK: That's a good question, but they could close the season early, would be the other option, and then the recreational guys could still be open. I mean, if you've got your for-hire reporting, now you have a somewhat solid dataset. Typically, it takes two to three years for anything to happen, and so, if we were to send this to the council and they would consider it, and they would look at putting in an amendment, and they would look at doing this, by the time it gets to the point to where you could have a real scoping document, you may have a couple of years' worth of data from the for-hire reporting, and then you can massage it. If you wait two or three years until you get the data, and then you go forward with something like this, well, now you're talking five or six years down the road before anything would happen on this. That's just remind everybody of how the cog turns.

MR. MOSS: All right. A couple of things. I know there's still some people that want to weigh-in on this, but two things, and one of them -- Sorry, but did we get a second on this, before we continue the discussion? That's my bad. We have a second. Okay. Just to keep on with procedure, and I will let Rusty and Richard talk, and then I want to vote on this, because it's already eleven o'clock, and we haven't taken a break, and we've still got one or two other things to cover. Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: I've been involved with the ACCSP thing since 2013 now, and one of the developments back then was Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, APAIS, and Jeff White and Amy Dukes and a few others had worked on a document for several years, and they made it available early this year, and they took the South Carolina charter boats, and they took this APAIS approach, and they were able to actually tighten up the error bars and estimate bars and everything on either side, as an example of what you can do with the logbook reporting of the charter boats and the old estimates and things like this, and that doesn't the count the MRIP changes yet, with those calibrations, but that's a very important paper and a very important development for NMFS and for the council, or councils, I should say. Where that goes is really another thing that can be

useful for getting into the future, but you're still down the road, Richard, and, honestly, we need the reporting.

MR. GOMEZ: I didn't really expect this to get too far, and so I'm not going to be too disappointed, but our ultimate goal, just so you know, is -- I mean, if we could separate that sector, we could start fighting to be able to sell our bycatch again, and that's kind of where I would head with it.

MR. BONURA: Just a comment here, or an opinion. I think this could be a good thing with full accountability of how the commercial guys -- We're doing our books, and we've got three different papers on all of our fish in Florida and this and that and the other, and this could be a good thing with full accountability. **Maybe you could add to the motion, if you would like, to add the accountability into there, like with accountability, at the end of it.**

MR. GOMEZ: **Yes, that's a great point, and I would like to add that in.** I can promise you this. If that ever did happen, the accountability on the charter/for-hire side would improve tremendously. We would be more on a page that we could wrap our hands around, rather than feeling like the red-headed stepchild so many times.

MR. MOSS: All right. Jim, are you okay with that change? All right. I know you want to talk, Bob, but, in the interest of moving this along, if you're okay, I want to put this to a vote, because we've got one or two other things still to handle, and, like I said, it's already eleven o'clock, and I'm sure everybody has to go to the bathroom, and so I will read it as it is. **Recommend that the council consider separating the for-hire component, charter and headboat, from the recreational sector to improve accountability. Those in favor, eight in favor; those opposed, five; those abstain, three abstentions. The motion passes eight in favor.**

MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

MR. HUDSON: I am not sure if Myra can do it as a form of an edit, but I had mentioned it earlier, about a weighted referendum versus an equal-weighted referendum, and there is two different things. It's a Gulf of Mexico example, and I won't go into details, but having an even playing field for referendum for the for-hire fleet is an important recommendation. **I will make a motion that we have a referendum that is fair for the for-hire component and not weighted on high-liners.**

Referendums were what was used to put IFQ systems in place and anything that's a limited access, and it was done in the Gulf of Mexico, but they did a weighted referendum, weighted based on high-liners for their red snapper commercial thing there, and it caused a lot of grief, and, once they evened the playing field for further referendums down the road, it was a lot easier to see how many were supportive versus how many were opposed and to be able to go with a majority. A majority should always rule, personally. That's just my feelings about that.

MR. ATACK: What is a referendum? Is that a vote count then? Do you mean actually ask each permit holder?

MR. HUDSON: Yes, that's the simple method, and then, of course, with the idea of asking them their opinion, then you get an opinion. For limited access, and that's what you're talking about in both cases, and so a person that has no history and has bought a ticket may not have the same

qualifications, but he still bought a permit, and so he's part of the big total right now, that universe that we don't have reporting from, and that's a problem, and that's what we're trying to solve here, is to be able to have better data in our stock assessments, so we have a better ACL.

MR. HULL: Rusty, would you entertain, also, after "limited access", putting "and sector separation"?

MR. HUDSON: Yes.

MR. HULL: I think that the point you're trying to make is that the charter/for-hire permit holders, you want to have a referendum to them to find out how many of them are supportive of doing this. We know that the majority of the private recreational sector is opposed to it, and I think we can assume that, but how many of the people that it's really going to affect on that end, as far as being professional fishermen, how many of them are supportive, and is that the point?

MR. HUDSON: That's the point, and then, of course, you can work out minor details. We had to do that with our directed shark or directed swordfish or incidental shark and swordfish. We had qualifiers of history in order to be able to put them into a sector. The Gulf of Mexico, with the red snapper, they did that with a bigger group, a bigger allocation, and then a smaller group, but the smaller group couldn't survive on that. We have to think about survivability in some pockets.

I understand you have this big problem with no inlets to speak of, and, I mean, the Keys are a different critter, and even North Carolina, at times, can be a different critter, but it's not as bad as the Keys, and, in between, it's just a few of us. We have lost a lot of our charter boats. We have lost a lot of commercial boats and shrimp boats, historically, when I look back over the last forty years. I don't want to see any more loss. Every time we lose, we wind up losing a dock, or --

MR. GOMEZ: We found them.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To add to that, this would be -- This would help the council really make a decision on whether they would like to move forward or not, and that's the main reason for this referendum?

MR. HUDSON: It's informational for those thirteen votes. It takes a seven-to-six vote to make it move forward, or a seven-to-five vote, because we're missing a council member, and that was the situation that got 47 off the table, for the time being, but they did a lot of work, but the scoping meetings got canceled.

MR. MUNDEN: I have a question for the maker of the motion. Do you intend this to be for snapper grouper only or all species?

MR. HUDSON: This body only deals with fifty-five species of snapper grouper and the X amount of permits. I think -- I can't quote all the charter stuff, but I know the commercial stuff, and the bottom line is that it's a fair way to deal with folks not feeling like they just got railroaded out of business.

MR. MOSS: All right. Any more discussion on this one? I will read it as-is. Request that a referendum be held for the for-hire component for limited access and sector separation.

Those in favor, fourteen in favor; those opposed, one; abstain, two abstentions. The motion passes. Anything else that we want to bring up in Other Business?

MR. ATTACK: I have one question. One the Amendment 46, which has to do with the recreational permitting and reporting, what do we foresee the timing on that now?

MS. BROUWER: I think the council did not request for that amendment to be brought back to them in December, and they may request to see it in March, and, if they do, we're still at the very beginning of it, and I believe that we haven't yet held public hearings, and so we would probably need a full year to finish developing it, and so we're looking at 2020 and developing it throughout 2019.

MR. ATTACK: Thank you. I just saw that it was going to resume work in 2019, and so, maybe by 2020, it could go through the whole process.

MR. BONURA: Something I have been thinking about for a while, and I keep hearing everyone saying the corporate permit and this and that and the two-for-one and all this, and how many permits do you guys think is a good number to have out of all the permits? I mean, where are they trying to go with this?

MR. HULL: I don't have the answer to that, but I know that I personally want to stop the two-for-one. This body has voted to stop the two-for-one, or recommended it, and the council is talking about it now, and it's hard to find a permit to work with. I am looking for permits, and I was asking you if you had any. I mean, it's like everybody is.

You can't find permits, and they are continuing to eliminate, and so we've gone beyond the point of where it should be. We are negative now, and so that's where I am at on it, and I don't know that they know -- I don't believe, the council members I've talked to -- There was no sunset on that two-for-one. There was no reasoning that they can come up with to explain to me why it's in place, and they are kind of saying that too, and so I think we're on the road to maybe getting that eliminated, but, right now, it's tight. It's very tight, and it's convoluted and complex.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Vince, it is extremely unfortunate that that number wasn't put in play right from the start. Being a participant in the spiny lobster fishery in the Keys as well, when that reduction process occurred, it started out as a take every year, and I think we were over 800,000 traps participating in the fishery, and the target was 500,000, and they just took from everybody to start, and then it worked into a more passive reduction, and maybe we could ask for some sort of classification on a more passive reduction than a two-for-one, and I'm not really sure how that would work, but certainly a basement should be set for the number of permits in the South Atlantic, or you're going to end up with people who own a piece of the South Atlantic fishery based on people that the permits are gone, and so we do have to find a way to kind of keep it -- I don't want to say open access, because it will never be that, but we do have to stop the bleeding at some point and keep the number of permits stable.

MR. WAUGH: Just to provide a little context on why the council did this, they did not have a number, because the economic information was not available when we put that amendment in place, but there was sufficient economic analysis to show that there was overcapitalization. By any measure now, you look at the available yield to the commercial sector, and you divide it by

the number of permits that are out there, and that landings, whether you look at the pounds or multiply that times some value, that's not enough, on average, to make those permits economical.

Rather than looking initially at reducing the number of permits, the council got a lot of input to just cap it. They looked at just capping it, and then there were a lot of people who said, well, I am retired, and I want to have a non-transferable. If you could do that for me, that number would gradually phase-out, and those non-transferable permits were never meant to be transferable, and that was given to a group of older fishermen who were on the way out of the fishery, and so those numbers should have gradually declined.

There shouldn't be anybody young with one of those non-transferable permits now, and so, just to give the -- There was a lot of rationale that went into this, and that fishery is still overcapitalized, from an economic perspective, and the council is getting to the point where we have had some analyses that have been done, and Kari has presented some here to you all, but we still need more detailed information to determine what an optimal number is, and so I just wanted to give that background. The council didn't do this willy-nilly. The idea was to cap it and let it gradually decline over time. There have been a lot of issues raised with the two-for-one that need to be addressed, and the council is going to look at that. Thank you.

MR. HUDSON: I think we're down to about a hundred of those 225 non-transferable, and, of course, they don't matter, in the scheme of things, but that's commercial. This open access, and Red brought up a point that I've just been thinking about, the open access of other fisheries, whichever ones they are, and I think each of those APs would have to deal with it, unless, collectively, the council wanted to do an overarching thing, and that's why my statement was snapper grouper open access. The limited access would be one alternative, one whatever, to comment on, and the sector separation is a second one to do a referendum on, and it's just that it's two different subjects, but they're sort of married together.

Once you have limited access, you put a cap on everything, whether it's for the professional for-hire or whether it's for the commercial, and so a lot of our commercial stuff, we're still -- We're limited, but we still have a little bit of open access, Spanish mackerel, dolphin wahoo, but not much. Anyway, I just wanted to throw that out there, Red, because I didn't want to feel like I didn't try to answer you.

MR. GOMEZ: Gregg, when you said "that industry", I'm assuming you meant snapper grouper, because James had brought up the lobster industry, and I didn't know what you meant by "that industry". Also, I think Vincent might be talking about all permits in general and not just the snapper grouper.

MR. HULL: Gregg had mentioned an economic analysis to show whether the permits were viable, and I would argue that, of the permits that are out there, there is a much smaller proportion of them that are really active at a level that are being used to be economically viable, and I don't know what kind of math that he's talking about that you used to come up with that, to where you're stating that, currently, with the number of permits, we're still not economically viable, and I would say that -- I would like to know more about the math that was used, because there is permits, and I know most of the -- I have heard that most of the lobster fishermen in the Keys all have snapper grouper permits, but that doesn't mean that they're using them.

They do use them, occasionally, and, if there's a hurricane, that's why they have them, so they can go do something if they lost all their gear and to rebuild, and that's one theory, and so that would be the thing. If you're going to go a mathematical formula with a number of permits divided into the amount of landings with the values, I think that would have to be some level of -- Does this guy produce -- We're not going to count somebody that just has a permit and divide the pie up amongst him to come up with that number, if that makes sense to you.

MR. MOSS: All right. Unless there is anything else, I would like to bring up Julia Byrd to discuss volunteers for SEDAR.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, guys. For those folks who are new, I am Julia Byrd, and I'm one of the SEDAR coordinators, and so SEDAR is the process that does the stock assessments in the Southeast, and I mainly work on the Atlantic and South Atlantic assessments, and so I'm happy to give folks updates on assessments going on, but what I really wanted to talk about today is the council is going to be making appointments to two SEDARs that will be coming up in the next couple of meetings, before you guys meet again. I just wanted to see if anyone was interested in being involved in those assessments or if you knew of any other fishermen who may be interested in being involved.

The first one is the South Atlantic tilefish assessment. When you guys met in the spring, I mentioned this assessment, but now I have an actual timeframe of when it's going to occur, which may affect whether some people want to participate or not. It's going to be a standard assessment, and so what that means is the model that was used last time will be updated with new data, and then there will be some flexibility and changes needed to some of the data inputs and some of the modeling.

At your spring meeting, I know Andy Piland, Jim Freeman, and Vincent were interested in potentially participating in that, and so the timeframe where it's going to occur -- It will start next May-ish, with a data scoping call, and then it will be a series of webinars and an in-person workshop. The in-person workshop is tentatively scheduled for January of 2020, and it would go to the South Atlantic SSC in April of 2020, and so it will be a mix of an in-person workshop and a few webinars, and so are the three of you guys still interested in participating?

MR. FREEMAN: On the in-person workshop, how long is that going to --

MS. BYRD: I know that's a bad time for longliners. I know.

MR. FREEMAN: That is when the season is just getting started.

MS. BYRD: It will probably be two-and-a-half days, and I know that's a really tough time for any longliners, since that's when you all are open, and so, if you're not able to participate in the actual workshop, that's fine. I think you would be great to be involved, because you're so knowledgeable about the fishery.

MR. FREEMAN: I will make room. I will be there.

MS. BYRD: Okay. Thank you. Are there any other folks who might be interested in being involved in the tilefish assessment?

MR. BONURA: I've got a question. That's going to be up here in South Carolina, or where would that be located?

MS. BYRD: The in-person workshop, and this is all tentative, because we're still kind of putting together the schedule, normally takes place where the analysts are, and so it would probably be in North Carolina, the Morehead City area, and then, for the webinars, you can be anywhere and participate, and so, if no one has done a webinar before, I am happy to kind of walk you through participating in that and what it would entail on your end, as far as getting on your phone or the computer.

Then the next one I wanted to talk a little bit about was the scamp assessment, and so scamp hasn't been assessed through SEDAR before, and so it's going to be a Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic assessment combined into one. It's going to be the first time that SEDAR is using a new approach called the research track, and I won't get into details here, unless you want me to, but it's kind of similar to a benchmark, and so there will be a stock ID process, there will be a data workshop, an assessment workshop, and then a review workshop.

Again, it's a tentative schedule, but stock ID would start in the spring of 2019, and the data workshop would be in late October of 2019, and then the review would be in 2020, and so it would be great -- The council will be making appointments to stock ID in December and then to the rest of the assessment in March, and so is anyone here interested in being involved in the scamp assessment? Randy. Great. Deidre. Jimmy. Okay. That's awesome. Thanks, and, if you guys know of any other fishermen who may be interested in being involved in either of these assessments, I would love to hear about it, and I'm happy to reach out to them myself, to give them a little better idea of what participating would involve. Thank you, guys.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Julia. Unless anybody has got anything else, I have two quick, very quick, things, and I promise it's quick. My first thing is, and it's kind of a -- I don't know if you want to say recommendation to the council, but, from an outreach perspective, and my brother-in-law brought this up when I was fishing with him last week, and I think that one of the areas where we're missing the boat is via social media.

I know that there is a South Atlantic Council Facebook page and the website, which I guess we can debate its easiness of navigation, but certain things, especially for the younger generation, like Instagram and Snapchat and things like that, whether it's updates on regulations, whether it's closures, whether it's whatever the case may be, from a recreational standpoint anyway, I think that we're missing the ball there.

If anybody else wants to chime in, feel free. Like I said, when I was fishing with my brother-in-law last week, he brought it up to me, and he is absolutely right. Especially for the younger generation, everything happens via Instagram and Snapchat and whatever app that is out now that I don't know about because I'm of the older generation, I guess, already, but it's something to look at. Anybody want to chime in?

MS. PASKIEWICZ: David, I would absolutely agree with that, and maybe Richard's generation, and not to like say that you're old, but most of these guys that are thriving in the Keys are the ones that know how to really manage social media. I mean, certainly there are guys that have their

clientele base, and they're going to be booked throughout the year regardless, but the rather newcomers -- They dominate social media, and their stuff is all over the place, and it's just a tool that needs to be utilized, because it's there, and it reaches so many people, and so I really agree with that.

MR. MORING: I totally agree with that, too. I'm a single dad of two teenage daughters, and, if I want to talk to them, I usually have to go on social media, most of the time, but I think that we can use that to make the younger generation coming up aware of why we are setting limits and what has happened to fish stock and why we want to rebuild it, and that's the only way it's going to work, and they are very, very mindful of conservation and wildlife. On social media, half the pictures are of kittens, and so having pictures of fish and stuff like that draws so much attention to that generation, and we really need to do that.

MR. GOMEZ: I also agree, and I think it would be a great way to get the young people involved, because, especially in the lower Keys, most of the guys still in this fight and in this struggle are from my generation, and I'm sixty-one right now, just in case you wanted to know, but, man, our problem continues to be getting young people that are entering the industry involved in this whole process. Unless you are social media savvy, we are losing a whole lot of young people that could and would be more involved.

MR. MOSS: Public apology time. There is an Instagram account. I looked for it the other day and couldn't find it, and so perhaps it's my lack of tech savvy that couldn't find it, but Kim will tell us about it.

MS. COLE: Cameron Rhodes, who is one of our outreach staff, she manages all of our social media, and we do have an Instagram page, and I'm only saying this because she is on a flight back from south Florida right now, and so she can't chime in, but the Instagram page that we have is safmc_official, and so we do have the Instagram page, and we have the Facebook, and I'm not sure about Twitter, but we do post to the Instagram page, and Myra says we do have Twitter. We do post to that Instagram page, and Cameron takes care of all of that. We post as much as we can.

I will definitely ask Cameron if she could post a little bit more to Instagram, if you all are saying that you would like that too, and then Myra and Brian just said that, if you all would like, we can talk to Cameron and maybe have her go over what social media we have and maybe give you all a run-through of what we do and what we have, and if you all have any suggestions, and so we'll take that back to her, but I did want to get on the record, for everyone that is listening, that we do have an Instagram, and so it's safmc_official.

MR. GOMEZ: I wonder how we could -- Because I am definitely not in the know here, but I wonder how we could get that information to some of these young fishermen that, even though you have an Instagram page, how do you actually get their attention?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: To go along with Richard's point, they have -- There has to be some kind of outreach. Something has to be done to promote this. We're on the AP, and we didn't even know, and so you can't expect other younger generations to --

MS. COLE: I won't speak for Cameron, but I'm just saying, as someone who -- I personally don't have a Facebook, and I don't use Facebook, and I think that, nowadays, Facebook is how we reach

most people, and so I think we kind of neglect our Instagram a little bit, but I'm with you. I don't use Facebook. I use Instagram, and my husband uses Instagram, and that's the social media platform we use, and so we'll definitely bring that back to Cameron and let her know to -- Maybe we should post more on there, but I was just going through the stuff that we post on there, and we post about -- It's the same stuff we post about on Facebook, but we'll definitely bring that back to her and see how we can step up that game.

MR. MOSS: Again, my apologies to Cameron, if there was one. Like I said, when I searched, I couldn't find it, but I'm not that tech savvy, and I know Cameron works very hard at what she does, and so I didn't want to throw her under the bus or anything like that, but certainly, if we could get more out there, because, as we've all discussed, this is the way of the future, and so it needs to happen.

MR. MORING: Could you email everybody a link to all of that?

MS. BROUWER: Sure. It's up on the screen right now, and so our Instagram account is @safmc_official. Our Twitter account is just @safmc, but I will make sure that I email the AP.

MR. HULL: Is everybody familiar with NOAA Fish Watch? Anybody? Okay. There is an entire -- You can go to NOAA Fish Watch, and it's like -- It's kind of like our government's version of the Monterey Bay Aquarium site, which gives you a green or a red or whatever on a species, and it explains the species, and it explains the life history of the species, and it explains its sustainability and how it's caught. Like in our restaurant, and in our fish house, in our market, we send people to this site. It's NOAA Fish Watch, and it's really good. You ought to check it out.

MR. MOSS: All right. My next thing is a quick apology. We pushed through, and it's 11:30 already, and so I'm sure that there is a lot of -- I apologize for pushing through. I wanted to try to get it all in, and thank you all for the participation, and, to the three new guys, welcome. Thank you very much for everything that you contributed, and Myra has something else, and so it's not me this time. It's Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just a reminder that I will be looking at our calendar for the spring, and I will send out an email, and I will probably check in with our Chair and Vice Chair and come up with some save-the-dates for -- We typically meet in the latter part of April, before shallow-water grouper opens, and so just be expecting that.

MS. MARHEFKA: David, I just want to say excellent job getting us through this meeting. You're awesome at it.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. On that happy note, meeting adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 19, 2018.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
November 9, 2018

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