

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPER ADVISORY PANEL

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
North Charleston, SC**

April 11-13, 2018

SUMMARY MINUTES

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Members

David Moss
Jim Attack
Scott Buff
Robert Freeman
Richard Gomez
Deidra Jeffcoat
Robert Lorenz
Gregg Mercurio
Red Munden
Andy Piland
Dr. Todd Kellison

James Hull
Vincent Bonura
Jack Cox
James Freeman
Rusty Hudson
Robert Johnson
Gary Manigault
Jim Moring
Kerry Marhefka
David Snyder

Council Members

Charlie Phillips
Mel Bell
Dr. Roy Crabtree

Mark Brown
Chris Conklin
Jessica McCawley

Council Staff

Gregg Waugh
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Chip Collier
Kelsey Dick
John Hadley
Cameron Rhodes
Christina Wiegand

Dr. Brian Chevront
Kimberly Cole
Mike Collins
Dr. Mike Errigo
Kim Iverson
Amber Von Harten
Julia Byrd

Observers & Participants

Dr. Kari Buck
Lt. Jerry Brown

Wally Bublely

Other observers & participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Crowne Plaza, North Charleston, South Carolina, April 11, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you all for coming. I guess we will start with the roundtable of who you are and where you're from, and I will start with you, Rusty, down there.

MR. HUDSON: Rusty Hudson, Director of Sustainable Fisheries, saltwater consultant.

MR. JOHNSON: Robert Johnson, commercial and charter boat operator out of St. Augustine, Florida.

MR. LORENZ: Robert Lorenz, recreational fisherman out of Wilmington, North Carolina.

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

MR. MERCURIO: Greg Mercurio, Key West, Florida, headboat.

MR. MORING: Jim Moring, restaurateur, Charleston, South Carolina.

MR. MUNDEN: Red Munden, retired marine biologist from North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Morehead City, North Carolina.

MS. JEFFCOAT: Deidre Jeffcoat, charter/for-hire, Savannah, Georgia.

MR. SNYDER: Dave Snyder, chef, St. Simons, Georgia.

MR. MOSS: David Moss, south Florida, recreational fisherman.

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

DR. KELLISON: Todd Kellison, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center's Beaufort Lab, and just a reminder that I'm a non-voting member of the panel.

MR. BONURA: Good afternoon. Vincent Bonura from Goin' Off Enterprises, Inc., Key West, Florida.

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

MR. BUFF: Scott Buff, commercial, Oak Island, North Carolina.

MR. COX: Jack Cox, commercial, Morehead City, North Carolina.

MR. GOMEZ: Richard Gomez, charter boat owner, Key West, Florida.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Jim Freeman, commercial, Daytona Beach, Florida.

MS. MARHEFKA: Kerry Marhefka, seafood dealer, Charleston, South Carolina.

MR. R. FREEMAN: Robert Freeman, for-hire, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Thank you very much. Moving right along, unless anybody has anything to add or objections to the minutes, I think we can just go ahead and accept those from the last meeting. Okay. The minutes are accepted, and we will move right into -- Following the agenda, I will turn it over to Myra for the status of snapper grouper amendments.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks, Dave, and welcome everybody. I wanted to bring you up to date on the snapper grouper amendments that we've been working on and those that have been recently submitted and those that are upcoming. I also wanted to mention that there have been two new appointees to the AP. Unfortunately, neither one of them is here today, but so hopefully the next go-round they will be here.

This is Attachment 1 in your briefing book. I am going to move kind of slowly. I don't want to rush through. I want to make sure everybody is comfortable, and, if you have any questions, please go ahead and interrupt me. This is sort of an overview of the various amendments. There is one in particular that if the AP would like to spend a little time on -- It's the vision blueprint recreational amendment. Last time we got together, we talked a lot about the commercial amendment, and we didn't spend a lot of time talking about what the council is thinking for the recreational, and so, if you guys want to spend a little time discussing that, that would be fine, and so we will go at whatever pace the AP prefers.

The first amendment, this one was recently implemented, and we talked a lot about this a couple of years ago, and it takes a little while for things, as you know, to get in place, and so this is the one that changed regulations for mutton snapper, and those were effective on February 10 of this year.

We have Amendment 43, which is currently under secretarial review, and this is the one that is going to set an ACL for red snapper for this year, and so the story there is that action was included in Amendment 46 for some time. The council gave us direction in June of last year to take out just the action on red snapper and go ahead and develop that amendment more quickly so we could have an ACL in place to open harvest, limited harvest, this year for red snapper. That amendment is moving through the review process, and we're waiting to hear on the proposed rule, and so the council is going to be discussing red snapper management in more detail at their June meeting in Florida.

We did do a short amendment on red grouper. This was needed because there was a stock assessment that was recently completed, and the ACL needed to be adjusted based on the ABC recommendation, and so, for that one, the change is quite substantial. The total ACL for red grouper right now is 780,000 pounds, and the total ACL for 2018 is going to be 139,000 pounds, and so that's a pretty substantial decrease in fishing levels there. This amendment was submitted in December for formal review, and so I believe the proposed rule has been published, or is in the process.

Another one that you guys may be hearing about, and recently there's been some movement in this amendment, is the for-hire electronic reporting amendment, and so this one was in the works for some time, and it was submitted last March, and, just this March, there was a notice of availability

that was published, which means there is a comment period for the amendment, and those comments are being requested by the agency through May 13, but there is also a proposed rule that's out, and that's where people can comment on the proposed regulations, and the comment period for that, I believe, is open through May 4. It was published on April 4, and the comment period goes through May 4. This is the amendment that would go into place electronic reporting for charter vessels, and it changes the timing for reporting for the headboat.

Those are all of the amendments that have been recently submitted or are in the process of being reviewed. Then there has been some that have been approved for public hearings, and so we're going to have public hearings coming up in May on the visioning amendments, and so here is the one that I mentioned of if you want to spend more time -- I will walk you through what the council has decided in terms of their preferred alternatives.

If you have any more questions -- I realized the link that I had included in your attachment, when I looked at it this morning, was not active, but now it is, and we have corrected that. If you click on that link, it will take you to the decision document that was discussed by the council in March and where they made decisions on which of the alternatives to select as their preferred to take that out to the public for comment.

This is the one that responds to stakeholder input on a vision for the snapper grouper fishery, and this one is for the recreational sector, and so, for Action 1, that's to modify the composition of the recreational aggregates, and so you see Preferred Alternative 2 is what the council is considering right now, and so that would establish three different aggregates, one for the deepwater species, one for shallow-water groupers, and then one that we're calling other shallow-water species.

Then the council had requested that we include two options. The first one would include species that are not currently in aggregates, like sea bass, vermilion, greater amberjack, hogfish, and red porgy, into the other shallow-water species aggregate and then the other alternative is to leave those species out and leave them as they are. This is what we're taking out to public hearing for that action.

The second action then specifies management measures for just the deepwater species, and so this is how this amendment has been structured, and so first they picked the aggregates, and then they picked management measures for each of those three aggregates, and so, for the deepwater species, they are looking at specifying a recreational season, and so their preferred right now is to make that May 1 through August 31, which is the existing season for blueline tilefish and snowy grouper.

Then they're looking at removing that twelve-inch minimum size limit for the deepwater snappers, and so that is their preferred, and then they would specify an aggregate bag limit for this aggregate, and, currently, their preferred, which we are in the process of analyzing still, because they included this alternative at the March meeting, is to have that be three fish per person per day with existing restrictions on golden tilefish, snowy grouper, and wreckfish. I'm sorry. This is not the one that we're still analyzing. That is for the shallow-water groupers.

This would maintain golden tilefish at one per person per day and snowy grouper and wreckfish at one per vessel per day, and it would be three fish for all the other species in that aggregate. Then the council would like to specify gear requirements. Remember that we've talked about having single-hook rigs just for the deepwater species, and so that is currently their preferred.

The third action is for the shallow-water grouper aggregate, and recall that the AP had recommended that the council take no action modifying the shallow-water grouper closure, and so they changed things a little bit to respond to some of the comments that we received from fishermen, mainly in the Carolinas, as far as the spawning season of red grouper, and so there was concern that they were being caught still in spawning condition in May, and so the council is looking at shifting or lengthening the spawning season closure for red grouper, and their preferred is to make that be January through May, and so they would just extend it by an extra month, and that would be just off of North Carolina and South Carolina. Any questions so far?

Then the aggregate bag limit for the shallow-water grouper aggregate, this is where they requested that we add another alternative, and they went ahead and picked that one as their preferred, and that is to make that three fish per person per day where no more than one fish can be of any one species in the aggregate. Right now, it's three per person per day, and we have one gag or one black, and so it would change things slightly.

Then, for the other shallow-water species aggregate, the sub-actions there are to reduce the recreational minimum size limit for gray triggerfish, and we've talked about this with you guys before. The current size limit is fourteen inches, and there is concern that that is creating some discards, especially in south Florida, and so the FWC went ahead and reduced the minimum size limit already, effective I believe January of this year, and so the council is going to take action to make that consistent in federal waters to put that at twelve inches as well.

The bag limit for this aggregate, the council hasn't yet selected a preferred, and so there is various choices here. This is all the no action, what I am scrolling through, and they are looking at leaving that at twenty fish per person and, within that, maintain the ten snapper aggregate or put in a bag limit for gray triggerfish that would be ten per person per day, and there is also an alternative that would look at ten Atlantic spadefish per person per day and another one that would be no more than ten of any one species, and so that's what we're going to bring to the public for comment for that aggregate.

Then there is another action in the amendment which would only be relevant, or would only come into play, if the council selected to not regroup these aggregates, but, instead, have all the snapper grouper species that are allowed to be harvested recreationally within one big aggregate, and then the option there is to cap the limit at twenty per person per day.

Since that has not been selected as the council's preferred, I am going to tell the public this is another thing the council is considering. If they choose to do that, then the amendment would be restructured to accommodate for them if they want to continue to discuss the recreational season for the deepwater species and all the other things they're considering. We would restructure all of that accordingly.

Are there any questions or any desire to see any of the analysis for this amendment, since you guys haven't really had much chance to delve into it? Like I said, this is going to go to public hearings. We're going to have webinar public hearings in May, and so a summary of all of this and the presentation that I am putting together is going to be online on the 24th of this month, and so all of that material is going to be available. I know the AP has already given their recommendations on

a lot of these things, but certainly, if you want to spend more time discussing it, now would be the time.

MR. GOMEZ: With that three grouper per day, is that for south Florida also?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, that would be the whole coast.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay, and so, I mean, it really doesn't make a lot of difference to me, but it may make a lot of difference to some people. We don't get many scamps, and so, basically, you're saying that south Florida gets two fish per day, and occasionally they will get lucky and get that third one, but, once they get a red and a black, they're probably going to have to leave the area and not worry about trying to get a scamp, which doesn't happen that often. That's all. I just thought I would add that.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks for that.

MR. COX: On Amendment 27 here, looking at the trip limit for the blueline and the snowy, I guess the council did as good as they can do, and I'm a little concerned that, with that really low ACL on the tilefish, that there is going to be some discarding, and I don't know how you have a targeted fishery with such a low ACL, but it's going to be interesting to see how that split season for the snowy coincides with the tilefish or the discards that we might have.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks, Jack. I was getting ready to walk you guys through those actions too, and so certainly, if you want to pause and have more discussion about those actions, we can do that. Anything else on the recreational?

MR. MORING: Have we gotten the numbers, the catch numbers, for the fall mini-season on red snapper?

MS. BROUWER: No, and that's a topic that is going to come up at the council meeting in June.

MR. MORING: Once we get those numbers, will they adjust the -- Will the data be used to adjust the July mini-season?

MS. BROUWER: I will answer that real quick, but I don't want to get into a lengthy discussion on red snapper, and so basically what we have in place right now is the process that was established where the council receives landings and discard estimates from the agency, from NMFS and the Science Center, in June, and so they compare those numbers to the ABC, the acceptable biological catch, for that year.

If the landings and discards are above that number, then there is no season. If they are below that number, then they consider a season, and so they're going to get that information at their meeting in June, but, as I mentioned earlier, Amendment 43 is currently undergoing secretarial review, and so that amendment would do away with that process and would establish an ACL for red snapper for this year and subsequent years, until the council modifies it, and so that one is, like I said, under review, and so we're waiting to see -- The timing of it all is a little uncertain right now, but that's where we are on red snapper.

MR. JOHNSON: My only concern when I look at all of this is that recreational fishermen, and not all of them, but a lot of them, really struggle with these regulations, and we're getting ready to throw another regulation on top of the regulations, and is that what I am understanding, because the guys have got to know that I can have this many and this many, but, oh, wait, I have exceeded this number.

I understand the point is we're trying to say, hey, we only need this many fish to be happy, but maybe there is another way to do it, and I don't know, but I sense some problems with some poor guy going through his fish box and counting fish, and he counted the limit, and he caught a limit of b-liners, and he caught a limit of bass, and he's at ten, and he might lose track when he throws a couple of porgies in there, and you know what I'm saying? It's just an area of concern for me.

MR. ATACK: The question asked about the landings on the red snapper in the fall, you're saying we won't have any data on that until June, and then they're going to have a July season, and then there is the web-based, I guess, landings, and then there is the MRIP landings, and is there any information on that that's going to be sent out to everybody, or will people be told about it?

MS. BROUWER: For the fall of last year, those numbers are available, and Kelsey is going to be here tomorrow, I think, or Friday, and there is a report in your briefing book that shows you the information we got through the mobile app, through the MyFishCount web portal, and so that information is out there, and I apologize if that's what you were referring to and I took it completely the wrong way there.

That information is available. As far as whether that's going to be incorporated, it's unknown at this point, and tomorrow, when Kelsey is here, and Chip is here too, to answer questions about that when we get to that item on the agenda, but, as you said, it's all very complicated, and there are lots of moving pieces, and I can't explain it all to you.

MR. ATACK: So that's when we'll find out about whether we're going to have a July or August or September season or is the SSC going to give us an ABC or what's going to happen with all the data? If we exceed this year, we won't have one this year?

DR. CRABTREE: It all hinges on Amendment 43, and that is in secretarial review now, and the notice of availability will be published later this week or next week, and the proposed rule has to be published, and we have to go through those comment periods. Then, once the amendment is approved, if it's approved, it would reset the ACLs. Whether that's going to happen in July or whether it slips back to August at this point, I don't know, but, in order to have a fishery this year, Amendment 43 has to go into place, and so it's still got to go through the process, because that sets the ACL.

MR. ATACK: So, regardless of the 2017 landings, if 43 goes through, that ACL will be the ACL and then whatever the -- Okay. There is no accountability measure from 2017 if 43 goes through?

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

MR. JOHNSON: Myra, did you say that the council could also not approve this and that they could come up with a total aggregate of all snapper grouper species and create a whole new system that they were considering? Was that in here, too?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and so let me pull up the decision document, so I can show you these nice little tables. That may make it just a little bit easier for you guys to visualize the whole thing. This is the document that we used during the March meeting when the council, the committee, the Snapper Grouper Committee, discussed this amendment and they subsequently made all the recommendations, or they selected all the preferred alternatives, that I just showed you.

I apologize for scrolling, but I'm going to try and go slowly. Here is the no action. That is what is currently in place, and so we have these color-coded tables to make it a little bit easier for people to sort of visualize what they are proposing. Here is all your species in the blue that don't currently belong to any aggregates. This is your twenty-fish aggregate right here, and your grouper aggregate, as you can see, includes some deepwater species, and so some of the input we received during the visioning process project is that the aggregates don't quite reflect how the fishery is prosecuted. Like you have shallow-water and deepwater all put together, and so one of the suggestions, or some of the suggestions, that were popular amongst stakeholders was to tailor it a little bit more closely to how people are fishing for snapper grouper species.

Here is the alternative that the council has selected as their preferred. You have got your deepwater species here, which includes these deepwater snappers that are currently not included in that aggregate, all your deepwater grouper and your tilefishes and wreckfish. Your shallow-water grouper would be just the shallow-water grouper, and then you have the two sub-alternatives that I mentioned, and you have to scroll down to see the difference here, but one of them, Sub-Alternative 2a, would bring in black sea bass, vermilion, and all the other species that are not currently in an aggregate into this aggregate, and then the other one wouldn't.

They picked that as their preferred, but the one you were mentioning, Jimmy, is down here, which basically you are creating an aggregate that includes all the snapper grouper species that are allowed to be harvested into one big group. If the council changes their mind and selects this one as their preferred, the way the document is structured right now, it would not easily allow them to then pick a recreational season just for the deepwater species or do the single-hook rig just for the deepwater species, just because the amendment isn't structured like that, but they could still do it. We would just have to change things around a little bit and say, for these species, the recreational season would be this, and, for these species, you would only be allowed to use single-hook rigs and that sort of thing.

That is where I am kind of a little afraid of these public hearings, because I know this is really confusing to people, and so, if anybody has any ideas for how to explain this in a way that is going to be easier for folks to understand -- We are trying flow charts, and we're trying these tables, and we're trying to make it easier for people.

MR. HULL: I am a commercial fisherman, but I am trying to understand what you're describing to this AP, and I think that some of the members of this AP probably have some pretty big concerns, and I know Captain Johnson made a statement that he thought that this was going to be pretty confusing already, and what's it going to do the deepwater fishery recreationally when the headboat operator goes to deep water or the charter boats that go to deep water?

The impacts of the discards that are going to happen and the impacts on their business to these proposals, and, of course, we know that the pressure on the fishery is wide open recreationally.

There is no cap on participation, and so that's why you're having to continually clamp down, but, if this was my bread-and-butter, I would be greatly concerned at what's happening.

MR. LORENZ: I just have one question. Some of these species, a number of these species, the groupers, they will cross between to me what I would call deep and shallow water. Now, I know you group them by name, and this is a shallow water and this is a deep water, but, if we start getting into a requirement for the deepwater fishing to be a single-hook rig, which I would endorse, actually, even for the so-called shallow water, at what point am I no longer fishing the shallow water and am in the deep water? Are we going to define what deep water is to switch off to that legal requirement to get rid of two-hook rigs?

MS. BROUWER: Well, that's tricky if the council is going to go down the road of defining what is deep water and what is shallow water, because that's something that would create problems for enforcement, and I think release mortality is a big something that dictates -- Something that is being used to make these groupings, and so we're talking about the deepwater species are those that we consider to have pretty high release mortality, like your snowy and your tilefishes, that are probably not going to survive being caught and released. It's sort of an arbitrary definition that there isn't really a demarcation for what constitutes deep water and what is shallow, but I see where you're coming from.

MR. LORENZ: Where I'm coming from is the announcing what species I'm going for versus what depth. In other words, I would consider 300 or 400 feet pretty deep, yet, in North Carolina, you can catch a red grouper there.

MR. JOHNSON: Just to clarify, I can count pretty good, and I don't have a problem with it. I am just talking about the general fishing public, I think, is going to be a challenge. I can keep track of what we catch, and this doesn't change bag limits. Bag limits remain the same for all of these species, but this just puts a cap on the number of fish you can have per person on your vessel, if I understand it correctly, and so what I do like about it is it does address some species that do not have bag limits, and so it will maybe keep, sometime in the future, those species from being closed, like gray triggerfish recreationally or bar jack or who knows, and so I guess it's a way of getting at that. I'm not sure it's the best way, but we'll deal with whatever you give us.

MR. COX: I see pros and cons of it, but I don't want to put Captain Freeman on the spot, but he's kind of the expert in our backyard, and, Jim, I was wondering what your thoughts were on this. I mean, talking about the single-hook, and I know you're a deepwater fisherman, and, if you wanted to talk about it for a minute, I would appreciate it.

MR. R. FREEMAN: Well, Myra, am I missing something, or are the vermilion snappers not listed, because it's a very targeted species in the shallow and the deep. I mean, we've caught them out to 600 feet, and we've caught them in eighty feet, and so where are they going to be? It's gotten to the point that the deepwater limits, the snowy and the tilefish, is almost not worth the effort to go out there, other than doing some trolling coming and going. The single-hook rig, I guess it makes sense if you're going to say, hey, they can only have one snowy or whatever, but, the fact that the snowy and the tile are mixed together, then the practical point is you're not going to spend more time with reduced effort by using the single-hook rig. It's just not very practical.

MS. BROUWER: Michelle Duval is listening in on the webinar, and she just sent in a comment, and she says that I think the big thing with the cap of twenty fish total is that it doesn't change any of the existing aggregate limits or individual species limits.

That is where the council was trying to compromise and make it less confusing or to -- Any kind of change is always sometimes hard to adjust to, and everybody is used to the existing limits, and, yes, they may not be ideal, but I get it that everybody is used to those, and so I think some council members were sensitive to that and didn't want to make the changes too drastic, and so that particular alternative, Jimmy, that you brought up would do that. It would allow for maintaining the existing limits and just capping the harvest at twenty fish, and so that was the idea behind that.

MR. R. FREEMAN: Well, the twenty fish, where currently the guys have been used to the five bliners and the seven sea bass and then twenty triggers on top of that or something, and those fish will be caught in the same areas and that sort of thing, and so this is a significant reduction, where currently say they could -- On those three species, you could have thirty-two fish, and now you're going to tell them that they can only have twenty, and it's going to be another impact on the guy from New York. He isn't coming that far to catch twenty fish. We have got to prove that we're doing something effective for the survival of these species if we're going to make this much of a drastic reduction in what's allowed to be taken home by these fishermen.

MR. COX: I have one last thing to say. I think, at some point, we're going to need to learn to -- I mean, there is another deepwater species that I am concerned about, both commercial and recreational, and it's the barrellfish. I think we need to figure out a way to start managing that fishery as well.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Under deepwater species, once again, the wreckfish is listed, and there still hasn't been a landing recreationally, and then also you've got your tilefish and snowy, and, outside of south Florida, everywhere else it's forty-plus miles offshore to get there. If you're going out there recreationally with a group of guys, you're going to have to have a few people on the boat to make the fuel expenses, and you may have only one single hook down, but you're going to have five guys with one single hook down there, and there's going to be a lot of discards going somewhere, and so I don't know. Once you start getting into the deepwater species like that, you've got to come up with something a little better than this, because it's either none or you try to do something a little bit better, make it a little more real on all these discards.

MR. MOSS: Remember too though, Jim, unless I'm wrong, this isn't boat limit. I mean, the aggregates, even for the deepwater, it's going to be individual, and so like you were saying -- I am a south Florida guy, just like you, and so, for us, we can almost take a kayak out to the deep water, but I know up north, like you were saying, if you get five guys together, each five guys gets his -- I am just kind of playing devil's advocate, and it's not like it's a boat limit of three. Everybody gets theirs, and I'm just throwing that out there.

MR. JOHNSON: I think the point Jimmy is getting to, and the one that I have always struggled with, is we've got a one-fish snowy grouper per boat limit, and isn't that correct? I think one hook is better than two. I mean, it used to be that you had five guys dropping down two hooks each to catch one fish. Not one fish a person, but one fish, and so I guess this is better. I don't know how much better, but it's better.

MS. BROUWER: If it helps, I guess I was going to pull up the alternatives that are being considered, and I apologize that this is a little confusing here, but, for the bag limit for the deepwater species, there are -- I showed you what the council's preferred is, but there are other alternatives, and some would take away the per-vessel restrictions. The council just simply wanted to maintain those, but there are alternatives that are considered and have been analyzed that would remove some of those more stringent things that are currently in place for wreckfish and for snowy.

Here is up on the screen, and so they had a suite of alternatives of one per day, one per day with existing restrictions on golden, snowy, and wreckfish, and then the same thing for two per day and three per day. They have selected 2f as their preferred, but those other ones are still available for them to consider.

MR. R. FREEMAN: That as an alternative -- If you've got the three tilefish per person -- Todd and some of their crew did six charters with me back two years ago, and I think they will agree that, in spite of what some of the people think, those snowy and tilefish are inhabiting the same bottom.

You may put a two-hook bottom rig down and come up with a snowy and a tilefish off the same spot or wreck or whatever, and so, when you have that kind of limit, then, if you're still going to be targeting the tilefish, then you're going to be killing snowy to try to get to three tilefish, and so that's why I think you should have a deepwater aggregate that makes some sense to the fishermen, where this, to me, doesn't accomplish the goal. If it's fish out of the ecosystem, then whether you're putting them into a cooler to take home and eat or you're throwing them overboard, then I just don't see that this is the right approach.

MR. JOHNSON: Just one more quick question. This analysis for this season was done based on one fish per boat, correct, to try to stay within the ACL? I am speaking specifically about snowy grouper. If you change it to one fish per person, what is that going to do to that? Did they do an analysis doing that as well, and what does that do to the ACL? How much is it going to be exceeded? It's still amazing to me that we have a fishery for snowy grouper at one fish per boat for three months.

MS. BROUWER: As you know, recreational landings estimates are very uncertain. The level of intercepts for deepwater species is very, very low. I think it's a handful for some species over a three-year period, and those numbers are the ones that we have to use for the analysis, and so the analyses were done with the existing data.

The complicating thing that I really kind of didn't want to go there, but, when you compare to the ACL, you have to move away from the aggregates and start thinking about these complexes, because some of these species, as you know, are under a complex ACL.

For example, blueline tilefish used to be in the deepwater complex. Then, when they got the stock assessment, they were removed from that complex, and they have their own ACL, and so it's a little difficult when you're talking aggregates and then compare what messing with those aggregates is going to do to the landings that you use, because you're comparing it sometimes to different ACLs. Blueline has its own, golden tilefish has its own, and some of the groupers are lumped together, and so it's a little -- It's not that clear-cut that we can say, okay, if you have a season, this is exactly what it's going to do. I mean, it's very kind of fluid.

If it's okay with you all, then we'll get back to walking through the various amendments. Jack had already mentioned the upcoming one that I was going to tell you about, the one that addresses the commercial measures, and so that's Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27, and, this one, recall that we spent a good bit of time talking about this one last time, and we looked through the analyses.

The AP had specific recommendations on the various alternatives, and so the council talked about it in March, and they selected preferreds for Action 1, which is the split season for blueline, and they elected to retain the calendar year as the fishing year instead of implementing a commercial split season, but, instead, they modified the trip limit, and so their preferred is to have a 100-pound trip limit from January through April and then up that to 300 pounds from May to December.

For snowy, their preferred is to split the commercial fishing year into two seasons and allocate 70 percent to Season 1, which is January through June, and 30 percent of the ACL to the second period of July through December. Then you still have that rollover from one season to the next if there's an unused ACL, and then don't change the trip limit there. There weren't any alternatives. There was no need to change that.

For amberjack, the AP had suggested a specific alternative that they thought the council should consider, and that was included for analysis, but their preferred right now for amberjack is to split the season into two -- Split the ACL 50/50 into two seasons, and, for this one, the fishing year starts on March 1. Then have a trip limit of 1,000 pounds in both seasons. I am going to pause there, because I think Jack had a question.

MR. COX: If I could, and I don't know if it's the right time, but would you remind us what the commercial ACL is for the gray tilefish and also what the -- What's going on with tilefish, and I know there's some stuff in the works with the Mid-Atlantic.

MS. BROUWER: Right, and so, in the overview document, there is an item that explains what's been happening with blueline tilefish. I hesitate to go through it all, just because I haven't been very involved in it, and there's a lot going on. As you mentioned, the Mid-Atlantic Council and the Mid-Atlantic Council's SSC and our SSC have been holding talks to try to figure out how to divvy up the ABC, because the assessment was done coast-wide, and they are trying to figure out how to allocate that.

That has been happening for the past several months. My understanding is that our SSC is going to meet in May, May 1 through 3, and they're going to be talking about the recommendations that the Mid-Atlantic has put forth for how to go about establishing an ABC that's going to work for the management agencies, and the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic will continue to manage using the North Carolina/Virginia border as the demarcation for that stock. I would be happy to pull up -- I don't know the ACL off the top of my head, but I can --

MR. HULL: Blueline tilefish is 87,000 pounds commercial, 87,500, and 87,200 for recreational. That was set by Regulatory Amendment 25. That's basically a 50/50 split. It's 50.07 and 49.93, and so it's 87,500 pounds.

MR. COX: Thank you, Myra.

MR. R. FREEMAN: What was the logic behind 70 percent of the catch limit during the first six months and 30 percent the last six months? Is that tied to a spawning season or what?

MS. BROUWER: No, and my understanding is, because blueline and snowy go hand-in-hand, they're trying to come up with a way that is going to optimize the catch for both species and that is going to minimize the amount of discards of both, because they are caught together, and so having the 70/30 split just maximized the length of the season and is expected to create less of an issue between those two.

MR. JOHNSON: I think some of that was addressing market concerns too, because you have shallow-water grouper closed January to May 1, and so snowy grouper is really valuable for the market during those months.

MS. BROUWER: We talked about amberjack. For red porgy, the council's preferred, again, is to split the season into two periods. For this one, the ACL would be allocated 30/70, January through April being the first season and May through December the second, and so, for this one, there is already a restriction on sale and purchase during that first part of the year, and so they're looking at a trip limit of sixty fish for that first season, and this, recall, was done in an effort to sort of make a lot of the discarding that's going on into landings, because a lot of red porgy are being discarded when vermilion and gray triggerfish are still open.

MR. COX: I just want to say I think that's a great thing that was done in visioning, and we can thank Chris to kind of get this thing off the ground, because it has really made our guys happy, because there is a lot of discarding, and keep in mind that the commercial guys could keep their recreational limit anyway, and so that allows them to have something to sell.

MS. BROUWER: For vermilion, this is another one where the AP has had a good bit of input. The council did not select a preferred for this one, and so you can see what the alternatives are that we're going to be taking out to public hearings, and so, for all of those, for both 2 and 3, you retain the trip limit and the trip limit reduction in Season 1. Then you modify the second season.

Then Alternative 4 has -- You take away those step-downs and you modify the trip limits, and these are what is being considered, the 1,000, 850, and 700 pounds. The council talked about this a little bit. In the end, they couldn't really decide on a preferred. They said let's just take it out to public hearings and come back to it in June, and so that's where they are on vermilion.

For almaco, they selected twenty inches as their preferred for a minimum size limit and then a commercial trip limit for the complex, which includes lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish, of 500 pounds gutted weight. This one, from what I recall of the analysis, is a pretty short season. It wraps up by August, and it's done, and so the 500-pound gutted weight is going to stretch it a little bit, but you're still going to be looking at an in-season closure for that complex, the way things are.

Then we're looking at the same thing for red grouper, as we already talked about for the recreational amendment, and so that January through May spawning season closure. Then the same thing for the deepwater species size limit and the reduction in the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish.

MR. JOHNSON: I was just going to comment on the 500-pound almaco trip limit. That's really aimed at trying to slow down the banded rudderfish harvest, because that's what's been driving that complex, is the banded rudderfish landings. When those things get together to spawn, anybody in Florida can tell you that you can really whop them, and so, in a perfect world, almaco would have their own ACL, is what really needs to happen, but this is better than what we had.

MR. COX: At some point, I would like to see us revisit the allocation for the banded rudder, too. I think it's something like eighty-some percent recreational. That's something to look at.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. Moving along then, here I'm just going to quickly go through amendments that are in the process of being developed, and so we're looking at doing scoping hearings for an amendment that is going to approve an additional three types of release gear for sea turtles, and so it's just going to -- From what I understand, this type of gear is going to make it easier. They are more portable, and they are easier to carry on different-sized vessels.

First, they have to go through this approval process, and they need to be added to the list of approved sea turtle release gear that can be used in the commercial fishery for snapper grouper, and then we would also modify the framework for the FMP so that, when the Science Center approves a new type of gear, it can be easily incorporated into the regulations, and so scoping hearings for that amendment are going to be done via webinar at the end of this month.

Then here are amendments that are under development, and they're still sort of -- We're kind of chugging along, and some of these have been kind of on the back burner for a little while. The one for blueline tilefish that I have already talked about, we're still waiting to hear recommendations on the ABC for blueline tilefish, and so that's coming up. May is when our SSC is going to convene, and so the council is going to get that recommendation in June. Then they will proceed with that amendment.

The Amendment 46, as I mentioned earlier, is still alive, but now it has even fewer actions in it, and so the council wanted to keep options to look at a recreational permit and do some changes to reporting in this amendment, and so we are in the process of modifying that and bringing it back to the council in June, and they will give us guidance on timing for this amendment then.

Some of the other actions that were included in Amendment 46 have now been taken out and put in their own amendment, and that one is going to deal specifically with best fishing practices, and you guys have talked a lot about descending devices and making that a requirement, or a recommendation, and all that good stuff. Also, powerheads is something we talked about last time. There is a need to potentially remove the prohibition off of South Carolina, and so there is going to be an action to do that in Regulatory Amendment 29.

The for-hire permit moratorium, we did talk about this some last time you guys met, and the council engaged in lengthy discussions about this at their March meeting, and they gave us a good bit of guidance, and so there is different perceptions for whether there is a need to be looking at this right now or not, and so, in the end, they settled on let's improve the information that we're putting in a scoping document and bring that to the council in June, and then they're going to consider approving that for scoping at that time.

They still want to include -- I put a lot of the detail in here so that you guys see where they're coming from. They wanted more specific information as to why the council is considering this action, and so there is a lot of debate about whether it is necessary at this time and the reasons why there has been talk about compliance and a moratorium on for-hire permits and improving compliance with upcoming reporting requirements and that the two have to sort of go hand-in-hand. They wanted to have more information in a document that would explain all of those details to the public.

Also, they wanted to discuss ways to address the existing regulation that prevents charter vessels that have a federal permit from possessing species that are open to harvest in state waters but closed in federal waters, and so that is something that is the way things are right now, and they wanted to have some more discussion about that. Also, include some questions to get input from the public on whether a moratorium should have a specific length, and I guess, by definition, you're talking about sort of a temporary freeze on issuance of permits, and should there be a time limit for that sort of thing, and so these are all questions that the council still feels that they need more input from stakeholders in order to move forward with this amendment.

John Hadley, on staff, is the person that's been tasked with putting this together, and so if you guys would like -- I know that some of you have a vested interest in this, and the AP has recommended to the council that they consider this on many occasions, and so, if you want to spend some time talking about this, by all means, John can come up here and we can have that discussion.

MR. GOMEZ: When was that next meeting? You said in June, and is that the one in Fort Lauderdale?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, the council is meeting June 11 through 14 in Fort Lauderdale, and so the discussion on this amendment would be during the Snapper Grouper Committee, which will be, I think, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week.

MR. JOHNSON: I was going to talk about some of this under Other Business, but we look at electronic reporting for the for-hire industry, but we still leave the door open, and it's not going to be very worthwhile data without this. This is sort of like a two-part thing, and I look at some of the things there -- My boats are inspected by the United States Coast Guard, as are anybody that takes more than six people.

We already jump through so many hoops, and this is going to be another hoop to jump through, and, as you all know, I'm willing to jump through the hoop, but what about all the guys that aren't jumping through the hoops? Those are my concerns, and it's easy to sit here and talk about addressing this difference between federal and state regulations and all this, but we've been talking about this for nine years, and I am not holding my breath that anything is going to get done in the future, and so I just wanted to bring that up.

MS. BROUWER: Moving along, another amendment that we're working on is the red grouper rebuilding, and so I've already talked to you about the stock assessment that prompted the council to have to adjust the ABC. Unfortunately, red grouper is not rebuilding like expected, and so it's not going to rebuild by the date that it was supposed to, and so then now we have to revise the rebuilding plan, and so there's an amendment in the works that is going to allow the council to do that.

MR. ATACK: Do we have any idea why the red grouper is not rebuilding? Is there any kind of data or research or juvenile recruitment? I mean, can anybody answer that? We're not really harvesting them, and the landings have been down, and so, reducing the ACL, all that does is say, okay, we're going to get closer to the ACL, but does it really impact the fishery, and so does anybody have any answers as to why we don't have any red grouper?

MR. COX: I will give you my version of it, because I fished heavy on that stock through the 1990s and early 2000s, and we were fishing on that stock I think when those things were in their peak spawning, and we were day-boat fishing and catching anywhere from 500 to 1,000 pounds a day on these fish, and not just commercial, but the recreational sector was hitting it pretty hard as well.

I mean, there were days we were gutting fish in April and May and we would discard, off the side of the dock, 200 or 300 pounds of roe, and I knew during that time that this was going to come back and bite us, and it did, and so I think that we've beat that fishery up pretty hard, and I think it wouldn't hurt my feelings if the fishery was shut down until we could figure out what to do to rebuild it, because we're not seeing a recruitment. Up through the mid-2000s, we saw quite a bit of small red grouper back inshore when we were gag fishing in a hundred feet of water, but we don't see that anymore, and so we've got some work to do.

MR. JOHNSON: Just a couple of questions, and maybe Todd can help with one of them. Is the spawn that takes off of North Carolina -- Is it beneficial? I know like spiny lobster, when you get to northeast Florida and beyond, there is a lot of debate on whether those eggs ever even come to fruition, ever produce little lobsters, and I don't know about red grouper.

The other thing that would be interesting would be to look back in time, prior to -- When did the landings peak? Was it effort driven? Were there high landings back in time, before the 1990s, that we could somehow look at, and then if hurricanes, if storm events, have anything to do with relocating these fish up and down the shelf edge. Just some things, because I am not sure we really know what happened to red grouper, and it may not be something we did. It may just be something that occurred, and that's just my point.

DR. KELLISON: I think, unfortunately, Captain Robert, the answer is we don't know, and that's probably true for most species that might get brought up here, but I will say that Mandy Karnauskas, who is with NMFS at our Miami Lab, has been leading a project that I'm involved with, and a number of others outside of NMFS as well, focused on red snapper that is looking at connectivity between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, one, but then also the fate of spawning in the South Atlantic and where is that going.

That's incorporating oceanographers who have the circulation data, and so that's focused on red snapper, and that project is a little way along, but Mandy and Kyle Shertzer, who some of you know, who is an assessment biologist at our Beaufort Lab, have funding to work on a number of other species as well, and I don't know if red grouper is among them, but I can certainly recommend that to them. I think hopefully we're getting there.

MR. MOSS: Just to throw something in there too, and I know it's anecdotal, but I can tell you that, post-hurricane, just off of Fort Lauderdale, directly outside of Port Everglades inlet, we were catching them left and right for probably three or four months after the hurricane. You usually

don't get bottom fish like we do right there, and for whatever it's worth. I don't know if it moves them or it just stirs them up or what it does, but, post-hurricane, it definitely has an effect, and I can tell you that.

MR. ATTACK: I guess my question was really to try to find out the root cause, because, if we don't really know why, we may not know how to bring them back. Of course, we've always heard that, yes, we've hammered them, and we hit them when they're spawning, and we hit them instead of the gag, because the gag is a choke species, and the grouper. Once we hit the ACL on the gag, we're going to shut the fishing down, and so there were some years where we hit the red grouper, but what are all the options as to why they're not coming back?

I mean, who is looking at the nursery areas, or are we doing any kind of population counts in nursery areas? With red snapper, you hear about Class 1 or Class 2 or whatever, and what are the possible answers? I mean, lionfish could be an impact, but I have never really heard, other than, yes, we hit them really hard and we fished them hard, but how many other things out there affect why they haven't come back?

MR. COX: In the 1980s, I was fishing on the commercial boats, and we always had 200 or 300 or 400 or 500-pound trips, I mean pounds of red grouper per trip. We had a nice, healthy fishery on red grouper. I think the good news is there is a segregation of the gags and the red grouper. We don't catch very many gags when we're out there fishing on the red grouper, the 130 to 150 feet of water, and so we can -- The council did do the right thing by separating that into a shallow-water season, because we definitely have a distinction between the two fish when we're targeting them, but I think we're on the right track.

I mean, if we could just extend the spawning season, like the council is looking at, through May, and if we can include some kind of small trip limit in the fishery, to where it's just a bycatch fishery and not a targeted fishery, both commercial and recreational, I think we'll be on the right track to rebuild them, but I also would agree that we do see spikes in gag and red grouper after hurricane events.

MR. R. FREEMAN: I don't know whether it's something that Rusty sent me or whatever, but, within the last couple of weeks, I have had a fisheries study or whatever that implied that the lionfish was a definite unknown in its impact on the forage fish, and the red grouper would be one of them slow-moving critters that would certainly be a target that is going to suffer from the predation of the lionfish and species like that.

MS. BROUWER: To that point, recall that you guys put together a fishery performance report for red grouper last year or the year before, and I can't quite remember, and we went through all those questions to inform the discussions the SSC was going to have on the stock assessment and so forth, and so we're all trying to figure out what's going on with red grouper, and one of the things that the SSC did was they recommended setting the ABC based on projections under a low-recruitment scenario, presumably because that's obviously what's going on, but we don't know whether it's related to the fishery or whether it's fishing mortality or whether it's a natural thing or whatnot.

My recollection is that the SSC made that recommendation, and that's what the council did, with the intent of coming back and look at the assessment again. Red grouper is going to be one of the

ones that is going to get reassessed pretty quickly, soon after the MRIP revisions are done, and so hopefully we're going to have more information on red grouper in the next couple of years to tailor management a little bit better, and, as you said, even at F equals zero, which means no fishing whatsoever, even at that, there is indication that the stock is not expected to rebuild under the current plan.

MR. BUFF: Me and Jack were just sitting here talking about it. If this ACL is going to be so low, the council ought to think about putting a bycatch trip limit on this for the grouper fishing, instead of having that normal -- Because it's not going to last very long, and so it would be proactive, and it wouldn't be too devastating for everybody, and I don't know what everybody thinks about that. If we had some sort of small trip limit, like they're doing with the red snapper, that might go a long way, and so we could at least still have what little bit we're going to be able to catch in with the other grouper, because they're going to be catching them anyway, and we'll be throwing them back.

MR. MOSS: Do you want to make a motion for that for us to talk about?

MR. BUFF: **I will make a motion that there should be a bycatch trip limit for red grouper.**

MR. ATACK: I will second it.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Do you like the way that's written so far, Scott? Jim already seconded it.

MR. BUFF: Yes.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Is there discussion?

MR. JOHNSON: I just was curious what kind of range you were talking about, like seventy-five pounds or a hundred pounds or 200 pounds? We've got to have something.

MR. COX: Myra, what did you say that ACL was going to look like this year for red grouper coming into 2019?

MS. BROUWER: 139,000 for this year and it's just slightly higher for 2019.

MR. COX: Is that a total ACL, commercial and recreational?

MS. BROUWER: That is total.

MR. COX: That would take a little bit of thought, rather than trying to just answer that question off the top of our heads. I mean, we only caught 11 percent last year, and we caught 39,000 pounds on the commercial ACL last year, and that's not very much.

MR. ATACK: I think you would have to look at what the landings are, and they could run the numbers on what the season would be, what time of year they're landed now, and then they would have to look at the numbers and the data and come up with some options, but all we're doing is asking them to consider it and then come up with some options later.

MR. BONURA: Is there any way to find out a historical average in trips on how many fish have been caught historically per trip?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, I'm sure that we could have that information, but I just don't have it right now, but we did put together a little information document that you all used for your fishery performance report that -- After the break, I could bring that back up, if you would like to continue discussion on this, or, as Jim said, I think at this point, the council would have to figure out where to include this action. Like I said, red grouper is going to get assessed, or there is going to be an update to the assessment coming up soon, and so, at that time, my feeling is the council will be ready to make whatever additional changes to red grouper, and so it's not going to be anytime soon, and so we have a little bit of time, but it is important that you put this forth.

MR. BUFF: Just keep in mind that grouper season is May 1, and I know that's never going to happen probably this year, more than likely, but just like me and Jack was just talking, and if the total ACL is 139,000 or 140,000, if you split that in half, we're at 70,000, and we only caught 39,000 all of last year, and so just kind of keep that in mind.

MR. MOSS: All right. Any more discussion on this? We'll put it to a vote. **All those who approve, seventeen; any opposed. The motion passes.**

MS. BROUWER: I think I'm close to the end, and so just bear with me, and then we can have some cookies. Just a little bit longer. The next one in line is -- You can see the council has been very busy, and so we're developing all kinds of amendments these days, and so one that you guys talked about a little bit when Manny was on the AP is for yellowtail snapper, and the council talked about it in March, and they have directed us to begin work on an amendment that would consider changing accountability measures for that fishery to take away the in-season closures for either sector until the total ACL is met.

We are going to be bringing that to the council with as much detail as we can to the June meeting, and so the idea is that yellowtail closed early last year, and I think it closed in June, and it's at like 82, or almost 83, percent right now for the commercial, and so the guys in south Florida are really wanting to see that change move forward.

MR. ATACK: Is that a doable proposal? I mean, the way we get recreational landings these days, how are you going to know if the total ACL is met? You won't know for six months, right? This sounds good on paper, but is it a reality?

MS. BROUWER: That's what the council is going to talk about in June, and so we'll bring whatever we can gather, and we'll go from there. Another amendment that we've talked about a little bit is one that would change the acceptable biological catch control rule, and so this is going to be a comprehensive amendment, and so it's not only going to be for snapper grouper, but it will change things for that FMP.

This would include changes that would allow the council to be more flexible in specifying how risky they are willing to be with establishing an ABC, and it would allow the SSC to reevaluate how it addresses uncertainty in the stock assessments and in specifying ABCs, and it would allow a phase-in and a carryover of ABCs, and so we're looking at all of those different scenarios. It's going to take a little while, as you can imagine. It's pretty complicated, and so this one is in the

works. We are not even at the scoping phase yet, but we'll be talking about this one, I'm sure, in upcoming AP meetings.

Then the last one that I have for you is a comprehensive review of recreational accountability measures, and so, as you know, the council, for a long time, has been expressing concern, definitely, over the recreational estimates and the quality and timeliness of those data for their management decisions, and they are doing things like this MyFishCount app that we're going to be talking about tomorrow, but one of the things they can do is to change their accountability measures, and so they're looking at doing a comprehensive review of all the accountability measures to allow them a little bit more flexibility in how they manage the recreational fishery. Again, that is going to be an overarching amendment that we are just now getting started with, and so more to come on that one, and that's all I have for now. Are there any questions?

MR. COX: I just have to say, and I can't help it, but when you put an accountability measure in place like cobia and Congress decides to overrule what the council puts in place, it doesn't make any difference anyway.

MR. ATACK: Maybe I didn't listen close enough, but back to the recreational permit, that Amendment 46, how close are we to getting the recreational permits? Where is that again?

MS. BROUWER: The council is going to be looking at approving that for scoping I believe in June, and so we're going to bring to them a more fleshed-out options paper with like different scenarios and things, and Chip is the lead on that amendment, and he is here if you want to talk to him more about that one, and so it would be approved for scoping in June.

MR. ATACK: Great, because, once we get that, I think we can get the for-hire reporting, and maybe the recreational landings will be more live data, rather than five or six months later you find out what we landed or didn't land, and so that's why it's hot on my list.

MR. LORENZ: Myra, to follow up with Jim, I would like to hear -- I am a little unknowledgeable on exactly how the recreational permit will come about, and, unfortunately, Dr. Crabtree just walked out, and so will he be here tomorrow, so we can have some questions on it? It seems like there isn't a structure to it within his office, and at a number of the SAFMC meetings that I have attended, he has brought up problems with it or why you couldn't do it, and it's never like it's my job and here's how I will do it, and so I was wondering if that would lie in the office that Dr. Crabtree works in, or do we go to Chris Oliver, or is this something that has to go through the Secretary's office? I wouldn't know, as an activist, where to get started, other than it seems like there is no -- We're going to keep talking, and it won't get started, because there doesn't seem to be a mechanism or an infrastructure to do it.

DR. COLLIER: It's very complicated, and we are working through this, and we're looking at other examples of ways that it has been done. Right now, the Mid-Atlantic is -- They have a requirement in one of their amendments to require reporting and permitting for blueline tilefish and golden tilefish fishermen, and so we're working with them to make sure that anything we come up with is adaptable for blueline tilefish.

We've been looking at some of the stuff that goes on in the Northwest, where they require all salmon to be -- You have to have a permit, and you have to report each one of those. It's not

electronic reporting, but they do require it, and so there is a mechanism for it, and we're trying to figure out whether or not it's going to be for a vessel or for a private angler, how that's going to be set up, and just depending on how some of these ideas are fleshed out will depend on how the structure is set up.

MR. LORENZ: May I just have a follow-on to that? From my understanding, here is where it sits. It's going to be a bottoms-up directive. In other words, I read *National Fisherman*, believe it or not, and they're a commercial fishing magazine, every month, and Chris Oliver always has his little blip in there with what the priorities are, and he mentions IUU, and he mentions having sustainable fishing, and, this month, it was really keeping an interest in maintaining fishing communities.

Never do I ever see anything on controlling the recreational fishery, and this would seem like a bottom-up. I guess where I've come from in the corporate world, often a CEO says something is going to be done strategically, and so that would leave me to believe that, wow, if you go to Mr. Ross's office that it could really happen. Then my question was then, well, no, then why couldn't maybe Mr. Oliver do that and move on, and here now we're going to bump it into what would be Roy's office, or even with you, and it would be a bottoms-up recommendation from the field, so to speak, to implement a license, and that's where we're heading, right? I mean, that looks like what the pathway is going to be. There is nobody from the top pushing for this.

DR. COLLIER: Well, that's generally how permits are established, is it starts with something like an AP recommending a permit for a certain fishery, and so now we have a golden tilefish permit, and we also have an endorsement for the black sea bass pot fishermen, and those are recommendations that have developed, either from the council or from an AP, in order to control those fisheries, and so this would be another example of how to do it.

MR. LORENZ: Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: When I was the chair of this group a few years back, I went out to Seattle to an electronic monitoring workshop, and I spent a week out there listening to all the different things that they've done all over the world, and one thing that was really clear was, in order for any of these things to work, you have to use the carrot-and-the-stick approach.

In this case, the carrot would be, yes, you could actually go fishing. The stick would be, no, you can't, and, if we do anything less than that, and they've done plenty of voluntary things. There is a lot of papers on it, but they do not work. When you just leave it up to you can do this if you want to and here's the website that you can go report on, they don't work, and they're a waste of time, and they're a waste of money that could be better spent maybe on a stock assessment.

I can't say that firmly enough. This was a huge group of people, and I don't know how many hundred people, and Mel was there, and carrot-or-stick, and that was pretty clear to me, and so, if we're not willing to do that, then we're really just wasting our time. I mean, I hate to be blunt, but that's it. If we're not willing to take that approach to fisheries, then we're going to be having this conversation, or you all will be having this conversation, years down the road.

MR. MOSS: The two things that I will kind of add that might be positives of moving in that direction, and I think it might have been at the last council meeting that I attended, were there were

a bunch of people from some of the Gulf states, Louisiana and Mississippi, and it had to do with red snapper reporting, and it was exactly what you said. A couple of them anyway would -- You had the mandatory reporting, and you got essentially a -- We'll call it a stamp, even though my verbiage might be off, but you don't get another one until you report your first one and so on and so forth, and so the nice thing is, if there are the vehicles out there, and I think that's one of the things that Chip and Dr. Crabtree are doing, are looking at what is going to be the best vehicle for this to get the participation.

The other thing, and I was actually reading an interesting article the other day, or it might have been a couple of weeks ago, about we all say the different generations, the millennials and the X and all this, and I guess the new generation is not the show me, but it's the show you generation. Everybody loves to brag and show, whether it's Facebook or Instagram or Snapchat and all that stuff, and so hopefully, moving forward, everybody will be so proud and braggadocious enough that they will have to report everything, and I'm just throwing that out there.

MR. JOHNSON: To respond to that, at that same meeting, there were some gentlemen from Texas, and they were advocating for VMS on all charter boats, which I really am not a big fan of, and so I finally got the guy in the corner, because I just had to know why he really wanted this, and he said it's simple and I want to be able to prove what I catch.

Now, sector separation is a nasty word, but that's how those guys are able to say this is what we have been catching over all these years and, look, I have proof. Until we're able to be willing to do these kinds of things, we're still going to be guessing at landings and guessing at effort.

We're going to be guessing at all of this stuff, and, to go way back to the sea turtle thing, I have sea turtle release gear on all my charter boats, like every charter boat that operates does and every commercial boat does. How many boats is that? Is it 2,300 or 3,000, maybe? How many recreational boats have all that junk we've got to load on our boat? I am not picking on recreational fishermen, but are we to assume that a recreational guy never catches a sea turtle and only commercial guys catch them?

Again, that's why I wanted to have that discussion about this electronic reporting. Here's another hoop, another hurdle, and to what end are we going here? Is it really helping what the real problem is? I am open for solutions and suggestions, because everything that I have put forward in nine years has gone nowhere. There has been a little bit of traction, maybe, but it really hasn't gone anywhere. Everybody wants to point at all the problems, and I'm hopeful that this group is going to come up with some solutions, because we all know what the problems are, and there are plenty of them, and so, if somebody has got some fresh ideas, this is the place, this group right here. You are the people to put those ideas forward. Thank you.

MR. COX: Robert, very well said, and I agree with you. I think the council has had a hard time with this, and all the things that you said about getting better data and figuring out who is catching what, these are things that we're going to have to do, and we're going to have to give the council support, because it's very controversial, and there are a lot of things that -- Sometimes they don't want to touch it and sometimes it's very political, but I think we're going to have to roll our sleeves up here with this group and support the council and come up with some solutions, and so, during this week or when you guys get together and have dinner or whatever, I think this is something that we really need to talk about and try to come up with something.

MR. BUFF: I just kind of want to reiterate what Robert said. If I want to go bear hunting, I've got to buy bear tags. If I want to go duck hunting, I've got to have a duck stamp. If I want to go deer hunting, I've got to buy deer tags, and, at the end of the day, the fishery, until we have some accountability for what's going on, we're throwing darts at a dart board, and we've talked about this.

I've been here a year-and-a-half, and it's the same thing ever year, and I'm not kicking the recreational guy. I do both, but, at the end of the day, we don't really know what we're talking about, because we don't know really what's being caught, and, until we have some accountability measures for what's really going on, and the political stuff of this shouldn't even play a part. We are here because of the environment. It should not be political. This ought to be what's best for everybody involved and not to say that we're better or they're better or any of us are worse. We're all fishing in the same place, and that's why we're here, is because we care about what we're doing.

Also, to the sea turtle stuff, either my guys are really not good at catching turtles, but I've been in this business for almost twenty years, and we spend probably \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year to re-buy all of this stuff, because it gets lost and misplaced. To my knowledge, since 1998, we have caught one turtle on one boat, and here we have to have this stuff on our boat, and so either we're not really good at catching them or either we don't catch them, and so I think that's something that ought to be visited.

MR. ATACK: The first letter I wrote to the council was 1995 to Gregg Waugh, and it had to do with Amendment 4, and what I was asking for then was a stamp or some type of thing to identify who is participating in the fishery, and that was twenty-three years ago. Then we came upon different amendments and this and that, and we got into what kind of landings there are on hogfish, and nobody knew, because there is no landings in North Carolina. If there had been this system put in place years ago, there would be some data. Now the recreational guys are concerned that we're going to start monitoring what they're really doing, and they don't have any proof of what they used to do, and then they're going to exceed the ACL.

There is fishery after fishery, and we spent a lot of money and time on black sea bass pot traps and fillets from the Bahamas, but we have not put the effort into establishing something for us to get the data for all of these fishermen in this fishery, and so I am really optimistic that this amendment is going to go through and all us to then data mine efficiently as to what's going on in these fisheries, so we know what the fish stock is and how it is and how we're impacting it.

I remember the AP put motions together for this many years ago, and I've been on this AP for a while, and I remember talking to Roy about it, and Roy was kind of shooting the whole thing down, like, no, we can't do that, for some reason, and I don't understand it, but, in other fisheries, they can do things like that, and why can't we do that in this fishery? The next thing you know, next year, we're going to be having questions about some other stock, and we don't have the data, and so we don't know, but, like what Robert said. If they can prove what they've been landing, then you have a much better way of managing that fishery and making the right choices to help make maximum sustainable yield on the fishery and bring it back. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Let's go to Richard and then Robert and then we're going to take a break. I don't want to beat a dead horse. I think we're all pretty much on the same page with this, and we're

going to talk about it again later on in the agenda, and so we'll take these two and then we'll take a break.

MR. GOMEZ: I haven't caught a turtle -- I have caught one turtle in thirty-five years that accidentally got hooked in a down-rigger, and so I never did get this whole turtle exclusion devices, but I agree that this is the place for new ideas, but I've got to tell you that I have never heard an idea that has any possibility of working when it comes to monitoring fish and fisheries and fishermen, and I don't think the VMS is one of them. There are too many variables, like honesty and tide and currents. So many variables go into this, and that's just going to be one more thing that we have to live with, but not one more thing that's going to solve the problem of fish counts.

MR. LORENZ: I was just going to say, in closing, and I will say more tomorrow, but the number-one thing to do is very simple. Before we get to any of the more complex things about recording what we catch and how and what we release, can we just get to a point to count us? I don't know how many peers I even have, the private recreational fishermen on their own boat. How many of us are there? That would be a nice start just to know that before we can talk to anything else.

DR. COLLIER: We can give you an idea of how many recreational fishermen are out there, because it is required for each state to have a recreational license, and so we can get those estimates. We just can't get them for the offshore fishery.

MR. LORENZ: The EEZ, yes.

DR. COLLIER: Right, and the other thing that I wanted to talk about is, any of these electronic reporting methods that we're currently talking about, it's going to take a long time before they are used for monitoring. They will have to be used in an assessment to develop the ACL. In order to do that, you also have to do calibrations with past MRIP numbers, and so it's going to take a while for anything to truly be developed and be used for this electronic reporting, but, coming in the future, you're going to have better data, and you're going to have better information on length information for selectivity, which is important for estimating ACLs, maximum sustainable yield and different things like that.

As these things are going on and being developed, they are going to provide additional information that can be used in stock assessments, but, for the monitoring for an ACL, it's going to take a while for them to get there, but you have to start somewhere, and beginning to collect the data, I think, is a good starting point.

MR. MOSS: All right. On that happy note, thank you, Chip. We'll take fifteen minutes. We'll take a quick break and be back here at 3:20.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: We're going to move right along and get into Regulatory Amendment 28 with Brian Chevront. It's all yours.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thanks. I just want to get you all up to date on what's going on here with Regulatory Amendment 28. First off, this thing is happening pretty quickly. We got direction at the December council meeting that something needs to be done with golden tilefish with the ACL.

Just to give you a little bit of back-up on the history here, golden tilefish is undergoing overfishing, but it's not overfished, and this is the result of SEDAR 25, the update that was done in 2016.

What happened is, once that status was determined, the council did an interim rule that put in a 323,000-pound ACL. Now, an interim rule is a rule that can be in effect for up to -- Well, when it first goes into place, it's for 180 days, and then it can be renewed for another 186 days, which basically gets you a full year of whatever the interim rule is, and the idea is that the councils will then come back in that year and fix whatever the issue is permanently.

What happened is the council put that interim rule into place, and it was effective, I believe, January 2 of this year, and then it will run through June. Now, at the June council meeting, the council will then request the National Marine Fisheries Service to extend it for another 186 days, and the commercial longline fishery is already closed, but the hook-and-line component of the commercial sector has not yet closed, and so we need to get that into effect, but we're now left with the dilemma of what happens on January 2 of 2019?

At this point, if the council does not do anything, the ACL will revert back to the five-hundred-and-twenty-some-odd-thousand pounds that it was before. Well, obviously, they don't want to do that, because that won't be following the outcome of the SEDAR 25 update, and so what the council is intending to do is to vote up or down, whatever they're going to do, in June, this amendment. It's a very, very quick amendment, and it only has two actions.

The first action is to set the ACL for 2019 and beyond, at least until the council changes it again, and then they decided to consider a second action, which was to look at changing the start date of the hook-and-line fishing year. I have given you some of the background, and so, like I said, there are two actions in the amendment, and, like I said, the timing is that the council is going to vote this up or down in June, and it's very, very fast-going, and we expect to get it into -- To submit it for secretarial review sometime within a week or two after the June council meeting, with the notion that this is going to be implemented in time for the January 2019 longline season and go from there.

The purpose and the need is to adjust catch levels and implement management measures for golden tilefish, and so we need to end the overfishing and not allow that to happen anymore, and so the document that you were sent shows the different alternatives that the council is considering. I am going to jump down to those alternatives first, because there is a bit of drama that goes with all of this.

The Alternative 1 is the no action alternative, which is what I described is the case, and the current interim catch limit, annual catch limit, is basically set at 75 percent of fishing at MSY, and that's when the population is at equilibrium. Now, that's all stock assessment terminology, but what that did is, when that was put into place, based on the values that came from the stock assessment, they ended up with the 323,000 pounds that are in place for this year.

Like I said, if we don't get the interim rule, or get this regulatory amendment in effect by January of next year, it goes to 558,036 pounds, and so I was off by about 38,000 pounds before, and so what the council did then was to ask the SSC what do we do and what is the ABC going to be set at for the future, and so the SSC met, and, in the fall, they discussed that, well, the acceptable biological catch recommendation is setting P* at 30 percent.

Now, that is yet more stock biologist lingo that helps them figure out, based on the P^* value, what is the pounds that would be allowed, and so Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 are -- Alternative 2 is the annual catch limit, which is the amount that the council says will be allowed to be caught. Alternative 2 is you're setting that to the acceptable biological catch level. Alternative 3 is to set it at 90 percent of the acceptable biological catch, and Alternative 4 is to set it at 80 percent.

Now, the thing was is that, when those projections came out, because that direction went from the SSC to the Science Center, who then calculated out what the poundage would be that would be related to that, and it created really, really large buffers between the ABC and the ACL. When the council looked at these values this past March, they said, okay, but the buffer seems really huge, and they couldn't quite understand why that was the case.

The council then said, well, what's wrong with continuing to use the 75 percent of FMSY value and basically keep it at the 323,000 pounds, and so this is where we are in the story right now. The council has decided that they want to ask the SSC again to look at this 75 percent of FMSY. It was good enough for the interim rule, and is it good enough for what we're doing now? Well, the SSC is going to look at this next month when they meet, and so we added this additional alternative, and we're going to see what the SSC says, in terms of setting the ABC, because that's in their purview to set the ABC. If they agree that this is okay, then potentially the council may choose Alternative 5 as their preferred alternative, and what's in the interim rule would remain in the future, but therein lies the rub. We don't know what the SSC is going to say.

During the council meeting in March, before they came up with the idea of let's continue what we have in the interim rule, the council had chosen a preferred alternative, but then they backed out of that when they came up with the idea of this 75 percent of FMSY and said, if that's what we could be allowed to do, that probably would be a better choice.

I am looking here, and I backed up to Table 1, so you can see what the values would be, and so, if we did Alternative 1, no action, which is basically modified by the interim rule and then it goes back to 558,036 pounds in 2019, we just can't do that, because that's in violation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and so we know it has to change.

Whether it's going to Alternative 2, 3, 4, or 5, that's what is yet to be determined. However, you can see, when you start looking now at the projected yield at P^* of 30 percent with the ACLs equal to the ABC, that is only 251,000 pounds compared to, when we look over here under Alternative 5, with the ACL set at 75 percent of FMSY, we're looking at 323,000 pounds. Then you start getting down to Alternative 3 is 90 percent of what's in Alternative 2, and Alternative 4 is now 80 percent of what's in Alternative 2.

As you can see, when you use that P^* value, it does go up over time. However, this is not going to be real helpful in the short term, and I believe -- I don't have any SEDAR people here right now, but, if I recall, this stock is supposed to be reassessed in it's either 2020 or 2021, I believe, and is that right? Is it 2019 that it's going to start, but it will be a year or two before we actually will have results that we'll be able to put into management.

We're looking at really the first couple of years, but the thing is that it's set up this way, and we have it -- When you get to 2024, those values would remain in place unless otherwise changed by

the council, because, if we only set it for a couple of years, and if the council did not get something new in place, we would be back in the same position where we are now and trying to come up with a new ACL, and so we're trying to cover all the bases, but, if everything goes the way it's supposed to, then what we would end up with is we would be under this type of approach for the first couple of years and then, hopefully, depending on whatever the stock assessment comes up with, then that would go into effect, in terms of modifying what the ABC and the ACL will be for the future.

When you look at it in that sense, if you're looking at it even though 2021, if you're still fishing under the ACLs that are set by Regulatory Amendment 28, through 2021, Alternative 5 still is what is going to give folks the most fish. That is the bottom line of what we're talking about, and so Table 1 just shows the overall ACL, but we have -- Remember we have the commercial sector and we have the recreational sector, and the commercial sector is specifically broken into two separate components. The first is the longline component, and this shows how many fish, or how many pounds of fish, would be available for the commercial longline component under each of these alternatives.

Over here, Table 3 shows what the ACL would be for the hook-and-line component under these different alternatives, and Table 4 is the actual numbers of recreational fish and not pounds. Recreational landings of golden tilefish are counted in numbers of fish, and so it was translated into numbers of fish.

The council does not currently have a preferred alternative, and I wanted to show you this here, too. Based on past fishery performance, we have looked at when the potential closure date would be for each of the different commercial components and the recreational sector based on the different alternatives, and you can see that those dates here are in Table 5, and, as you would guess, the more pounds that there are available to catch, the longer the season is going to go.

If you look at it here, the commercial hook-and-line, even under the best scenario is probably set to close no longer than April 26 if we leave the start of the fishing year at the same time, and so that's why we have this other action in there that we'll get to in a moment.

The interesting thing about this is that this is moving very, very quickly. The council does not yet have a preferred alternative, and they're going to do the public hearing for this at the June council meeting. Once they've had the public hearing -- People can turn in comments or whatever they want to up until that point. After they have the public hearing, the council will select a preferred alternative, and then presumably we will vote whether to send this in to the National Marine Fisheries Service for secretarial review, and so, if we want to talk about this action first and then we'll go on to the hook-and-line season dates.

MR. HULL: Brian, thanks. In the world of P* uncertainty, where does 30 fall into the uncertainty into this? Is this a high uncertainty that they used or a low uncertainty or --

DR. CHEUVRONT: It kind of falls right in there. It's usually 30 or 40 percent, and so we're in the range.

MR. HULL: Then, as far as the council being able to address these different alternatives, it's kind of -- I guess you said the SSC is going to review maybe some new information or this added

alternative for sure, and so it's kind of how much risk the council wants to take as far as allowing -- Seeing if they can do that type of thing, and is that what --

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, the council's logic in wanting to include this additional alternative is they think that the buffer between OFL and ABC, when you have P^* equals 30 percent, is too large, and it's much larger, percentage-wise, when you're actually looking at pounds of fish, than we've seen in other fisheries when they have had similar P^* set.

I believe, at the council meeting, and, Chip, you might remember better, but when the representative from the Science Center was there, Erik Williams said that he wasn't sure why that buffer was so large between the P^* of 30 percent and the ABC. He thought it bears reviewing, because, at the time that the SSC made the recommendation, they had no idea what the size of that buffer was going to be. They just did it strictly on statistics, and I think the issue that the council wants the SSC to look at is, is that buffer that comes from that P^* of 30 percent, is that unreasonably large or not, and I think that's the bottom line of what they're looking for.

It's up to the SSC. They set the ABC, which the council has to go from, but the council can request the SSC to reconsider and to look at something again, and that's what they're doing in this case, and the council thought, well, if the 323,000 pounds that was calculated by using 75 percent of FMSY is okay for the interim rule, is it also okay for this other rule, this ACL that will end up going into effect, for a few years, and would that be okay, and so they need to get the SSC to weigh-in saying is there undue risk that is occurring biologically to this fishery by setting the ABC now at 75 percent of FMSY.

MR. HULL: Which setting it at 75 percent of FMSY is a buffer in itself, and so they can set that percentage of MSY wherever they would want to as a larger buffer, and so it's buffer upon buffer, in many instances, too, and so anyway.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I think the P^* 30 percent and the 75 percent of FMSY -- They are not building on each other. They are independent of each other, statistically, and what they're doing is it's just -- It's how you calculate the ABC from OFL using these two different things. Yes, if you go with 75 percent of FMSY, you still have a buffer in there, but it's just not as large as if you used a buffer of P^* at 30 percent.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Do you have the number for that buffer?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I can't tell you that right offhand. I would have to pull up the document and look through it, but I can get that for you. You want to know the difference between OFL and then the --

MR. J. FREEMAN: I want to know what the SSC's buffer number is, because, at one point in time, I think it was almost 140,000 or something like that, and we were very high, our buffer was, and, if it's still that number, and they're wanting to take it down -- If we have to take a 235,000-pound hit, and now they're wanting to reduce it again, our buffer is going to be larger than our catch limit.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, the buffer -- Remember it's based on the value that came out of the updated stock assessment, the 2016 stock assessment, and so I'm not sure if the buffer you're

talking about is referring to the outcome from the 2016 stock assessment or from what was in place before that, but I can look up -- I can find out what that number is, the size of that buffer between OFL and then the P* of 30 percent and 75 percent of FMSY, but it was discussed at the March meeting, and the general consensus around the table was, wow, that buffer is really big, and so I can get that to you, but I just can't pull it up right this moment.

MR. ATACK: I was looking at the projected closure dates, I guess your longline, and you've got February 27, I guess, for the interim rule, but, actually, it was like March 27 this year, and only 90 percent was landed. Last year, it was May 9, I guess, with the higher ACL, and do you know why it went longer this year versus your projected?

DR. CHEUVRONT: It could be weather-related or something. Jim might know.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Our average day was eight to ten-foot. We had just a handful of days that was under five-foot, and cold water and everything else going wrong.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, and these are just average -- I mean, when these projections come out, they're just average scenarios based on what has happened over time, and so, when you start to have things like unusual weather events or unexpected weather events, that's going to mess with it one way or the other.

MR. BUFF: This is one of our bread-and-butter fisheries, where we're at. This is something that we depend on quite a bit, and I don't know if this is the time or the place, but the closure dates on this -- I am just making a suggestion, but the longline opens, and would it not make more sense to have the hook-and-line open somewhere close to where the longline closes, to keep the fish prices high? It would also keep that open longer, being the ACL is cut so much, and, also, nobody has addressed the trip limits, and I really don't know how I feel about that, as far as the trip limits even for us, because we're having to run so far to catch these fish and it's not just a five or ten-mile run just to catch them.

I really don't know how we're going to adjust the trip limits to keep it open as long as we can, because, normally, in the past, this has been -- When we had the 135,000, we were catching these fish on up towards the end of the year, when some of the other stuff had already closed, and so we're not going to have that option this year, because that's going to be closed, and so I just don't know that we should maybe open that somewhere to coincide with the longline closing, and that would keep their fish prices high, and it would keep our fish prices higher, and it would last -- It would give us that extra couple months of buffer, and I don't even know that we shouldn't cut the trip limit down maybe by half, and I know that nobody wants to hear that, but, at the end of the day, this is a big, driving force where I'm at. We catch these fish every week, and this is something that keeps our doors open.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I am going to address -- You brought up two things specifically. One is the timing of the beginning of the hook-and-line component, and that's actually Action 2 in here, and we're looking at moving that back to start later in the year, and the other is the commercial longline trip limit. We talked with several of the fishermen, and, actually, in the version that the council saw of this document in March, it had two actions, which they removed, that had to do with commercial trip limits that were for the longline component, because they were very, very unpopular with the longline component.

Those two actions, one was looking at stepping down the commercial trip limit by 500-pound increments, and the guys who were in the longline fishery said, you know, that is going to make it so our trips are becoming less and less profitable for us, and so they just as soon -- We'll take what we can get and let us fish what we can get on the longline, and that's okay.

The other action that we had put in there was, okay, whether or not we reduce the trip limits, another approach that we could take is you can fish for two weeks and then you're off for two weeks and then fish for two more weeks, and they didn't like that either, and so the bottom line was the council looked at ways to extend the longline sector, through trip limit reductions and by allowable fishing days, and neither one was really seen as being very acceptable solutions to this.

MR. BUFF: I just want to make clear that my reduction was the hook-and-line and not the longline.

MR. BONURA: In the hook-and-line sector, we fish golden tile pretty much all year, or we used to, but all the commercial hook-and-liners I have talked to are very, very against trip limits under 500 pounds.

MR. COX: Brian, would you put Alternative 2 up there with the hook-and-line?

DR. CHEUVRONT: This is it right here. This is commercial hook-and-line, and this is ACLs.

MR. COX: I was talking with Vincent earlier, and it seems like the conversation we were having, the difference between the two here, because I would support what Scott is doing, because it gives us a longer access to the fishery. Then Vincent has less species in south Florida to fish on than what we do in North Carolina, and so those guys want to grab what they can get and move on to another fishery, but it just kind of goes back to supporting, at some point -- It's back to a discussion of the two states kind of -- You know what I mean, managing the states together, but I did want to bring up one other thing while I have the mic for just a second, and I wanted to talk about the blackbelly rosefish that we don't manage, but I know it's a pretty big bycatch in this tile fishery, and I would love to hear some conversation on it in terms of how the range -- Like, Vincent, do you catch the blackbelly rosefish? Some of the guys longlining will have a whole lot of them, and so it's something to think about as you look at a smaller trip limit. Do you have the access to that fishery?

MR. BONURA: Usually, if you're catching golden tiles, you don't catch blackbelly rosefish at all. If you're catching blueline tiles, you will catch them.

MR. ATACK: I guess the question I've got is, geographically, you guys are in south Florida, and is it the same fish stock? I mean, has any DNA research been done? Are we managing two different stocks with one ACL, or should there be an ACL for Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina or over the stock split?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I am not able to answer that question. I don't know that there is any information available on whether genetic studies have been done on golden tilefish.

MR. ATACK: The concern, I guess, is with these smaller ACLs and we close the season earlier, and most of them are caught in Florida. You could blow through the critical mass there, and that

fishery could collapse, and then North Carolina is really not harvesting -- The further north fisheries aren't really harvesting the golden tilefish, and so it would be good to know if it's two different stocks or not.

MR. JOHNSON: Were there any alternatives that considered a split season for the hook-and-line?

DR. CHEUVRONT: There were not.

MR. JOHNSON: Okay, because, to Vincent's point, you're not going to have a year-round fishery under this scenario, or not even close to it, and so it would be like do you want to catch 500 pounds for a few months or do you want to catch 250 pounds for a longer period of time, and is that a targeted trip, the 500-pound trip? That is what your trip is on? Okay.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I jumped over here to Action 2 to show you what the council is considering for alternatives. I just wanted to remind you all that, if you would like to make recommendations to the council for alternatives that you would like to see them consider, whether it's just for the hook-and-line sector or all new actions all together on something, or if you would like for them to consider additional alternatives or something for the ACLs, this is the time for you to say, because this is the one and only chance you guys have got at this specific amendment.

Now, that doesn't mean that the council couldn't later decide to do something like if you came up with some ideas that the council wants to consider for the hook-and-line component, other ways to manage that fishing year, whether it's through a split season or it's through reduced trip limit alternatives, things like that, that certainly can be done.

Now, the council may -- If you want to do that, the council may pull that action out of this amendment, because it would need time to have those things analyzed, but that doesn't mean that would go away, because there are some other things, other amendments, that such an action could go into, and so this is your chance though to react to this before the council is expected to take their vote in June. If you have suggestions on ways you want this to be looked at, I would really highly recommend that you make those now.

MR. BUFF: Vincent, this discussion, what would it be to split your season up? I hadn't thought of that until Robert just said that, but, right now, today, I've got the ACL pulled up, and we're at 55 percent, and the weather has been terrible. If the weather was good, we would probably be getting ready to close this thing down, and, last year, it lasted most of the year, and so do we put a motion to have a split season and keep it at 500 or do we try to cut the -- I don't know that there's a right answer, but I am just saying what do we do?

MR. BONURA: On the split season, I would have to think about that, think it over a bit, but on the trip limit for sure, we would -- Keeping it at 500 pounds is the correct thing for us. For you guys, I don't know, but, for us in Florida, that's how we would like it, and this is a targeted fishery, too. You're in the mud, and there is really no bycatch whatsoever. You are catching yellowedge grouper as well. If you catch your 500 pounds of yellowedge, you might have forty or fifty pounds or eighty pounds of yellowedge, and that's it. Then you can go in and come back out.

MR. BUFF: We don't have that bycatch either. We're just catching tilefish, but I am kind of sitting on the fence here, because we're trying to keep the market open too and have fish on the

dock to be able to sell to the restaurants and stuff, and so, for us, it's hard having the doors closed and not being able to have that fish available to the market, and so it's just -- If we could figure out something that worked for everybody -- We're going specifically to catch those tilefish, and that's a long run for us, and so that's why I don't know if we want to cut it or -- I would just like to make the season last as long as we could.

MR. ATACK: Just a quick question. On the DNA, how expensive is it and how long does it take to do it and how much resources does it take?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I am the wrong guy to ask that.

MR. ATACK: I know they've done it on cobia and they've done it on hogfish, and they have done some other things, but I am just curious. If it's not a big deal, it would be good answers to have.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I have a feeling it's a bigger deal than we're thinking, because we're talking about the thousands of pounds that are harvested here versus the cost to be able to go out and do a genetic study, and it would probably have to be somebody in an academic realm who is going to do this, but I just don't know.

MR. ATACK: It's just a matter of getting fin clips and analyzing them from the different fish houses.

DR. KELLISON: I just wanted to note that a similar question arose before the most recent blueline or gray tilefish assessment, and I don't know -- I think it might have come from both the -- I am not sure where the funding arose, but I think it came through NMFS, but there was a study. Someone at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science did that study and just got a bunch of fin clips from some of the survey work that we did, and some of it was commercial, and I think that they found, coast-wide, no genetic differentiation. It's essentially a single population, but I think it would be relatively straightforward to perform, and I don't know what the cost would be. Thanks.

MR. HULL: As comment, and I've been in other discussions with hook-and-line tilefish fishermen from south of me, south of Cape Canaveral, and then we have a longline fleet out of Ponce Inlet, and it kind of seems, for the market purpose, why do we have them both open at the same time, and you could start -- I think we were leaning, the guys south of Cape Canaveral were leaning, more towards opening up the hook-and-line and changing the opening date into March, after the longline will close, probably, with the current ACL situation, which would extend -- Without changing the trip limit, but it would extend it further then, because you would start later, which, for the market, makes a whole lot of sense, because then the price isn't being dropped if we did have some good weather and the longline was able to prosecute their fishery the right way. I mean, there's going to be a lot of fish all at once, and why would you want the hook-and-line guys producing fish at the same time?

If the price is low, they probably wouldn't. They would probably choose not to, and so that was in some discussion, and I think, for me, I would support something like that, to start it later, unless someone would convince me that, for them, it is a good thing.

MR. MOSS: I just want to kind of steer -- We've got a lot of things, I think, going on with these. We've got like four different things that it seems like that we're all discussing, and so I just want

to -- For my own sanity anyway, I want to try to hone in on one thing at a time, and so if we could go back to -- Scott, I know you had initially talked about the possibility of split seasons. If we could finish some discussion on that and then kind of move on to maybe the hook-and-line season starting different and go on to the other aspects, if that's okay with you guys.

MR. HULL: I think he's talking about strictly hook-and-line and not longline, and so this is all hook-and-line.

MR. MOSS: I understand that, but splitting the season, as opposed to starting it later or whatever, but I just wanted to try to focus the discussion in one direction.

MR. BUFF: I am going to throw one more at you. **I would like to make a motion that the council looks at changing the start date, and there is going to be two parts, to the March 1.** That would give the longline sector time to close, and that would keep ours open further and looking at some alternatives for a split season or the trip limits, and I don't know that -- Even for us, I don't know that the trip limit works, and so I'm kind of straddling the fence on that, but just to have an alternative that backs that up and shows some data of when it would close. That's something that we don't even know, with the way the weather has been this year.

I mean, look at the b-liners. We are almost mid-April and we're at 60 percent, because the weather has been so bad, and the same with the tilefish. If we had the good weather, they would probably be getting close to closing, but I think that might make some sense. If we have a start date of March 1 for the hook-and-line component for the golden tilefish, and maybe they could give us some alternatives for a split season, if that would work for everybody, and I am just --

MR. MOSS: Okay, and so we'll start with this one, and then we'll kind of move to the split season one, if that's okay with you.

MR. BUFF: That's fine with me.

MR. MOSS: Okay, and so do we have a second for the March 1 start date? We have two seconds. Is there discussion?

MR. JOHNSON: I just had the question of the council did not have a preferred on those alternatives they had up there, and so they're looking for the AP to give them guidance, I'm assuming?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, they do, and the earliest start date in alternatives that they have right now is May 1.

MR. BUFF: Right.

DR. CHEUVRONT: So that you are requesting is an additional alternative that would set a start date at March 1.

MR. J. FREEMAN: On the March 1, for the most part, 99 percent of the time, longline will be closed. We already have gags, or the shallow-water grouper, closed until May 1, and so that's about the only species, as far as a white fish goes, that is going to be available for retail and for

any restaurants during that Lent season, which that's the reason why the tilefish market has been developed, for the most part, as far as the pricing on it.

Me and Scott Osborne talked about this and brought it up at the AP meeting, I think a year-and-a-half ago, requesting this, and, to me, it's a no-brainer to separate it. As far as doing a split season, I don't hook-and-line fish, but, with the weather the way it is and everything else, if you start -- B-liners and amberjacks, they have a vast amount of people fishing on them. Tilefish, we really don't, even on the hook-and-line sector. If you start trying to do a split season on it, come towards the end of the season, you might be leaving fish, if we have bad weather, on the table, and we don't want to do that.

MR. BONURA: The March 1 opener, I could not be for this, and I think Mr. Freeman brought up Scott Osborne over there, and I was actually on the phone with him about three hours ago, and he would prefer a September or October opener.

MR. BUFF: When we're fishing for the tilefish, we're catching the snowy and the gray tile and then going further offshore to catch the golden tile, and so maybe March 1 is not -- Maybe we ought to back that up to May 1. There's an awful lot of fish that are open in that time of the year for us to be able to have fish on the market, and I think September is maybe a little far for us to push that back, but I don't know. I do know that it needs to be pushed back from January 1 somewhat, and so maybe May 1 is something that we ought to talk about.

MR. JOHNSON: To the September start date, if they ran the analysis, you might find that you would still have those fish in March, because of the weather and all these other things, and so it might be -- Do you see what I'm saying? It would give you those fish in -- I don't fish in that fishery, and I wish I had them close enough to catch them, but I would have to run a hundred miles, and that's a little bit too far for 500 pounds.

MR. J. FREEMAN: If you did that in September, the only other species out there with tilefish is going to be a snowy and a blueline, and they're both closed. They will be closed by then, and so you're going to have discards.

MR. BONURA: The other positive note with opening it here in September would be that you could have fish at Christmastime. As far as the wholesaler is concerned, it would be really nice to have golden tile at Christmas.

MR. BUFF: But would we really have them if that's the only thing that's open? Maybe, if we did push them back to May, it might give us a couple of extra months, but I wouldn't go for the September, because there is nothing else out there. We're running sixty miles to catch these fish, and so we really kind of need something to do with them while we're there.

MR. BONURA: We're running thirty to seventy miles and fishing up on the Gulf of Mexico fence on the eighty-three line there, east of the eighty-three, and you're running twenty-five up to seventy miles.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have to go with Jim. I think fall is way too late, market-wise, and I think availability-wise also to be able -- I don't think Mark is going to go out there and have access to that fishery in the winter, and so I really do think we need that type of fish in the spring, and I think

it really needs to be sometime like March 15 or something, March 1 or March 15. April 1 would be tight with the longline. I think the longline would close before then.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One thing that we need to make sure that we're talking about here is we're talking about the fishing year and not the season. The fishing year, in this case, if it started on March 1, it would end on February 28 or 29, as opposed to a fishing season, which would start on March 1 and then would end December 31. I want to make sure that we're clear that the action that we've been talking about is the fishing year and not the fishing season, and I wanted to make sure that distinction was out there, so that people would understand that.

MR. ATACK: Is there any way to write it in where it's flexible, so that you start it when the longline closes, or two weeks after? Is there flexible fishery regulations that we can do, because that's not a concern. It's when does the longline close, because we don't want to be bringing in from the different sectors, and it lasts the longest if it starts after the longline is closed. Then they will be closed come December, probably, because they will hit the ACL. The only way it stays open for 365 days is if they don't hit the ACL.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That is correct, and Myra was just telling me that the council has tried to consider an action in the past that looked at the hook-and-line component opening once the commercial longline component has met its component ACL, and the council removed that alternative, and I'm not sure why they did that, and they also removed an alternative to look at a March 15 start for the hook-and-line component.

MR. COX: I don't fish on these. None of our guys really fish for them very much, unless we head down off of Scott's way, but I would be interested to ask some of the guys what the bycatch is with snowy and maybe just try to work that into the start of your season.

MR. MOSS: We've had some decent discussion on this one, but, before we get into the other stuff, let's go ahead and vote on this, because we've already had a second. **All those in favor to recommend that the council consider a start date of March 1 for the hook-and-line component of golden tile, fourteen; two against.**

MR. HULL: I've got just one more question. On Table 5, it shows that, with Alternative 5, which is the most fish that you're going to get for the commercial hook-and-line under the current interim rule or that alternative, that is January, February -- It's four months, basically, that the fishery would stay open under that ACL scenario, and so you're going to get four months of the hook-and-line fishery if the weather was good, or according to all of this anyway, and that's as long as it's going to last with this new reduction that you're taking the hit on.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That is if you're making the assumption that the fishing rate remains constant across the entire year, which I'm not sure that it would.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Do you have the last closure dates for the blueline and for the snowy groupers?

DR. CHEUVRONT: They're available, and Myra is going to look it up. Kerry, do you have it?

MS. MARHEFKA: I have it pulled up. Last year, for blueline, blueline closed in July and then reopened for three weeks at the end of October, and so we must have been under and they figured out we were under and reopened in the fall, and so say it lasted the three weeks that it should have, and it probably should have closed in August. Snowy grouper closed June 22.

MR. J. FREEMAN: If you did the March 1, if that was to go through, your snowy and your blueline -- If it goes according to plan on the four months, they would all be closing within a month of each other, and that's all your bycatch.

MR. BONURA: I was going to put in there that, if you run the numbers the past couple of years, it's about an average of 12,000 pounds per month, and so, at about an 80,000-pound ACL, that would keep it open for six-and-a-half months. In my opinion, April 26 on a closure is going to be inaccurate.

MR. MOSS: All right. Anything else there? Okay. Then moving on.

MR. COX: Chris and I were just discussing that there's a split season on the snowy and the tilefish, and so keep that in mind too when you're talking about this.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That fits in well, because we're still having this discussion on the hook-and-line fishing year, and, right now, the council, the way it's set up, it does run the calendar year, January 1 to December 31, and the council has three additional alternatives. One is September 1 through August 31 and August 1 through July 31 and May 1 through April 30.

We have talked about, and you voted on to approve to recommend to the council, to also consider a March 1 start to the fishing year, but there has been discussion about a split season for golden tilefish, at least for the hook-and-line component, and so it would be good if you have recommendations for the council -- If you want them to consider something in the future on a split season for the hook-and-line component, now would probably be a good time to have that discussion.

MR. BONURA: I would put in there that if these guys wanted in March -- If you did a September opener and a March opener on a split season, that could work out for everybody.

MR. BUFF: I was thinking the same thing. It might keep everybody happy, but, on our side too, there's not really going to be a whole lot open in September to fish for. It's going to be a long run just to catch those fish. Also, too, just so we know, we do not catch goldens where we catch the gray and the snowy, in our place, and so we only catch the golden tile when we go golden tile fishing. The snowy and the gray tile are just on the way, but they're not in the same depth of water.

MR. MOSS: All right, and so do we want to consider making a motion for that?

MR. BONURA: I was just going to say that's correct, Scott. On our fishery for goldens, we have zero bycatch, nothing.

MR. MOSS: Do I hear a motion?

MR. BONURA: **Could I make a motion to put in a split season with a September opening date and a March 1 opening date, and so that's September 1 and March 1, at a 50/50 split ACL.**

MS. MARHEFKA: I think it's obvious, but I forgot. If we go under our quota in a first season, we get it credited the second season, but, if we go under our second season, we leave fish on the table, and is that correct?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That is typically the way it works, yes.

MS. MARHEFKA: This would make me nervous just in the fact that, going into the fall and going into the winter, I would just be really worried about leaving fish on the table that could have been caught in better weather months and just losing access to that fish altogether.

MR. BUFF: Kerry, like he said a while ago, that will stay open until March 1, and so we would get to carry those fish over if we didn't have them.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm saying I'm worried about if we don't catch all the September fish.

MR. BUFF: But we would have them all the way through March 1.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, you're right. I was thinking -- Exactly.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I also want to add to that that the council will -- If they decide to go ahead with this action, they will have alternatives that will look at variations of this with different start dates and different split rates between the seasons based on landings histories and things like that from the past. Just because this is what you are recommending right now, if the council decides to act, it will probably come back to you later with additional alternatives, and this would simply be one of the alternative combinations that would be available to you, and so you're not wedded to the idea of having to do it just like this and not consider anything else.

Kerry's concern about rate of catch, which I think was the bigger concern that she had between a spring season and a fall season and could fish be left on the table, potentially -- I don't know that it would happen, but there is potential that it could happen, and that would all be analyzed as part of this, and so you would be able to see some of that.

MS. MARHEFKA: But isn't this getting submitted a couple of days after the June council meeting?

DR. CHEUVRONT: The likelihood of this action going into this amendment is practically nil, to be perfectly honest with you.

MR. MOSS: Any more discussion on this motion? All right. Let's put it to vote. **The motion is recommend the council consider an action that would split the hook-and-line component into two seasons with a March 1 and September 1, splitting the season 50/50. All those in favor. It passes unanimous.** Thank you.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Mr. Chairman, that's all that I have for this amendment.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Brian. All right. Then we are, I believe, Myra, moving on to citizen science with Amber.

DR. CHEUVRONT: We've got wreckfish, I think, still to do.

MR. MOSS: You're right. I'm jumping ahead. Sorry. Wreckfish.

DR. CHEUVRONT: All right. That's me as well, and so let me pull this up. The council, when you all met in November, we talked about the fact that the council started in June of last year and directed staff to begin a review of the wreckfish ITQ. Some work has been going on with that, and, if the council is able to keep to its current schedule, this will be the last time that you get to see this review, or have a chance to discuss the review. I am going to walk through with you now where we are with this and what's going on, so you can see where we are. Then, if there's any input that you all have that you want to give to us on this, it would be great.

A little bit of history. The wreckfish were discovered on the Blake Plateau in the 1980s. The fishery expanded extremely quickly, going from two vessels landing 300,000 pounds in 1987 to twenty-five vessels catching two-million pounds in 1989, and so, in two years, it just exploded, and so the council saw that and was very concerned about the potential for depleting the fishery, and so the IFQ began in 1992, and it's the oldest finfish ITQ in the United States, and I think the Mid-Atlantic ocean quahog is the actual oldest one, but this is the second-oldest one. The important thing to remember is that, because of the age of this ITQ, it is exempted from some, but not all, of the requirements that came into effect that apply to ITQs, and I will get into some of that.

You can see though that, when you look at this here, it shows that there was a pretty big decline in landings in the early to mid-1990s, and it kind of leveled out there for a while. The big black block in there is basically telling us that those landings are confidential in those years, and so we went from twenty-five vessels down to fewer than three vessels landing in any given year in about ten years.

The status of the stock for wreckfish, it's neither overfished nor is it undergoing overfishing. We have no indication that this stock is overfished at this point. The most recent stock assessment that we have was done by Rademeyer and Butterworth in 2014 that was based on the recommendations of an earlier stock assessment that was done, but the SSC, in a special workshop, made some recommendations. They went back and revised the stock assessment, and that's what we got in 2014.

There is a couple of folks who work with our SSC who have actually done some significant work with the wreckfish fishery, including getting some publications done about what happened in this fishery, because it was a very unique situation that occurred. It just exploded quickly, and then it dropped just as quickly, and so it was looking at why did people stop fishing in this fishery, and so Tracy Yandle and Scott Crosson surveyed council records and basically looked at the public comments that people had given, either in person or in writing, as well as they did a survey of former shareholders.

They found out, in many cases, that some of the other fisheries are more lucrative. This is not the easiest fishery to participate in, and there were other fisheries where they could make more money. They were trying to develop a catch history in other fisheries, because they maybe were concerned that other ITQs might occur, and they wanted to wait for share prices to go up, potentially, before they were going to sell them, and so the survey said that, when people left, or weren't fishing, former shareholders, that they were concerned about that there were better alternatives and it was easier to catch fish in other fisheries and make equivalent amounts of money. There were health and safety reasons, or it was simply that they didn't have enough allocation to make it worth it to go out and fish them.

Just to give you a bit of where we are with this, in 1990, they had the two-million-pound total allowable catch that was set at the highest level that they had at that point. In 1991, bottom longlines were banned, and they started the permit system. In 1992, the prices declined, and the landings were going down pretty quickly.

The council had been working on this ITQ plan. In 1993, the ITQ started with forty-nine vessels, shareholders, and a two-million-pound quota, but notice, in 2011, the SSC set the ABC to 235,000 pounds, and this was a huge, precipitous drop in a fishery in which no one knew that the stock was in trouble or anything, but this came along at the time of the revised Magnuson Act, and the council had to set an ACL for all species.

The only thing they had to go on for wreckfish was landings, and you remember I showed you that graph that showed that landings had gone down? They didn't know why those landings had gone down, but they just saw that they were lower, and so what they basically did was set the ACL at that low level of what people were catching at that time. Now, what happened was basically 90 percent, roughly, of the ACL went away overnight, and that also means in an ITQ that the value of your shares just dropped by that much at the same time.

Also, in 2011, they established sector allocations, and that was part of the revised Magnuson Act, and so they set it at 95 percent commercial and 5 percent recreational, because it was known that there were some recreational landings of wreckfish, and this is still a bit of a sticky issue, because, in looking at historical landings, and what we tend to go by is what's available to us previously in MRFSS, but now MRIP, and I believe there is only one documented landing of wreckfish, and that was in 2012, recreationally.

However, all you need to do is just go onto Facebook and search for wreckfish. You see lots of guys with pictures of themselves holding up their wreckfish. The problem is they just never seem to get caught on MRIP, and so we're having problems trying to figure out how to deal with that scenario, because we don't know what the right amount is to have for the recreational sector, if any at all.

Anyway, in 2012, the council then had an amendment that basically revoked inactive shares, because the value of the shares had dropped so much, and so only those people who were continuing to participate in the fishery got to stay in the fishery, and all of the shares were reallocated to those people who were continuing to participate in the fishery. Also, a share cap of 49 percent was established. The fishery never had a share cap prior to that.

Now, when we got that independent stock assessment, it raised the ACL from 235,000 pounds, and then it was reviewed by the SSC, and it was set to 433,000 pounds. Now, in the meantime, there was a lawsuit and all kinds of things that were done. This independent stock assessment -- In saying independent, it was paid for by the fishermen, some of the fishermen who participated in the fishery who felt that the level of that ACL set by the SSC initially was certainly not sufficient. Anyway, through that whole process, they were able to get the ACL increased.

Now what we've got is, based on that stock assessment, this is what we are left with now for ABCs and ACLs. Now, the council set ACL equal to ABC for wreckfish, and you can see the total ACL share in this column, and you will notice it's decreasing over time. Once we get to 2020, those values that exist in 2020 are going to remain in perpetuity until the council does something to change it, and so you can see that ACL is remaining roughly the same from 2020 on.

The National Marine Fisheries Service came out with guidelines for reviewing ITQ programs. The idea is that you don't want to set up an ITQ program and just let it run forever without somebody saying, hey, wait a minute, let's look at this thing and see how it's going, to see if we can do things over time to optimize performance of this ITQ. Council staff conducted an initial ITQ review in 2009, and that has sufficed for what was needed, but the later guidance from NOAA -- They said that ITQ programs need to be reviewed at least once every seven years, and so this is the first subsequent review, and that's what has triggered this whole thing, was the guidance that came out from NOAA that we need to review these things at least every seven years, and so that's where we are now.

There is nothing that specifically triggered this, nothing identified as a specific problem, but it's turned out to be a good thing, and so, last summer, in the June council meeting, the council directed staff to begin to work on this review. We encountered some problems that we didn't really quite anticipate at the time, and the first one was confidentiality. We knew that there was some confidentiality in landings, but we didn't know what the extent of the confidentiality was going to be, and so what we needed to do was to get waivers from all the participants in the fishery so that we could actually say something significant in terms of breaking down what we know, for example, by locations and things like that.

The problem is that we went and we requested the waivers, and this says that at least one shareholder and one dealer indicated that they would not sign the waiver, and I can tell you for a fact that more than one of each refused to do it, and we had a number of folks who did not participate in it.

Now, understand that this review goes back to data that go to the 2009/2010 fishing season, and so some of those people who were sent waivers were people who got kicked out of the fishery and had their shares revoked, and those were some pretty mad folks, and so it's not surprising that some folks did not want to share their information with us, because they got kicked out of the fishery, and they weren't happy with that.

The other issue is the data collection. I am not going to get a huge amount into this, but there are some real issues with data collection. This is an old program, and it's a pencil-and-paper program, and there are four different datasets where the data are collected. Some are logbooks, and some are coupons, literally pieces of paper that have to be sent in. It's fairly antiquated, and so all those data had to be merged together.

What that has resulted in is, more or less, a complete dataset, but we don't have all data for every trip and every pound that was landed, and so that has left us with a few holes in the analysis, and so where we are now is these issues were more difficult than were initially anticipated. We have been working on the analyses. The confidentiality waivers have been collected, and we're not getting any more, and we already know that enough people have said no that we can't pursue that any further.

The Socioeconomic Sub-Panel of the SSC met this past February to discuss the review and the topics that are going on there, because so many of the things that are involved in there are social and economics related, and so they made some recommendations for this review. The problem is that the SSC won't review those comments until May, and, at that point, we assume that they will approve that report and that will become part of the guidance that goes to those who are developing the review.

At this point, we've got a nearly complete draft of the review done, and there is a couple of points that I want to specifically make. One is that there are no actions in this review. It's a review of the program, and it might make recommendations for actions that the council ought to consider for the future, and those would come up through a regular amendment process, but this is not an amendment. This is a report. I want to point that out, and I wanted to show you some of the categories that are in the report that are being covered, and some of them are very ITQ-specific and other things are related to the fishery, like eligibility and participation and sector allocation and transferability and that sort of thing, but they're also looking at safety at sea and monitoring and enforcement and that sort of thing as well. Anyway, that's all that I have for this presentation, and that's where we are.

The council is, if they stay on schedule, will get the final version of the report in September, and they will give us direction at that time whether they accept this report and we move on from there and we send it off to the Secretary of Commerce or if they give us further direction to continue additional development on it. They did tell us in March that we've got a lot of things happening with this right now and that they don't want to see it in June, and so the shareholders are meeting in early July to talk about the review, to get their input, but, as part of this, we wanted to get any input that several of the APs had, including Snapper Grouper and Law Enforcement, and so anything you all want to comment on or add would be great.

MR. COX: A quick question. In an ITQ program, if a new entrant wanted to enter the fishery, how many shares or what would he have to do to become a participant today, and what would it cost? Do you have any idea, at the minimum, if he just wanted to have just enough shares to be somewhere of a bycatch fishery?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, you can potentially own 0.1 percent of a share. I mean, I think that's the minimum amount of shares that you have to get, and so you would have to buy shares from somebody who has it, but you also have to get a certificate to get into it, and, Jim, is there more -- That's basically it to get into it, right?

MR. FREEMAN: I don't even know what to say here, other than the fact that this bycatch 5 percent for wreckfish is larger than the snowy grouper ACL, I think, for the recreational sector. We know there's a lot more people trying to catch snowy grouper, and so I don't know if it would

be appropriate for the AP to maybe look at that 5 percent and change it to something a little bit smaller. That's a lot of fish. If they're not being counted, and I know you say you look on Facebook, and you can do the same with snowy grouper. You can go on Facebook and see guys holding three snowy grouper on a stringer, one guy, and so, I mean, if we're going to go down that route, I don't know, but I just think that -- I am not in this fishery, but I know people that are, and, man, have they suffered. You talk about losing 95 percent, and wow. That's tough, and so I don't know, but it seems to me like there could be something done there.

MR. COX: If it's an unutilized resource and it's something that the consumer could benefit from, why don't we look at some kind of lottery system or some way to put it back out there on the market? I mean, it's certainly something that's sitting on the shelf and not being used.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I think an ITQ program, how it's set up, is these guys own a percentage of the ACL, and so, in essence, we -- I was here for that. We established that 5 percent bycatch because we had guys at this meeting talking about they were catching them daytime dropping for swordfish, or maybe it was someplace else, but I remember that was the discussion, that they're throwing these fish back, and this daytime swordfish fishery that has exploded in south Florida -- They fish the structure, these seamounts, for these swordfish, and they catch wreckfish as bycatch, and that's why -- Because there was no recreational fishery, period, for wreckfish, and that's why that went to that 5 percent. Looking back, that was probably not something that we should have done. 5 percent might have been a little bit too generous is all I'm saying.

MS. J. FREEMAN: As far as going to like a lottery program or something like that, there is fishermen here that's in the part of the fishery now that have to lease every year, because we don't have enough as it is, and now we're inviting more people in. It's not that we don't want more people in. When Butterworth ran it, he ran twelve models, and eight models was over 800,000 pounds. One model was at 400,000, and that's the one they picked. I mean, if we were back up to a number that it should be at, then there would be room for people to come in and participate, and that's what we discussed at the shareholder meeting itself, and so it's just that it's still way off, as it is now.

MR. ATACK: Is there more data for 2014 through 2017? That's my first question, and then --

DR. CHEUVRONT: There are. I borrowed that graph from somebody else that was in there, but their landings have basically gotten quite close to the ACL each year.

MR. ATACK: They have been close? Because I heard a while back, I thought, that some of the landings weren't there because some of the people that held the shares, and he could probably answer, were charging too much for a share to make it worthwhile to go fishing, and so, if some of the shareholders aren't fishing and they're not allowing those ITQs to go out for a reasonable price, then we're not using that resource.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I mean, one of the things that is touted in an ITQ program is that it's market-driven, and so the ACL is the maximum amount that can be harvested, and so I know it hasn't gone over the ACL, but it's gotten fairly close in every year, within maybe 30,000 pounds or so.

MR. JOHNSON: How many participants are there? Do we know?

DR. CHEUVRONT: It's changing, actually. It has changed recently, and it's around six participants, active participants, right now, but it has been changing in recent months.

MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Well, Jimmy is holding up four over here, and so I'm thinking -- I am just going back to that 5 percent bycatch, where we have one intercept in the last however many years, and 20,000 pounds divided by four gives those guys another trip, at least, or two. That's just something to think about. I mean, I'm not trying to take anything away from somebody, but we took it away from one group to give it to another group, and we don't even know if they're using it, other than some Facebook stuff.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, at this point, the thing to do is -- Remember that there is not going to be any actions in this review. However, this group can make recommendations for what they want the council to consider when they do take action on this fishery, and so the shareholders are making recommendations for actions that they want the council to consider, but it's not going to be part of this document. It would be taken up later, but you're perfectly free to make recommendations for things that you would like the council to consider once this review is completed and accepted for how you think this fishery should be managed in the future.

MR. JOHNSON: **Then I would like to make a motion that the council reconsider that 5 percent allocation.** I don't know what it should be, but I feel like 5 percent is too high. If it's not being used, there is no way that we can document that it's being used, then it seems like that it should go back to the guys that were harvesting those fish. I don't know how you would word that.

MR. J. FREEMAN: When I said four, Robert, it's actually -- Technically, it's four, but there is three people that is catching it all. The fourth person is landing roughly -- A ballpark is probably maybe 10,000 a year, and so three people are catching almost the whole quota.

MR. BUFF: Jim, you may not want to tell this, but what does it cost to lease wreckfish?

MR. J. FREEMAN: I was leasing all of the shares out of south Florida there for fifty-cents a pound. Other people were charging, I believe, a dollar, but now there is new -- There has been some transfers, as far as people now buying in. Boat price is around that \$4.15 or \$4.25 mark.

MR. JOHNSON: To that point, basically, a two-pound b-liner is worth as much a pound as that wreckfish is if you had to lease that quota. That's tough.

MR. MOSS: Robert, to go to your motion, and we'll ask for a second here in a second, but the only thing I will say to that is I understand what you're saying, and I'm trying to think of the best way to phrase this, that, visually, it looks like it's a non-utilized fishery, the 5 percent on the recreational, and we all know, again, that it's the anecdotal data. We've all seen it, and we know it's being used. Unfortunately, we also all know the -- I guess we'll call it the hiccups with data collection.

Just be careful that 5 percent is a very low amount already, and, if there is only three people really participating in this fishery and you take away 5 percent from recreational fishermen, just -- I have never caught one in my life, and I don't fish for them, and I don't plan on it. I don't necessarily have a dog in the race, other than me being a recreational fisherman, but 5 percent, as it is, is a

very low amount, and, again, I understand what you're saying and where you're coming from, but, when you're taking away 5 percent from recreational fishermen, it's cutting it pretty low.

MR. JOHNSON: It's 20,000 pounds, and so, I mean -- These fish live in about 1,800 feet of water, and so I know they're not hand-cranking them. They are using a Lindgren Pitman, and it's in a rod holder, and I'm not trying to dump on them, and I'm not saying take all 5 percent, but maybe give them 2 percent. It's supposed to be a bycatch fishery. It wasn't a fishery set up for them to go try to harvest wreckfish. It was set up just in case they accidentally caught one that they wouldn't waste it, because it's dead when it comes up. I mean, if you went to 2 percent -- Just look at some analysis and look at the landings, the MRIP intercepts, and say, hey, this probably would work and give them back a little bit.

MR. MOSS: That's kind of exactly what I am saying. You're absolutely right, and the people that I know that have caught them, it's exactly that. It's been going for swords or they're going for something else and they drift a little bit deeper, or whatever the case may be. Again, the recommendation I would then make is maybe put a percentage on there, on your motion, and that's just my two-cents, of what you would like it to be rather than just say revise the recreational allocation, because it worries me, as I'm sure it would worry if they said to revise a commercial allocation. When you kind of leave it open-ended like that, it gets a little scary.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, not for nothing, but I think the point could be made that this is a commercial -- This is strictly a commercial fishery, and historically has always been that. There is fish on the other side that are strictly a recreational fishery, and this is the one fish where that argument really, really stands strong, and so, I mean, I agree that I think it needs to be very low and go back to these guys.

MR. PILAND: I know Hatteras is quite a unique spot in the world, but, during the short season that we have recreationally, there is more than three boats that target wreckfish out of my port, charter boats. I mean, we know where we can go catch them. I can go to that wreck right there, and I am most likely going to catch a wreckfish if I drop a bait down on it, and we've got more than one wreck that is like that, and it's just a matter of waiting for the season to open so that we can try to catch a wreckfish for our customers, but, again, I know Hatteras is unique, and it's not like that everywhere, but it is in Hatteras. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Before we get too much further into this, do we even have a second on this yet? Okay. Yes.

MR. R. FREEMAN: I would make a comment. To my knowledge, I've only caught one in all the years that I've been out there, and it's forty-plus. It was in a little over 600 feet of water. If we take that recreational allocation and give it to the commercial guy, what happens to somebody like myself that goes out and you happen to catch one? Now you've wasted a fish, or you've taken an illegal fish in, and you take that chance.

MR. MOSS: Yes, and, again, Kerry, I completely agree with you. This is almost, and I say almost, exclusively a commercial fishery, but there are, as we said -- We know people that are going out there, and I just don't want to see it go to zero is my only concern, and that's the only thing I am saying to Robert on his motion. When you leave it open-ended like that, that's the only fear I've got.

MS. MARHEFKA: I agree, but we're hearing two different ends of the spectrum, and so maybe, as a panel, we need to decide sort of where we stand, because I agree if one is caught that certainly we don't want it to go to waste, but then we're hearing targeting is happening, which was not the intent of this, because I remember when that happened too, and so, as a panel, can we come to a consensus that we don't want there to be a targeted wreckfish recreational fishery? I don't know.

MR. HUDSON: When we had the meeting in Daytona last year, we discussed this 5 percent, because we're not achieving the optimum yield, the ABC. We have, I believe, and Roy could probably back this up, no intercepts to date on the wreckfish, or maybe one, and then this idea of the inshore component of the wreckfish, and there is this little area in the Carolinas that we've heard about where the snowy and some smaller-sized wreckfish do intermix, but it's not the average size that they're catching with the longline in the deeper water.

At that meeting last year, there was this range that was as low as a half-percent, which would have pulled it down to a couple thousand pounds. Otherwise, there was the idea of some other component, maybe around 1 percent or 2 percent, but that's in the minutes, and Brian remembers the discussions, and they wrote it all up, and so you're all going to have a July meeting, and that can all play into whatever stuff that the council can consider, because, unless you have -- Like you say, it's going to be a hit-and-miss.

Some of the guys may be targeting them, like Andy was just pointing out, and maybe some of them actually only get one and know that it's going to have barotrauma and it would be a good thing to bring it in, but it would be nice if the recreational that do catch those things would somehow allow an intercept on a regular basis to occur if they're actually targeting or actually having that kind of a bycatch in a year's time, so we can come to some numbers. Thank you.

MR. MANIGUALT: I sat and listened all day and give my level of support, once I got clarity on what the commercial guys wanted. I voted, and I am in total disagreement with anything that anybody says in regard to taking any percentage from the recreational guys, because we do fish for them.

With all the discussion that's come from this side of the table, there is that possibility, and so, even with the new stuff that DNR is bringing out with vessel and all this other type of reporting fish, eventually someone is going to catch one.

It's eventually going to happen, and I don't think that we need to take anything away from those recreational guys, because they spend not as much money as you guys do, but there are a lot of guys that actually fish in deep water for them, and, if you do that, they're either going to bring them in regardless or they're going to throw them back and they're going to die. Let's give the other, for lack of a better term -- Ask DNR and all these other agencies to try to bring aboard a year or so to show that they are catching these fish, possibly, than to just take something away right now. I mean, this is on a whim, to me, basically, and it's not fair.

MR. ATACK: It just goes back to what we were talking about earlier today. Just because you don't have any landings recorded, it doesn't mean there aren't any landings. It's another example of a fishery where lobster and hogfish and African pompano -- I mean, you just don't have the MRIP intercepts or whatever, and so, when we get a permit, and if we get the charter/for-hire

reporting, I think those numbers are going to change, and so I agree with Gary that we shouldn't be taking away from the recreational at this time, because you really don't know what they're doing right now. I mean, they might be doing more than 5 percent.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Then hold them accountable. Plain and simple. If you want all of this, be held accountable for it. Turn it in and show what you've got. Go and present it to your DNR and everybody else, so they can take a sample and they can record the data on it. If you're not going to be held accountable, why are we sitting here asking for everything, if you're not going to take part in what's going on?

MR. ATACK: I want to respond to that. I mean, we have tried to do that up in our area. We had NC DNR come to fishing tournaments and do landings and measure hogfish and take weights on them, readings on them, but none of that is admissible, because it's not MRIP. Even though we've tried to get some way of accountability, or some way of recording what takes place in that part of the fishery, there is no method, really, right now.

DR. CHEUVRONT: There is a couple of things that we need to remember here. One is that there is no action that is going to be taken as part of this review. The other thing is that -- Actually, I had three things, and I have forgotten one, because we have this whole discussion going on here, but the other thing that I do want to remind everybody is that the council is going to be considering an allocation amendment in the future.

We don't have the exact start date for this yet, but the councils have been directed by NMFS to reevaluate allocations between sectors. Part of the things that the South Atlantic Council is waiting on is for the MRIP recalibrations, because that's going to change a lot of what the recreational landings were, and so we're going to have to look at this whole thing holistically, and so, if you all want to make a recommendation, and I remember what it is, about consider revising the allocation for wreckfish, one, it doesn't mean that the council is going to do it, and, two, you don't need to set a specific value of what you think that recreational allocation ought to be at this point if you're not ready to do that, because the council has to consider an entire range of alternatives, anywhere, probably, from zero to even higher than 5 percent.

They have to consider these sorts of things, and so the decision is not being made now. I think the thing we need to focus on here is whether you all want to make the recommendation that the council consider looking at this for this fishery, and there will be plenty of opportunities later to argue and make recommendations about what that number ought to be later on. It's not going to happen real soon. I would be surprised if we're back here in a year talking about this.

MR. MANIGAULT: I agree with Captain James Freeman on your part about accountability. We just recently had a charter captains meeting with the Department of Natural Resources, Amy Dukes and a couple of the other folks that were bringing in new applications. I totally agree with you that each and every one of us should be totally accountable, and I just ask that you give them a chance to get this stuff approved so we can get all these recreational guys to play their part.

Like I said previously, I support you guys, because I know what it takes. My father was a commercial fisherman for a while in the blue crab realm, but I understand that it takes money to do what you've got to do, and it's got to be logical within things that you have to do, but give it a chance, man. Give it a chance. Technology is coming out there, and these guys can use it when

they get it three miles within the jetties or somewhere within that timeframe, to where they will be more than happy to report the stuff, I believe.

What I recommended to her is that we ask captains, when we attend these seminars or we're in the tackle shops, that guys like me discuss this and have a thing with those guys, because they've got a bad taste in their mouths anyway when it comes down to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NOAA and anything, but I sit there and I try to advocate for it all the time, because, like I said before, I used to be a lawbreaker, but I got introduced to this program, and it makes a difference, but some guys have an open mind and some of them don't, and so I ask that you just give it a chance, please. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Okay, Robert, and then we'll put this to a vote.

MR. JOHNSON: I was just going to make the point that we can't pick and choose when we want to believe data, and so we don't believe red snapper data, because there's lots of red snapper, and now we don't believe wreckfish data, because we know somebody is catching them. You know, I think that's a slippery slope when we start picking and choosing which we want to believe and not believe. I just wanted the discussion, and it looks like we had plenty of that, but I just think that it should be considered.

As far as, Gary, as it being on a whim, it was on a whim when we took it away from them, for sure. I mean, we just sort of did that. It was, oh, well, these guys say they're catching them, and so we're going to -- A fishery that they never had an allocation before, and they had zero, and 5 percent seemed generous at the time, and, looking back, after the fishery was -- After the ACL was restricted like it has been, it was. It was way too generous, probably.

MR. MUNDEN: Concerning Robert's motion, the intent that Robert put forth, I think, with this motion is that the council consider reducing the recreational allocation but, if you leave "revising" in there, you have to be careful what you ask for, and so I would think a recommendation -- If that's the motion you want, then "revising" should be reworded as "reduced". Now, I'm not saying that I am going to vote for it, but I would just like to see the motion a little more clear.

MR. MOSS: Do you want to make that change, Robert?

MR. JOHNSON: **Yes, I do.** Thank you, Red.

MR. MOSS: Is that okay with whoever seconded it?

MR. J. FREEMAN: Please keep in mind that an 89 percent reduction took place with no stock assessment being done, nothing.

MR. ATACK: One other comment. Brian said that there's 30,000 pounds a year being left out there right now.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That is not true. I did not say that that was specifically -- I want to get it on the record that I did not say that 30,000 pounds were being left.

MR. ATACK: Okay, and you said most of it was being met, but not all of it.

MR. MOSS: All right, and so, Jack, was it you that seconded it? I'm sorry, but I don't remember who seconded this initially, but you're okay with the change?

MR. COX: I am.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Let's put this to a vote. **Recommend the council consider reducing the recreational allocation for wreckfish. All those in favor, ten; those opposed. It passes ten to seven.**

AP MEMBER: Are these wreckfish -- The people that are catching them, are there plenty of them out there?

MR. J. FREEMAN: Yes, and our sizes have increased over the last five years. Our landings -- It depends upon the weather. It's all based on -- You're in 1,800 foot of water, and so it gets to fourteen-foot real quick, but, as far as our catch rate, everything has increased.

MR. LORENZ: This is maybe a little off-the-wall as a question, and maybe it's not even legal or I will look dumb asking it, but, with the insignificant amount of these that are probably caught, except in certain areas of Florida, where you have seamounts and all, nobody can go out where these things are, but is it possible that, in the soup, there is an alternative to -- Can you remove a fish like this from management of the recreational side and just let it go for now, or is that just something that could never be considered?

MR. HUDSON: We have tried to get into the queue of stock assessment for wreckfish for several years. It took a handful of the people, and not even the entire wreckfish component, that forked out over \$100,000, and spent two-and-a-half years getting it done, and then everybody benefited by a reallocation that should have been more minimal, until there is a way to track the recreational. We have that problem with a whole lot of fish stocks for the recreational, and so it's not an individual thing.

To take it out of that, we have ACL equals ABC in that type of situation, and the OFL -- Well, there really is nothing there. We need new science, and we've been saying to SEDAR that somehow to get it up the queue from number thirty-one on the list, because it will never get done at that rate, and so thank you.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One thing that the council could potentially consider in the future is removing sector ACLs and just have a single ACL for the stock, and that could happen as well, but how that would apply when you have an ITQ, I am not quite sure as to exactly how much of it you would then apply of the total ACL you would apply to the ITQ, and so there would be some details, I think, that would need to be worked out, but I think there's a potential there.

MR. ATACK: I am sorry if I misunderstood what you said earlier, but could you clarify then what the landings have been versus the ACL?

DR. CHEUVRONT: As I told you then, I don't know exactly what it is. I know it has not exceeded the ACL, but it has gotten quite close. I do know that at least one of the shareholders, for example, last year did not land his entire allocation, but it was in the matter of thousands of pounds, but I

cannot tell you. If you want to know, we can find out specifically, based on -- Well, I can't even tell you for example yet, because that fishery, that final count, is not in for the 2017/2018 season yet, but we can go back and find out the 2016/2017 season and tell you what that was.

MR. JOHNSON: I just want to clarify, Jim, in an ITQ, they still should never be exceeded. That's the whole purpose of that system, is not to exceed an ACL. Just because they didn't exceed it, that's a good thing, because they all know exactly how many fish they're allowed to keep.

I mean, I'm not saying that I'm a fan of ITQs, but that is one of the strong points of that system. You never bust an ACL. To me, just because they didn't maybe quite reach it, that just meant that somebody might have broke down at the end of the season, or there's a lot of reasons that might not have happened. Somebody might have got sick and just didn't go fishing. There is a lot of ways that you would not quite reach it, and so it doesn't mean that they weren't using the resource or utilizing it. They are.

MR. MOSS: All right. Rusty, and then I would like to move on, if that's okay.

MR. HUDSON: Brian can probably elaborate, but there is a sort of rounding situation with the coupons and paper, and that's something else that has to be corrected that we figured out in the review.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Like I said, it's all done in a paper version, and the coupons come in 100 and 500-pound coupons, and so rarely do you land exactly in that amount, and, as one of the current participants in the fishery said, it's really awful when you land 2,000 pounds and all you've got left are hundred-pound coupons, because you're filling out coupons all evening long to get them - - Then what you do is they round up and round down based on what your actual landings were, and so there is some discussion that -- The participants in the fishery have mentioned that they would like to see this go to an electronic format, and a model for that already exists in the Gulf, and so they're talking about making that as one of their recommendations, that let's get rid of this coupon system, this paper coupon system, that we're using.

MR. MOSS: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Brian. We appreciate it. We're going to squeeze one more in today. We're going to have Amber go over some of the citizen science stuff, and then we'll call it a day.

MS. VON HARTEN: I know I'm between you and happy hour, and so let's get through this. As you guys have been hearing for the last year or so, the council has been working on developing the program and then also working through each of our five Citizen Science Action Teams to develop some of the recommendations for how the program should operate, and one of the action teams is the Projects and Topics Management Action Team, and they are the ones that have been helping us develop kind of the priorities that the program should be focusing on and a mechanism for establishing kind of research needs and topics that are of interest for the program to invest and support projects under.

Early on, that team developed kind of a process that they felt we should follow for developing research priorities based on the council's existing research and monitoring plan, which is updated every three years, and that includes input from you all, from APs, as well as the SEDAR stock

assessment research recommendations and lots of other input from stakeholders and the council, of course.

That document is pretty technical in nature, and it really hones-in on the specifics for each species, since it does include some of the SEDAR research recommendations. It's a little unwieldy and a little more difficult to kind of take a look and figure out what some of these items -- How they might be able to fit into a citizen science approach for doing different types of research projects, and so the team felt like it would be a good idea for us to have a separate document that was based on input from that research and monitoring plan as well as input from the APs and the council, of course, to have our own specific research priorities that the Citizen Science Program would address, because not everything in the research and monitoring plan is necessarily appropriate for using citizen science, and so we tried to pick and pull some of those ideas out of that research and monitoring plan and put them into a separate document that we're kind of circulating right now amongst the A-Teams and also with our advisory panels, and then the council will be reviewing this in June, at their June council meeting.

This is what this document is, and, again, this is to help drive the kinds of projects that the council's program is interested in supporting, and so this is more topic oriented than the research and monitoring plan, and so I believe we have eleven main topical areas, and each of these topical areas is broken down into who would our target volunteers be, what kind of participants would we expect to participate in these types of projects, what type of data would be needed, if there was target species that were identified in that research and monitoring plan, and we tried to plug those in here, but I'm sure there is more, and so don't get upset if you don't see your species that you're really interested in on this list.

Then the anticipated outcome and how it could possibly be used in science or management and then just a ballpark kind of potential cost rating, and so one dollar-sign up to three dollar-signs, obviously with one being kind of a lower-cost project and then three dollar-signs being a higher-cost project.

I will just kind of walk you through each of these, and what I'm looking for today is just your feedback on what you think of these research priorities. If you see anything that's missing, I would like to hear that, and I'm going to look at Jimmy, because he's on this A-Team, and he was helpful in developing this, and I have some other A-Team members around the table as well.

The first topic was age sampling, just pretty straightforward, and we felt that this was a good kind of topic that could involve recreational fishermen. The type of data that we would need would be otoliths, and whether that was working with state and federal partners to process the otoliths or have carcass collection programs, but this is the data that we're after, is otoliths. These were some of the target species that were identified, and obviously the outcome would be to help characterize the age of catches. Depending on how this was designed and the level of training that would be involved with volunteers and the scale of the project, the cost could be fairly moderate. Stop me along the way if you have any questions or comments.

The second one is maturity data. We felt that that could be done with both recreational and commercial fishermen, and obviously we would need biological samples, or even just pictures. There is some protocols out there that you can actually take pictures of gonads and things like that to determine the stage of reproduction. These are some of the target species, the cobia, red porgy,

snowy grouper, and the anticipated outcome would be improved reproductive information. Again, another moderate-cost type of project, depending on how you scale the project and what partners are involved.

These are in no order of priority. These are just listed as they came up, but discard information, and both recreational and commercial fishermen could be involved in these types of projects, and all this data that's listed here are the types of data that we need, and the target species are scamp, red snapper, deepwater groupers, red porgy, greater amberjack. Obviously we need improved discard removal estimates, and the potential cost could be low to moderate, and, as you all have been hearing, our first pilot project that is underway, or has actually started, is focusing on discards of scamp, and so hopefully, by your next AP meeting, I will have an app to show you, and I will hopefully get some of you to help participate in the project to collect data on your interactions and discards of scamp grouper.

The fourth is genetic sampling. Again, both sectors could be involved. Something as simple as fin clips could be collected, and we have cobia on here as a target species. Obviously, there's a stock ID workshop going on as we speak that this kind of information could be pretty useful for, but we want to make sure that we're not just focusing on fish-specific types of projects. We also hope to incorporate other types of projects under the Citizen Science Program, and ecosystem and habitat types of projects have definitely come up, and so we have a bottom habitat mapping topic that we felt that recreational and for-hire captains could be targeted for, using different technology to get out there and actually start mapping some of the bottom habitats and getting improved resolution on the habitat that's out there.

It could be kind of pricey, but this is the kind of project that we anticipate perhaps working with a corporate sponsor, somebody that actually has this technology that might be willing to loan the equipment for use on different vessels to get out there and collect this information for a project like this.

Monitoring in managed areas, as you all know, we have a series of deepwater MPAs and spawning special management zones now, and also a system management plan that is going to have to be worked on, in terms of research and monitoring, and it's been discussed that perhaps citizen science could be one of the tools used for doing monitoring in these areas, and so we have recreational as a possible target for looking at species length and depth data of these deepwater snapper and grouper species that are in these areas, to look at changes in fish abundance over time. Again, some of these projects would be more short-term, and others would be more long-term.

Another one that has come up is more of the socioeconomic types of projects, looking at fishing infrastructure, and so actually understanding fishing-related infrastructure that exists in our region, everything from commercial fishing facilities to recreational facilities, roadside seafood stands, how that fluctuates throughout the season, as different fisheries shift and change, and so kind of just getting a better baseline of fishing-related infrastructure that could help document potential impacts from regulations. That could be beyond just fishermen, but it could also just be regular citizens that might want to participate in that.

Number 8 is historical fishing photos, and this is primarily the pool of historic photos that exists come from the recreational for-hire sector, and so, obviously, the data that we need for that is to digitize images and targeting commonly-caught charter and headboat species and being able to do

some image analysis on those types of photos to get length comps for certain species and also just to improve the historical information for those different fisheries prior to when fishery-independent surveys started up in the 1970s. I am happy to report that we did submit a project, a pre-proposal, for a project to focus on this just recently using crowdsourcing to actually do some of the initial image analysis.

Fishery oral histories, and so, obviously, if we have this whole collection of photos that we get, there is obviously lots of stories that go along with those photos, and kind of documenting with those fishermen and with those captains, or family members of those captains, because we're losing some of these guys, and they are passing away as they get older, but of those historical photos to get the actual oral histories of those fisheries and the captains that go along with those photos.

Then Number 10 is more focused on environmental conditions and getting fishermen to take observations, whether it's oceanographic or weather changes over time, and so some of the types of data that are needed are bottom temperature. As we saw during the red snapper mini-seasons this past year, weather impacts to fishing, that's another parameter that could be collected, and so to help build a database on climate and conditions as they change over time in different fisheries.

Then the last one is rare species observations. We are getting lots of reports from folks about seeing mutton snapper here off the coast of Charleston and things like that, especially events that happen after big storm events and having some type of mechanism that any fisherman could go out and collect just point observations about unusual events or rare species that they have encountered, just to get a baseline to see if species are shifting and changing.

Like I said, these are kind of the initial research priorities that we're developing, and, again, this document, we hope, will be used obviously internally for us to pursue projects, but also to help encourage different partnerships to develop between researchers and fishermen to go out and seek their own funding to pursue projects that would come under the umbrella of our Citizen Science Program. Any questions or comments?

MR. COX: On some of the targeted volunteers, sometimes you're looking for recreational primarily, and I think my question relates to the SMZ sites and why would that not be commercial?

MS. VON HARTEN: Like I said, it could be. This was just the initial draft, and that's why we're coming to you. If you think that there is something that's missing and you think that commercial should be added there too, then we can do that.

MR. COX: I think you should add it.

MS. VON HARTEN: Okay.

MR. HULL: Amber, I think a lot of these things, especially Items 1 and 2, are really pretty -- They could be easily done, in particular otolith collection, with drop sites and things like that. I think that that age information from the recreational sector, whether you would have areas where they fillet their fish at docks, public docks, and also bait and tackles, and they all have freezers, most of them, that would volunteer as a collection point.

I think that if the recreational fishermen knew that the information was going to be used and was going to be helpful, I think you would get a lot of volunteers and a lot of participation. I know we had that in the older red snapper mini-seasons that we had, and it was really successful, and so I just wanted to make that point. Those seem like real easy things to do, to me.

MR. ATACK: I agree with what Jimmy is saying. I know, on age sampling, the commercial would be very happy to help with that and some of the fish houses. I know, in our area, it would be real easy to get a lot of age sampling off the carcasses. The fish is coming in there, and you can just pick a lot up in one spot, and they would have to hold the stuff on ice before the dumpster comes once a week, and so you could get a lot of information that way.

MR. COX: On some of these things that you're looking for information on, especially the biological sampling, the gonads and so forth, I think it would be a great place for the Information and Education Committee to maybe put something together and give it to some of the guys that are taking pictures. Most of them all have cameras on their phones on the boats, and so they could -- If they knew what they were looking for, I'm sure they would be willing to help if they thought it might be something that would help with their assessment.

MS. VON HARTEN: Just to kind of give you an idea of what we're thinking for project development, for example, the scamp project that we're developing, we're really fortunate to have all these Action Teams at our disposal to help us develop how to carry out that project, and so each of those Action Teams is actually developing a plan for communication, how we're going to actually communicate with our volunteers and share project results, a volunteer training plan, how we're going to train these people to use the app and submit data and interact with the program, and there's a data management plan.

We are working with our data partners at ACCSP, and they're going to be managing and housing all the data for us, and we're working with Harbor Lights, who is the app developer, to kind of coordinate all of this, and so, again, the whole impetus behind this program is to make sure that any project that comes out of here that the data can actually be used. It's not going to just sit on a shelf somewhere. It takes a lot of planning, but, in the end, I hope the outcomes is something that is going to be robust enough that we can actually use the science in management.

All of those things are being considered, and, actually, another thing that the projects team is working on is actually developing a project endorsement program, where a researcher, or a team of researchers and fishermen, can come together and say, hey, we've got this project idea, and it meets one of our research priorities, and we can either give them help in developing the project, following our criteria, or they can submit like a pre-application and say here is our idea and we want to get the endorsement of your program that this meets your requirements and that these data can be used in science and management.

It's just one more value-added type of thing for the project to offer, because, a lot of times, when you apply for a grant, you need letters of endorsement or letters from your partners, and so having this as something that we can offer to projects that are being developed I think is another really important piece of the puzzle for the program.

MR. HULL: Just one further comment. Outreach, as far as these projects, and I think where this body, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel -- We have a wide variety of people here at the table

that we represent a lot of communities from the whole region, and I think that the AP should hopefully be involved in a lot of these citizen science projects and as far as helping develop volunteers, when they do reach the point where we're reaching out and the ideas have been ready to go, so to speak, so that we need volunteers, and I think that the AP would be very useful for that, and other things, and I believe you have a great body of people here to work on that.

MS. VON HARTEN: Kind of one of the first things that we'll be doing, hopefully by the summer, is the Volunteers A-Team has developed kind of a volunteer interest form, which we need to find out what our universe of volunteers is in this region and what people are actually willing to go out and collect. We have a form that we created that we're going to roll it out this summer, hopefully, and say, hey, we've got some projects coming up and tell us a little bit about yourself and what your interests are and what kind of skills you have to bring to a project and what you might need training on, in terms of like, for example, how to collect an otolith or how to drop off a sample somewhere. Let's find out about what you have to bring to the table and how we can get you engaged in specific projects.

MR. JOHNSON: Amber, are these first two items -- Are you going to do that in like partnership with state agencies? I am just trying to figure out, like on otolith collection -- Are you going to take the otolith out and put it in a little vial and they're going to come by and pick it up or -- As far as their reproductive stuff, I know that some of that stuff doesn't have a long shelf life, and so, for a commercial boat, he obviously would have to take a picture. He's gutting his fish at sea, if you could find a guy willing to do it, and, for the recreational anglers, it might be a little easier, because that's typically a day trip, but I just know, from having done some of this stuff myself, that even on a two-day research trip -- The stuff you collect that first day is sometimes not so good.

MS. VON HARTEN: Definitely, and a lot of these would be in partnership with state agencies and others, academics or whoever, that already has this kind of expertise, and part of our volunteer interest form is not just for fishermen to fill out and tell us what they have to bring to the table, but we're trying to target scientists, academics, researchers, NGOs, all the different people and players that might be a part of a project.

One of the things that has been really helpful for this scamp project is we do have a small project design team that has been meeting every couple of weeks to kind of work through like, if we design the app this way, is this really helpful, and part of the team includes fishermen, someone from the Science Center, researchers, everybody that we hope would be a part of a project and planning it from the very get-go.

MR. JOHNSON: Have you done any outreach to like coastal universities, like in our area, Jacksonville University and Flagler College, there in St. Augustine, that have marine biology programs? That seems like it would be a perfect partnership there to get some of these young college students down there on the docks to do this kind of stuff and just let the fishermen sort of know when they're going to be in kind of thing.

MS. VON HARTEN: Yes, and that's actually one of the things that our Finance and Infrastructure A-Team has been working on, is trying to figure out the resources that we have available, not just from a funding perspective, but resources that can come and help with the project, and the academic side of things has definitely come up, and that's why we wanted to make sure that we included that in our initial interest form, so that we can target those people, but, if you guys have

suggestions of researchers that you have worked with, state folks that you have worked with, on these types of cooperative projects, please send them our way, so that, when we get this interest form out, we can send it to them and target them, so that we can make sure that they engage with the program.

MR. JOHNSON: I know, in our area, the state people are usually stretched pretty thin doing a lot of things, and that's why I was sort of suggesting some of these young college kids that don't have near as much to do might be something that would be better.

MR. ATACK: Where are you doing the scamp research and all? Can you tell us a little bit more about what you're already doing?

MS. VON HARTEN: Well, the contracts got put in place about a month-and-a-half ago, and, like I said, we've been working with a small planning team to work with the app developer kind of to start off with about the design of the app and what are the core data elements that we want to collect, and I hope, in the next like month or so, we'll actually have an initial layout of what it might look like, but I think our target date is probably the end of the summer or early fall for that to come out, for the app to actually be ready and be tested.

MR. ATACK: So you will be doing in-the-field work in the fall then on it, the scamp samples and all of that?

MS. VON HARTEN: We will need to beta-test the app first with fishermen, to make sure that it even makes sense, and so, yes, but all those different layers of the project, in terms of data management, because there is app stuff on the backend that has to be built to help it connect with ACCSP's new database and things like that, and so that's going to take some time over the summer to get in place.

MR. MOSS: There's a lot of good stuff here. Thank you very much, Amber. We appreciate it. On that note, we'll adjourn for today, and we'll be back here tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 11, 2018.)

APRIL 12, 2018

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened in the Crowne Plaza, North Charleston, South Carolina, April 12, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Good morning, everyone. I trust everyone has had just enough coffee, and hopefully not too much. One thing that I neglected to do yesterday, and Myra brought it to my attention, and we can open it up for public comment, if anybody has anything that they would like to contribute

in the back here, and I could open that up right now. Seeing none, we will move on with Kari talking about the socioeconomic profile of the commercial fishery.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Good morning, everyone. My name is Kari MacLauchlin-Buck. I had a name change recently, but my email address will stay the same. I wanted to first, with the attachments -- You had two attachments, Attachment 5a and 5b for this, and 5a is -- It's 5 and 6, and so 5 is the presentation, and then Attachment 6 is the draft document for this report, and this was the draft that the council also received in March, and so I haven't updated that with their information. I wanted to get your comments and their comments, and then we will finalize this document.

This is Attachment 5, and so this presentation is just the basic summary of what I found. If you take a look at the document, there is like sixty-plus tables and I don't even know how many figures, maybe seventy figures, and so, with all the information that the council was interested in and that you guys had also suggested, there is a lot of information in the document, in your Attachment 6, and so this presentation is just the surface, the key findings, so that we're not here for a super long time, but we have the document, and, if there is a specific question, we can pull up some of those tables that have more information.

I am going to go through the background, the main topics and projects goals, data and methods, and then we'll get into key findings and then next steps. The council and the AP had requested this in-depth profile of the commercial fishery as part of the vision blueprint, and this was something that, when I was on staff, we would try to work on, but just, workload-wise, we didn't make a lot of progress on it.

When I left the staff, I was able to finish this project as a contractor for the council, and so, before I left, we did get input from you guys, the council, and our Socioeconomic Panel about what information you wanted and the specific topics, and then I did the analysis in October through January and presented it to the council in March, and I did present a really broad overview to the Socioeconomic Panel when it was under review with the council staff, and then I'm presenting it to you guys, and then I'm going to finalize it and have it completely done in mid-April.

When we all talked about it with the AP and with the council and got information, we came up with these project goals, and so there are community area summaries, and so I broke it up into nine areas that are also used in a lot of the analysis. It's the Florida Keys, and then I have the Florida east coast, south and central and north, and then Georgia and southern South Carolina are together, northern South Carolina, and then I have North Carolina split into three areas. In the document, I have the maps that will be included, but I talk about the primary communities in each of these areas and then some of the main species and fishing characteristics there and fleet characteristics.

When I presented it to the council, they did -- Michelle did bring up that, for southern North Carolina, I had only used Brunswick County, and she thought that I should have included New Hanover also, and so I will probably do some tweaking of those runs and redo those tables.

Next, I did a lot of analysis with the permits, the permit holders, and the vessels. I also looked at participation, number of trips, vessels, and days at sea, and how that has changed. Then I looked at catch portfolios, trip types, and then also a section on landings and revenue with total, broken down by species or complex, and then by gear.

The data I used were permit records from 1998 through 2016, and those were all vessel permits, and then also I had logbook data from 1998 through 2016, and I used some ALS data and then the Science Center's socioeconomic dataset that they have, their most recent one from October of 2017, and John Hadley had generated the information for the landings and revenue chapter from that dataset. Mostly, it was descriptive statistics. There was a lot of number crunching and processing the data, but then I also used some network analysis to look at the portfolios.

The first section is the breaking down the permits and the permit holders, and so just a little background on this, just so everybody knows, but the limited entry for the commercial snapper grouper permits was implemented in December of 1998, and there were two tiers of qualifications. One was a valid permit for a specific period and then a secondary where you had to have landings in a specific period, and so it created the snapper grouper unlimited, which throughout this is SG1 permits, and then the snapper grouper 225-limited permits, which are SG2.

The unlimited permits are transferable, but they have the two-for-one requirement, except for, with some exceptions, immediate family or vessels with the same entity as the owner, and then some other corporation transfers, which we can get into a little more, and I actually made some separate slides, so we can talk about that if people want to talk about when the two-for-one requirement applies or not. Then the 225, the limited, are non-transferable, and so they just have gone down over time.

What I did for this presentation was try to do some questions that were in the outline and then the answers, so there's not so much right off the bat text on the screen, but you can see it in your presentation, and so the first one was how many permits are there, and so the last -- I had data all the way from 1998, but the last data pull I did was in January, so I could give a really recent one, and there were 541 Snapper Grouper 1 and 110 Snapper Grouper 2, and those were valid and renewable.

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

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: I think there were close to a thousand SG1, but it's in the -- We can pull it up in the document. In Attachment 6, in the draft document, this is page 21, and there is a figure in there, and so it started out in 1999, and that's when I did that first pull, because there was an allocation in December of 1998 and then some throughout 1999, as people renewed, and so it was a little over 900 and then a little over 300 of the limited.

There has been a 45 percent decrease in the SG1 permits and a 67 percent decrease in the SG2 permits, and so the decrease in the SG1 is the two-for-one requirement and then also just permits being retired permanently as they are not renewed, and then, for the SG2, those are non-transferable, and so, as they are not renewed, then they are permanently retired.

MR. JOHNSON: Just real quick, Kari, is there -- On the 521, do we know how many of those are corporate versus single?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Yes, and so it's coming up, and I have a lot of information about those. Where are the homeports, in the document, there is a breakdown by area of where these permits -- Where the vessels are homeported, but, for the most part, a majority of them are in

Florida, with the largest concentration in the Keys, and so about two-thirds of the SG1 permits are in Florida, and 80 percent of the SG2 permits are associated with vessels homeported in Florida.

Then I also looked at how long have the SG1 permit holders had the permit, and so about 60 percent had the same permit holder for ten-plus years. If it changed from an individual to a corporation and it was the same individual's corporation, I was looking at twenty-plus years of the histories of a thousand permits, and so I didn't check to see who owned the corporation, if they moved to a corporation, and so it may be even more of the same individual associated with that permit, but it's just that they changed to a corporation, but, as far as the exact entity, about 60 percent of them have had the same permit holder for ten-plus years, and almost a third have the original permit holder that it was originally issued to.

Then, also, I looked at the permit portfolios of snapper grouper vessels, and most vessels had three to four federal permits, and these include HMS and Gulf permits, and a majority have that commercial dolphin wahoo and Spanish mackerel, and those are open access, and so almost everybody had at least those two other commercial permits, but a lot of them have the commercial king mackerel, the limited entry. About a third of the vessels have at least one of the federal charter/headboat permits, either for Atlantic dolphin wahoo, CMP, and snapper grouper charter/headboat.

Corporations, this has increased from 17 percent in 1998, when they were initially issued to a corporation, to about 45 percent, and so there is still individuals, non-corporate entities, and there is still slightly more of them in 2018, and so I have some documents in here, or some figures in here, to show that this as the percentage, and then I also have the numbers in the document, if you want to see the actual numbers, but just so you can see the blue is an individual, a non-corporate entity, and then the yellow is a corporate entity, and so you can see how it has increased over time. The rate hasn't changed a whole lot in the past few years, but then I had talked to Jim about how many are left currently and low you could go.

In the most recent permit poll, in January of 2018, there were 287 non-corporate, and so, if those require a two-for-one if they are transferred, then you could get to 397, but that also depends on if a permit goes from an individual to a corporate, and the two-for-one, we have also figured out, has applied at least once for every permit, because of the way of the family corporate transfer, and we can get into some of that, and I have talked with Mark Brown about it, and I don't know if you guys want to get into all the different transfer requirements, or we can do that afterward, and I have some extra slides. Overall, it's still mostly non-corporate entities, but the corporate have definitely been increasing.

Next, I looked into the cost, and, to do this, the Regional Office does keep a few records of transfers, but sometimes it's voluntarily reported, any price information, and then sometimes it's a whole business, and so it includes the vessel and other permits, and so I couldn't really tease out how much an SG1 permit costs, and so I just got online, and I would look at forums, and there was sometimes Craigslist, and there were different websites, and sometimes there were older posts, which was helpful, and so I was able to get some older information.

Based on the advertised prices that I could find, it costs about \$60,000 to \$80,000 to get the SG1 permit, and that's either buying a corporate or obtaining two non-corporate permits, and sometimes they were advertised like that, as one corporate permit or two non-corporate for sale, and then I

did find some old posts from 2011, and so the advertised prices were about \$40,000, and so, in the past few years, you can see that it has increased quite a bit. Then any advertised prices for annual leases were about \$6,000 to \$8,000, depending on kind of where they were. It seems like, for the part, they were around \$7,000, and everybody kind of knew, and does that sound about right, from what you guys know about prices?

MR. ATACK: I think, in 2009, they were about \$20,000. You could buy a single for \$10,000 and two for \$20,000 and then turn it into a corporate, and so it certainly has inflated in the last eight or nine years.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: These were the advertised prices, and so the negotiated prices may be totally different, but it did seem like whenever there was like one corporate for sale that it was cheaper than the ads for two non-corporate.

Another question you guys had were how many -- We talked a little bit about inactive permits and how many have zero landings of snapper grouper, and so what I did was I compared, with my logbook data, 2012 through 2016. That was the time period, because that was the most recent full dataset I have for landings, and then I attached those to the vessels and the permits and compared those, and so less than 5 percent had zero snapper grouper landings in the time period I was looking at, and so, even if they had very small landings, they almost always -- Everybody had some landings, at least, during that time period.

Then I looked at which permits had landings every single year, all five years, in that time period, and almost half of the Snapper Grouper 1 permits had landings every single year in that time period, and a third of the Snapper Grouper 2 permits had landings every year, and so it's basically there is a really small percentage of permits that have no landings, and then, for the most part, at least half of them have been very active, fishing every single year, and then a lot of them had at least one or two years in there.

MR. HULL: Kari, your last bit of information on 45 percent of the SG1 permits have landings every year, that means that half of them don't, more than half, and so is that correct?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Yes, but I think it's in the document, and I would have to look, but that is -- That have landings every single year, there are people who have landings four years out of those five years, and so maybe something --

MR. HULL: Well, I think my question is, with your expertise on this, what percentage of the permits, SG1, that are out there are really active, would you summarize are actively participating, and I guess you would have to find some level, because they could make one trip a year and you could say they're active, but I guess there needs to be some threshold, and where would you consider them to be really active and producing product into that sector?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Well, I think this is the big question. That really is more you and the council. What is an active permit? What about the king mackerel fishermen who are mostly mackerel fishing, but then part of their year -- They definitely move around. They're the ones who have the permit, but they maybe don't have snapper grouper landings every year, because they are switching. Really, if you guys have suggestions on active level --

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so that does -- The more you talk about it and you think about how these are used by fishermen, they're part of the portfolio, and it's part of someone's portfolio in the Keys that relies on it for whatever period of time or wherever they are along the coast, and so, anyway, thank you. That just clarifies it, or it creates more questions, but thank you.

MR. MANIGAULT: Is this just geared towards the commercial sector, and so have we even thought about permits for charter captains?

MR. MOSS: We have thought about it. I will be nice and say that. Yes.

MR. MANIGAULT: So what you're saying is it's not going to happen or --

MR. JOHNSON: Well, Gary, I'm not sure if you're talking about -- If you operate in federal waters as a for-hire vessel, you have to have a federal permit, and that's been the thing that's sort of been flying in my face, and a lot of people's faces, is there are so many vessels operating that do not have those federal permits. In the State of Florida, a lot of them claim that they're operating only in state waters, and that's how they get away with that. That's only a twenty-five-dollar open access permit.

There are some people, myself included, that would have liked to see those permits move into a system more like you see for the commercial sector, where you actually had a number on the permit and we could get this kind of information about the fishery, because, as of right now, we can't get much information about the for-hire industry, because we don't even have numbers on our permits, because it's open access.

Just for the data that would be produced and that would be useful, it seems logical that the for-hire industry should have been more into a limited access kind of permit, where you look at the people that are in it and they get a permit, and we can track that permit. We know how long they've been in it, and we know a lot about what they're doing. The way it is right now, we don't know much about the for-hire industry, other than some people are permitted and some aren't, but, Kari, my question was is there a pound -- When you say they had landings, was it like one pound or a hundred pounds? I think that's what Jimmy was sort of trying to get at, is how active are they, because, if they just had any landings, I guess that's what you used as a qualifier?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Correct, and so, when I ran this, like you had to have zero landings on the permit, and so there were some that had really small, but everybody -- A large majority have other permits that are participating in other fisheries, and, if somebody is sitting on their SG1 permit, that's \$60,000 to \$80,000 that, if they weren't going to use it, that they could sell it for, and so they must be keeping it for some reason.

Then, Gary, with the charter information, are you saying we should do something like this with the charter? That would be -- For this, the council had just said commercial, but definitely there is a lot of overlap with the vessels being dually-permitted, and then also that may just be something that, in the future, that they want to do another in-depth look.

MR. LORENZ: I just have a question here, as an interested person, and I'm going to put my investor hat on. These permits are available to buy for \$80,000, and they can be leased for \$8,000. With an investor's hat on, that's a pretty nice, attractive return right at this point, and what are the

qualifications to buy an \$80,000 permit? In other words, I don't own a commercial boat or anything, and may I buy one?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: You just have to have the capital.

MR. LORENZ: So I may buy one and use it as an investment? It's possible? I just wanted to bring that up for thought.

MR. ATACK: Like Jimmy said, 55 percent of them have no landings over that four years, for at least one year, but it would be nice to know how many have more than one year of no landings, but, from an investment standpoint, if somebody is just sitting on it, they would probably try to lease it for \$6,000 or \$8,000, versus just not getting any money from it, and so it would be good to know -- Maybe they just couldn't lease it that one is why they had zero, and the other years they have leased them. I know they don't probably lease permits, but you know what I mean by saying leasing, and so that would help explain part of it. If that's the case, then maybe 100 percent of them are getting used, except for when they don't have a boat to put it on.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: The way that I ran this was the logbook tied to the vessel that was tied to a permit, and so, if they have zero landings, that means that I couldn't find a vessel with that permit on it in the logbook with snapper grouper landings. Maybe they have landings of something else.

MR. ATACK: Maybe the other way to quantify it is if 95 percent of the landings are by how many boats, and do you know what I mean? Because, if you've got 500 pounds here or another permit had like 200 or 300 pounds on it, like you said, then that would tell you what percent of the permits are really doing the landings, if you do some percentage like that.

MR. COX: I was just going to say that I know this looks expensive, but, when you think about it, Scott and I were just talking, and, in our business, we have several boats that catch \$150,000 or \$160,000 worth of fish a year. Realistically, you could pay for a permit in one year of fishing, if you paid \$80,000 for it, if you fished hard, and, some of the people that are leasing, sometimes it's just cheaper to rent than it is to own, and they want to see if it's worth putting the investment in it, but I know there is some SG2 permits being leased for \$2,500 a year. Did you look into that? Right now, there is about twenty or twenty-five SG2 that people are leasing. They are not transferring them, but they're just putting them on a vessel.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: The only transfer that an SG2 can have is vessel to vessel with the same entity who also owns the permit, and so, if they're moving those around, then somehow that entity is the owner of that vessel, even if it's a temporary, or something like that.

MR. COX: I know in my area, in Morehead, there's about three or four of them, and so the guys in Florida are leasing the vessel and putting their permits on it, but it's the same thing that we're doing if we lease an SG1.

MR. GOMEZ: Am I wrong when I -- I thought that, after a number of years of inactivity on a permit, you do lose it, and isn't that the case or not?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: You just have to renew it with the Regional Office and pay your fee, but there is no landings requirement to keep it. You just have to pay your renewal fee.

MR. GOMEZ: That's a new one on me. I thought you would lose it. A good friend of mine is thinking he is about to lose his, and I said why, and it was because of inactivity and that he hasn't reported, and so I will give him the good news.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: No, there is no landings requirement for these.

MS. MARHEFKA: I do think you have to report though. He does have to report that he is not fishing regularly like we do, but that's one of the reasons that -- There is a long history of this panel talking about a, quote, unquote, use-it-or-lose-it provision, but it has never come to fruition. I guess my question is I would be very curious to find out if we can look into this 225 situation with leasing, if that's really happening, because that is not why those were created. They're supposed to go away eventually, and, if that's happening, then they're not going to go away the way they were supposed to, and so I would be really curious if that's happening and what someone is going to do about it, I guess.

Then I think, Robert, to your point, you need to -- I think it has to be attached to a vessel. A vessel doesn't have to fish, but I don't think you can just hold a permit and not have some sort of vessel that it's attached to. I think the boat can sit in your driveway, but I think there has to be a boat. Am I wrong?

MR. JOHNSON: You don't have to own a vessel. You can lease the vessel. You can't lease a permit. We get confused here, because that has never been legal. You can't lease a permit, but you lease -- If I have a permit in my name and don't own a boat, I can lease your boat, and I don't have to go on your boat, and I don't have to pay any of the bills on your boat, and I don't have to have anything to do with your boat, but I just have to, on paper, lease your boat. I think that's how it works.

MR. BUFF: Just keep in mind too, when we're talking about what makes these things active, I fell into this, along with a couple other people, on the sea bass trap endorsements, but your portfolio is what makes your business operate, and where I'm going at with this is with the king mackerel permits, because we've talked about this quite a bit, but, just because you have that there and you didn't use it at the time when we needed the landings, it didn't make sense to use that.

We had it as a tool in our toolbox, but we lost that tool over time, and so just kind of keep that in mind with what we're talking about on what makes this active. I don't know where the line is at, but just keep that in mind when we're trying to decide what makes that work and what not, because that's how people lost some of the tools they had, was because it wasn't profitable for us to quit b-liner fishing to go sea bass fishing at the time.

MR. HULL: Thank you for that, Scott, and, Richard, to answer your question there, back twenty years ago, when this was implemented, you had to have a certain amount of landings, the same thing, and, if you don't have landings, you never know when the council is going to implement some new amendment to reduce us even further and reduce people, and they will have some landings criteria and, if you didn't meet it, you're going to lose your permit, and so you just don't

know what's going to happen in the future, and nobody does, and so it's best, if you have these permits, that you should use them.

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, I remember that that's how it began, and I just assumed that that's how it still was.

MR. BUFF: I just think that there ought to be something in there to where, if you're participating in the fishery, that that should be a tool in the box and not just that he had to use this permit. That's kind of where I was getting at.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: In the document, Table 3-7, in the section with the landings on the permits, I do have it really broken down, and I did some comparisons of the last five years, and then I have it broken down by state, or South Carolina and Georgia together, and then I actually show, each year, the percentage of -- This is for SG1 permits that have snapper grouper species and then the percentage that have snapper grouper, CMP, or dolphin wahoo, and so this doesn't include HMS or even wreckfish, because that wasn't included in that logbook data that I had, but I did have CMP and dolphin wahoo, to include those.

In a lot of them, if you had snapper grouper landings, then you had some other landings, and there is not a huge difference, but, for example, the Florida east coast, especially in these later years, only 68 percent of the SG1 had snapper grouper, but 86 percent had CMP and dolphin wahoo, and those are probably the mackerel guys that maybe didn't participate that year because it was more beneficial for them to switch to king or Spanish and not focus on snapper grouper at all.

That information is in there, if you want to see other species, and there is also state species, spiny lobster and lots of important things, and so there are probably a lot of permits associated with vessels that are participating, and I would say it's probably a really small number who just aren't participating and haven't for several years and are just sitting on an SG1 permit.

Next, I looked at characteristics of the permitted vessels, and there is lots of breakdown of sizes and age and everything in the document, if you really want to dig into it, but, for the most part, Florida vessels are a little smaller and a little older than the vessels in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. They mostly have similar horsepower, in the 200 to 400 range, fiberglass, and ice for refrigeration, almost every vessel, and so there were some really small vessels associated with the permits, and so I think there may be some where they're just adding a vessel on there and then maybe leasing out that permit.

Next, I looked at participation, and so what this is, it's just a breakdown, and I used logbook data. It is number of vessels, number of trips, number of days, and I broke it down by the nine areas that I used, and then I compared the 2012 through 2016 period, and so we had the most recent five years that I had, and then, also, I did a comparison of 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016, so I could kind of see, over time, how participation has changed.

Then I used three seasons, and they were four-month seasons, except for the Florida Keys. I modified theirs a little bit, where Season 2 was just May through July and Season 3 was August through December, to accommodate for the spiny lobster opening, to see if that affected how that was going to change.

This section of the document is just full of breakdown by area and year and everything, and so these are just the key findings, the overall take-home. Participation has been consistent, at least in the last five years, pretty consistent, and it hasn't changed a whole lot. It definitely has decreased since 2001, of course, overall, with the decrease in the number of permits since 2001. The exception was north Florida and central Florida. North Florida actually had a slight increase in their participation, vessels, and trips, and central Florida stayed about the same. Everybody else has decreased over time, all the other areas.

Looking at seasonal levels of participation, in the northern areas, it's highest in Season 2, and so that's summer, and that makes sense. The middle areas, and so maybe southern North Carolina through north Florida, the participation is highest in Seasons 1 and 2 and then drops off in Season 3, and then, down in the southern areas, central Florida south, it's consistent all year, and so that makes sense, with weather.

Northern North Carolina, central North Carolina, and the Florida areas, they typically have one-day trips with one to two crew, and, in the middle, southern North Carolina through Georgia, they have longer trips, three to five days, with two to three crew.

Catch portfolios, this was the most analytically, I guess, intensive part, but I really want to get some of your feedback on it, and I'm not going to get into the methodology a whole lot, but this is definitely just the first steps in really looking at catch portfolios, and I ran these a couple of different times, splitting up by the nine areas and really breaking it down, and it was -- There were really enough similarities to just do these three different regions, and so I put the North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia together. They were similar enough where, when I was running them separately, I couldn't really tell the difference, and then the Florida east coast all together and the Florida Keys, and you can definitely see some that are probably a little more regionally specific.

I used the 2016 logbook data, and I used trips that had snapper grouper landings, but all the species that they had, and that did not include HMS and wreckfish, because that was not in the logbook data, but anything else that they caught in state species, CMP, and it did not include any spiny lobster or stone crab or anything like that, because I don't have those, but it does include an other species, and that probably captures some of those state species and shellfish.

For each season, and I used my three seasons, for 2016, I looked at the primary and secondary species, and then I drafted some trip types, and this is what I would like to see your input on, and then annual portfolios, when I could kind of see them with the areas that I was looking at. This is North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, and this is Season 1, and so what I did was, when I did these analyses, I was able to kind of see these primary species that were driving trips and then any secondary snapper grouper species and then any non-snapper grouper species that were showing up on snapper grouper trips.

For the most part, with what I know from my experience here, these mostly line up. The primary snapper grouper species lined up pretty well, and so you can see, for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, it's black sea bass, vermilion, snowy, other species, which could be state species, gray triggerfish, and then jacks and amberjacks. Then you have a lot of secondary species that are caught on the trips, but they're not really driving the trips. That is Season 1.

In Season 2, everything gets more diverse. There is more participation in there, but you see a lot more species in the summer, with things open starting in May, and then also more participation. Then, in Season 3, for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, the number of primary species goes back to kind of those base species, even though those secondary species are still really diverse.

With the trip types, not every trip fits into this perfectly, but there were some patterns, definitely, for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, and so, in Season 1, we have black-sea-bass-driven trips, and the gear is electric, and some hook-and-line in there, and then I had -- For each of these seasons, I would identify these core snapper grouper trips, and these were multi-catch trips where they weren't exactly the same catch combination every time, but it was kind of the same species that were driving those trips, but, on those trips, you were usually catching several other species of snapper grouper.

For this one, the main species were vermilion, gray triggerfish, the jacks complex, and grunts, even if you were catching a lot of other snapper grouper species, and then there were deepwater trips driven by snowy, and sometimes the other species showed up on those, blueline a little, and golden. Then, in Season 2, the core snapper grouper trip really diversifies a little more, but it's still centered around black sea bass, gag, red porgy, and there are definitely the blueline-tilefish-driven trips, at least in 2016, with the longline and then deepwater trips. Then, in Season 3, it's mostly these core snapper grouper multi-catch trips with gray triggerfish and red porgy driving, and then black sea bass and gag-driven trips.

MR. ATACK: I know also some of the species that are landed are like African pompano, and that would be a non-snapper grouper species, and lionfish, and I think lobster is also sold commercially, and I don't know if you're looking at certain poundages to put them on the list or -- I see it's not on the list at all, these species.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: In the data that I used, the logbook data, maybe those would have fallen under other, but it definitely wasn't something that -- These are the commercial logbook, and it's the pounds with a species code, and I guess everything else goes in other species, and so I would think the African pompano, lionfish, any of the shellfish, maybe they would have been captured in there.

MR. ATACK: I just know they're directed, or they're part of some of the commercial divers up our way, and, in the off seasons, they are certainly doing lionfish landings and African pompano.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Okay, and so this is -- I hope that maybe you can see this on your presentation screen, and so I debated -- You can only show so many of these before people just start glazing, and so I'm not going to really get into it, but I did want to show you a little bit of the methodology, and so you guys have seen network analysis, and that's a thing, right, and maybe like a social network, with dots and everything, and this is kind of like this.

It's a quantitative method, and so what I did was I took the trips, and so the little dots are trips, and then the squares are the species. Then I plugged it in, and it did -- The software program ran a lot of metrics and everything, and it produced these visuals, and I also used metrics for some of the ways that I talked about your catch portfolios and your primary species, and pretty much what it does is it uses an algorithm to place them, and, the closer the species are together, the more often they are caught in combination on a trip.

Then, the more often the trips have a similar catch combination, those little dots, the more often they are together, and then I also added some metrics to show me the driving species, and so, the bigger the square is, the more kind of important it is, in that, if you took it out, it would totally change how you guys fish, and so I thought that was a good way to look at it and then also visually to be able to see it, and so, here, we have this really dense area in the middle, and that's the core snapper grouper.

You see that in every season, and there is always like this dense mess in the middle with a bunch of -- Not a bunch, but like several snapper grouper species there in the middle, and the size of the little square is a metric called betweenness that I use to show what is probably the species that's driving that trip, that they're really focusing on, and so, here, even though vermilion is like a little bit bigger, it's not really big, and so what I can say about those trips is that vermilion is probably the driving species for a lot of those, but triggerfish and jacks and amberjack are definitely really important in these, just as important, and then, over here, we have the black-sea-bass-driven, and you can see that is like a really prominent one, and so I can show you those trips. Black sea bass is what they want and all they want.

Then we have the deepwater trip up here, and while there is some blueline, yellowedge grouper, and golden tile, snowy definitely is the driver in that, and so it worked out pretty well, and I felt like they made sense visually, and then it also allowed me to have some kind of quantitative measure of this is why I have presented this as the driving species, because I have some metrics behind it, based on the number of trips that were reporting that, that species.

MR. ATTACK: I am thinking the black sea bass square is big because you've got a lot of black sea bass pots and traps and that's their directed fishery. If you took those landings out, then you would see what this is, hook-and-line-wise, versus the traps, right?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: When I looked at those trips, I thought it was going to be traps too, but the endorsements have moved south a little bit, and they're not quite as prominent in North Carolina as they used to be, and it's still a small component, and most of them, for 2016, it still was heavy hook-and-line. There were definitely pots involved in that big square right there in those trips, and especially the trips that are all black sea bass, but the hook-and-line was pretty heavy too, or electric was really --

MR. COX: I was just going to say, in North Carolina, a lot of our guys, the high-liners that were trap fishermen, are really dying off. We have lost some high-liners that were producing a lot of those fish over time, and so I think the newer generation hasn't really figured out how to work the traps. That's just my theory on it. I mean, we've lost a lot of good people over the years.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Okay, and so I just want to show you a couple more of these, so that you understand where I got all of this. This is Season 2 for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. This is your summer, starting May 1, and there is a big, very dense area in this network with a lot of species, and so I had showed you the table, showed you that, in the summer, the primary and secondary species are -- There's a lot more of them, and they are more diverse.

What this is telling me is we have our blueline up here, and these are our longliners up here, and so we can definitely see that those are blueline trips, for the most part, but then you have this really

dense area that has a lot of species, and maybe black sea bass and gag and greater amberjack are probably the most driving species, but there is no giant block in there. Black sea bass is probably the biggest, and so what this is saying is there's a lot of trips that are focusing on several different snapper grouper species, and, even though it's the same group of species, every trip is a little different, but they're mostly focusing on those, and so you can really see that in there, and that's what I called the core snapper grouper trips.

Then there's a little bit of deepwater, but it seems to be running over into blueline there, and then you have a big others in the middle, the other species, and so that maybe is the lionfish, sheepshead, different state species, maybe, but I'm not really sure. I am not going to show you all of those, because they're all in the document at the end, if you want to look at all of the graphs, and they get a little crazy, but it's kind of interesting.

Next, what I did was I wanted to look at the annual portfolios, and so were there any patterns with the vessels where I could see like, okay, this group -- First, they would fish their core snapper grouper and vermilion driven, and then they would switch to black sea bass and gag, and so I was looking for patterns. Again, it was everybody -- It's very diverse, and nobody was really fitting perfectly into a pattern, but this is kind of what I could see for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia when I was looking at attaching the trips back to the vessels.

One type of portfolio is people are fishing for the core snapper grouper, the trigger and the vermilion, mostly vermilion though, focusing, and then, starting in May, they are fishing for that multi-catch snapper grouper trip with lots of different species, but black sea bass, gag, and red porgy is probably driving those trips, and then Season 3 is focusing mostly on black sea bass and gag or gray-triggerfish-driven trips.

Then another one is black sea bass at the beginning of the year. They switch to that core snapper grouper with the black sea bass, gag, and red porgy, once they open. Then, in Season 3, black sea bass and gag may be switched back to gray trigger, and then the deepwater folks are usually fishing snowy until they close, and then they switch to gray triggerfish in the fall.

Then the last one is basically the blueline tilefish guys. Maybe in Season 1 they will fish for snowy, but it's pretty minimal. In the summer, they fish for blueline, and then a lot of the folks that participated in the blueline-driven trips were either out in Season 3, or maybe they switched to gray triggerfish.

Florida east coast, the Florida east coast was definitely -- It has the most species and trip diversity. It's really hard to -- There weren't a lot of patterns, and this one was actually a little more difficult, and then you throw in king mackerel and Spanish mackerel and it made it even more diverse, and so, in Season 1, we have other species, which are the state species, probably spiny lobster, down in south Florida, and this does not include the Keys. They had their own analysis. Jacks and amberjacks and golden tilefish, of course, down there, and that's the longline fleet that is probably showing up there. Then yellowtail and snowy, and you have a lot of secondary species.

Then for Season 2, May through August, a little more diversification than the snapper grouper. This one was -- It was really hard to even try to describe the primary and secondary species, because the trips were so diverse with what you were catching. Then the same with Season 3, and it's just tons and tons.

The trip types, there were more trip types, and it definitely had kind of a hard time fitting into the typology. We had the core snapper grouper trips, which are vermilion, gray trigger, mutton, greater amberjack, and hogfish-driven, but they had a ton of snapper grouper species. Yellowtail-snapper-driven, those were mostly down in south Florida.

In Season 1, we have the golden-tilefish-driven, and that was mostly the longline fleet, and your jacks trips, and then, of course, your king mackerel. Then, in Season 2, the greater-amberjack-driven trips, and we still have the yellowtail and mutton snapper and then the non-snapper-grouper species, mostly king mackerel, and then, in Season 3, the core snapper grouper switched to the shallow-water species of vermilion and trigger and scamp. We still had the yellowtail-snapper-driven down in south Florida and golden-tilefish-driven and then the non-snapper-grouper-driven are mostly your Spanish mackerel guys who are catching some snapper grouper.

I just have, I think, one of these in here, and so the Florida east coast was really diverse, and so you didn't always see a lot of really dense areas, because of the way they fished, but we did have -- These are our jacks, the other species over here, the driven trips, and the core snapper grouper trips, where there is no really particular driving species and they're just -- Everybody is catching almost the same level of vermilion, trigger, mutton, greater amberjack, and you do have the deepwater over here, with the golden tile longline guys, but also some snowy. Then king mackerel is right in the middle, and so the guys on the king mackerel trips -- What this suggests is that they're catching all of these things in lower levels on their king mackerel trips.

MR. HULL: Kari, what is the southern boundary for the Florida east coast?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: The Miami-Dade line. I included south Florida for this.

MR. JOHNSON: Kari, did you have any idea how many of those trips had limits of certain species? Like, when you're talking about the vermilion, typically, in that first opening, the boats in northeast Florida, they are getting their ten boxes every trip, and so it would be consistent that they would all have like the same amount, and does that play in here?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: That is the limit, and definitely the trip limits would. When I ran these, it was more of like cooccurrence, and so were you catching them together and who was kind of showing up a little more than the poundage, because that's what I was more trying to capture, was the catch combinations. You could get really down in there and see like the proportions of the different species that would be limited, but that's like probably a modeling exercise for a really smart person.

MR. JOHNSON: Right, but I was just curious, because I know vermilion, in our area, is the driver, and it didn't seem like that was sort of showing that. It was just showing that all species were the driver, if I am understanding it.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Sure. This is for the whole Florida east coast, and so it's going to incorporate what other people -- Maybe that's why that core snapper grouper group is looking like it's balancing out. If you pulled north Florida out and ran it, then probably vermilion and triggerfish, probably, and jacks in the beginning, and mutton snapper probably is the one that is messing that up for the south Florida folks.

When I ran them separately, there were some differences with like north Florida, central Florida, and south Florida, but there were enough similarities where it made more sense just to run them all together than to just show you the same numbers over and over, because they were mostly similar.

MR. COX: I just wanted to add one thing. We were talking about the bass trap again, Michelle Duval reminded me that during 2013 through 2016 we were closed, because we were trying to figure out how to deal with the right whale issue.

MR. HUDSON: Kari, on Slide 4, you mention areas, but you don't break down the nine areas, and I would suggest that that would be useful for somebody looking and viewing this. When I get into the nine areas, I see northern North Carolina, central North Carolina, southern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, north Florida, central Florida, and I suspect south Florida is number eight, and number nine is the Keys. Can you also provide the latitude division between those areas? Like, for instance, central Florida versus north Florida, central Florida versus south Florida, what are those two different latitudes?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Well, I did it based on the counties, and we have maps that Christina had generated, and I am adding those into the next document. I mean, I used the counties and not the fishing area, and so, with a map, just with the latitude lines, would that be helpful?

MR. HUDSON: Normally, the port of call would be the sort of active way to think about most of the boats, and, of course, the demographics of the way the boats fished in the 1960s and 1970s and early 1980s has changed tremendously by the time you get to the 1990s and stuff, and the other thing that gets me in the presentation is you never mention Snapper Grouper Amendment 8 that became effective in later 1998, between July, August, and December, depending on which particular rules you want to talk about, and there was a purpose and need description that starts on page 1, or PDF page twenty-five, of that 185-page document that is very useful to understand what was the mechanism to drive this reduction of permits in a limited access or a controlled access way.

They name five different reasons, and the first, of course, was thirteen species of fish were experiencing overfishing based on the science that they had done a couple of years earlier, and the second was fourteen species of fish were overfished. The third is, and I will use the word that we use now, Goliath grouper was considered severely overfished in both the Gulf and South Atlantic. Number 4 was the massive increase in the number of boats and the competition between the different sectors, and fifth was that additional species may be overfished, or likely to experience overfishing, and so the proposal revision in that amendment was to reduce excessive fishing mortality.

Now, when you use your 2012 through 2016 identification, as you know, in 2010, we had to stop overfishing. In 2011, we had to have rebuilding plans in place, and so 2012 through current time indicates that we're at a time way past excessive fishing mortality, particularly for our snapper grouper limited access. Right now, I will just leave it at that, except for -- This is the part that gets me. Twenty years ago, when they did this, they said there's a lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social, and economic data. That still persists today.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Was there a question for me in there, Rusty, or just -- Got it. I will check out Amendment 8. All right. I do, Rusty, in the big document, in the draft document, try to go back a little further to capture some of the major regulatory situations that maybe could have affected it, so I can compare them. Like, in participation, I did compare 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016, to try to show a little bit of a broader time, and then, in some of the other comparisons, I used some particular years where a major regulatory -- Something happened, either with catch limits in place or closed areas and things like that, and so I did try to capture some of the regulatory impacts on fishing behavior and landings, also.

MR. HUDSON: I guess, as a final thought, I know that when we started the councils with the Magnuson 1976 Act, and then we get to 1983 and we have a Snapper Grouper FMP, and then, everything that I know that I fished at that time period, I carried four to six crew members and had four to six bandits and did whatever, and then we phased in the bottom longline.

A lot of that changed, of course, particularly once we got to other rule changes and the things dealing with the effects on who could participate and who could not participate, but I really believe we have reduced these permits a great deal for the areas involved, and I wish that they had put a sunset provision in that Snapper Grouper Amendment 8, and I would still say that we need a sunset provision.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: If some of this information leads to recommendations for the council, that would be great. All right, and so, with the Florida east coast, the annual portfolios, there's really too much trip diversity, and I couldn't really find a lot of patterns with the portfolios. Everybody was constantly changing the species, and there are a lot of species there, and there may be some particular driving species, but people were just switching and switching to the mackerel and other species as well. For Florida east coast, I couldn't find annual portfolios, and I think a breakdown of those areas would probably be next.

MR. COX: Rusty, you were talking about a sunset provision, and I missed exactly what you were discussing. Would you repeat that again, please?

MR. HUDSON: There is none.

MR. COX: What were you referring to, a sunset on what?

MR. HUDSON: The two-for-one for permits, because it's been in place for twenty years, and there has been a 60 percent, approximately, reduction in those number of permits, and 30 percent of them are owned by the original owners that they were issued to, and 60 percent were bought within ten years or after, between ten years and the original, somewhere in that range, and you've got less than 5 percent of both sets of permits that have virtually no landings, and so, really, who are we left to reduce? That's the big question, and so I would like to see a sunset provision, because I don't think we need to go any lower.

MR. COX: I mean, it's interesting to --

MR. MOSS: Let's move on, and then we can talk about that later on. I don't want to cut you off, but let's keep moving.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: All right. We're almost done with the presentation, and so the Florida Keys -- Again, the seasons, I modified them a little bit, where Season 2 is May through July and Season 3 starts in August, to capture the spiny lobster folks who are participating, and so I have the primary, secondary, and non-snapper grouper. As far as snapper grouper species in the Florida Keys, yellowtail is definitely the most dominant driver there. In Season 2, the secondary species definitely diversify a lot with the May 1 opening and then just, in general, summer participation, and the same for Season 3.

Getting into trip types, it's yellowtail-snapper-driven. Definitely that's the most prominent snapper grouper trip happening in the Florida Keys for the most people. In Season 1, we also have the deepwater, snowy-grouper-driven mostly, and non-snapper grouper species. They caught other species, but also yellowtail, and those are state and probably some spiny lobster maybe still happening in January, and then the core snapper grouper, which are focused around mutton, mangrove, gray trigger, and greater amberjack.

In the summer, it's still yellowtail snapper, and we do have some trips that are greater-amberjack-driven and gray-snapper-driven and some core snapper grouper, with mutton, and then the deepwater folks. Then, in Season 3, it's yellowtail again, and this is when some folks probably have switched over to spiny lobster, which opens in August, August 6, but there were some core snapper grouper with the shallow-water species, the hogfish and mutton, and then there still are deepwater folks fishing.

Running it and having a graph, this over here with so many species, it's just around the yellowtail, and so yellowtail is -- This is what all the Keys graphs look like, pretty much, and yellowtail is definitely the dominant, but you do have the others, and that's probably spiny lobster and some other state species, and it's really diverse. There are kind of core snapper grouper species, and then you have your deepwater trips up here, but yellowtail is just absolutely the most dominant snapper grouper.

Then, as far as the annual catch portfolios, looking at the vessels and the trips associated with them to see if there were some patterns, the most prominent are the folks that fish yellowtail all year, and we do have the greater amberjack folks that then switch to core snapper grouper and shallow-water in the last part of the year and then the deepwater folks who also switch in Season 3 or they're out, and so they may be participating in spiny lobster and other fisheries.

In the last chapter of the book, the landings and revenue, this is the total commercial landings and total revenue adjusted for inflation for all the snapper grouper species together from 1998 through 2016. The orange here is total pounds, and the gray is total revenue, and then there is also some trend lines. When adjusted for inflation, you can see that there has been some decrease in both of those. However, in recent years, even though orange, which is the pounds, has decreased overall, the revenue has gone up, and so the value of the fishery is increasing.

In the document, we broke down several species, and John Hadley provided the information that came from the Science Center's dataset on landings and revenue for the last twenty years, as available, for some of the main species, and the one that's in there -- Black grouper, that seems to be some kind of misidentification problem with the dataset from the Science Center, and so I'm going to take that out completely, but that has been pointed out, but, overall, you can look at all

those primary species in the document if you want to see specifically how the landings and revenue have gone up and down and who is holding the fishery afloat, species-wise.

The next steps is to present to the council, and I've got you guys, and I am going to review and do revisions and incorporate any input. If anybody wants to talk about anything else or you have some additional comments to go over or questions, then you can always get in touch with me, and then there is lots of room for additional analysis and data collection and expanding this into charter/headboat or into the other fisheries down the road.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Kari. That was a lot of information there, I know.

MR. HULL: That was really nice. That was a great presentation, and it was much-needed information that you put together, and it was a lot of hard work. It brought a lot of things to light, and, from the Florida perspective, we have the most fishermen in this sector, we have the most species, and we have the most diversity for our trips, and I will tell you that I am very concerned about where this two-for-one is taking the industry into the future. No one knows the future, but, to me, it's like a cancer that needs to be stopped, and it's eating away at us. At this time, to open up some comment, I'm sure, I would like to make a motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HUDSON: I would like to second it, and I would like to have a moment of discussion, too.

MR. MOSS: I think perhaps he should actually voice the motion before we do that. You never know what road this might be leading you down, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: That's true.

MR. HULL: I would like to make a motion that -- I would like to have the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel recommend to the council that they stop the two-for-one permit transfer requirement for SG1 commercial permits.

MR. MOSS: I believe we have a second.

MR. HUDSON: Yes, I would like to second that, and I was so enthusiastic about my first effort at that, and, on the discussion, one last little tidbit. In that twenty-year-old document, the increasing number of vessels, the example was wreckfish, and we know where that's at now, and so we're definitely not seeing any more increase there.

MR. JOHNSON: If you look at the numbers, the best-case scenario is you're going to reduce the fleet by 143 permits. I mean, there is 287 individual permits, I think is what she said, and so, if those all went two-for-one, that's the reduction, and that's the best case, that you're going to get rid of 143 permits, and a lot of these permits are in south Florida, in the Keys, and so, anyway, that's just information.

MR. BUFF: Just keep in mind, everybody, that -- Jimmy, I'm on both sides of the fence, because I have both, and so I get it. I have singles and corporates, and so I understand, but, if we're going to ever get to a year-round fishery, unless the council gives us some fish back, or we figure out how to get some more quotas or ACLs go up, this number needs to be around 300, and so I don't know how we get to that point for us to be able to have a year-round fishery.

Might it be that it takes 140 permits away, but, at the end of the day, if we're all going to survive and be here twelve months out of the year, which is what I'm here for, it's to get that number down, to reduce it down, and I had even thought about asking for a three-to-one, just to get some of them to go away, and I know that's never going to pass, but I have permits that are singles, just like Jimmy does as well, but, if we're ever going to get to that point to where we can fish all year, one of the two has got to happen.

MR. HULL: Scott, in Florida, we can fish year-round. We have the diversity, and we need these permits in our portfolio and have them. I know you're a proponent of that, but we have the species available. At this time, it's very difficult for people that want to transfer permits to find permits that they can buy to group together to make a transfer.

We have reached a level, in my opinion, where we need to go no smaller. You don't know what the future is going to hold at this time, and you're saying we would like to have a year-round fishery in North Carolina, and you may get that, but, in Florida, we can have a year-round fishery now if you have the permits available to do it, to move from one fishery to -- Which we all have to do.

My perspective, of course, is from where I'm at, which is the east coast of Florida, and yours is from North Carolina, and so there are some differences there, but, in the future, you're taking this sector that is the consumer's access to these resources and you are limiting participation, and so, in the future, you're never going to get these back. They are going to be gone. We are going to be a smaller and smaller entity.

How would it be if the private recreational sector had to give up two entrants so that they could combine into one or the charter or headboat? If you transfer a permit, you're going to have to get rid of two of them, and there's no limitations on any other sector. This, in my opinion, has to stop, and I am very concerned about the industry. I am not concerned about right now at this very moment. This is bigger than this moment. This is something that we need to protect this sector from further reduction of these permits. These permits are what make or break what you're doing. Later on, there is lots of things we're doing to stretch out seasons.

I am a great proponent of split seasons and trip limits and things like that to stretch these seasons out, and, ultimately, when you do these split seasons and things, you almost always leave fish in the water, and so I will just leave it at that right now. It's different for us in Florida, I think, than for you in North Carolina, is the bottom line.

MR. HUDSON: As a reminder, the "portfolio" word that he just used is very important to a lot of the charter boats, in particular, that have these commercial permits, and so that gets into a really gray area. The other thing is the only thing that's going to set us free, Scott, is science, and the science is driven by the data and the assumptions made at the actual analysis, and then the council has to work with that science, based on what the SSC tells us.

We have learned that, since all of that has taken place since the Magnuson reauthorization, and, basically, I understand about the excessiveness in some areas. There may be some excessiveness, but one of the things that we could do is take a look at the species that are not overfished and overfishing not occurring and there is quota being left.

You mentioned king mackerel, I believe, yesterday, and we're leaving fish on the table year-in-and-year-out. There is black sea bass and other types of fish that are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, and we're not catching the quota, and so how do we go about getting to that point? I mean, one of the things we're looking at is -- Like king mackerel is a good example, and starting the season at a little increased rate, and, that way, the guys can make more money, particularly if the prices are down, and, if you didn't make the king mackerel thing, I am sorry.

MR. JOHNSON: Scott, I understand where you're coming from, and, Kari, that was a great presentation, and it would be helpful if we knew where all these permits were being held that weren't being used that much, because, unless there is a bunch of permits that get sold and those permits get moved to areas, like North Carolina and northeast Florida and South Carolina, and I'm just -- I can't help but think that a lot of those permits are in south Florida and they are part of somebody's permit portfolio, and so it may not make much difference if we got away from the two-for-one.

It may not be this big thing we're all fearful of that they're all going to move in next door to us and tie up and go fish on that same -- I don't have any plans of moving to North Carolina. I like where I live, and I doubt most people in the Keys want to move either, and so I know that's probably the difficult thing to get at, to find out where these people are that have these permits that are not being used, or have very low landings, but, like I said, the best you're going to get is 143 less. That's the best. If you look at 287 and divide that by half, that's all you're going to lose, and so, anyway. They have a year-round fishery in the Keys. That's why those guys are down there. They catch yellowtail pretty much year-round. If you look at her presentation, that was a driving species in all three seasons.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: I have that information, because it's in the dataset, and I can tease that out, but my question would be what is your -- What's the minimum that you want, or do you want zero, because sometimes there is the less than 5 percent -- There are people who just have a few pounds or something like that here and there of snapper grouper that were not included in that. If you gave me a minimum of 100 pounds in one year or 100 pounds for the whole five-year period or something like that, then I could break that down.

MR. JOHNSON: I think what I'm asking is it could be zero. What I am curious about, and I think what everybody is, is what is their intent? These people that have these permits, is their intent just to keep it as part of the tools in their toolbox, as we all say, or do you think, if it became -- We can't see the future. Are they going to sell the permits, and is the guy going to go to North Carolina or South Carolina or some of these other places?

I think that's the fear, is the unknown, the what's going to happen, and, obviously, these people are not affecting the landings. They are not affecting our seasons right now, because they're not fishing, and so they're not having an impact, and I think what's where the fear is, of what if everybody that has a Snapper Grouper 1 all of a sudden starts fishing hard, and that's what everybody is fearful of, and I just don't think that's going to happen.

MR. COX: Kari, that was a good presentation, we've been looking for that for a long time, and so thank you for coming back and helping us get this done. I mean, some things here you've got to think about. We've got the SG2 that are being leased, and so that's going to put more pressure

on the resource, and that's just going to get bigger. I stand with Jimmy on this. I don't want to see our fishery get smaller. I want to see the participation -- I don't want to lose fishermen, and it's important that we -- The commercial fishery in the South Atlantic is extremely important, and we're getting older, a lot of us are, and we want to see our younger guys be able to learn what we've been doing and to sustain the commercial level.

At the same time that we're having this discussion, and I heard it many times at the council table, we all need different species at different times of the year, and the weather in North Carolina is so much different half of the year compared to Florida that the vermilion fishery is extremely important to us, and we don't have a lot of the inshore stuff, because our water is extremely cold. Out just off the beach, it's in the mid-fifties, and so there's not a lot for the guys to do when they can't get offshore and catch vermilions.

What I'm hearing is there is a lot of regional differences in the fishery, and I think, at some point, we're going to have to come back and look at a way to manage the fishery in terms of a way to keep it sustainable year-round for each region. Personally, I would like to look at -- I would like to see us maybe manage the fishery by states. I would love to see North Carolina and South Carolina try to figure out a way to manage their fishery and Florida and Georgia. Thank you.

MR. R. FREEMAN: I think we need to be careful of using catch data, period, as the intention to participate. In my area, I'm sure we have got a headboat and a charter boat out of Captain Stacy there, that they are doing the tourist thing in April through November or whatever, and, by the time they're ready to go get some Christmas money catching some b-liners and bottom fish on a commercial basis, the season -- The limits have been caught, and the season is out and stuff like that, and so there are underlying reasons why they're not participating.

If they're not allowed to keep anything, they are not going to run out there and go fishing for nothing, and so that is a dynamic that needs to be understood on these individual permits and why they are not participating. It can be anything from family illnesses or whatever, and so it's a very complex formula that explains why these guys aren't out there.

MR. BUFF: I understand that everybody has their own point, but, Jimmy, also, for us where we're at, we're fishing for seven months. We've got four months that the boats are tied up at the dock and there is no revenue coming across the dock and there is no fish being packed. The rent has still got to be paid and power bills, et cetera, and I am glad that you all have a twelve-month fishery, but we don't, and, somehow or another, we need to get to that point.

The biggest thing that I am afraid of, if we open this back up for the two-to-one, is you've got -- I don't know the exact number, but I have often heard that there is somewhere around 30 percent of the permits that catch more than 50,000 pounds of fish, and that would be something that I would like to know, is how many boats catch over 50,000 pound a year.

That would tell us really who is running our fishery, and so, if you open all these two-for-one back to one-for-one, you are going to throw 300 more permits that might not even be used back into the mix when we can't even survive at what we're doing now, and so you're going to cut all of what you've been able to catch -- The season is going to shut sooner and sooner and sooner, because all these one-for-one are going to be able to transfer around, and so then the guy that wouldn't have had that permit is now going to have it, and I am not saying that that's the way it should go, but I

am just saying that everybody at this table needs to think about, when you throw them other 300 singles back into this mix, they're going to get used, and they're going to be able to be transferred around, which is going to cut already the quota down even more. Instead of us having seven, we're going to be down to five or six.

MR. HULL: I hear what you're saying, but we're trying to address the inequity of the weather and the seasonality the best we can with splitting -- We're talking about splitting all these species up now into split seasons and certain parts of the allocation for the second season to -- When the weather gets better, I am all for that, and a way to stretch it out, but we need these permits available to the fishermen in Florida to participate in our fisheries and to quit the reduction, the overall reduction, of our sector in the long run, because, as I say, we're talking about right now what's going on. In the future, when these are gone, they are gone, and things could change.

We may finally get some more production available to us, but you're not going to be able to utilize it. We're not utilizing it the best if you don't have a way to get fishermen involved and a way to move these permits around freely with -- Some of the guys in my area -- I mean, it's very hard to accumulate a couple of permits to turn into one to transfer them and to do this and that.

It just needs to stop, and I understand all the concerns you have and the reasons why, but for twenty years this has been in place. For twenty years we've been doing this, and it was put in place for a lot of the reasons that Rusty pointed out when he originally commented. Those were the justifications for doing it, and most of those justifications are now gone.

MS. MARHEFKA: I went into Amendment 8 and found what the council said their intent was when it would be lifted, and this is verbatim. It says that the council's intent is that the two-for-one permit would apply until the optimum level of vessels in the fishery is reached. Once data become available to determine this level, if the fishery reaches such a level, the Snapper Grouper FMP will be amended to drop the two-for-one.

I am actually -- I agree that I think that we're about at that point, but I don't know for sure if we're at that point, and so I think that the council needs to do what they said what they were going to do and define the optimum level of boats in the fishery. When we know that the number, then it's black-and-white, as far as I'm concerned.

MR. BUFF: I am going to say this one more time. Just remember, when you throw these 200 or 300 permits that are not being used back into this fishery, you are going to double the effort for what's being done today, and so everybody keep that in mind. There is 200 or 300 permits that are not being used as of right now. They're in the fishery, but they're not being used, and so, when you open them up for one-for-one, you're going to be able to put them on boats, and so you guys just remember that.

MR. LORENZ: Just as a recommendation to Jimmy, and you made the motion, maybe put some kind of a time stamp around that stop. If you think enough is now, wouldn't it be good for you to say immediately or something like that? Hearing what Kerry said, it's like what is -- Since they don't know what the endpoint is, do you want to state that you feel the endpoint is right now?

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: In the presentation, where it says 45 percent have landings every year and everything, in the document, in this table, Table 3-7, what this shows is, for each of these

years, and this is for the whole region, how many of the permits had landings of any snapper grouper specie and then of the snapper grouper, CMP, and dolphin wahoo, and so I want -- Even in the lowest, it's still 75 percent of them have snapper grouper landings, and then 80 percent, and so really -- These change. It's not always the same permits. It kind of depends on what people are doing each year.

I don't think that there are 200 or 300, and that's my point. I think that there are, at any given time, maybe a hundred permits that aren't being fished on in a year, but they change. They are not the same permits every year, because everybody is -- They take a year off for a personal reason, or they're focusing on spiny lobster for a season, because it's an awesome price, or who knows what's going on.

Then, when you break it down by the state, it's only 10 percent of -- About 10 percent or so, 25 to 10 percent, that don't have any in North Carolina, and I feel like, when I did the landings comparison to the permits, that it was higher than I thought it would be. The activity was higher, and everybody was at least using the permits, for the most part. The people who are the least active are definitely the other regions, and that is primarily your Gulf guys, your guys in the Keys that are coming around from the Gulf side. Those are pretty low, and so there is always what happens if everybody maxes out what they have, and we had this talk when we were talking about king mackerel a lot, and would the fishery be able to support it, but I don't know.

There is just so many factors, because everybody has access to other fisheries, and it really -- It would be like -- I don't know if everybody would activate ever at the same time, because it would mean that king mackerel is done, Spanish is done, all your state species are done, and your charter. I mean, you would have a third of your commercial vessels that have the charter permits and are maybe participating in that in part of the year. The diversity of this fleet is really unique, and I don't think they will ever all activate.

MR. JOHNSON: I think there's a couple of points here, Scott. We need not to be confused that everybody that has a single is not fishing, and that's sort of where that discussion went. There is a lot of people that own a single South Atlantic that fish hard year-round, and we didn't see from this what percentage of corporate versus singles aren't being used or what have you, but the point she just made about the charter fleet, that is not going to change.

There is a lot of guys that charter fish the majority of the year and have a permit just so, when it gets slow in the winter, they can go catch some fish. The point she made that if everybody goes and fishes to the maximum -- Well, if we do that in the recreational sector, we would shut the whole thing down in a month. If they counted every recreational angler, if we truly counted them, and they all went fishing, wow. We wouldn't have a fishery, and so I don't think that's the way to look at it.

I think what Jimmy's point is, it's when is enough is enough, and maybe have the council do something, as far as letting us know when they think that enough is enough, but I don't think -- Greater than 50 percent of these permits are in the Keys, and I don't think that's going to change either, because of just where they fish, and so I just think we're getting a little bit fearful of something that probably would never come to fruition.

MR. BUFF: I understand that, Robert, and 80 percent of these permits had a landing. When you go to singles, those single permits are going to be able to -- Some of those buyers or whatever are going to be able to fish those permits more than just having a landing, and, like I said a while ago, if you go back and pull this up, there is a very small percentage of boats that catch over 50,000 pounds in this fishery.

When you open that up, that is going to change. We are barely able to survive what people we have in the fishery now. Even though they did use 80 percent of the permits, there is a really big percentage of those that didn't catch hardly any fish, let's just say 5,000 or 10,000 pounds a year. When you open those singles up, those are going to be able to be sold or bought for somebody that's going to use it every day like we do now, and that is going to reduce the ACL for what we can catch, and believe me that maybe we are at the happy number, and I don't know.

It doesn't matter to me, and I am going to do the same thing, but just keep in mind that when you bring somebody into this that's going to fish hard, and you're going to open a lot of that up, it's going to cut down our seasons even more, and so all I'm saying is keep that in mind. Even though it is 80 percent, but probably 60 percent of them probably didn't catch a whole lot of fish.

MR. JOHNSON: Scott, I would argue that, under the current system, if somebody is going to buy two singles and make that investment, they are definitely going to fish hard, because, if they're willing to spend eighty-grand, they've got to recoup that. I don't know.

MR. COX: Listening to all of this, I think it's important to -- Looking back in time, through 1998, how healthy is our fishery? What can it sustain? What are our assessments telling us? Are we going up, are we going down, and where are we? I think it's important that we look at that. How is the grouper fishery in your backyard compared to what it was in the 1990s? I mean, a lot of these are stock assessment questions that need to be answered. We're all keeping our fingers crossed that we see the vermilion assessment go up, but I wish John was here or somebody that could say, hey, how healthy is the fishery, and can somebody help answer the question, and how are the assessments doing, as a general rule.

MR. WAUGH: Good morning. Mark asked that I give a little bit of background on this, and we'll get to Jack's question in a little bit, but, years ago, Vishwanie Maharaj was our economist, and she did an analysis, and it showed, with the available yield at that time, forty vessels could harvest the available yield.

We have had different analyses done. When we had a LAPP Committee and we were looking at it, we looked at the MSY values for our fisheries, and you can make various assumptions. If a vessel needs to earn X pounds a year to turn a profit, how many vessels does that equate, and, most recently, during the council's visioning process, John Carmichael and our staff put together an analysis similarly looking at, okay, here's where we are with current yields, if you rebuild all of these stocks and get up to MSY and make various assumptions about a level of poundage or a level of dollars that each vessel needs to earn to break even, and here's the number of vessels you can look at.

If you look at where we are now, this analysis that Kari has done gives us a lot more social and economic information, and, if you're interested in having that two-for-one repealed, and it seems that you are, then I would suggest that you ask the council to work on their objectives. What is

their goal for the commercial snapper grouper fishery? That is what is needed now to do a socioeconomic analysis to determine the optimal level.

In other words, do you want to have all full-time vessels? Do you want to have some full-time and some part-time? Do you want to make an allowance for full-time vessels in the Carolinas and maybe part-time vessels elsewhere, where it fits into their annual portfolio? Those are the types of goals that need to be developed so that a socioeconomic analysis can be done to then say here is the optimum number of vessels.

As far as Jack's point, we can update that table as to where we are now with current landings, and you can make those same assumptions of, okay, if a vessel needs a certain amount of dollars to break even, it will tell you how many vessels that is, but I can guarantee you that that's going to be a lot fewer vessels than where we are now, but is that your goal? Do you want full-time vessels, or do you want a mix?

I don't know if you all have time at this meeting to develop some of your recommendations about what you think the mix should be, but, for an analysis to be done and to know the effects, as Scott and others have pointed out that it's going to do, the council would need to develop some goals and have that analysis done.

MR. MUNDEN: For the last fourteen years that I was with the Division of Marine Fisheries, I represented North Carolina on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The Mid-Atlantic Council has limited access for almost all of its fisheries, but it doesn't have any use-it-or-lose-it provisions relative to those permits, as far as I know.

I never really fully understood the two-for-one exchange in the South Atlantic for the snapper grouper fishery, but where I'm going with this is that the comments that I've heard, primarily from fishermen that I deal with north of Hatteras, is that a number of those fishermen, or several anyway, did not qualify for the SG1 permits because they didn't have the necessary landings, because they shifted to tilefish and other species, and so they are very bitter about not being able to go out and fish for snapper grouper other than under their SG2 permits, when they were historical participants in the fisheries, but they just didn't have the landings that they needed to qualify for the SG1 during that particular time period.

I support this motion, and I think it needs to go before the council. Gregg has made some great points as to what the council needs to do, but keep in mind that, no matter what this advisory panel recommends, it's going to be looked at very, very seriously at the council level, and so I support the motion.

MR. GOMEZ: Just a little bit of education on Lower Keys fishermen that hold a majority of the snapper grouper licenses. I would break it down to three groups. You have one group that only snapper fishes, and it's a very small amount of older fishermen, older fishing boats, and that's all they do, and that number is getting smaller all the time.

The second group would be commercial fishermen that also lobster fish, and so, when lobster season closes, they target the snapper grouper, and the third group would be -- Here is where some of that dormancy is, is in the charter boat industry, where, in the slow times, these charter boats

that have licenses will go out and commercial fish for snapper grouper, and what's happening with them is that, little by little, they are getting older, of course, and their business is improving.

As the business improves, they go out and commercial fish less, but I can tell you this. The Lower Keys fishermen aren't looking to sell their licenses for profit. They are looking to keep them and move them through the family members, and so they don't come on the market very often, and the few that do come on the market are generally from the charter boat industry, where a guy has finally decided to get off of this snapper grouper license, because he knows he's not going to do it and he can't pass it on to anybody.

MR. COX: A lot of this plays back onto the recreational sector, as far as -- I would like to know, in the report, what the status of the stocks, of our key stocks, that have been mentioned in the report would look like, the status of the stocks, since we've been talking about it from the 1998 to present. Are the majority of our assessments going up or going down or where are they? I think I have a pretty good idea, but there is a lot of participants, and here we're pretty much focused on commercial.

I don't want to see the commercial fishery or fishermen decrease, and I stand beside Rusty again and Jimmy, but, at the same time, I am concerned, overall, how much is being taken out of the fishery to sustain a level of harvest for both sectors, and there is this piece of data that we just can't get our hands on, and it's from the recreational sector. When you get to these things and you try to figure out what to do, at the end of the day, you've got to know what your stocks look like.

MR. ATACK: One thing that's really not depicted in this analysis is the other permit holders, quote, unquote, that were reduced when they did away with the North Carolina SCFL licenses. There was a lot of 225, quote, permit holders, or equivalents, by selling fish commercially under the bag limits, and so there was probably 90 percent of the commercial fishermen that would land snapper grouper with day-trippers to the fish houses that were cut out when they did the SCFL thing, and a lot of them would have applied for a Snapper Grouper 2 permit back in 1998 had they known that they would have done away with the state bag limit sales of snapper grouper.

There has been a bigger reduction in the small day-trip limited quantity sales than what this really shows, and so that's an important thing to look at when you're talking about participation in the fishery. Now there is fish houses that can't get some of the fish they want in the summertime, and I know they have asked it to come back to them getting Snapper Grouper 2 permits, but I know that's not going to happen, but, when you look at what has happened as far as effort and participation, that's another big reduction in this grouper fishery from the commercial side that's not shown in this portfolio.

MR. MOSS: Kari just asked me, and I'm not sure I can explain it to her, but explain "SCFL".

MR. ATACK: It's a state commercial fishing license. In North Carolina, until -- Was it 2009 when the amendment went through, when they did away with the bag limit sales? There were commercial fishermen that didn't have a snapper grouper permit, and they would sell in the 200-pound range, or the hundred-pound range, of snapper grouper. They were small day trips, and they were equivalent to like a Snapper Grouper 2, as far as landings.

The other thing that might be interesting to see is, when you look at all these landings, and some people are concerned about the SG2 permits, is what percentage of the whole landings is Snapper Grouper 2 permits? Is it 2 percent or is it 3 percent? That might alleviate some people's fears about the Snapper Grouper 2 permits, and the incentive right now is to fish these permits, because, if somebody has an SG1 permit, they have got a -- It's worth \$60,000 or \$80,000, or, if they don't fish it, then they could -- If it's leased at \$6,000 or \$7,000 or \$8,000, there is incentives already to participate in this fishery, and so, by doing away with the two-for-one, I don't know that it's going to really change the effort in the fishery.

What you can control is what type of fishermen are going to hold the permit. If they have a permit and they use it when they need to, if they charter in the summer and they just use it for supplemental income, that's one thing, but, if the permit goes to somebody that's going to do three to five-day trips, and much more poundage comes in, that's what you really can't control.

MR. HUDSON: I like what Scott brought up with regards to the 50,000 pounds and the full-time commercial fisherman, at a dollar a pound or six-dollars a pound, and I've seen various species range in that area, and, Kari, is it possible that you're able to break out that component in a large area, just to give us an idea of who is at 50,000 or above on pounds, and not worry too much about the values, and we know it depends on the species, and then how many of the charter boats or for-hire boats that also have the commercial permits, the commercial snapper grouper species, and I don't even want to talk about the other permits, but just the snapper grouper, and then how many of them exceed 50,000 pounds in a year, and possibly in a large area, so that we would see where weather affects them and the off-season, wintertime, et cetera, and then how many of what we would call a part-time commercial fisherman that is not a for-hire guy.

Remember that our SEDAR science only started in the early 2000s, and, the 1990s, the stuff that was used, like Gregg brought up, there was a different mechanism to describe overfishing and overfished and whatever you're rebuilding to. Now we've got all these different ways to look at that, and then, of course, they bring up about the open access permits.

Kari had a good point about the optimum yield and then how to describe that, and I would like to see the reference, so I can get my mind around that a little bit, but just like Richard brought up just a minute ago about the lobsters, and I know several of the guys, for decades, that do that, and then they go off and do the other stuff, whether it's shrimping, whether it's shark, whether it's dolphin wahoo, whether it's king mackerel or Spanish mackerel, and the IFQ wreckfish is a small group, but then you've got the Gulf guys that you put up there that own these snapper grouper permits, and some of those guys, just like our king mackerel guys go into the Gulf, some of those Gulf guys come over on this side.

There is a lot that the council could look at at the next council meeting if we start down this road, and that will help them with this two-for-one and how to be able to get to wherever it is we need to get, because, if it takes a full amendment, and I don't know the answer to that, that's a year-and-a-half, minimum, and so we're talking a couple of years out before we ever get to some point of decision on the sunset. Thank you.

MR. HULL: That is the intent. If this body supports this motion, that is what this is going to do. This is much needed conversation, and this is going to go to the next level, and it's going to start the conversations going forward, and we're going to figure out where we're at and what we need

to do and what's going to happen next, and that is the purpose of this. If we support this, it will go to the council, and it will go to the next evaluations and discussions at the council level, and then they'll come back to us and say here's what we've got and what do you think now, and then it will go back again, but this gets the ball rolling, and I hope that you all support it.

MR. MOSS: All right. We're going to go to Robert and Kerry, and then we're going to put this to a vote, if that's okay with everybody.

MR. JOHNSON: Just a real quick comment. I think that that 40 percent number of dually-permitted vessels is key, because, as a charter boat operator, you are not going to go commercial fishing in May, June, July, and August. It's not going to happen. That's when they're going every day on charters, and they're getting their big tips, and you couldn't make those guys go commercial fishing. I think that's a real key component in this. Those guys are using those permits as a fallback when they don't have trips, and I don't think they're going to sell their permit. I think they're going to keep it and continue to operate that way.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just think it's important that we're very clear about where are we going and what is the purpose of doing this. Do we all want -- I know, for myself, when -- I became involved in this in the early 2000s, the late 1990s and early 2000s, and, in my mind, it should be full-time snapper grouper fishermen, and that's how I started this. I have evolved. I now think that that was simplistic, or maybe the fishery has evolved, and we all need to do a lot more, and so my opinion has changed that I don't know that it necessarily has to be forty full-time snapper grouper boats, but I think, before we open this up, this body better have a very serious endpoint as to what we're looking at. I personally think it needs to be full-time commercial fishermen, but I don't know that I can vote for this quite yet, until I know where we're going with it.

MR. MOSS: Okay. We've had quite a bit of good discussion on this, and so, before we start kind of going back on ourselves, let's go ahead and put this to a vote. I will read this. **The motion is recommend to the council that they stop the two-for-one permit requirement for SG1 commercial permits. All those in favor, twelve in favor; those opposed, three opposed. The motion passes twelve to three.**

All right. Thank you very much, Kari. We appreciate it, and that was awesome information, and we have quite a bit more, I guess, to look into as well.

DR. MACLAUHLIN-BUCK: Yes, and, if you were looking in the document, Jack had brought up -- I am going to clean this up and take black grouper out, but, for each one, I have a little blurb about the regulatory -- The quota and anything that maybe could have affected it, and then I have landings and revenue, and so this is black sea bass, and so you can see how it has decreased over time, and then, when possible, broken down by state or area. Sometimes I had to put it together for confidentiality, but just so you could see where the landings are coming from, and we have those for -- I think there is thirteen or twelve species broken down in that way.

If you guys are going through this document, and this is the draft that's in your briefing book, and it was in the council's March briefing book, and there will be a final version that will be provided and posted, but, if at any time -- My email address is in the document and at the beginning of the presentation, and that's not going to change. It will get to me, and please let me know, and we can

talk about it, or if you have comments or you see something that is incorrect, and please let me know. Thanks.

MR. HUDSON: Kari, on this right here, that's black sea bass, and, of course, we see the drop because of the trap prohibition. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: All right. Let's go ahead and take a fifteen-minute break and be back here at 11:15. Thank you once again, Kari, and then we'll go over some performance reports.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: We are going to move into the fishery performance reports. Myra is going to start off talking about amberjack.

MS. BROUWER: Thanks, Dave. Recall that last time we all met that we spent some time talking about black sea bass and vermilion, and we generated two very useful fishery performance reports for those species, and so we're going to continue getting your knowledge and expertise to help us put together these fishery performance reports for species as they move along the SEDAR process and they get assessed.

Right now, there is an assessment that is getting ready to begin for greater amberjack and another one for red porgy, and so those are the two species that we're going to be talking about, and so we'll proceed the same way. I will go over this information document kind of quickly, unless people have questions, and we'll look at a bunch of graphs and tables and talk about different trends, and then we have a list of questions, very similar to what we had last time, and some of you have already submitted some information, and so what we'll do is take one question at a time and give everybody a chance to give their input and then move along that way. We will get through what we can get through before lunch and then continue on after lunch.

The first one, for amberjack, the intent for these information documents is to have a lot of background information too, and so they're stand-alone documents, and so there is the information on the biology, and I'm not going to go through all of that stuff, but we do have information, whatever is available, on spawning and seasonality. If there is any information on migratory patterns and movements, that is also included.

For amberjack, the spawning season in our region occurs from January through June with a peak in April and May, and there is some information regarding movements and tagging data that indicate that amberjack are capable of moving over large distances, and that may be related to spawning activity.

As far as the stock status goes, that's the next section in the report, and so we summarized basically whatever is available from the latest stock assessment for each of the species, and so, for amberjack, there was a benchmark assessment that was completed in 2008, and that used data through 2006, and so obviously that's a little dated. At the time, that assessment concluded that amberjack in our region were not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, and so you have some more detailed information there as to how those determinations are made and the ratios that are used. As I said, a standard assessment is being conducted this year, and we'll be talking about

that a little bit more when Julia Byrd is here to give you an update on all the various assessments that are coming up.

The next section talks about a management overview, and I tried to pull information on the various amendments and the regulations that affect amberjack or related species, and so there may be things that aren't directly affecting amberjack, but it may be relevant when you're talking about trends in that particular fishery, and so, again, I am not going to go through every single one of these, but I will just sort of highlight some of the things.

Back in 1991 is when the commercial harvest above the recreational bag limit was prohibited each year during April. Initially, that was just south of Cape Canaveral, Florida, and, later, that was changed to be coast-wide. The recreational bag limit was initially, I believe, three, and it was reduced to one per person per day back in 1998, and there was a commercial quota that was established at that time of 1.1 million pounds, and the recreational and commercial minimum size limits were established at that time too, and a trip limit that went in place also of 1,000 pounds at that time, and so those things have changed.

There was a prohibition of bag limit sales through Amendment 15B, and the commercial trip limit was increased in 2011 from 1,000 pounds to 1,200 pounds, and then, as you know, the Comprehensive ACL Amendment was implemented, which put in place our ACLs and our sector allocations, and so that was also the case for amberjack.

There were some regulations that may have affected amberjack. There was something that went in place to limit the harvest of snapper grouper species in South Carolina special management zones to the recreational bag limit, and then the most recent thing was a change to the fishing year for amberjack, and so the fishing year now goes March 1 through the end of February.

We tried to include any summary information that we have from fishery-independent surveys. For amberjack though, because it is a pelagic species that moves around a lot and the way that the MARMAP survey, or Southeast Reef Fish Survey, I should say, samples, and it uses traps and bottom longline, and so they do not sample amberjack in that survey very frequently, and so we don't have -- We have limited fishery-independent data for amberjack in our region at this time.

Then here is where we are going to get into talking about the trends in landings, and we have just a little blurb for your information as to where the data were obtained. Commercial data comes from the accumulated landings system, and that is the system the Southeast Fisheries Science Center uses to track commercial landings in our region, and it is based on the commercial dealer reports, or it includes, I should say, the commercial dealer reports. Then the Southeast Fisheries Science Center provides recreational data that are a combination of what comes from MRIP and the headboat survey, and those data are taken by the Center and they apply a weight conversion, because, initially, those numbers, as you know, come in numbers of fish, and so they apply a weight conversion, and those data are then shared with the council each year.

That's what we used to put together this summary, and one thing that we did, and I noticed that nobody mentioned to me that this link was not working, and so I know that you guys did not open this file before this meeting, and I found this out yesterday morning. I was like, well, this is not working, and so now it is. It should be working, but clearly this file is not, and so I'm going to pull it up, and it's a really neat little tool that Chip Collier put together for the AP.

We will toggle back and forth between this and the information that is in the report, because they don't overlap completely, but this is something that we thought would be useful for the AP to have on hand, and so you can select the two species we're talking about, greater amberjack and red porgy, and you can select which one you want to look at there. We have the range of years that was used. If you wanted to look at just a snapshot, you could just toggle these and move for the time period that you want.

We have the life history information, which is limited, with just a growth curve, fishery-independent data, if they're available, yearly landings, and then you can select commercial or recreational, and so these are the same data that are in the report, but it's just a nice little tool to have. Your red line over here shows you your ACL, and then you can have either monthly landings or landings by wave, and so we'll be toggling back and forth between this and the report as we continue talking about these two species.

To start off, we're going to do the commercial sector, and the data that we looked at were from 2000 through 2016, and I should mention that Mike Errigo on our staff was the person that compiled all these data, and also John Hadley compiled the economic information, and so I got the information and pieced it all together for you in this report, but they did the majority of the work in pulling this information together.

Georgia landings are typically combined with South Carolina to maintain the confidentiality, and so the first table shows you total commercial landings in pounds whole weight and if there was a quota or an ACL for those years, and it shows you that in the far-right column, and there was a change in the fishing year. Initially, it was May 1, and then, as I mentioned earlier, it was changed to a fishing year beginning March 1, and so you can see, by fishing year, what the landings were. You have your total landings over here, and you can compare to the quota or the ACL that was in place.

Then we have it broken down by state, and so North Carolina is in the blue and Georgia and South Carolina in the orange and Florida in yellow, and so clearly amberjack are a Florida-centric fishery. Then here are annual landings, and so you can see the trend over time compared to a quota or an ACL, and so there was a change here in 2011 and 2012, and then here is where the ACL currently is, and so you can see that, in recent years over here, we see the landings were above the ACL, and there was a little dip around 2015, and now we're seeing landings go back up a little bit.

Where there is information for how much the ACL was exceeded by, I try to include that in there, and it's sometimes illustrative to see how far above the ACL are we going or sometimes how far below are the landings remaining, and so there was an in-season closure for amberjack at the end of January of 2016, and, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service website data, the ACL -- The landings only reached 92 percent of the ACL that year. However, there was still an in-season closure.

Then we try to show you seasonality of landings, and so landings by the geographic distribution, and so where are the landings coming from and through the seasons as well, and so we have here just monthly commercial landings from 2000 through 2016, and so you can see the April closure very clearly here and then things ramping up in May and then pretty level the remainder of the

year. Here is the monthly commercial landings by state. Again, Florida is where most of the landings are coming from.

For recreational, again, the same time period is what we looked at. We have the same table. Where there is an ACL, that is shown on the far right. For amberjack, that didn't start until 2012, and so you have the summary of landings by fishing year here, and here is your breakdown by state, and so the recreational landings are a little bit more -- There is more landings in the other states, and it's not so much so Florida-centric, and, for this one, it is shown broken down for Georgia and South Carolina.

Then we included in here a little explanation to make clear how, for some species, it's difficult to compare current ACL to MRIP landings, because the ACLs were based on estimates that came from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, or MRFSS, which is the system that was in place before MRIP was implemented, and so, in order to be able to compare values, there needs to be some transformations that are done, and so that is explained in here, so that, when you look at this graph, you can see the total recreational landings in the blue, the recreational ACL, and then the calibrated landings.

It's useful to sometimes take a more detailed look at this, because you can see here that the landings -- If you look at the blue landings, it looks like they're way above the ACL, but, if you look at the calibrated landings, which is the appropriate one to compare to the ACL, you can see that the landings are really not that far above it, and so, for that reason, we felt that we needed to include that explanation for amberjack in here.

Moving on to the seasonality, here it is broken down by month, and so, again, Wave 3. This is by wave and by state. Then here is showing directed recreational trips, and so these are trips that either targeted or harvested greater amberjack by year, and so clearly there is a trend going up here in recent years on trips, and then let me move back to our little tool here. Give me just a second to come back to the tool, because it does have some information on discards, which are not included in the report.

We included in this tool, and this is not in the report, and for both commercial and recreationally, just whatever was available from the latest SEDAR assessments, and so you can also see some information on discards. We had a little bit more time to prepare the fishery information documents for black sea bass and vermilion last spring, and so we had a more detailed breakdown of the discards. Recall that we had a lengthy discussion on discards in the black sea bass fishery, but we have that available also for amberjack in this tool.

Then the last thing we include in the report is some metrics of economic performance, and so there is some price-per-pound information, and I will just go straight to the figures here, and so this is ex-vessel price for amberjack by state and fishing year, and so you can see there is an increasing trend in recent years here, and then the last thing is the value over time for the commercial landings and the ex-vessel value, and you can see the orange line up there that has remained above those landings. I believe that is the end of the summary. If you have any questions about the information, we can address those first, and then what I would like to do is then go into the discussion and start piecing it all together.

MR. JOHNSON: There was a change from 1.2 million pounds in 2012 to 800,000 pounds on the commercial ACL, and that is also the same year that you had the first recreational ACL posted, and I just was curious if there's a correlation to that, and then the second question is I remember, from the last meeting, a discussion among some of the guys that are pure recreational anglers in this group, and they said they don't really target amberjack. I see these huge recreational landings, and is that being driven by the for-hire industry, the headboat, and is that -- There is no difference in your data, but it just says recreational landings, and so there's no way that we could see, really, what group had those landings.

MS. BROUWER: I can't really -- Like I said, I would have to invite Mike to possibly answer your question, and I think that there is a way that we can break it down. Sometimes we run into issues where there is confidential information, if there's just not a lot of landings, but it can be broken down by those two sectors, but I will let Mike address that.

MR. JOHNSON: Just one more point. I was just curious. When it went from 1.2 million pounds to 800,000 pounds, was that driven by a stock assessment, or what was the logic behind that change in the commercial ACL?

DR. ERRIGO: In 2012, that was done by the Comprehensive ACL. It did take its information from the assessment that was done for amberjack, which was done in 2009, but it took the information from there, and I am not 100 percent sure, but, before that, it was all commercial. The quota was all commercial, and there was no recreational quota. In the Comprehensive ACL, they came up with sector allocations, and so it could be that the quota that they came up with that they sub-divided, and so that might be why the commercial sector suddenly dropped like that. As far as the recreational landings data, yes, it can be broken down more specifically. I wasn't sure what would be most beneficial, and so I gave the recreational landings, but it can be broken down into for-hire and private or however it would be most --

MR. JOHNSON: I just know that's a very important fish to the charter fleet, and that closure really hurt last year, and it was driven by one wave that had these huge landings that had never occurred before in that wave, and I am not going to go down the bash MRIP path today, but it was just interesting to listen to the guys that do recreational fish, like the gentleman to my left, and they said, well, we don't really target amberjack and we don't go after them, and so are we to believe that all those landings pretty much came from the for-hire fleet? That was sort of my question.

DR. ERRIGO: I remember looking into that large spike in landings for one of the years, and I don't remember exactly when it was, but, oftentimes, spikes that seem unreasonable are coming from the private sector. They don't typically come from the charter sector, because the way that the effort survey is conducted is different for the for-hire fleet, or for the charter fleet, in the South Atlantic as it's done for the private fleet. Usually, you see the most uncertainty and variability in the private side, and I believe that's where the jump came from. I can look into it more though, and I think I still have the breakdowns of when I looked at it more closely.

MR. ATACK: On the greater amberjack, we're at 100,000 trips directed at the 2016, and that's probably mostly in Florida, I guess, because most of the landings are in Florida, and so, if we want to put an ex-value on that, is that \$500 times 100,000, which becomes five-million or whatever?

MS. BROUWER: I am not an economist, and I'm going to let John Hadley here answer that question.

MR. ATACK: Because it would be good to have the ex-value of that when you compare it to the commercial of 1.2 million and what's the ex-value for the recreational side.

MR. HADLEY: Usually, if we were going to put a value on it, we would use basically a consumer surplus estimate, and so we would look at the harvest. We would look at the number of fish harvested, and then you would apply a dollar value to that, but it's not in there, and it's something that I could certainly pull out of one of our FMPs, but it's possible, but we just don't have it on hand.

MR. ATACK: If they're directed trips, and it's mostly for-hire, if it's \$500 a trip, that's actually \$50 million times 100,000 trips.

MR. HADLEY: Right, and so the trips -- We could certainly run the economic impact estimates for that. That wouldn't be that difficult. You basically look at the trips by mode, and then you input them by if you have many or, if any, short trips and then private and then for-hire.

MR. GOMEZ: Robert, to answer one of your questions about the Lower Keys, the charter boats down in the Lower Keys do target amberjack for a small handful of months, maybe February and March and April, but it's only done for part of our trip, and not all of us do it, and so we're trolling around, for the most part, and we will stop on a wreck and drop a live bait down and catch one, but, generally speaking, we may bring in one for eating, and we release the rest of them, get the air out and let them go, and so I'm not sure where these recreational stats come from, but I don't think they come from the Lower Keys. If they do, they're not too accurate, I wouldn't think.

MR. JOHNSON: I will respond to that. That's good to know. I know in my area, in Ponce Inlet and St. Augustine, just about every charter boat that goes out on a trip is going to catch their limit of amberjacks if they're available, unless the people specifically say they don't want them, and then we don't, but, most of our trips, we're going to have a limit of amberjacks, and we're going to have a limit of b-liners, and we're going to have all these other species as part of a trip.

Is someone not going to book a trip just because they can't keep an amberjack? Probably not, and so I think it's hard to put an economic value on that, but they are an important fish. I mean, people go fishing on a charter boat to catch a big fish that pulls hard, and nothing fits that bill better than an amberjack.

MR. COX: I have been commercially fishing on these things since the 1980s, and I know quite a bit about them. My boat lands about 25,000 to 35,000 pounds a year of greater amberjacks, and it is an important fishery, both commercially and recreationally. The price of the fish is going up, because people are realizing that there is good value in it. It's a nice, white-meat fish. You cut out a little bit of the tail section, and it's a great fish to do a lot of things with when other things are closed.

It used to be it was a fish that the recreational guys wouldn't think nothing about catching, but we're seeing the big charter boats now pulling up on the wrecks, because we -- I guess where I'm going with this is fisheries are changing. Back in the 1980s, the charter boat guys in Morehead

would go out there and catch an abundance of yellowfin tunas, but we don't see that fishery that we had in the 1980s and early 1990s, and so, on days that they are not catching other species, it's nice that they can pull up on a wreck and have something for the folks to pull on, and that amberjack is that fish, and so I don't know if you can put a value on it, because most of our guys don't -- The charter boat guys don't go out to try to catch them, but it's something that they can always pretty much guarantee that they can put somebody on.

MR. MOSS: As a recreational south Florida fisherman, I agree with what Richard said. We'll, recreationally, go out there, and you might catch one, just because it's fun and it's something to tug on, and it's a hard fight, but it's rare that we keep them. Not to put you on the spot, Greg, but I was curious about some of your customers. Do you guys typically keep amberjacks when you go out?

MR. MERCURIO: They don't want anything to do with them.

MR. MOSS: Yes, I wouldn't figure. That's a south Florida thing. It's fun to catch, and then we let them go and that's it, and then we go about our day.

MS. BROUWER: It sounds like everybody is starting to go and answer some of these questions, and I don't want to miss any of your feedback, and so I would like to -- If everybody is ready to get started going through these questions, and then, that way, I can capture your comments as we go along.

These questions were a part of your briefing book, and I was hoping that you had a chance to look through them, so you would come prepared to answer some of them and share what you know about amberjack, and so the first question is about catch levels over the past five years, and we just put a number in there, but when and where are the fish available and has this changed? You can see that Jimmy already submitted information for his area, and that's what the italics font is, and so I will go ahead and let you guys have at that first question.

MR. LORENZ: Going thirty years, in North Carolina, I don't know that -- It used to seem that it was a common fish. Every day, you would see one on a pier, and you almost never see them on a pier now. They seem to be further offshore, and so I don't know if that's an abundance issue or what and why you always used to see them before on piers and no longer. Now, I will see them, and they will go under the boat twelve or eighteen miles out, and then there are certain wrecks where people go there, and we call them reef donkeys specifically, and just have a day pulling on a large fish and letting it go, and so I don't know if anybody else can qualify that and why they don't seem to be more in the surf zones anymore, if anybody cares.

MR. JOHNSON: There is definitely a seasonality thing off of St. Augustine, and it's driven by water temperature. In the cooler months, you're not going to have them inshore, and, when I say inshore, I'm talking from eighty to a hundred foot, but we have them year-round. We catch them year-round out in the deeper water especially, and then, in the summer months, they are abundant ten or twelve miles off on some of the artificial reefs and wrecks.

MR. GOMEZ: For us in the Lower Keys, thirty years ago, you could go up on the wrecks and just blacken the screen and drop a jig down, and you could have three or four amberjacks in a matter of a few minutes, and it was a great way to get some action fast, but, as the years went by, it is

more difficult. They have gotten more educated, and there is less of them for us, and so, generally speaking, we can't get a jig down there and get them anymore. It has to be live bait, and that's one of the reasons that a lot less of us charter boat fishermen worry about targeting them at all. It's just, compared to how it used to be, it's a lot harder.

MR. COX: I started fishing on these in the 1980s, and we would be gag fishing and stuff, and they would be so thick that we would have a hard time getting the baits down to catch gags, and you would see these big, massive schools of amberjacks, and sometimes they would jump and you would think it was a school of tunas.

We don't see them anymore, and that was prior to annual catch limits, and I just want to say thank God for annual catch limits, because I think they have certainly helped us rebuild the fishery, and we're seeing a lot more smaller fish now. We are seeing a lot more recruitment, and so we're seeing a nice rebuilding of the amberjack from what I remember back in the 1980s, and I hope we see those big, massive schools of jacks that we used to see.

MS. JEFFCOAT: For us, off the coast of Georgia, we're seeing them anywhere from April, depending on how quickly the water warms up, into the fall, and I think it's a healthy stock. We're seeing all signs of recruitment, and there is a lot of pressure on them for us off our coast. We don't see the grouper that we did ten or fifteen years ago, and we can't keep red snapper, and our customers love catching them, and 90 percent of them want to take them home.

MR. MOSS: Again, speaking for south Florida, and, Richard, going a little bit further north in the Keys, off of the Humps and stuff, a lot of times they will get them when they try to go offshore on the Humps to get tuna. If the tuna bite slow, they will drop down and get amberjacks on the Humps, but, again, it's rare that they keep them. If they do, they will keep one, and, further north, the wrecks, they seem to be there all year. When I say further north, I mean further north in south Florida and not north Florida.

MR. PILAND: Off of Hatteras, it's an important fishery year-round, as long as the season is open. Most all of our customers want to take them home, and everybody likes fighting them, and 90 percent wants to take them home, and, as long as the water is over sixty-five degrees, the fish are on the wrecks. Because I'm on the amberjack SEDAR, I did a little research, and the Albatross Fleet is the original charter boats in Hatteras, and they've been running since before the World War, and Ernie said that his father was fishing for amberjacks as early as 1937.

MS. BROUWER: The next question has to do with size, and you've already touched on this some, and so has the size of the fish changed? If so, could you describe the change over the past five years, more or less? Jimmy said that, yes, there's a lot more larger fish offshore, around 160 feet, and a lot more smaller individuals inshore off of Ponce Inlet, Florida.

MR. JOHNSON: I would say that probably holds true for the St. Augustine area too, and Mayport as well, that most of your larger fish are out in the deeper water, twenty-one fathoms to twenty-eight fathoms, and then, on the eighty to a hundred-foot range, you're going to have a lot of the thirty or thirty-two-inch amberjacks. There just doesn't seem to be the real big ones in there, and I will say, in the early 1990s, I used to catch some eighty and ninety-pounders at nine miles, and so I don't know what that means, but I think that, in recent years, the stock has leveled out, and

it's pretty true that the bigger fish are offshore and the smaller fish are inshore, and we still catch some. I mean, I had one two years ago that was 125 pounds, and so we catch some big ones still.

MR. HUDSON: Yesterday, I dropped off some pictures with Amber. In the 1960s and 1950s, you can see a lot of amberjack, and most of them were caught between nine miles and twenty miles from the beach, and forty pounds was the average. According to that graph, that's a five-year-old fish, and I'm not sure what the fork length is, but it's just an interesting change, and, of course, at that time, when we dressed them for the customers, we just did a shoulder cut if they were over say thirty-five pounds, because of the worms.

MR. COX: In the spring of the year, we'll see a lot of small fish. I mean, I say a lot, and most of the fish are not -- They're in like eighty or ninety feet of water, and they're twenty-eight to thirty-two-inch fish, just under legal size for us to sell, and they're very hardy. They will come up in the shallow -- If we catch one or two while we're fishing for something else, they do really well, as far as discarding, but the big fish, for us, don't really show up off of Morehead until the fall of the year in the shallow water, and then, sometime about August, you will start to see schools of the bigger fish, and I think they're migrating up from Florida, because that's when, I think, they start to see less of them. Our guys that go out in over 150 or 200 feet of water vermilion fishing, they will interact with the big fish, but they're not really targeting the greater.

MR. GOMEZ: I was going to put in there that, in the Keys, when we catch them on the wrecks, in the springtime, they're around thirty-five-pound, average, fish.

MR. MOSS: All right. Have there been effort shifts?

MR. JOHNSON: I did want to add something. We do encounter the juvenile small amberjacks back in the shallower water in the summer, too. When I say juvenile, I am talking very small, eighteen to twenty-two-inch, and they're not banded rudderfish. They're actually little baby amberjacks, and there will be huge schools of them, and so I think recruitment is doing pretty well, because we're seeing a lot of little teeny guys, too.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Have there been effort shifts to amberjack?

MS. MARHEFKA: In our case, definitely yes. I mean, there is now a much easier, more ready market for it, and both the market has created the effort shift and the fact that there are times of year when there is nothing else to catch, and I don't know which came first, the chicken or the egg.

MR. JOHNSON: I think, in the charter industry, customers are more willing to keep them. In the 1980s, I used to give them all to the soup kitchen, and they loved them, but I think people are realizing that they're good to eat, but that goes for a lot of species. When I first started fishing, you couldn't get them to keep triggerfish. Nobody kept triggerfish, and they really didn't want vermilion. They wanted red snapper.

MR. HUDSON: I recall back, I believe it was the early 1980s, there was a ban on redfish, red drum, and the blackfin stuff, and amberjack became a more desired product then.

MS. JEFFCOAT: Last year, with the cobia closure and all the other big fish that we're not keeping, amberjack was definitely more valuable to us, and the customers wanted to target them. They wanted that big-fish fight, and so, yes, we did target them more.

MR. LORENZ: I am going to mention that -- Robert talked to me last year, and he said, well, I didn't target these, but, with the situation with the gag and the red grouper up my way -- Most of us that live on the coast and can pick our day, I think it was more of a preference. We're going to go out there, forty miles out, and go out into the 140 or 180 water and try to get the grouper, but, being that we can't keep very many and they don't seem to be there, I think, in the future, if you talk about targeting, as I've been sitting here and talking at breakfast and all, in my mind, yes, let's go out and try for some amberjacks on the other reefs and structure, and why go out forty miles for nothing if at twelve to eighteen we can have a good day with the reef donkeys, and so I might predict that effort in southeast North Carolina may shift to doing that even among the private boat owners, just as a way of enjoying a nice day with a big fish.

MR. MOSS: Anybody else? All right. What do you see in terms of discards in the commercial sector and then in the recreational sector?

MR. JOHNSON: I don't know if this would go under discards, but, in Florida, we definitely have a predation issue with large sharks. I mean, it's to the point, on the shelf edge right now, if you try to catch an amberjack, you might catch the first one, and, some of the research trips we did with the State of Florida, we had like five drops in a row where the sharks, the big sharks, ate the rigs before they hit the bottom, and so that's definitely -- I don't know if anybody wanted to speak to that, but we're not discarding them. They're getting eaten. We're not having a chance to discard them.

MR. GOMEZ: Yes, that's happening in the Lower Keys quite a bit, also. There's a lot more sharks.

MR. J. FREEMAN: Down at the Daytona/Ponce Inlet area, the sandbars are out of control, and that's the only way you can describe it, and it doesn't matter. I mean, back in the 1980s, as far as sandbar sharks, I don't really remember them being three miles off the beach back in the 1980s, and we've got them now from three miles on out. They have had them out -- One of the swordfish trips we did, 200 miles offshore, we still had sandbars out there eating swordfish gear.

MR. COX: I would just like to say that we're seeing the same thing off of North Carolina. The sharks have become a huge problem, as far as discarding, because, whatever we let go, the sharks are eating them. I think we have to just keep going back to that, that we have a lot of discard issues with the sharks. We hear it all the time, and I don't know what we can do, as far as the council, to fix that, but it's a problem.

MR. BUFF: We're having the same thing where we're at, too. The sharks are becoming a huge problem for the boats, and so we're having a ton of issues with them eating the discards and just having to get up and move just because you can't get away from them.

MS. JEFFCOAT: You might get the first one back down, but, after that, it's game-on with the sharks.

MR. MERCURIO: We can't even get the muttons and the red snappers off the bottom in a lot of places now. When you're talking about the amberjack, it's the same thing. There's a lot of heads.

MR. ATACK: I would agree with the -- Fishery management has worked very well with the sharks. Back in the 1990s and 2000 through 2009, we would do a lot of diving and not really see sharks. Now, when you dive reefs, you're going to see a shark on every dive, about two or three sandbars, when you do the diving, and so it has really helped, and the population has come back.

MR. MOSS: All right. Steering this back to amberjacks, Jim, have you got more on amberjacks?

MR. J. FREEMAN: Just talking about the sharks, and now I'm off-base here a little bit, but this time of year is when the rays start moving in, and the cobias hang on the rays, usually, and we're catching more cobias off the sharks now, but there is none on the rays.

MR. PILAND: I would just agree with everybody that -- Up in Hatteras, it's the same way, Hatteras and Oregon Inlet. The tuna fishing is not productive. The hooking of the tunas is very productive, but, when you get two out of ten in on the yellowfins up off of Oregon Inlet, and that's the summer fishery, and, right now, if we would try to catch blackfins on jigs, we would lose better than 50 percent to the sharks. I know we're talking about amberjacks, but we're talking about sharks, and there is predation on everything that we hook right now, amberjacks included.

MR. MOSS: All right. I think that covered both commercial and recreational. Moving on to the next question, social and economic influences for the commercial sector. How has price and demand for amberjacks changed?

MR. COX: Well, it has definitely become a popular fish. We sell a lot of amberjacks to the Canadians. I think the Gulf closes sometime in the middle of the summer, and that has changed the value of our fish, and so there is a demand on them in the fall for us, and that's usually about when the fishery closes, and I think it closed last year in October, but the price of the fish -- We're seeing it go up every year. People are willing to experiment with other species, and they're finding that it's a tasty fish and there's a lot of things you can do with it. A lot of people are eating fish tacos and things now, and so it's become quite popular, and the price has gone up.

MS. MARHEFKA: Our price, we are paying like \$3.50 to the boat, up from a dollar, and, also, I noticed, with our restaurants, they will use it not necessarily interchangeably, but for the same price per plate as grouper, and so you're looking at our restaurants charging twenty-eight to thirty-dollars for a plate of amberjack, which is fairly unheard of, but they get away with it in Charleston. I am not asking the questions, but they're paying for it.

They don't pay us the same price as grouper, and I will say that, but they have no problem turning around and charging the same price, and so we used to have to sell our fish to the Canadians, our amberjack to the Canadians, in December, because we had too much, and we no longer have to do that. We can keep it all here, which is a big shift.

MR. SNYDER: Unlike Charleston, we give the value back to the guests. This is turning into a good alternative that, rather than selling a thirty-two-dollar grouper, we're selling a twenty-four-dollar amberjack, and we're getting a little bit more loyalty from the guests, and it's getting more respect on the plate.

MR. MOSS: Anybody else?

MR. J. FREEMAN: As far as wholesale and us, we used to have to go to the Canadians, but probably 95 percent of ours now just stays in the states and it doesn't leave.

MR. MOSS: All right. Has the demand for charter/headboat trips targeting amberjacks changed?

MR. GOMEZ: In the Lower Keys, we target them less nowadays than we used to. We just target them less.

MR. MERCURIO: Same thing on the headboats. People will take one if they can't get a snapper or a grouper, but, most of the time, they don't want to be bothered.

MS. JEFFCOAT: We have quite a few customers that have fished with us before and caught them, and they want to go target them again and not take them all home, but they do like fighting them.

MR. JOHNSON: We don't really target amberjack, but, in this day and age, with all the restrictions on different species and bag limits, they're part of a trip, and so we catch them. Just about every trip, we catch a limit of amberjack, but I wouldn't say we target them. I do get it occasionally. I had a guy that was supposed to go Sunday that is going to get weathered-out that he specifically asked if we could catch some amberjack, and so I do get that, but it's not that often.

MR. PILAND: The customers that we have off of Hatteras are very interested in catching them as part of the day, and that's not the only thing they want, but they go tuna fishing and then ask if we can stop and catch a few jacks. When we go bottom fishing, we jig for jacks, and it's part of our day.

MR. MOSS: All right. Directed recreational trips show a sharp increase in recent years. Would you agree that this is the case, and what is driving this pattern?

MR. LORENZ: I will say, if they are, or if they were, again, they were done for catch-and-release. You hear of people going out there and going to particularly the reefs where there is sunken boats, and it's catch-and-release, and so I don't know what that means, but they might keep one. As I mentioned, with the state of maybe the grouper fishery, maybe a few more of us will target them, but, again, they take one per boat, and they're going to take a lot of them.

MR. R. FREEMAN: A lot of the trolling boats, after a slow day on the dolphin wahoo or whatever, they will hit some of the wrecks on the way home to jig for the amberjack. It gives the guys a reason to crank a reel.

MR. MOSS: That's kind of the south Florida mantra, too. If nothing is happening offshore, you might hit a wreck or something like that on the way in, but it's not a targeted -- You don't go out saying I'm going to catch an amberjack today, and so, for me, I was very surprised to see the increase in targeted trips for that.

MR. GOMEZ: For me, also.

MR. MOSS: What communities are dependent on the greater amberjack fishery?

MR. COX: Our community is, like I was saying. Again, we catch about 25,000 pounds of these fish and support the local economy, and it's a great fish to have, especially when other fisheries are closed in the fall of the year.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I just think you have to look at it as just one of the many fish that we're all using to put together to make a living, and so I don't know that there is really -- The days have passed where one fish is the driver of one community, but I can certainly tell you that, if our little area didn't have amberjack, I don't know how we would get through some of the months.

MR. JOHNSON: The Johnson household is dependent on it, because my customers like catching them, and we catch them on our commercial boat as well, and so it's a very important fish, and my six employees too depend on them.

MR. BONURA: Throughout the entire Florida Keys, everyone up and down that entire chain of islands, the commercial guys target these fish, commercially.

MR. MOSS: Have changes in infrastructure affected fishing opportunities for amberjacks, docks, fish houses, et cetera? Has that affected anything? I guess not. Nothing? How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the greater amberjack fishery?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, this was the first year we had a closure, and the most common thing that people said on my charters was, really, they closed amberjack? It's like no one could believe that. We adapted to it, but at a time of year when you can't catch grouper, and that's the big fish that fits that bill, that pulls hard, and that was tough on the charter fleet in our area not to have amberjack available.

MR. HUDSON: I guess my question on the twenty-eight-inch and thirty-six-inch minimum size is what's the pound weight of each of those animals, so that I can put it in perspective of a five-year-old, forty-pound amberjack? Because I see it's ten-year-plus on the max age and stuff like that.

MR. MOSS: You're jumping a step ahead. Let's finish up with this question first, and I understand what you're saying, but let's talk about people adapting to the changes.

MR. COX: I think that we're just becoming dependent on the fishery more and more. I think a lot of our commercial guys are using the fishery to make payments, house payments and their rent and things like that, and it's a valuable fishery now, and it's important.

MR. J. FREEMAN: I have noticed with our guys, like Jack just said, they are changing the style of the way they fish, and they're changing the boats that they fish on, and they're going to day-boat fishing, almost, in and out, and that species -- If the b-liners aren't biting, you can always try to pull a trip out of it.

MR. PILAND: Our fishermen, our charters, are expecting to be able to catch amberjacks pretty much on a daily basis.

MS. JEFFCOAT: I think that amberjack has become well known by a lot of fishermen, and they like the fight, and a lot of them like the taste, and it's showing up more in restaurants locally.

MR. ATACK: It looks like, according to the chart, the twenty-eight-inch is about twelve pounds, and the thirty-six-inch is about twenty pounds, and so it's twelve versus twenty.

MR. HUDSON: Since that question had to do with a thirty-six-inch minimum size, what Robert told me was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight would be the bare minimum of about thirty pounds, whether it's roed-up or not, and maybe all that makes it part of it, but, again, that is a cleaner animal, or less worms anyway.

MR. MOSS: That will bring us right into is the twenty-eight-inch minimum size limit for the recreational sector appropriate?

MR. JOHNSON: I am torn here, but yes. I know like the headboats and some of the charter boats that don't fish as many deeper trips -- If you raise that size limit much, you take a lot of fish off their catch, and we catch a lot of bigger amberjacks, because we fish -- Most of our trips are ten-hour days, and we're out there twenty-one to twenty-eight fathoms. I would venture to say that -- I don't know. I mean, sometimes you feel like, from a management perspective, you're better off to let the real big fish go, and so that's just a thought, and I am not advocating for that, but it's just a thought.

MR. COX: On the commercial size, there's a lot of days when I can't catch anything but a damn thirty-five-inch fish, and I would love to see it go to thirty-five inches, and it drives me crazy, because we can't carry but so much live bait, and, by the time we go through our bait, there are a few big fish showing up, but, no, I think the thirty-six-inch size is appropriate. A thirty-six-inch size or greater is roughly twenty-five to twenty-eight pounds. That's if he's not fed real heavy, but I do feel like it's appropriate, and I do like to see the season last as long as it can.

MR. BONURA: I think I would have to disagree with Jack over there. How come, if he can catch them twenty-eight inches, why can't we catch them at twenty-eight and make it easier on enforcement and keep it all the same?

MR. HUDSON: Jack, for clarification, is that twenty-five to twenty-eight gutted weight?

MR. COX: Yes, it is, and it just seems that we get a nice-sized fillet off of that fish. I would just like to add to it, on Vincent's -- Just to follow-up on his comment, if we went anything smaller, I think we would really catch the ACL mighty fast in the spring of the year, because they are so abundant in the spring of the year, the small fish, and so we would be competing with his market.

MR. MOSS: Are there new measures that the council should consider, or existing measures, that should be changed? Keeping sharks out of the equation.

MR. COX: I think, with the amendment, Amendment 27, and looking at the amberjack alternatives, I think there is a nice range in there to select from, and I think that folks need to weigh-in, because we've got some opportunities here to do the split season and to do a trip limit change for the commercial, and so I would hope that everybody would weigh-in in May, during public comment.

MR. MOSS: Anybody else? Would removing the prohibition on powerheads in the EEZ off of South Carolina impact greater amberjack?

MS. BROUWER: I will say that this question was put in there because some of the issues that we're having, that the state was having, with the SMZs. There was a lot of problem with amberjacks being kind of locally overfished in some of these artificial reefs, and so, as you know, the council is considering removing this prohibition off of South Carolina in Amendment 46, and so I just wanted to sort of get a feel or any extra information you all might have that could inform those discussions that are going to be coming up.

MR. JOHNSON: Is this a commercial fishing issue or an all-fisheries issue, because, I mean, the landings are driven by Florida, and so I wouldn't think it would make a whole lot of difference if we remove this in South Carolina, and I see Mel waving back there.

MR. BELL: The whole bang stick issue, going way back in time, came up because we had an issue in South Carolina where folks were using bang sticks on our artificial reefs, primarily, and basically depleting, very quickly depleting, the amberjack off of these reefs, and so we went through the process of requesting that the council address that, and that evolved into the restriction on bang sticks that existed, but it kind of morphed into something a little beyond just that, and it became South Carolina was the only state in which you could not use a bang stick, recreationally or commercially, in federal waters, period.

We're the only state in which bang sticks are not allowed in the commercial fishery, and so a number of the commercial guys, for several years now, have been coming and saying, hey, we just want a level playing field, and, back when this was an issue, there were not ACLs, and that was another concern as well, but things have evolved over time, and so we're perfectly comfortable in South Carolina with playing on the same level playing field with everyone else and allowing bang sticks to be used commercially or recreationally, but it's a little different, because South Carolina is the only state in which that federal waters prohibition exists across-the-board everywhere.

We're not worried about the artificial reefs anymore, because most of our artificial reefs are special management zones, and that is already covered, and so the original reason that we asked to have this in place is covered, and so we're just simply trying to level the playing field for folks off of South Carolina, commercially or recreationally, and so that's why it's a little odd, but it was an interesting difference between us and the other states, and so that's the background, and so this is in response to primarily requests from commercial guys saying, hey, can we just be like everybody else, and it's a level playing field for all four states then.

MR. ATACK: I can attest to what Mel is saying. I have gone to wrecks and seen all the shell casings on the wreck and seen no amberjacks, period. Typically, with the new ACLs and your trip limits, maybe that won't happen, but that's a very efficient way of landing amberjacks, and sometimes they will have two divers, and they will keep one amberjack on the line, and the other will sit there and shoot one and shoot one and shoot one and shoot one, and, the next thing you know, the whole school is gone, but at least, with the trip limits, you can only do much per trip, but I have seen that happen.

MR. GOMEZ: I think the greatest way to deplete a population in a concentrated area such as a wreck is turn a bunch of guys loose with bang sticks, and that's how you make them disappear quickly.

MR. MOSS: All right. Environmental and ecological, have you perceived any unique effects of environmental conditions on greater amberjack? Thank you, Mel.

MR. COX: I will say that these are aggressive fish, but there are times when they don't want to be aggressive and you can't get them to take a thing when we're commercial fishing for them, and so I don't know if when the water gets really hot, as these water temperatures are rising, but sometimes we just can't get them to bite.

MR. JOHNSON: I see that Jimmy has already put the shark issue there, and so I will mention it one more time, because that is a real problem.

MR. HUDSON: We meet twice a year at the HMS AP, and I would recommend that we have the South Atlantic Council there the next time, because, this last meeting, they weren't able to get there, because both meetings were at the same time, but this keeps coming up at both meetings every year for several years, and everybody knows that we're predator-rich at the HMS AP, and everybody at the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council know the same story.

MR. MOSS: What are your observations concerning the timing and length of the amberjack spawning season in your area? Is the commercial harvest restriction in April appropriate?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. HUDSON: I asked Robert a little while ago, and apparently those are like the one-year-olds, the little ones that he's seeing in a huge thing, because we used to call the banded rudderfish baby amberjacks back in the 1970s and stuff like that, but now we know better.

MR. COX: I think it's appropriate. I mean, I don't know. We certainly see a lot of recruitment out there, and it's always nice to see that the stock is healthy, and I would say it's a healthy stock, and so I would say yes.

MR. MOSS: I haven't heard much about the actual spawning season in various areas. What do you guys see at what times of year?

MR. COX: It's just something I haven't checked. I don't know. I will have to start paying a little more attention to it, but I am not an expert on the peak spawning season, but I think we're hitting it pretty good.

MR. JOHNSON: I don't know, and maybe Todd could answer this question, but I am not sure the amberjack spawns much north of northeast Florida, or maybe they do, and I don't know, but I know that, in our area, it's right now. That's when they're spawning, and there are huge schools of them on the shelf edge in certain locations. They're there every year, and you can count on it.

MR. GOMEZ: In south Florida, in the springtime, it's usually when they have roe, and I think April is pretty good. I think it's got it there, and I don't think any other months are needed, and I think April is all right.

DR. KELLISON: Captain Robert, I don't know. My understanding has always been that the spawn is off of Florida in the spring, but I would be interested in Jack's thoughts or Scott's or others from North Carolina of whether there is any up our way off the coast.

MR. COX: We will start paying a little more attention to it, and I will walk across the street and give you some answers hopefully soon.

MR. MOSS: Do you perceive the abundance of greater amberjack has changed over the past five years? If so, how? I was just texting with a captain friend of mine down in Islamorada, and he said he's seeing less of them off of Islamorada.

MR. COX: The last five years, I think it's been pretty much the same. I think it hasn't changed much at all. Maybe, looking back a lot longer than that, I could answer that, and I think I did earlier, but we're seeing a lot of small fish in the spring.

MR. J. FREEMAN: We've been seeing, once again going back to day-boat fishing, the style fishing that we're doing, I would probably say, over the last five years, we've seen pretty much an increase. I mean, we're getting daily limits on it, and so I think it's just getting better and better.

MS. JEFFCOAT: I believe that we are seeing a slight increase on them in Georgia, and they're all sizes. It's small to big, and so I think that they are increasing.

MR. MOSS: What do you see in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? I think we've already hit that one. Are catch rates of amberjack higher on artificial reefs or natural reefs?

MR. JOHNSON: Anything big, and so I have big ledges and areas on the shelf edge that they're always there, and then they like wrecks, too. They just don't typically like smaller pieces of bottom, and so I don't know. I mean, you usually associate them with wrecks, but they definitely like a big rock formation as well, a big break.

MR. COX: We've got some wrecks that we can just about always go to and they're going to be there. It seems like you can go to a wreck and you can catch amberjacks, and you won't always get your limit, because they won't always bite, but we can go there and find amberjacks, but they're on the rocks as well, and you just have to do a lot more scouting to find them.

MS. JEFFCOAT: We're finding them on the ledges in a hundred-foot of water, but we are starting to see them a little more often on our artificial reefs that are in about seventy-foot of water. Not the real big ones, but they're keeper size.

MR. HULL: Myra, on my comment, after "larger fish", it's supposed to say on natural bottom.

MR. GOMEZ: I would say, in the Lower Keys, it's mostly the wrecks. We don't find them on bottom structure much at all.

MR. MOSS: I didn't even think about it, Robert, but, to go with what you said, it's the bigger wrecks down in south Florida. Then, like I said, like off of Islamorada and stuff, I've got them on the Humps, which are obviously larger seamounts and things like that, and so, yes, any kind of larger structure is probably where you're going to find them. The last couple are when would you say the fishery for amberjack began to develop in the South Atlantic, or did it originate in a particular area?

MR. HULL: Off of Florida, in the mid-1970s, recreationally, I would say that we started targeting them pretty heavily and then commercially in the late 1980s.

MR. COX: I would have to say we really didn't target them. They were not very much value. It was a fifty-cent fish. Then, when ACLs went in place, in about 2008, they became more valuable, because of, obviously, closed seasons and seasons and so forth.

MR. PILAND: 1937.

MR. LORENZ: I am going to say it now, and I'm going to date myself, but I remember having fun catching them in the 1960s and in the early 1970s in St. Augustine and up off of Morehead City off a pier.

MR. MOSS: Anybody else?

MR. HUDSON: Just because I know somebody born July 11, 1968, I sent him a picture from my relative's boat, and the rack was full of forty-plus-pound amberjacks, and that's what they caught that day, but, like I said, the pictures can reveal a lot more about the numbers, but that was one of the few pictures I saw with solid amberjacks.

MR. COX: Before 2008, there was such an abundance of those species to catch that I just don't know why any of the guys would want to put these fish in their fish box, because they were so cheap, and you could catch a fish worth three-times the value.

MR. JOHNSON: I know, in the early 1980s, when I commercial fished, we didn't keep amberjack. The market -- Like Jack said, it took up too much room and too much ice, and it just wasn't worth it, but we didn't keep triggerfish either. We kept the high-value species, the snappers and the groupers.

MR. MOSS: All right. The last one is what else is important for the council to know about greater amberjack?

MR. COX: I think they have acknowledged it with some really nice alternatives at the last council meeting that they had, and I really appreciate that, that there is a regional difference and it's important to both Florida and North Carolina as well as the other states.

MR. HULL: Just to sum it up, things have changed for this species, and, currently, this is a very productive, important, and sustainable species for fishermen and for consumers.

MR. HUDSON: I have been on a new project researching newspaper articles going back to the 1950s and 1960s and stuff, and we have like Skippers of the Week down in 1965 and 1966, and

then there is this adjoining picture that have five wheelbarrows of amberjack, and they were all thrown away from the recreational fishery, and so that stuff went on because, like I said, the forty to seventy-pound animals, we do the shoulder strip at two-dollars a pop for one fish, and then that changed in the early 1980s.

MR. MOSS: All right. Thank you very much. Go ahead and break for lunch, and then we'll get into red porgy.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: In the interest of moving on, we won't waste any time, and we will jump right into the red porgy performance report and Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following the amberjack fishery performance report, we'll repeat the exercise for red porgy, and so I will go through the attachment that has the summary of the information, and then we'll go through the questions in similar fashion as we just did for amberjack before lunch.

Again, for red porgy, we have a short blurb on the biology and life history. There was not a whole lot of recent information on this species, and you can see some of these references are rather dated, but that's what we have on life history summary for the moment, and the stock status -- Red porgy was the first species that was assessed through the SEDAR process. An update to that assessment was done in 2012, and that included seven additional years of data since the previous update, and there was an update done in 2006 and another one done in 2012.

The later one showed that red porgy are currently still overfished, but overfishing is not occurring, and there was some talk about low recruitment, and that would explain why recovery has been very slow with this species, and so landings have been quite a bit below the maximum sustainable yield since the first size limit was implemented in 1992.

Like I said, there is an update coming up for red porgy, I believe this year, and that's why we're going through this exercise and providing extra information that the analysts and scientists can use in their discussions on this species, and so, as far as management, there was a rebuilding program that was put in place for red porgy beginning in 1991, and there was a total length minimum size limit of twelve inches put in place then, and, in 2000, Amendment 12 was only for red porgy, and that amendment put in place an eighteen-year rebuilding schedule, with year-one being 1999. There was a fifty-pound trip limit, or a bycatch, I should say, allowance that was put in place outside of the closed season of May through December.

Then the council made a whole bunch of different changes to red porgy management in 2006 with implementation of Amendment 13C. There was a whole bunch of things that happened. The minimum size limit went up, and there was a commercial quota that was implemented then, a trip limit of 120 fish from May through December, and the current recreational bag limit of three per person per day or per trip.

Then allocations were established of 50/50 for this species in 2008, and then, after the latest update, the council again made several adjustments. The ABC, as you can see on your screen, was

specified beginning in 2013, and the commercial and recreational ACLs were adjusted accordingly.

As far as fishery-independent trends go, this is a species that is sampled by the Southeast Reef Fish Survey, and so that's using the chevron traps, and so here is a figure showing the catch per unit effort for that index, and, of course, you can see, over here in the last ten years or so, there seems to have been a decline in that catch per unit effort for red porgy.

MR. ATACK: On that, it also says the video trap, and did the video show anything different than what the trap was showing in the catches?

MS. BROUWER: I don't know. Maybe Todd can speak to that.

DR. KELLISON: I don't know. Wally and company generate the trends report with the trap data every year, and, thus far, we have not done that with the video data, and so a similar index hasn't been created, but we do have that data.

MR. ATACK: The video started in like 2010, right?

DR. KELLISON: It was region-wide in 2011, and it was mostly Georgia and Florida in 2010.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you for that, Todd.

MR. MANIGAULT: Do we have any access to any of the video, to be able to see the fish in the traps, by chance?

DR. KELLISON: Do you mean the data or the actual videos? I am not sure that I have any on my computer, but it would be easy for me to get some to show the group, if that's what the request is. Would you like to see a video taken from our traps that show red porgy?

MR. MANIGAULT: Yes.

DR. KELLISON: Okay.

MR. R. FREEMAN: What is the timeframe that the lionfish was identified as a predator in our local waters? How far back does that go, because that seems like the silver snapper would be a logical target, maybe, for them also, and they're in the depths that those lionfish have been captured.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and it's my understanding that the MARMAP survey has kept track of lionfish. They have made observations, and I know that, when I worked at the DNR, there were studies being conducted back in the late 1990s and early 2000s to sort of start quantifying the presence of lionfish in the South Atlantic, and so certainly there is data that's been gathered since then, but I don't know if anybody else in the room would know if there's been any actual studies to figure out whether the abundance or presence of lionfish has affected reef fish directly, and I don't know about that.

MR. ATACK: I believe it was between 2005 and like around 2008 was when we were really seeing them offshore, and there was some work being done in North Carolina. They were doing some dives and some ROV work up there, and so it was the late 2000s. Then, since then, it's probably five-times what it used to be. I mean, we're seeing a lot more larger ones, and so probably that's about the timeframe that might have started affecting the fishery, because it certainly is competing for food and also maybe eating juvenile fish that we want to hook-and-line.

DR. KELLISON: I was looking for the paper, but I think that the initial sort of establishment, certainly off of the Carolinas, maybe dates to the late 1990s and early 2000s, and there is probably expansion through the region in that time. I would say that, in my previous comment, I said Wally et al., and I should clarify, for the record, I meant the MARMAP group at South Carolina DNR, but that group is also working on generating an index for lionfish, and so a time series, to look at their regional scale abundance over time.

I was involved in a study a couple of years ago, and I have forgotten what the date of the paper was, that looked at the potential effect of lionfish on the abundance of tomtate at a regional scale, and the conclusion of that study was that lionfish had an impact on tomtate, but it was not -- It was sort of based on a number of lines of evidence, but there was no diet information in that study.

Wally and I were having conversations earlier today about this, and we were working on several different lines of analyses, like community-level analyses, where -- This is still work that's in progress, but where we don't see like clear changes in like regional reef fish communities over the period in which lionfish were becoming well established in the region, but there is a lot of information in the literature showing species-specific and community-level impacts in more tropical communities.

MR. ATACK: The other thing is I think, in the late 1990s or early 2000s, it was all deepwater lionfish, and we were saying, well, no, we're seeing them where the shallow-water grouper are too, and so then the research changed to where they also saw it in the sixty-foot and that area, too.

DR. KELLISON: Just to clarify on their diet, there are a number of published studies looking at the diets of lionfish, and, in general, they kind of eat anything that's around. They are very opportunistic predators, and what people tend to find is that what they are preying on -- Their higher-frequency prey tends to be what's present in the environment, and so, if there's a lot of blennies and gobies around, and they tend to eat smaller fish, and they will be eating blennies and gobies, but there are definitely instances, observations, of them eating grunts and vermilion snapper, and so they certainly have the capability of consuming species in the snapper grouper complex when they're at relatively small sizes.

MR. BUFF: A few years back, and I don't know what year it was, but we had a really, really cold winter, and these things were floating everywhere offshore at our place, and the fish were still alive, but they were in shock, and the guys were dip-netting them and putting them in the boat, and they actually cut a bunch of them, and the meat was really, really good. You would be surprised, but they had -- There was hundreds of them just floating everywhere, lionfish.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Let's steer it back to red porgy. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you. Okay, and so, moving on with the description here, again, the fishery performance is based on the same information, the same datasets, as we've already talked about, and, again, the link to the tool that shows you all of this information for red porgy and for amberjack, and, if the AP -- I forgot to say this before, but this is, like I said, something that we just started using, and we haven't really had a lot of internal discussions at the staff level to see if this is something that would be useful or how we could maybe expand its use for our outreach or whatnot

If you guys like this or don't like it or have any suggestions of extra information that you would like to see or ideas for how you think it could be best utilized, we would love to hear from you. We are going to just play around with it and see how well it works and maybe even stop producing these lengthy documents and do more of this type of format to generate discussion for the fishery performance reports.

Commercial landings, again, the time series we're using for the description, of the snapshot, I should say, of the fishery is from 2000 through 2016, and, again, we have the table with total landings for that time series and, where applicable, the commercial quota or ACL for each of those years. Then we have it broken down by state, and you can see North Carolina, in the blue here, is pretty prominent when it comes to red porgy landings, and, again, for this one, South Carolina and Georgia are aggregated for confidentiality, to avoid confidentiality issues.

Here, you have the total commercial landings annually in relation to the ACL, which is the orange line, and so you can see that landings have fluctuated. There was a little blip here, and I don't think that it actually caused an in-season closure. Landings were above the ACL for a little while, and then, to show you the seasonality here, this we broke it down prior to and after 2006, which is when I told you that Amendment 13C went into place, and so it had a lot of regulatory changes, and so, to give you sort of a better idea of what that did, we broke this down into time periods, and so this shows you prior to 2006, and, here, the blue, is the average from 2000 to 2016. The orange is prior to 2006 and the gray is from 2007 through 2016.

This is for the entire South Atlantic, and then, over here, you have it broken down by state, and so North Carolina, again, is very prominent there. Florida, not so much, and then here you see the change, where Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida landings go up, and this is post-2007, and so those regulatory changes seem to have had an effect and maybe spread out more of the red porgy harvest throughout the region.

For the recreational sector, the same type of information. It's total landings in pounds whole weight in relationship to the quotas and ACLs that are in place, and then here are the recreational landings by state for the entire time series. One thing that we noticed was this very prominent Florida landings over here in 2016, and so that's one question that we have for the AP. Is this something that you have observed? Is this an artifact of the data? It just seems kind of odd that all of a sudden the Florida landings are so high.

Here is the recreational landings by year. They're well below the current ACLs, and you do see this uptick right here since 2014. Here is the recreational landings by wave and by state and so certainly the summer months, Waves 3 and 4, are important, and then, for Florida, it seems pretty even throughout the year, and here is your directed trips.

Then, for discards, and I will circle back to the online tool here in a minute, to show you the discards, and, again, that's information that came from the latest update to the assessment, and then the same information that we went over for amberjack, and we're showing that here for red porgy, and so the South Atlantic region is shown in yellow, Florida is blue, Georgia and South Carolina are orange. This is the ex-vessel price per pound in 2016 dollars, and you see how these lines are matching pretty well here, the commercial landings and the ex-vessel value, for that time series.

I think that's it, and so let me go back to the tool. What I wanted to show you here was the discards for red porgy, and so here is the commercial discards from the latest SEDAR assessment and then, for the recreational, we have the same sort of thing here.

One of the reasons that the council is considering the split season, as we talked about yesterday for the commercial, is to reduce those discards during the closed season. At this point, I guess we can get into the questions, or answer any questions the AP may have on the information that I just presented.

MR. ATACK: You made the comment about the one year there. If you go back to the chart, about the Florida landings went way up on the recreational in I guess 2016, whether it's real or not, what year did we go from MRFSS to MRIP on the recreational landings?

MS. BROUWER: That was 2013, I believe. It was definitely earlier.

MR. ATACK: Figure 7 I guess is what you were looking at, right?

DR. ERRIGO: The methodology for the intercepts changed in 2013, and so the first full year of the new intercept methodology started in 2014. We recalibrated numbers back to 2004, based on the numbers running side-by-side for several years, for 2013, 2014, and 2015, but the new intercept method, like the new MRIP methodology, went into effect in 2013, Wave 2 of 2013.

MR. ATACK: It's odd that the South Carolina landings went to almost nil and the Florida went up on the same year on that chart.

MR. JOHNSON: I know that we catch a lot of red porgies in northeast Florida, but I know the guys out of Ponce Inlet -- They sort of act like they don't catch as many, unless they come up my way, and I am just curious to hear from the other guys in Florida, south of us, is this something that you commonly catch? I mean, we catch our limit if we want to, but these fish off of my inlet -- You're not going to encounter them in any less than really about 128 feet, and most of them are out closer to the shelf edge and beyond. From 145 to 300 feet is where they are, and so, the recreational landings, I'm sorry, but I don't have any faith in that right there at all, that big spike in 2016.

MR. HUDSON: Back in the 1980s, fishing with bandit reels, I would anchor up on the Steeples, which you can no longer do, and I would catch as big of a pink porgy, red porgy, as you could ever catch at the base of the steeples, and they were just pretty thick out there, but I asked one of the captains there a couple of years back if they all go out there to fish, and that was before the *Oculina* expansion occurred recently, and he said, why? We can catch plenty of porgies inshore if we want to target them, and so that's the best I can say.

MR. MOSS: It's definitely not a south Florida fishery. I mean, we don't -- In fact, I was just texting with a buddy of mine who runs a boat out of Islamorada, and they never catch them. I shouldn't say never, but it's rare, and, if they do, it's deeper.

MR. JOHNSON: Vincent, do you encounter red porgies where you fish?

MR. BONURA: Actually, we catch them when we're blue-line tile fishing in around 450 or so, 450 feet, but I haven't actually tried for them anywhere else, and so I can't be certain that there's not fish within 100, 200, 250. I can't say. I mean, I'm sure there is.

MR. COX: I remember there were places back inshore, back in the 1980s, that we used to catch those things in sixty or seventy feet of water. They would be three or four-pounders, but there's so much pressure back inshore now that you would never find one, and so most of ours are coming out of about 120 feet and deeper, and we've got some really big ones out in about 200 feet, some of those five and six-pounders.

MR. R. FREEMAN: We were catching them right there on the Big Rock, in sixty fathoms or so, and I'm talking about some seven-pound fish or better. I know, one day, everybody on the boat had a citation fish, and I think that's four pounds or better, but we had some seven-pounders. That particular depth along that edge there, northeast and southwest of the Big Rocks, seem to be the best of it. Like Jack says though, in 120 feet, you will catch something, but it's nothing like it used to be.

MR. MOSS: All right. Recreational landings appear to have increased since 2014, particularly in Florida, and would you agree that this is the case, or what may be driving this pattern? I think we kind of answered that. I don't know that it's the case, unless it's a northern Florida thing.

MR. JOHNSON: I just think it's bad information.

MS. JEFFCOAT: We are catching more of them now than we were a few years back. They're smaller, but we are catching them in eighty to ninety-foot of water. If you get past 120, they're a little bit bigger, but, to get the big ones, it's 180-foot of water plus, and I'm not sure why, what the drive is for it, but we are seeing a difference in location.

MR. MOSS: Then, moving down, when and where are the fish available and has this changed, and I know we kind of hit some of that, of the where, but what about the when? It seems to be deeper water, for the most part, and any particular timeframe?

MR. JOHNSON: Unfortunately, for them, right now, winter and early spring is when you catch the bigger ones, it seems like, but they're available year-round. We have no problem catching red porgies whatsoever.

MR. HUDSON: A question, I guess, might be for Todd, because I know, as far as the chevron traps, a lot of times, getting down in our backyard, and especially in that offshore component, that west wall of the Gulf Stream usually made it real problematic, and is there a lot of years that MARMAP and your outfit, since 2009 or 2010, has been down our way and in the offshore component by the big ledge and stuff like that, Todd?

DR. KELLISON: I am not sure, Rusty. Beginning in 2010, the trap survey effort was video added, and I think the footprint, in Florida definitely, down to south of Canaveral, increased a lot, and so we've had pretty good coverage since then in that area, but your question is particularly about out like on the deeper end of that, and I would say probably -- I might ask Wally about this, because he's probably more familiar with the sampling footprint than I, but we've been pretty consistent about sampling in that area, including to a depth. I don't know how deep we get, and that is mainly our SEFIS group that's down there in that area. Most of our samples don't go beyond like eighty meters, 250 feet or something like that, but I'm guessing that it's a little harder for us to get out that deep that far south, just because the current is stronger closer in.

MR. BUBLEY: The chevron traps go to about a hundred meters. I would have to look into our database to see exactly, down there, how far we get out, but the SEFIS group is the one that's typically doing the sampling down there, and so I'm not quite as familiar on a day-to-day basis, but we have that data available, and so I can let you know.

MR. HULL: I have a question for you, Wally. If you can recall, from the MARMAP chevron trap survey, in a year, red porgy, what is the number of samples that you catch of fish for the year? Is it hundreds or thousands?

MR. BUBLEY: It's probably low thousands. I would have to look at it exactly, but I could probably tell you within a couple of minutes, because I have that pulled up, and so I can let you know.

MR. JOHNSON: I just wanted to add something on the where. I know, in my area, we catch red porgy on a different kind of habitat than we do a lot of the other fish. They're on like real low-relief bottom, and we call it porgy bottom. I mean, a lot of times, that's what you catch there, triggerfish and red porgy, and so you don't catch them -- That's why I don't really buy into the recreational deal, because most of those guys are fishing known ledges, known wrecks, and there's not going to be many red porgy there. That's not their habitat. Their habitat is totally different, and I think that's important to note.

MR. HUDSON: To that, with what Robert just said, when I would come in 1980, through the 1980s there, with my bandit reels and stuff, I would work my way up to St. Augustine, and there was a component that fished out of St. Augustine with Miami hand crank or whatever kind of operations, and they were fishing live bottom, and that was particularly their thing to do, and, of course, we were snapper grouper fishing, and so it was kind of funny. They would be catching porgies, and we would be on the periphery of them catching snapper grouper, just around that same live bottom.

MR. LORENZ: I can pretty much reiterate what the gentleman to the right said. An unsophisticated recreational angler off of southeastern North Carolina, we're going to catch the legal ones, to get fourteen inches, and you can have four guys go out and maybe catch seven of them almost any time during the grouper season, once the grouper season opens, and they will be in -- I seem to remember 120 to 180 feet of water, and they will be there. They would always call it a pick. They're always there, and nobody fishes specifically for them. Again, everybody is praying and hoping for a grouper, and that's why they've gone. In fact, I will state that there is

kind of an urban legend that they go together. Where there is pinkies, there will be red grouper and scamp.

MR. MANIGAULT: I have never caught one in that deep water. Normally, here around Charleston, they're seventy to eighty, and there has never been a charter that we've had that we have never caught any, but it's always been on a live bottom.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, guys. Has the size of the fish changed? If so, could you briefly describe the trend over the past five years?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, the size limit has definitely made the size change. They've got to be fourteen inches to keep, and that's almost a five-year-old fish, if I read the graph right, or at least four years old, and so I think the size has been pretty consistent for us. We catch some sixteen and seventeen-inch fish. We try not to catch the little fish. I mean, there is no reason to catch them.

MR. LORENZ: Just to be comical, my question would be do they really get over sixteen inches, and so that kind of tells you.

MR. R. FREEMAN: There was a place, twenty-five years ago, that we went there with four anglers one day and caught 500 pounds of them, and I'm talking about four to seven-pound fish, and you go there today and you will hardly catch a porgy, which reminds me of a comment that Woo-Woo Harker, who used to run the Carolina Princess there out of Morehead, he said that a lot of this fisheries science would be good, as far as marine protected areas and things like that, if the little fishes took little hammers and built little houses, but they move around, and we've seen over the years, and I guess I've got as many years of longevity as most anybody here, and it's dramatic how different some of these places can be from year to year and over many years.

What you used to catch there is no longer true. I know Gilbert Mathis and me and a lot of other people know of a little old grouper hunt in 447 feet of water that used to be -- It would be 100 percent snowy, and you go there today and it's 80 percent two or three-pound tilefish, and so there's a lot of variation in what goes on out there.

MR. MOSS: Have there been effort shifts to and from red porgy? If so, please describe.

MR. JOHNSON: I would just second what Jimmy's comment is. I mean, with all the different regulations now, as charter boat operators, you target what you can keep, and I would say that's the same for a commercial boat. 120 head is part of your trip, and they're good fish, and there is a market for them.

MS. JEFFCOAT: Since we're seeing more of them in a little less water than we were, yes, they are being targeted. I think that they're also mixed in with a lot of the vermilion that we target, and so we are looking for them.

MR. COX: I would just like to say it's the part of the management that we have to deal with, and it's tough, because, when we lose our vermilion fishery, they're going to go out there and try to get what they can, and so they will go out there and work really hard to find something to make a living off of, and, a lot of times, it's this fish when the vermilion is closed.

MS. MARHEFKA: Mark was talking to me about his belief that there is a stock that is in much deeper water that, in his mind, is protected and not part of the main fishery, but that's him, and you guys might have a different point of view. It's in about seventy to a hundred fathoms, sort of like northeast of the Georgetown Hole, where you're catching them with the golden tile and snowy, and he is only -- You wouldn't go out there just for them, and so, if you're targeting golden tile and snowy, you might get some of those, and he says they're bigger and lighter-colored fish that he doesn't believe are sort of part of what you're catching up inshore, and so he targets them at that time.

MR. HULL: I just wanted to follow through on what Wally provided the answer to me, and, in 2017, they caught 1,700 animals, but they made 1,500 trap sets, and that's a real increase in trap sets through the previous years on the graph, where it shows a large stock abundance, and so that's a lot of effort for not so many fish.

MR. MOSS: What do you see in terms of discards in the commercial sector and then in the recreational sector?

MR. JOHNSON: On the commercial sector, I think that's why we would like to have that little bit of a discard catch in that first season, because we do -- They do co-mingle with the vermilion, and you do throw them back, and I will say though that they are pretty hardy. Most of them go back down, even in pretty deep water. We used to catch them snowy fishing, and they would go down. If you throw them in the water, they go right back to the bottom, and so I don't know what the discard mortality is on red porgy, but, obviously, if we can't keep them, we're discarding them.

MR. ATACK: Does that mean the CPUE went from 0.6 up to 1.13 in 2017? Wally, on your number there, does that mean the CPUE went from 0.6 up to 1.13 in 2017?

MR. BUBLEY: It's a little more complicated than that, because, when we develop those CPUEs, we are taking into account temperature and latitude and things like that, to move it around, not to mention the fact that the numbers that are showing up there on that figure are normalized to the mean average, and so it's basically a value of one would just indicate that it's average for the entire time series, and so, if you're just looking at those nominal numbers without any of that standardization, then, yes, it would be slightly -- It would be right around one in 2017, per trap at least, but you also -- The time the traps are in the water varies a little bit, but not a lot.

MR. ATACK: So does the 2017 versus 2016 -- It jumped a bunch, and is that what you're saying, the CPUE?

MR. BUBLEY: I would have to look at it again to see. I don't think it jumped that much over that one-year period. I think it was relatively similar.

MR. LORENZ: We are discussing discards, Mr. Chairman? I have something to say, and here's a fish that I have felt really bad about. The circle I work with is just the private recreational anglers, and, when you're looking at the discards of these fish, I don't think I have seen a more abused fish discarded than the red porgy, and I don't know if it exists anywhere else in the recreational fishery, but, along southeast North Carolina, as I stated before, there has been this truth that, when you're going for red grouper and scamp, where there are the red porgy, or the pinkies as they call them

locally -- When you catch them, that's where the grouper are going to be, and then the term is that makes good grouper bait.

That isn't just among the private anglers, but they learned that from a number of charter captains in that area, and I don't know how far that extends, and so when I tell you that a group of four folk will go out for a day to -- Back when the red grouper were there, four people would bring in five or six, and, I mean, I tried to stop it sometimes, but I would see five or six red porgies, twelve inches, would be chopped up for bait and put on the hooks, and, yes, you caught a grouper with them.

This would have been a fish, to me -- I think of Amendment 29, of best fishing practices and ethical angling, and here was one, or here is a mindset, that I think there needs to be more public education on. If you get an important fish like this, and I didn't see it back with the sea bass days, but, with the red porgy, I think it was one of the most abused fish, where it's not just the live discards, but, for every one that came in to be cleaned, there was probably one chopped up for bait. I apologize that I couldn't do more on that, but it was just too many people.

MR. MOSS: All right. Social and economic influences for the commercial sector, has price and demand for porgy changed?

MR. SNYDER: Now, I don't know what they charge in Charleston, but this is another fish that gives us the ability to sell something to the guests for only twenty-two or twenty-three bucks, instead of thirty-dollars, and so there is more demand.

MR. JOHNSON: I know every fish house you take them to are going to buy them, and so they're going somewhere. They are obviously using them, but they're not a real high-value fish, but, in this day and age, everything we catch is valuable.

MR. COX: I own a fish market, and just about anything in there that I want, I can take home for dinner at night, and that's usually what I will pick, is a pink -- They are very good to eat, and people pay a lot. It's nice to have something cheaper to offer some of these restaurants that don't serve really high-end, white-tablecloth stuff, and so, yes, it has definitely increased over time, and it's a very popular fish, and so that alternative in this Amendment 27 has been really nice, and I hope we get that pushed through.

MS. MARHEFKA: They do really well. They fit in really well in like the whole fish, people who want a single whole fish presentation, where they would use vermilion. That's what it's used for, and so they fit that spot really nicely.

MR. ATACK: I wonder why the chart doesn't really show the increase in red porgy pricing. I mean, the ex-vessel price is kind of flat on the table.

MR. MOSS: Has the demand for charter or headboat trips targeting porgy changed?

MR. MERCURIO: Nobody has ever asked me for one, never once.

MR. JOHNSON: My number-one customer, that's his favorite fish. He fishes with me at least once a month, and he loves red porgy. Actually, let me rephrase that. It's his wife's favorite fish,

and so, again, I can't state this enough. Our customers want value for their trip, and so, if we can keep three red porgies a person, they want to keep three red porgies a person, plus their five vermilion and all their other fish. They're a great-eating fish. I mean, I served them to everybody at my bachelor party when I got married twenty-nine years ago.

MS. JEFFCOAT: I am like Robert. I don't have anybody that calls and wants to book a trip to go target them, but, if they bring them in and they're legal, they want to keep them.

MR. MOSS: What communities are dependent on the red porgy fishery? I'm assuming it's going to be kind of the same thing, that they're not dependent on just that, but they like to have it mixed in, but we'll hear from you guys officially.

MR. JOHNSON: I will say it one more time. In this day and age, when you start taking any of these fish out of the catch, you are making that trip less profitable, and it's the same thing with the charter boats. When you start taking fish out of the catch, people are less likely to want to go, and so they're part of the puzzle, and they're an important part of the puzzle.

MR. MOSS: Have infrastructure changes affected fishing opportunities for red porgy? No? No. How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the red porgy fishery?

MS. MARHEFKA: I specifically remember, whether it was Amendment 12 or 13C, but one of those two being when Mark made the adjustment to trying to sell his own fish, and it wasn't that - Red porgy was just the tipping point, and it wasn't because he couldn't survive without red porgy, but red porgy was sort of the tipping point to decide, okay, things aren't looking good, and we're not going to get as much as we used to get, and so now we need to do something different, and so, in that aspect, way back then, we did have to make a change.

MR. MOSS: All right. Is the fourteen-inch size limit for the commercial and recreational sectors appropriate? I see nods, but we've got to actually say something.

MR. JOHNSON: I would say yes, but maybe Todd can answer this question. When are they sexually mature? How many spawning cycles have they gone through by the time they reach fourteen inches, because, for most of these species, that's what the goal is, to let them spawn a few times before they are big enough for us to kill them.

DR. KELLISON: I don't know. Sorry, but I'm still working on the porgy videos, but give me a second and I will -- Which I am making progress on, but let me follow back up on the minimum size.

MS. BROUWER: Up in the information report, the little bit of information I've got here is that it looks like the vast majority of female red porgy, according to Roumillat and Waltz in 1993, were mature by age-two. Now, I don't know how big an age-two red porgy is, but that's just the information, and they are pretty long-lived. They live into their teens.

MR. JOHNSON: For my own information, are they born male and female? The larger ones are males, and I see that, and so are they just born that way, or do they change, like gags?

DR. KELLISON: Yes, they are protogynous hermaphrodites, and so they are female first, and then they switch to males.

MS. BROUWER: It also says they, at least in the Gulf of Mexico, and so somebody did I think their PhD research, this DeVries, in 2006, and it has a lot of information, but it's just in the northeast Gulf, but they do change sex, but over quite a wide range of sizes and ages.

MR. MOSS: All right. Based on that, any comment on the fourteen-inch size limit? Is it appropriate or not, for the information that we have?

MR. COX: I think it's a really -- I mean, I think it's the perfect size for commercial, just because, when you get much smaller than that, it's hard to get a nice fillet off of it, and it gives the fish time to spawn, and so it's set about right.

MR. MANIGAULT: It would be nice to see it at twelve for the recreational sector, given the distance.

DR. KELLISON: I am just looking at the dissertation that Myra was referencing from the Gulf, and it states that there is 50 percent maturity at around 215 millimeters, which is around -- It's a little more than eight inches.

MR. JOHNSON: Okay, and so then another question is what percentage of the stock are male? I mean, is it like gag grouper, and when it's less than -- About 10 percent, or 8 percent, I think, of the gag population is male, and I'm just trying to -- I think everybody is sort of interested in why there is low recruitment, because we have afforded this fish a lot of protection, and we have had restricted bag limits and all these things, and then, when they did the survey, they just don't seem to be picking up any recruitment, and so is it the methodology being used or is it something else?

MR. MANIGAULT: By reading what the research paper says right here, most of them are born females, and so maybe they are catching them while they're females, versus having enough males to do the reproductive type thing.

MR. MOSS: According to the research, they start to transform into males at eight inches, and --

DR. KELLISON: No, it's that 50 percent are --

MR. MOSS: I apologize. They're mature at eight inches.

MR. HULL: Just a comment on trying to figure out why the fishery-independent survey using the chevron trap -- To me, it isn't tracking what we are seeing hook-and-line fishing, and so we have the trap survey that is showing one thing, and then we're all fishing hook-and-line, and we're kind of saying, well, I don't know, we're seeing a lot more than what you're seeing in that trap, but I don't know.

Is MARMAP and SEFIS -- Are they doing any hook-and-line sampling, or is there any cooperative hook-and-line sampling going on with fishermen, both charter and commercial, to maybe try to track these animals with hook-and-line gear instead of the trap? Those are just statements, and

I'm not really asking for anybody to answer it, but it's just things that I think should happen. We need hook-and-line sampling also.

MR. BUFF: How do we know where those traps are set, and are they set somewhere that we would fish? That would be --

DR. KELLISON: Myra is going to pull up a figure that shows -- It's dated by a couple of years, and so it's not the most recent. This figure, each of the red dots shows a potential sampling location that we have for our trap video universe, or survey, and so, right now, and, Wally, correct me if I'm wrong, but we have more than 4,000 sites, and every year we sample a subset of those sites, which are randomly selected, and that doesn't look like 4,000 dots, but it's because the dots are bigger than the site separation is, and so a lot of them are covered up, and so it's a pretty broad distribution across the shelf, and this gets at, Rusty, your question earlier.

You can see the sampling in Florida and down south of Canaveral. Since you asked your question, Wally was looking it up, and he said that, south of Canaveral, our deepest sites are at around sixty meters, and so 190 or 195 feet, something like that, and I would be pretty confident that that's limited by the current. I know that -- Usually, I am not on those cruises, but I hear, when they're going out and trying to sample those sites, they try to always have some inshore sites that they can get to also, because they have to go out and see what the current is doing. If the Stream is in too close, they can't sample that day, and they will go sample somewhere else and come back later that afternoon or the next day, and so probably that depth is limited by current there.

MR. HUDSON: Yes, I agree, Todd, because, that current, you can see how tight you are down south of the Cape there and just to the north side, but, quite honestly, there is times in June where that west wall moves further east, and you can actually have an eight-ounce lead drop down in 200-foot of water, and so you could do your chevron traps, and there's been a time or two that some of our guys have witnessed your chevron traps trolling on the water, because of the Gulf Stream, and so, anyway.

MR. R. FREEMAN: Some of the better places that we have fished over time for the red porgy are quite small spots. They will be just a tight knot, and I refer to them on the scope as looking like a butter bean laying there on the bottom, and so you've got to be right dead-on with your trap, if that's how you're trying to prove they're there, or you're not going to wind up with a fish.

DR. KELLISON: Thanks, Captain Robert, and I would just say that the trap video survey is targeting a suite of species, each with maybe their own unique habitat preferences, and so we're trying to collect the most information that we can on the greatest number of species while getting useful information on a lot of species that we can.

MR. R. FREEMAN: That sounds like a good place to have some videos on the traps, to prove -- I seem to remember something, from all my history of going to these meetings, that the red porgy was one of the species that doesn't trap very well, and so, just because you're not seeing them in the trap, it doesn't necessarily mean they're not there.

DR. KELLISON: Beginning in 2011, we have had video cameras on all of our traps, and we generate a separate index of abundance from the video data. When it gets to the stock assessment workshop, in some instances, or maybe all, the trap and the video index have ended up being

combined for use in the assessment, but we do develop separate indices, and you're right. I think probably a majority of species we see -- We get a higher frequency of occurrence on videos than we do in traps, but there are some species, like white grunt and black sea bass, that we actually see more often -- We get them more often in the traps than we do on the video, and so times when they're in the traps, but we don't see them on the video.

MR. ATACK: Where do the juvenile red porgy grow up at? Where do they live, and where do they grow up?

DR. KELLISON: I am not sure if that's a question for me, and I don't know. I don't think there is much literature, and I will look at this dissertation from the Gulf, but I don't think that it focuses on juveniles. I have always thought that was an information gap for us, something that I was interested in knowing. If I had to guess, I would assume that they grow up in mid-shelf and off-shelf reefs and they don't have an inshore juvenile stage, but I don't know that for certain. I have certainly spent a lot of time stomping around estuaries, and I have never seen any data from them being collected in estuaries, and so I would guess that they are on offshore reefs somehow, but I don't have any data to support that.

MR. ATACK: So then a plausible explanation could be the lionfish grounds could be affecting the red porgy recruitment then, right?

MR. BUFF: When they set these traps and you're looking at the video in that trap, if there's nothing there and it's not on the bottom where it should be, does that trap and that data get taken out of that, or does it get factored in anyway?

DR. KELLISON: Wally, you might have a better answer for this, because I'm usually not part of the SEDAR process where they're figuring this out, but part of the information that we collect is not just species identification and the abundance, but it's also environmental variables, like temperature, and then we also get habitat information from the video cameras.

If the camera is just looking at sand, we know that, and it's impossible to know where -- Like relative to what the cameras aren't seeing, where the trap is relative to reef, and so the trap might be seeing only sand, but you might see porgies and b-liners all over it, and so maybe the reef is just out of view of the trap and the video cameras, but I guess I would just say that that information, the habitat information, is included when we standardize it. It goes through a modeling process, but to correct for changes over time and space of like the depth of sampling every year or the amount of sand in our samples, for example, or the temperatures. We try to standardize the indices for variability and all of those things, if that makes sense.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Gary, this might be where you chime in with your size limit changes, but are there new management measures that the council should consider, or are there existing management measures that should be changed? All right. Are the current ACLs appropriate for each sector? Do we have the post-lunch blues or what?

MR. JOHNSON: It's a 50/50 split, right? So, I mean, the ACL is what the science says it can be set at, and so I'm not sure what we can do with that. We all want more fish.

MR. MOSS: Environmental and ecological, have you noticed any unique effects of environmental conditions on red porgy? If so, describe.

MS. JEFFCOAT: I am not sure that this really has anything to do with it, but, after Matthew, we started setting the mutton snapper, and we're seeing the red porgy in a little closer, more shallow water, than we are accustomed, and I can't help but think that that has something to do with it.

MR. JOHNSON: As Todd can attest to, and anybody else that lives in northeast Florida or has done sampling there, but we have almost yearly thermocline conditions, and, when you get that, there is nothing biting. Those fish leave, and they go someplace else, and I'm sure that's picked up in their sampling too, when they sample in those cold-water events, but porgy are no different than anything else.

When I say nothing, it's nothing. When that water gets below a certain temperature, I don't -- That's almost a yearly thing that we get those. Some years are more severe than others, and I think that's maybe a Cape Canaveral to up off of our way, or a little bit north of us, event. It doesn't seem to happen south of there, and so I don't know about the Carolinas and if they get thermoclines or not.

MR. MOSS: What are your observations concerning the timing and length of the porgy spawning season in your area? Anybody? Do you perceive the abundance of red porgy has changed over the past five years? If so, how? Do we need coffee in here?

MS. MARHEFKA: It has increased.

MR. JOHNSON: It's not a problem to catch them, and so it definitely hasn't gone backwards. It at least has stayed the same or gotten -- In most cases, I think it's better, a little better, and so I think it's headed in the right direction.

MR. MOSS: All right. I almost don't even want to ask the next one. What do you see now in terms of recruitment and where are the small fish? I know that we've kind of hammered this already, but we'll go ahead and make it official.

MR. JOHNSON: I would add that we do -- Like in twenty-one fathoms, there are some places that you will encounter the smaller red porgies. The bigger ones are out in the deeper water, and so there is some recruitment, and it's obviously not being retained. Those fish are all being released, and so there is some recruitment, but I'm just curious about where the little, teeny fish are. When I think of recruitment, I think of less than age-one, and that's what I would like, just for my own curiosity, to know where those fish are, because I don't think they're being picked up in any samples, and it may be just the gear being used.

MR. HULL: Just to comment on that, I have run some Z-traps, and I think you have too, with the FWRI, and, inshore of -- As shallow as a hundred feet and stuff like that, they have sampled out some red porgies in there, over some of the trips we ran. They were bigger than young-of-the-year, age-one, but they were small animals.

MR. MOSS: I know Jim brought it up already about the lionfish, but I am curious to know if there is any way to figure out what kind of effect -- I mean, we hear all the time in south Florida that

they can clean out a reef area and all that stuff, and so they're obviously eating the heck out of something, and I'm going to assume that it's a lot of these smaller fish. Is there anything else important for the council to know about red porgy?

DR. KELLISON: I am still just scanning through this dissertation from the Gulf, but I think somebody mentioned this before, about the transition. There was a question about the size at transition from female to male, and somebody mentioned that it was over a broad range of sizes, and so the person that did this, Doug DeVries, reported that he found transitional fish over the ages of two to nine, and so it seems like it's a pretty broad -- Maybe, at the break, I will see if that honed-in on any area, but it's definitely a pretty broad variability.

DR. COLLIER: In the last SEDAR assessment for red porgy, they were indicating that there are different time periods of maturity schedules for red porgy and transitions to males, and some of that is going to be dealing with the abundance of the fish, and so it changed, and I don't remember all the years, but I think they had four or five different time blocks for where the maturity changes.

MR. ATACK: One other question. When is the next SEDAR on red porgy scheduled?

MS. BROUWER: I can pull that up real quick. I don't know off the top of my head, but I know there is a schedule in your Attachment 12 that has all the upcoming SEDARs.

MR. ATACK: Then how will the council use all of this information on these fishery performance reports in their management decisions?

MS. BROUWER: The intent of these performance reports is really to use them as a complement to the information the analysts are using in a stock assessment, and so they are provided to the SSC, and they are provided as working papers or what have you during the SEDARs, so that the folks that are gathering all the information ahead of a stock assessment will have this to inform them, and so, if they come across something weird in the data and they would like to have access to fishermen's knowledge, that could potentially have extra information to explain some weird trend or what have you, and that they would have this in front of them, and so that was the main idea of how this was intended to be used.

We have talked about utilizing it more for outreach or whatever, to have this information available, and we haven't yet formulated a specific plan for how these reports are going to be used beyond what I just said, or how they're going to be made available to the public, but we're continuing to gather the information, and certainly if the AP has any ideas for how they would like to see this utilized beyond informing stock assessments, then we can have those conversations, and so by all means.

MR. HULL: Myra, a follow-up on that. I was an official observer in the black sea bass stock assessment that just was concluded, and information like this that the analysts are looking for -- They are looking for a recruitment signal to run the models of projections, and so, if they have very little information on recruitment, they can ask us what we're seeing, and then they can -- That will draw them to maybe find some other sampling survey from the states on discards or something, where they can maybe get a glimmer of some empirical data to apply either high or low recruitment into the projections, and so it's important that they hear from us in all phases.

MR. MOSS: All right. I guess that kind of partially answered the next question, which is are the current monitoring efforts sufficiently monitoring the stock, the trap index and the catch estimates, et cetera? Any information there?

MR. JOHNSON: I would like to see them develop a juvenile index somehow to try to find out where these little guys are. I think that's really important, and not just on red porgy, but on a lot of these species. We still are sort of clueless where the babies live, where they are settling out before they ever even come into the fishery.

MR. R. FREEMAN: In no way is this scientifically proven, but I don't remember catching undersized or throwbacks in the sixty-fathom stuff, but, inshore, sometimes you won't get one out of a dozen that you can keep, in a hundred or 120 feet of water.

MS. BROUWER: Just to follow-up on the utilization of these fishery performance reports, Kim just reminded me that they are currently available on the website, and they are under Council News, and I guess because we're not quite sure where to house them. We haven't, like I said, had a lot of conversations in-house to come up with a plan, but they are currently available. They're a little bit buried in there, and we also have these -- If you haven't seen them, we have these story maps that Cameron puts together, and Kim, to keep the public updated on all of these amendments and what is coming up, and so the fishery performance reports are with the story maps, and maybe Kim can elaborate a little bit on all of that.

MS. IVERSON: As Myra noted, this is a fairly new process, and so, if you would take a minute, under Council News, and this is the header that the fishery performance reports are there, along with the story maps, and Cameron Rhodes, who handles our website, has discussed where these things need to live, but I can assure you that, in dealing with the public, and they have questions, and maybe they want to learn more about black sea bass or greater amberjack or whatever performance reports are there, and they're greatly relieved, because I will take them, and I will say look on the website, and let me show you the fishery performance reports that have been put together by the people that are actually prosecuting these fisheries and our advisory panel members.

They're readable, and they provide a story and background information on various parts of the Southeast, and so I've had reporters actually go and read the performance reports and members of the public, and students, graduate students, and so they are being utilized, and, as we get more and more of them, and please provide your input when you get a chance to look at the website on where you would like to see them live and how we can make them more accessible, but they are being utilized, and people find them quite useful.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Kim.

MR. MANIGAULT: Could you scroll to the last item we were addressing in to port sampling and all that type of stuff? It says we need more cooperative hook-and-line sampling with commercial fishermen and more port sampling, and does that include MRIP, or does that include recreational fishermen, in regard to your port sampling?

MR. HULL: Yes, that would include more cooperative sampling with all sectors. Now, the port samplers that I was talking about there, they strictly sample commercial vessels, but there is

sampling for recreational, which is through the MRIP or through your state agencies that intercept you.

MR. MANIGAULT: Do we need to make that plain, to include the recreational sampling also, too?

MR. HULL: Go ahead. Add to it.

MR. MANIGAULT: In plain English, can we just add that to it? Can we just add recreational sampling or whatever to that too, please? Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Thank you. Todd, did you have a video? Is it ready or available?

DR. KELLISON: It's going to require me to spend a little bit of time at the computer. I have to log into an account.

MR. MOSS: Okay, and so we'll take a -- Let's go ahead and take like a fifteen-minute break, or a twenty-minute break.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. MOSS: All right. Let's go ahead and take our seats and we'll move on and watch some videos, or a video. Todd was kind enough to dig up this video for us, and so he's going to narrate.

DR. KELLISON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to say that this is just an example of -
- This is one of our survey videos, and so we have two video cameras that go on each of the trap deployments that we perform each year, and so weaving a combination of our group up in Beaufort and the MARMAP/SEAMAP South Atlantic Group, based here in Charleston, at South Carolina DNR, and so, together, we deploy, in recent years, on average, about 1,500 traps a year, and each of those trap have two video cameras on them.

Then we count the fish in the traps and get measurements, and then we have people who sit down and read the videos when they're not at sea, and so we use specific methodologies, but, for each species observed, we get a metric called -- It's a mean count for each video, and we use that to build an index of abundance for the videos for the year, just like we would for the traps, and so the request from Captain Gary was for a video with red porgy, and I don't have too much detail about where this video came from.

Somebody in the Beaufort Lab just grabbed one of our videos with porgy in it and made a clip and sent it. They said it was from Florida, and so this is probably the shelf break, or just above the shelf break, somewhere in Florida, and so maybe somewhere between forty-five and sixty meters, something like that.

MR. ATACK: How many fish did you count at this site?

DR. KELLISON: That's a good question, and so the metric that we used is something called mean count, and so our video readers will -- We read about twenty minutes of tape, of video, beginning five minutes after the trap hits the bottom, and, within that twenty minutes, we do counts every

thirty seconds, and so beginning at time-zero, which is five minutes after the trap hits the bottom, they will do a count within maybe approximately a second frame of how many fish, and then, thirty seconds later, they will do that again for all the species. Then we'll end up with -- Over twenty minutes, we will have forty-one separate counts. Then, for each species, they will calculate a mean value for those counts, and that will be the number that we use.

That is in contrast to, for example, just counting every, for example, porgy that you see on this video. There is no way to do that without knowing that you might be counting the same individual once or twice or three times or ten times or a hundred times, and so people use different metrics, but we have -- Our group has put a lot of effort into -- We identified this metric as the one that most accurately will track abundance linearly, and so our mean count metric will increase linearly as we assume abundance around the trap has increased.

MR. ATACK: We ran into that problem in a project we did, but we only had one camera. How many cameras do you have on this? Do you have a 360-view on this, or just a single camera?

DR. KELLISON: We don't. We have two cameras that are facing opposite directions, but I believe that we use one of them. We always use the same one, the one that is at the mouth, I believe, for the fish counts.

MR. HUDSON: Todd, in the Gulf, they use a camera that is able to measure. Have you all phased-into that yet?

DR. KELLISON: We haven't, but we're getting there. Captain Rusty is referring to stereo-video. They use a set of cameras that are calibrated so that they can determine lengths of objects that are seen in both cameras. We haven't done that. In the past, in the Gulf, they have used these arrays of stereo-videos, and those units -- We have talked about this previously, in other meetings here at this advisory panel, but those gears -- There is a series of cameras, and, together, those units cost somewhere around \$75,000 to \$80,000.

Our cameras now that we use on these traps are GoPro in deepwater housings, and I don't know the specifics, but they are maybe \$400 to \$500 each, and we lose gear, and so, as opposed to our colleagues in the Gulf -- Where they are fishing, they are typically not high-current or high-relief, but we are fishing out deep, in high-relief, and maybe in the Stream, and it's not unusual for us to lose traps. We might lose two or three or four or five a year, and doing that with an \$80,000 unit is not -- I mean, that's one reason that we went with putting the inexpensive cameras on traps.

We have been working for a number of years, and we've talked about it a number of times, about trying to develop a less expensive stereo-video camera, and we're working with -- Nate Bachelier up in Beaufort is the lead on it, but we're working with some of our colleagues in the Gulf, at the Pascagoula Lab. An engineer there is involved to -- We have money this year to generate a prototype low-cost stereo-video that we can hope to start deploying here.

Also, Rusty, I'm sure you know that Captain Rob, and maybe others, Captain Jimmy, were involved probably in working with FWC personnel in deploying some of their recent stereo-video work, stereo-video cameras, but we -- It was a little bit for our traps, and so we're still trying to get there, and, actually, our assessment people tell us that it's one of our biggest needs for the survey, is getting lengths from our video work, and so we're trying to get there.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Todd. We appreciate it. All right. As much as we would all probably like to stare at this for an hour, we'll move into the MyFishCount reporting app.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you, all. You guys are going to be hearing about MyFishCount again. We've been talking about this quite a bit with this group, and, as you know, it was available last fall for use for the red snapper mini-season. It says that Kelsey is going to be giving this presentation, but I am going to step in for her and do the best I can. It's a step down, but we'll get through it the best we can.

This is going to go over a lot of what MyFishCount is currently looking at, and then I will provide a video of exactly what we mean by recreational reporting, and so we have a video of Kelsey actually entering one of her trips that she did this past spring.

Our goal is to develop an electronic permitting and reporting app for the private recreational anglers, and what we mean by that is, when you sign on to MyFishCount, it actually assigns you a unique ID, and so you will have a permit number associated with your MyFishCount account, and then, when you report, for each one of your reports, your permit number is going to be associated with that as well as each trip has its own reported number, and so everything is independent, and you can track down to the trip-level data. However, we try to keep it as confidential as possible.

What we're trying to do is look at the catch and have fishermen report the catch and improve recreational data. We are not trying to replace MRIP. We are trying to enhance MRIP. MRIP is going to be there. It's always going to be there, and it does have its strengths. It's a survey design, and so, if we're getting trends in MyFishCount and in MRIP, that provides validation that these things are seeing the same thing.

Right now, there is a lot of questions with MRIP. When they see a single blip, if you only have that single blip in one survey, what does that really mean? Is it an outlier or not? This could potentially provide some information to managers of whether or not that blip was a real outlier or a true data point.

In 2017, we had our web-based platform available for fishermen to use, and the down-side of that web-based platform is fishermen out on the water were not able to use MyFishCount, but it did allow them to begin to report when they got back to the dock, and, once again, this provided an additional stream of information on the private recreational fishery. In all actuality, you can provide data on not only the private trips, but, if you have a charter trip or a headboat trip, you can provide information for your individual trip within that charter or headboat.

We had some great partnership last year, last fall, and hopefully it's going to continue this year in July when we're hopefully going to be having another red snapper season. You can see the different publications that printed information, *Sportfishing Magazine*, *In the Bite*, *Florida Sportsmen*, *The Fishing Wire*, *Saving Seafood*. All of these groups had positive things to say about private recreational reporting and were definitely engage in trying to get the word out about this.

We had several anglers participate in this, and it was essentially a three-day season, even though it was open for nine days. Six of those days were extremely windy, and I think we had one

headboat report go out and that was it, but, what we were able to collect, we had size of fish, both kept and released, and we had the distribution across the geographic range, where fishermen were targeting red snapper, and we also had release information, based on depth fished and also the treatment. A lot of this information wasn't previously available.

What we did to our anglers, we provided this report, and it's called *The MyFishCount Report*, and we just wanted to let them know exactly what was reported in MyFishCount. This generally went out by the Wednesday following the weekend that they had fished.

Once again, we had 360 registered users, and we had 341 abandoned and completed trips. If you look at the percent abandoned, you can see there was 83 percent abandoned, and this information was considered when the National Marine Fisheries Service extended into that third weekend. They recognized that the second weekend was a complete blowout, and they opened up -- They were hoping for a good weekend on the third weekend, but, once again, unfortunately, it was blown-out as well.

In the graph to the right, you can see where most of the reports came from throughout the coast, and the most was coming from Florida. This one is a little bit difficult to see, but we have length of fish on the top, and it's length of fish that were kept, and, on the bottom, it's length of fish that were released. This begins to make sense as you're looking at it. Up top, when you see it begin to go up, that is right at twenty inches. Fishermen have been used to a twenty-inch size limit for red snapper, and they were releasing fish less than twenty inches, because that's what they were used to. Then you go down to the bottom, and you look at total length, and, once again, fish that were released were generally less than twenty inches. The fishermen were identifying those fish as being too small, and a few of the anglers had identified that they were over their bag limit, and so they had caught more than one per person, and they were releasing fish.

Another piece of information that is pretty interesting from MyFishCount is we had several anglers that reported both length and weight of fish, and there is also a length and weight relationship from the most recent stock assessment, and that's the solid line that is plotted here, and you can see the information that the private recreational fishermen reported was right on that line.

We had some discard information, and so, at the bottom, we have different depths, and we have fifty-foot, 100-foot, and 150-feet, and then, for each color, that is a different release treatment, and so the dark brown is a descending device was used. The lighter brown is vented, and the very light brown is not treated. If you look all the way to the left, in that fifty-foot category, where barotrauma is less common, fishermen were not treating those fish, and they were releasing them without any treatment.

As they were being caught in deeper depths, barotrauma is more common, and fishermen were actually using different treatments, such as venting or descending devices. Then, when you get to the deepest depths, it's not as common that fishermen were going out to those deepest depths to target red snapper, but they were using venting and descending devices, and very few fish were not treated at all. This information about release treatment wasn't available for the red snapper fishery prior to this data being collected for the private recreational fishery. There is some information on charter boats and headboats.

We can skip this slide, because we are going into the future, and we're going to be going into an app that's going to be available beginning in June of 2018 for private recreational anglers to report using their phone, and it's going to be available to be used offshore.

These are our partners. NOAA Fisheries is critical in this. They provided the funding, and we're also working with them to ensure that it's going to be useable data, and the Snook & Gamefish Foundation have been a big help, where they have been promoting a lot of this with us, and they also introduced us to Elemental Methods, who have been designing our app for us. If you have any questions on this, I will take those now, or we can go straight into a -- It's like a five-minute video showing how the app works.

MR. HUDSON: Did you say there was only one headboat that was observed, as far as the catch?

DR. COLLIER: No, there was one headboat, I think, in that third weekend that went out.

MR. HUDSON: That's what I meant, and I believe that was the one in our backyard.

DR. COLLIER: The one that reported through MyFishCount, and that was just one gentleman that was on the headboat.

MR. HUDSON: I understand now, and it's not like where the headboat interviewer actually from NMFS was there, because that was the one that I was referring to.

DR. COLLIER: No, it's not that one.

MR. HUDSON: On your discard list, you had fifty-foot, hundred-foot, and 150-foot, and is that correct? But it could have been seventy-five-foot or 125-foot, in some cases?

DR. COLLIER: That's correct, and what we've done, more recently, is we've made categories based on atmospheres, and so it's about thirty-three feet at that range, and so there is going to be a little bit of -- Some people might fish in different depths, but it's just getting to the general depth area.

MR. ATACK: So the new app will have like atmospheres, like one atmosphere or two atmospheres?

DR. COLLIER: It's going to be listed in feet.

MR. ATACK: Right, which is thirty-three feet per atmosphere, and so they're going to have multiples of thirty-three feet would be your options?

DR. COLLIER: It's pretty close to that, yes. All right, and so this was a trip that Kelsey took last weekend, and you can see that they kept four black sea bass, four gray triggerfish, three white grunt, and they released seven black sea bass, five gray triggerfish, one red snapper, and seventeen spottail pinfish.

This is what the app looks like. She starts a new trip, and you have the option to click on private, charter, or headboat, and she clicked on that and indicated where she was fishing, if she was leaving

from a public or private boat ramp or dock, and if she's logging for the vessel or for an individual. You get your choice of several different species, and so you can go through here and pick several different items, or fish groups, if you're going for billfish, black sea bass, bottom fish, cobia, deepwater grouper, and it's in bigger blocks than what is typical in MRIP, and we figured that people are going for more of a complex, quite often, when they go fishing, and we tried to design it based on that.

She was targeting black sea bass and bottom fish, and we have three primary methods of fishing. It's bottom fishing, surface fishing, and diving. If you look at this, you can see that the trip has been started, and she left from a public boat ramp, from Charleston, South Carolina. She is logging for the vessel, and the primary method is bottom fishing.

We are going to go through the quick log function, to show you how quickly we can go through several of the species that she caught. Once again, she had seven released black sea bass and four kept black sea bass, and there is a smart part of this app where it identifies what you're typing, and it will bring up the common species. She slides this bar over to seven fish and then the four kept, and, bam, you have your eleven black sea bass instantly entered into it.

She is doing the same thing for released gray triggerfish and kept gray triggerfish. We are just showing you a quick option to enter a lot of this data quickly, and then you can go back and add more data if you would like to, and, when she does the red snapper, she goes into the full-blown everything that you can enter into it. One thing you will notice for this released spottail pinfish is you can only do ten fish at a time. One reason for that is it makes those distances between each of the spots a little easier to find. If you go any smaller than that, then it gets a little bit difficult.

Now she is going to do a red snapper, and she's going to use this larger button to log your catch, and this gets to detailed information, and she's going to do it for white grunt as well, white grunt and red snapper. Here, you get the option of kept or released, and you can enter length, weight, where you caught the fish, the data, and she just entered one fish at a time. Now she's going to duplicate this catch, and you do that simply by swiping left.

The final one is red snapper, and there is going to be detailed information provided for this. She has a photo of this fish, and you can enter the photo, and so, based on that measurement, it was fourteen inches, about four pounds. The location she's going to skip, but here is the depth ranges, and it's about every thirty feet is what we had, and it was hooked in the jaw with a non-offset circle hook. The fish was descended, and it gave the reason of it being too small, and here is the information on the catch, and so that's her entire catch, and she got all those fish entered, and I believe it was forty-something fish that she had entered in just a couple of minutes.

Now she is going to end the trip, and we ask if the trip was taken and completed, and that gives us the abandoned trips, if people abandoned a trip. We want to know the time away from the dock. Since she reported for the vessel, we need to know how many anglers were on it, and we also want to know if the fish were sampled when you returned to the dock and then the percent of time that actually hooks were in the water. That is the entire app.

In addition to this, when the user gets back to land and they're using their internet, they can go back and actually search their own trips, and so they can look back however long you want to go once a trip has been entered. It's always in their account, in their secure account, and so you log

on with a user name and a password, and you will be able to see all of your past trips and what species caught and what area and what size they were. With that, I will take any questions.

MR. HUDSON: Was this a make-believe trip, because of the date, or was the date just reflecting today? That's what I was trying to get at, because you said the red snapper is too small, and that would be, in my mind, the twenty-inch minimum size or something like that, perhaps.

DR. COLLIER: She had entered all of that information in today, but the actual catch was her own catch, yes, and so I don't know when she made the trip, but she entered it today, and that's one thing that -- When you enter these things, it is a little squirrely, as far as the dates when things were caught, and so we have to check those.

MR. GOMEZ: Once you bring up that app before your trip, is someone able to track your boat and where you're going and things like that?

DR. COLLIER: No, we're not tracking where a vessel is going. They have the option of reporting where they caught fish, and it's more or less for that angler to figure out where they caught them, and we are trying to be as confidential as we can with this information. We're not going to provide actual locations of where fishermen fished. We might provide blocks. If you remember back to that graph of where we had percent of trips taken, we had EEZs off of different states. As we get more information, we might be able to fine-tune it a little bit, but we do want to keep it in pretty large grids.

MR. COX: Chip, I miss the old app that we used, and the commercial guys could use it as well, and this is pretty much a recreational app. The South Atlantic app, we've got to get that back.

DR. COLLIER: You mean for Fish Rules?

MR. COX: It was not so much to enter information like this, but it also gave us updated information on what was closed and what was -- Another question I had is, as I play with this app right here, I see that they have advertisements on it, on the MyFishCount.

DR. COLLIER: There shouldn't be.

MR. COX: Maybe I have got the wrong one pulled up.

DR. COLLIER: You're on the Fish Rules app, and so that has all the regulations, and you are right that we don't have a version for it developed for commercial fishermen. What we are providing commercial fishermen right now is an updated PDF that they can download prior to them going offshore, and they can look at that to see what the regulations are and if a season is open or closed.

MR. JOHNSON: Actually, Jack, what we really want is to be able to report our catches electronically, instead of having to sit there and fill out the logbooks and all of that. It would really be so simple to be able to go to a site on the computer and enter our commercial catch.

MR. COX: Well, to that point, we were -- When I first got on the council, we were promised that we would get that a long time ago, and we're not there.

DR. COLLIER: So an update on that. They are getting closer. They are working on a thing called an API, and I cannot remember what that actually stands for, but the last one is “interface”, and so they are getting very close with that. ACCSP and National Marine Fisheries Service are working on that interface, to get it developed, and it should -- I think they were saying something about later this year it might be available.

MR. HULL: Chip, we have said this before, but this is what we’ve been asking for, and the private recreational anglers need permitting and reporting, and this is a big step towards that. I think it’s great for all of us, because this is going to affect every sector, if we can get some accurate information about the private recreational fleet, and this is better than sliced bread. I mean, this is really good.

MR. JOHNSON: Jimmy, it’s a step in the right direction, but this is totally voluntary, and there was somebody that posted on *Florida Sportsmen’s* forum about this app, and it was lambasted and just -- I mean, the comments that he got from the recreational fishing public were just astounding, and so, again, not to beat a dead horse, but let’s beat it. It’s going to take a carrot or a stick. This is not going to -- It may give you some information, but, if you really want to find out what they’re doing, you’re going to have to make them.

I mean, I hate to keep saying that, but that’s what has got to happen, because you’re going to get some people that really want to do the right thing, and they’re going to do this, but you’re going to have this huge group of unknowns that are never going to do this until you tell them they’ve got to do it to be able to fish.

MR. HULL: I agree that the permitting comes first, and this is the way to report for them, with the permit. You’ve got to have the permitting first.

AP MEMBER: How is this data going to be validated, and how will we use it for stock assessments?

DR. COLLIER: Validation is a very big topic these days, and so validation comes in several different forms. If you look back, if you remember that length-weight plot, that is one piece of validation that could be used. Are they reporting accurate information for length and weight, and that plot indicates that, yes, you are getting some validation between the length and weight that seems accurate. In order to be making up that information, it seems like you would have to be biased in one direction or another, or you’re very good at doing the length-weight relationship for red snapper, and that doesn’t seem to be the case.

Other things that can be validated through this app, because you have the option to provide a picture, if a fisherman reports a certain species and calls it by a different name, you can begin to validate what a fish is being called. Right now, we don’t have that ability for the private recreational fishery for released fish.

Other things that could be validated are areas where they were fishing, potential depth and location, to make sure that those two are actually lining up with each other, and so there are several different pieces, and the biggest one is what does this mean in terms of total catch, and we can’t even begin developing anything to validate that until we decide if this is going to be a private recreational --

A voluntary or mandatory reporting tool or if it's going to be done on an individual or on a vessel basis. Once you begin to step in those directions, validation can be set up for however the program is set up.

MR. MOSS: As of right now, this is just a web-based thing, but I guess, in June, you said it's going to be available as an app, and so, right now, you've got to actually go -- Like on an iPhone, for instance, you've got to go to Safari and log-in and do that whole thing, which it's not complicated at all. I just did it, but, by June, you'll just have the app on your phone that you can open up whenever you're out there.

DR. COLLIER: One thing that we would like to do is go and talk to fishing clubs, and so, if you guys have any recommendations on fishing clubs that we can go talk to, that would be great. We would like to promote this app as much as possible and get as many fishermen using it as possible, and so please provide us that information.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much. We appreciate it. The next thing on the agenda was the SEDAR review and updates, and -- Basically, the next two things on the agenda, those people aren't here, and so, if it's okay with everybody, we will get out of here early today. We will go ahead and end the day right now and be back here tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. Thank you, guys.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 12, 2018.)

APRIL 13, 2018

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened in the Crowne Plaza, North Charleston, South Carolina, April 13, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman David Moss.

MR. MOSS: We're going to get going this morning. Good morning, everybody, and thank you once again. We're going to start off this morning by going over the SEDAR updates with Julia.

MS. BYRD: Thanks. I'm Julia Byrd, and I'm one the SEDAR Coordinators, and so I wanted to do was just give you a quick update on some of the assessments that are underway now or have recently finished and will be going to the SSC for review and then talk a little bit about some of the upcoming assessments and seeing if there is anyone interested in participating in some of those. I will just kind of -- I think this is Attachment 12, and it's a kind of update document that I put together, and so I'm just going to plan to walk through it, and, if you guys have any questions on anything as I am kind of going through things, feel free to just stop me and ask along the way.

The first assessment is SEDAR 55, which is a South Atlantic vermilion snapper standard assessment, and so this assessment started last year, and the last year of the data in the assessment

is 2016, and it will be complete soon, and so it was held all via webinar, and the assessment report is being worked on right now, and it should be complete next week, and so that report will be posted to the SEDAR website once it's complete, and then this assessment is going to be reviewed by the SSC at their upcoming May meeting, and it will go to the council in June of this year. Again, I'm just going to kind of go through these quickly. If you all have questions, feel free to slow me down.

The next is SEDAR 56, which is a South Atlantic black sea bass assessment. Again, this one started last year, and the last year of data in the assessment is 2016, and it finished up and was complete last week, and so the final assessment report is posted up on the SEDAR website now. If you guys are interested in seeing it, I can give that link to Myra, and she can pass it out to you guys, if that's of interest, and so, again, this assessment is complete, and it will be reviewed by the SSC at their May meeting, and it will go to the council in June.

MR. JOHNSON: Julia, the results of that assessment -- In that report, the stock was considered, according to the base run, not overfished and overfishing was not occurring, and is that true?

MS. BYRD: Yes, and so one thing I will note is that the results are preliminary now. They need to be reviewed by the SSC, and this is a standard assessment, and so the SSC is the only kind of review body, but, in the assessment report, the base run did find that the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring, but the abundance was on a decline, and part of that -- The model was thinking that that was at least partly due to recruitment being really low over the past few years, and so that's what was included in the assessment report. Again, the SSC will review that and then come up with catch recommendations if they approve the assessment.

MR. HULL: Which the SSC would then have projections, and those projections will either be based on recruitment levels, and other factors, I'm sure, of high recruitment and low-recruitment scenarios and things like that?

MS. BYRD: There are some preliminary projections that are included in the assessment report, and that is based on kind of average recruitment, and one of the things that was discussed during the assessment webinars was whether or not a low-recruitment scenario should be included for the projections, and recruitment has been low for the last few years, but there was large recruitment seen before that, and, based on some of the input that you and other fishermen gave, saying that you have started to see more fish on the water, the panel decided that just having those kind of average recruitment scenarios included in the assessment report was good. However, the SSC could request projections using low-recruitment or high-recruitment scenarios, but, right now, the ones that are in the assessment report are based on average recruitment.

MR. BUFF: Can we get that information on the vermilion and what you just said about the sea bass, please?

MS. BYRD: I can give you information, but one thing I will say with the vermilion is that the final assessment report isn't complete, and it won't be complete until next week, and so I don't have a copy of that final report. Again, this information will have to be reviewed by the SSC, and that will -- This is all preliminary, but the draft report found that overfishing was not occurring and that the stock was not overfished. The stock wasn't declining. It was pretty steady, I think, for the past few years, or increasing a little bit. Again, that report isn't complete yet, and it won't

be complete until next week, and so everything that I am saying is preliminary, and then it has to be reviewed by the SSC. Any other questions there before I move on? Okay.

Those are two assessments that are kind of wrapping up, and we have two assessments that are getting ready to -- They have recently started or are about to kick-off soon, and the first is SEDAR 59, which will be a South Atlantic greater amberjack assessment. The last assessment on greater amberjack was done a number of years ago, and so this is a standard assessment, and it's going to be done via a series of webinars, and we may have an in-person workshop if it's decided that it's necessary, but we had a data scoping call at the end of March, and things are just getting underway now. The current schedule has it to be complete at the end of this year and to go to the SSC for review in spring of 2019.

SEDAR 60 will be a South Atlantic red porgy standard assessment, and this one will take place over a series of webinars, and there will be an in-person workshop as well in December. The data scoping webinar will kick off at the end of June, and then this one is supposed to be complete in March of 2019, and, right now, it's scheduled to go to the SSC for review in the spring of 2019.

Then the next assessments that I want to mention are ones that we're kind of in the early planning stages, and we're hoping to identify people who may be interested in participating in these assessments. The first one is SEDAR 64, which is the southeastern yellowtail snapper benchmark assessment, and so the lead analytical agency will be the State of Florida, and so they will be kind of the lead assessment team for this assessment, and there will be an in-person data workshop, an in-person review workshop, and then, for the assessment stage, there will be a series of webinars.

The data and review workshops will be in Florida, and I think the exact locations are to be determined, but we're interested in seeing if any of you guys are potentially interested in participating in the yellowtail assessment, or, if you are not, if you know any fishermen who are really knowledgeable about this fishery who you think may be interested, I would be very interested in getting their names, and I am happy to reach out to them to see if they would be willing to participate. Is anybody interested? Okay. Thanks, Greg. Anyone else potentially interested or know of anyone who may be interested?

MR. R. FREEMAN: I can attest to the fact that they apparently have been extinct for about forty-six years off of eastern North Carolina.

MS. BYRD: Okay. The next one is a scamp assessment, and so scamp has never been assessed through SEDAR, and this would be kind of a joint Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic scamp assessment that would be done at the same time, and this was originally on the schedule a while ago, and it is the first kind of assessment that would be used with this different approach that we're calling a research track.

It's a little bit like a benchmark, and we're still trying to flesh out exactly all of the details of what a research track would entail, and so we're waiting to hear back from the Science Center. They are supposed to provide us with a project kind of statement of work that kind of lays out how the research track process is going to operate and what timeframe of that assessment is, and so I'm not going to ask for anyone to potentially volunteer or participate in this one yet, since I don't have a timeline for it, and I think it's probably going to be hard to ask for participation when we don't have a timeline, but I just wanted to let you guys know that this is on the schedule. It's supposed

to start some time in 2019, and so I will probably be coming back to you guys later this fall to ask for participation in this assessment.

The next one that I wanted to mention is South Atlantic golden tilefish, and so this would be a standard assessment, and so it's scheduled to occur in 2019. We don't have a specific schedule yet, but I know the council has a lot of interest in getting this assessment started as soon as possible, and so we'll be kind of planning in the upcoming months, to try to put together a schedule, but I did want to see if there is anyone here who would be interested in participating in this assessment.

Again, I don't have a schedule, and so, once the schedule is together, I would follow back up with you, to see if you were still available to participate, once we have kind of dates laid out, but, again, this one -- The council is interested in getting it started sooner rather than later, and so, instead of waiting until the fall to ask for participants at the snapper grouper meeting, I wanted to go ahead and do so now. Jim? Okay. Vincent. Okay. Great.

Then the last thing I wanted to just briefly mention is we're also planning to do some what we're calling MRIP revision assessments, and so you guys, I think, maybe are familiar that the MRIP data is being revised based on a new effort survey being used, and so those new MRIP estimates are going to be available in the summertime, and so what we're planning to do is update some of the recent assessments with that new MRIP information, and so we're calling those MRIP revision assessments, and so the MRIP revision assessments will take place for red grouper, blueline tilefish, black sea bass, and vermilion snapper, and we don't have the exact kind of timeframe of when those are going to be conducted, but it will be after the new MRIP numbers are available in the summer, and so I can give you an update on what's happening with those at your next meeting.

Then the last thing that I wanted to do here was just kind of show you the SEDAR schedule, and so you can see kind of what species are being assessed now, what are going to be assessed next year, and then you can see kind of what the future priorities have been identified by the council for 2020 and 2021 and 2022, and so I just wanted to make you guys aware of kind of what's coming down the pipeline there.

MR. COX: With the state of the red grouper stock, I'm surprised it's pushed back all the way to 2021. We've got a stock that's in more trouble than any stock that I know of, and it's pushed way down the list here.

MS. BYRD: It's going to get an MRIP revision assessment, and so the new MRIP numbers are going to be incorporated into that assessment hopefully either later this year or early in 2019, and so that will be a small update of that assessment, and I know there are some statutory requirements for the rebuilding plan that are coming up too, and so I think waiting a little while may make more sense, so you will have more data as to what's going on before you assess it again.

I know it's a priority for the council, for them putting it on the schedule already for 2021, but they will be getting the MRIP update assessment hopefully this fall or next spring, and then it will come up again in a couple of years, and so, if you have concerns that you think it should be assessed sooner, I would encourage you to share that information with the council members.

MR. R. FREEMAN: The last year full-time that I ran 107 charters or something from like April through November, we never caught a red grouper, and Jack and I were talking earlier that they

just have disappeared in the catch, and so I would encourage more proactive efforts to see what's going on there and completely cut off the creel limits or whatever on those fish.

MS. BYRD: One thing I can say is, from the last assessment, it seems like there's been a lot of low recruitment that is driving some of that, and that's what the assessment model showed.

MR. BUFF: We have had a lot of interaction with the grouper this winter, just FYI, and I don't know why, but a lot of it has been the red grouper, and so maybe that's a good sign. The guys say they're catching quite a few of them and releasing them, and so hopefully that's good news, but don't get me wrong. That's not saying that it's okay, but it's just better than what it has been.

MR. HULL: I agree with Scott. Off of Florida, just this year, we're starting to see red grouper again, where, just as Robert said, they had disappeared, but they're coming back, it looks like.

MS. BYRD: Any other questions about any of the SEDAR projects? Okay. Thank you, guys.

MR. HULL: I was just going to say that we appreciate the opportunity for fishermen to be involved and our input, and so we thank the agency for that opportunity.

MS. BYRD: Yes, and I always say that I think it's very helpful to have fishermen involved in the assessments, because what you guys see on the water -- You bring a different perspective and more information to the table, which otherwise we wouldn't know about, and so I appreciate everybody taking the time and the effort to participate in these assessments.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Julia. We appreciate that, and so, moving into the SSC updates, we're going to be doing that via webinar, and so listen tight and pay close attention.

MS. BROUWER: Let me just -- This is something that we included in the overview for you all, because there has been a lot of movement, I guess, on blueline tilefish and red snapper, and there is some workgroups that were created, and so these little narratives in your overview kind of explain what's been going on, and I just wanted for Mike Errigo on staff to be available to present this to you, in case you guys have any questions, and so he's going to quickly go through this via webinar.

DR. ERRIGO: For blueline tilefish, that was assessed in SEDAR 50, and there were a lot of difficulties assessing blueline because of the way the fishery is processed. There is a break in where blueline tilefish are fished and how they are fished and what's going on there, and so, for most of the historic time period, it was fished south of Hatteras down to like Canaveral. Then, in more recent years, there has been a large increase in the fishery from Hatteras north, and that was mostly longlining that's been going on up there.

The SSC was tasked with trying to figure out how to come up with an ABC for the portion of the stock that is up in the Hatteras and north area and then how to break that ABC up so at the council's jurisdiction, and so there was a working group that met. The SSC had some members break up into a working group, and that included Mid-Atlantic SSC members, and they looked at all of the available information that they had, any studies that were done, and they did come up with a method based on a survey that was done in locations for blueline tilefish up and down the coast, all the way down to Hatteras.

That went in front of the Mid-Atlantic SSC just recently, and they looked at that, and they agreed with using that methodology, but with slight tweaks, and now that will go in front of our SSC in May, and we'll see what happens there, but it's roughly -- What they came up with was they had developed an ABC based on the data-limited methods, and it was a 56 percent/44 percent split of that ABC, 44 percent to the South Atlantic and 56 percent to the Mid-Atlantic, based on the survey results. That is just that piece that goes from Hatteras north, and so that's where we are with that for now, but we're not sure what our SSC will do with that and how they will deal with it.

The Mid-Atlantic considered an estimate of OFL rather than an estimate of ABC, and so then they applied their ABC control rule and reduced that and then split it, and so we'll see how our SSC handles all of that, and we'll get back to you after the SSC meeting in May, and so, if there is any questions or anything, I would be happy to try and answer them on that piece.

Otherwise, I will just hop on along to the next issue, which is the red snapper, the red snapper ABC issue, and so we also had a tough time coming up with an ABC for red snapper, and that was assessed with SEDAR 41, and we had a memo sent to us from the Science Center saying that there were some issues with some of the data, not only that went into the assessment -- There is a big lag time between the end of the assessment and when we're trying to put in an ABC, and the fact that most of the fishery now is discards, and those discards are very, very uncertain.

Therefore, any kind of ABC that we could come up with is going to be very -- The ABC would be uncertain, but, also, we would have a very hard time tracking it, because we can't really use any of those estimates of discards, especially since the new effort survey is coming online, and that's going to change everything, and so we were trying to figure out a way to try to estimate an ABC using different methodologies than just the standard projections from the assessment.

We put together another working group of SSC members and Science Center folks, and they went through all of these different methods of trying to come up with an ABC, and they included things like using indices of abundance to try to come up with an ABC separate from using like any kind of landings and discards, data-limited methods that didn't rely on the same type of data information that the assessment did, and there is also this brand-new method that the Southeast Center came up with that is an interim analysis that they're planning on doing in between assessments to help us look at how stocks are doing between assessments, and are they on track, are they not on track from what the assessment said that they were going to be, so that we can make adjustments to the management.

The working group went over all of these methods, and they ranked them in order of how they think they would be most appropriate for use for red snapper, and now the SSC needs to go over those and see what they think about the top-ranked methodologies and so they think they will be useful in coming up with an ABC for red snapper, and then they would have to try to apply them, as best they can, and see if they can come up with an ABC recommendation, and so that will happen at the May meeting as well, and that's what we have for updates for what's going on with the SSC coming up the first week of May here. If you have any questions, again, I will try to answer them as best I can.

MR. ATACK: I guess I'm a little confused. We're looking at setting an ABC, the SSC is, for red snapper, and I think what I heard yesterday was Amendment 43, if it goes through, then the SSC, if they set an ABC, it won't really be used. Am I confused on that?

DR. ERRIGO: What's happening is the council is setting an interim ABC, because this process that the SSC is going through might take a while. They may not be able to come up with actual ABC number right off the bat. They might be able to come up with this methodology here, and then they may have to request that this methodology be used with some data stream, and then the Science Center will have to use that to come up with the ABC recommendations later on, and so we're not sure. They may have to meet by webinar, or they may have to go to the council, or they may have to see it again in October, and so this may not happen very, very quickly, and so that's why the council put in the interim ABC, so that we would have something in place for this year.

DR. COLLIER: I just want to point out that the Amendment 43 is just setting an interim ACL. It's not setting an ABC. The council can't set an ABC, and so it's just an ACL, a conservative ACL, that was come up with.

DR. ERRIGO: Thank you for that clarification, Chip.

MR. MOSS: Anyone else?

MR. HULL: Just one more clarifying question on that, for me. I think the council kind of set that based on the indices of abundance, somewhat, with the chevron trap showing the increased abundance through that fishery-independent survey.

DR. ERRIGO: Yes, they used that as evidence to show that the ACL that they set shouldn't have any negative impact on the stock.

MR. MOSS: Anyone else? Thank you very much, Mike. We appreciate it, and Chip as well.

DR. ERRIGO: No problem. Thanks.

MR. MOSS: Okay. We're going to kind of move things around a little bit, because our Coast Guard representative isn't going to be here until ten o'clock, and so, if you don't mind, Dr. Brian Chevront, if you could come up and go over regulations recommended for removal.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Good morning. I believe this is Attachment 13 in your briefing book, this document, but, instead of having a real presentation, I think mainly what we need to have is a discussion about what's going on here. You may recall that, just over a year ago, President Trump signed an Executive Order trying to get federal agencies to implement regulatory reform, which meant that what they would like to see happen is an exchange -- Any time that there was a new regulation that was going to go into place, two regulations would be removed.

What has happened is that this is filtering down through the federal government, and what's being asked of the councils at this point is to come up with a list of regulations that they think are unneeded, unnecessary, or outdated, and so the council submitted a plan in December for removing regulations or recommending regulations that could be removed in the future. That was discussed by the council in December. In March, we presented the council with some suggested ideas that

came from council staff and from Southeast Regional Office staff, but, as part of this plan, what we're going to do is to go to all of our advisory panels and ask them if they are aware of regulations that they think ought to be considered for removal.

Now, understand that this idea of removing regulations, this two-for-one thing, there are some caveats to all of this, and the only regulations, I believe, that this applies to -- There is a dollar threshold, I believe, and I believe it's \$100 million. I am not sure, but I could verify that, but it escapes me right now if that was the exact figure or not, but that is the hurdle for which, if you want to implement a new regulation that is at that level, you have to remove two other regulations.

However, this is being looked at as a way of simply updating our regulations and getting rid of things that just are unneeded or outdated, and so what we're asking you all to do is this document includes for all fisheries that we've identified, and so you can see the first one that I've got here is for golden crab, but I believe it starts on -- For permits and fees, one of the things that the SERO folks identified is on vessel permits, and that is the notion of not having to mail everything to everybody and that you could actually do it online, and they're actually working towards that, and so they have listed that as one of the things that certainly could be removed.

Then, in snapper grouper specifically, we're looking at the idea of -- It was mentioned, I believe, yesterday, but the idea of getting rid of power heads or changing the prohibition on powerheads in the EEZ off of South Carolina. Then we also identified removal of deepwater species size limits, and I believe that this was in a visioning amendment as an action. We will clarify to make sure that the right species are selected here, but this is -- Okay. That's fine. We're not going to get rid of the yellowtail size limits. You're right.

That's what we have identified for snapper grouper, and, yesterday, you all were talking about the -- You voted in favor of getting rid of the two-for-one for the SG1 permits, and so that might be something that you would want to recommend. That hasn't come directly from staff, and the council hasn't specifically mentioned that, and so, if there are things like that, what I would like to do is to add them to the end of the list of the documents here, and so am I safe to assume that, based on your vote yesterday, you would like to recommend that the two-for-one for the SG1 permits be removed? Okay. What I will have to do then is go back through the CFRs and find the relevant regulations, but what we have to have in here to go with this document is the reasoning behind why you want that to be removed.

MR. HULL: Are the ones that you have already listed by the council -- Do they meet the monetary threshold that you said? That still has to be determined?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That is correct. No economic analysis of these have been done, but I doubt that any of these regulations that we have identified are going to meet that monetary threshold, but they still could be removed anyway. I mean, it's just -- It doesn't mean that they have to meet that threshold to be considered for removal, but it's just that, for the requirement, to be involved in -- Actually, another point I want to bring up is that, when this two-for-one business is going on, it doesn't mean that it has to be within fisheries.

For example, we're in the Department of Commerce, and so, if somebody in atmospheric sciences wants to implement something that would cost over \$100 million to implement it, they could take

regulations from another agency to offset the cost of their new regulation, and so it's not tied just to fisheries. This is a government-wide operation.

MR. LORENZ: Brian, what is true is that it isn't necessarily a single regulation, but it could be a bucket of regulations, like snapper grouper, or could it be South Atlantic Fishery Management Council regulations, and that could be a huge bucket.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I believe, if I understand it correctly, it would be any or all of those things, and so it doesn't have to be things that are specifically relevant to us.

MR. LORENZ: I meant like a line item, because you're not going to have very many South Atlantic regulations of \$100 million, but you might cumulatively get a whole bunch of them.

DR. CHEUVRONT: It's a potential, but I'm not quite sure how that's going to play out. That's like way above my paygrade. We've been asked to identify regulations that can be removed because of unneeded or unnecessary.

MR. JOHNSON: So you're asking this group if we have any regulations in mind? Is that what the question is?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, and the question to this group is, in addition -- Yesterday, you voted about the two-for-one.

MR. JOHNSON: Right, and so I love turtles as much as anybody else, but boy has there been a lot of effort and money spent on this turtle release gear, and not just by fishermen, but just by the government itself, sending Charlie around, and I like Charlie, but to all these different ports and having these meetings that very few people come to, and they sent out a nice booklet, and I don't know what the cost of all that was, but I am not sure it's really necessary, especially when you're only implementing it on the for-hire industry and the commercial industry and you're not even talking to the recreational anglers, who far outnumber those groups, and so I don't know if that's something that is possible, but, to me, if you're talking about useless regulations, that one is pretty useless.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Are you speaking specifically to the education of it or the --

MR. JOHNSON: No, I'm talking about the whole thing. I mean, to tell some charter boat, some of these guys in a twenty-five-foot boat, that they need a spare tire to lay the turtle on or something similar, I mean, it's -- To me, that was a very burdensome, unneeded regulation. I don't know how everybody else feels about it.

MR. MANIGAULT: This morning, we were discussing out in the hallway, and I'm hoping that this is the right time for me to interject this, but we were talking about licensing, because I can remember back when the State of South Carolina didn't have saltwater licensing, and everybody was against it, but then it worked out. It worked itself out, because the folks saw where some of the funds were going.

Where I'm going with this is we were also discussing reef permits, and I would like to also revisit reef permits for any and everybody who is going to be out there fishing. They may buck, and they

may grumble, but you can mumble and you can grumble, but that's just the way the cookie crumbles sometimes. We have to put this before them in order for us to be able to get some form of proper reporting with these reef fish or whatever the case may be, and so I'm hoping that I'm interjecting this at the right time, but it's just something that I want to visit, and there may be other people who may want to comment also or support it.

MR. MOSS: You're about an hour early, Gary. For the sake of this one, we're trying to remove stuff, and I'm not saying that I don't support you, but, when we get to Other Business, you can put that one out there. I appreciate it. It was a solid effort.

MR. R. FREEMAN: It's upward of 3,500 charters that I have run over the years out there, and I have never hooked a turtle, and I've got all that gear. A lot of it, I was able to make myself, but it is burdensome, and it is ridiculous, and one of the things you had to have -- I think it was a thirteen-inch pair of needle-nose pliers. How about you try to go find those things? I live in North Carolina, and I finally found somebody in St. Lucie, Florida, that had them. Why wouldn't twelve inches be good enough? Who in their right mind said that a lot of these guys out there, the private boats or whatever, the small twenty or twenty-five-foot boats, they're going to take a turtle aboard? No.

You wind up getting somebody hurt or whatever, and it's diminishing returns to do whatever it is you plan to do for this turtle that you probably have never caught. The turtles in our area are very shy, and you don't get close to them. They don't come visiting to see what they can steal off of your hook or whatever and get hooked up, and so I will let it go at that, but you can make some of this equipment, but the big deal was the great big landing net, big enough to put a turtle onboard, and a lot of boats just don't have a storage spot for that. Thank you.

MR. J. FREEMAN: On the turtles, just our time involved in this, and it's a four-plus-hour class on how to detangle a box. I mean, this is on something that we never, ever catch, and, if anything, this thing really needs to go. It's a \$180 net that is so big that you can't put it on a center console. I mean, this is ridiculous, really.

MR. BUFF: I think that something that needs to be looked at is the requirements for the boats. A lot of this stuff is going to the day boats too, and I think some of these safety requirements could be -- Just like it requires them to have a life raft on a center console, and I think that's a little absurd, but a lot of this stuff could be looked at, because the expiration dates on this stuff -- The stuff is good longer than the expiration dates, and where I'm going at is your life raft pack and your flare kits and stuff like that. I think that we could look at a lot of the safety, and not only with the regulations in the fishery being tighter, but also the expense of doing this stuff is astronomical, and so I think that all of that stuff could be looked at, to see if there was something we could reevaluate. The turtle gear, I said this the other day, but I've had these boats for going on twenty years, and we've caught one in the twenty years.

MR. ATACK: I would kind of reiterate what Scott says on the safety equipment. I mean, it's ridiculous. You buy a life raft, and, the first two years, you all can inspect it. Then, every year after that, and it's in the \$500 to \$1,000 range to inspect it, and it depends on what kind of raft you've got, and they could easily change that to just every other year instead of two years off and then every year. Instead of making it an annual, make it every two years, and that would save the fishermen a lot of money.

I understand, the way the flares are, they had to come up with some expiration date on flares, and so they came up with three years. I mean, the flare kits usually last longer than that, and so, if that regulation could be changed, to where they could put an expiration date of four or five years, that would also save the fishermen money.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Just so you know, I'm including this in here, but I believe those are Coast Guard regulations, and I am not sure how far we can step with our reach on this, but I am including it in the list here, and I will research this to find out if this is something that can be included. We are looking primarily at the 50 CFR regulations, which is fishing in the South Atlantic. However, this is in here, and I will research and figure out what we can do with that, just to make sure that it gets out.

MR. COX: I missed a little bit of this since we got started, but are we at the point where we're looking to see if we can lessen some burdens on South Atlantic fisheries? Is this where Washington is asking us to chime in to see if there are things that we can do to make our fishery less restrictive? Is that what we're doing here?

DR. CHEUVRONT: It's regulations is what we're doing, and so we're looking at what regulations basically are unneeded, outdated, and unnecessary, and so, if there are things that we can come up with as recommendations -- Some of the things, if you look through the document, that are in there, some of the things that are listed are regulations that are under review to be revised right now.

MR. COX: Are these things in terms of Magnuson that we're looking at, or is this just more or less just fishery regulations?

DR. CHEUVRONT: These are fisheries regulations in the South Atlantic.

MR. COX: Like circle hooks, we have discussed for a long time that circle hooks were something that we really didn't -- It's a regulation that we have discussed that's not really making any difference. I mean, we're realizing that you have as much mortality with a circle hook as you do a straight hook, in a lot of cases, but I don't know. I was thinking in terms of the ABC tolerance and things such as our flexibility in rebuilding, and that's not what we're discussing.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, that's a little bit above this level. That is Magnuson Act stuff, and I think some of that is being looked at, but certainly the circle hook requirement is something that comes from the South Atlantic Council, and, if you all want to make a recommendation on removing the circle hook requirements and give the reasons why you want them removed -- You just said that, in your experience, it doesn't seem to reduce mortality of released fish, and that is something that we could put on this list as well.

MR. COX: Well, I would add that to the list. I mean, we've had a lot of discussion about the circle hooks, and it seems like, at the end of the day, we came up with it's not being enforced and it's something that fishermen are using what they want to use, and, after what we've done, for a long time, we're not seeing that it makes a whole lot of difference, and we're having as much gut-hooked fish as much with a circle hook. However, we do use the circle hook a lot, especially on the large fish, but I think it's a very complicated regulation that we know there is certain species that we're just not going to use the circle hook for, some of our small fish, and I think it's something we can take out.

MR. JOHNSON: I understand where you're coming from, Jack, on the circle hooks, but I do know that there was a significant change to discard mortality on the red snapper due to the use of circle hooks, and I myself am not willing to give that up, and that's just all I'm going to say. When you make a decision like this and you have a stock assessment on some of these fish, it's going to change things, and it's going to change them in a negative way. Anyway, I would just throw that out there.

MR. COX: I agree, and, to that point, bigger fish. Maybe keep the regulation in place on fish that we know, like the red snappers and things, but, when you go to a small fish, like a triggerfish or a b-liner, and you've got a regulation in place, if we're doing it for a feel-good measure, or to try to get some credit on an assessment, we're not using it. I am not using a circle hook on a b-liner or a triggerfish, and I don't think anybody else is, and so --

MR. HULL: I just would like to say that it's already in the document, but about operator permits, and you can see where it's been struck, and I totally agree with that. I don't know anyone in this room that has ever had anybody look at their operator permit when they were boarded, and it's just something that -- They're already looking at getting rid of it, and I think that's -- I support that totally. It's completely useless for what we're doing.

MR. BUFF: I don't know if this is the place, but we were talking about the permitting a while ago, and, also, with Jimmy's thing, the operator cards are useless. I mean, we've got tons and tons and stuff that the guys have got to have already just to go fishing, and so why do we need to take them and get a picture ID? It's aggravating to have to deal with, and it's just something else for the owners to do, but, also, this permitting process, where we just had it a while ago about the renewals, I don't know why we can't have just a renewal.

If nothing is changing on that permit, why are we having to fill out -- I don't know how many of you guys have had to renew your permits lately, but you almost have to go to an attorney's office to fill the paperwork out, and so I just wish that we had something that -- You can go online for \$25 and five minutes and get a tuna permit to catch a \$5,000 fish, but it takes almost an attorney to do the snapper grouper renewals, and so it would just be nice if we had a renewal letter that basically nothing is changing on this permit whatsoever, and we're using the same boat, and you check the box, put a check in the mail, and you send it back. Simple. Done. We didn't cut ten trees down, and I didn't have to go see the attorney to fill the paperwork out, and we could do it online.

MR. MOSS: That's something we're probably going to need to bring up in Other Business as well.

MR. COX: I know the council has talked about operator cards a lot, and it's something that I continue to support, just for the fact that there is so many fishermen out there that don't have -- They don't have any kind of form of ID. Most of them can't even go to the bank and cash a check, a lot of them, and I don't know, but, for some reason, they don't have IDs, and it seems like it would be a really nice way, if there is violations or if there is boardings at sea, that they are required to carry some kind of identification to operate these vessels, so that, if there are violations, they have a way to track who is doing what and to put a face with an address or a name or some kind of credential.

I know that our operator cards don't really have a -- There is more information that could be added to it. Like, I know in the Mid-Atlantic, they have a number, like a driver license number. Ours are no more than just a picture and an address, but I like the fact that they're accountable and that, if they are in some kind of violation, that enforcement has something to look at to put a name with a boat or a captain.

MR. BUFF: Also, too, just be aware that that operator card is only valid for the dolphin and wahoo fishery, and so that's basically what it's for.

MR. MOSS: All right. Steering this back to things that we want to remove, anybody else?

MR. BONURA: Scott, do you guys fish on the buoy gear in the golden tilefish?

MR. BUFF: Yes, we use the buoy gear a lot. Yes, we sure do, and the reason we use the buoy gear is it reduces the time you're there actually catching it, because I don't know where you're at, but, but where we're at, this is a huge area, and there is no rhyme or reason to where they're at, and so it covers a lot of ground, and it reduces a couple of days off of your trip.

MR. BONURA: I agree 100 percent, but, on the buoy gear regulations, I feel like the one where it's two feet of water per one foot on the drop line is kind of ridiculous, because, if your gear is moving in or out, and you may have been in 1,000 feet of water and a couple thousand feet of line, if your gear moves in, you're going to be illegal as your gear is moving.

MR. BUFF: Pretty much where we're setting the gear is on the golden tile, and our bottom doesn't change very much there. Just where it's set out, we're retrieving it within a mile of where it's at, and the bottom is pretty much about the same. It's in the same depth, give or take.

MR. BONURA: All right. You've got that, and then how about the ten hooks within thirty feet of your lead? How can you possibly get ten hooks within thirty feet?

MR. BUFF: It's where you set your snaps at, but, to reply to that, we only run seven on ours, just FYI.

MR. BONURA: All right, and so what I'm getting at here is I believe the two-to-one on the feet and the ten hooks within thirty feet could be removed and have the regulations to where it's simpler. It could be ten hooks and a ten-pound lead and one ball up and down, and it's much easier and much simpler, easier on the fishermen and easier on enforcement. It's just a simpler way to do it.

MR. BUFF: That's fine with me. It cuts a little bit of time off of our trips to be able to use the buoy gear, and that's mainly what we've been using, but the ten-hook rule is fine with me.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I just want to clarify that what you're asking for is that you would like for there to be -- To look at potential modifications to buoy gear requirements so that it would reduce the likelihood -- If the gear moves, it would reduce the likelihood that the gear would be illegal?

MR. BONURA: Yes, that is correct, and the ten hooks within thirty feet of the lead or your weight.

MR. BUFF: I just want to make sure I'm clear with this. If we're taking regulations off, we're okay, but, when we're adding regulations, we're also going to have to take regulations off to change those regulations, and is that correct? Also, too, Vincent, I know this buoy gear has kind of been up in the air all the time, and that's why I really -- I don't even like bringing it up, but I would just like to keep what we've got and be happy that we have it, but, when you bring something up, it's just kind of -- It's been something that's kind of been on the borderline to start with.

MR. BONURA: I agree with you there, and I was sitting over here contemplating it for the last ten or fifteen minutes now, and so, if you want to, we can leave it up there or hit the back button.

MR. BUFF: It doesn't matter to me. Just my thoughts was we're taking regulations off, and so, if we're making a regulation, we're going to have to -- We're increasing one to take two more off, which is fine, and it doesn't matter, but I just don't want to lose the gear type.

MR. BONURA: I agree with you, but, here, we're just simplifying the regulation. We're not trying to get rid of it or modify it, but just simplify it and make it easier. Ten hooks is ten hooks, and why does it have to be thirty feet from the lead? It's ten hooks.

MR. ATACK: I think what you are worrying about is people might construe it to be a longline. If the hooks aren't within the bottom thirty feet, and now you don't have a restriction on two feet per foot of depth, now you've got a one-mile line, and, if your hooks aren't construed to the bottom thirty feet, then they could be across that whole mile, and now is it really longline gear or are we fishing with buoy gear? That's the concern I think you get into if you start removing some of these regulations.

MR. BUFF: What I was under the impression of why that was there was they didn't want those hooks up in the water column. That was what I was --

MR. BONURA: But, still, ten hooks is ten hooks. It's ten hooks, and it's not a longline. It's ten hooks.

MR. BUFF: Basically, from what I understood, it was that, once you get up off of thirty foot off the bottom, that you're starting to target the water column with the other fish that we're really not trying to catch, and that was why they were -- Not trying to catch, but you're targeting a different species than the bottom fish, and that's why that was there, from what I understood.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Remember that these are just suggestions that are going to go before the council, and then the council can decide whether they want to move them forward or not, and it's not -- I think it's pretty clear that the recommendation is not to get rid of the buoy gear at all, but potentially to look at modifying it somehow, because that thirty-foot distance for ten hooks really is not enough, is what you're saying.

MR. MOSS: Have we got anything else that we want to recommend for Brian to take off? Going once. All right. Thank you very much, Brian. We appreciate it. Moving right along, we're going to go to a discussion about the Coast Guard law enforcement priorities.

MS. BROUWER: We have here Lieutenant Jerry Brown from Sector Charleston U.S. Coast Guard, and he wanted to get you guys' input on prioritization of enforcement for the Coast Guard, and so I'm going to let Jerry come up here and talk to you for a little bit.

LT. BROWN: Good morning, gentlemen. I am Lieutenant Jerry Brown. Just to give you a little bit of background of my specific role here, I work right here in Georgia and South Carolina. Although I don't reach, primarily, into Florida or North Carolina, my counterparts that I work with, we talk to each other a lot on this.

I just wanted to give you -- Essentially, it's to ask you what is the best way forward of how the Coast Guard can help with enforcement throughout the area. Now, for us specifically, our reach is that we have multiple units within our AOR, and I say AOR, and that's the area between Georgia and South Carolina, and we have small boat stations that have a reach of probably ten to twenty nautical miles from base. They can reach out all across different vessels, and then we have also patrol boats, the eighty-seven-foot, the can reach out to probably fifty to sixty nautical miles.

Within those units, the smaller stations and the patrol boats, our reach can be pretty far, but, then again, we are limited in resources. Now, with LMR, which is living marine resources, enforcement, that encompasses everything from all species, right whales and marine mammals and any natural resources that fall within the EEZ, and so I wanted to come and ask you guys -- Probably the best way forward that we can move with is increasing our efficiency for our law enforcement.

Now, if you're out of our area, we have come across multiple violations. Some are by sheer dumb luck and some are by shared intel. Now, when we have shared intel, that can go both ways. There are people who just want to say things just to kind of rat on their buddy or to just cause some sort of confusion for us, but there have been some very helpful things of people divulging information that we are going out to people who are conducting highly-illegal operations.

For example, just the other month, we came across a black sea bass operation, and they were harvesting black sea bass pots in a prohibited area, and I would say probably the total violation is about \$20,000 is what we're looking at. We came across, a couple of months ago, out-of-season and undersized grouper species, and they were filleting right there on the boat, and they were tossing the carcasses overboard as we approached, and so there is illegal activity going on throughout the area, but it's kind of open to discussion of any tips that you may have for us and vice-versa.

Kind of a cool example is a buddy of mine, just a couple of months ago, or this past year, he was working down in Florida, onboard scuba divers, and the scuba divers seemed fairly helpful and friendly, but there was an intel of people harvesting undersized lobster tails. As my guy was going onboard, he actually bumped into the scuba tank and noticed that it was ice cold, and there was no reason why the scuba tank should be freezing cold.

Further information, we later found out that these guys were stuffing all their scuba tanks with undersized lobster tails, dozens throughout the entire boat, and that case went to thousands and thousands of dollars, and the guys had been doing for years too, and so little stuff like that goes across the fleet, and, like I said, this is an open discussion, and any help that you can give us.

We are limited in resources of what we can do, and, like I said, fisheries is not a priority. It is search and rescue, and that is our number-one priority in the Coast Guard, but a mission for us is living marine resources enforcement, and so we'll take any information that we have in regard to you sharing, and it goes both ways. Anything that we can do to help you and vice-versa, and so it's kind of an open discussion, if you guys have any pointers or things that might stick out that normally people don't see.

MR. MOSS: Anybody got any helpful tips of anything that you see?

MR. JOHNSON: This is probably not a helpful tip, but he touched on something, and I think that a lot of us have been a little frustrated that when someone does get caught with a violation that the penalties aren't that severe, and so it comes to mind of a boat out of our inlet, and I'm in Florida, St. Augustine, was caught before the grouper opened up with grouper onboard, and he never missed a lick. I don't even know what kind of fine he got.

I mean, it's great to have these regulations, and I, for one, would like to see somebody that's not playing by the rules pay when they get caught, versus just a slap on the wrist, and I know that's not your deal. All you can do is make the case, and then it's up to a judge, I guess, somewhere to do that, but it's just an observation.

LT. BROWN: When you say severe, in regards to the monetary fine, how it's not steep enough, or that it doesn't happen right away and it's not immediate, because, like I touched on before, we do law enforcement, and this isn't the sexy drug trafficking that we deal with down in the Caribbean or in California, and so it doesn't take -- I won't say precedence, but it is not as time sensitive as you might think. Like I said, is it severity in regard to how much it is? Is that what you're talking about?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I have to be careful here, because I am a boat owner, and there are other boat owners here, and we have some real special people work on our boats at times, and I don't want to see an owner punished for something that a boat operator does, but I would like to see the operator have -- Too many times, the guy that owns the boat, that had no idea this guy was in an MPA, he's the one that gets the fine, and there has to be some way to address the people that are actually violating the law instead of turning to the guy that you know you're going to get the money from. I guess that's what I'm getting at.

MR. BROWN: That's one of the things that they were talking about with that operator card too, where, if it's attached to a specific person, they can pull that up and then look at their history too, and so that was another thing that they were talking about why to support that.

MR. BUFF: I was fortunate enough to get jammed up in this this year, and I have got a pretty good class on this, and so I can tell some of you guys how it really goes down, but my suggestion is that there ought to be more repercussions for the person that is doing the actions, and how this goes down -- There is two ways for this to happen, and NOAA can either do it criminal towards the operator or it can be monetary to the operator and the boat owner.

In some cases, I think like the sea bass that you were talking about, I think the owner was involved in that, but, in some of these cases, the operator is doing this behind the owner's back, and there

ought to be more punishment to the operator, and the owner should be left out of that, because the owner really has no idea what's going on.

Also, too, this is something for the council that -- As these regulations are getting tighter and tighter and tighter, and it is what it is, but these guys are getting more creative on what they're doing and how they're making their living, because they still have house payments and power bills, and, on my boat, and as probably everybody in here knows, the guy was actually cutting fillets and packing them in the hull, and they were bringing them in and selling them on the black market, and all of that is under investigation as we speak, but, luckily for me, this is a repeat offender, and they're going after him for the criminal charges, but just so you guys know that either NOAA can prosecute it monetarily, which takes the boat owner and the operator, or you can either have it criminal, which goes all to the operator.

It just depends on which way they try to take that, and so it's not a good situation, and it's happening more than you think, and so just for everybody at the table -- Being he brought this up, and I wasn't even going to bring it up, but you guys need to know what you're dealing with, and these fines are not cheap either.

There are some pretty good penalties, and, the guy that's working with me, he's probably looking at a twelve to twenty-four-month sentence when all this is done and over with, and so you're going to take this guy, this fisherman, that's standing here on the back deck of this boat throwing 200 or 300 pounds of fish that was \$1,200 or \$1,500 back in the ocean, and, instead, they're cutting them and taking them and selling them to pay their bills, and so who is right and who is wrong? This is something that I am, at the minute, dealing with myself.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Scott. Just to kind of steer this back, remember that there's not much you can do about the punishment or anything like that. We're here to talk about kind of exactly what Scott brought up. If you guys are seeing certain things out there that maybe Coast Guard or law enforcement wasn't aware of, and like you brought up about the lobster tails and the scuba tanks, things like that, just stuff to look out for, and obviously we're not expecting everybody to be tattletales and narcs or anything like that.

MR. COX: We appreciate what you guys do, we really do, especially when our guys are in trouble and you guys are out there to give us a helping hand. We know your plate is full, and our marine resources are very valuable to all of us, and somebody has got to police it, and, unfortunately, you guys have got to do a lot of different tasks out there.

The South Atlantic had an app that helped enforcement, and that app, on the commercial side and the recreational side, was a quick way for you guys, if you were offshore, to look at that app and to try to figure out what our regulations were, because they were updated constantly, and so I wish you guys would request the council to give you guys some kind of tool, like the South Atlantic app, that you could use on your telephone to help follow all these regulations we have, because it's all we can do to keep up with them, and I'm sure it's a lot for you guys, especially when you're boarding a vessel, and a lot of your guys are young, and they don't have a clue what they're looking at, because there are so many different species.

For the app that we had, it would not only show you a picture of the fish, but it would tell you the trip limits and different things, and so a lot of the fishermen kind of laughed, because they know

you guys don't really know what we know, and so, with that said, if you guys could request the council maybe to give you some kind of tool that would help you, and I think that was a great tool that we had that went away for some reason, and it helped us as well, even those of us that are experts in the field. It was hard for us sometimes to follow the regulations.

Another thing is, a lot of times, when we hear you guys speak, you talk about the violations that you find and so forth, but, you know, there's a lot of recreational folks out there, and so I would like to hear, every now and then, that a small boat has been boarded and things are going on with the private recreational sector, because it's so easy to spot a commercial fishing vessel and to board it, but very rarely do we hear of the small boats or -- You know, it's frustrating that our guys, the commercial guys, continuously seem to be the ones that are targeted, and their vessels are stopped and there is countless hours of going through their equipment, and so please consider that as well, but, again, we really appreciate you guys. You do a fantastic job taking care of our guys on the water and what you do.

MS. RHODES: Just to that point, Jack, I wasn't here when you guys were discussing some issues that you were having with app-related things, and so I just wanted to bring a point of clarification to the table. Fish Rules is a recreational app. That is what we're promoting at the council level right now. We have a relationship with them.

I am responsible for updating all of the federal regulations on the app relative to the South Atlantic, and so that would be available for the Coast Guard to use, much the same way that our former app was, and so if that's something that you wanted to use for recreational, I strongly recommend that you take a look at it, and I would be happy to walk you through getting the app set up. I know there are some folks in the room that are having trouble getting the app set up for federal waters, and so, if you have issues with that, just come talk with me after, and I'm happy to get you set up.

Commercial is something that we're really trying to correct right now. We know that a lot of the commercial guys, not only in the room, but also in the entire region, are really frustrated that they don't have an app right now.

We are getting a proposal for app development, which we're expecting at the end of this month, and we're going to review that proposal and see if it's something that is actually financially feasible for us to take on. We're seeking partners to hopefully enter into this with us, so it won't be just the South Atlantic. It possibly could expand to other areas as well, but we are doing a number of things to try to make sure that commercial guys have an app that they can use, and, if that does come online, that's something that I strongly recommend that the Coast Guard take a look at.

We do have a fact sheet online right now, which encompasses all of the regulations for the snapper grouper complex for the South Atlantic. It's a PDF, and it's not the kind of fix that I know you guys are looking for, but it is something that is available online, and, if you guys have more suggestions for how we could get this kind of information out there, app-related or otherwise, please come talk to me about it, commercial guys or recreational guys, and it doesn't matter, but just come chat with me about it.

MR. MOSS: Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: I just quickly wanted to add that there is an app that is being developed as part of the pilot that was put together for recreational -- Or I should say for-hire reporting, and so the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel is meeting here next week, and they're going to get a demo. This app is currently under development, and it is intended to be a tool for enforcement, and so that's another thing that, Jerry, will be available for the Coast Guard and other enforcement agencies to use for fisheries in our area.

MR. HUDSON: Thank you for your service to our country, and I would like to introduce this idea that, for twenty years, I've been on the HMS AP, and I believe you might be familiar with that. Twice a year, we have meetings. Twice a year, we have both the U.S. Coast Guard making a presentation on the interdictions and stuff like that that they encounter from Maine to Texas and the Caribbean.

Now, we only need our district, North Carolina to the Florida Keys, and it would be nice if we had that. We have two meetings a year with regard to this, and we have four meetings a year with regard to the council, and we have four newsletters a year, and we also have the NOAA OLE that makes their presentation, and that's where everything gets finalized, through those people.

It gives us an awareness of what's happening, at least with the highly migratory species. I did see a little item where some fellow was illegally using black sea bass pot traps, and I believe you probably know about that, and that would be a great update, if you all were able to put that together for us, educationally, and you could look at the examples on the HMS website, because, in their briefing book, you can go right on back through the years and see what they actually presented, and it's pretty easy. It's a regular little team that comes together, usually with a lawyer, usually with the Coast Guard in uniform, and with OLE, and a variety of people there, and so it's just an idea.

It would help educate us, because, that way, we would know it's not just in a vacuum and we would actually see what you all have been having to do out on the sea and then the stuff here. In my experience, I have had to help the Coast Guard several times through the years, and that has worked out, and so it's just something that maybe you could talk to your superiors and then talk to the council and then look at the HMS stuff and then maybe that could give us an idea of how to educate us better, so that we can help you better. Thank you.

MR. PILAND: Like everybody else has said, we really appreciate you all's service and dedication to safety on the water and coming to our aid when needed. The only recommendation I could come up with was just a little better education on the fish ID. Speaking from personal experience, I know your guys that board us are typically being trained, but they seldom have a good grasp on the type of fish that they're looking at.

LT. BROWN: You're absolutely right, and especially with snapper grouper. That species frustrates me by far the most. I don't know how you guys deal with that on a daily basis, but you're absolutely right, and we aren't experts at that, unlike you guys. For you guys, that's your bread-and-butter, even with species like snapper grouper and HMS and cobia and mackerel, and the list continues to go on, and that's on top of safety when we go onboard your boat.

We do appreciate it, and 95 percent of the boardings that we do, for both recreational and commercial, because we do hit a lot of recreational boats. Those are actually the low-hanging fruit

that we hit. They are inbound, and they come in for the day, and we board the boats and go through the process, but, 95 percent of the commercial boardings that we do, it's great. I mean, everyone is compliant, and there is no hostility. I understand that we're taking your time up, and so we try to be as expedited as possible, and, the more cooperation that we receive from the fishermen, the faster we can get on with our day and you can make some more money and catch some more fish.

There is that small chunk that people are doing some shady stuff, and that includes anything from lack of safety, and then, of course, illegal fishing operations, and so we do appreciate that there is some on-the-job training. Safety is the primary one, and we care about your EPIRB and your flares and your life raft and all of that, because, when you are in danger, that is what will save you and give you some extra time until we can get on the scene and help you, because I also do -- Another job of mine is search and rescue cases.

I am the guy in the command center who is hearing the radio, and so, when you call "mayday", I am the guy launching the helicopters and small boats to your position to go save you, and so that's another side of my job as well and not only LMR, and so I do thank you for being compliant with the Coast Guard. It can be frustrating, and I understand that.

I've been on the crab fishing boats up in Alaska for a few months a couple of years ago, and it was -- It is kind of a pain in the ass when you're onboard and we take up two or three hours of time, and so I do appreciate all the help you guys do for us, and we do use the apps as much as possible, but, with those fish IDs, it's hard. Jeez, it's hard, but we're trying to do our best, but don't be afraid to do some education to the Coast Guard personnel as well, because, like I said, we're going onboard your boat, but we're also targeting people that just go out there and catch whatever they come up with and disregarding the regulations and the rules and the seasons and the size of the fish, and so I just ask for a little bit of just patience, but I do thank you for all of your help.

MR. MANIGAULT: I can attest that the Coast Guard does board recreational boats. I had a situation with them last summer on a charter, and trust me they do, but they were cooperative, but it was a challenge. There were some things that I didn't actually know that was actually needed in regard to stickers and things like that, but they guided me in the right direction. There were some other changes that had to be made, since we were doing charters, and I had to have a life raft, but that's still in discussion, but they do board recreational boats.

The only challenge that I had was I was just inspected by the City of Charleston Police water guys, and we were at the marina, just passing through under the bridge, and we passed their inspection, and then, a hundred feet further down is when you guys boarded me, and so I passed the City of Charleston inspection, but then we turned right around and your guys hit me on one item.

We didn't necessarily fail, but you advised me that I needed this and that and that and this, because there is a class of yachts -- There is a yacht classification that Sea Hunt makes in boats, but it doesn't specify the total number of people that can actually be on the actual boat itself, and so we have to take that up with Sea Hunt in regards to getting a placard that identified the total number of people that could actually be on a twenty-eight-foot boat, and so I thank you.

MR. COX: Back to the safety gear, one of the burdensome things that we have that is very expensive, and it's something that I think should be changed, is we have to get our life rafts inspected every year, and it's expensive. It's anywhere from \$800 to \$1,200 or \$1,500. Every

five years, we have to have a major repack, and they look at the cylinder and different things like that, and it makes a lot of sense to me that, when you first buy a raft, it's good for two years, and then every year you have to inspect it, and it's very expensive, and it seems to me that it's -- We would love to see some leniency on that. I mean, I think two years is very reasonable, if you have had your raft packed, every two years rather than every year.

MR. MOSS: Not to interrupt you, Jack, but we've got to kind of steer this back to why this is here, and it's certain recommendations of things that law enforcement can look out for. Not to insult you, but that might be a little bit above his paygrade and something maybe we could bring up for us in other business, but let's steer this back to -- Again, I go back to what he mentioned about the lobsters hiding in the tanks and things like that, things to look out for. That's why we're here.

MR. COX: I understand, and thank you. I'm just trying to take this opportunity, and it's something that I'm pretty sure we all agree on.

MR. MOSS: No, and that will be coming up next, I promise.

LT. BROWN: I appreciate that. Thank you, and I can make that note to the right people, but that might be not quite my domain, but, as he was saying, little things that -- For example, we came across a boat, and they were harvesting their catch, and we saw frozen, or not frozen, but very cold fillets all across the boat, and maybe 120 yards leading up to the boat. They were the only boat within probably twenty miles. I mean, come on, dude.

You know better than that, and, of course, they denied it and all that, but we collected the evidence and all that, and we had about -- There were floating groups of frozen fillets all across the boat, and, of course, as we came upon them, that's when they just started dumping the carcasses overboard. Just little things like that that we come across that sometimes is dumb luck, it really is, but, as you guys know, in the fishing industry, one case, one instance, it has ripple effect. People hear about it very quickly all throughout, and so, like I said, any guidance, I will take from you guys that we might not be cognizant of or the normal person might not see, and I am all ears.

MR. JOHNSON: I see this as mainly for South Carolina and Georgia, and it's a little different where I am in Florida. We have state regulations and federal regulations, and, good gosh, I know that's got to be a challenge for the guys down there, and it's a real stickler for us that are federally-permitted vessels that we have recreational anglers especially that harvest fish in federal waters, and the only chance to make an enforcement is you've got to catch them in those federal waters, because, once they get to state waters, there is nothing you can do.

I know this may be straying a little bit from the intent, but it would be really nice if there could be some pressure brought somehow to get state regulations to maybe -- I know that's not your job, but it's very frustrating, and I'm sure it's frustrating for enforcement down there, because they -- A guy can come into the dock and clean a red snapper beside me and there is nothing that the FWC can even do, because they are legal in state waters, and red snapper is a big deal for most people.

All I would say is, if you talk to those guys down there, if they see a guy that's running at thirty knots and he's not going to the inlet and he's running in there to stop on the beach, because that's what they do. They run inshore, in state waters, and stop and drift around for ten or fifteen minutes

and then take off and go in the inlet, and what they're doing is they're saying, well, yes, we caught these in state waters, and you can look at my plotter and, see, I stopped in state waters.

It's difficult to make a case, and I don't know what you can do about that, but that's just something to be aware of, the behavior of those fishermen in our area, and it's telltale. Every time I see a guy running toward the pier barge in an offshore boat, I know exactly that he's got red snapper onboard, and I would bet money on it, and that's how he's covering his tracks, and so I guess it doesn't apply up here, but you could pass that on to Coast Guard Mayport.

LT. BROWN: Yes, and all my counterparts and co-workers work all throughout Mayport and Jacksonville and Key West and Miami, all throughout the -- We do talk a lot and share information. Granted, it's a little different between Key West and South Carolina, but we do share a lot, but thank you very much.

MR. ATACK: Is there like a hotline or a phone number that we should call if there's something like that that we want to report?

LT. BROWN: I'm glad you brought that up. That's something that we're going to start, or at least I will be starting, locally and then branching out. I don't want to bite off more than I can chew in regard to that, but, for Georgia and South Carolina, I will be opening up my working line, because we have had that in the past, and there's been guys who try to rat out on each other, absolutely, just to cause confusion and just to cause hindrance for them, and so we have to take that with caution, and I'm sure you guys can understand that.

In regard to that, when someone is doing illegal activity in a prohibited area and they come in and they are in an allowable area, we have to catch them in the act. If there are trends though, if this guy is there -- If we have this guy here every Thursday in this permitted area, that's something we can follow up on, but, for a one-time deal, we can't get our asset there and on scene. By the time we get on scene, that guy is long gone. He has already processed the catch.

Something that I will be doing locally for Georgia and South Carolina is opening up my work contact information and opening it up and slowly building it up. If I realize that this is beneficial and we are getting great cases and catching violators, then I will reach out to my counterparts throughout Florida and do the same thing for them as well, but I don't want to open up -- Like I said, I'm just specifically for Georgia and South Carolina, but I do have influence in Florida as well, and so I will be reaching out after this meeting, yes.

MR. HULL: I would just like to say that I have problems occasionally with -- I will set some gear, commercial gear, and it's tampered with by other generally recreational sector anglers. They will see, for instance, my buoy at the end of my longline gear, and they will cut my gear off, which is -- Then I have to go try to grapple it up and find it, and sometimes you can't, and they will actually pull your gear.

I know that you have to catch them in the act, pretty much, but just so that, in your training on your patrol personnel, that they're aware that that does happen. It happens, and that was all. It's just that there is conflicts, especially between commercial gear and recreational anglers, that will see your buoy in the area, and it will have your vessel name and all your requirements, but they will just go up and mess with it or cut it off. I have had them cut off.

It happens, and it's bad for me, but it's also bad for the environment, because, if I lose all that gear on the bottom, it continues to tangle up, possibly, endangered species and things like that, and so it is a serious problem, and especially in Florida, with as much recreational -- The growth of that, and there's just a lot of action there, and so I just wanted you to be aware of that. Thank you.

MR. COX: Just one quick last thing, and I appreciate Chris for reminding me of this. The council has identified some places out in the ocean that are special to us, some places that we consider possibly spawning areas and MPAs and things like that, and do you guys have that on your plotters? When you guys are out patrolling and just cruising, do you happen to go through those places? If so, do you ever find any violations in our SMZs or -- I guess the question is how often do you patrol it and do you guys actually know where those places are? Are there some things that the council can do to help you identify the places that are of interest to us?

LT. BROWN: There is no uniform answer to that, because each Coast Guard unit involves themselves more in the enforcement than others, and so some are very familiar with this is where this MPA is and this is where this spawning ground is, and so it's kind of dependent on the unit itself, but the best is to educate my law enforcement officers and let them know, but, every once in a while, I will direct them towards a certain area, and especially Gray's Reef, for you Georgia fishermen, and that's something that we are taking more of an interest in as well, but I think yes and no is probably the best answer, but we are doing just education, and I am letting my guys know that there are certain areas, but they know ahead of time, but, right there on the charter, on their plotter, they might not have the tools to let them know exactly which MPA they are in, and so not quite as much as I would like them to.

MR. COX: I would like to see the council, Myra, if we could pass that along to the Coast Guard and give them our coordinates, so you guys could update your charts. That would be something very simple that you could just put in your system and say, hey, this is a special area and help us patrol it when you're out there.

MR. MOSS: Anybody else? All right. On behalf of everybody here, we certainly thank you for everything that you guys do, and we definitely appreciate it, keeping everybody safe and watching out for us, and so thank you very much. If it's okay with everybody -- This is the moment that I guess everybody has been waiting for, right, Other Business, and so we'll just push forward. I know we've got a few things that a few people have tried to push through, and so we'll move on to that right now, and we'll open the floor.

MR. COX: Well, red grouper. You know, Scott and I have -- We have talked about red grouper a little bit, and I understand that the council has reduced the ACL by quite a bit. Back to the red grouper, and we've only commercially been able to meet about 8 to 10 percent, or 11 percent, over the last couple of years of attaining our ACL, and we're very concerned about that fishery. I think it would have been more appropriate to put something in place than reducing an ACL that is still not even attainable at the levels that we've been trying to target.

We want to rebuild that fishery, and that's a very important fishery to us, and it seems that it would have been more appropriate to put a commercial -- An emergency rule into effect to close the fishery like that, rather than using the emergency rules to open fisheries all the time because of political pressure, and I would have suggested an emergency rule to close the fishery and figure

out what's going on with it. We know we have a problem, and fishermen have been asking us to help fix that problem.

The suggestion here would be that we get on a fast-track of rebuilding that fishery and figure out what's going on with it, and so I think Scott and I wanted to see the council include some type of small trip limit, if that's correct. With that motion that we had made previously, and I don't know if you can bring that motion back up, but Scott had made a motion, but I don't know if we had included any kind of range of -- I don't know if we can include some alternatives in it to help the council realize what kind of small trip limits were bycatch in the red grouper fishery that we're looking for, but I guess what I'm saying is we should carry that to a further level and say let's put a small trip limit in place until we get that 2021 stock assessment out on red grouper.

MR. BUFF: This fishery is in really bad shape. I think, last year, we caught 10 percent maybe, or 11 percent, and the days are way gone by where the guys were catching 400 or 500 pounds of red grouper a trip, and my concern is that, as the other grouper fisheries are going to be open, we're going to have a lot of interaction, just like we've had this winter. These fish co-mingle in our area. Some of them are in the same exact places, and so I would like to see some sort of really small bycatch trip limit that would be something similar to what we've done with the red snapper. I mean, even if it's a hundred pounds, but just to try to -- We need to do something now and not later.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. As you can see, Myra brought it up, and we obviously put through that motion, and it might have been actually the first day, and, to be honest with you, I don't remember who brought the motion to the floor. Was that you, Scott?

MR. BUFF: It was me the first day.

MR. MOSS: Yes, and so, unless you -- I don't think we can amend it at this point, but we can put another motion that maybe puts an actual poundage number on there, if you want to do that.

MR. COX: Sure. I would make a motion that we ask the council to consider some small trip limits on the red grouper fishery, and I don't know what the range of trip limits would be. When I think of a small trip limit, I think of a hundred-pound trip limit.

MR. MOSS: That actual motion is on there, and the only thing is, if you want to amend, you can put a range, if you want to do a separate -- It would be a separate motion, because that has already passed unanimously, but I'm sure, when they look at this, they're going to have to look at a range of things anyway, but, obviously, you bring it to the table twice, and so it's a high-priority item, and so we can make sure to just get that noted. Thank you.

MR. COX: While I've got the mic, can I put one more thing on the Other Business?

MR. MOSS: Sure.

MR. COX: I am very concerned about the balance of the council in upcoming years. I am just going to say this, and there's probably not a lot that I can do about it, but I think the commercial representation needs to be something that we make sure that we have, that we have knowledgeable people on the council, and I think, anytime that we look at appointing council members to the

council, that that particular community of commercial and recreational should be able to have a voice in the say and say that we feel like that we have somebody that can represent us well.

You know, it's very important that we bring knowledge to the table and that we have people that we feel like are competent in what they do representing us, and I just can't see how we have representatives of our industry at the table that don't have the experience level that some of us feel like qualify that particular person, and, in some form or fashion, I would hope that the council would reach out to industry and say, do you think this person is appropriate and get rid of some of that political stuff that we're dealing with, this crap, and let's get back down to things that are important to protecting the resource and the livelihoods of our fishermen.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much for that, and we'll go to Scott and then to Jimmy.

MR. BUFF: Go to Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you for that, and I would second that, and I think we should craft, you should craft, a motion with trying to say that and balanced representation, qualified and balanced representation, for all sectors and not just one, but every stakeholder needs to have balanced, educated, qualified representation on this council, and I think everybody in here would unanimously support that belief.

MR. BUFF: I think that it's important. When you sit here and you look at this table, and there is so much diversity here, from the restaurant owners to the scientists to the recreational guys to the commercial guys, and everybody brings something to the table, and it's really unique, and, for us, to go back and explain to the guys that are sitting on the bench fussing because they don't have no fish, for us to be able to tell them that here's what we're doing and here's how it works and for them to have some faith in it, and I think that that ought to apply for the council as well.

None of this stuff should be political. We're here for the environment and for the fishery. A lot of us, this is our livelihood. This is what we depend on to make our living, and the political ought to be out the window. That is what is wrong with our government today, but the council should not be no more one-sided than this AP board is. If the recreational guy comes off, a recreational guy ought to come back on. If the commercial guys comes off, a commercial guy ought to come back on, and that ought to be something that the council really thinks about, because, for us to go back and tell our people that, yes, we believe in what we're doing, we need to believe that.

MR. COX: I will make a motion of something, if you will help me, Jimmy. **The motion would be that we want to see industry have a say in who is appointed to represent us at the council table.** Jimmy, feel free to help me fill that in, but we don't get paid for this. We take time away from family, from work, and, at the end of the day, I think we lose AP members, because they feel like they're not making a difference. We feel like our job here is to support the council, to bring knowledge to the table, and, if we don't have representation at the council level, we feel like what we're doing is a waste of time.

MR. MUNDEN: In my former life with the Division of Marine Fisheries, one of my responsibilities was to coordinate the council nomination process for the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission, and so I would go out, and I would contact industry people, and I would

talk to staff members, to try to find individuals that were interested in serving and who also qualified.

North Carolina is very unique in that the Magnuson-Stevens Act -- My recollection is that the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that the Governor submit the name of, at minimum, three qualified candidates for each vacancy. North Carolina is unique in that the Marine Fisheries Commission is charged, by statute, with providing a list of qualified candidates to the Governor for all nominees, and so, for the North Carolina reps who are sitting around the table, your focus needs to be on the Marine Fisheries Commission, and I don't know that the council can do anything to influence the quality of the nominees or whatever, because I believe the Magnuson-Stevens Act says that the Governor submits the names of the candidates.

After having worked with the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic Councils, worked with our commission for nominees for both the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic, I can assure you that in some states it comes strictly from the Governor's office, just like the Magnuson-Stevens Act says, but, again, North Carolina is very unique, and so, if you are concerned about the individuals whose names are going forward, then the pressure needs to go to the Marine Fisheries Commission, because that's where it starts in North Carolina.

MR. MOSS: Before we go on with that, do we have a second for this, before we continue on? Okay. Jimmy seconds.

MR. LORENZ: For Jack and Jimmy, just something I think I could offer, because I have a bit of experience in governance and things like that, but I might request that you -- To get this through a little better, because I think it would handle better legally, that the AP requests that the industry have an advisory vote in who is appointed, and use that term, and that's just a suggestion of mine, because it allows what was mentioned about candidates come before, but you may get to look at it and say something and it means something, and that's just a suggestion to try, since this is new, an advisory vote.

MR. COX: A couple of things to that, and thank you for that, Bob. I really appreciate that, and you're right that maybe we have some kind of sub-committee or something that goes out in our field and can get something to that effect, but maybe you can help us wordsmith it, and feel free to, but, Red, back to what you were saying about the Marine Fisheries Commission, in all due respect, I don't know when the last time is that you've looked at the commercial representation on the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission, but it's not very well balanced either.

MR. MOSS: Did you want to amend?

MR. COX: The motion reads that we request that industry have a say in who is appointed to represent them at the council table, and I am not the best at wordsmithing a motion, but, sure, Bob, feel free to --

MR. LORENZ: I would suggest that the AP requests that industry have an advisory vote for prospective candidates that are appointed to represent them at the council table, and I think you're good.

MR. COX: Correct, and we're talking recreational and commercial. We are looking for -- We are not trying to single anybody out that's representing us right now, but we're just concerned with moving forward and some of the names on the list that some of the commercial guys have really held close to it, and we thought that some of these guys had a really good opportunity to represent us, people that have put a lot of time and effort into serving on APs and different things, and then, all of a sudden, when you realize that somebody that has no information or no experience in this and, all of a sudden, this is going to be our representative, it just blows us away that this can happen, and that's why we're trying to look for something to help with -- Our Governors don't have time.

They rely on other people, but then, all of a sudden, it gets political, but some way that we can take information from this table and get it to the Governor's office, and that's just as important as other players in the field, such as these big manufacturers and people that are trying to sell products and just trying to get somebody lined up to represent them.

MR. LORENZ: Yes, exactly. You know, right now, Roy Crabtree has the list from every Governor, and has our list for North Carolina, the three, and I don't know how it would be implemented, and for any of us that might be on the list to be excluded or recused, but you could bring that forward right here, just to put the names up, and you could even have a quiet vote on it.

MR. MOSS: Jimmy, are you okay with the changes, as the seconder of this motion, on the record?

MR. HULL: No, because I want to add something to it.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. HULL: I think that fair and balanced representation of the sectors, and so you can't have one sector that has too much representation, and you basically have -- Through a gentleman's agreement, you have two representatives, other than the state-obligated one to the state, but the intent is to have fair and balanced representation on the council for each sector, and, basically, it's in the hands of the Secretary of Commerce, who is going to make this final decision, due to the Magnuson Act that states, as Red said, that they set the three nominees in order, number one, two, and three, but the Secretary of Commerce can choose number three, if he wants to, to obtain fair and balanced, because we know that politics plays heavily at the state level, and so we -- Hopefully the Secretary of Commerce can throw the politics part out of it and go to fair and balanced, and so that's the point I'm just trying to add to it, if we can, so that there is fair and balanced representation for each sector for each state too, and so it needs to be each state needs to have balanced representation for each sector and state, and so I don't know how all that is going to read, but let's read it.

MR. MOSS: Kind of like that.

MR. HULL: Kind of like that. Request that industry have an advisory vote, and so, just to go back to that, having an advisory vote, well, we all submit comment -- Well, I don't know if we all do, but we submit comment in the State of Florida to the Governor's committee that is selecting these people to request for industry, and we sent lots of letters to request our preferred already to the Governor. Then, if the Governor doesn't take that into account, then he selects whoever he

wants, and so I don't know where that -- It goes back to what Red is saying, that the Governor actually does that.

Then, at the council level, and I don't know what the council can do, other than to, through the council, recommend to the Regional Administrator, possibly, that the Secretary of Commerce make sure that this is balanced, and so I think we're getting our point across to them to take a look at it and that we're looking and we're feeling the effects of something that isn't fair and balanced, and we see it, and we want them to know that we see it and they should speak up on our behalf. We're asking the council to, on our behalf, make sure that -- Do whatever they can do to make this fair and balanced.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Before we go too far, Jack, first, back to you. Are you okay with this now?

MR. COX: Sure. **I will read it, just to make sure, and it's to request that industry have an advisory vote for prospective candidates appointed to represent them at the council table. The intent is to have fair and balanced representation for each sector and state.** It seems like we're covering the bases, or I think so.

MR. MOSS: I am assuming, Jimmy, since you added that little bit, that you're good with it?

MR. HULL: I am good with that.

MR. MOSS: Okay, and so we've got a second. Now, I believe, you wanted to say something?

MR. R. FREEMAN: Would there not be some reason to put in there that would be some time -- I mean, yes, I could be fair and balanced and have absolutely no knowledge of the industry, and so do you want some industry experience or --

MR. MOSS: I think they're going to get that, but that's why we wanted to put it to an industry vote, so that you get basically almost a jury of your peers voting on whether or not they feel that you're a qualified candidate.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I probably know as much about this process as anybody in here, and I am not trying to be doom-and-gloom, guys, but this is not going anywhere. It's purely political. The Governors have the say, and my advice would be for each individual in this room, if you feel so strongly about this, then weigh-in to your state representatives and have them bring pressure on the Secretary of Commerce.

I mean, I totally agree with this, but I know how the process works, having been through it, and I've been on here for nine years, and a lot of you guys know that this is my last meeting, and it's very disheartening to work so hard and then see a Governor of two different states, and I'm going to just go ahead and call it out, because -- Georgia and Florida put as their preferred people that do not represent the commercial industry in any shape or form, and it's frightening.

I think a lot of people are frightened, and we should be, because it's not fair and balanced, and it's not even representation. Now, these people may be very good people, and I don't know them, and they may be fair and balanced, but they have no experience in what the people at this table do for a living. They don't. They may know a little bit about it, but they have never ran a commercial

boat, and they have never sold a fish, and so I think your intent is good, and I hate to be doom-and-gloom, but I don't think it's going anywhere.

I think you have more power trying -- If everybody in this room wrote letters and used whatever political contacts they had to let the Secretary of Commerce know that the Governors of these two states, Florida and Georgia, in your opinion, have made a serious mistake, I think that would probably be more helpful than just a motion, because they are never going to give you a vote. That is not how the process works. That's not how Magnuson set it up to work. Your vote is who you voted for as your Governor and then who he appointed in positions.

MR. BUFF: This question is for the council. Why would the council member not be required to participate on the AP board for a minimum of two or three years before they could even go to the council? Then they're going to have some sort of knowledge of what goes on, and they're going to put the effort in to be on the council, because, just like Jack said, some of these people, they don't even have a clue what goes on in here, and, in my opinion, if you don't want to put the time in to participate, why do you want to be on the council board? I think it ought to be a requirement that you had to be on the AP board for three years before you could go to the council.

MR. MOSS: We can make that separate -- I mean, you can put a motion up, and I don't know that there's anything that we can do about it, but you can make a motion for a recommendation once we're done with this one.

MR. BROWN: I fully agree with what Robert said. I mean, he's absolutely right, and I went through the process, and I saw what happened and everything, and I am seeing what's happening now. You know, when I got on this council, I felt pretty good about the mixture of people that were involved and that we had such a great staff and great APs and everything like that, but I don't know if many of you know, but I have a commercial fishing background.

I started commercial fishing when I was a kid, and I owned a longline boat for five or six years, and I longlined swordfish, and I hand-lined king mackerel, and I bottom fished snapper grouper, and then I got into the for-hire business, and I have run some tournament boats and stuff like that, and so I've done a little bit of everything.

My heart really does -- My heart and soul bleeds for the commercial fishing industry, because I know what you're going through. I have been there, and I know what it's like, and I know all the things that you have to go through, and I am really nervous about what's on the horizon, things that I am seeing that is starting to come to fruition with the way the balance of this is going to go, and I am concerned, and, also, another thing that has me concerned that you probably ought to be paying close attention to is this push for aquaculture.

It makes me nervous about what the administration seems to be wanting to push really hard that may take a real hard pinch on the commercial fishing industry in the future. I don't know how that's going to work, but there is a lot of things on the horizon, and I just want you guys to know that also I'm going to be in the position, possibly, in the near future of swinging the gavel, and so I will have a position as the Chairman, but I can only do so much, and I can only listen to both sides and try to do the best I can to make the right decisions, but, if the balance of power is a little bit weighted one way or the other, it may not be so easy.

MR. MOSS: We appreciate that.

MR. COX: After serving on the South Atlantic Council, I've got to say it's a special council. It's been special to me for years, and I think the makeup of this council has been very well representative, and I think that we've operated at a level that's been very professional, and we all have our differences, but, at the end of the day, I think that we all did the best that we could to identify things and keep our industry strong and to look after the resource.

You know, it's just I'm starting to see things that happened in the Gulf, and we should learn from their mistakes, and their representation and their balance, and I see those things coming our way, and that makes me nervous. A lot of hard work has been put into this council, and I would even - - I would carry the motion to another level that says I think this advisory panel should be able to have a vote that goes to the council that somehow gets to the Governor, and so why don't we just add something in the motion that says, when they are selected, the candidates coming forward to represent our industry, why doesn't the AP have a say in it and have a vote in it?

Why don't we amend the motion to say that the AP should have some discussion and a vote on the folks who are going to represent us, and that gives us a chance to talk amongst ourselves, and what's special about what we do here is that we get to share time with each other and what's going on in our states, and we get to know each other, and I think that we could carry some weight into this, and so I would like to add to the motion that the AP have an opportunity to weigh-in, or to vote, on the people that are going to the Governor's office before it gets to the Governor's office, and I don't know how you would say that, but I want to kind of -- I want to give us a little power here. I think we work hard at what we do, and we're spending taxpayer money, and so we should do the very best we could in supporting the council in decisions that are made. Can we add something in to say that the AP has a vote in who the council members are? Let me re-read the motion.

MR. MOSS: Sorry to interrupt you, but the only thing I will say is it's important for us to remember that we're not the only AP, and so, if you're going to say this, you might have to say "the APs".

MR. COX: But we're a Snapper Grouper AP, and so why don't we consider snapper grouper in this? Thank you for that, David. I will include that in there as well. Okay. **Now the motion would read to request that the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel have an advisory vote for prospective candidates appointed to represent them at the council table. The intent is to have fair and balanced representation for each sector and state.** I think that's much better, and it covers a little more --

MR. MOSS: Jimmy, are you good with that?

MR. HULL: I am fine with that.

MR. MOSS: Thank you.

MR. MUNDEN: I want to say, first of all, I cannot and will not support this motion. I think it is totally inconsistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and I will say that I have not looked at the

Magnuson-Stevens Act relative to council appointments in the past six years, but I don't believe it has changed.

Secondly, I think it's very inappropriate for the advisory panel to weigh-in on this. I have absolutely no problem with everyone sitting on the advisory panel to send letters to the Governor's office under their signature, but there is no way, as an AP member, that I would agree to support anyone who is going up for a council appointment as a panel, but, individually, we can do it, but I think we are really on a slippery slope here, number one, and, number two, if the advisory panel says, well, we support this guy because he's a commercial fisherman, we may not get consensus around the table. We may not all agree, and so it's not a whole lot different than what's going on.

Going back to what I said earlier, the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that the Governor submit a minimum of three candidates, and I believe it says qualified individuals, for each vacancy, and I have seen as many six names to go forward, and I'm talking about for North Carolina, and I have seen the Governor's office pare it down to three. Under the North Carolina statute, the Governor's office cannot add names to that list unless he or she goes back to the Marine Fisheries Commission.

Sometimes the lawyers find a way to tweak that, but, basically, under our North Carolina statute, the Marine Fisheries Commission is charged with submitting names to the Governor, and I think that's where the pressure should come from people who are supporting specific individuals or want to see industry representation, and so, again, I will not support this motion.

MR. PHILLIPS: I appreciate the conversation, and, as you all know, I term out, and so this is the last Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel meeting that I will be at, probably, for a while, and I think the council agrees with you. It wants to see balance, but even the council, without being a lawyer or having a lawyer present, we can't lobby, and so I don't think we can tell the Governor that we approve this one or that one.

We, by law, cannot lobby. At best, we can answer questions from the lawmakers, and so -- Just like Robert said, and he's right, but it's concerning. We need balance, and we need the expertise, and sitting at the table is not easy, just like what you all have discussed. It's not easy, the weighing priorities and trying to play inside of the box or play as close to the edge as we can, if we feel like we need to. I think everybody has heard what you all have to say and how you feel, and I believe everybody, at least at the council level, agrees with you, but we can't do this. We literally, legally, can't do this. Thanks.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Charlie.

MR. BUFF: Red, I respect your opinions and what you say, and I don't want this to come across the wrong way, but I can't believe that you would say that after these people sit at this table on their own time, and we come here and basically spend three days of our own time to sit on this board because we care about this industry, and, believe me, it may not go nowhere, and, believe me, it may not have -- It might not go nowhere than where it's at, and I respect your opinion, but these people that sit at this table care about this industry, and there needs to be some balance in this, and there is balance at this table, and there has been balance at the council level up until this coming year, and this is a really, really -- This is something that really concerns a lot of us. I just don't understand that statement, but that's my opinion, and you have yours.

MR. MOSS: We will go to Jack, and then we're going to have to put this to a vote.

MR. COX: This will be my last comment. If the council can vote -- The council votes to put us in the position that we're in, and we should have the same thing in retrospect. We should be able to vote who we think should be on the council, and I understand that we're not allowed to lobby and these things, but we can at least do that. That's not lobbying. That's saying we think these are good representations of our industry. We all pretty much know that we spend a lot of time at this, and everybody at this table here probably knows who is the leaders in our industry, and that's all we're saying. We feel like we should have a say, because what we do when we leave, we take the information from this table and we go out and we talk to our stakeholders, and we try to get these people involved in the process, and that's what, in turn, leads them to help understand what's going on.

MR. HULL: I have seconded this, just because I want what Charlie has said, that they hear us loud and clear, and this is -- Basically, all this is going to do is just let them know that we're very concerned. Do I think we're ever going to get a vote? No, because the Magnuson Act is set up the way it's set up through the Governors through what Red said, and the system is the system.

I don't know if it's worthwhile to change this again and take the vote out and say that we're concerned. Go back to the original comment that we're very concerned, because that's what we are, with the system and that fair and balanced representation is what we're concerned about, and we see a problem with that, and so I don't know -- We've said all of these things, and, at the end of the day, they're going to say, hey, these guys are concerned, and they would like to make sure that it's fair and balanced by interjecting themselves, and so it's going to do what it's going to do. If it gets enough support, and the council already knows it, and you're putting it on the public record, we've probably done all we can do at that point.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Jimmy. I think what we will do is we'll go ahead and vote on this. If you want to, after this, just go on the record and just state exactly what you stated, that is fine, and certainly a number of people here have said that already, and so let's go ahead and -- Since we've already got this up there and we've got a second, let's go ahead and put it to a vote. I will read it one more time.

The motion is the AP requests that the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel have an advisory vote for prospective candidates appointed to represent them at the council table. The intent is to have fair and balanced representation for each sector and state. Those in favor, eleven in favor; those opposed, one opposed; abstain, one abstain. Thank you. Any other Other Business?

MR. ATACK: **I would like to make a motion that the council ask the SSC to go back and look at the wreckfish, all the models and everything and the recent data, and try to establish a new ABC like they are doing for maybe like red snapper, and, if it comes out that they would be in favor and increase the ACL for that fishery.**

MR. MOSS: Okay. Request that the SSC revisit the wreckfish ABC to increase the ACL, and is that the way you want it to read?

MR. ATACK: Yes, I guess so.

MR. MOSS: Do we have a second? Jim Freeman seconds. Is there discussion?

MR. ATACK: The reason I'm asking for this, I guess, hearing everything I'm hearing about the wreckfish and how much the ACL was reduced, and they had all these different models, and they picked the most restrictive model to develop the ACL, and there has been more data and landings since then, and so I think, if they could just look at that and maybe -- Not really have to do a stock assessment, but look at the models and review it and review the recent data and that they could maybe establish a new ABC and ACL for that fishery within like twelve months.

MR. HUDSON: Right now, wreckfish is not in the queue in the next several years, and I'm not sure exactly what we're going to do, but we were going to plateau out. We've been dropping down our ABC and our ACLs equal, and we were dropping down, and so, until we can do another full-blown assessment, there's not much the SSC has to review except what we did five years ago.

MR. MUNDEN: I am concerned about the motion to basically direct the SSC to take action. I would more comfortable if it says request that the SSC revisit the wreckfish ABC to determine if an increase in ACL is feasible.

MR. MOSS: Are you okay with that, Jim?

MR. ATACK: Yes, that sounds good.

MR. MOSS: Mr. Freeman? Okay.

MR. HUDSON: One final thought, like Jim brought up the other day. There were projections that were much higher, but, to be, I guess, precautionary, they went with a lot lower level, but it was double, almost, what we did have, at least in the beginning, and now it's dropping back.

MR. MOSS: Thank you. Any further discussion? Okay. This was nice and easy. Let's put it to a vote. **Request that the SSC revisit the wreckfish ABC to determine whether an increase in the ACL is feasible. Those in favor; those opposed; those abstaining. It passes.** Anything else?

MR. JOHNSON: I emailed everybody a paper that I submitted a couple of years ago and then some -- Do you have that, Myra? Could you pull it up? This is my last meeting, and I will say it's been a real pleasure. You guys have been great. I submitted this after SEDAR 41 was completed, and I still have the same exact fears I had when I walked out of the room that day. I don't know if the people in this room are fully aware that SEDAR 41 is still there, the results are still there, and the results, as we saw earlier today, are red snapper are overfished and still undergoing overfishing, and so how do you solve that problem, under the requirements of Magnuson, with the fisheries closed?

I know what the solution was under a different council makeup nine years ago, and that was to target the area of abundance and say we'll just close the area of abundance and that will fix everything, and I watched that council manipulate that closure down that coast, where it didn't affect them or their constituents, and I sat through those meetings, and that's why I am so

passionate about all of this, because that's where I live, and that's where I make my living, and that's where I provide for my family.

I am not picking on the council, but we continue to kick cans down the road, and they do a great job, but we're really not doing anything to address the real problem, and I hope that there is somebody from CCA or ASA listening in on this conversation, because they're really good about showing up at a meeting with a bunch of people to say that we don't want limited entry and we don't want this and we don't want that, but the group that they represent, they claim, are recreational anglers.

The reason that SEDAR 41, the results are what they are, is based mostly -- Not entirely, but almost entirely on dead discards from recreational anglers. Now, we all know that MRIP is not the best way to do that, and they're going to recalibrate MRIP. In my experience, when they recalibrate MRIP, it is never good. It's always more, you're catching more. It's never that, hey, you guys aren't catching as many fish as we thought.

So, we're going to go through a recalibration, and this is not going to go away. This is going to be dealt with in the future. You guys are going to be dealing with it, and the council is going to be dealing with it, and we still have not found a way to -- We've talked about this reef fish stamp for nine years, and, again, these recreational groups that have such a loud voice and so much political power refuse to do anything about the real issue, and that is their sector needs to be accountable. They need to be held accountable, and they need a reef fish stamp.

If they would work as hard toward some of the goals that they could achieve, like that, we would be years ahead in management, but they refuse to do it, and so my question is why? Why not? If it's all about the resource, all about the fish, then why are we not doing anything, and I am not really talking to this group, and I'm not really even talking to the council. I am talking to anybody in the public that might be listening to this that represents these organizations, because they do have a lot of power, and we're seeing that in the council process, in the selection process, because contributions are made and pressure is brought to bear and promises are made, and that's politics. We all hate it, and I think the motion was a great feel-good thing, but that's all it is, guys, and it's not going to go anywhere. It is what it is.

Where the pressure really needs to be brought to bear is the recreational industry representatives, and they're the only ones that can fix this mess. They're the only ones that can lobby Congress and go to their representatives and say, hey, we're not happy with MRIP, and we need to be accountable and we need to know how many people are actually going out into the ocean that intend to catch a reef fish and when they're going.

You know, I just got an email today, and my son went duck hunting this year. He went and bought a duck stamp, and literally I got one on my phone, a survey from the FWC, and how hard is that? They do it for ducks, and they're not going to ask him how many wood ducks or how many pintails or what -- They're just going to ask him how many times he went in the field, and that kind of information would be so valuable, but, again, for some reason, we refuse to do it, and I just don't understand that.

I have been here for nine years, and it has cost me a lot of money, and my wife lets me know that, and I've been away from my home and my family and I've missed stuff because of this, but I felt

so strongly that I could make a difference, and, if I sound frustrated, I am, because I've been here for nine years, and I don't think that I have done anything, and it's very disheartening, and I think that the power players in this whole process are not in this room. They are not here, but they're the ones that are really making things work in the back, and they're the ones that are keeping some of these ideas from going forth.

Like I said the other day, limited entry is not a hill for me to die on. I am not an exclusionary person. I'm a free market-guy, but has somebody got a better idea? The reason I came up with that was SEDAR 41, and I thought, oh my gosh, if they start closing down the ocean, they should at least let commercial guys, who are accountable, they should at least let for-hire guys, who are accountable, continue to make a living.

We are not the problem. Can anybody in this room tell me how many recreational anglers there are in the Southeast? We don't even know, but we daggone know how many federally-permitted charter boats there are, and we know how many federally-permitted commercial boats there are, and, you know what, I'm frustrated. This south Florida issue, I know that will be an act of Congress, and I understand that. Nothing is going to happen. They're not going to do anything, and so, ten years from now, we'll have people in south Florida holding up pictures of warsaw groupers that they caught in state waters. Heck, they even tried to get an ESA listing on warsaw a few years ago, because they are so endangered, but they are still killing them in south Florida. How much sense does that make? It makes zero sense.

I mean, if we're not willing -- If our political representatives and the people in the background who have so much power and control -- If they're not willing to try to fix this problem, my question to them is what do they want? What do they think is going to happen here? We have Magnuson-Stevens that we have to adhere to, and SEDAR 41, and I am not a prophet, but SEDAR 41 is going to bite us if we don't do something, and we can't just ignore it.

I don't agree with it. I mean, when you've got biomass going this way and the stock assessment says it should be going this way, something ain't right, and the council is like, well, we don't have a high degree of confidence. Well, no kidding. Nobody does, but we haven't done anything to fix those problems, and I encourage this group to at least keep whatever pressure that you can. Hold their feet to the fire, and don't be scared to call it out for what it is. I think that sometimes we've been too nice, and I think we need to call out what's going on here, and what's going on is we have recreational sector representatives that really don't want to solve the problem, apparently, because, if they did, they would do something.

That's all I have. Like I said, it's been a real pleasure being on the AP, and I love the staff here, I really do, and I am going to miss you all, but it's disheartening to work so hard. You know, I've worked hard at this and a lot of things that I've worked in my life, and I've been pretty successful, but this is one thing that I just couldn't get. I couldn't -- It's like I saw Gregg with a bandage on his head, and I said, that's how I should look, because I feel like I'm beating my head against the wall, because it's just like nothing is happening. We're still talking about the same thing today that we were nine years ago, and we've made all these motions and we've told the council that we want this and we want that, and nothing has happened. Thank you.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Robert, and certainly thank you, above all else, for your passion and dedication to the panel and the council. On a personal note, thank you for putting your arm around

me my first panel meeting and introducing yourself and kind of helping me along, and so certainly thank you from me, and thank you on behalf of all the AP members, and I'm sure the council as well, and, like I said, above all else, thank you for your passion and your dedication and everything that you've done so far. I know that you are frustrated, and I'm sure you will continue to be frustrated, but know that we will -- I am sure that we will all continue to fight the fight in your absence, and I guess in your honor, and so thank you once again.

MR. COX: Robert, I want to say thank you as well. You have always been very informative, and you've always been fair, and I feel like you've done a good job, and I hope you stay involved in some form or fashion. I would certainly like to say that, as a former council member, that I think this AP makes a difference, and I think it's important. If I didn't, I wouldn't be here, and I wanted to stay involved in the process, and I believe in the system that we have, and I believe in the people, and, as a council member, we read the notes from the AP meetings, and we incorporated those into our votes, and it was not just something that was a waste of time.

MR. HULL: Well said, and job well done, and we're going to miss you. I remember that you told me, when I came on to this AP, Jimmy, you couldn't drag me away from this AP, and I'm going to be here to try to do what I can do, and I agree with you, and a round of applause to you. Thank you so much, Robert. (Applause)

MR. MOSS: One more thing from me, too. Keep in mind that I am saying thank you genuinely from the bottom of my heart, not only as a recreational fisherman, but as a south Florida recreational fisherman as well.

MR. LORENZ: Just a quick note, Robert. Thank you for all the discussions we've had, which were very frank going back and forth, and I am a recreational representative, and I am purely a recreational representative, and I have been a member of CCA North Carolina. I have been, and I have even been on their board, and I am no longer on it, to be able to, I feel, do some better work, and I just wanted to let you know that as a representative here and certainly my commitment -- I am totally dedicated to get the recreational anglers counted and for us to do what's right for everybody, and you can hold me accountable for that. You have my number and email, and, anyone here, hit me any time. I think this group will see some things that I would like to bring forward to get us counted and get a license or stamp.

MR. MANIGAULT: **I think it's my second time actually meeting you, but I see that you're a wealth of knowledge and a great person, and we had this discussion out in the lobby earlier this morning, and, with all the wonderful things being said about you, I am totally behind that as a for-hire/recreational person, and, at this time, I may not introduce this right, or I think this may be the right time for me to make a motion that we address the recreational sector and holding them accountable or whatever we need to do to get them to buy a reef permit.**

Like I said earlier, there was a time that we didn't have to have saltwater licenses. People mumbled and grumbled, but that's just the way the cookie crumbled, and I believe that, if we push forward and put this at the top of our agenda, they will fall in line if they want to catch those reef fish and understand what we're trying to do, in a nutshell, and so hopefully all of us are on the same sheet of music with that, and I need your support, and I would love your support, and I know I probably have your support, and so I thank you.

MR. MOSS: Are you okay with the way it's written up there so far?

MR. COX: I appreciate that, Gary. This whole meeting, you have really pushed that agenda on your side, and I think that's something that we all, in the vision amendment, were looking for from the recreational side, and I think -- I just want you to clarify something. As we're looking for a reef stamp or some way for the recreational community to be more accountable, are you also speaking in terms of limited entry support for the for-hire sector?

MR. MANIGAULT: To be completely honest, I am not that well-versed.

MR. COX: I will talk to you about it later. It might be something you would be interested in, but, while I have the mic, I would like to say that there are two other people that I would like to recognize.

MR. MANIGAULT: Could you help me with that like right now? Can we talk about it right now? Do we have the time to talk about it right now?

MR. MOSS: Let's finish up this motion right now. First of all, do we have a second on this motion? Then I will turn it back to you, Jack. Okay. We've got a few seconds. I kind of figured that was going to work that way.

MR. COX: I just wanted to take a minute and let folks know how much we appreciate Michelle Duval and her work and what's she's done for us. (Applause)

She is going to be truly missed. She is somebody that was extremely passionate about what she did for us and worked as hard as I think anybody has ever worked at it, and she's been listening to our meeting the whole time, and she's been texting many of us here, and I know it's all she can do not to be at the mic, but just what an incredible person she is, and Charlie here behind us, who has run his course, and he's going to be taking some time off, and I think we should give him an applause as well. (Applause)

MR. HUDSON: I guess it's discussion, since it was seconded, but shouldn't that read a snapper grouper stamp, because it might be confusing with the reef fish designation from the Gulf Council.

MR. MOSS: Yes, and that's up to Gary and any number of the people who put the second on the table.

MR. HULL: I would like to see those that made this motion actually add that it be a snapper grouper stamp or permit, if they would do that.

MR. MOSS: I think one of the things that we could do to accomplish that -- I was just going to say put "stamp" in quotes and it could be defined later, but certainly have the council start to look in that direction. I know, as Robert said, we've run up this hill a few times already, but it's certainly up to you, Gary. If you're okay with the way it's phrased, then we'll call Jack as the person who seconded it, and are you okay with the way it's phrased now? Okay.

MR. MANIGAULT: Has anybody else got anything that they suggest that we add?

MR. LORENZ: Just one small comment, and I'm certainly going to support this, and we have for many times, but to remember the one thing that's missing and the difficult thing for some of us to do, Gary, that are in the recreational sector is I think everybody is going to know that -- We're just going to put our opinion again that we want this, but the issue that is out there, that I need to see, that we need to see, so we can get it done -- As Robert said, go out there and lobby and get this done, is what is the flow chart? What needs to be done to implement this?

I have touched on it yesterday, and, yes, obviously, it would be in the Southeast office, but, yes, it's going to be with the NMFS office, and, yes, it's got to go up, probably, to the Secretary of Commerce, and so, to get it done, I am not sure what all is needed to put the infrastructure in place, and that is the flow of how that work goes, to get the people and the money to put this up, because, in order to get the permit, there is going to have to be people to administer it and that sort of thing, and we are missing that.

Here again, we're asking for the work to be done, but I think what's getting stuck is -- I would love to have a checklist of the things that need to be done to get this done, to get this finished, and I touched on it yesterday. Does that mean that some of us go into the Secretary of Commerce's office and start there? Do we start with our politicians? I just wanted to make that comment that this is the goal, but we don't have the things we have to check off the list to get this done.

DR. COLLIER: We are working on this exact thing through Amendment 46. We are going through the amendment process to develop a private recreational permit, and that's what we're calling it. It was originally a stamp, but, based on recommendations from the Southeast Regional Office, it would be called a permit, and so we are currently working on this. It's coming back to the council at the June meeting and then potentially going out for scoping shortly thereafter, or, as we develop it more, it's going to be going forward. The other side that we're going to be working on with Amendment 46 is the reporting side for the private recreational fishery.

MR. BUFF: Robert, Jack had to go out for just a second, and why don't you fill Gary in on the limited entry? You would be the best one.

MR. MOSS: Hold on. Let's get through this one first, and then we can bring that to the table. Any other comment on this particular motion? All right. Let's go ahead and put it to a vote.
Recommend that the council work to address recreational sector accountability via a snapper grouper stamp or permit. Those in favor. It passes unanimously.

MR. JOHNSON: Gary, the whole reason that came up, to me, was, like I said, I was here when they were kicking Amendment 17A around, which was a closure of all waters from eighty feet out to 300 feet to bottom fishing. It was a closure, no fishing, year-round, until whenever, until red snapper were rebuilt.

When I saw the results of 41, which I was involved in, I said, what the heck? What am I going to do, because I heard murmurs about a lot of those discards were from northeast Florida, and so I thought, well, how can I continue to make a living and why is it, in any universe, fair for the commercial sector and the for-hire sector that are going to do all this reporting and do all these other things -- Why should we be swept into the big arms of this sector that we don't really know what they're doing?

I thought, okay, well, maybe we could go to some kind of limited entry, or just put a moratorium. Say, okay, if you don't have a permit, a federal permit, for for-hire, then, if you didn't have it during this date, then you can't get one, and the reason being, if they did have an area closure and make an exception for commercial and for-hire vessels, under the current system, every recreational angler could send twenty-five dollars to the St. Petersburg office and get a for-hire permit, which they would.

Your fleet, which has been pretty level over the last I don't know how many years, because it's a tough industry, and people come and go. You've got some people, like Mark and myself, that have been in it -- I've been in it since 1980. All of a sudden, that number would probably change dramatically, because, like I said, everybody that had twenty-five-bucks could -- It's an open-access fishery, and I don't know if you realize that. Our permits aren't even numbered. They're not.

A snapper grouper permit, a commercial permit, has got a number associated with it. You have catch history, and they know how long you've had that permit and a lot of things. We don't do that for the for-hire industry, and that was the only reason -- It was never to exclude anybody, and everybody likes to talk about what's going on in the Gulf. Well, you know, the Gulf could be a good tool for us to learn from. You could set up any program over here, taking into account all the issues that happened in the Gulf.

You could set it up in a way that allowed for new entrants and allowed for historical participation and people that had been the captain of a boat, but they didn't own a boat, and their dream was one day to have their own boat. There's a lot of ways that limited entry could be set up, but we don't even want to have that conversation at the council level, because it's very political, because a lot of people -- I don't know if they see it as a job-killer, but that never was my intent. My intent was never to exclude, but my intent was just to make sure that, under some giant area closure, I would still be able to make a living. It's that simple. It wasn't a complicated thing, and it wasn't, to me, a monetary thing.

I have a commercial vessel that is not dually-permitted, and I intentionally did not put a for-hire permit on that commercial boat. If I was in it for the money, why would I have not put a for-hire permit on it? That was not the intent, and it's been misrepresented, and it's still like barely alive, and I don't think the council is going to move forward with it. I wish they would at least take it out to the public and listen to for-hire operators and not just the loud noise in the room, and so I'm not sure what is going to happen with it. They keep requesting white papers and all these other things, but, anyway, that's what limited entry is, basically.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I just wanted to follow-up with what Robert is saying. The council has been considering limited entry in the for-hire. It originally was for all three for-hire permits that they were considering it, and now they're just considering it for snapper grouper. It's on the council's agenda for the June meeting, and, yes, they are going to discuss it again, and it's on their agenda for them to be able to vote to send it out for scoping, and so hopefully, if that's what the council wants to do, that will happen this summer.

MR. COX: Could you remind me again how many for-hire permits are there out there, Brian? Do you know?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I cannot give you that answer off the top of my head. I was the staff member who originally was working on this when we were looking across all of them, but then, in that time, I am now in the position that I am now as the Deputy Executive Director for Management, and that has gone -- John Hadley is our staff member on that, and so I haven't worked on that amendment for two years.

MR. COX: Is it 1,400 or 1,500?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I don't want to hazard a guess, because I don't want to say something incorrectly.

MS. BROUWER: I am going to look that up real quick.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have that number. I think it's 1,609, as of January of this year, and so there might be a more updated number.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's 1,639, and most of those are -- Over a thousand are in Florida, homeported in Florida.

MR. COX: Could I make a motion?

MR. MOSS: Sure.

MR. COX: **Could I make a motion that the council continue to look at limited entry for the for-hire snapper grouper sector and ask the council to continue to work on this at their June meeting or vote on it?**

MR. MOSS: We will give Myra a second to type it up, and then we'll ask for a second. Are you okay with the way it's written, Jack? The AP requests that the council continue to consider limited entry for the for-hire sector in the snapper grouper fishery. Do we have a second? We will go with Vincent for a second. Is there discussion? I think we've already discussed it, but go ahead, Robert.

MR. JOHNSON: Again, we have made this motion numerous times. I mean, the council knows how we feel, but they're not listening to the AP on this one, but I appreciate it, Jack, I really do.

MR. COX: Robert, it gives us an opportunity to talk about it, and, like I said again, what happens here, I feel like we support the council, because they lean on us sometimes. We are a baby council is what we are, and I think they lean on us sometimes for advice and support, and I feel like we're an advisory panel to the council, and that's all.

MR. MOSS: That's exactly the intent of what it is that we do, and I understand your frustrations, Robert, but hopefully, the more we say it and the more we post it on there, maybe one day somebody will listen. I keep thinking that with my kid, anyway. All right. Any more discussion on this motion? All right. Let's go ahead and put it to a vote. **The AP requests that the council**

continue to consider limited entry for the for-hire sector in the snapper grouper fishery. Those in favor. It passes unanimous, again.

MR. ATACK: I would like the AP to weigh-in on this. I know Robert talked about Amendment 41 a little while ago and red snapper, and I know we have these mini-seasons we're looking at, and I know that the bycatch mortality was pretty much consuming all the ACL in the past, and so I am for taking some red snapper take, and, with these mini-seasons, I'm not sure we're really doing it the most economical or the best for the fishery.

Does the AP prefer these little mini-seasons, or would you prefer a bycatch in the fishery? In other words, like one fish per trip, so that, instead of throwing all the red snapper back year-round that we're now doing, versus these three weekends, and can we have a certain number of months per year where the fish could be harvested in a bycatch mode?

I would like to hear what the other members feel about that from the AP, so we could maybe recommend to the council that, yes, we want to continue with these mini-seasons or do we want to get more bang for our buck versus the targeted season, targeting these mini-seasons, versus just allowing some bycatch throughout the year? I think that's going to be better for the fishery if we allow some bycatch through part of the year.

MR. BUFF: I am kind of like with Robert on this, too. How do we ever get to where we need to go if, the more it recovers, the more interaction and the more bycatch and the more discards? That seems to me like that completely works against itself, and so, the more the fishery recovers, the more we catch, and the more we throw back, and so my question to somebody would be how do we get beyond that? Is there an answer for that, or are we just going to keep kicking the can, as Robert calls it?

MR. HULL: I think the council has been saying the same thing we are. I think they're trying to figure out a way to open up the red snapper fishery with what's been dealt to them, which is an ACL with more discards than the ACL, and they have taken steps. The only reason we've got what we got is because they stepped outside the box and did something, and so, until the science catches up with the stock, I don't see how you could have anything more than a mini-season, because of the amount of fish that they're giving us.

Then the amount of estimated effort on the recreational side, because of all of the reasons we just said, that the effort estimate is so huge that you're -- Anyway, I don't know how they could do it. I think if they could do it that they would have already done that, but I'm all for them fixing it, and it needs to be fixed, but it all starts with the science and what the SSC recommends as an ACL to them to work with.

MR. ATACK: Yes, and I guess what I'm saying is say we have 60,000 fish that we're allotting for this mini-season, and we could just take those 60,000 fish in a year, versus putting 60,000 fish on top of the year. I mean, right now, we've got this bycatch throughout the year, and all of it's going back, and, if we allow a one-fish per boat, or something like that, until we hit those 60,000, and they could run the numbers on it, then you're not putting mortality on top of mortality, which affects the rebuilding plan for the red snapper, and so, to me, we can't keep any fish year-round, and we're throwing them all back, and then, all of a sudden, we're going to have a directed fishery and the numbers go through the roof like they did a couple of years ago, and that's going to happen

this summer, versus allowing -- I agree with allowing some keep, but, if we allow the keep throughout the year or through the summer, then you're not directing more mortality against this fishery and affecting the rebuilding plan.

MR. MOSS: I think, and I will come to you in a second, Robert, but, to go back to you, Jim, I think that what Jimmy is saying is the issue is, once you have any kind of allowable keep, you almost have -- Especially when it comes to red snapper, and I know certainly down in Florida, you almost have a directed fishery the second you have any allowable keep, and that's what happened even during the mini-season.

As bad as the weather was, everybody wanted to go out during those mini-seasons, and whatever the ACL was for those little mini-seasons, the plan was that it was probably going to be hit in just those -- Well, it was supposed to be just the one three-day season, and then, because the weather was so bad, they expanded it, but I understand what you're saying, and I agree with you, and it would be nice to have sort of an allowable, if you want to call it bycatch, throughout the year, but the tough part is, the second you open it -- I know, recreationally, down by me, the second they're allowed to keep one, everybody is going to be leaving port to go catch their one.

MR. LORENZ: Jim, I am trying to think about this too, and I really would like to offer some kind of proposal in the future, but where my head is going is that this -- There is the moral hazard issue of if you allow bycatch that it will just become a catch that we're allowed, but some type of control. We're getting into this situation where, the bigger the population is, and as there is a certain amount of population, and it's a rather aggressive fish that is close to where we all fish, it is increasing our interaction, and so I'm of the thinking of is there some way to get some kind of season or allowance for recreational catch and take and commercial catch and take with a segment of the population that's very large.

I see, from the science, that they want this population to be from say zero to forty-eight years old, but there may be a belly of that population that is the amount of fish that are most commonly interacted with, and so the most common way I can think of it would be would there be a possibility of allowing a take within a slot limit commercially or recreationally, to thin a section of the population, yet still allow that diverse age of those fish to be out there in the ocean, and so those are my thoughts, but that's rather complex thinking that you have to talk to the scientists about.

MR. MOSS: Thank you for that, Bob, and that's probably not a bad idea. I don't know if it's something we could make a motion about, or if anybody wants to.

MR. ATTACK: My question to the AP is would you rather have a mini-season, or would you rather have a one-fish -- For the mini-season, you're going to have one per person, right? You could have four or five or six per boatload, or would you rather have a longer season than three weekends, where it's one fish per boat, annually as bycatch, and so what would the AP prefer?

MR. COX: I know, for the commercial sector, I think I can speak for the guys that I've talked to, that we would like to have a bycatch fishery rather than a season fishery. I think it would considerably help with discards to have a one fish per -- I don't know, but just something that would allow us, throughout the year, to have those fish.

MR. HULL: I would rather have a season fishery, because there is such a small amount to begin with, and it would just be better off for our area to have a season with these, and, again, it all goes back to this tiny amount of harvest that we're dealing with, and it's just tiny for everybody, recreational and commercial, and so it's just a horrible situation they've got us put in.

MR. COX: To your point, I respect that, and I understand, because it's something you guys can pretty much target. A lot of times of the year, those fish are just spotty for us, and we just pick them up as we're fishing the deep water, 200 or 300 or 400 feet, and so it would -- It's that regional difference thing. You and I are on both ends of the deal here.

MR. R. FREEMAN: What I understand about having a slot limit is I think you would have an encouragement for people to fish them, which is going to lead to more release of fish, and so I think it would increase the pressure on the resource.

MR. MOSS: Thank you for that. Unless we have any more discussion on that, one other thing that was brought up that Myra asked me to go over, and I will just go ahead and read it. During the March 2018 council meeting, a brief discussion took place regarding fishermen off of North Carolina who use spearfishing gear and those using hook-and-line increasingly experiencing conflict. Fishermen who have drawn attention to the issue cited concern over gear efficiency and resource conservation. The council requests the AP's input on this topic. I know, Jack, you and I were talking about just that last night. The floor is open.

MR. COX: Every situation is different in every state, and I am a spear fisherman. I'm a diver, and I enjoy it. The concern I have, and I don't know that there's a whole lot that we can do here, other than continue to talk about it. At some point, I think the council may have to make some decisions on this, and I will just tell you what's going on.

Free diving, where divers can swim down without a breathing apparatus and hold their breath and go down seventy-five or eighty or a hundred feet, is becoming increasingly popular, and I know, in my area, there is classes being given on it, and, when these guys do that, they are doing that -- Most of them are doing that to learn how to swim down and shoot fish, and you can become really effective at shooting fish when you don't have bubbles coming out of your mouth.

It's another form of catch method that's going to take a toll on the resource, and we have special places that are in forty or fifty or sixty feet of water off of North Carolina that hold a lot of gag grouper, and, when I'm out fishing, I'm starting to see an increased number of boats that are out participating in this fishery, and my concern is that we're going to take harvest in an unconventional way that is going to take a toll on the resource.

That's really all I have to say. I'm aware of it, and I don't know how to handle it or what we do about it, other than the fact that we make ourselves knowledgeable about what's going on. The other thing is that, when you're fishing with conventional fishing gear, like I said about the amberjacks, sometimes they just don't bite, and I think it's a great thing that Mother Nature does that limits our harvest, and there is another buffer in the fishery that protects the resource. Sometimes they bite and sometimes they don't. We always want them to bite, but sometimes they don't, and that's not a bad thing.

When you scuba dive, you corner them and you shoot them in their house, and that's it. You swim in somebody's house with a gun, a fish, and you shoot them, and I don't know how I feel about that. It's something that's allowed, and it's legal, but when there's a commercial boat and he's out there and he's set up on a reef and he's bandit fishing and some of those fish come off on the way up, that's another buffer in the program that protects the resource, or some of them don't bite, but then, when a scuba-diving boat comes up there and he works that same ledge, it irritates the hell out of our hook-and-line guys, and they don't like it, and they want us to make it to where it's not legal. I don't think we can do that, but at least we can have this conversation and be aware of it and wrap our heads around what can we do to prevent this thing from getting so big that it takes a toll on the resource.

MR. MOSS: Thank you for that, and, yes, I'm one of those guys, and I see the effect that it has on south Florida. As you said, it's becoming increasing popular, certainly in the Keys and south Florida and all over, and, as you and I had discussed last night, it's kind of a 100-percent kill fishery. Now, there is no guarantee when you dive down that something is going to be there, but there is and if it's in range, you shoot it, and you ain't losing it, for the most part.

MR. JOHNSON: I mean, this has been talked about a lot, and I just think we have to be -- I don't dive, and I will just go ahead and throw that out there, but I think we have to be careful when we start choosing which gear we think should be able to harvest fish, as long as people are staying in the ACL and staying within the limits. I mean, I've got some friends that are commercial spear fishermen, and they would tell you that we don't have any discard mortality and we don't kill red snapper, and our discard mortality on red snapper is zero, and we don't kill any warsaw groupers and we don't kill any speckled hinds. They will use that argument.

I know that, inshore, on these SMZs, that's something that states can do to keep spearfishing down, but I don't know, Jack. I mean, I know that the guys that are good at it, they're really good at it, and, if you probably looked at landings, and I'm sure somebody can. I am not requesting that, but I'm sure they could look at landings and see that some of the larger landings on gag grouper are coming from dive boats. They are not being harvested with bandits, and there may be some kind of regulatory thing you could do to slow that down, but what we don't know if we have no idea how many recreational anglers are shooting fish, and I do think that has increased a hundredfold in the last fifteen years.

Every inshore wreck off of St. Augustine in the summertime is going to have somebody diving on it, and it doesn't matter if you're there fishing either, and they're going to come right on there and dive, and so the conflict has always been there, but there's always going to be bad behavior, and you just have to take that for what it is, but what are you trying to accomplish? Do you want like a motion to restrict it, or I'm just curious.

MR. COX: If you're out there with a charter, and you're fishing and you're on a wreck or a reef, and I come over there with a commercial boat with six divers on it and plop over the side of that boat that you're set up on and I go under there and start shooting the fish that you're fishing for, how would you feel?

MR. JOHNSON: Again, I wouldn't be happy, but there is really nothing that I can do. I mean, I have had them come up there and run the dive flag up and tell me that I had to move because

they're diving, and I was already there. I get what you're saying, but I don't know how you would address that through a regulatory measure.

MR. COX: Well, I didn't start the conversation. I think it was started as a group, and this is not my deal. I am a diver, and I'm going to spearfish, and I'm going to shoot some fish this year, but I have ethics, and I'm not going to do that, but it's being done to some of our fishermen, and they don't like it, and it's going to cause problems on the water.

I buy fish from dive boats, and Chris does too, and we depend on those guys that can go down and shoot hogfish and other fish that we can't catch with conventional hook-and-line, and it's an important thing, and I'm not trying to do away with spearfishing. That's not the intent here. The intent here, I think, is to just have discussion that there is another method of take in our fishery that is highly effective, and it's something that we need to discuss and be aware of before the problem gets so big that we don't know what to do with it.

The council doesn't have a lot of time to have conversations that we have like this, and usually they're behind the eight-ball when there's a problem, and so all we're doing is discussing it, and I'm not trying to put something in motion and make something happen. I know in some of our fisheries, like trap fisheries or buoy or any kind of fishery that we have, if we see something getting bigger than we can handle, we slow it down, or we put a moratorium on it with permits, or we put endorsements on things. It's just something that may have to be considered in the future. We've just got it in front of us, and we don't want to get behind it, and that's all.

MR. ATACK: I understand what Jack is saying. I'm a diver, and I've been doing it for a long time, and we are selective, and we don't shoot red snapper, and so there is no discard there. All the fish that you see down there, you generally can't spear. Some are a little skittish, and some will get away, and some won't get away, but I do understand the -- If you're looking at a gear type, we have a limit on the number of black sea bass pots we have, and I think we exceeded the ACLs on the hog snapper a few years ago, based on what they are now, because you can have more of that gear type move in and out-fish an area.

I think the hogfish population has dropped, prior to an ACL in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, and now we've got a lower ACL, and that will help protect that, but I think, if enough commercial divers come into an area, they can -- It can exceed the capacity of the resource, yes, and so I understand what you're saying, and maybe down the road that might need to happen, but, also, by the time we see things or hear things or do things, we get behind the eight-ball.

It takes at least two years to do anything, and that's kind of what happened with the hog snapper. It took more than a few years, and we were asking for minimum size limits, because the commercial divers are out there shooting twelve-inch hogfish and just depleting some of the spawning stock before it could really spawn that much, and so it's been hammered.

MR. COX: So maybe we're just trying to figure out that universe and how big is our diving community and what is their take on our resource, and so maybe a simple motion to say, hey, if we're looking at a recreational stamp, why don't we carry it just a little bit further and try to identify whether they're divers or hook-and-line fishermen, because there is not a lot of -- You know what I'm saying?

Either they're hook-and-line fishing or they're diving, and what else would they be doing, and so it would be nice to know that universe, so, if we do have to get to a point that we have to do something, that we can identify it. I will also say that, when I'm spearfishing, I do have discards. I am not 100 percent, and I wish I could be, but sometimes there's that fish that's out of range, and I shoot him, and I feel bad, because I know he's going to probably die, and I don't get that fish.

MR. ATACK: Yes, and I agree with that. I mean, I've been asking for that for years, but, if we do something like that on the recreational side -- You know, how many of those recreational snapper grouper fishermen are actually spearfishing? When you go into these assessments or you're trying to count what's been landed, how many are participating in that fishery with a spear gun? I think you really need to know that.

On the commercial side, I think you know that, because we fill out the logbook, and you're writing down spear or hook-and-line. You are putting down your gear type, but, on the recreational side, if we don't do that when we set this up, we would be missing a good dataset, and I think we need to know.

MR. MOSS: Do I hear a motion?

MR. COX: I would make a motion, and I will need some help with this. **The motion would be, when we go to a recreational fishing stamp, that we have a way to identify whether that fisherman is a hook-and-line fisherman or a spear fisherman.** Just something as simple as that, and they could do that when -- They may be both, and our MyFishCount app, and I don't know if it's on there, where they could identify how they're harvesting, whether they are spearfishing or whether they are hook-and-line fishing, but that would be something they could add on there as well.

MR. MOSS: Yes, there on the -- Chip, go ahead.

DR. COLLIER: That is on there, if you're primarily diving, if you're primarily bottom fishing, or if you're primarily trolling. Those are the gears that we have listed right now.

MR. MOSS: All right, and so we'll read the motion as it is and see if there's a second. Request that the council consider a way to identify recreational use of spearfishing gear. Do we have a second? Jim seconds. Any more discussion on this one? All right. Then we'll put it to a vote. I will read it one more time. **Request that the council consider a way to identify recreational use of spearfishing gear. All those in favor. It passes unanimous.**

MR. MANIGAULT: I was just getting some clarity from Robert in regard to rules of the road when it comes down to diving. If we have to stay away a certain distance from the divers once they put their flags down, shouldn't there be something in place that once a commercial fishing boat or for-hire boat is already there before a diver that they should stay a certain distance away from the actual commercial fishing or for-hire vessel also, too, versus just gentlemen's rules?

MR. COX: I hear you, and I would love to do that, but I don't know how to do that, to enforce it. I don't know. I mean, in a perfect world, we would. We would say that you have to stay so many feet -- I know, in the scuba-diving world, when you put a dive flag up, there is a rule, and the regulation is a certain -- But it should also be that if a commercial fishing boat is out there. He

ought to be able to put his flag up and say, hey, stay this far away from me. I think one is as fair as it is for the other one. The scuba-diving boat, it's done so that when the divers come up and they come away from the vessel that they're not hurt. It's to protect life.

MR. JOHNSON: I mean, what we're trying to do here is regulate good behavior, and that's impossible to do, and I would venture to say, Jack, that the experiences you have are like tenfold in the State of Florida, especially in south Florida, where everybody is constricted to that one little area. I mean, there are people on top of people down there, and so we just all have to get along and be respectful of one another, and I don't think we can have a motion to that effect.

MR. COX: We're kind of getting caught up in the weeds on this. I think the conversation started because a lot of our snapper grouper guys are saying, hey, there is dive boats that are coming out here, and they used to not dive in a hundred feet of water, or 150 feet of water, and spearfish, but technology is changing. There is different mixed gasses now, and so the guys are getting irritated, and so, if there's something that the council can do to prevent these conflicts on the water, then I think that we're supposed to be sitting here trying to figure out what we can do to prevent gear conflict interests, and that's the conversation, and I really don't know. It's going to take more than what I can figure out.

MR. MOSS: I think the conversation is twofold. I think it's exactly what you said, that there has been, as it reads in here, I guess conflict in North Carolina, where you have exactly like you said, divers pulling right up on boats and things like that, and I think it's also just to be aware that this is now a much larger user group than it was five or ten years ago, and, as you stated earlier, Jack, let's just be aware. There's probably not much we can do about it now, and not much that we should do about it right now, but it's another thing to be aware of.

MR. BUFF: Probably about fifteen years ago, I had the opportunity to run a headboat for a while, and the dive boat, even in our area, it's like you're on this big tank that won't run but so fast, and it's like the dive boat overrides the fishing boat, in most instances, and I think this is where we're getting at. You could be there fishing, and even the guy right down the dock, he just rolls right up where you're at, and you're fifteen miles from going anywhere, and he throws his flag up and you're just supposed to get up and leave.

I don't know where all that came from, but it's like the dive boat overrides the fishing boat. If we pulled up on them, we're in trouble, and I understand what everybody is saying, but that's kind of my take of it. You guys will be -- It happens more than you think. They roll up there and throw their flag out, and you're supposed to just get up and go home, and sometimes there is a lot of controversy over that.

MR. MOSS: I get it, and, trust me, I understand your frustration, and, like Robert said, I think we're kind of talking about policing morality here, which is something obviously we can't do, and it's probably a slippery slope too, but, again, I think it was just something to table and discuss and just have it out there and just kind of an air of awareness.

MR. ATACK: I would like to make a motion, I guess.

MR. MOSS: Go ahead.

MR. ATACK: **I would like to make a motion for the council to consider creating a gear endorsement for spearfishing.**

MR. MOSS: Does the motion right above encompass what it is that you're trying to do?

MR. ATACK: This is for commercial. It's kind of like the black sea bass pot endorsement or the longline endorsement, and this would be a spearfishing endorsement for the snapper grouper fishery.

MR. MOSS: All right. I will read it, and then we'll see if we have a second. Request that the council consider creating a gear endorsement for spearfishing for the commercial sector. Is that the way you want it to read?

MR. ATACK: Yes.

MR. MOSS: Do we have a second?

MR. COX: Sure, I will second it, and I would just like to have a quick discussion on the motion.

MR. MOSS: Yes, absolutely.

MR. COX: So our thinking here is, being that we both are spear fishermen, and we see the popularity of this increasing, that we think that we need to maybe consider a gear endorsement to slow down the process, so we can control it, because we see it growing at a lot faster rate than a lot of other people do, being that we're engaged in it.

MR. MOSS: You are asking me or just defining that?

MR. COX: I am just having a discussion on the motion. I am seconding the motion, and, Jim, did you want to have any discussion on it before it goes to a vote?

MR. MOSS: Yes, we'll open discussion, now that it's got a second. Is there any more discussion on it?

MR. HULL: I am open to recommending that the council consider a lot of things, and so I would support this, to get some more information, like everybody wants. Sure.

MR. MOSS: Any more discussion on this one?

MR. ATACK: Not really. The concern is the overcapacity, and so, if we do the endorsement, then we can maybe not get behind the eight-ball down the road on this.

MR. MUNDEN: Sorry I missed part of the discussion here, but what is the intent of this, if this is not a limited gear endorsement? I mean, is this just to track the number of people, or are you trying to limit the number of fishermen, because Jack and Jim said there are more people getting into the fishery, and so straighten me out on that.

MR. ATACK: I think it's analogous to the bully gear thing, like in Florida with the spiny lobster, where they're seeing a lot of people, they thought, getting into the bully gear thing, and so they wanted an endorsement or a tracking, so that, if it looks like -- They could put like a limit on it, and so I'm not really proposing a limited right now, other than we can look at what the numbers are and see if it makes sense to do a limit right now, versus just a gear endorsement.

MR. MOSS: I think this goes along with something that we discussed earlier, just to kind of more define a user group.

MR. HUDSON: Both our golden tile and our black sea bass had requirements to limitations, and that's what Red just brought up, and I personally think that should be an open access for the commercial to begin with, because we don't know that universe, and we don't know what criteria there is to limit them, but you are trying to identify them, and so that has some traction.

MR. MOSS: All right. Any more discussion on this one?

MR. JOHNSON: I had to step out for a minute, but, Jim, I understand what you're trying to do, but we already have gear on our logbooks, and there's a lot of guys that they bandit fish and dive, and, I mean, when you start doing endorsements, then you're going to tell the one guy that you have never dove, and so you can't do that, but, the guy that's been diving, he can do what you're doing, and I just -- I mean, commercial fishing is a pretty small group already, and I wouldn't support it, just for those reasons, myself.

MR. COX: I mean, the reason we're bringing this up is because we see what we're seeing in our community and the diving community and how it's increasing so fast, and we're afraid that it's getting out of control, and we see a take on a resource that is, like I said, unconventional gear that's going to take a heavy toll on the grouper population, and we know our grouper fishery is overfished and overfishing is occurring. The primary target in most of the spearfishing is the grouper, in our area, and so we are just trying to be proactive here.

MR. HUDSON: Unless it says it's open access, I feel like Robert does, because they're already limited by the snapper grouper permit, and that universe is not going to grow. It's going to shrink.

MR. MOSS: All right. Thank you very much, everybody. Is there any more discussion on this one? I will read it. **Request that the council consider creating a gear endorsement for spearfishing for the commercial sector. All those in favor, seven; opposed, four. The motion passes seven to four. Were there any that abstained? Two abstentions.** Is there any other Other Business?

MR. LORENZ: Just a closing thing for me, just maybe to help the group. I think, over the past few years, in being on this AP, we have come up -- I have heard things, particularly from the commercial sector, on regulations and things that really impede their operation, and I think they're value-less, and I think what we had from Brian is an opportunity to consider in the future -- Just one suggestion is always consider simplification and put a dollar value to it. Your time is money, and, coming down from our presidential administration, we're going to see where that is what talks.

It is not just the hassle you go through, but it's trying to be innovative in thinking of how it costs you money, because, Vincent, you were mentioning about your buoy gear, and anything and everything that could cost you, and put your time in there as a cost, and bring that up and let the rest of us know, and, Scott, you mentioned about needing a lawyer, maybe, for your snapper grouper renewals, things like that, and boil that down to what is your time and the lawyer and what that means, and I think there is going to be opportunities over the years, and that's a quick way to deal with regulations that you think are ineffective, and that's just a suggestion.

The other thing I will probably bring up a little more often, but I don't know where it's going to sit, because I was in a highly-regulated industry, and we had in that, from the Food and Drug Administration, a concept of guidelines versus regulations. Regulations have the power to give you a fine and to get you in jail if you disobey them, but guidelines were kind of things to do because it's right, and it's probably the way you need to go there, but you don't need to jump on there right away with making it a regulation, which, of course, brings you enforcement. A regulation is worthless without enforcement.

I am going to consider, with the council, to kind of think of those kinds of things. An area where that might really work is we have the discussion of the circle hook versus j-hooks and that kind of a thing, and here is a thing where you kind of make a regulation, and it might have been good to have it as a guideline, and I know that, in recreational fishing, it works, because, if it was a guideline and that sort of thing, strongly recommending we do that, there would be a lot of peer pressure, but you eliminate all the cost that you would have with things like a regulation, and particularly, when we had the Coast Guard here, there are things that they wouldn't have to worry about, and that saves money for people also, and so I just wanted to introduce that concept.

MR. COX: To your point, I appreciate that, Bob, because I definitely am one that wants to simplify things, and I don't like cumbersome regulations and things that are expensive and things that are hard to enforce. I think the intention of this discussion on the scuba diving and spearfishing is that, as we look around the South Atlantic, in places that have been prosecuted pretty hard, like the State of Florida and their inshore fisheries, they're not what we have, and we're starting to see an opportunity here where our inshore fisheries could be in the same shape some of theirs are. In other words, they have a lot of boats and a lot of participation, and these things are growing at a high rate, and so I just think that we're trying to be precautionary.

Something that's different in what we're trying to do here and manage this different from a lot of other industries or walks of life that we come from is that there is so much uncertainty in what we try to do, and so we're just trying to be proactive and not so much put a regulation on something, but try to see what's happening in other areas.

I was discussing last night with David about Florida and, on the weekends, how you can go out and walk from boat to boat, and we're starting to see so many more people participating in the fishery in our area off of North Carolina, where there will be days on -- Say, like the Big Ten, there will be fifty or sixty boats on it, and we didn't see that years ago, but we know that we're going to be where Florida is in another decade or so. You know what I mean? We're getting to that place that we can learn, and we're just trying to be careful. At the same time, it's hard not to put burdensome regulations on stuff, and that's all.

MR. MOSS: Thank you for that. Do we have any other -- Scott.

MR. BUFF: I would just like to bring back up the permit issue. I would really like to see that be simplified somehow for renewals, and I am not saying for everything, but just on the renewal side. If you're just renewing your permits, just like they are, an existing vessel and the whole nine yards, and it sure would simplify things a little bit. I just got done renewing four that, unfortunately, happened at the same time, and it's a pretty good process, to where it could be simplified a whole lot, and it could be done online.

Also, too, I would like to say something to the Coast Guard guy. Unfortunately, this year, for us, we had somebody that almost lost their life on a boat due to a cut, and we really appreciate what you guys do. If they weren't there, the guy would have died, and I've never had this happen in twenty years. They had just got there and put their anchor out, and they were sharpening the knife on the deck and getting ready for the next day, and he cut his wrist. It was just a perfect world to have, and there was a ship there and a cutter that was close by, just to be able to get that guy off that boat and get him to the hospital, and he almost died, and so I have never had that happen in twenty years, but I appreciate you guys for what you do.

MS. RHODES: I just wanted -- I am speaking kind of on behalf of the SERO Permits Office right now, but they are piloting a program for renewals online. Right now, it's kind of in a rollover phase, and so there's only a certain number of participants who are allowed to do that, but they are in the process of making that happen. They are in a transition period right now. Carolyn Sramek, who was leading up that program, is no longer over there, and so it might take a while for some of this stuff to come online and be available to everybody, but it is in the works, and so it should be available to you guys hopefully in the next couple of years.

MR. J. FREEMAN: On the permit, just a little horror story that I just went through with my wreckfish application, but it was sent back to another fisherman with all my personal information, all two of my corporations' FEIN numbers, and thank goodness I happened to know him, and it wasn't even -- When I called over there to speak to them, I went through the application and reading off my address, and they wanted to get a little bit rude with me, asking me what my point was and what I was getting at, and then, once I asked them how this could happen, their attitude changed a little bit, and they sit on a -- It seems to take longer and longer to get these permit renewals. It's a month-and-a-half or sometimes two months, and this conversation happened at 8:45 in the morning, and, at 9:15, I had an email back, and, at 9:40, my permit was printed, tracking number, and shipped to me. That's just something to think about here.

MR. ATACK: What about the electronic reporting on like no-fishing reporting or your trip reports? Are we getting close to that, versus these thick, paper books that come out?

MS. RHODES: In terms of the commercial sector? I am not really educated enough on that to speak to that. I don't know if any of the council members in the room know what direction that might be moving, or maybe Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I think we talked about this yesterday, but they're working on -- ACCSP and the Southeast Regional Office are working together to develop a system for this to enable, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and they're all working together to make sure that the data is going to flow seamlessly from ACCSP to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and SERO, to make sure that we're getting accurate information. They had presented to the council last time,

and I can't remember the timeframe, but it should be later on this year where we're going to be looking at electronic reporting that's available for the commercial fishery.

MR. COX: Thank you for that good news about the online and what's going on at SERO, because I will tell you that I have dealt with them for a long time, and they're arrogant people. They treat us like we're stupid, and they're not nice. It's very unprofessional most of the time, and there are a couple people there that do a wonderful job, but they are very frustrating, and it's not an easy process.

I have been doing it for many years, and it's hard, and, every time you do an application -- We only have a few days before we can't go back to work, and this is something that prohibits us from going back to work, and so that's very good news, trying to simplify the permit process. I think that -- I would love to see it the next AP meeting, that maybe we have an update and continue that good information coming, so that we can share it with industry, and, if there's anything that we can do to help with that, we would love to do that.

MS. RHODES: Just to that point, I haven't been doing this a long time. I have only been doing this a year as council staff, and I share your frustrations, and I have -- When Carolyn was there, she was very helpful, and I spoke to her about some of the issues that I had with certain staff members, and I don't want you guys to be received in the ways that I was received, and so I've been working with them and communicating with them on how we can make that better, and so, if anything happens, please call me. I don't work there, but I am happy to try to help you guys sort out of those problems if you do have engagements that aren't helpful.

MR. MOSS: Thank you.

MR. BUFF: I wasn't even going to bring this up, but being that Jack opened the door, these things are really complex now, and maybe it's not -- Maybe some people can just breeze through it, but I am not very good with a computer, and mostly what I do is by hand, but, when you call the Permits Office, they really talk down to you, and there is some great people there, and don't take this the wrong way, but there is some people there that are very rude and arrogant, and they really -- They just act like you ought to know, and, if we knew, we wouldn't be calling and asking.

On the up side to that, we can only renew these permits sixty days out, and you think, well, sixty days, that's a long time. Well, when you get the application and you mail the application in, it's hard telling what's going on with it, and so it's probably three weeks before you get anything back that says that here's what's wrong, and we can't go fishing until this permit is renewed, but, when you call down there and -- I can call them out by names, and I've done this for a long time, and there is one or two of the girls there that you can get on the phone that will actually answer your questions and be cordial, and then there's about four of them that are arrogant and rude on the telephone, and it's very unprofessional. If they worked for me, they wouldn't be there but a minute, and so just so you guys --

MS. RHODES: Yes, we absolutely are aware of it at the council level. As council staff, we have talked about it, and, again, if you guys encounter any problems, I encourage you to reach out to me. I am at the council office, and, if I'm not in the office, you can get me by my cell. My line will automatically go to my cell phone if I'm not there, and you're welcome to call me at any time,

because I know this is frustrating, and I want to make sure that you guys have all the legal requirements that you need in order to be able to go fish.

MR. R. FREEMAN: What is sacred about the permit having to be renewed every year? If you're overworked, then go to a two or three-year permit process. Most of us understand that, hey, we're going to be doing this two or three years from now, God willing, and so why not have an elongated permit process that reduces the paperwork for you all as well as the fishermen? I haven't had the chance to go back and double-check that it really occurred, but, the fellow that's responsible for keeping up the documentation on the vessel that I used to run, I understand that he just did a five-year documentation renewal, and I've never heard of that.

MS. RHODES: I don't know the answers to why they don't have more of a rollover for permits. Again, I don't work in the Permits Office. I work as South Atlantic Council staff, but these are kinds of recommendations that I can certainly bring to the council at the next council meeting in Other Business, if it's something that you guys would like me to do. I can certainly bring this up, and I know that we've had these conversations at the council table, relative to permit issues, but I would be happy to bring this to their attention, and it will also be included in the AP report, and so we can make these concerns heard.

MR. COX: We really appreciate your willingness to help us, sincerely, with the permit process. It's hard, and a lot of us are new to your face, and so would you, again, let us know what your name is, so that, when we call the council office --

MS. RHODES: My name is Cameron Rhodes, and I'm the Outreach Specialist in the council office for the South Atlantic, and so, again, before you guys leave today, please come talk to me about the app. I want to help you out, but come on by. I will give you my email and my phone number, and we can work together on this stuff.

MR. COX: Just one other thing. Thank you, Cameron. The burdensome regulations that we were trying to put in place, could we go back real quick? I know we're ready to go. I've got a five-and-a-half-hour drive, but can we put in there that we would like to see a two-year renewal process for our permits and not every year? Could we include that, please? I will make a motion if I need to make that as a motion.

MR. MOSS: I suppose we could mention it to Brian to probably include in that. Go ahead and rephrase that, Jack.

MR. COX: When we were talking about the burdensome process on the council level, are we at liberty at the South Atlantic Council to ask National Marine Fisheries Service to allow our permits to be renewed at a two-year level rather than a one-year? I will tell you that it would help everybody on each end.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I don't know what the federal policy is on that. I mean, I was sitting back there thinking that your driver's license, at least in South Carolina, is for ten years, and why doesn't it make sense that this could be something that could be considered at -- I don't know whether that's in the council's purview to establish that or if there is something at a higher level than the council that determines if they have to be annual, but that's certainly something we can look into.

If this group wants to make a recommendation that permits last longer than a year, then that should be a recommendation that you can make, and that goes back to the council, and then the council can consider it, but, in the meantime, since I know that's something you're interested in, I can try to look into that and find out who is able to make that decision, because I have no idea, because this question has never come up before, that I am aware of, that I've been involved in looking for the answer, and so I can't answer that question at all as to who has the responsibility to be able to do that, but there's nothing wrong with making that request.

MR. COX: Knowing what I know about Washington, I think they're looking for anything they can to take restrictions off of industry, and I think this would be certainly within the realm of what Washington is looking for today, and it would certainly free up a lot of time and work for us on the federal level, and so I would make a recommendation that you guys, the South Atlantic staff, reach out to National Marine Fisheries Service, Roy and his guys, and ask if this is something that we can request from the Department of Commerce, if we can look at a renewal of more than one year for our federal permits.

MR. JOHNSON: I will second that, and just I think that probably that one year initially was because of reporting requirements. If you don't report, when it comes time to renew your permit, you're not going to get it until you get up to date, and so I think, in order for this to work for the extended time, and I'm not saying add this into your motion, and they can figure this all out, and I like the motion, by the way, and I think that they would have to have some way that they could bring to bear that, hey, we're going to take your permit from you if you don't get up to date on your reporting. We report after every trip, like I'm sure your boats do, Jack, but I know that that's -- In the past, people actually lost permits for non-reporting, and so I think that probably has a lot to do with the seasonality of it.

MR. COX: I appreciate that, and I know what you're saying. If folks want to understand what he's saying, he's saying, if you're not on a timely manner of reporting your trip reports on the commercial side, the National Marine Fisheries Service will hold your permit back from the one-year renewal until you've caught your logbooks up to date, whether you have fished or not fished, and so that is one tool that they use to keep the commercial industry accountable, and that is a good tool, but, on the other side, I think there's a way that we could figure out to do that -- There's another way that we could do that without -- Maybe they could hold a permit, but still let it be renewed on the folks that have done what they're supposed to do. In other words, don't penalize the guys that are doing what they're supposed to do because there is people that don't, but I don't see why -- I certainly don't see why National Marine Fisheries Service would not entertain this idea.

MR. MOSS: Okay, and so we have a motion on the floor, and it's already been seconded, and so I will read it real quick. The motion is to recommend that the council reach out to NMFS to request that the snapper grouper commercial permit renewal period be extended. I'm assuming, Jack, you're okay with that, and Robert already seconded it. Any more discussion on this one?

MR. COX: I would just like to put a timeframe in there. Be extended beyond the one-year required renewal date.

MR. MOSS: Okay. Robert, are you okay with that? Okay. Any more discussion on this one?

MR. BONURA: I mean, wouldn't that be all of the permits and not just the grouper permit?

MR. MOSS: Yes, but we can only control snapper grouper.

MR. PHILLIPS: The renewal period is after it expires, and I think what Jack is asking is for a multiyear permit, but that's not exactly what that says. A renewal period is -- Right now, you've got a year after it expires to renew it, and now he's saying it might be longer than that, and I think what you're asking for is a multiyear permit, and I think it's different.

MR. COX: Charlie, thank you for the clarification. Yes, sir, that is correct. The motion would now read recommend that the council reach out to National Marine Fisheries Service to request that the snapper grouper commercial permit be on a multiyear -- Be renewed at a multiyear level of -- Let's just ask for three years, just to give them something to start with. Let's give them something.

MR. MOSS: Robert, are you okay with that?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. BONURA: I was going to say the U.S. Coast Guard commercial fishing safety inspection is every two years, and so you could align that to where they are --

MR. MOSS: I will say remember that, at this point, you're just kind of putting it out there for them to look at, and so you're probably going to get a host of options.

MR. COX: Let's just leave it where it is, just because -- I appreciate that, Vincent, but I think it would be hard to line those up together.

MR. MOSS: Any more discussion on this one? Okay. I will read it one more time, and then we'll put it to a vote. **Recommend that the council reach out to NMFS to request that the snapper grouper commercial permit be issued on a multiyear (three-year) basis. All those in favor. I believe that's unanimous.** Kim, did you have something?

MS. IVERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to reiterate what Cameron said as far as staff support and being able to help you in any way that we can, but I also want to caution you that, as I tell people every day, we are not the Permits Office, and we do not have access to a database, and we do not have the information that you may need as individuals, and I think most of you at this table understand that, but there may be folks listening that think that they can call us and we can automatically help them with certain things, and we can't, and I just want to caution the level of expectation for the Permits Office.

I think that this advisory panel, earlier this morning, has sent a very strong message to the folks at that office that maybe some changes need to be done and that you do have those concerns, and certainly that's within the purview of the advisory panel, and, as staff, we are always there to support you. As Cameron pointed out, we have cell phones, if you have an issue that we can help you with, but I just want to caution that we don't have access to individual permit numbers, and we can't expedite things, and, ultimately, it goes back to those folks at the Permits Office that we

all have to work collaboratively with, and so that's a separate agency, and it's a separate entity, and so we work within that.

Hopefully, as Cameron pointed out earlier, this process of renewing the permits and everything that's involved will become a little more streamlined, hopefully a lot more streamlined, but be aware, as Cameron pointed out, there are some changes going on at the Permits Office right now, and so I just wanted to point that out, not only to you guys at the table, but anyone that might be listening that is going to call us on Monday.

MR. COX: Thank you, Kim. You guys do a fantastic job, and so we appreciate what you all do.

MR. MOSS: Thank you very much, Kim. Anything else? All right. I guess that's it. I'm sorry, but we have two more things, real quick. We don't have to talk about this one, but Myra is just going to post up here the information for the gentleman from the Coast Guard, and so, if anybody wants to take that down, and it will be available in the report as well, I'm assuming. Again, the purpose of that was to -- Anything that you guys see out on the water that you know of something that maybe they hadn't thought of that people are doing or to look out for, and please be aware. Then the last thing is two options are possible for the October --

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and thank you for that. I just wanted to get a feel for when the next Snapper Grouper AP meeting might be convenient to schedule, and so I was looking at two options of October 10 through 12 or 17 through 19. I kind of wanted to narrow it down to those dates, so that folks can start thinking about it, and then maybe I will just send out an email in the next couple of weeks, and then we can go from there.

MR. COX: Would you do that in a poll, where we could like yes or maybe or no?

MS. BROUWER: Sure. I can send out a poll.

MR. ATACK: Can we do two days versus three days?

MS. BROUWER: Nope.

MR. COX: What were those dates, October 10 through 12 and the other one was --

MS. BROUWER: I think the 17 through 19, and so both of those are Wednesday through Friday, just like this, the half day, full day, half day.

MR. MOSS: The last thing is I just wanted to, one more time, open it up for public comment, if anybody in the public wanted to add anything or bring anything to the table. All right. Thank you once again, everyone, for your time and patience. We do appreciate it. Robert, again, hats-off, best of luck, and thank you again. We are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned on April 13, 2018.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
April 23, 2018

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

Chair

✓ David Moss
7312 Via Leonardo
Lake Worth, FL 33467
(954)214-7954 (ph)
david@smoss.com
12/13*, 3/17*
Recreational

Vice Chair

✓ James Hull Jr.
1258 John Anderson Drive
Ormond Beach, FL 32176
(386)547-1254 (ph); (386)615-9333 (f)
hullsseafood@aol.com
12/13*, 3/17*
Commercial/Dealer/Retail

Jim Atack
111 SW 20th Street
Oak Island, NC 28465
(910)520-8279
Jim.atack@ADM.com
9/10, 12/13*, 3/17*
Recreational

✓ Vincent Bonura
800 SW 12th CT
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315
(954)240-8615
SailRaiser25C@aol.com
9/17*
Commercial

Richen "Dick" Brame
Coastal Conservation Association
517 Braddock Street
Wilmington, NC 28409
(910)599-5245 (ph)
dbrame55@gmail.com
9/15*
NGO

✓ Scott Buff
109 SE 36th Street
Oak Island, NC 28465
(910)294-1463 (ph)
Scott@buffbuilders.com
9/15*
Commercial

✓ Jack Cox Jr.
141 Bayview Blvd
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512
(252)728-9548
Dayboat1965@gmail.com
9/17*
Commercial

✓ Robert Freeman
221 Smith Street
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512
(252)726-9814 (ph)
sunrise@coastalnet.com
3/17*
Charter

✓ James Freeman
122 Springwood Dr.
Daytona Beach, FL 32119
(386)882-6151 (ph)
Cfreeman23@bellsouth.net
12/13*, 3/17*
Commercial

✓ Richard Gomez
289 Leo Lane
Key West, FL 33040
(954)798-7764
captainconch12@yahoo.com
9/17*
Chater

Manuel "Manny" Herrera
707 S.W. 28th Road
Miami, FL 33129
(305)951-2069 (PH)
guelsy28@gmail.com
12/14*
Commercial

✓ Rusty Hudson
P.O. Box 9351
Daytona Beach, FL 32120
(386)239-0948 (ph); (386)253-2843 (f)
DSF2009@aol.com
9/15*
Commercial

✓ Deidra Jeffcoat
20 South Cromwell Road
Savannah, GA 31410
(912)308-5317 (ph); (912)897-3460 (f)
dcjeffcoat@comcast.net
3/16*
Charter

✓ Robert Johnson
804 Shore Drive
St. Augustine, FL 32086
(904)794-2628 (ph)
jlfishing@bellsouth.net
3/10*, 6/13*, 3/16*
Charter/Headboat

✓ Robert Lorenz
1509 Meridian Terrace
Wilmington, NC 28411
(910)232-4755 (ph)
blpinfisher@gmail.com
12/14, 3/18*
Recreational

✓ Gary Manigault Sr.
1299 Sand Pine Rd
Ladson, SC 29456
(843)471-4637 (ph)
garymanigaultsr@yahoo.com
9/17*
Recreational/Charter

✓ Greg Mercurio
1211 20th Terrace
Key West, FL 33040
(305)923-4401 (ph)
greg@yankeecapt.com
3/17*
Charter/Headboat

✓ Jim Moring
The Commonwealth Group
171 Church Street
Suite 300
Charleston, SC 29401
(843)343-5757 (ph)
commonwealthjimm@prodigy.net
9/17*
Recreational/Restaurateur

✓ Fentress "Red" Munden
P.O. Box 1165
Morehead City, NC 28557
(252)226-9015(h); (252)241-9541(m)
fmunden@gmail.com
9/12, 9/15*
Conservation

✓ Kerry O'Malley-Marhefka
P.O. Box 2343
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465
(843)452-7352 (ph)
abundantseafood@gmail.com
6/14, 9/17*
Commercial/Dealer

James Paskiewicz
7987 Shark Drive
Marathon, FL 33050
(505)304-6210 (ph)
islandskipperfishing@gmail.com
3/18*
Commercial

✓ Andy Piland
P.O. Box 533
Hatteras, NC 27943
(252)216-9273
andypiland@gmail.com
9/15*
Charter

OPEN SC SEAT

Ron Rozier
129 Firetower Rd
Ludowici, GA 31316
(912)318-5684
ronrozier@gmail.com
3/18*
Commercial

David Snyder
55 Cinema Lane
St. Simons Island, GA 31522
(912)399-3813 (ph); (912)638-9163 (f)
dave@halyardsrestaurant.com
12/13*, 3/17*
Consumer Representative

AT-LARGE

Dr. Todd Kellison
NOAA - Beaufort Lab
Chief, Fisheries Ecosystem Branch
101 Pivers Island Road
Beaufort, NC 28516
(252)838-0810 (p); (252)728-8784 (f)
Todd.kellison@noaa.gov

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2017 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

COUNCIL CHAIR

✓ Charlie Phillips
Phillips Seafood/Sapelo Sea Farms
1418 Sapelo Ave
N.E. Townsend, GA 31331
(912)832-4423
Ga_capt@yahoo.com

W. Chester Brewer
250 Australian Ave. South
Suite 1400
West Palm Beach, FL 33408
(561)655-4777 (ph)
wcbafmc@gmail.com

VICE-CHAIR

✓ Mark Brown
3642 Pandora Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
(843)881-9735 (ph.); (843)881-4446 (f)
Capt.markbrown101@gmail.com

✓ Chris Conklin
P.O. Box 972
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
(843)543-3833
conklinsafmc@gmail.com

Robert E. Beal
Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
Commission
1050 N. Highland St.
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 20001
(703)842-0740 (ph); (703)842-0741 (f)
rbeal@asmfc.org

✓ Dr. Roy Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727)824-5301 (ph); (727)824-5320 (f)
roy.crabtree@noaa.gov

Anna Beckwith
1907 Paulette Road
Morehead City, NC 28557
252/671-3474 (ph)
AnnaBarriosBeckwith@gmail.com

Dr. Michelle Duval
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
3441 Arendell Street
(PO Box 769)
Morehead City, NC 28557
(252)808-8011 (ph); (252)726-0254 (f)
michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov

✓ Mel Bell
S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources
Marine Resources Division
P.O. Box 12559
217 Ft. Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29422-2559
843/953-9007 (ph); 843/953-9159 (fax)
bellm@dnr.sc.gov

Tim Griner
4446 Woodlark Lane
Charlotte, NC 28211
(980)722-0918 (ph)
timgrinersafmc@gmail.com

Zack Bowen
P.O. Box 30825
Savannah, GA 31410
(912)398-3733 (ph)
zackbowensafmc@gmail.com

Ben Hartig
9277 Sharon Street
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
(772)546-1541 (ph)
mackattackben@att.net

(continued)

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUCNIL
2017 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP (continued)

Doug Haymans
Coastal Resources Division
GA Dept. of Natural Resources
One Conservation Way, Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520-8687
(912)264-7218 (ph); (912)262-2318 (f)
haymanssafmc@gmail.com

Dr. Wilson Laney
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Atlantic Fisheries Coordinator
P.O. Box 33683
Raleigh, NC 27695-7617
(110 Brooks Ave
237 David Clark Laboratories,
NCSU Campus
Raleigh, NC 27695-7617)
(919)515-5019 (ph); (919)515-4415 (f)
Wilson_Laney@fws.gov

✓ Jessica McCawley
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Commission
2590 Executive Center Circle E.
Suite 201
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850)487-0554 (ph); (850)487-4847 (f)
Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com

LCDR Jeremy Montes
U.S. Coast Guard
909 SE 1st Ave.
Miami, FL 33131
305/415-6788(ph); 305/710-4569(c)
Jeremy.J.Montes@uscg.mil

Deirdre Warner-Kramer Office of Marine
Conservation OES/OMC
2201 C Street, N.W.
Department of State, Room 5806
Washington, DC 20520
202/647-3228 (ph); 202/736-7350 (f)
Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

Dr. Kari Buck
Wally Buble
Lt. Jerry Brown

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director

✓ Gregg T. Waugh
Gregg.waugh@safmc.net

Deputy Directory-Science & Statistics

John Carmichael
John.carmichael@safmc.net

Deputy Director-Management

✓ Dr. Brian Chevront
Brian.chevront@safmc.net

Fishery Scientist

✓ Myra Brouwer
Myra.brouwer@safmc.net

Outreach Specialist

Kathleen Howington
Kathleen.howington@safmc.net

Admin. Secretary/ Travel Coordinator

Cindy Chaya
Cindy.chaya@safmc.net

Public Information Officer

✓ Kim Iverson
Kim.iverson@safmc.net

Purchasing & Grants

✓ Kimberly Cole
Kimberly.cole@safmc.net

Senior Fishery Biologist

Roger Pugliese
Roger.pugliese@safmc.net

Fishery Scientist

✓ Dr. Chip Collier
Chip.collier@safmc.net

Outreach Specialist

✓ Cameron Rhodes
Cameron.rhodes@safmc.net

Administrative Officer

✓ Mike Collins
Mike.collins@safmc.net

Financial Secretary

Suzanna Thomas
Suzanna.thomas@safmc.net

Outreach Specialist

✓ Kelsey Dick
Kelsey.dick@safmc.net

Citizen Science Program Manager

✓ Amber Von Harten
Amber.vonharten@safmc.net

Fishery Biologist

✓ Dr. Mike Errigo
Mike.errigo@safmc.net

Fishery Social Scientist

✓ Christina Wiegand
Christina.wiegand@safmc.net

Fishery Economist

✓ John Hadley
John.hadley@safmc.net

SEDAR Coordinators

✓ Dr. Julie Neer- Julie.neer@safmc.net
✓ Julia Byrd- Julia.byrd@safmc.net

SG AP Day 1- 4/11/18

Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Bianchi	Alan	Alan.Bianchi@ncdenr.gov
Bonura	Vincent	SailRaiser25C@aol.com
Clarke	Lora	lclarke@pewtrusts.org
Conklin	Chris	conklincc@gmail.com
Duval	Michelle	michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov
Foster	Dean	dfoster@pewtrusts.org
Hadley	John	john.hadley@samfc.net
Helies	Frank	frank.helies@noaa.gov
Hudson	Rusty	DSF2009@aol.com
Mehta	Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov
Phillips	Charlie	ga_capt@yahoo.com
Stillman	Karolyn	karolyn.stillman@noaa.gov
colby	barrett	bcolby3@cfl.rr.com
vara	mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov
Burgess	Erika	erika.burgess@myfwc.com
Howington	kathleen	kathleen.howington@safmc.net

SG AP Day 2- 4/12/18

Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Bianchi	Alan	Alan.Bianchi@ncdenr.gov
Bonura	Vincent	SailRaiser25C@aol.com
Bowen	Zack	fishzack@comcast.net
Byrd	Julia	julia.byrd@safmc.net
Clarke	Lora	lclarke@pewtrusts.org
Conklin	Chris	conklincc@gmail.com
Duval	Michelle	michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov
Foster	Dean	dfoster@pewtrusts.org
Hadley	John	john.hadley@samfc.net
Helies	Frank	frank.helies@noaa.gov
Hudson	Russell	RHudson106@aol.com
Hudson	Rusty	DSF2009@aol.com
Mehta	Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov
PUGLIESE	ROGER	ROGER.PUGLIESE@SAFMC.NET
Sinclair	Fred	fsinclair55@aol.com
Stillman	Karolyn	karolyn.stillman@noaa.gov
Weakley	Jeff	jeff@floridasportsman.com
vara	mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov
Burgess	Erika	erika.burgess@myfwc.com
Howington	kathleen	kathleen.howington@safmc.net

SG AP Day 3- 4/13/18

Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Bianchi	Alan	Alan.Bianchi@ncdenr.gov
Bonura	Vincent	SailRaiser25C@aol.com
Conklin	Chris	conklincc@gmail.com
Duval	Michelle	michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov
Errigo	Mike	mike.errigo@safmc.net
Hadley	John	john.hadley@samfc.net
Helies	Frank	frank.helies@noaa.gov
Hudson	Russell	RHudson106@aol.com
Laks	Ira	captainira@att.net
Stillman	Karolyn	karolyn.stillman@noaa.gov
vara	mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov
Burgess	Erika	erika.burgess@myfwc.com
Howington	kathleen	kathleen.howington@safmc.net
Hudson	Rusty	DSF2009@aol.com
Mehta	Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov