

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Webinar**

**March 4, 2021**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Mel Bell, Chair  
Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
Chester Brewer

Steve Poland, Vice-Chair  
Jessica McCawley

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Monica Smit-Brunello  
Duane Smith  
Dewey Hemilright  
Tony Dilernia  
Patrick O'Shaughnessy

Dr. Jack McGovern  
Dr. Clay Porch  
Rick DeVactor  
John Sanchez  
Dr. Genny Nesslage

Other observers and participants attached.

The Executive Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened via webinar on Thursday, March 4, 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Mel Bell.

MR. BELL: We're going to convene the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee consists of myself, Steve Poland, Carolyn Belcher, Chester Brewer, and Jessica McCawley. It's a small committee, but, again, everyone here is certainly welcome to participate as you would like. First, we will need to approve the agenda. We have four items on the agenda. Are there any recommended changes to the agenda? I am not seeing any hands, and so then the agenda -- We'll leave it alone. Is there any objection to approval of the agenda? Seeing none, then the agenda stands approved.

The first item would be Approval of the Minutes from our December 2020 Meeting. Are there any edits or changes that need to be made to the minutes, the draft minutes, from December 2020 meeting? I don't see any hands. Are there any objections to approval of the minutes from December 2020? No hands, and so then the minutes are approved. That will take us to our first agenda item, which will be Advisory Panel Policy Discussion, and I think John is going to run that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will.

MR. BELL: Okay, John. Take it away.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right. I will take it away. Thank you, sir. At our last meeting, we went through the revised AP policy in considerable detail, and there were a couple of changes suggested, and there were a couple of areas where you requested that we consult with Monica and get some proper legal wording to address the situations and provide clarification. I will just scroll through this and stop at the few areas that are highlighted where we have changes or the additional language, as requested.

The first portion is where we refer to advisory panel details, and there was additional language added to clarify that participating in SEDAR assessments is part of the expectations of advisory panel members. In the appointment process, you asked that we clarify the background check, and so the added language notes that it's conducted by NOAA Law Enforcement, and it determines if the applicant has any marine policy violations during the prior three years.

On the administrative provisions, we clarified that the stipend policies and eligibility requirements of the council apply to AP members, and, on Item 4, we had a fair amount of discussion about what was called the APs that don't meet very often, and where we ended up at the last meeting -- What this reflects is that each AP will meet at least annually, to provide just general feedback on the fishery conditions and inform the council of what's happening, even if there's no other specific say amendment-related business to come before them. Then they would document these by preparing a fishery performance report. Then the plan is, unless there is some other direction, these would alternate between webinar and in-person meetings, and that will ensure there's at least an in-person meeting every other year.

The Number 5 here is addressing end of appointments in the highlighted text, and this is one of the places where we came up with some legally-appropriate language. The question revolved around just cause and how it was defined, and it mentioned violation of marine resource law, and

there was some discussion about conviction and how it applies to marine law and the federal legal situations, and so, working with Monica, I came up with revised language that is in the highlighted section, and it clarifies that just cause may include, but is not limited to, violation of marine resource law that has been finally adjudicated by NOAA or other federal or state agencies or a violation of council policies.

I would say, if you have a question or anything about any of these, just go ahead and raise your hand, and we will pause. Otherwise, I will keep rolling through these. We're almost down to the last one.

The last part was some clarification on what we call the pools. We have the SEDAR Pool and the Citizen Science Pool. They stand as APs, and then, from these, you select people for individual projects. When the pools were created, the SEDAR in particular, there were various groups of people that were added to the pool, in a general sense, and so it was like employees of South Carolina DNR MARMAP, and so employees of the agencies and members of all of our APs, as they are members of APs, and this gives us a chance to have some general language, but not have to keep up with say state employee rosters, as they may change over time. We can ask who is your person doing say commercial statistics and have them covered, and then you appoint that person individually to each project, of course, but you don't have to appoint each of those individual people to the SEDAR Pool each time they're covered under these blankets.

The question that arose was how do we document who those larger groups are that have been approved, and we looked at two options, one being to list them in the official roster and the other being to list them within this policy document, and both achieve the end goal of making sure that it's documented, and you can see who is there, and others can see who is there, and so we have transparency of what these groups are. Then, if there's a question about someone, if they're in one of these groups or not, we have it much more accessible.

The downside of Option 2 was, of course, if that were to change, the people in that -- If a new group were added, or perhaps you pulled a group out, we would have to change this policy, which is a little more difficult than say changing the roster, and so, after reviewing these options with NOAA GC, we recommend Option 1, where we'll list these groups in the official roster, what we call, often, the South Atlantic Council Directory, for each of these pools. Those were the issues that were asked to be brought up for this meeting. At this point, if there's no questions or further discussion of changes, it would be nice to get a motion that would approve this.

MR. BELL: Right, and so are there any questions about anything that John has gone through? Recall that this is -- We started this at the last meeting, but this is also Attachment 1 in the binder under Executive Committee, and you can see exactly what John just put up there. Any discussion or any questions? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Just a motion to approve.** I appreciate the extra look at and work on the policy.

MR. BELL: Thank you, and, yes, I agree. Is there a second from someone?

MR. POLAND: Second.

MR. BELL: All right. We have a second from Steve. Any further discussion on that motion? **Any opposition to the motion from those on the committee? I don't see any hands, and so that motion is approved.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Mel. I will read it. **The motion reads to approve the AP policy as revised.**

MR. BELL: Thanks, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Should I move on?

MR. BELL: Yes, sir. Let's go to Item 2.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Item 2 is Attachment 2, and this addresses a proposal for what we're calling the South Atlantic Council's Seminar Series, and so there is a fair amount of introduction and background information here describing this. The best way to think of it is the dolphin seminar that we had last summer, where we reviewed the tagging information, and we had the SSC represented there, and we had the council represented there. We invited advisory panels and others and opened it to the public, and it gave a chance for all of these different groups that are under the council umbrella to review the same information and hear the same presentation and then have a discussion about the topic.

The idea there is to increase the transparency of technical information of that nature, increase its availability, and, also, avoid one group getting ahead of another, and that's really one of the big issues to address with this as well, is situations where potential technical information may be presented to the council in the past, and you might be interested in using it, and you might be encouraged by the outcomes, but, if it hasn't been reviewed thoroughly by the SSC, we haven't really established it. It's begun that process, I would say, of establishing that it's best scientific information available, and then therefore useful within the management and is reliable and robust.

The idea here is, rather than have presentations like that come straight to the council, to give them here in this group setting. If you feel that something is worthy of further discussion, you can then remand it to the SSC, ask that the SSC have a more thorough discussion of it, perhaps, and so the idea here is not to have this be a replacement for any of that, and this is just a first chance to make sure the council and the advisors and the SSC are all seeing this information together and everyone is on the same page.

We talked some about symposium or seminar in doing this, and so you may see -- I think, in the agenda, it says "symposium", and we have ultimately decided on "seminar" as being a bit of a better word, and the two are pretty similar, but, overall, after a lot of discussion, we felt that seminar better captured what we're attempting to do here.

They will be hosted by the council, and these will be public, and they will be noticed on the website, and they will be published in the Federal Register and announced through the various council channels that we do, and, of course, it will be something that we would include in each council meeting, where we review upcoming meetings, and we would highlight them there as well.

The intention, and the next bullet there, about making information available two weeks prior to a seminar, just as we do for our regular briefing materials, to make sure we have information available and transparent.

The schedule, our intention here is to have essentially a set day of the week and the month throughout the year when we do these, just to make it a little bit easier to schedule and clear out some time and make sure, within in our internal council staff scheduling, we're not putting APs or something on top of days when we might like to do this, and so, for starters, we're proposing the second Tuesday of each month, and these will be held in the late afternoon, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., and we would skip the months where there is council meetings. We already have quite a bit going on in those months, and that avoids any potential overlap with the council meeting as well, depending on, within the month, when the council meeting is scheduled.

In this case, we would be there for skipping March, June, September, and December. Then, of course, as I said, they will be noticed on the website. We will talk some, later on, about the new design in the ED's report, and I will give you a little update of where we are on our new website process, but we're envisioning a page dedicated to this series being hosted on our new website.

The support staff, the lead for this would be Chip, as the Deputy Director for Science, and then supported on the data side and the science staff support by Mike Errigo. Other staff that would be involved would be, of course, outreach and communication, primarily for posting and announcing and getting the word out, and then the different host staff would be chosen based on the topic, and so, if it were a snapper grouper topic, it might be Myra as the host staff. If it were a citizen science topic, it could perhaps be Julia as the host staff, and so that will be revolving, and they'll be working with Chip and Mike on the process and getting the information together and essentially kicking off the seminar, via webinar, when the time comes.

For topics, these would be suggestions from really anywhere, and staff, obviously, but council members and advisors and requests by researchers, and so one of the things that is common to most of the federal funding opportunities now is that they need to provide for some type of outreach and communication of results, and so we're often approached by different researchers who are being funded by these grants for them to present the information to the council. We don't really foresee having a whole lot of difficulty of keeping a pretty full topic selection list going for you guys, to have interesting things that are relevant to the council business.

Then, as far as picking a topic, like I said, we expect to have quite a few. Our plan would be, during the March and September meetings, the Executive Committee would look at the topics and review what's being proposed and could, at that time, potentially maybe highlight some, or promote some, that you think are especially important and do some prioritization, as necessary, just to make sure the council has some voice in the topics, and it also helps to make sure the things that are being scheduled are important to you.

The general process of these would be the staff host, as I mentioned, they're going to introduce the presenters and the topics, as a regular webinar format, as we would do, and we envision a presentation of thirty minutes to an hour, in most cases, and then a period after that for question-and-answer. Then that host would be the moderator, and so it would be the normal thing of raising hands, and people would be called on.

We would give priority to council members, and then SSC and AP. If there's time available, of course, we would also entertain questions from the general audience and the general public. We will try to maintain the focus on the topic at-hand and on the webinar, and so it says here, in the interest of time and maintaining relevance, if a question veers into council actions, or why the council is doing something, we would try to direct people back toward the issue at-hand. This is intended to be a fairly technical presentation, scientific-type things, and it's not the chance when we will be talking about how the council may respond, or perhaps why the council responded in some way in the past. There is time for all of that, between AP and SSC meetings, to discuss all of that in detail, and so we want to make sure that we make the most of the opportunity we have with the presenters.

Then, after the seminar is wrapped up, the appropriate committee chair, council chair, and vice chair could then consult amongst themselves, or perhaps they may convene a call with our support, and consider if they wanted to direct that the topic or paper be sent to the SSC for formal review or recommendation on best scientific information available. This may very well happen during the seminar, and I think it's just a matter of the timing and the topic and the level of interest and really what council leadership -- How they feel about the situation and how they feel the council may need to respond or look at this topic a little closer, and so that's just intended to clarify what we would do, but we're trying to avoid making any hard-and-fast process on that, which we might come back to down the road, depending on how it plays out.

With that, that's the quick view of the seminar series, as we've proposed it, and the idea is that we'll start this and continue to do it for the foreseeable future, as long as we have good topics and it seems to be effective. Mel, I will pause there, quickly, and see if there's any questions on the general process before we look into the initial list of topics.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, John. I think that's a good description of the concept, and I like the idea of being able to push out useful information that would be pertinent to the things we do, and the public might be interested as well, and, again, as you mentioned, the one we -- It wasn't part of this, but, effectively, the seminar we had on dolphin I think was well received and well attended, and so that's kind of the idea. It's a way to better communicate, and so it's an education and outreach tool, for internal as well as external, and it just seemed like a really good idea, and the obvious challenge would be that we get into this and we make sure that we're not overloading staff and that sort of thing, but what do you all think? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel. I'm really excited about this. I really think that one that we did on dolphin was really well received, and I like how we're not trying to cram it in during a regular council meeting week, because I feel like, when we try to add things like this, if we get behind, this is one of the items that usually gets bumped to some other meeting, and so the fact that we're decoupling it from the regular council meeting week I think helps.

I think, the way that this is laid out, it looks good. The one thing that -- John touched on this, but, just to make sure that I understand, the next steps -- So I just didn't want there to be an awkward discussion during the seminar itself about whether or not the item presented in the seminar is going to go to the SSC or not. It seems like, in the next steps portion, you're saying that, after the seminar, and, in other words, outside the seminar itself, through some other mechanism, whether it's phone call or email or what have you, there would be a discussion with this group of folks about whether to send it to the SSC for formal review, and is that right?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, Jessica. We were leaving it slightly open, but I think you make really good points about doing that essentially offline from the seminar and having that group get together after the seminar and decide.

MR. BELL: Good call, Jessica. That's, obviously, something that I think would help, if we structured it that way afterwards. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Mel. That was a great point, Jessica, and I agree. If we have that discussion following an individual's presentation, it might not be received well, since we're effectively passing judgment on the presentation that we just received. First off, I really like this idea and this approach, and I feel like it will allow us to receive kind of timely information, and even more information, by spreading this out in the months outside of council meeting months than we would if we just received these presentations at the council meetings, and so I'm excited for this.

As far as topics, it seems like we have a pretty long list as it is, and so it might not be appropriate at this time, but, John, I would be interested in maybe putting together some type of call for topics, so to speak, or call for interest, so to speak, that we could distribute to some of our research partners, either in other agencies or to universities, to gin up some interest in presenting to us, and, again, it looks like we've got plenty of topics to discuss over the next year or so, but maybe consider that in the future, if we're starting to run low on topics and we want to generate some more interest in presenting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thanks, Steve. That's a good point. I think we'll definitely, assuming you guys approve this, and it sounds like you will, and we can let the SSC certainly know about it at their meeting, and I'm thinking, along with that, when we advertise for one of these, we could include a little blurb about, if you have a topic that you would like to have considered, just directing them to reach out to Chip, and then, like you say, maybe, down the road, when we sort of work through these topics, occasionally put out a plea, to say, you know, we're interested in some new topics. We've talked about -- You guys have seen the snippets that Kim has been sending around, and, every other week or so, sending out a little blurb on various news and interesting information, and that would be a great place where we could put out word about something like this.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Steve. Good suggestion. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think this is a really interesting idea as well. I have one minor suggestion, John, for wording on this page you're on right now. In the bullet under Moderated by the Host, and so, instead of saying "questions that go beyond the presentation and veer into council actions or decisions", and then I have edit. Right now, it says "will be considered out of order in this process and not addressed", and maybe, instead of "out of order", we could say will be considered "beyond the scope" of this process and not addressed. It just seems to flow a little bit better, and maybe it will be a little more straightforward for the public, too.

MR. BELL: I like that terminology myself, Monica, better. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Mel. To that point, Monica, I mean, it's obvious, and it sounds like that we're not interested in conducting any business during these seminars, and it's just

informational, and so would that need to be reflected in the FRN notices, to basically notice this with the acknowledgement that no council business will be conducted, something like that, just to cover our bases?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Probably, and I say probably because I will get back with John on this, and I want to make sure that we line up with the requirements in the Magnuson Act for these kinds of things, and this isn't really a council meeting, per se, like we're having right now, and so I don't think that there needs to be a place where you take public comment, but I will just run that down and make sure, and I think it would be a good idea, Steve, if it's appropriate, yes, to tell people right upfront that this isn't the kind of thing where you're going to be allowed to make -- You know, have a discussion on council actions and those sorts of things, and so, yes, I'll get with John and make sure of that language.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Monica and Steve. That's a good point, to make sure we get things worded exactly how they should be worded.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, that's really helpful, Mel, and I will make a note of these changes, and we'll be able then to make those revisions, and I made a note that, when we do the FRN for one of these, we will loop Monica in to consider the wording for some of these.

MR. BELL: Right. Any other questions or comments or observations up to this point in the discussion on this? Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you, Mel. I was just wondering -- There is an indication that you guys will be reviewing this twice a year, and do you guys think that is sufficient for the review? What I was thinking is kind of develop a six-month, around a six-month, schedule. That way, you guys are aware of everything that might be coming up and the topics that are going to be covered, and then, at one meeting, and then the following meeting six months later, you guys would be making recommendations on future presentations after that. Does that sound like a good approach?

MR. BELL: Following how this would work, and so, potentially, every six months, you would have two -- You would have four, because it would be -- Yes, you would have four of them that you would have had underway, and then there would be a block of four coming up or something, and so, I mean, kind of a twice-a-year look at it, and does that sound reasonable to folks? Steve, did you want to comment on that, because I have Genny on there, which she probably didn't want to comment on that specifically.

MR. POLAND: I was going to speak to this point. I mean, that sounds appropriate, and I don't see any need to schedule topics out much past six months, for a few reasons. One, if it's a new and noteworthy study, or a hot take on something, we want to be able to get it in the queue pretty quickly, and, two, I don't want to reach out to researchers and say, hey, I would really like to hear about your work in 2024, and so I think doing it twice a year and just having the goal just to kind of schedule them out for no more than six months, and I think that's appropriate.

MR. BELL: Okay. Thanks. Genny, what did you have?

DR. NESSLAGE: Thanks for entertaining my question. I had two quick things. One was I am just wondering if you're anticipating that all of these will end up being sent to the SSC for formal



review, and that's scaring me a little, and the second question has to do with the recommendations on BSIA, and I would just caution the council that a lot of these studies and issues, the information that we might be presented -- To decide whether it's BSIA is difficult, in the sense that we would need to know what you're planning to use it for, and so, when you're considering sending it to us for that sort of a recommendation, we would need to know the context, if that makes sense, because it might be a great study, but depending on what you plan to do with it will determine whether or not it's the best available information for that particular purpose.

MR. BELL: Very good point, Genny. I don't believe the intent is to pass these all to you, because I could see how that would certainly be a bit scary, in terms of scheduling, but that's some really good things to bring up, and I don't think that was, by any means, the intent for this. John, do you want to weigh-in?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, Mel, I will, and, Genny, you're right that it wasn't our intent to -- That each of these would elevate to that stage, and I do think you may a really good point about the council providing you some guidance on how it's potentially considering using that information.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. I thought that the dolphin workshops that were held were very informative, and it was the inclusion of some of the council's work, and I'm just envisioning the future of these seminars and symposiums or whatever they decide to get named, and what would be like the subject matter? Is it any or all of the above, or does it have any relationship with fishery ecosystems or anything like that? I am just curious of how it gets picked and the discussion purposes of it, because I see a lot of things that come from schools of higher learning that have symposiums on something that probably doesn't have a lot of rationale for fisheries or something, but I'm just curious of how is it going to be picked and chosen and different things like that. Thank you.

MR. BELL: That's touched on here a little bit. I don't know if, John, you want to explain that in a little more detail.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That actually is a good transition into the potential topics, and, Dewey, as usual makes a really good point. Our intention here is to make sure that these are topics that are timely and relevant to the stuff that the council is facing, and that's certainly one reason of looping the council in here to help decide what the topics are going to be, but, other than that, we haven't really imposed any restrictions on the types of things that we may wish to talk about.

Here, you have a list of things that staff has come up with, and it's based on some studies where we were approached by researchers and then some other things where we see that there's a lot of interest on behalf of the council to maybe look a little more technically at some particular topic, and so I will start with the first one, because this is actually scheduled for not too far in the future. Chip, what's the date on this one?

DR. COLLIER: March 30.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you very much. March 30. It's the red snapper diet composition that was done by MARMAP researchers using DNA barcoding of fish prey, and so we went ahead

and scheduled this in there, similar to the dolphin one, because we know this is pretty timely information, and we thought it would be useful to get that done. That's an example of the researchers approached us as they did this study, and they realized it was something that would be relevant to council discussions, and they wanted to present it to us.

The next one is the deepwater coral ecosystem research, and so, as noted here, this was a request from the Habitat Committee to have this potentially presented at a council meeting, and we felt this is probably a really good topic to have presented through this type of forum. We're looking at bag limit analysis as a potential topic, because we are dealing with a lot of bag limit analyses, and this would be a way to give the council a little deeper information on how those are conducted and how you would evaluate them and what they actually tell you.

There is a project that Julia is involved with here that's electronic reporting research, and this is trying to better understand attitudes and effectiveness of electronic reporting itself, and it's College of Charleston master's student that Julia has been working with. Those are just some of the topics, and then we see red porgy from MARMAP. They've done some habitat work. Then following-up on dolphin, and that's sort of a follow-up from the dolphin presentation and looking closer at the telemetry work and satellite findings.

There is the participatory workshops that are underway, and they got delayed because of COVID, unfortunately, but we thought this could be a good way to share that kind of information. We could talk about citizen science generally, and we could talk about how we evaluate management regulations, sort of looking down the road a bit, but Allie, who is on our staff, did her research on how you can evaluate management regulations, and she took a number of our stocks and tried to see what you could discern from the stock assessments themselves about how effective our various management regulations have been, and it's pretty interesting work, the things that she found.

Then we look a little farther to the bottom, and we have the upcoming red snapper count and greater amberjack studies that, at some point, could be potential topics, and so it's a pretty broad list right now, and we have the top two there up where they are, because of the obvious interest in red snapper and then the direction from the committee on deepwater coral.

Then, as far as which ones we go into next, some guidance from the committee maybe about another one that you would like to do. We can do one in March, and we can do one in April and May, and so, if we do the deepwater coral potentially in April, do you have a topic that you might be interested in for May? Then we could carry it out further and try to line up some timing for some of these others.

MR. BELL: All right, and so this is not a -- This list, in itself, is not fixed in stone, but that's what we would be looking for, is maybe some initial thoughts about something to add in the near future. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Mel, and John kind of touched on it, and I was going to ask about timing, since we have the red snapper diet composition seminar already scheduled for March 30, and would we start -- If we approve this today, would we start that second Tuesday in April and then pick up the schedule at that point, which I don't have a problem with, but, as far as topics, I mean, all of these look appropriate.

The red snapper and the greater amberjack count topics, I am kind of torn on those. I would almost rather have those presentations and discussions during a Full Council meeting, because I already know that we will probably ask the SSC to weigh-in on those, and it will probably generate a lot of management discussion, and those are two projects that are mandated through legislation, with very clear kind of management application with them, and so I don't know if they're appropriate for this or if we just go ahead and just acknowledge that we're going to receive this under the Snapper Grouper Committee during a full council meeting, and so that's my thoughts.

MR. BELL: That's a good point, Steve. Some of these things might more obviously lend themselves to things that would be going, potentially, to the SSC or would become immediately involved in discussions about something that's going on at the time, and so we would just need to be sensitive to that, in terms of what we select and the timing, but that's a good point. Roger.

MR. PUGLIESE: I just had a quick comment on the deepwater coral. There's some flexibility on that. Originally, we were trying to time it close to the Habitat AP meeting, or after the timing for March. However, there is -- I was just notified that there is going to be an additional Okeanos cruise, in May I think, which may benefit adding all of the results into that and to be -- I mean, they've done and compiled a lot, but it may be a benefit, and so just there's flexibility on where we want to address that.

MR. BELL: Okay. Good point. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I just wanted to point out one thing. The dolphin participatory workshops, those are going to be done through online, and Matt McPherson and Mandy Karnauskas with the Science Center and John Hadley and Julia Byrd with council staff have been working on this project, and they expect to be able to have everything done and ready to present in May, and, that way, you could get an additional -- It would be available for your discussion during the June meeting, if you guys would like to hear about that before finalizing Dolphin Wahoo 10.

MR. BELL: All right. That's a good point about considering the timing of things with all of this, which is something we'll, obviously, have to do internally, but keep in mind this is a mechanism or a tool that's designed to benefit our ability to do our job and effectively communicate with our constituents, so they know what's going on, and it's designed to improve information flow and understanding, and so it is a tool of our own creation, and so we're not a slave to it, but we're going to direct this in a way that makes the most sense, to get the most benefit out of it, and to do no harm. Anything else on this, John, that we need to -- Other than do we need a motion to adopt this, or do we just need direction to staff to kind of move forward with this? What's the --

MR. CARMICHAEL: A motion to adopt it would be nice. I will flash one up there in a second, and I was going to say it sounds like, for upcoming topics, the coral research and then the dolphin participatory workshops, probably in May, and so that's pretty encouraging. Chip, I guess we'll have to see if it would be ready that early in May, but that would be nice.

DR. COLLIER: They did indicate that they could have it ready for them, and Julia is going to be giving an update during her citizen science update at Full Council.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. That's great, and then the research project on electronic reporting, depending on the student timing and when the project is done, and that's four things that we've

definitely got identified that we're interested in, and I wonder if there's just any feedback on a few of the other topics, maybe two others, that you think are potentially priorities that we could start trying to arrange speakers and the timing.

MR. BELL: All right. Steve, that might not have been what you were wanting to talk about, but I'm sure --

MR. POLAND: I was prepared to make a motion, but, given the discussion, I will discuss it a little bit more, and so, with the dolphin participatory workshops, and have the south Florida and Key West workshops have been held, or are we still waiting on those? I feel like that's a comparative kind of study, and so, if they haven't completed the south Florida workshops, I don't want to --

MR. BELL: Julia, did you want to respond to that question from Steve?

MS. BYRD: I will provide a little bit more of an update when I do my citizen science update at Full Council, but, seeing that holding in-person workshops anytime soon was likely not going to be feasible, Mandy and Matt have kind of switched up their -- They've kind of switched up their methodology, and so they're doing -- What they're doing is individual workshop -- Individual interviews with fishermen in south Florida, and we've been in touch with kind of the Dolphin Wahoo AP members and Florida council members to kind of help connect Mandy and Matt to some folks, to kind of fishermen, to talk to down that way.

Then they'll be using the information from those individual interviews to build a draft conceptual model that they will then kind of show, via webinar, to the folks that they interviewed, to get additional feedback and make sure that they captured everything correctly, and so the idea is that will be ready to present kind of their full kind of result from south Florida and North Carolina and Virginia to the SEP in April, and then hopefully via this seminar in May.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, Julia. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was just going to make a motion, but I don't know if we're ready for that.

MR. BELL: Well, I've had two of you interested in making a motion. Is there anything else that anybody wants to offer at this point? Steve, something new?

MR. POLAND: No. If Jessica wasn't going to make it, I was going to make it.

MR. BELL: Okay. Go ahead, and then she can second it.

MR. POLAND: All right. **I move to approve the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Seminar Series.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Second.

MR. BELL: All right. Thank you, guys. All right. Any more discussion about the motion to approve the policy, as revised? I don't see any discussion. **Any objection to approving the**

**motion? The motion is approve the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Seminar Series. I don't see any objection, and so then that motion passes.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you.

MR. BELL: All right. Well, thanks. I'm excited about this. I think this is really cool. The next item on the agenda is Handbook Update.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mel, thank you, and I just wanted to bring the group up-to-speed. We're going through a very thorough, fine-toothed review of this in-house right now. Our next steps then would be to have it reviewed by the council leadership, and so we're looking at Mel and Steve and Jessica, given her vast experience and former chair status, who was very involved in the handbook so far.

Then the next stage would be to conduct the official legal review, and so, Monica, we'll be reaching out to you about someone in NOAA GC to look at it, and, as we've discussed before, also have a consultation or a review of it with someone who is a lawyer familiar with South Carolina personnel-type issues, to make sure that we have everything as it should be related to the various personnel policies, and so, between NOAA and someone skilled in employment law, we should cover the main aspects of the handbook, the employee practices and then the federal and Magnuson-type issues. We'll keep everyone posted on that as it goes, and, as I said, we're entering into hopefully the home stretch of this, with doing these reviews.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks. Obviously, nothing to look at there, but just an update on how we're managing that process. Any questions about that? I don't see any hands. That takes us to our final item here, which would be the workplan, and there it is. Also, Attachment 3b is the description of all of the -- It's more of the written description of what's going on in the different amendments and things, but this is the easy thing to look at and work through, and so go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right. Thank you, Mel. As Mel said, if you want more what is really more detail about these different projects, it's all listed in that narrative. This is the schedule that we work on for planning from one meeting to the next and then looking at our priorities extending out into the future years.

The plan here, at each meeting, is to -- We hold this committee late in the meeting, and we have a chance to see how things went during the week before us and decide if we need to make any tweaks or changes, et cetera, in the schedule to keep your priorities on track. Last night, Myra, John Hadley, and I went through this and tried to think about how things were going this week and some of the direction from this week and how we may need to respond with regard to the scheduling for June.

I will just go through, and this version is slightly modified from the version that was in the briefing book, because it reflects our discussions last night, and the various notes that you see in the text explains what exactly was changed, and so I will start here with dolphin. Obviously, as the discussion we heard earlier today, this is a priority, to complete dolphin for June approval.

What we have done here is increase the amount of time estimated that dolphin will take in June, and we think it will take at least four hours, and it could end up taking more time than that, given the many, many actions that are in there and the fact that a fair amount of the analysis that you've seen so far is still, to some extent, preliminary, and so we do expect that to be a pretty big time expense in the June meeting, but we're preparing for that, and we're looking forward to trying to achieve the June approval date, as planned.

Red porgy, we've dropped the time down on that a little bit, from orange to yellow, and so that means, instead of assuming a four-hour slot, we assume a two-hour slot, and remember that the yellows are the slightly-less time slots that we account for. Red porgy seems to have been proceeding along pretty well, and it hasn't occupied quite as much discussion time as some of the other topics, and so, by reducing the time plan there, it gives us a chance to fit in additional time on dolphin and the next topic, which is all our favorite, red snapper.

We know we're getting the stock assessment on red snapper in June, and we've already heard some of the discussion here this week, and there was definitely clear desire to try and have something done for red snapper, if at all possible, to get the catch limits changed sooner rather than later, and so, factoring that into the equation, it told us that red snapper is probably going to take a little bit more time.

Wreckfish, the overall timeframe of that project is extended out a bit, and that's to accommodate additional shareholders meeting later this summer, or this fall, sometime, and so we're just extending that a little bit to get that in, which was the guidance earlier in the week. King mackerel stands as it was, and, yellowtail snapper, there's no change there. Greater amberjack, no change there.

When we get down to the *Oculina* discussion and Coral 10, the document is not as far along with the various analyses, the social and economic impacts and all of that type of work, and so it seems that we're going to need an extra meeting to actually get that all completed and let you look at it and then actually do approval, and so the approval has been extended out one additional meeting, to September of 2021. The plan is to deal with as much of that as we can in June, but it doesn't seem likely, with the other workload, that that could be fully wrapped up. We knew that was a stretch. We knew getting that part of this document was going to be a stretch, and so that's not altogether a big surprise.

The ABC Control Rule Amendment, that's also been extended by one meeting. That's to accommodate the work that the SSC is doing, which I think is really helping this amendment, and it's certainly helping in understanding the ABC Control Rule, and also to allow -- To get some input from the various AP chairs, and so what's called there an AP chair meeting to be held in the summer or fall, to get input from all of the various APs on the ABC Control Rule, or at least those that are impacted by this, and so that's added another meeting to that.

Snowy grouper, we got the assessment at this meeting, and it's maintaining on the schedule that it has, and this one actually -- I anticipate that we will be under a statutory deadline pretty soon to end overfishing and address the overfished situation, and probably revise the rebuilding plan, as soon as SERO gives us a letter, which probably later this week or early next week we'll start our two-year clock, and so that timeline is what it is, and we need to strive to really achieve that.

We have, looking ahead to the other assessments that we will be receiving in June, which are gag and golden tilefish, and, depending on, again, the recommendations on those stocks and their status, we may have statutory deadlines or not, and we'll know more about that come June, and so those are still penciled in there as they were, and Spanish mackerel is still penciled in as it was.

I added here, this morning, based on the discussion, the big green box here in Row 17, where it says "new" for a dolphin framework, and so we discussed, this morning, two potential dolphin frameworks to be added. The idea here is -- You see the yellow box in September, and those really can't get started until we wrap up Dolphin 10, for workload and for staff and everything else, and just all the folks involved, and so the intention here now, what we think we can provide for June, is to look at the framework policies and come up with an approach for how those frameworks could be developed, potential timeline and things of that nature.

We'll talk about that briefly in June and then potentially have more in-depth discussions on the topics and potential alternatives in September. Now, obviously, if we're not successful, in June, in approving Dolphin Wahoo 10, then I think, realistically, this dolphin framework discussion would have to extend another month, into December.

Then that brings us to the couple of projects that we had penciled in as the potential new things coming down the line, and one being the dolphin longline. This one, we also intended to be starting once Dolphin 10 was completed, and I think that is going to have to be after the dolphin framework. If the things in the framework are more of a priority, then we're probably going to need to put our efforts into getting those taken care of first. A framework is intended to be shorter, and so we need to get those in and get them submitted before we can really start as intensively on the longline amendment as we had hoped.

That's the big view of the projects and how they've changed. For June, based on these time estimates and the other committees we have coming, and we will have AP Selection and SSC Selection in June, and we're planning for the Citizen Science Committee and Law Enforcement Committee, and then a various bunch of other updates on other things that will take a little bit of time, but not an incredible amount. Then we're at our workload maximum that we plan for these meetings of eight.

I will point out that it looks a little heavy as we look ahead to September, but, as I kind of alluded to above, we'll need to see how June plays out and where we end up on red snapper and these dolphin frameworks, and then we'll be able to better balance September and December and the rest of the year. Mel, that's the big-picture view, and I'll see if there is any comments or questions, et cetera, of where we stand now.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, John. I really like this spreadsheet. It really helps me, and I guess I'm a visual person or something, but, as you guys can see, we're -- When things come up, and we have great ideas of things to move on, it has a -- In order to execute it, we have to fit in it, and we're already kind of red-lining on a couple of things, but this is a nice way to look at everything and balance it out and prioritize. Before I go to Chester, Myra, did you have anything you needed to say relative to what John was talking about, before I go to Chester for input?

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Mel. I just wanted to throw out there, on the dolphin, you also have the option to combine everything into a single document. My understanding is that you had talked

about several actions with the pelagic longline amendment, and so it would kind of be a big document, but, anyway, you still have the option of combining everything into one package.

Then I was also going to point out, at the very bottom, under Other Activities, for the allocation trees blueprint, I was talking to John Hadley earlier, and I think what we would suggest for that is to allow staff to give you an update in September, or rather to hold discussion in September, as it's shown, and then have final approval for that in December, and that would be to allow extra input from advisors, and so I just wanted to make sure that was highlighted. Thank you.

MR. BELL: Okay. Thanks, Myra. You all know that we were kind of coming up a little bit with -- It was almost like a to-do list for things remaining with dolphin, dolphin wahoo, and so what we'll have to do, of course, is look at the complete list and figure out the mechanism that is needed, either framework or -- What's the minimum mechanism needed, and then we'll look at timing and that sort of thing to move forward, and so there's a lot of moving parts, but we can certainly do all of that. Chester, you had a question or comment?

MR. BREWER: Thank you, Mel. John, as I look at this, I see, on the dolphin longline, under September of 2021, there is a minus-one, and I didn't know what the minus-one meant.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Good question, Chester. I meant to point that out. What I did was I shifted that whole project over one meeting, and so it used to start in September of 2021, and I pushed it over to start in December of 2021. I put that in there to be a placeholder to remind myself, and clearly it didn't work, and so thanks.

MR. BREWER: Okay, and so your thoughts with regard to discussing that issue, from the standpoint of -- Well, I understand that everything depends on whether or not 10 gets approved in June, but, assuming that it does, are we -- You mentioned that we would have short discussion with regard to these frameworks, and just sort of like which direction should we go, or is that not on the -- Is that not in the game plan?

MR. CARMICHAEL: That's the plan for June, and so we would review the framework provisions and what is required and look at them closer with the guidance that we have for the particular actions and try to map out how those could be addressed, and it will give us an opportunity to discuss with SERO and the Science Center just the realities of getting the data and the analyses to support that and be able, in June at least, to talk about a realistic plan for getting it done.

MR. BREWER: Okay. Thank you so much.

MR. BELL: All right. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. A couple of questions here. We've had this commercial logbook on this list for a long, long time, and, you know, it used to be that we sent out that little Survey Monkey, and we rated them all, and it slowly, no matter what it was rated, just kept getting pushed down the list, and now I see that it's been pushed behind the dolphin longline issue, which I know that's important, but that only affects five boats. The commercial logbook affects 500 vessels, and I think it's important that we get this logbook thing done.



I mean, here we are now that you can even renew your permits online, but you can't turn your logbook in online, and I just would like to see us get started on that and get something done. I mean, I'm looking at this schedule, and, at the rate we're going, it's 2024 before it ever gets implemented, and so I'm a little disappointed in that. The last iteration of this list, that logbook was above the dolphin longline, and I don't understand what is so pressing about this dolphin longline that it keeps jumping up above things that we've had on here that are important, and maybe somebody could help me out with that.

MR. BELL: Andy may be the person, but my thinking on that, Tim, is that we could establish that as a priority, and we could push forward, and we could maybe make something happen, but we might be in a position kind of like with the for-hire sector reporting system and all, where we had that kind of push forward, but then there's a lot of moving parts to actually get it up and implemented and in place and functional, and so Andy might be wanting to comment on that.

MR. STRELCHECK: Mel, I wasn't going to comment on that. Clay or John maybe could specifically comment to timing, or we need to get Dave Gloeckner involved. What I was going to comment on is I guess two things. One is with the dolphin frameworks and the longline action, and I think it does make a lot of sense to try to combine those, if we can, and certainly I would look to staff to provide some recommendations with regard to how to do that and if that makes sense going forward.

I did want to ask John and team, given our discussions in Snapper Grouper, about red snapper, and so there's a little bit of uncertainty, obviously, with regard to what we can or can't do with the assessment, and then having to determine whether we're going to have to change allocation or not, but there was discussion of potentially doing an abbreviated framework for June if we didn't change the allocation, and so this is looking at more of a longer-term schedule for the red snapper assessment response, and how would a shorter-term response fit into this, from your perspective, John, or Myra?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Andy, and let me just comment to Tim first, and then I will get back to that. Tim, we'll hear more about the logbook program from the Center tomorrow, in the Center's report. In December, they reported on it, and it was coming along, and one of the suggestions -- I think it was in December, in their report, but that the idea was to get it up and get it voluntary and learn from it a bit, and then be able to come back to the council with some more specific information about what they really think is necessary to get that put into place.

Our hope is that, if that plays out over this year, and, late this year or early next, they come to us with here's what we need to do to make this happen, then, potentially, we can do that in a much quicker timeline. What you see there is just the default timeline for most every project, but I certainly hope that will be much shorter, and so the timing of these is based on then just that, and dolphin was based on the discussion in December, and my understanding was that commercial logbooks was put onto the later one because of the desire to let the Science Center put this into place and hear from the fishermen and come to us with what they really need. Really, as Mel said, it will avoid, hopefully, some of the issues we've experienced in the for-hire reporting program that has taken three or four years now to get in place.

Then, as far as the red snapper, yes, there was the discussion about the framework, and then there was the further discussion about what can be done under a framework and dealing with the

allocations and all of that, and so my understanding is that we're looking into that now, and the idea is to try and do something ASAP to be able to respond to the stock assessment and be able to, if possible, increase that ABC and then that ACL for that fishery.

I think there's going to be some more discussion about that, but we just didn't think that we could necessarily change the timeline at this point until we actually knew what we were working on, and that we may likely end up in a situation where we're perhaps doing one of our expedited frameworks that we are able to do in Snapper Grouper to simply change the ABC values and then move into, after that, the regular amendment process that we anticipate that we need to do as well.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, John. Andy, I apologize for trying to read your mind.

MR. STRELCHECK: Mel, can I follow-up?

MR. BELL: Sure. Please.

MR. STRELCHECK: John, thanks for that, and so then, I guess, the obvious next question would be, if we did proceed with an abbreviated framework, from your staff's viewpoint, do you feel like anything would have to drop off of this priorities list for the June meeting, or do you feel like everything could be accomplished with the proposed workload and that abbreviated framework?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I would say that's something that certainly we've been pondering, that Myra has been pondering, and we potentially have to factor in your folks as well. We do think that, if we are directed to do the abbreviated framework, and the idea is to have that together for June, there probably is going to have to be a cost for some of these other projects, and so our thought on a couple that we could consider are greater amberjack, because that isn't under a statutory deadline, and it needs some work, but it could perhaps be put off a little bit and potentially skip council discussion in June.

Then the other one is the ABC control rule, because I feel like we made good progress on a few of those, and certainly simplifying that amendment, and we do have some SSC workgroups working on that, and so, even if staff paused on that a little bit, at this time, I don't think it would greatly slow down the overall process of that amendment, and so, if we do need to make some sacrifices, those are the two that we're suggesting, amberjack and the control rule.

MR. BELL: Does that cover it, Andy?

MR. STRELCHECK: Great. John, certainly, thank you for laying that out, and I think it was important just to acknowledge that we would be prioritizing that red snapper framework, if we are able to proceed on it, and it might come at the cost of something else.

MR. BELL: All right. That's a good example in the discussion, and you can see, when we talk about schedules and workloads, the interconnectivity of the SERO staff and council staff and the Science Center, and it's a balancing act, and a huge workload for everybody, and so, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Mel. Staff requested that I also acknowledge that we are continuing to work on CMP 32, which is the joint amendment with the Gulf on cobia, and so I wanted to make

sure, even though it's not part of this workplan, that it's acknowledged that we are continuing to work on that. Thank you.

MR. BELL: Right, and so that's going on behind the scenes of this spreadsheet. All right. John, what do we need to do with this next?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I have the guidance that we are prioritizing dolphin wahoo for June, and we are prioritizing red snapper, and I think we may have some more discussion, now or at Full Council, perhaps, about the potential for expedited framework, and get some guidance there, and then the sacrifices would be greater amberjack and the ABC control rule, if needed, to meet those June priorities, and so, with that said, I think, if folks are clear and understand where we're coming from, we don't really need any formal action on this. I will say, on the dolphin frameworks, the idea, essentially, in June is to come forward with a plan of attack for getting them done.

MR. BELL: All right. As you can see, if you add one thing, something else has to move, and, I mean, that's just, again, the constant balancing act of this with priorities, and so is everybody clear on the plan as it exists right now? Are there any other questions or comments or concerns? Again, we'll get this in June, and we'll have a more clear sense of how we're going to move once we get to June. Anything else? I am not seeing any hands. That was the last thing we had on the agenda for the Executive Committee. Is there any other business that needs to come before the Executive Committee right now? I don't see any hands, and so then we will adjourn the Executive Committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 4, 2021.)

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Transcribed By  
Amanda Thomas  
April 26, 2021

# SAFMC March Council Meeting

## Attendee Report: (3/01/21 - 3/05/21)

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