

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

**Westin Jekyll Island
Jekyll Island, Georgia**

March 5, 2020

SUMMARY MINUTES

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Chris Conklin
Anna Beckwith
Dr. Kyle Christiansen
Tim Griner
LCDR Jeremy Montes
David Whittaker

Mel Bell, Vice-Chair
Chester Brewer
Dr. Carolyn Belcher
Spud Woodward
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Steve Poland

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Shep Grimes
Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. George Sedberry
Dewey Hemilright
Tony Dilernia
Pat O'Shaugnessy

Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. Clay Porch
Duane Smith
Erika Burgess
Dr. Wilson Laney
Rick DeVictor

Other observers and participants attached.

The Full Council Session of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Thursday, March 5, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We are going to start in Full Council, and, if folks are listening on the webinar, we're kind of changing the order of what we're going to do a little bit, but we are going to do the shark presentation, and then we're going to go into the council staff reports, and then the SERO presentation, Southeast Fisheries Science Center presentations, and then hopefully do the Kitty Hawk Wind Project update. If those folks aren't here yet, then we'll go into the committee reports, and we'll take the Kitty Hawk Wind Project when they get here, and then we'll wrap up with the agency and liaison reports and any other business, and so that's the plan, and hopefully we'll be able to get through all of that today.

It's always weird, because, once we get to Full Council, then we start introducing everybody that's been here all week, and so we have Tony and Dewey, who have been here all week, and we also have J.D. with the Gulf Council that's been right up front up here all week. Our first order of business is a voice recognition, and so we'll start with Carolyn, and if you wouldn't mind doing a voice recognition.

DR. BELCHER: Carolyn Belcher, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

MR. WOODWARD: Spud Woodward, Georgia.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN: Kyle Christiansen, Georgia.

MR. CONKLIN: Chris Conklin, South Carolina.

MR. BREWER: Chester Brewer, Florida.

MR. WHITAKER: David Whitaker, South Carolina.

MR. BELL: Mel Bell, South Carolina.

MR. DUGAS: J.D. Dugas, Gulf Council, Louisiana.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jessica McCawley, Florida.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Dewey Hemilright, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, North Carolina.

MR. DILERNIA: Tony DiLernia, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, New York.

MS. BECKWITH: Anna Beckwith, North Carolina.

MR. GRINER: Tim Griner, North Carolina.

MR. POLAND: Steve Poland, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

LCDR MONTES: Jeremy Montes, U.S. Coast Guard.

DR. PORCH: Clay Porch, NOAA Fisheries.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA General Counsel.

DR. CRABTREE: Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. MCGOVERN: Jack McGovern, NOAA Fisheries.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, everybody. The first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any changes or modifications to the agenda? Does anybody know of any other business right now? All right. Any objections to approval of the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

The next order of business is Approval of the December Minutes. Any modifications or changes to those minutes? Any objection to approval of those minutes? Seeing none, the minutes stand approved.

Now we're going to get into the long-awaited shark presentation. Everybody is so excited about sharks, and I can tell you that I'm sorry that Art Sapp is not here, and he's fishing in a tournament, because I feel like, every time he opens his mouth, the first word is something about sharks, and so he's sad that he's not here for this presentation, but welcome, Karyl, and I'm so glad that you're here, and Randy is here too, to give us this presentation, and I'm sure that there will be lots of questions about sharks, and Chester feels like he can even back you up and give this presentation if something were to happen here. Thank you.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thank you so much for that welcome. That was wonderful. Good morning, everybody. I am going to disappoint some of you, and there is no Jaws theme for this presentation, but you can imagine it in your head, or, if you want to, you can imagine the Baby Shark one.

Moving on, thank you all for the invitation to come and discuss shark depredation with you. As I am sure many of you know, shark depredation is not a new phenomenon, and it has been happening for years, and there are a lot of negative impacts regarding shark depredation, including mortality on target stocks, loss revenues, loss seafood, gear damage, and just the overall negative social impacts.

It seems, through anecdotal evidence, that it is happening more and more frequently over the last few years. When I first started in HMS, we never got calls about shark depredation. It just never came up, and now it happens all the time. We are always getting calls from fishermen, and we have received letters from the councils that this is happening, and it is a growing problem, and it is happening throughout all the areas that sharks happen to live in, and so it's happening for all the councils, all the states, HMS-managed fisheries, and it's happening in all the council-managed fisheries in all the regions.

Some of them make the news, and people get great little shots, and a lot of them we just hear about on the phone or from all of you, and so both this council and the Gulf of Mexico Council requested

HMS do something to solve the problem, but there are some factors that limit how much we can do.

Some of the challenges we have, before we try to figure out a good solution, is that reporting is not consistent. We are getting the calls on the phone, but we're not really getting verifiable reports of depredation events, and we don't really know the extent of the problem or where it's happening. We know it's happening everywhere, but we don't know the specifics on where, and we also have trouble confirming what the shark species are that is involved. There is a lot of shark species that are implicated in these events, and some of these species are just hunky-dory and very healthy, like blacktip or smoothhound, but some of the species are prohibited, and a couple of the species are listed under the ESA.

As I mentioned before, it seems to be across all the councils and all the fisheries. I met with some people from Ocean Wild Seafood on Tuesday, and they wanted me to remember that shrimp was also an issue, and shrimp trawlers have that problem, and, yes, we do have that on our list.

A lot of you may not have been paying much attention to shark management over the years, other than sharks are managed, and so I just wanted to give you a very brief history of where we started and where we are now. Shark management started with the first FMP back in 1993, and that FMP did a number of things. It started reporting for shark fishing, it established permit holders, and it established quotas, and it prevented finning and all of that good stuff, and it also established three complexes, species complexes, for thirty-nine species.

These are complexes that you're all familiar with. There are pelagic sharks, and those are the sharks that are caught by the pelagic longline, and also the Mid-Atlantic and New England recreational fisheries, and so these are blue sharks and the shortfin mako. You have the small coastal sharks, and these are the sharks that are caught closer to inshore in the recreational fisheries and were caught traditionally commercially with gillnets, and so these are sharpnose, bonnethead, finetooth, and then you have the large coastal complex, and that's the complex that many of you associate with the commercial fishery, and it was the primary commercial fishery for sharks, using bottom longline gear, and so this is tiger, bull, blacktip, and so those three complexes were started back in 1993.

Sharks, at that point, were determined to be overfished, and the stock assessments were done on a complex basis, and so we started limited access in 1999, and, since then, we've been managing more and more and more on a species level and assessing at a species level. Back in 2015, we added smooth dogfish, Florida smoothhound, and Gulf smoothhound to our complex, and we have also had a number of stock assessments that have split the species into two stocks, an Atlantic stock and a Gulf of Mexico stock, and so, for example, Atlantic sharpnose, we have a Gulf of Mexico Atlantic sharpnose stock and an Atlantic sharpnose stock, and so we now have forty-two species and forty-five stocks overall.

For most of the time that we have managed sharks, those commercial quotas have been harvested fully, and sometimes exceeded, and they have been harvested really quickly. That has changed in recent years. In recent years, we have not been fully harvesting our commercial quotas.

This is showing the biomass of our large coastal sharks, or some of the major ones that we've had stock assessments for. Sandbar is the one that is sort of the purple-blue line. As you can see, it's

going down. The last assessment indicated that it is rebuilding, and it is considered overfished, but overfishing is not occurring. This is a species that most people cannot take. It is allowed commercially if you are part of the shark research fishery, and we have about five to ten vessels participating in that fishery every year, and it's 100 percent observer coverage, when they go out on the trips.

The other species there, dusky, is now a prohibited species, and it is overfished, and it still has overfishing occurring, and we are currently under litigation that we have not done enough to stop overfishing for dusky sharks, even though you are not allowed to land or target them.

The light blue, at the top, is Gulf of Mexico blacktip, that stock is perfectly healthy, and we could probably increase the quota, but we're not even landing the quota that we currently have, and then scalloped hammerhead is the greenish one, and that one is considered overfished. It is also, from the Caribbean south, listed under ESA as a threatened species, and so that does not include our mainland or around Florida, and that is just Caribbean south.

Small coastal sharks and our smoothhound species is here, and so you can see these species are doing a little bit better, for the most part, and you see that they are going down, and then they go back up, and the exception there is blacknose, which is considered overfished at this point.

As I mentioned, recently, the quotas have not been harvested for large coastals. Small coastals, we have never fully taken the small coastal quota, and so this is showing both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic landings, along with the species groups that don't have a region, aren't split. Aggregated large coastals are pretty much all the large coastals, except for sandbar, and then you have hammerhead, and that's the three hammerheads, smooth, great, and scalloped.

Non-blacknose small coastal, that's what the non-BKN SCS stands for, and that's your sharpnose, bonnethead, and finetooth. Then blacknose is separated. Smoothhound includes smooth dogfish, Florida smoothhound, and Gulf smoothhound. The large coastal research are the large coastal sharks that the research fishermen land, and "SSB" stands for sandbar research, and then we have blue, porbeagle, and the other pelagic sharks. As you can see, the average in the last three years is nowhere close to the quota.

We are taking some steps to try to improve that situation. In our shark specifications for this year, we have increased the starting retention limit, and I believe, in the Atlantic, it's currently at thirty-six. In the past, it's been at twenty-five, and we're also changing how we're sort of monitoring the quota. To ensure that we've had the quota the full year, once the quota has been at 20 percent, we have slowed down the retention limit and then picked it back up around July, when the sharks are in their more northern part of their range. This year, we're going to be looking more at 30 percent, instead of 20 percent, and see where we're at.

We're also working on Amendment 14, and this amendment will be establishing, or reestablishing, the mechanism on how we determine what the commercial shark quotas are, and so looking at the ABC control rules that we have and where we go from there to calculate the ACLs, or annual catch limits. We did scoping last summer, and we are working on the proposed rule now.

Spatial management and data collection, we are very interested in collecting scientific research data from the closed areas. A lot of the closed areas we have have been put in place, been in place,

for around twenty years, and I know this council is very familiar with the Florida east coast and the Charleston Bump areas, and they were put in place in order to reduce bycatch across all HMS fisheries, and a lot of you think just on swordfish, but it was for all of the species, and sharks was a big part of that, and so we are working on how do we get into the closed areas and seeing what's happening in those closed areas, including for sharks.

Atlantic blacktip shark assessment, so Atlantic blacktips were last assessed in 2006, and, at that time, the scientists could not determine what the status was, and so Atlantic blacktip is currently an unknown status, and the assessment is going forth right now, and that's very exciting. It will be done by the end of this year, I believe, and then we are starting on the hammerhead shark stock assessments, where we'll be looking at all the different species of hammerheads, and it's a research track assessment, and it will take a couple of years to complete.

Then we're also working on implementing biological opinions. I mentioned scalloped hammerhead is listed as threatened only in the Caribbean and south, and oceanic whitetip is listed as threatened throughout the range of the species, and so that includes all of the U.S., and then, internally in HMS, we have started what we're calling SHARE, or Shark Fishery Review, where we are exploring the health of the fishery itself and not just the stocks, but how the fishermen are doing, how many permits we have, what's been happening to the permits, what happens if we increase or decrease the retention limits, what things do the fishermen do as a result, and are we having the impact we think we're having, or are we having a different one?

As a result of that, I wanted to share some data that we have for it, and this is just the number of active vessels by permit type, and you have the Gulf of Mexico on the left, and the Atlantic on the right, and these are -- By active, we mean any vessels that have landed, reported landed, at least one large coastal shark.

As you can see, there are a lot of state-water fishermen, and then that's what the orange lines are, and the blue lines are directed permit holders, and so these are fishermen who can target sharks federally, and then the green lines are the incidental permit holders, and they are always limited by a much lower trip limit. One of the things that I want to point is, while the state-water fishermen, there are a lot more permit holders, when we look at that compared to the landings, the majority of the landings do come from the federal permit holders.

That is sort of the history and where we are right now and where we're going. If you call up to us, and you're telling us that one of your snapper grouper whatever happened to be eaten by a shark, we might ask you these three questions, or try to find out the answer to these questions, and that's are there fishing techniques or strategies that you're using that might attract sharks? Are there specific locations or seasons where you see the depredation is more frequent? We're also trying to figure out what are the best practices to quantify the ecological and socioeconomic impacts of depredation, and we need all of this type of information before we can really come up with a possible solution.

We are making some progress, in terms of trying to figure out what species are involved, and Marcus Drymon published a paper where there is a genetic method to identify shark species, where they basically take a little swab of the bitten-off part and use genetics to try to figure that out, and it is done at the lab, and it's not something we can just do at the dock.

In summary, we are very much aware of this issue, and we are aware that it appears to be increasing, but we're having a problem really quantifying the extent of the problem. We really need more data, and so we are looking -- In addition to asking people who write to us for more information, we're looking at how do we change the observer programs to collect this information, what do we have to do on logbooks to it, maybe electronic monitoring. In other words, videos could help us. Depredation has been identified as a research priority in some of the grant processes, and so Saltonstall-Kennedy and BREP both put out shark depredation as a research priority.

The last thing that I want to make sure that you all are aware of is our management is bound by the Magnuson requirements, just like all of you, and we still have to rebuild overfished stocks, and we have to stop overfishing, and we need, basically, to find a way to balance the problem that sharks happen to be predators, and we are rebuilding the stocks of those predators, with the need to also allow for everybody else to go fishing on the things that sharks happen to eat, and so we're looking at a lot of ways, but it is kind of a conundrum, and I definitely look forward to hearing from all of you, and that's it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Karyl. I am sure that folks are going to have questions, and this was a great presentation, and thank you guys so much for traveling here to give it to us. Can you talk a little bit more about that SHARE program, how long it's been in effect and just a little bit more of the specifics on that program?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: SHARE is something we are doing internally, and we've been working on it for about a year, but we have had some issues just trying to find the time for it among all the other priorities that we have, and so we hope to have something maybe at the fall AP that's more detailed that we can share, and what we're doing here is very similar to what we did with the swordfish fishery a number of years ago and with bluefin tuna, where we looked at the IBQ system over the last three years.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other questions?

MR. BREWER: It's nice to see you again. I can only speak to my area, and I'm sure that things are different in different areas, and I live in south Florida, and the, quote, problem sharks that we're seeing are large coastal, and it's sandbars, and it's bulls, for the most part, bulls in particular. The problem really and truly has gotten out of hand. I have fished down there for I guess forty-five years or so, and I don't remember having a situation where you almost can't get a caught fish to the boat without having a shark attack it.

I was talking to a couple of people before I came up here, and there are now reports of sharks going after sailfish, believe it or not, and the -- I did want to comment on your fishing techniques that might cause a problem, and this is something that I witnessed I guess not that long ago, and I couldn't even believe that it was an allowable practice, and that is, when people are cobia fishing, and this is both commercial and recreational, but, when they're cobia fishing, they will catch a bonito, or some other bloody, oily fish, and they will half-butcher it and hang it over the side of the boat.

To do that, what they're -- What they're trying to do is attract sharks, particularly large coastals, because the cobia tend to swim with those sharks, and it's better known that they follow the big mantas during their migration, but the cobia will also follow those sharks, and so what happens is

people are -- They are fishing for cobia, but, to get them, they are training the sharks to come to the boats, and it's gotten to the point now where you pull up on your boat, and you're getting ready to anchor up and whatnot, and here come the sharks, because they have been trained. It's bordering on being as stupid as hand-feeding sharks when you're taking out dive tours, and that's a practice that I think should be looked at and discouraged, to the maximum extent possible. Thank you.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Karyl. I appreciate the presentation, and certainly I understand the constraints you guys have, just like we all -- Unfortunately, your fish eat our fish, and we've just got to work through that, but I've been trying -- As you know, we've heard about this a lot from our fishermen, whether it's the shrimp fishery or the snapper grouper fishery or any of the fisheries, and so I have been trying to tell people to -- First of all, the council doesn't have the authority related to sharks, but HMS does, but, if you're going to communicate with HMS, try to be quantitative, and try to give them information that they need, and, from what you've said, obviously, you do need the data, and so I'm just thinking something that perhaps could be set up, where folks could provide you -- They could fill in certain data fields for you.

I think there would be great value in some sort of reporting system for you, however we set that up, because I just sort of steer them in your direction in general, and you've probably heard from some of them, but they do have -- They do have valid observations, and they see things, and they send me video clips or whatever, and that's all great, but, if there was some system in place where you guys could capture that in sort of a cooperative sense maybe, and I'm not trying to create a whole separate program for you, but I think that would help, because then they would know that there's a way they can communicate these concerns, but do it in a manner that actually helps you and provides you with as much quantitative stuff as they can, including some of our shrimpers have had issues with gear, attacking the nets, and nets are expensive for the shrimp fishery, and so document it, or just explain how much it costs to repair a net, or a replace a net, and that sort of thing.

I don't know, but it would just seem, if we could set something like that up somehow, where the information could flow to you in a more standardized form, that would be of value, I would think, and it might help with the fishermen understanding that there is a way they can communicate their concerns, and their concerns are valid, and their observations are valid, and they could be useful.

Species identification, I know that's kind of an issue, and we hear some of the same things, and they will be saying it's this shark or that shark, and identification sometimes can be challenging with sharks, obviously, and so I don't know if you have plans or are thinking towards some sort of cooperative program or something that you could set up or data collection program that would be standardized, but I could see that being useful, and, of course, everything takes money and people, but that's just -- I would see that as something helpful, and then, in terms of what can be done about it, I think some of them are thinking that, well, we need to be removing more of these sharks.

Well, you're showing right now that, within a given fishery, we're not even hitting the quotas, and how do you remove more sharks if you can't -- That would take more of a focused effort, and perhaps geographically focused or something, or species focused, and now you're in a program to eradicate them, which kind of sounds like it's going in the wrong direction, and so it's a challenge, and I don't envy you guys, but I was just thinking in terms of an ability for them to communicate directly with you in a standardized fashion, that there would be value in that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you want to respond, Karyl?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I think, on some of the electronic reporting apps, they are thinking about adding in fields for depredation, which at least we get some of the information, and it wouldn't get all of it, and, of course, it depends upon how it's added. In terms of the removing more sharks, yes, not only is that a challenge for that, but, for some species, like blacktip, sure, remove more sharks, because they seem to be healthy, but, for things like dusky, that could be a problem, and then just the interactions of people taking more blacktip could lead to more taking of dusky, which it's sort of -- So, yes, there are problems.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think that some kind of an app, or some way that folks could report, would be helpful, because, I mean, we get tons of calls at the FWC, and we're trying to just answer the questions and not necessarily have them call you guys, but, if there was a way that we could tell them, hey, you can download this app, and you can enter the information for every interaction that you have, and they are trying to quantify it, I think that's a great idea.

MR. POLAND: Thanks, Karyl, for the presentation. I mean, I certainly understand the complexities of the issues, and the same constraints you have that we have on managing some of our fisheries. I first kind of wanted to mirror what Mel and Jessica said.

Any type of reporting app or just inventory of depredation events, and I know, up my way, and I'm probably one of the ones to blame to contribute to the increase in phone calls, because I get a lot of phone calls from the Outer Banks, the Oregon Inlet and Hatteras fishing fleet, and I send them your way, but I know they take it upon themselves to start documenting shark depredations, with videos and pictures from the cockpit and the bridge, and they have that information. Any type of reporting medium that can be created to funnel that information to you guys, I would certainly advocate for that, and I would assist in any way in that.

As far as increasing harvest on the sharks, I mean, that's something that I hear from the guys up our way, if they could just land more sharks and take them out of the water, it would be fine, but I'm also hearing that it's those large coastals, especially out of Oregon Inlet, and it's dusky and sandbar, and I understand the issues with doing that, but then, looking at just total shark landings, I am -- I feel like, as a management entity, HMS is -- You seem pretty liberal on allowing harvest, and so what's going on in the market, or can you speak to what's really going on in the market, that's keeping these landings down, and maybe some of the commercial reps around the table can speak to it too, because it seems like, to me, there is plenty of fish out there, and so it's obviously a market condition issue, and do you have any insight on that?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: The only thing I can say is that, yes, there are definitely market issues with the fishery, and I don't know if you all saw a web story that we put out that it would be good for people to buy sharks, that U.S.-caught sharks are sustainably managed, and you should go out and catch them, and, while we got a lot of good feedback from commercial feedback and some recreational fishermen, we also got a lot of feedback from beyond, basically that was what are you talking about, and sharks are endangered, and nobody should be eating sharks. We also got feedback of what are you talking about, and sharks have too much mercury, and you shouldn't be encouraging people to eat toxic meat. Obviously, both of those things are not true, which is why we put out the web story, but I think it's hard to improve a market when those thoughts are so

prevalent in the public, and so we're doing what we can, and NOAA Fisheries is not a marketing agency.

MR. GRINER: Could you tell me a little bit about who conducts your stock assessments, and how do you prioritize what species you're going to assess? Could you also tell me when was the last assessment for dusky and sandbar?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Our stock assessments are done using the SEDAR process, and so the same process this council uses. They're actually pretty over-stretched, because they do the Caribbean, South Atlantic, Gulf, and HMS stock assessments, and so that's the process that is used. For prioritization, the agency does have a prioritization document that we try to follow when setting it, and we tend to look at what species haven't been assessed recently, which unfortunately tends to be a lot, and which ones are most important, in terms of the fishery. Sandbar and dusky were just assessed very recently, and I don't remember exactly what years, but it was I want to say 2016 and 2017.

MR. BELL: Just in a discussion of markets and things, one of the things that I have noticed, of folks that might have been in the shark fishery or are thinking about the shark fishery, commercially, is there's been discussion at the state level and the federal level about the prohibition of the sale of fins, and, of course, finning is already prohibited, but the sale of the fins -- In some cases, the fin can be the most valuable part, in terms of per pound of sharks, and so those things are floating around all the time, because the folks -- I guess some folks think that we're going to save sharks, because they're all endangered, by prohibiting the sale of fins, which is a part of the shark.

If you're going to harvest the shark, you don't want to waste that part, and so I think that may be part of the resistance for folks maybe getting in the fishery, or it just seems like you never know when, at the state level or the federal level, something might happen, and, the next thing you know, you can't sell the most valuable part, or at least a valuable part, of the harvesting, and I've heard of that and seen it in the news and discussions locally.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't know if you want to respond to that.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I'm not sure how to respond to that. I will say the agency recently put out several documents regarding the shark fin bans and how we are not supportive, because we do have sustainably-managed species, and the fin bans wouldn't increase how they are managed. It would just limit what the fishermen can sell of an already sustainably-managed stock.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Some of the questions that I hear asked is why aren't we harvesting our quotas. If you go look at the amount of fishermen left to go harvest the quota, it's a lot less, and there's a lot more hooks in the water, I know, for the pelagic longline industry, and we're down to -- Probably, five years ago, we were setting eight million hooks, and we're down to 3.7 million, maybe, last year, and so it's going down, decreasing.

The propaganda that's put out there with the shark fins and everything, and, you know, you might hear the number of seventy-three million to 100 million sharks are killed every year for their fins. Well, they've been saying that for twenty years, and so something is wrong, and there should be no more sharks, if that's the number.

Simply the U.S. is the poster child for the rest of the countries, and we've done the right thing here in the U.S. We have never got no credit for it, until recently, which I wish it would have happened five years ago, that NOAA would have come out with a press release, as Chris Oliver did the other day, which I'm grateful, but I'm worried about it's too little too late.

As far as the shark depredation, get used to it. There ain't nothing that's going to change, and there is just going to be more shark depredation. HMS needs more data, observer programs, logbooks, and we've already got that in place for the commercial fishing industry, pelagic or whatever, and are they going to do that to the recreational industry, logbooks, or are they looking at observer programs for the for-hire industries, different ways to get this data? It's clearly right here that they need more data, and so the shark depredation is going to continue on, and it's not going to get no -- They're going to continue biting, and I just hope that folks don't get bit, and so get used to it, I guess, as sometimes I've been told that I have to do.

MR. CONKLIN: I used to pack a good bit of shark, and it was great. The fellas would set their line, and they would go out, and they would get their limit, and they would bring them in in the morning, and I cut all the fins off, and they would take those and freeze them. When they got enough to ship over to China, I guess is where they would send them, they would send them out, and I would take all the bodies, all the tubes, and pack them up into vats, and they would go straight to a supermarket, and it was a great, low-priced source of protein.

There's just not enough guys going out to get them anymore, and that's the bottom line, is we need more hooks in the water, and, if any kind of legislation passes through to make the fins worthless, I would imagine it's probably going to probably put the whole industry, what little bit is left, completely out, and we'll all be walking across the ocean on sharks and snapper.

Also, we have a reporting tool for shark depredation, and it's MyFishCount, and so, if you guys aren't aware of it, you can pick up your phone and go start reporting your shark depredation instances, and Chip can get it and present it to us next year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Chris.

DR. PORCH: Several points, and one is, just in case Tim didn't get it, we're the ones who do the shark assessments, and so they are, effectively, our fourth council. As you can see, with forty-five species, there's a similar load there. The other point I wanted to make is, when you look at these graphs, and thanks for showing them to us, Karyl, of the abundance of sharks, one thing that really leaps out at you is that, one, they are increasing in recent years, and the assessments are showing that, but they're nowhere near the levels, in most cases, except for blacktip, of what they were in the 1960s and 1970s, and, actually, from the old-timers that I know that were diving in those days, they would say that too, that there were a lot more sharks there. Even in my experience, I used to see more as a kid than I see now, and, granted, I'm not everywhere, but where I was.

I think Chester's point is really important here, that they are learning to seek out boats, and I think that makes them look a lot more common than they really are. Especially, when you look at sandbar, the indicators are they have had a little blip up, but they're not a whole lot more common than they were a few years back, but I will be they are learning to track down boats, and they hear a meal ticket.

Just like Chester's observation, as a diver, I took my kid diving at Looe Key, and I jump in the water, and there is piles of fish behind the boat, and that doesn't happen in places where you don't have lots of people feeding the fish. I mean, literally just stacking the surface right behind the boat, and sharks are swimming all around, which is really cool for me to show my kid that, look, here's a shark, and he swam five feet from you, when he recovers from the shock that one came that close, but it's because people are feeding them, obviously, and people are doing it in all sorts of ways, and so you see it all over the world.

Even big tiger sharks, they hear certain sounds, and they know it's a fishing boat that tends to dump the effluent in the water, and then they just come flying, and so you think it's bad with sandbars and bulls, and how about sixteen-foot tiger sharks coming up behind your boat, but this is happening all over, and so I think a lot of it is not only the fact that people are feeding them, but they are learning, just like bottlenose dolphins, to rob fishing lines, and it's just been something that's been going on for years, and so, I mean, Dewey may be right that this is going to be a difficult thing to work.

The other point that I wanted to make is that they too are also being managed to maximum sustainable yield, and that's a requirement of the law, and the reality is, probably for a lot of people who are fishing for other species, they would rather see sharks fished down below maximum sustainable yield, which is, typically for sharks, something closer to half of the unfished level, and so that generally means, for many sharks, that you actually have to continue allowing to increase, so that they reach that level that is specified by law.

This is where I kind of jump into what does ecosystem-based management mean, because, when you start allowing one stock to achieve MSY, or go above MSY, you're actually affecting potentially the maximum sustainable yield of other fish, and so this is probably where we need to have a discussion of how do we actually implement ecosystem-based management, when we have large predators like this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good point. Other questions?

DR. BELCHER: Karyl, I just wanted to put it out, but, if you guys didn't already know, the shrimp fishery is probably going to be your harder one to get observations from, because they don't have observers, and they don't have electronic reporting and that kind of thing, but there is a researcher with Georgia Southern, Christine Bedore, who has been using some undergraduate students to go out and try to get an understanding. I mean, obviously, it's not super fleet intensive, and I think she just has a few people that she goes out on vessels with, but they have been documenting some of that, and so that might be a potential resource, at least to kind of think about how you would get some outreach to the fishermen.

Similarly, Brian Fluech with Georgia Sea Grant and Marine Extension, they have been working on things like getting a handle on what's going on with blackgill disease in that fleet as well, and so they have apps that they have been able to roll up to help get that information back, and so maybe there's something that Brian's group might be able to think about that might get you some of that observation relative to the depredation in that fleet.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's great information. Are there other questions or comments? I know Art is not here, and so I'm trying to represent some of the things that he likes to talk to us about, and one of the things that he brings up -- He takes a lot of videos when he's out on the water of this happening, and is there a way that folks can provide videos, or, once again, like Mel is suggesting, would you need a specialized app that would allow folks to upload those videos, and is that type of information helpful to you guys, because Art has tons of videos that he saves, but he just says what do I do with them, who do I provide them to, what can be done with these videos?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: He is welcome to reach out to us, and we can talk about how we can get some of the videos. Some people do send them to us, and some of them are fascinating, and you can see the shark, and others you just sort of see a shadow under the water, and that's not necessarily helpful for identifying, but it could be helpful in terms of what were they doing when the shark appeared.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. That's helpful. Any more questions or comments? Thank you, Karyl, and thank you, Randy, for coming to talk to us about it. I appreciate you being engaged on this issue, and, of course, the South Atlantic has sent you guys letters, and I hope that we can continue this dialogue in the future, as we both try to work together on what could be done about this. Chris, did you have something else that you want to add?

MR. CONKLIN: Sure. Over the years, people have asked me how to get into the shark fishery, and I am a little naïve on HMS stuff, but you just can't go get a permit, and they're limited access now, and is that correct, for the record? Is there any way to try and ramp up fishing effort to open up more directed shark permits? I mean, it's my understanding they're not that valuable anyways, but, I mean, if you -- While you can still sell the fins, if you could open it up, I would imagine there would be a few more people who would try and participate in the fishery, if they could, because it's close to shore, and expenses are low, and there is demand for the stuff.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: You are correct that they are limited access, and so, in order to enter the commercial fishery at this point, you do need to find somebody who is leaving and obtain their permit. The smoothhound fishery is open access, and so you can obtain a permit for smooth dogfish, Florida smoothhound, or Gulf smoothhound, and that quota is not even close to being reached, and so there's plenty of opportunity in that fishery.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: For a directed shark permit, it's about \$10,000, and so you can go into the fishery, for the piece of paper, for the permit part, for \$10,000, and a lot of the permits you have to have a tri-pack, if you're pelagic longline fishing, but you can also have an incidental shark if you're a pelagic longline fishing, but, for \$10,000, you can enter, and it's not a problem. I mean, I don't perceive it or hear it being a problem if somebody wanted into the fishery, but you've got to have a profitable fishery, and I don't know how -- Unless you're trailerable boat, and then you could probably make it on thirty or fifty fish or do something like that, a boutique fishery, but it would be really hard for any amount, really, if you're traveling or something.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else? All right. Thank you, Karyl, and thank you, Randy. As always, it's great to have you, and thanks for coming and giving us a presentation, and we look forward to working with you guys in the future. Next up on our agenda are Council Staff Reports, and we're going to start with John on the Executive Director's Report.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you very much. I don't have a whole lot to report on, but you see that a number of the staff will come up and have a few things to say. I just want to tell you that we had an office renovation right after the December meeting, which went way better than we had expected, and they have been renovating the building for quite a while, and everything has taken three-times as long as they planned, but they got our offices done over the holiday season, and we were back in early January, with new carpet and new paint, and it's very nice. The offices look a lot better, a lot more professional.

We took that opportunity to reclaim our reception area in the front of the offices, and it gives us a more professional appearance, certainly, for visitors and guests and prospective job applicants who come by, and so I think the staff has really appreciated that, the new space, and it's been really nice.

Despite that, and as well as the holidays, staff was able to get four amendments, final amendments, submitted between the December and this meeting, which has been great. Definitely hats-off to our staff, as well as the SERO staff, who are heavily involved in all of those final documents as well, and so I think that was really great, getting a lot of things like that out, and despite being that time of year.

I mentioned the retreat that we had with the leaders during Executive Finance, and so we'll be continuing with that and looking for ways as a staff that we can be more efficient and better serve the council's needs. One of the places we'll be turning our attention to soon is the website and making that perhaps easier to navigate, and we're looking into some tools that could make it a better source of information for you, the council members, particularly things like reference materials on issues that play out over a longer period of time, and we're looking at some type of council member portal or something that we can make information easier for you to access and not have to necessarily dig back through old briefing books and try to recall when things happened for these issues that are kind of extensive and have certain important references that you go to often.

We're also be looking at our travel process and how we handle travel orders and reimbursements and stuff and just little things like that that we think we can do to make things more efficient for all of us. We'll continue lots of the outreach, and we have been, and I think I wanted Cameron to come up and give the report on what's been going on for the descending devices and the outreach on best practices, which has been pretty exciting, but the whole outreach team meets regularly and talks a lot, and there's really great communication going on there, and we're always looking for opportunities to get out and spread the word about what we're doing, really in ways that aren't just about here's a regulation that's coming at you, but ways to get our constituents more knowledgeable about the council and the things that you're doing for the fisheries that are above and beyond just here's the next regulation that's going to affect you, and we're really excited about what we've done in outreach so far, and we're continuing to do that.

I think, in mentioning the outreach team yesterday, Kim was inadvertently overlooked, but, yes, she is a key part of our whole outreach team, and we are abiding by the idea, which has been thrown out a couple of times, of ABO, always be outreaching, and keeping a lot more of our staff involved in doing that, and it's not just the traditional outreach folks, but it's all the tech staff who are intimately knowledgeable of these issues and getting them more opportunities to talk with the fishermen, and I think that helps both sides. It just really helps everything.

We are looking into hiring some new positions, filling some vacancies, and you've noticed that Kelly has been all alone this week, without another admin staff by his side, since Cierra left us in December, and we thought we had someone on track, and things didn't work out, and so we're back to the hiring process on our travel meeting support, and we've got some interest, and I think some folks around the table might be interested in doing that.

We also have an FMP position that we're hiring, a fisheries scientist, which is out for advertising now, and we're able to do that because we have shuffled around how we've handled what was traditionally the core biologist, the position that Chip had before he became Deputy Executive Director, and being able to use some salary that that freed up for us to hire another FMP coordinator, essentially, level position, and we hope to have them on soon, certainly by the June meeting, and Brian will be working on, as he mentioned, what they will do and what their responsibilities will do. It will definitely give us a chance to be able to bring some more things before you and not have some of our tech staff spread quite so thin.

I hope that everyone has enjoyed the new sound system this week, and hats-off to Kelly for researching this and coming up with what seems to be a really nice system. The sound quality is good, and I hope the quality has been better on the webinar than it has been in the past, and it's just a sign of things to come. If it makes the meeting go a little bit better, then it's definitely worthwhile.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree, and I'm really excited about the new microphone system, and I feel like Kelly hasn't had to come over here once and jiggle cords on anything to make it work, and we haven't -- When we've had people on the webinar, we haven't had the whole, wait a minute, we don't have the microphone next to the speaker, and so I'm really excited about the new sound system. I am excited to see the renovations at the office when I get up to Charleston again, and so I just appreciate everything that you guys have been working on, and I look forward to hearing some more staff reports.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right, and so I think BeBe is up next.

MS. HARRISON: Hello, everyone. Thank you, Madam Chair and council members, for some time on the agenda today, and I'm very excited to give you an update on the MyFishCount app, and thank you to Chris. I was going to also start out by mentioning that anglers do have that opportunity currently with MyFishCount, to enter all species that they encounter when they are logging their catch, including -- I think I counted at least forty-six species of sharks just now, when I was opening it up, and so keep that in mind as you are moving forward.

I am also -- I wanted to say thanks to John also for being so supportive of ABO, and coming up with ABO, always be outreaching, and one of the things he mentioned is that we do talk a lot, and, yes, we do talk a lot, but I appreciate Cameron and Kim and Julia representing us at the meeting, while Allie and I are holding down the fort in the office. We are all working on some awesome events and projects that are up on the horizon.

I was going to start on this with letting you know that the George Poveromo National Saltwater Seminar events -- They covered a lot of the east coast, but I attended the four that were in our region, and those four drew about 2,000 anglers, and the nice thing about these events were that

these were anglers specifically attending, and it wasn't like going to a boat show or an outdoor festival or something, where you have hit-or-miss. Every single person at these events fished, and so they were -- From the first one, I saw a jump in folks downloading the app, which was great.

I gave out swag, and I also gave certain items, larger-type items, to those who showed us their profile on their phones. If they show us the profile, then we know that we have captured their email address and can communicate via Constant Contact that way. If they just download the app, we haven't captured them completely, and so that's one of the things we did to get folks onboard.

We also, right before the last one, and I will talk about this a little more, but we launched a trial subscription for *Saltwater Sportsmen Magazine*, and we'll do a push for this on social media channels this month. The next thing was MREP, and I appreciated so much the opportunity to go there, and I met a lot of good folks, and I saw a lot of ah-ha moments happen, which was really good to see from the back of the room.

Myra helped set up a visit to Halifax Sportfishing Club, where I was well received, and they also had another educational-type workshop that night from a local fellow, and I think he was at a marine science center down near Mosquito Lagoon, and so we both kind of talked about the environment and how things were connected, and we had a lot of good support for the app at that event.

Then the RBFF State Marketing Workshop was last week in Atlanta, where we made some really good contacts, and I have actually gone ahead and set up some follow-up meetings with several entities from that event, and hopefully the Angler Action Foundation -- Brett and I are going to meet with some of the folks following that event, probably at ICAST, if not before.

We recently, thanks to a lot of work from Chip also, got that weather feature, the updated weather feature, on the app, and it is a huge selling point for anglers. When you mention it, when you're discussing it with anglers and getting buy-in, two things help give it a little bit of teeth, and that is knowing that it's -- I call it a cousin app to Fish Rules, because a lot of folk already have Fish Rules, and so letting folks know that they kind of work well together, and then also this weather feature, and so it's wind speed and direction and tides, and those things were really mentioned a lot by anglers, and one of the coolest things is that, after you submit your trip, they come back, twenty-four to forty-eight hours later, and weather stamp it, and so your trip is already going to go ahead and have a weather stamp.

I have been going back and reviewing my logs, to see how my progress is, and it's really a neat feature that Elemental Methods has worked to get on there. One of the coolest things also is to show folks that it's reporting data from fixed locations, from ships, and from buoys, and so it's neat for folks to be able to see that, and it does definitely help as a selling point for the app.

The survey for MyFishCount users will be sent from the Angler Action Foundation, and, once it's approved, we will be getting that out and trying to collect information, as per our grant documents, and so, as I mentioned earlier, that *Saltwater Sportsmen Magazine*, they -- The Bonnier Corporation came to us and said what are your app users getting, what are they getting for participating, and they wanted us to be able to offer folks something, and so they offered us a free three-month subscription, trial subscription, to *Saltwater Sportsmen* for just downloading the app.

In addition to that, and they can go in and complete that and not have to enter any financial information, and they can just enter their address, and it will send to them, but, if they do want to extend it to a full year, they have offered us the full year subscription for five-dollars, which is a screaming deal, and so we were really excited to work with them on that, and, not to leave current app users out, we're going to use that as a reward for participating in the survey, and so pretty much everybody will have the opportunity to take advantage of that, and so we invite you to check that out.

I have gotten a couple of tutorials up, and I'm still working on the how to log your catch, because we've got some details that I need to work out on that one, but, right now, we have the how to create a profile and how to use the weather feature, and those have both been uploaded, and thank you, Cameron, to the website, and you can also find it on some of the social media accounts.

On the social media channels, if you have a Facebook or an Instagram account, I would love for you to share our posts, and/or hashtag MyFishCount in your own posts. Art and Chris have been doing a great job with this, in helping to share the pages. Thank you, thank you. They have done a great job at getting the word out for us, and, in addition to that, we're getting some interest from some industry, and they have also been interested in helping with our monthly incentives, and so that magazine, Bonnier, who has contacted us, and Gillz Performance Gear, Engel Coolers, Z-Man Baits, Plano, and there's more to come, and so, each month when we send out our newsletter, there's going to be a different incentive for folks that have participated or spread the word on social media about MyFishCount, and, this month, it happens to be from our friend Mike Dixon at Engel Coolers, and it will be issued and given through the Angler Action Foundation. With that, if there are any questions, I am happy to field them. Thank you all so much.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, BeBe. Great presentation. I like the always be outreaching, and, in fact, I think I saw some folks this week, and maybe Christina has a shirt on right now with the South Atlantic Council logo, and so it's exciting stuff, and the whole *Saltwater Sportsmen Magazine* subscription is super cool, and so, yes, this is really cool stuff. Thank you. Any questions for BeBe? It sounds like Spud has been busy on the road with you, BeBe.

MS. HARRISON: Spud has been doing great, and we've only crossed paths one time. He is a definitely honorary ABO member.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Well, if there aren't any more questions for BeBe, or comments for BeBe, thank you so much, and thanks for getting on the webinar with us, and I think next up we're going to go to Chip.

MS. HARRISON: Thank you.

DR. COLLIER: Since the last council meeting, the System Management Plan Workgroup has met one time, and we discussed two different things. one was the Spawning Special Management Zone webpage, which I'm going to show you guys right now, if you give me a second to pull it up. What this webpage is doing is it's basically an information source for the public, and this is going to end up on our managed areas webpage, and, when we did this in the past, we did it through a Story Map.

However, when we're looking at Story Maps, it doesn't actually translate over to some mobile devices that well, and so what we've done is use it through this Articulate Storyline software, and you can actually add videos in there and put little text boxes and different things, so you can sell your product a little bit better, and you can see the first two slides on this is basically an introduction to what we're trying to do with Spawning Special Management Zones, which is protect spawning fish.

There has been some great images of mutton snapper spawning, and so what we started off with was the mutton down there in Riley's Hump, a spawning aggregation where they actually videoed spawning fish. That is the *crème de la crème* of a spawning aggregation, and it's not often seen, and so it's great to have that video and to show it.

When we were developing this, some of the fishermen had very different ideas about some of what the Information & Education wanted, and so we have this landing page, and the fishermen are very interested in the regulations and the location, and so, in here, we have the regulations, and it's not all that sexy, but regulations aren't that sexy, and so what we're trying to do is provide them the exact language of the regulation. If they have questions about what "stowed appropriately" means, it goes up there for what a recreational fisherman will be looking into, and you can also look into the different areas and why they're separate.

If they want additional information on bag limits, size limits, and season, once again, we provide a link to the Fish Rules app, and that's updated all the time, and we also have the link to the CFR, if they would like to go into that.

Another thing that we put in here was the actual coordinates, and fishermen like to see coordinates in a variety of mechanisms, and so we have it decimal degrees, decimal minutes, and Loran-C, and we would like to thank North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries for converting these over to Loran-C. They provided this for us, and so we have the three different ways. You can click on them, and you can see exactly the boxes for the spawning special management zones.

Then you can go into the location and descriptions for each of the areas, and there's a lot of questions about what we're doing in these areas and why we're doing it, and it starts off with the bathymetry, and so you can move the map around to the different areas, and this is the South Cape Lookout, and you can see the mapping in that area and see the depth profiles. One thing that we did is we actually linked to videos that have been recorded in the areas, and so you can see here a scamp in the South Cape Lookout location, with a Spanish hogfish that went swimming by as well.

What we did was just highlight a few of the important fish that we see in the different areas, and each of these sites has a video, and so we have collected data in each location, and it may not be quantified, but we do definitely have information in the sites, and we have the building blocks to be able to detect what's going on in the area.

Then we provide information for each of the species that were considered in designating those spawning special management zones, and it's -- Once again, it's not all that sexy. I mean, it's really good pictures here, and these were provided by National Marine Fisheries Service, but, once you get in there, we have some of the life history information that's available for the species and whether or not it's overfished or overfishing is occurring.

Then one of the things that I actually wanted to show you, and I didn't realize that this video was available, and this was collected by Dr. Will Heyman during some of his cooperative research work that he did funded through Pew, and what you see here -- It might be difficult on the screen to see, but these are -- It's basically an aggregation of scamp during the spawning time, and this was recorded off of Devils Hole in 2015, and so you can see there's about a hundred scamp in this area, which is quite frankly a lot more than what I've seen in all the other videos, and so good job. You guys seem to be protecting an area where scamp are potentially aggregating, and now we need to continue to collect more information, and hopefully we can get spawning fish in that location.

The next page after the goals is looking at how we evaluate this, and I'm not going to go into all of this. It's a bunch of text, and, once again, not all that sexy, but it does provide different ways that you can look in the objectives of the Spawning Special Management Zones, and you can find out more about it, and then, finally, we have a get involved function. If you see a violation, we provide links to all -- We provide a phone number for all the law enforcement officers in the South Atlantic region, starting off with NMFS Law Enforcement, and then, if you want to call your local FWC, Georgia, South Carolina, or North Carolina, you can do that.

Another thing that we have developed in this is a way to report fishing activity in any of our protected areas. This is to report activities in or around marine protected areas, and so what we want to do is find out if you're observing illegal fishing or if you're observing legal fishing, and you don't have to put your name in there.

It's the date, it is the MPA that you're talking about, and so we have all of our MPAs listed, as well as our Spawning Special Management Zones, the observations, and then just some other information that you can provide in there, and we would encourage any fisherman to report on this, and we've been asking some of the scientists that work in the areas to report this as well. That way, we can see if fishermen are actually abiding by the boxes. If they're fishing on the edge, that's a great sign that they're abiding by the boxes. If they're trolling in the area, that's legal, and so we want to figure out how these areas are being used.

Then we provide links to other pieces of information, including SAFMC Release, MyFishCount, and then the fishery project, which is going to be coming online soon, and that will be available as well. I think I mentioned this before, but this is going to be ending up on our managed area webpage, and it's going to be available to the public, and hopefully we're going to get it on that webpage next week.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Those videos are super cool. Are there questions for Chip?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: That's really interesting, Chip, and so will this be under your Spawning SMZ portion of your web? I am just wondering the location of where it will be.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, that's where it's going to be for now, and I think we're talking about changing how that managed area webpage looks, and so we're not exactly clear how it's going to end up in the new look, but that's where it's going to be for now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: More questions or comments?

MR. BELL: Related to Monica's question, I mean, the more prominent we can make it at some point, that would be great. Then, on the report fishing effort, is that anonymous, or is that -- Because I know, related to some of the illegal things that people have told me about, there is some reluctance to be identified, because they're worried about retribution and things, but I don't know how that's set up.

DR. COLLIER: It's set up as optional. You don't have to put your vessel name, and you don't have to put your observer name.

MR. POLAND: Just put "Roy Crabtree" for every time. Do you have -- Just kind of a roundabout, is it being utilized? I mean, have you received any anonymous tips? Then, if you have, what has come of it?

DR. COLLIER: The goal isn't necessarily to let law enforcement know at that minute that an illegal activity is occurring, just because these areas are pretty far offshore, and it would take a while to get there. The goal is to figure out -- It's maybe to help law enforcement to be more efficient, and so, if there are certain times of the year where illegal activity is occurring, maybe they can do patrols at that time, and so that's what we're thinking for this, and, as well as when we're evaluating these areas, if we're consistently seeing illegal fishing occurring in the spot, it's not necessarily that the spot -- That putting it there is a failure, but it's just we need to improve compliance in the area, and we can do it either through law enforcement or education.

MR. POLAND: So this isn't live yet, and so you haven't received any reports?

DR. COLLIER: Versions of this have been live, and we have not really put it out to the public yet, and so this is our first opportunity to really put it out to the public. In the past, we've had some scientific observations in some of these areas, and those have been used, and I was on a trip with Pew down in Warsaw Hole, and we observed a couple different people that were fishing illegally, and we talked to them and educated them about the spot while we were in there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there more questions for Chip? Thanks, Chip. This is super cool, and I'm really excited that it's going to be on the website for people to see, and at least one of those Riley's videos I'm pretty sure was FWC's spawning aggregation video. Next up is a Citizen Science Update from Julia.

MS. BYRD: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for letting me have some time this morning, and I just wanted to give you a quick update on what's been going on with the Citizen Science Program since you all met in December, and so, first, I'm just going to go over some kind of programmatic-level activities.

As you guys know, you adopted the new citizen science research priorities in December, and so we've pushed those out onto the website. We have also continued working on program evaluation, and so we have continued having meetings with the Operations Committee, Rick Bonney and Jennifer Shirk. We met in January, and we're having another webinar meeting in March, at the end of this month, and what we're trying to do is to develop draft program objective strategies and indicators of success that then we'll bring to you guys to review in June.

I have also been asked by the Mid-Atlantic Council to come present on our Citizen Science Program at their April meeting, and so I'll be going up to New Jersey in April, and they are interested in getting kind of a general overview of why the council was interested in citizen science, kind of how we started the program, and they're interested in a little information on our pilot project, and so I'll be going up there next month.

I have also been working to submit a symposium for this year's American Fisheries Society meeting with some NOAA colleagues up at S&T, and working with Laura Oremland, Richard Cody, and Abigail Furnish, and we have submitted a symposium that will focus on how citizen science and other kind of non-traditional data sources could be better used in stock assessment and management, and so, right now, we are kind of soliciting presentations. We've reached out to a bunch of different networks, but, if you guys know of anyone who may have some information that would be interesting to present in this symposium, please let me know, or I'm happy to contact them. I'm really excited, and I think we'll get some really kind of cool presentations at the symposium.

We're also continuing to work on the bioscience manuscript, kind of highlighting the development of our program, with Rick Bonney, and we'll be working on revisions for that in the upcoming months, and then I'm also working to put together an annual report that will be sent out to our email distribution list hopefully in the next month, and so that's kind of programmatic level activities.

Then the next thing that I wanted to do is highlight some of the projects that we have underway and give you an update on where things stand with those projects and then talk a little bit about some projects that are under development now, too.

The first is the SAFMC Scamp Release project, and so, right now, we're working on recruiting and retention of commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen. As we kind of let you guys know at the last meeting, we'll be receiving some funding from ACCSP later this spring and summer, where we'll be combining kind of our release app with North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries kind of flounder release app under the ACCSP umbrella, so that other partners will be able to kind of use this app to collect information on released fish. Through this grant, we'll also be able to expand the number of species that we'll be collecting released fish data on, not just for scamp, but we're going to expand it to all the shallow-water grouper species.

The other proposal that we have put in, in regard to this project, is with the Waitt Foundation, and we submitted that in November, and we're still waiting to hear if we've received it, and just a quick reminder that this is the grant that we're reviewing what we're calling a series of outdoor media tours, where we'll be chartering boats, hopefully one trip in each state, and we'll bring outdoor writers onto the boats and kind of show them how -- We'll be going fishing and showing them how to use the app and talking about best fishing practices and then encouraging them to write stories about kind of this project as well as the council's best fishing practices efforts.

The SEDAR stock assessment is coming up for scamp, and the data workshop is in a couple of weeks, and so we'll be writing a working paper, or I am writing a working paper now, with our information, and so it will be kind of presented at the data workshop in the next few weeks, and then we've also started working with a College of Charleston graduate student who is going to be

kind of reviewing user perceptions of the app as part of his thesis project, and that will get underway kind of later this summer and fall.

The next project that I wanted to give you all an update on is the FISHstory project, and, as a reminder, this is the project where we're trying to document historic for-hire catches and lengths using these historic photos that Rusty Hudson has provided from the Daytona Beach, Florida area, and so there's kind of two components to this project, and I guess I'm going to stop here for a minute and say that Allie Iberle, who is the project coordinator for this project, has taken the lead and is doing a great job, and I'm sorry she's not able to kind of present this update to you guys today, but she is furiously working on FISHstory back in Charleston.

We have two components to the project, and one is to look at species composition in the photos over time, and so we have created the project in Zooniverse, and we gave you all a demo of that in December, and we've put together kind of the validation team, which are kind of fishermen and scientists who are going to help validate some of the photo work analysis done by citizen scientists. We held a series of webinar trainings for the validation team in December and January, and so we held these just so they could kind of familiarize themselves with the photos and then also kind of go over the process they'll be using to review the photos through the project.

We submitted the project to Zooniverse for beta testing, and we got some initial feedback from staff, and we have incorporated that, and hopefully, in the next week or two, we will be sending out the project to their kind of gold star users, to get some beta test data, and then we'll be able to launch the project hopefully later this spring. We have put together a communication plan, and we have a FISHstory logo, and we're developing promotional materials, and so we're getting ready for the big push when we launch later this spring.

For the length composition component, what we're trying to do is see if we can get length estimates from the photos, and the idea is that we're using the lumber in the photos, the two-by-fours or two-by-sixes, to help us estimate length, and so, for this pilot project, we're going to do that for one species, and the species is going to be king mackerel, and, so far, we've kind of developed our database, and formatted the database, and the protocol for measuring lengths is under development, and we're doing some preliminary analysis now to look at uncertainty in measurements, how close we're able to get to things of known measurement in photos that we're taking now, and then Allie and I are also kind of measuring fish, to see precision between multiple readers, and so we have kind of preliminary analyses on those, and then we'll be moving forward with that part of the project in the upcoming months.

Then the last kind of project that's underway that I wanted to mention is one that's being led by the Nature Conservancy and has gotten funding through the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and it's called Promoting Gray's Reef Through Engaging Georgia Anglers, and this is a project that Cameron mentioned to you all yesterday when going over what's been happening with best practices outreach.

Bob Crimian, with the Nature Conservancy, is the one who is leading these efforts, and we have a really great team of partners working on this project, and so the goal of this project is to kind of -
- It's threefold to increase awareness of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary among recreational anglers, to kind of encourage and further the use of best fishing practices when fishing

for deepwater species, and to also promote collaboration through citizen science efforts, to kind of help fill data gaps.

As part of these efforts, we're hosting a series of fishing learning exchanges that kick off this Friday and Saturday here in Brunswick, at the Golden Isles Library, and so these fishing learning exchanges were put together after having a series of focus groups with fishermen this spring, and so, at the workshops, we're hoping to discuss with fishermen kind of fishing in Gray's Reef, and we're hoping to help discuss barotrauma and best fishing practices with them, and Brian Fluech, who is with Georgia Sea Grant, is going to have a variety of different descending devices available, and he can kind of show people how to use them.

All of the participants who come to this workshop will receive a descending device, a SeaQualizer, and a weight, and so that's an incentive to try to get folks to come to these workshops, and then we'll also be talking about the council's Citizen Science Program and about kind of opportunities to collect data that exist throughout the region, and so hopefully we can get some folks interested in the Scamp Release app as well as MyFishCount.

Again, if anyone is going to be around on Friday or Saturday in Brunswick, we would encourage you to come to these, or, if you know people who may be interested, let us know, and we're happy to reach out to them, or you can spread the word as well, and so, if anyone is interested in learning more information, I think Bob Crimian has been around this week, and he's in the back of the room now, and so you can get with Bob.

Then the last thing that I wanted to quickly go over is a couple of projects and collaborations we have under development. The first one is rare species observations, and this is one that we've talked to you guys about before. We're trying to put together a program that is similar to the Redmap Program that's in Australia, and so the idea here is we get kind of point observations of rare-event species and use that to try to help detect species shifts, due to things like climate change, and so we have a group of partners that have been talking about this over the past kind of year or year-and-a-half, and we submitted a proposal in January to Lenfest, to try to get funding for this project.

Unfortunately, we recently found out that we didn't get funding through Lenfest, and so we're looking for other funding opportunities now, and the second project that I wanted to mention is one where we're hoping to collect information on data-limited species using recreational divers, and we submitted a grant for this to the Coral Reef Conservation Program in January.

Chip took the lead on pulling this together, and we're partnering with REEF and SECOORA, and the idea here is we want recreational divers to collect kind of length information on some data-limited species, and this would be a pilot project that would focus on the Keys, and we would be looking to collect information on species like hogfish, several of the grouper species, and some parrotfish species, and so it's kind of a cool project.

We're working with REEF, who already has an extensive network of kind of volunteer citizen scientist divers, and so the idea is that they will work to help develop an instrument that a diver could go down with and take video of the fish with that instrument, and then we would help analyze the videos, to get lengths of the fish, and so we should be finding out whether we receive funding for this in the upcoming months.

Then the last project is one that you guys already heard about earlier this week, and it's the dolphin wahoo participatory workshops that we're working on with the Science Center and MREP. Just a reminder that the ones in North Carolina and Virginia are next week, and so, if anyone is interested in coming to these, we would love to see you, and you're welcome to contact me if you want any additional information, and then we'll be planning the Florida Keys workshop for this summer, and, once we have details on locations and dates, we'll make sure to share that with all of you guys, and so that's just a quick update on what's been going on in the program over the past few months, and I would be happy to take any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Julia. That's a lot of stuff that you guys have been working on. Once again, I saw Spud make a cameo in one of those photos, and it looked like an ICAST photo, and so Spud is definitely getting around. One of my favorites is the FISHstory project, and I just think that's a super cool project, and I can't wait to hear more about that as it progresses. Are there questions?

MR. BELL: This is not so much a question, but great job. This is really good stuff, and I can see where it really catches the public's eye, and they're willing to be involved, and so that's what you want, and that's great. I just had this thought. I mean, we talked about it earlier, and it kind of goes back to the HMS thing, but how does HMS get data that they need, and, well, this sort of thing -- Like, for instance, like your Scamp Release app, and what if you had a shark depredation app, some way -- I don't know if that sort of is a reasonable thing for a cooperative project, if someone had the money to fund that sort of thing, but the fisheries that are impacted that we deal with are our fisheries, our fishermen, and something like that might be appealing as a type of project, again, if we funding were available.

The same kind of information, and we talk about videos or pictures or whatever, and you could just use that app and send the stuff in, and it gets quantified in a standard way, and so it might be of use, but just something like that would seem to kind of beg for a citizen science potential approach or something, again if someone had the money, but that's -- I could just see that being something that folks would really easily take advantage of, and it's something to think about for future exploration.

Also, then the kind of information that you would be collecting too would be perhaps not as detailed quantitative sort of stuff for stock assessments, but it actually would be useful in patterns of activity, patterns of behavior, species involved, kind of a high-level look at it, but quantifying that, and so I don't know, and it just hit me as that sort of issue kind of could get value out of an approach like this, and so it's just really cool what you guys are doing though.

MS. BYRD: I think that's a great point, Mel, and I know that's something that's come up, and Ira Laks has brought up the idea of a shark predation app at some of the AP meetings, and I kind of was writing the same sort of notes down when Karyl was talking this morning, and so I think that would certainly -- There would be a lot of interest from fishermen who are on our APs and who fish in our region for something like that, and so I think that's a good thing to think about. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions or comments for Julia? All right. Thank you for that, and I think that's our last staff presentation. Let's go ahead and take a short break.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: We have some presentations from SERO. First up is Rick DeVictor talking about the commercial landings status for the remaining stocks that we haven't already talked about this week.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you. As far as I can tell, there is only golden crab. That's the last one standing, and it's 44,189 pounds, and that's 2 percent of the two-million-pound ACL. If you want, I can move right into standard bycatch reporting methodology.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great.

MR. DEVICTOR: This will be just as short. I would just remind you that they're called SBRMs, and, of course, they assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery, and it's a requirement of every FMP to add an SBRM, and we presented in the past that a rule came out where the councils, in coordination with NMFS, must conduct a review of their SBRMs in their FMPs, and that has to be done by February 21 of 2022, and so the time is coming up, and we're still working on it, and we're working with council staff, but there's nothing new to report, other than that we're making progress.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any questions for Rick? Next up, I believe we're going to go to Jenny with a Protected Resources Report, and we don't have a document, and we're just going to get a verbal report.

MS. LEE: Hi, everyone. Yes, I have very limited updates to share, but you did ask a few questions, and so you asked for a progress update on the dolphin wahoo bi-op, and so just to let you know that SERO, in its role of the action agency, is still gathering data on the fishery, via the developing amendment, and learning about some of those questions that we talked about probably a couple of council meetings ago about who the actual participants are that are using pelagic longline independent of the HMS fishery, and so there is really no change from the December council meeting, or the September one, during which I provided that full oral report. There's not really the consultation side that really is active, and we're still in the data-gathering phase.

Then you asked for an update on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan and what's going on with their rulemaking. They are targeting publication of a proposed rule by mid-2020, and the proposed rule will solicit public comment, and public hearings will be scheduled in late spring. The final rule is planned for 2020, and then an implementation target of May of 2021, and so just keep an eye out for that proposed rule, and I'm sure you'll be informed.

Then, when that's all done, down the road, they will be convening the Take Reduction Team to then develop coastwide entanglement risk reduction measures for gillnets and other traps and pots in early 2021, and so we will keep you informed of that as it relates to you.

Then, other than that, no updates to share, as far as consultations, other than the dolphin wahoo one, and then no updates on the ESA listings or unusual mortality events or other take reduction team news, and so I think that's really all I have to share, other than I was just going to you know,

if you're not following it, that we are up to ten mother-calf pairs this North Atlantic right whale calving season, which is of interest.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's great. Does it look like one of those mothers and calves went into the Gulf, I think?

MS. LEE: I think I did hear something about that, but I guess, just overall, they're doing better than last year.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions for Jenny? I don't see any hands. Thank you, Jenny.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Bye.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Next, it looks like back to Rick for the for-hire reporting amendment.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a short presentation here, just to go over the for-hire reporting, and I want to update you on the rulemaking that's going on with the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico for-hire reporting amendment, and I do this at each meeting, to update you. Hopefully you all say the Fishery Bulletin, where, yay, we published the final rule, and we have an implementation date, and that final rule published on February 24, and the implementation date is September 1.

I just want to give a short update on the SEFHIER program and where we are at with standing up the program and a few slides talking about the requirements, to remind you, and we'll talk about the timing and what have we accomplished to date.

Just a reminder. Since you all started this in 2016, and so it's been a little while, but to remind you that this applies to all Southeast federally-permitted charter and headboats, regardless of where you're fishing, and so, if you're fishing in state waters, and you have this federal permit, you're going to have to report. If you're fishing off the coast of New Jersey, and you have this permit, you are going to have to report what you catch.

As far as the requirements, again, it applies to all permit holders, federal permit holders, of their charter/headboat permit, and it's trip level electronic logbooks, of course, is what we're talking about, and, as far as the South Atlantic, you have to report by Tuesday of each fishing week, and a fishing week is defined as Monday through Sunday.

The Gulf is different in a few ways, and I will go through those. You need to report your catch before you offload your fish, and so it's more frequent. The Gulf is also different in they have that hail-out requirement, and so you submit an electronic form before you leave, and you tell them your return date and your return time and your landing location, and there is a list of approved landing locations. The final difference with the Gulf is that they require a location tracking device, a VMS unit, that is currently affixed to your vessel and always on.

We talked quite a bit about this as we were working on the rulemaking and the amendment, about, if you have both the Gulf and South Atlantic permits, we wanted to avoid the duplicative reports, and so you must follow the more stringent requirements, and that is the Gulf, and so, regardless of

where you're fishing, you need to follow the Gulf requirements if you have both permits. Again, that's just a quick reminder of the requirements and what is in the final rule.

As I do each meeting, I will just go through a projected implementation timeline, and so, of course, I just said the final rule published on February 24, and the effective date is September 1, and so what we are thinking is around June 1 is when we should have everything ready, where you can go online and you can sign up and get an account and start reporting, around June 1, and that may change, but so between June 1 and September 1 is sort of a practice session, where you can go on and start reporting, but the requirement is that you must by September 1.

We plan to have outreach sessions, and we just had one on Tuesday, where we give a presentation of the requirements, and, once we get closer to June 1, we'll be able to help you sign up and start walking you through some of these software programs that I will talk about in a second, and the final note on this slide is the Gulf is going to happen in two phases. They are a little bit behind us, in terms of the final rule, and they haven't published that yet, but they plan to do that maybe around April, and the first phase will be hail-out and logbooks, and the second will be the location devices, and they want to give a little more time for fishermen to get used to the equipment, and so they did it in two separate phases.

We want to update you on what we have accomplished to date, and we have the software tech specs and approval process on our website. Of course, people are going to report via phone, computer, or tablet, and so, in order to do that, you need to have a software program, and so we're working with two groups, ACCSP and VESL, and they have come up with some software, and we're close to having them approved, but we want to keep this where anyone, a programmer, who wants to come forward and develop a software program -- They could take our tech specs from our website and run it through the approval process, which we have outlined on our website, also.

Data warehouse, early in the process, we decided that ACCSP is the data warehouse, and they had to do a data security audit, and this was basically to make sure that they can receive secure data, and, to tell you the truth, this is part of the reason why this is taking a while, because we're finding out that this is quite a process to go through, but we're getting closer to that approval.

Location devices in the Gulf, I won't go through this in too much detail, since it's the Gulf, but, just as you have software tech specs, you need to have tech specs out to the VMS vendors, so that, if they want to develop units or forms, they can do that. We have sent this out to the vendors that are satellite based that are already through the commercial system, and so their approval should be relatively quick, because they're already approved for use for the commercial, and then there is archivable units, cellular-based, and that approval process may take some more time. We had to do a proposed rule on that, and that comment period ended recently.

That is, quickly, what we have accomplished. I have a couple more slides, and there's one on the funding and staffing. When we first started this program, we did not have dedicated funding, and that's part of the challenge that we had as staff, is we had to pull people over that were working on other activities, such as plan coordinators and such, to lead this effort, but we're happy to announce that we have gotten grants awarded to us for 2019 and 2020, and we have hired contractors to start to QA/QC the data that comes in for VMS, for example, and customer support. We want to have people that can answer the phone and answer questions. That's going to be a big

part of this program, and we're already getting quite a bit of questions coming in, ever since we published the final rule.

Then compliance and monitoring for both regions, and this is basically a check to see if people have submitted the logbooks before they renew their permits, and that's what a compliance monitor would be sort of charged with.

This note I have here, and I won't read the text, but there was an appropriations bill, and this is just funding for the Gulf reporting and enforcement, and this bill provides \$2.65 million for the fiscal year for electronic logbooks for the federally-permitted charter/for-hire sector in the Gulf of Mexico. Further, \$1.525 million for enforcement, and a lot of that would be passed on to the states for enforcement activities. Just to be clear, that FIS grant, that's for both the Gulf and South Atlantic program, where this funding that was in this bill was just for the Gulf program.

Finally, just a note on the outreach, and we want to do a lot of outreach on this, and, of course, this is a big program. In the South Atlantic, you have over 1,700 permits, and so it's going to be a big deal, of course. When we published, day one, we sent out letters to each permit holder, to tell them about the requirement, and info packets is something that we're working on, that, eventually, as we get closer to that June 1, we will mail to all permit holders. I mentioned already the outreach sessions that we're going to be planning up and down the coast, and we'll maybe do videos for people, and get on webinars, where they can go and walk through, again, how to sign up and then how to start using the software, because that's a lot of the questions that we've gotten is, okay, are you going to teach me how to use this software once we have to start on September 1.

We have a phone line, and there's the number on the screen that people can call with questions on this program, and you can email us, and we have a website, and we have all these documents up there and amendments and rules and FAQs and presentation and the software tech specs and the VMS tech specs. All of that will be on there, and then we'll have, as we get closer, an approved list of vendors up there, where people can go see, because they're going to need to get the software program, and we envision sort of a table, where people can choose which vendor and software program they want to use that works best for them. That's my update on the for-hire amendment. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Rick. Any questions for Rick?

MR. DILERNIA: On the electronic logbooks, it's my understanding that, in addition to catch and effort, there is also some questions regarding economics and income and all, and is that correct?

MR. DEVICTOR: Right. We do have some questions, such as how much you paid for fuel, the cost of your trip, and this is really to help us. Partially, when we write our amendments, that's an important piece of information that we can use as we assess the impacts of different regulations, and that's part of the reason why the council decided to add this as a requirement.

MR. DILERNIA: Okay. I wasn't aware of that, and it was brought to my attention as I prepared to serve as the liaison, and I was asked to bring to the attention of the council or whatever that it's anticipated that there will be -- We're trying to eliminate dual reporting, so that, if you have the Mid-Atlantic permit, something coming from GARFO, once you fill out that, you don't have to fill out a SERO report, but the two forms are not going to be consistent, because there are no

economic questions on the GARFO form, and we -- There have been for-hire captains that have expressed an unwillingness -- Mid-Atlantic Council for-hire captains completing GARFO forms have expressed an unwillingness to also provide that information on the SERO forms, and so I don't know how we're going to merge the two forms together to get one-stop shopping, so to speak, to avoid dual reporting. Thank you.

MR. DEVICTOR: The intent of this, from the get-go, was, if you have two permits, to do one form, and I can tell you that's something that we're working on, if you have both the GARFO permit and the South Atlantic permit. We're working with the software vendors to come up with a single form that you could potentially have, and then you can see which permit you have and then which data you have to do, because I believe, with the GARFO permit eVTR, that you have to do forty-eight hours, and so that's going to be a different time period than that, and so all I can say is that we are working on that, and that's the intent, to have a single form that we can do that.

MR. BELL: To that same point, we've had a for-hire logbook in place since 1993, and we've worked, from the beginning of this, to be a partner and try to achieve one-stop shopping, and so we just ask that, as we look at additional tweaks to this, realizing the need to try to standardize it, it would be great to have something standardized for all of National Marine Fisheries Service and -- But just kind of make sure -- I talked to Karla a little bit yesterday about it, and I just wanted to make sure that we're included in the discussions, because any tweaks to it, since we're using VESL, as opposed to the other system, we have to, as a state, consider modifications to that, which may or may not cost, and then there are additional fees and things, and so we have -- It was our intention, from the very get-go, to be a partner in this and to try to -- We have adjusted our reporting form and our current electronic reporting to accommodate, but just keep us in mind, and we're kind of unique, in that we're the only state, at the moment, that has an actual system that's been up and running for a while, and so just keep communicating with us, okay?

MR. POLAND: Rick, the outreach sessions, do you all plan on having those as just webinar-based, or would there be any in-person outreach sessions or training sessions? I know, in the past, we did a lot of in-person training, and, just because of delays in getting the final rule published, and I think the last one was close to a year ago, and so is there any plan to do some more in-person training?

MR. DEVICTOR: Yes, we're definitely planning to do in-person training, and also video, like I said. The challenge is to get people to come out, certainly, and get the word out, and we'll work on that, Fishery Bulletins and stuff, and with the states on how best to get people out and where to go and everything, because the council did a similar thing about a year or two years ago, where they went to each state and did some outreach, and, now that we're getting closer, we can really help people start signing up for the account, and we have a date that it's going to be implemented, and so we're hoping that there will be more people attending than what we've had in the past, but I would like to hear feedback from you if there is ways -- What do you think is best to get the word out and would be most effective for people?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Do you have more, Steve?

MR. POLAND: Just to respond to that, certainly just communicating with us at the state level and let us communicate through our regular avenues with our stakeholders, and the word is already out, too. I mean, my phone calls the last few weeks reflect that.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is there also a -- I believe, in the snapper grouper, 20 percent of folks are sent out a survey to do financial reporting, if I remember correctly, something like that, and I have a survey that gets sent to report my financials if you're chosen, and I was curious, and is there any of that in the for-hire logbook here, in the bottom part of it? Is it mandatory that you have to fill it out, and is there any types of financials?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I don't have all the specifics in front of me, but I know there is economic information that they want, that we discussed a little bit earlier, in terms of fuel use and cost of the trip and that sort of thing. I don't know though that it gets into the kind of economic information that you're asked to fill out as a commercial fisherman, if you get selected to report for that economic logbook information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Anybody else? All right. Thank you, Rick. Does that conclude your presentations?

MR. DEVICTOR: It does. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. All right. Next up, we have some presentations from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and I think that these are via webinar, and so, first up, I believe we have Brett Pierce on our status of the commercial electronic logbook program.

MR. PIERCE: Hi, everyone. I would like to take just a little bit of time to provide a brief update on where we are with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center commercial e-log project, and then I'll be happy to take your questions at the end.

If you recall from the last meeting, or if this is your first one, there are three main areas where we are working to bring the southeast commercial e-log online, and I'm going to go into detail for each of these points in the next slide, but, in general, we need to finalize the technical requirements for third-party vendors, and this may include modifying all of the software applications to meet the Southeast Fisheries Science Center requirements.

There are still some infrastructure changes that are needed at ACCSP. Specifically, we need a database VIEW that we will be using to push southeast commercial data to, that we would be pulling from, and, additionally, there are a few modifications needed, at ACCSP and here at the Southeast, to make sure that all applications are talking to each other and that data is flowing in a way that we expect it to, and also the way that we need it to. Mainly, the work that's being done on that is integrating and mapping the ACCSP data into our Southeast Fisheries Science Center databases.

To get into more of the detail of our current work, the bulk of our current effort is integrating and mapping the southeast commercial test data that's submitting to the ACCSP into the Southeast databases, and, additionally, there are some application changes that are needed at ACCSP, and, essentially, once we finalize how the database is structured, those changes will need to be reflected on the applications and the interfaces that fishermen interact with.

Additionally, there are some modifications that are needed to Southeast Fisheries Science Center applications. As we become more familiar with the test data, and as we interact with it a little bit more, we will need to work through some additional integration of that data.

We have internally mapped all ACCSP variables that are in the SAFIS database to our required variables that are housed here in our UDP system, and this may include noting when new variables need to be created, and potentially when new validations will also need to be developed based on those variables. The only way to ensure the proper mapping is to actually push the data through the system, and, to do that, we are currently using an application that we're working with ACCSP to make sure that the application is collecting all the data fields that we need, so that we can actually push correct and complete test data through the system.

Before I go on to the next bullet, I want to take just a few moments and kind of talk about how our work has changed since last summer. You have heard me talk, over the last few meetings or so, about changes to application infrastructure and modifications to Southeast Fisheries Science Center applications and ACCSP applications, and I want to take just a few minutes to talk about what exactly that means and how that work has changed over the last year or so.

Beginning last summer, we have worked with ACCSP to identify the variables that we require for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, but were not yet present in ACCSP's database, and so, after we went ahead and developed a process with ACCSP to identify those, those variables were going to have to be pushed through their standard code process, which would involve letting all eighteen or so partners know about the changes that will be potentially coming to their databases, so that they could all sign-off on that.

That took a few months, and so about October and November, once their partners had signed off on all the additional database variables that need to be included, ACCSP staff went in and actually altered their databases to include those additional variables. Since then, we have worked with ACCSP to make sure that we have access to those databases and that the database VIEWS that are created specifically for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center are complete and contain all of our required variables, as well as making sure that any other variables, say for the Northeast or any SEFHIER variables that may be in the database, don't actually end up in our VIEW, and so, over the course of a year, we've been modifying all of these applications, but work has changed slightly, to the point now where we are actually able to see Southeast commercial test data in ACCSP, and we're beginning the process of mapping those variables to our current system. Actually, just last week, we gained access to their databases, and then, next week, we're actually having our first meeting to talk about modifying and optimizing their database.

This is mainly important because the variables that come from ACCSP into our system will influence whether a fisher is compliant with his reporting requirements, especially when it comes to the renewal process. In addition to that, the final aspect of what we need to do is make sure that linking -- That we link ACCSP participants to SERO entities. Any reports that are submitted to ACCSP will count toward compliance, whether this be a no-fishing report or a positive fishing report. Everything that is submitted to ACCSP will need to go through the privacy sharing agreement that is ongoing right now, so that compliance can be counted for southeast vessels.

With that being said, we do have some form of electronic reporting in the southeast currently. We do have a no-fishing report application that is up and running, and it is live. The Southeast

Fisheries Science Center will no longer be accepting faxed no-fish reports after April 30, and so all no-fishing reports will need to be mailed in or submitted through the FER website, and fishers can now register and submit no-fishing reports electronically through that FER application.

To sum it up, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is using an application to test commercial data, how to flow through ACCSP into our current databases, and we are providing feedback to ACCSP to address any outstanding database issues, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is creating new variables, and potentially new validations, within our existing databases, based on the test data that we push through the ACCSP system using an application, and then we will finalize the technical requirements document for all third-party vendors, so that they can begin to develop an interface that will go through testing and be verified by the Southeast and available to commercial fishermen in the southeast. With that, are there any questions?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and I'm looking around to see if there is hands in the air.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I have a question as to when you think that this project would be finished, such that you would prefer, at some point, to receive all this information electronically and no longer mailed in, and I ask that because the council will need to do an amendment to make reporting in this manner mandatory, and so I kind of would like to get an idea.

MR. PIERCE: Well, a lot of the work just to get to the voluntary stage of this process -- We are piggy-backing a lot off of the SEFHIER process, and many of the same reporting processes by which a report is submitted through ACCSP through SEFHIER, that counts toward compliance. A lot of that infrastructure and those processes will be the same as ours, and so we're -- To get at least to the voluntary stage, that's a good indication of how long it may take for the commercial side of it.

Certainly the other aspect would be developing applications, such as interfaces for fishermen to use, and they are a lot more robust than SEFHIER, and there are some test versions out there that are close, but not quite ready yet, and so, once we do get our requirements in place and sent out to third-party vendors, that would be an additional time -- I guess an additional thing that needs to be worked on until we can get to that process, and until we can get to a process where we can correct everything voluntarily.

It's always been our position that we will start voluntary reporting before we do any kind of mandatory requirement, and so I do not have a specific date on when I think that there may be some mandatory requirement. I would think that we would need several months of voluntary data, to make sure that we are getting everything and that the process works smoothly, and so I'm sorry, but I just don't have a definite timeline for you, but that's kind of an idea of the steps that we need to be taking before we go to any kind of mandatory reporting requirement or any kind of council amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? All right. Thank you, Brett. Thanks for that presentation.

MR. PIERCE: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Now I think we're going to go to Todd Kellison, and he's going to give us two presentations, and the first one is about the Atlantic Science Coordination Workshop, an update on that.

DR. KELLISON: Good morning, everyone. I am Todd Kellison, and I'm with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Beaufort, North Carolina, and I will provide relatively brief updates on two workshops. The first is a National Marine Fisheries Service, or NMFS, Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop, and the second is the South Atlantic Fishery Independent Surveys Workshop. I will walk you through those sequentially.

The Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop, this is a National Marine Fisheries Service workshop, and it's scheduled for late April in Chapel Hill, and Vince Saba with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and I are the lead organizers, and the objective is within the context of changing climate and related changes in species distributions to assess the degree of coordination of NMFS science activities across regional and regulatory boundaries along the Atlantic coast and to identify steps to improve the coordination and related support for fisheries and protected species management.

Participants in the workshop will predominantly be our agency staff, but there will also be participants from the Atlantic coast councils staff, and potentially council members, and also from ASMFC. Also participating will be select staff from state agencies representing key data collection efforts and a small number of representatives from academia and industry.

Topics that we'll cover during the workshop include focusing on data collection efforts within our agency, which includes fishery-independent surveys, fishery-dependent surveys, protected species, and human dimensions surveys and research, and we'll have a section focused on stock assessment, a section focused on management perspectives, on the science that's available and that science that's needed for species across regulatory boundaries, such as distributions potentially that are shifting, and we'll focus some attention on blueline tilefish. We'll discuss documented and anticipated species distribution shifts, as well as ecosystem status reports and climate vulnerability assessments, which are relatively large-scale data assessments, but typically they are not cross-reaching across regulatory boundaries.

These are the topics that we'll cover, and we anticipate generating, during the workshop, recommendations for improving our agency's science coordination along the Atlantic coast and subsequently generating a summary report highlighting what we're doing well currently, areas for improvement, and next steps, both in the near term and longer term. In terms of our planning status, we're currently seeking feedback on a draft agenda from the Atlantic coast councils staff and the ASMFC, and we anticipate sharing more broadly a refined agenda in the relatively near future. With that, unless there's a preference for me to go ahead to talk about the surveys workshop, I could stop and take any questions here on the coordination workshop.

MS. MCCAWLEY: There are questions, and so let's take questions now, before you go into your other presentation.

MR. BELL: Todd, thanks for the update. Just a quick point or a question, and I know you had mentioned some limited state participation, and you've got the commission on there, but I guess you guys are aware that we manage -- We have a shrimp plan here, but we're seeing some really

interesting thing with white shrimp over the past few years, and so if there's somebody that has data, and I know all the way up to Virginia, and Pat Geer up that way can tell you all about their shrimp fishery now, but that's one of the things that we're seeing that may not fit in the typical things we talk about here, which is like blueline or some of the other stuff, but just as long as somebody is paying attention to shrimp, and I just wanted to make sure.

DR. KELLISON: Thanks for that comment, Mel, and just a note that I appreciate any feedback on this workshop, and I'm going to be taking notes as you ask questions. Some of the surveys that we will be talking about and considering data from include the coastal trawl surveys, and so, for the southeast, that's our SEAMAP South Atlantic Coastal Trawl Survey, and the rough analog for the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast is the NEAMAP Trawl Survey, and I think -- I am not familiar with the data, Mel, but I'm aware of the shrimp issue, and that will be included when we talk about what we know and what we anticipate in changes to species distribution, and so we don't anticipate limiting these discussions to just federally-managed species. Does that address your question, Mel?

MR. BELL: Yes, and it sounds like you've got it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Other questions? I don't see any more questions, Todd, and I think we can go into your next presentation.

DR. KELLISON: Okay. Thank you. South Atlantic Fishery-Independent Surveys Workshop, we held this workshop last week in Charleston, at the SC DNR facility at Fort Johnson, and so thanks to our SC DNR colleagues and survey partners for hosting the workshop. The main objectives for the workshop were these two sub-bullets, to review and determine the relative priority ranking of current and potential fishery-independent surveys and to provide recommendations to improve the utility of surveys, and that was within the context of the support those surveys provide for South Atlantic stock assessments and management, including ecosystem-based fishery management.

We also, during the week, had a one-day planning meeting for a 2020 regional-scale longline survey that we're planning that will target the deepwater demersal species complex, and so blueline and golden tilefish and snowy grouper and speckled hind, and potentially warsaw grouper and yellowedge and associated species. This effort will be a cooperative effort between the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and SC DNR and industry, and we'll utilize industry vessels for the sampling.

The workshop component focused on surveys targeting reef-associated species and tilefishes, essentially the snapper grouper complex, and we excluded from consideration surveys focused on sharks, coastal and nearshore species, pelagic species, and protected species.

Workshop participants included representatives from SC DNR; Southeast Fisheries Science Center; John Carmichael, Chip Collier, and Roger Pugliese from council staff; three SSC members, who I will highlight on the next slide; Ted Sweitzer from Florida FWRI; two commercial fishermen participated in the longline survey planning meeting, and that's Steve Shelley from South Carolina and Jim Freeman from Florida; and then Paul Nitschke and Brandon Muffley from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council staff, respectively. They participated remotely through all the days of our discussion and provided Mid-Atlantic perspectives on the topics that we were going over, which was quite helpful.

Everyone that participated fully participated in all the discussions, proposing recommendations and contributing to the discussions about the relative priorities of surveys, but we identified a subset of participants, people who are essentially customers, or users, of the survey data and could best evaluate its utility to make specific recommendations on survey prioritization, and so we called that subset the review panel.

The review panel, it's their responsibility to make specific recommendations and prioritizations, and the review panel is John Carmichael, Chip Collier, Erik Williams and Kyle Shertzer from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and they're stock assessment scientists, and then SSC members George Sedberry, who is the current SSC Chair, Jeff Buckel, and Marcel Reichert.

Some outcomes from the workshop, I will briefly summarize them in a few slides, and so I don't have all the detail here, but one of our task was to prioritize -- Assign relative priority rankings to our surveys, kind of think about what we're doing and the relative importance of various activities that we're currently doing, and so we did this for current activities, and then we sort of took a step back and said, well, what if we also consider things that we could be doing, and so I will talk briefly about those separately.

For current surveys, the review panel prioritized or ranked the Southeast Reef Fish Trap Video Survey as high, and the Southeast Reef Fish Survey, or SERFS, is a cooperative effort between SC DNR, funded via MARMAP and SEAMAP South Atlantic, and the SEFIS group, out of the Beaufort Lab here in North Carolina, and so we all work cooperatively to perform the regional-scale trap video survey, which, for simplicity's sake, we call it the Southeast Reef Fish Survey, or SERFS, and I will be referring to the trap video survey as SERFS as I go through this presentation.

The review panel ranked the SERFS survey as high. It provides important information on multiple species of management interest, and the review panel determined that the SC DNR short-bottom and long-bottom longline surveys should not continue dedicating sea days to those surveys at the level of effort at which they have typically been carried out in the past, which is relatively low sample size and spatial coverage.

However, the review panel did recommend that we continue to pursue the short-bottom longline survey opportunistically, and so, in the step back, the current and potential surveys, and, obviously, if we could be doing surveys at the regional scale, and, of course, the SERFS survey is at the regional scale, and the review panel assigned the following priority rankings, and so they identified the SERFS survey and one of two coastwide scaled-up short-bottom longline or long-bottom longline survey as high priorities, and a regional-scale cross-shelf, including shelf break, trawl survey or vertical hooked gear survey or ichthyoplankton/larval fish survey as either medium or low priority, and so all the surveys were assessed to determine that they would provide useful information for a number of reasons, for example the number of species for which they provide information and potential overlap with information that is already being provided to the trap video survey or potential longline surveys, and they were prioritized as low. Again, the SERFS survey or the online surveys.

For SERFS in particular, the review panel determined that the survey is operating at maximum capacity, given funding constraints, and they didn't recommend any changes in how the survey is designed or carried out. It was noted, at the workshop, the declines in recent years in sea days and

shortfalls in otolith and reproductive tissue processing and analysis, and those are related to available funding, and so the review panel recommended that, if increased funding became available, that it first be utilized to fully implement all components of SERFS, which would mean sea days and otolith processing, otoliths and reproductive tissue, and so, if additional funding was available, they recommended processing the backlog of biological and video samples that we currently have.

If additional funding was available, they recommended collection of additional information, and so the things that I listed there beside that Bullet 3 here, DNA, diet, muscle tissue, scales and spines, those are things that we collect from some of the species some of the time now, and it was just recommended that we do that more expansively, if funding permitted, and, lastly, they just made a general recommendation of not implementing new surveys unless they are appropriately designed and funded.

The review panel also recommended the formation of a South Atlantic Fishery Independent Survey Working Group that would meet at least once a year, and it would have representation from council staff, and so the Deputy Director for Science and Statistics, and that's Chip now, would be the chair, and it would have representation from the SSC and from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and the Science Center. From the SEFSC, there would be a stock assessment representative and a surveys representative, and the objective of this working group would be to provide recommendations to optimize the utility of South Atlantic fishery-independent surveys, considering developments pertaining to surveys, data needs, and funding.

Essentially, what this working group was anticipated to do would be to sort of do what we did at this workshop last week, and so revisit these issues, to make sure that we're each year focusing on the most important issues.

Lastly, the review panel recommended that SC DNR and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center coordinate to generate and submit to the council an annual report on SERFS, which would include information on sampling effort, funding, life history samples collected, processed, analyzed, processed, and/or backlogged, and related information.

Finally, I mentioned that we had a planning meeting for the longline survey, and we made a lot of progress last week in continuing to plan for that, and I will just highlight this third bullet and sub-bullet, which is that the Mid-Atlantic Council is funding a longline survey targeting golden tilefish in 2020, and it might have been a couple of years ago, but more frequently beginning last year, a number of us from the Southeast I think coordinated with a number of people in the Mid-Atlantic to think about whether it would be possible for us to coordinate our surveys to an extent that we could integrate the data and sort of generate one combined dataset, and so we're trying to make our methodologies sufficiently consistent that the data can be integrated, and I think that we will be able to do that. We still have some hurdles to cross, but that's one reason that it was important to have Mid-Atlantic participation in our workshop last week.

Next steps is discussion of these results with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center leadership, and we anticipate generating summary reports for both the workshop and planning meeting and continue planning for the 2020 regional-scale deepwater longline survey, and so, with that, I will try to address any questions you have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Todd. Are there questions for Todd? I am looking around the room.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Was your South Atlantic Fishery Independent Survey Workshop open to the public, and were they put out there so people could be notified of them?

DR. KELLISON: Good question, Dewey, and so it was not, I guess, a noticed meeting, and it was at the SC DNR facility, and we did have some people stop in, but, like I said, it wasn't broadcast, and I don't think we would have kept anyone that came in from participating.

DR. COLLIER: This was more of a workgroup than a public meeting or anything like that, and it's more designing some of the SEFIS projects, to make sure that they're on target, and it not necessarily was trying to get public involvement, but just trying to make sure that we're going to be able to coordinate with different groups and getting the best data that we can.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions?

DR. PORCH: Thank you, Todd, and I look forward to talking with you a little bit more about this, since obviously we have a very strong interest in the outcome of the survey, but I do have a question. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council longline survey, is that also a cooperative research survey, where we're using industry vessels to set the longlines?

DR. KELLISON: It is, Clay, and they did a similar survey in 2017, and so the proof of concept survey, where they are trying to focus both on blueline and golden tilefish, and that was also a cooperative with industry survey, and, based on the outcomes of that, they probably could most efficiently focus on golden tilefish, but, yes, it's going to continue to be a cooperative with industry effort there.

DR. PORCH: I just wanted to highlight that aspect of it. I think the only way to really move forward in this region is for all the players to contribute assets and figure out how we can work cooperatively, and it may be that we have one survey design, and, in some cases, states do part of it, and industry does part of it, and the Science Center does part of it, and we find a way to kind of pool assets to get something more powerful in the end, because, as we all know, there's not huge amounts of funding raining in to implement these things, and so the only way to really do something useful is for us all to work together, and, like I said, combine assets, where appropriate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Clay.

MR. DILERNIA: To that point, in the Mid-Atlantic, we have -- The Bigelow does a lot of the survey work for us, but the Northeast Fisheries Science Center has created a Northeast Trawl Advisory Committee to look at the work that the Bigelow does and to make recommendations on the trawl survey and the work of the nets that are used by the Bigelow. One of the recommendations also is to initiate side-by-side trawls with the industry vessels, to begin to compare the results, or if there can be some way of using the industry vessel results, perhaps, as a proxy in the future compared to the Bigelow. There is a general agreement in the Northeast that the Bigelow is a bit large, or too big, and some folks have dubbed it the Too Big Bigelow, to do the types of surveying that we need done and that industry vessels could be used instead.

We also have an inshore survey that is run by industry right now, and, actually, Captain Jimmy Ruhle from North Carolina runs that for us, and so we have a lot of work that is -- In the Northeast, we're beginning to go more and more towards the use of industry vessels and collaborative and cooperative research, but, again, it's all done under the supervision and encouragement of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tony.

MR. BELL: Just a comment. I mean, Clay mentioned the importance of everybody working together to try for the common good here, and one thing with that is that, perhaps at above our level, there needs to be a commitment to enough funding to keep the work going for long enough so that you have a data stream that is meaningful for management purposes at some point, and so that's just everything costs money, but it is an important area that we do have a commitment to, and we just need to maintain that commitment as best we can.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One thing I have advocated for in the last probably five or six years, particularly in reference to blueline tilefish, is develop a survey, and then we go find the money. Don't wait until you've got to have the money and then you go develop something, because it just takes more time, and so develop something to say, if you do these ten things, here is your survey, and let's go find the money, and industry might could come up with something, use of vessels at a reduced cost or something, to get it done, but don't wait until you've got to go find the money, because that will just put another probably four or five years on getting it done, and, for fishermen in certain areas, we can't wait four or five years, when we've been reduced the crumb fisheries that we are now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Dewey.

DR. KELLISON: Dewey, thanks for that comment, and so I would say that, in this case, we sort of have done exactly what you suggested, and so the workshop that we had in 2015 at the Beaufort Lab, which was industry and science, and so commercial and recreational and scientists, coming together to think about how we would survey the South Atlantic deepwater species complex, demersal species complex, if we could, and we have made a lot of specific recommendations on how we would do that.

We have utilized many of those recommendations down to the detail in the planning for those surveys that we're going to carry out, or we anticipate carrying out, in 2020, and so, I mean, that's an example of the planning occurring first and us being essentially ready to utilize the plan when the funding became available, and so I would say thanks for your contributions to that workshop I 2015, because we're putting your recommendations to use.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Todd. Any other questions or comments?

MR. CONKLIN: It looks like it took five years either way, Dewey, but at least it's getting done, and so the process to apply to be an industry participant in these new surveys would be through the DUNS process, and is that correct? Where you have to bid it out, or is there an easier way to do it?

DR. KELLISON: Well, I think that we'll have to determine that moving forward, and so, for 2020, because of a number of developments -- I mentioned that this would be a cooperative effort between the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and SC DNR and industry, and so, for the 2020 survey, the contracting was occurring through SC DNR, and so they are going to be contracting the commercial fishermen. In the future, that might be happening on the NMFS side, in which case we would proceed with essentially a request for bids, and we would go through a competitive process to determine who the participants would be, I would envision. That's assuming that we continue to have funding for this survey in subsequent years, for which I'm hopeful, but we'll have to see.

MR. CONKLIN: I would encourage keeping it with the state and letting the state advertise it, and it's pretty tough to do all the other federal stuff.

DR. KELLISON: It is a definite hurdle, and you're correct.

MR. PUGLIESE: Just a quick note, and I think one of the biggest take-aways from the overall workshop was the fact that we were literally working on the edge, and those programs -- The reductions are going to be real reductions in either assessment capability or future ecosystem activities that we really want to see some of these things begin to contribute to.

One of the aspects I think that was discussed somewhat, and it's captured somewhat in what was presented, is that we have real opportunities, both through the existing survey situations and with the Palmetto and others to use other technology, and so hopefully we can get some partnership with NOAA or other partners to get some of this new technology for mapping or other capabilities that doesn't compromise the surveys, but you've got all these vessel days on there, and you should be collecting a lot more than that.

The other opportunity is to work with industry, and I was talking with some of the longliners at the workshop, and opportunities to integrate something like a BAT system or a multibeam system, and they're already investigating some of that, and they have some, I guess, connections with that, but there's just real opportunity, again, to take advantage of -- To maximize the time on the water and use the new technology, because things have advanced so far, and they don't have a lot of the caveats, and so it really affects both either the fishing or the research that's ongoing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Roger.

MR. DILERNIA: I am going to take off my liaison hat for the moment and put on my industry hat, and I would like to say that I was first appointed to the Mid-Atlantic Council in 1991, and I served as an advisor for years before that, and, in those early years, industry was very suspicious and upset with the results coming out of the Science Centers regarding the surveys.

In recent times, the Science Centers have made tremendous progress in working with industry and getting the support of industry and the confidence of industry in the work that they're doing, and so it's a complete reversal, and I think the Science Centers are doing an excellent job of trying to work with industry in improving their survey results, and, to both the Northeast and Southeast Centers, on behalf of industry, I would like to say thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tony. Anybody else? Clay.

DR. PORCH: I did want to come back to Dewey's point, kind of the idea that, if you build the plan, that it will come, and, in this case, as Todd answered, we've been looking into this for some time. However, it's not that new funds actually came to pay for this survey. We are making a conscious decision in the Center to stop doing certain things, so that we can fund the survey. Whether that will continue, of course, depends on many things and what other things we're directed to do with our budget, but, right now, I see it as a priority, and that's why we're investing in this longline survey.

That doesn't mean, if we came up with a new survey that we would like to do, that we could also find money to fund it. It probably wouldn't be able to come out of my budget. We're stretched pretty thin right now, but, in this particular case, because we see that need, and it's very clear, we've made a conscious decision to invest in an industry-supported survey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My reason for saying build it and then go find the money is maybe states - - Off our state of North Carolina, if there's an area, particular or something, that, if you say you go do this survey there, then it can provide the science for something further, and maybe the state goes and finds the money, or the fishermen goes and finds the money to donate their time and planning, because I think it's crucial, that part, and I know stuff takes time, and I'm very well experienced in that, and I'm grateful that the Science Center has stepped up and said we're going to dedicate these things, but sometimes --

I haven't even had a chance to look, and I don't know where these surveys are going to be done, and I don't know what the protocol is and all these other things, but that maybe a state could go and say, hey, since a certain area north of Cape Hatteras has been segmented off, as an area, that the state could say, if you do these certain things to a survey, then it can be scientifically validated, and it can be used in the stock assessment, and this little area that showed very -- That you're allowed to harvest very little fish out of there, and the end result could be increase the harvest to the fishermen, and at the same time get the science done that passes muster, so to speak, at a reduced rate or something like that.

That's the only reason, because, you know, the higher up you go, it seems like it just takes more time, and the bureaucracy eats up time and stuff, and so, if you had a plan, like you inserted a little chip into it, and say, hey, under this chip here, you go find the money, and you do this protocol, and this is the same as having to wait five years and the bureaucracy to eat up time and all this to get something actually done, and so that was my reason for saying that, build it and they will come. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more comments or questions? All right. Thank you, Todd.

DR. KELLISON: Thanks for your time, everyone.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Next up, we have Vivian, and she's going to give us an update on the MRIP catch weight estimation approach.

MS. MATTER: Thank you. We were asked to present our weight estimation methodology that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center uses for stock assessment and management. A little bit of

the history on the weight estimation methodology, and, back in 2009, we were asked, with the implementation of ACLs, we were asked to produce weight estimates for the recreational sector every two months, in order to monitor the annual catch limits.

At the time, most of the estimates that were being produced from the recreational sector were in numbers of fish, and, oftentimes, the average weight to generate weight estimates in a stock assessment were generated in a model, and so, in order to be able to meet that need of getting weight estimates every two months, we had to implement a methodology that we would be able to apply consistently and frequently across all years and species.

The weight estimation methodology that we use basically addresses a couple of the shortfalls of some of the weight estimates coming from our surveys. For example, back then, it was the MRFSS estimation methodology, and we would sometimes have estimates of fish in number, with no corresponding estimate in weight, due to not enough information at that cell level, or that strata, for weight, and so sometimes, in the survey, you will have an estimated number, but not in weight.

Our methodology we're seeking to address that issue, as well as having to produce estimates every two months, and we also have, for example, the Texas Parks and Wildlife survey that doesn't estimate recreational catch in weight at all, and it's just in numbers, and so the methodology was applied across all years and these surveys, in order to be consistent, and so that's a little bit of the background of why we implemented this methodology.

It's documented in a couple of SEDAR working papers, and, basically, what it does is it takes the sample data of the survey and it calculates average weights by strata, and the finest level a survey estimate is produced is at the species, region, year, state, mode, wave, and area fished level, and so what this methodology does is it tries to get an average weight at the finest level available, if there are enough weights at that level, and, if there are not, we kick back and start dropping off strata, in order to get a minimum number of sample weights.

Currently, we use the new MRIP size datasets, and they were released in 2018, and so we've been using this new sample datasets since November of 2018, and they include weights imputed by MRIP. Also, we have recently made a change in the minimum sample size. Originally, we had thirty fish, at a minimum, and we have moved that to fifteen, and that was implemented last fall, and I will walk you through some of the information that led to that decision.

The Science Center did an analysis on the minimum size required, or, basically, it was a comparison between how much do we gain by adding more fish to that minimum size, and so this graph just shows you some of the species we were looking at, and it shows you that, if you go from thirty to fifteen, you're really not -- I'm sorry. The other way. If you have thirty minimum sizes, you're not gaining all the much in a reduction in the standard error of the original weight estimate, and so it basically shows that the sample size -- I'm so sorry. It basically shows that the minimum sample size of fifteen is one that is recommended, because increasing the minimum number does not increase the standard error by -- It doesn't decrease it by that much.

This new methodology was presented to the South Atlantic SSC at the MRIP workshop in August, and it was incorporated into the ACL file starting in September, and then it was submitted to the Gulf of Mexico vermilion snapper SEDAR in October, and it was applied to the SEDAR 38 king mackerel update in November of 2019, and so the weight estimates provided for South Atlantic

greater amberjack, red porgy, and yellowtail snapper -- All of those assessments occurred before the change in methodology, and so they all still use a thirty minimum sample size.

The next few slides show you the impact of this change in minimum sample size on the weight estimates by species, and the green line shows you the weight estimates using the minimum of fifteen, and the blue line shows you using a minimum of thirty fish, and the red line is shown for comparison, as to these are the estimates coming out of the MRIP survey, and so you will see there is not a large difference between the fifteen and thirty in these cases here. I have included the comparison slides for grater amberjack, red porgy, and yellowtail, with the same color scheme, where fifteen is shown in green.

As I clumsily said before, the summary is that using a thirty minimum weight threshold does not significantly improve the standard error of weight estimates compared to using fifteen. Using fifteen will result in more precise weight estimates within the strata, since we'll have to aggregate less from coarser strata, and the change from thirty to fifteen will not introduce bias in the resulting weight estimates, and so these are the reasons why the Science Center implemented a new fifteen minimum weight threshold.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Are there any questions for Vivian? I don't see any hands. Thank you for the presentation, Vivian.

MS. MATTER: Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Next up on our agenda would be exempted fishing permits, and we don't have any exempted fishing permits this time. I suggest we go ahead and take a break for lunch and come back at 1:15.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're going to do the wind presentation, and so we have Rick and Craig that are going to talk to us about the wind project.

MR. POFF: Hi. I'm Craig Poff with Avangrid Renewables, and give us one second, because we pulled up the wrong document, and so one second here. Thank you all for your patience. My name is Craig Poff, and I'm the Director of Development for the Kitty Hawk Offshore Wind Project.

Our company, Avangrid Renewables, is part of one of the largest owners of renewable energy generation in the world, and, here in the U.S., we've got a big footprint of onshore projects, all throughout -- Any place that's really windy and interested in wind energy, we're there, and, as a global company, there's been a big push in the last few years to really move forward with offshore wind.

With our global affiliates, we are very much involved in the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the Baltic, the Bay of Biscayne, English Channel, and, in those projects that we've built in those areas, we have developed a good corporate expertise and talent for those sorts of very complex projects, and we're beginning to import those folks over to help guide our deployment of offshore projects here

in the U.S., and so we take kind of the best of both worlds, our experience with the onshore business and melding that in with the offshore expertise in those areas kind of in northern Europe.

With an offshore project, folks are very familiar with the wind turbines that are out there, the sexy, interesting, huge pieces of equipment spinning out in the ocean, and there's a lot of other pieces that are necessary to support that, and they involve a lot of coordination and siting and consideration throughout, and so each wind turbine is connected to an offshore substation by array cables, and so cables that run from that turbine to the substation carrying the electrons.

The offshore substation then consolidates all that energy, typically steps it up to a higher voltage, and then exports to the existing electricity grid onshore, and we refer to that as the export cable, and so, in our case, that would land around Sandbridge, Virginia and then proceed inshore about another five to seven miles to the existing overhead electric transmission lines, where we'll build a substation and connect to the grid.

Then, along with that electrical infrastructure, there's all the supporting infrastructure. During construction, there is considerable port activity, and there may be somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty to seventy-five vessels involved with the construction of the project, from crew transfer vessels to equipment handling to survey to fisheries monitors, to everything else that's going on to coordinate and facilitate the installation of the turbines.

During the operations phase, we will have sort of crew transfer solution, typically in close to shore applications, and there will be kind of day-trip vessel that will take crews out, and they will work during the day and go back at the end of the workday. In the case of Kitty Hawk, we're still looking at the solutions available to us there, which may involve a larger vessel with extended duration that may stay on the site with the crew for say a week or ten days or something to that effect. It will service the project and then head back to port for resupply and crew change. Then, along with that, there is oftentimes some aircraft involved, for emergent issues, and then, of course, a port facility of some sort with an operations warehouse, crew kind of offices, if you will.

All of these things are planned well in advance of the deployment of the project, and, oftentimes, it's an iterative process that involves the technological changes that are occurring in our business. Wind turbines are getting larger and more efficient, which means we're able to build fewer of them, which create fewer interactions with the ocean, and it really improves interaction with the natural and human environment, and then it also just makes it a little easier for the operation and the maintenance, because you have fewer of them out there.

The Kitty Hawk site is about forty nautical miles southeast of Rudee Inlet and about twenty-four nautical miles due east of Corolla, to its closest point, Corolla, North Carolina, and you will notice that it's kind of a triangular shape there, and that sawtooth on the southwestern side, if you kind of extend that straight up, you will notice that it pretty much points to the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and the size and shape of this lease area, as with any other lease area, is the product of a long and involved federal stakeholder process that occurs long before the lease is ever put out for commercial auction, and so, through that interaction with the Coast Guard and with the military and with fisheries stakeholders, and the National Parks Service in this case, they all had a say in really deciding where sites should not go, and then you look at what's left.

In this case, they looked at vessel transits, and they looked at no-go areas on the north side there for the Department of Defense range usage, and then, when we go to the next -- I'm going to skip ahead two slides, but I'm looking at level of effort of fishing out in that area, and, really, it kind of finds a hole in the donut in a lot of these concerns, ranging from fisheries interests to military interests to National Parks Service visual interests, et cetera.

The site ends up kind of in an area that we're finding is just inside of the fishery for the highly migratory species, and then offshore of the drop-netting, the potting, or the seasonal shrimping and such that occurs inshore, and so we have been spending a lot of time gathering data on the site, characterizing the seabed, conducting bathymetry, geophysical surveys, and we've also been conducting monthly aerial surveys, and we fly a very sophisticated camera system over the site, and it's got about nine high-resolution cameras that click about 10,000 images per survey, and we then put that through some artificial intelligence algorithms that pull out things that might be of interest, whether it's a fish high in the water column or a marine mammal or a turtle or a vessel, and these images are pulled out and then put in front of a biologist or a subject matter expert to identify what we're looking at.

In the case of a bird, we can actually tell not only, of course, the species, but also the direction of travel and the flight height, and we know the camera system height, and the resolution of the equipment gives us the capability to know, within a few meters, of how high that bird is flying.

We gather all this data to kind of make sure that the fundamental premise of renewable energy actually is followed, and the whole reason we do these sorts of projects is to create energy with less impact on the environment than other means, and so we go to a great extent early on to make sure that we understand how the site is being used, both, again, with the natural environment and the human environment, and then try to design a project that's mindful of all those.

The last few years, we've been conducting all this assessment and outreach, et cetera. Late last year, we submitted to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management what's called a site assessment plan, and that plan is about to be approved, and that will allow us to deploy a meteorological buoy within the wind energy area, where we'll be able to characterize the wind resource within the site, but we'll also gather a considerable amount of ocean data, current, wave, temperature. All of these sorts of things really inform not only the potential production of a wind energy project, but it informs the engineering that will be necessary to support that project over its useful life.

In advance of that, or alongside all those surveys, we have been working to make sure the people that we expect are using that area of the ocean are considered and have input and awareness of what we've been up to and what we might be doing out in the ocean, and that's where Rick Robbins comes in. With targeted engagement in these areas, Rick has been visiting the tournaments and the marine operators and the councils and walking the docks and speaking with fishermen, to make sure that we understand where they are operating, make sure they understand what we're doing, so that we don't bump into each other, and we're considerate of each other's area of operation and make sure we can all exist out there safely.

We have also, again the royal we, Rick, has been conducting oral history interviews with folks that have been out there fishing for generations, and we're really trying to understand how people have seen or used the site and what they've been seeing over these lifetimes of fishing, and, I mean, Rick, you've had some folks that are seventy-five years old and have been fishing out there for

fifty years, and we've been able to really start to gain a picture of which way they tend to trawl, where they spend their time, and the other thing we've been really hearing a lot about is there isn't so much HMS effort in the area, but it's a transit area, and so we need to be considerate of those fleets departing Rudee to go out to fish the point, or the triple-zeroes, or the ones coming northeast out of Oregon Inlet as well.

All these things we're kind of characterizing and putting into a big cookbook, if you will, that will eventually be used, along with the site data that we've collected through the surveys and the fish and birds and marine mammal usage at the site, and all of this will eventually be baked into a proposal that we can then put forth and really start talking about how it all fits together.

In conducting these surveys, I just wanted to kind of share a few images with you, and we've been seeing a good amount of hammerhead sharks out there and tuna, and we're seeing a lot, a lot, of sea turtles seasonally, in the late part of the year, and then our survey vessels have been covered up, from time to time, with all sorts of porpoise and dolphin and such out there, and it has really influenced and impacted our ability to do work.

As some of you may or may not know, the activities that we undertake as a federal leaseholder are subject to a number of restrictions around protected species, and so, whenever we are operating with a sub-bottom profiler, which is fairly low energy, but it characterizes the first about twenty to fifty meters of the bottom of the ocean, and that does have a sound output. Whenever a protected species is within 500 meters or so of the vessel, we have to shut down our equipment and go around and get on our line again, and so a lot of these interactions with protected species that include not only turtles, but the porpoise and such, and whales, and we're always working within that environment.

We're getting very close to getting a good first pass of what the site looks like, and I kind of look at our data right now, and it's more or less what you would get from a rabbit ears television thirty or forty years ago. You can kind of see what's going on, but maybe you wouldn't want to watch a hockey game or a baseball game on it, but, as we move into this year, we're doing a little bit tighter line spacing, kind of increasing the resolution, and, soon, we'll be able to kind of get a 4KHD picture of what we're up to.

Along with the remote sensing that we've been doing, kind of towing equipment, we've also been actually contacting the bottom with benthic sampling, to understand kind of the critters that are in the seafloor and characterizing the grain sizes and such of the geology down there, so we can understand how maybe cable burial depths or foundation installation might impact the area around there, the siltation or the sediment transport, and all these things are considered as we design the project.

As I mentioned before, later this month, into early April, once we have the green light from BOEM, we'll be deploying a platform in the wind energy area, kind of in the northwestern area, and this apparatus is kind of a hull similar to maybe a Montauk-17 small center console boat, and it has two floating lidar systems that are going to be looking up, and you can see the wind generators on the back of it, to help keep the power and the batteries up, and it collects all sorts of barometric pressure, air density, humidity, all these things that impact the wind resource.

Then, on the floating lidar, as well as a trawl-resistant bottom-mounted frame that will be mounted immediately nearby, we're able to understand the wave heights, currents, the acoustic wave current profiler that is attached to the bottom, and so all of this will be in the area for one to three years, and we'll start out in that northwest portion for the first year, and then we may move it to a couple other approved areas over the course of the monitoring campaign.

I would note that the locations where we are deploying these were scrutinized very closely by BOEM, and we did a very high-resolution survey in these areas, to make sure that we weren't on any sort of essential fish habitats, paleolandscapes, unexploded ordnance, anything like that. They were scrutinized very closely, to ensure safe deployment.

I would just note that, as we -- We come and see you guys, I guess, for this second time here at the council, and we were with you a year ago, and our website is coming up online later this month, and there will be a fisheries section on there, where anyone can go to kind of see the latest fisheries notices. The notices that will go out for the buoy deployment and such, while they will certainly come to the council for distribution, to your folks, they're also publicly available in these locations. That's all I have for my presentation, and Rick or I are glad to take any questions that you might have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that presentation, and thanks for coming back to talk to us about this. Are there questions?

MS. BECKWITH: When you guys discuss how you handle protected species, the protected species that you guys are dealing with are not usually fish, and we have a lot of grouper species that are more prone to hunker down than to leave an area where there is a bit of sound, and I guess I'm curious if there's any consideration to that when you're passing over hardbottom habitat, deepwater corals or shipwrecks, that that might be a consideration that you guys have during surveys.

MR. POFF: Our regulatory framework really goes straight to those marine mammals and sea turtles, specifically, that have exclusion zones, and we do not have any particular requirement around fish in those areas, and I can say that the sound levels of the sub-bottom profiler that we're using are nothing along the lines of say those that are used in gas exploration or oil exploration, and they are orders of magnitude lower, and there is -- The short answer is no, we don't have that, but we do take our requirements with regard to the species that are identified -- We take those very seriously, and we adhere very closely to those shutdown periods.

MR. BELL: It's a completely different gear, and sub-bottom puts out a lot less energy than what we would experience with a geodetic and geologic survey kind of stuff. I'm just curious about the number of actual -- The platforms you have and the spacing between them and that sort of thing, and the big question really are the fisheries. When you get these up and running, is there like a security zone standoff distance, and is that established, or is that something that you've just got to work through?

MR. POFF: The technology is evolving with regard to size. Turbines are getting larger, which means we build fewer, and so the way we're going about Kitty Hawk is we're planning a project in three chunks, and each one of them is 800 megawatts, which megawatts doesn't mean much to

most folks, but it's around -- 800 megawatts will produce enough energy for about 200,000 homes, give or take.

If we assume the best available technology today is -- General Electric makes what's called their Haliade twelve-megawatt turbine, and we can simply divide 800 into twelve and come out a little under seventy, I guess, and there are discussions in the industry about turbines approaching twenty megawatts, and so, if we were to get up to twenty, that's forty for each chunk, and I would note that the Kitty Hawk lease area itself is about 200 square miles, and so, if we skew towards what's best available technology, and let's say it's seventy turbines, and we do it in three chunks, that's about over 200 square miles, and so, in that case, you're about a square mile per turbine, and you're over a mile separating them, well over.

The array design -- You typically don't just simply build them on a checkerboard square, because you have considerations in the land, and we want to avoid essential fish habitat, and we want to avoid unexploded ordnance or wrecks or any number of things, in addition to consideration of the environmental factors, which way is the wind blowing, how frequently, and how energetically, and which way is the current flowing.

All of those things will inform the eventual layout, but, typically, we want the turbines far enough apart that they don't overly interact with each other. If you think about it, a turbine's sole purpose is to remove energy from the wind, and so you don't want another one too close behind it, because it won't be getting energetic wind, and so all of these things kind of go into the consideration that you want them far enough apart to not interact, but, then again, you don't want them so spread apart that you are building an unnecessary footprint and making it too large, and so we want as nice, compact, efficient site as we can find.

MR. BELL: What I was getting at is I'm a fisherman, and I might like to fish near that, and how close can I come?

MR. POFF: There is going to be no restriction once the project is built. Certainly during activities, and so, presently, it's during survey activities, we ask vessels to stay back and give us a half-mile, or as much as they can, because we don't want to tangle up each other. Certainly, during construction, whenever we'll have activity that is potentially hazardous, we're going to have exclusion zones around the activity. Once the turbines and the offshore substation are built, one is going to be able to go up and drop a line right into the structure, just like you do an oil rig in the Gulf, and, as a fisherman myself, I'm kind of excited about the amberjack and the kingfish and everything else that are going to be showing up there.

MS. BECKWITH: Who is going to be responsible for the decommissioning of all the equipment when you guys are done using it?

MR. POFF: We will. It's a requirement of the federal lease, and, really, any wind project as well. Whenever they're done, they are decommissioned and removed. There is considerable salvage value, as you can well imagine, but, on top of that, just the requirement of the federal lease is we remove it.

MR. DILERNIA: Have you decided what type of foundations that you'll be using at this site?

MR. POFF: We have not yet. That is a function of kind of the whole purpose of deploying that met ocean buoy out there and then taking the high-resolution surveys that are yet to be completed, and those things will really inform what we're looking at. Given the depths out there, I would expect that we're a pretty good candidate, and knowing that there aren't massive boulder fields in this area, I would think the site is a pretty good candidate for monopile foundations, but we can't say that with 100 percent certainty at this point.

MR. CONKLIN: You guys have already been awarded the lease, and is that correct?

MR. POFF: Well, awarded in that we paid \$9 million for it, yes.

MR. CONKLIN: I missed that, and I just wanted to make sure.

MR. POFF: Yes, we bought it.

MR. CONKLIN: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are there more questions?

MR. POLAND: Thanks for the presentation. Did I hear correct that a decision has been made that the cable is going to run into Virginia?

MR. POFF: That's our current plan, yes, is to land it near Sandbridge, Virginia, if you're familiar with that area, right at the end of Sandbridge Road, and we have been in discussions with the City of Virginia Beach for over a year, and we have obtained a couple of options for the substation sites onshore, and presently we're reviewing and negotiating the actual routing and conditions of the cable in the landing area and then the route to those substation interconnect points.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions or comments?

MR. ROBBINS: Thanks for the opportunity today to hear this project update, and it's really been a pleasure for me, and I've told just about everybody that I've talked to about it and what a pleasure it's been for me to be in this role of interaction with fishermen and scientists and managers to talk about the fisheries side of this project.

Craig pointed out the fact that I've done oral history interviews with fishermen who have spent lifetimes out there, and it's been a great experience, and I will say they have been very forthcoming and very helpful in providing information about the details that we want to have as we seek to really understand the historical fisheries in that area, because we know we can't get all of that out of a data run, but we want to understand the operational details about how they fish and how things have changed over time, which is a story unto itself, and I'm sure you can appreciate it, and so we're working hard to get that information, and I'm in the middle of that, but I also wanted to say, if you have specific fisheries concerns, please let us know.

Anna, you raised a question about possible impacts on groupers during survey work. If there's a species distribution in there that you have a concern with, please let me know, and we will try to look at all of the available data, and I've been asking fishermen, as I interview them, about species presence, and, so far, grouper haven't really turned up in that discussion in that area, and it's in ten

to twenty fathoms, and it's north of the inlet, but, if you have fishermen that have information, or if you have any specific concerns, please let us know, and I would be more than happy -- If you all have constituents that have information or concerns like that, we're glad to hear from you, and so I would be happy to follow up on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Roger is coming up here.

MR. PUGLIESE: It's great to see you again. Welcome aboard, and I appreciate you making it back again, Craig. I think this has been really wonderful, to be starting at the absolute beginning of this process, and you've made some very significant strides forward. The things I was curious about I have raised before, and I want to continue, because I think it sounds like things are aligning, and opportunities for collaboration as it moves forward, and, right now, you're in the met tower stage, and so the opportunities to look at maybe alignments, as you get into the planning stage, where you could create trolling alleys or whatever, by the way things are placed.

I mean, I think we have the opportunity to be creative with it, and, also, the situation that these are going to be some of the first structure systems out in the open ocean and the opportunity to expand our ocean observing observation network. Working with SECOORA and other partners to be able to integrate some of the different monitoring capabilities will expand significantly our observing capabilities that are driving models and that are providing even new technology, maybe eDNA or whatever, and one final one that I've been thinking about is, as these different systems come online, that cabling network system may provide an opportunity, if this is even likely, is to maybe -- If it's going to be something that provides access to further offshore, it could actually provide other information that becomes a point where we could have collections that are almost static systems that provide several sites, and we've been talking about creating those, to have long-term collection of information.

If you've already got that, we could potentially have some partners couple with that and then be able to go even further into the deep ocean and do that, so that, as you move from state to state, you build a network throughout the entire southeast, the big picture type of things, but I think the biggest thing is it sounds like there is real opportunities for collaboration, and also when you're talking about building additional structure and everything, and this is all going to be additional habitats in these areas, and that's going to be probably some of the most significant new habitat added into the system.

MR. POLAND: To Rick's request, I think our comments we've provided in the past have kind of focused on access to the area, kind of what to Mel was getting at and to what Roger mentioned, as far as siting these, and kind of reasonable trolling alleys, or at least site them with the intent that these are going to be used. I mean, they're essentially big artificial reefs off the coast.

As far as snapper grouper species, that far north, that's really up there towards the northern limit of a lot of the range of the species that we manage in the snapper grouper complex, but, as we see species distributions changing, and this is a lot of available habitat that will potentially be out there, and so, I mean, it's not out of the realm of possibility that we might see some of our managed species settle on these sites. Since Anna brought up decommissioning, what kind of like lifespan will these have? When will decommissioning potentially start, and then what is that process? I mean, what's left, and what is brought to shore?

MR. POFF: The expected life is designed to be around thirty years, and the BOEM lease, with some -- It's an operating lease of around thirty years, and then, whenever we decommission, we remove everything that can be removed without creating undue burden, and so, typically, and this is the first time that I've been asked decommissioning specifically about Kitty Hawk, and so I will preference this by saying that, based on my general experience, and not the Kitty Hawk lease specifically, which I haven't dug into the decommissioning requirements there, but, typically, my understanding is the foundations will be removed.

If they're jackets, they will be lifted up and taken out, and probably the piles would be left behind that are pinning it to the bottom. If it's a monopile, it would be cut off somewhere just below the surface type of thing, and, typically, the cables are the same way. If they are buried cables a couple of meters deep, you probably just get rid of the two ends of it and leave the rest of it buried, so you don't re-disturb that area, but, effectively, it's kind of as though you take everything that could be above the surface of the bottom of the ocean and remove it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? All right. Thank you, Craig, and thank you, Rick, for coming and giving us another presentation about this.

MR. POFF: Thanks for having us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Now I think we're going to move into the committee reports, and I believe that we're going to start with the Committee of the Whole, Brian. We are going to go first into the sanctuary, and so the Committee of the Whole met on March 2 and 3 of this week, and we approved the agenda, and we discussed a number of items.

The first one that we talked about was the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Our comments are due next week, and we talked about a number of items that were in the PowerPoint, and the draft letter has been emailed around to everyone.

There were a couple of items that, between Brian, myself, and Martha, that we were a little bit unclear about what the direction from the council was, and one of them was on this slide, and so these are some additional areas that are not currently protected, and there is proposed expansion, and there is different types of actions that are occurring in these areas, and then, as you can see in the bottom right, there's an area there that's a coral nursery, and it's not proposed for any type of protection, and so all of these areas are in, or at least partly in, federal waters of the council's jurisdiction, and they all would affect fishing in some way.

We heard some people say that we want to do the same thing that FWC is suggesting here, which we're suggesting lots of different things for different ones of these areas, and the different alternatives are very complicated, as Martha was trying to explain the other day, and I can pull out my copy of the plan if I need to, and I heard other folks, like maybe Chris, suggesting that we don't want to support the creation of these at all, and so I'm just trying to get some more direction here, and it was unclear, from our notes, what people were suggesting.

MR. BREWER: These areas, while they -- I mean, I'm assuming that most of these are these nurseries for coral, which are being set up by the FWC, I guess primarily, and this is almost like you're putting your seeds in that vast vault that's under the frozen tundra, where you're trying to preserve the DNA and grow out some of these plants to be transplanted to other areas later on,

hopefully. That's pretty important stuff, and, if I understand it, that's what is going on there, and I think that those things ought to be protected in some shape or form. I'm not sure that I understood all of the different boxes and the shapes that were there to protect those areas, but, as an overarching concern, they need to be protected.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to be clear, these are not all only FWC specific nurseries, and I believe that this is other entities have these nurseries as well, and so they're not just FWC ones, and all of these would affect fishing in some way, and so you could make a comment to the effect that you think it's important to look at preserving these areas, like Chester suggested, but try to do it with as minimal restrictions on fishing as possible, or something of that nature, and so we didn't get into this in a lot of detail, but, earlier in the PowerPoint, we talked about how one of FWC's comments is going to be that, for active nurseries or active restoration sites, we're asking the sanctuary to develop a process with which they could open and close those in a quicker fashion than having to put out an entire draft environmental impact statement, and the life of some of these sites is maybe only about two years.

We were suggesting that maybe the sanctuary develops a process, and it could be in conjunction with the FWC or the Department of Environmental Protection, where you would pick a very small area, a small box, around some of these nurseries or restoration areas and just close that area, and you wouldn't necessarily need as large of a closure as maybe what some of these areas are suggesting.

You could also -- If you were putting a box around a restoration site, you wouldn't necessarily have to close the entire reef, and just possibly the area where the restoration is active, and you could even use that as an educational opportunity to help people understand what coral restoration is and why it's important, and they can kind of see that in action.

I kind of threw out an idea there that maybe you could protect some of these -- Suggest protection of these nurseries, some of which you can see are a little bit outside the areas that the sanctuary is proposing, but you could also make a comment that you want to try to limit the fisheries restrictions or something as much as possible, and that's just a suggestion. Any other comments on these areas?

MR. CONKLIN: I like kind of what you're saying. Anything in the SPAs that's any kind of no take, full zero retention, catch and release only or whatever, that probably wouldn't work for me.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so did anybody take some time to look at the letter? I tried to capture some of the things, Brian and myself and Martha, and Monica tried to capture some of the things that we had discussed, and so including things like water quality, education, law enforcement, and other things in there, and I just want to make sure that you guys thought it was reflective of the discussion that we had.

MR. BREWER: I actually read two versions of it, and I wanted to compliment those who worked on that letter. Obviously there was a lot of work that went into it. On behalf of a representative from the State of Florida, thank you very much. I don't have it in front of me right now, but I believe it's in the first paragraph, where you're talking about water quality, and people that have been involved in it for a while have, to a person, said that water quality really is the major issue, and we heard it again during public comment, in no uncertain terms.

The language that's in there right now I think needs to be a little stronger, because, right now, it says like the council noted, or something like that, and I might want to throw in some stuff about the council has heard repeatedly from stakeholders and from council members that water quality is an overarching concern, or the major concern, or the primary concern, something like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Thanks, Chester.

MR. CONKLIN: Thanks for mentioning that, Chester, for sure. There is a couple of things, and I know we were told just to comment on the fisheries regulations, but, without the sanctuary funding more enforcement officers, and I don't see how making more regulations about enforcement -- It seems like they should go hand-in-hand, and so perhaps we should recommend that they fund more officers for patrolling.

Then another thing that I heard, and I have been following this pretty closely, for whatever reason, but there is a sixty-day rule, and then another sixty days for emergency rule in there, and the sanctuary is wanting to double that, which would, in effect, put many businesses out of work for over a year, or close to a year, theoretically, and so I think we maybe should mention some sort of language in opposition of that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me talk a little bit about that proposal. If you're talking about the one that I think you're talking about, there is a proposal -- It's kind of like how we can put -- The council can put in an emergency rule for 180 days and then extend it again for another 186 days. I would liken what is in the plan to something like that, and so, in other words, if there was a ship grounding, or something of that nature, it's my understanding that this is lengthening the time with which they could put in emergency type regulations, and that's how we have interpreted that part of the document.

If you have concerns about it, if you could be more specific, like if you're suggesting that if those emergency actions related to fisheries, and they were going to happen in the South Atlantic's jurisdiction, maybe they could consult with us before taking an action, or something of that nature, and that might be a little bit more helpful, to add those types of specifics.

MR. CONKLIN: I am going to look back at the Gulf letter and see if they mentioned anything, and I think that they did, and so I will get back with you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

MR. POLAND: I agree with that statement that you just made. If we could have some language in there to ask them to at least consult with us, and that might help mitigate any fisheries interactions that Chris or other stakeholders might be concerned about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I can pull out the Gulf letter, and we could look at that. Chris, I bet you have it. Are there other concerns or ideas? Did people have a chance to look at the letter and felt like it was reflecting of the discussion? It looks like some people are looking at that letter now, and we have really tried to capture every part of the discussion, whether it was about baitfish or permits or the items that were listed, eleven or twelve items that were listed here in the PowerPoint, as well

as things like water quality, and we can certainly beef up the section on law enforcement, and we can beef up the section on water quality concerns in there.

MR. CONKLIN: I can read the Gulf language, if you want me to. It says several council members and stakeholders have expressed concern about the potential implications of extending the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary emergency regulation from sixty days to 180 days on fishing and related businesses. Further justification for this period change in the DEIS is warranted as an assurance that the sanctuary will consider fully the economic impacts of an extended closure in its decision-making process.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Would you like for us to have similar language as what's in the Gulf letter to this letter about that action?

MR. CONKLIN: I think continuity is always a great thing, yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else?

MR. BELL: Nothing new, but, from what I can remember about our discussion, you guys hit the points we were making, and so I think -- I am looking at the second one, and I don't know what the first one was like.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Madam Chair, what have we decided about this slide that is being projected now? I mean, it's still not really clear to me what the council is asking that we do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I can help write some language. It's my understanding that we're suggesting that we believe that new or proposed nursery areas -- Either current new proposed nursery areas need some protection. The protections that are established around those sites should likely be as small as possible, especially if they are going to be limiting fishing activities. That's how I took our comments, or minimize.

DR. CHEUVRONT: You're going to help with that language?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I certainly can.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thank you very much.

MR. CONKLIN: Some members of the Gulf Council have reached out to me, and they want us to take a look at the western extension of the Tortugas Ecological Reserve South. In their letter, they are hesitant, at this time, to support it in full, and I think what I've heard from them is that FWC is in favor of it, but I didn't know if we should talk about it some.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me use the pointer. I'm going to go through this again, and it is extremely complicated, and I apologize. This rectangle right here is the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve, and then -- Let me back up one slide. This red box at the top, this is status quo for the sanctuary, and so this is what the sanctuary looks like now, and, this little red rectangle that is not currently attached, this is the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve.

This is Alternative 4, the most restrictive alternative, and you can see that the -- When we go from status quo to Alternative 4, we are taking this line here, and we're pulling it out to encompass that entire corner, and so there is this new addition, and what the Gulf Council was talking about was this is also pulling this westward boundary even further west, and then this is Pulley Ridge out here that's not connected, and so let me go forward.

This little blue blob that is dark blue there, that's a cubera snapper spawning aggregation, and it's a known aggregation, and so that's one of the reasons why the sanctuary is suggesting to pull that boundary over to the west. What FWC is saying, and so here's the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve here, and what FWC is saying is that these deeper waters here are not necessarily needed to be part of the sanctuary and should be removed, so that they are not part of this, and take this new expanded boundary and pull it up, so then there's all these areas down here that would have been included, but they're not, because we're suggesting taking that boundary and pulling it up to here.

FWC is okay with pulling this to the west, because it is grabbing this cubera snapper spawning aggregation, but I can tell you that the Gulf Council did have some concerns about it, and so there were people on both sides, some people saying, yes, pull it to the west to grab that aggregation, and other people were suggesting that we're kind of getting into an area where people might be doing some shrimping, and so definitely some concerns here about even just pulling out this little sliver here, but that's why the sanctuary is suggesting it, is to try to encompass a portion of this aggregation.

I agree with you and understand where the Gulf Council is coming from, is because it -- When you start to get out here and get around the Tortugas, there's a lot of shrimping, historic shrimping, that occurred out there, and it could be a concern, and so I'm up for whatever you guys want to do, and I'm just showing you what FWC is going to be suggesting, which is complicated, but we also were welcoming the -- We call it a give-back, a give-back here in this area, of an area that was formerly inside the sanctuary, and we didn't necessarily think that it was needed, because, since the sanctuary was put in place, there's been additional research done, and we felt like the key areas are up here and that these areas down here aren't really needed.

DR. CHEUVRONT: To follow-up with that, the way the letter is written right now, it supports the FWC position, which is that -- It makes reference to about 105 miles, square miles, that the council believes should not be included, and that's referring to that part underneath there that Jessica referred to, but it does include protection for the cubera snapper spawning aggregation.

MR. BELL: Thanks for explaining that, and so there's some give-and-take in all of this, and I think the desire to protect that cubera snapper spawning area, which is known, is consistent with our discussions and desires and actions to deal with -- Try to attempt to protect some spawning aggregations, and so, I mean, I think your approach that you described -- I am comfortable with that being consistent with what our council has kind of been doing with other areas.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I just want to make sure that Chris is comfortable, because he is bringing up the --

MR. CONKLIN: I am comfortable. Our council has taken the lead on protecting spawning fish, and Mel hit it right on the head, and it looks like a pretty fair deal, and I know you guys worked hard on this.

MR. BREWER: What Chris just said.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chris, do you have any other things that folks from the Gulf wanted us to look at and talk about, anything else? I mean, like I said, there's a lot of actions in this plan, and Roy is right that a lot of them don't necessarily affect fishing, or they aren't necessarily in the South Atlantic's jurisdiction, and I can try to answer questions, if you have specific ones, but we made some suggestions for areas that we thought the South Atlantic would want to comment.

All right, and so, if we go back to the summary report for the Committee of the Whole, we have a draft motion in there, and we might need to edit it a little bit. **It says approve the draft letter to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary as the council's comments regarding the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Restoration Blueprint Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We could say something like approve the draft letter, as modified.** Would someone like to make that motion?

MR. BELL: **I move that we approve the draft letter to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary as the council's comments regarding the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Restoration Blueprint Draft Environmental Impact Statement, as modified.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Chester. Any more discussion or concerns? Once again, this letter is due next week, and we can help Brian with the things that we just talked about and get them in the letter and get it finalized before the deadline. Any more discussions? **Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Then the Committee of the Whole talked about determining the need for conservation and management of select species, and we got some presentations about this, and we talked about the different species, like little tunny, African pompano, and barrelfish, and we decided that, at this time, we don't want to consider them for adding to a fishery management plan, and then we requested that staff prepare a white paper to evaluate the ecosystem component designations for the species that the SSC suggested, and those were cubera snapper, margate, sailors choice, coney, yellowfin grouper, and saucereye porgy.

Then we talked about allocations, and so we received two presentations on allocations, and then we got into talking about what we would like to see, in addition to landings, when we start getting into specific species, and so there's a list there in the committee report of some of the things that we would like to look at, in addition to percent standard error, and so PSEs, and so these are just some criteria that we discussed that we would like to see moving forward.

Then we got into the ACLs and allocations for unassessed species, and we looked at some tables on this, and we talked about how we want to consider developing an amendment, and we talked about a number of things that we would need to look at, including the new MRIP numbers, and we would need to consider the allocations and new ABCs, et cetera, and staff is going to bring back something for us to look at, but we did not make any motions on those two parts of the committee.

Then there was no other business that was discussed by the Committee of the Whole, and then we have a timing and tasks here, a timing and tasks motion, and I can read it. **It's prepare a letter to be signed by the Council Chair to the Superintendent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary with comments regarding the restoration blueprint DEIS; bring back to the Snapper Grouper Committee a white paper regarding ecosystem component species designation for cubera, margate, sailors choice, coney, yellowfin grouper, and saucereye porgy; and bring back to the Snapper Grouper Committee the information regarding ACLs and allocations for unassessed species, as directed.** Would someone like to make that motion?

MR. BELL: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Mel and seconded by Chester. The timing and tasks motion is under discussion. I see thumbs-up. Any more discussion on this? **Any objection? Seeing none, the timing and tasks motion is approved.** That concludes the committee report from the Committee of the Whole. Next up I believe is Shrimp and David.

MR. WHITAKER: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The Shrimp Committee met on March 3 in Jekyll Island, and the committee approved the minutes for the December 2019 meeting and the agenda. The committee discussed Shrimp Amendment 11. The committee received reports on the January 17, 2020 Joint Law Enforcement, Shrimp, and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panels and public hearings on February 5 and 6. The committee approved adding an additional option for cold-water closed areas in the amendment and selected Option 2 as the preferred option. The committee then reviewed the codified text and approved the amendment for secretarial review. We have several motions here.

The first motion is to approve the IPT recommendations to the purpose and need, and so, on behalf of the committee, I make that motion. Any discussion? **Any objections to that motion? Seeing none, the motion is approved.**

Motion 2 is approve the IPT recommended options for Shrimp Amendment 11. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any further discussion? **Seeing no further discussion, is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, the motion is approved.**

Motion 3 is recommend Option 2 as the preferred option for the Shrimp Amendment 11. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any further discussion? **Any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Motion 4 is recommend approval of Shrimp Amendment 11 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document and codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any further discussion?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will do the roll call, if you're ready. All right. Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Dr. Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Absolutely.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Dr. Christiansen.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Griner.

MR. GRINER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Poland.

MR. POLAND: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Sapp. Mr. Woodward.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Whitaker.

MR. WHITAKER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Chairman McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: **The vote passes unanimously with one absence.**

MR. WHITAKER: Now we need a motion to adopt the timing and tasks, and can I get someone to make that motion?

MR. BELL: **I move to adopt the following timing and tasks. Staff will prepare Shrimp Amendment 11 for secretarial review and submit in April of 2020.**

MR. WHITAKER: Do I have a second? Steve seconds. Any further discussion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, the motion is approved.** That concludes our report for the Shrimp Committee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, David. Next up, we have Habitat and Steve.

MR. POLAND: All right. Thank you, Chairman. The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee met in Jekyll Island, Georgia on March 4, 2020. We received a summary report from the October 2019 Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel. This report was given by Dr. Wilson Laney.

From that report, we received a request from the AP to direct the Habitat Committee to update a couple of their policy statements, and, during discussion of the committee, the following motion was passed. **The motion is to direct the Habitat and Ecosystem AP to update or create an addendum to integrate and address climate change in the beach dredging and filling, beach renourishment, and large-scale coastal engineering policy statement. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any objection? The motion carries.** On behalf of the committee, I would entertain a motion to adopt the following timing and tasks.

MR. BELL: **Move to adopt the following timing and tasks: 1)staff support ongoing development of the South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim Model and SSC workgroup review and presentation during June committee meeting; 2)staff provide guidance and priorities supporting NOAA and partners mapping/characterization of South Atlantic deepwater ecosystem; 3)staff facilitate ongoing Habitat and Ecosystem AP sub-panel input highlighting state activities addressing FEP II Implementation Roadmap.**

MR. POLAND: Is there a second to the timing and tasks motion? Chairman McCawley seconds. Any discussion? **Any opposition? The motion carries.** Madam Chair, that concludes the Habitat Committee report.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Steve. Can you do Mackerel Cobia?

MR. POLAND: Yes, ma'am, I can. The Mackerel Cobia Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council met in Jekyll Island, Georgia on March 3, 2020, and the committee received a status report on commercial catches versus quota for the species under ACL management. We then received a status update on amendments under formal review.

We then moved into discussion on Framework Amendment 9, and this was an amendment to modify the commercial trip limit in the Northern Zone. After discussion, the committee passed the following motion. **The motion is to discontinue work on CMP Framework Amendment 9 until the stock assessment. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any opposition? The motion stands approved.** There was no other business brought before the committee, and there is no timing and tasks motion to adopt. With that, Madam Chair, that concludes the Mackerel Cobia Committee report.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Steve. All right. Next up is Snapper Grouper. The Snapper Grouper Committee met on March 4, and we approved the minutes and the agenda. We then got a status of commercial catches for species under ACLs and a status of amendments under formal review.

Then we got an update on modifications to the red snapper season, including Regulatory Amendment 33 and the 2020 red snapper season, and so we had a lot of discussion on this, and we talked about the expected number of days, and then there was a lot of discussion about I guess the frustration with so few days in the red snapper season, and we got into looking at the statement of work for the upcoming red snapper stock assessment.

We made a number of edits to the statement of work, but we didn't approve the changes, and that's because I mentioned that I needed to go talk to FWRI and our stock assessment folks about it, and I have spoken with them, and they are good with the changes in the statement of work. They also mentioned that they felt like FWC could lead that special selectivity group, if you wanted to pull that out and do it separately and if you guys were strapped for time. The FWC folks said that they would be willing to step up and lead that group, and, also, we talked about getting a presentation from Marcel at the June meeting, and that possibly Luiz could give a presentation on some of the updates to the FWC data, and Luiz mentioned that he could come to that meeting and give a presentation on FWC red snapper information. With all that said, we probably need a motion to approve the statement of work, as modified.

MR. WOODWARD: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Spud and seconded by Chris. Any more discussion of that? We had a lot of discussion the other day, and so this was the item that we had where we were removing some items so that the assessment could go through a little bit faster. Any more questions or comments or concerns?

MR. CONKLIN: I just wanted to thank you for reaching out to your people, and especially to Dr. Barbieri, and so I appreciate that information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No problem.

MR. BELL: Thanks to Clay and everybody that worked together to realize this is something very important that we need to move along, and so I appreciate everybody pulling together on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. **Any more discussion on this motion, which is to approve the statement of work for the red snapper assessment, as modified? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Then we went into Regulatory Amendment 34, which is the special management zones off of North and South Carolina, and the committee made the following motion to approve the purpose and need statement, as modified. I am not going to read the entire statement. You can see it there on the screen. **On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion, or additional discussion, on this purpose and need statement? **Any objection to approval of this purpose and need statement? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

We then made another motion to accept the suggested edits to Action 2 and Alternatives 1 through 3 and maintain Alternative 2 as preferred. We had a substitute motion that we passed that then became the main motion, and so let me back up.

That's Motion Number 2, and that was to accept the IPT's edits to Alternatives 1 through 3 and select Alternative 3 as the preferred under Action 1. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion on that motion? Any objections? That motion stands approved.

Then we made Motion 3 to accept the suggested edits to Action 2 and Alternatives 1 through 3 and maintain Alternative 2 as preferred. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? That motion is approved.

Then the committee made Motion Number 4 to approve Regulatory Amendment 34 for public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move. We should probably have some discussion about is it okay to conduct these public hearings via webinar.

MR. POLAND: I think that's fine, but I would probably suggest at least two webinars, and two should probably be plenty, unless Mel feels like they need one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Two per state or two total?

MR. POLAND: Two total.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mel is saying yes. All right. Any more discussion of this motion? **Any objection to this motion? That motion stands approved.**

Then we talked about the Snapper Grouper AP topics for their discussion in April, and we went through that. Then, in Other Business, we talked about some outreach campaigns, including the one for best fishing practices.

Then we have the following timing and tasks motion, which is to prepare Regulatory Amendment 34 for public hearings; hold webinar public hearings for Regulatory Amendment 34 prior to the June 2020 council meeting; begin work on the white paper to determine the need for conservation and management of cubera, margate, sailors choice, coney, yellowfin grouper, and saucereye porgy, and so that came over from the Committee of the Whole.

MS. BROUWER: May I add, just from my own, that this is to come back to you in June?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, please. **Myra is adding that that white paper would come back to the council in June.** Would someone like to make this timing and tasks motion?

MR. BELL: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Mel and seconded by Steve. Any discussion on the timing and tasks motion? **Any objection? That motion stands approved.** That concludes the Snapper Grouper Committee. Next up is Dolphin Wahoo and Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Thank you. The Dolphin Wahoo Committee met on March 3, and the committee approved the minutes from the December 2019 meeting as well as the agenda. We then received the status of commercial landings versus our ACLs. We began discussion on Amendment 12, which will add bullet and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan as ecosystem component species. We also received guidance from SERO staff on the council's ability to designate bullet and frigate mackerel as ecosystem component species and implement associated regulatory measures. In reference to Amendment 12, the committee provided some direction to staff to not include Draft Action 2 through Draft Action 9.

Our first motion was to approve the IPT's suggested purpose and need statement. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

We then put forth a motion to select Alternative 2 in Action 1 as a preferred alternative in Amendment 12. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

We then received an update on the dolphin wahoo participatory workshops, which will be occurring in Beaufort, North Carolina; Wanchese, North Carolina; and Virginia Beach in March, and all of them are occurring next week. There were no other items under Other Business, and we have one timing and tasks motion. I will go ahead and read the motion.

The draft motion is to direct staff to complete the following tasks: continue work on Amendment 12 for review at the June 2020 meeting. Would someone like to make that motion?

MR. POLAND: **So moved.**

MS. BECKWITH: Motion by Steve and seconded by Mel. Is there any discussion on that motion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.** That concludes my report, Madam Chair.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Anna. Next up, we have Chris with SOPPs.

MR. CONKLIN: The SOPPs Committee met in the Grand Satilla Ballroom at the Westin Jekyll Island Hotel on March 3, 2020, the year of our Lord. The committee approved the meeting agenda and the minutes from the June 2019 meeting.

We also went over the travel policy. The committee met during closed session and reviewed proposed changes to the council travel reimbursement policy. The changes were developed to simplify the travel reimbursement process and address concerns that the existing policy did not treat all travelers and travel situations equally.

We made one motion to modify the existing handbook language for the travel reimbursement section to reflect that all airline reservations and car rentals must be made through the council's designated travel provider. Travel expense reimbursement will be limited to the prevailing airfare rate, as determined by the council's designated travel provider, effective

immediately. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion on the motion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

We do need to make one timing and tasks motion, and so I will read it, and then somebody can make it. **That is a motion to update the council travel memos and instructions to reflect the new policy and update the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council handbook for future approval.** The motion is on the floor.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **So moved.**

MR. CONKLIN: It's made by Jessica, and can I get a second, please? Steve seconds. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the timing and tasks motion stands approved.** Madam Chair, this concludes the Standard Operating Practices and Procedures Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council committee report. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Chris. Next up is Executive Finance. The Executive Finance Committee met on March 4 and approved the meeting agenda and the minutes from the December meeting. We talked about council priorities and looked at our council priorities spreadsheet and noted that we were on track for what we had planned for December and March, and it looked like a higher than normal workload expected for the June council meeting.

We then discussed the Gulf and South Atlantic working group and talked about some guidance for that particular working group, and there is some bullets on the screen there as the guidance. We talked about council policies and practices, and our new Executive Director provided a summary of the council leadership retreat, and then he went into a proposal on the South Atlantic Council Award of Excellence. We provided some guidance on that, and the committee made the following motion.

The motion is to establish the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Award of Excellence and guidelines, as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

There was also a proposal to look at changing up the council committees, and there were a number of items and consolidations and such, as well as establishing SSC and AP liaisons. **The committee made the following motion to approve the committee consolidation plan, as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? That motion stands approved.**

In Other Business, we discussed the proposed changes to the NEPA process, and there was a letter that was provided, and the letter has to be submitted by March 10, and so we had discussion on that, and we also talked about the upcoming CCC meeting in May and some of what we think is going to be discussed at that meeting, and we also talked about the Atlantic Science Coordination Workshop that will occur in late April and how, following that science workshop, that maybe we need to talk about what are the next steps on the management side of that discussion.

Then we have a timing and tasks motion, which would be notify the council SSC and AP members of the new award of excellence and the June 30, 2020 deadline for submitting nominations for this first award; incorporate the committee consolidation plan for the June

2020 meeting and update council guidance documents as required; submit the NEPA changes comment letter by March 10, 2020; coordinate with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council to arrange a meeting of the joint working group between April and June 2020; contact the two other councils and the ASMFC to discuss next steps for addressing management concerns related to species distribution shifts. I need somebody to make that motion.

MR. CONKLIN: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Chris and seconded by Steve. Any discussion of that timing and tasks motion? **Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: Do we want to have discussion on the NEPA letter any further? Steve had submitted some comments, which I thought were appropriate and helpful.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I thought so, too.

MR. CARMICHAEL: If there's no further suggestions, if you want to make a motion similar to what we did for the Keys, I have one here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. **If someone would like to make a motion there to approve the draft letter to CEQ as the council comments on the proposed NEPA modifications.**

MR. POLAND: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Motion by Steve and seconded by Chris. Any more discussion? **Any objection? That motion is approved.** That concludes the Executive Finance Committee. Now we're going to go into the agency and liaison reports, and I'm going to look over there to Carolyn to start this discussion.

DR. BELCHER: Just to give you some updates relative to the shrimp fishery, the majority of our landings are in, and there's just a handful left to come in, and we actually had a pretty good year this year. It was 2.9 million pounds, versus an average of 2.2 million over the last ten years. Dollar-wise, we ended with \$12.7 million related to this year, which is well above the \$9.2 million average for the last ten years. All in all, considering 2018's cold snap, we did do fairly well.

On the other side of the shrimp part of the fishery, we finally submitted our spend plan for the 2013 funds that we got, under guidance of our governor, and the hope was for direct payouts, and so the majority of that money will be going to direct payout, with investments going into blackgill research and also we have a technical college here, a technical school, that is tying in with Macintosh County High School, where we have a fairly strong fleet, and the school system has recognized a very high dropout rate, where a lot of these kids end up working on their parents' boats, and so what they wanted to do was work with the Department of Education to work on a professional certification of these kids, to help them do better at the job as a commercial fisherman, and so they're working on a curriculum development.

Right now, it's slated just for Macintosh County, with the idea that it could branch out into another county, and so we are putting some money towards that as a seed program, and so that kind of gets

at what the hope was, was that we could reinvest back into the fishery, but we're also addressing what the governor would like for us to do with that.

As quickly as we wrote that plan and sent it off, we were then informed, on a much quicker timescale, as Mel pointed out, that we have also been given monies for our 2018 fishery failure, which ended up being \$3.4 million. We don't have a spend plan for that yet, as we don't have the formal letter. We were just notified last week by Jack that the funds have been attributed, and it's kind of surprising how quickly it did move. As Mel pointed out, we waited about five years to find out on the 2013 funds, and so less than a year on the other.

Then, in case you all didn't make the north end of the island, before you leave, if you would like to see our problem, you can't miss it. It's been here and St. Simons, the Golden Ray. That progress is moving forward, and they are putting pilings in right now, which are supposed to be part of the environmental barrier, which is basically being put up to contain any off-debris from the boat as they section it. It's a five-foot diameter webbed net that's going to be tacked completely around that, and it's, I think, almost thirty-one acres, is what it's supposed to enclose, with the idea being that, as cars or large debris fall out, as they're making the section cuts, they can contain them, and then they'll go back and pick that up.

There will be a smaller mesh net that's involved during the cutting operations, but it will only be in the water during the time of cutting, and so we're not going to have as much entrainment issue as originally was thought, and, if all goes according to plan, we should be starting, or they should be starting, their cutting by the first part of May, and I think they're still some holding on that. We've got an issue with a lawsuit from the original contractor. The salvage company that was involved had put an injunction in over environmental concerns and some other things, but the judge has not ruled, and, as such, they're still making progress forward, because the hope is to try to have this boat as close to gone by the start of the hurricane season as they can do it.

If you're interested in how it's going to be done, we can send you the YouTube link, and it's actually a pretty impressive process by which they're going to chop that boat up into seven pieces and put the seven pieces on 200 to 300-foot barges and secure them and float them all the way back to Louisiana, which is the only reclamation yard that can take the products off of that boat.

They are claiming, if everything goes according to plan, that it could be done in sixty to eighty days, and the cuts are twenty-four to forty-eight-hour cuts, and they're continual. They can't stop, because of the potential bind-up, is the way it's being worked, but, like I said, if you want to see the video, I can send you the YouTube link, and it's pretty impressive.

We did benefit with new artificial reef materials. The prop, which everybody almost fell over and died, but the prop and the rudder are now in an offshore reef, and I think I said that in December, and then there's the back ramp that they use to put the vehicles on and off, which is going to be sectioned up and also put out as artificial reef.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Carolyn. Any questions for Carolyn? I'm surprised we're not taking a field trip out to that boat. All right. Moving down the line here, Mel.

MR. BELL: We don't have any really cool marine salvage projects to report on, thank god. I will note that that's not the first time one of those ships has done that, and it's not the first time that

one of them has had to be cut up, and so, I mean, we get a lot of them in and out of Charleston, and so I never thought that would have happened.

Things of interest going on in South Carolina is the Research Vessel Palmetto and Research Vessel Lady Lisa are both in their yards right now, and that's good. There's nothing really major going on with them. The Lady Lisa, recall, is the forty-plus-year-old wooden-hull trawler, and she's still seaworthy, but we're looking at options of trying to replace her, and we've got some hope that we might be able to get some one-time money in the budget this year, but the budget hasn't been finalized or anything, and so that's what we're hoping for. We will probably replace her with not necessarily new, but we have some options that we were looking at for a used vessel.

We have a cobia bill, and nobody cares about cobia on the council. Well, the cobia north of Florida is now managed by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and we have a bill that we're hoping to get through this year to kind of implement all the things we need to since the management has been shifted from us over to ASMFC, and so that's of interest.

We have a tripletail and a spadefish bill, which will probably pass this year, and so we'll actually have some regulation of the tripletail fishery, and then spadefish will sort of mirror what we've done here through the council process, but we're going to have some dissimilarities on the state versus federal, because the state chose to implement a size limit, and, of course, we don't have a size limit associated with spadefish for federal waters.

Our shrimp fishery, actually, we didn't have quite as good total landings as Georgia did. Ours was actually down, and we had a pretty bad September through late November, but then things rallied, as the industry was catching a lot of large white shrimp that seemed to be coming down from North Carolina or Virginia, or wherever they were coming from, but they fished those on out the rest of the year and then into this year, and so it wasn't as bad as it could have been, but we did have a really bad particularly late September through late November, and we were well below average.

Carolyn mentioned the disaster plan money, and we're still awaiting the actual letter to the governor, but I've been using Georgia as kind of a -- Copying what they have done with the 2013 process, and so we'll be implementing a similar process and working with NOAA to work out a spend plan, an approved spend plan, and all, but that's about it, I think of interest for us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mel. Any questions for Mel? All right. Then we're going to go to the Gulf Council report and J.D.

MR. DUGAS: We met in New Orleans from January 27 through 30, and we discussed the Florida Keys Sanctuary expansion, and you all have seen the letter, and we discussed the joint committee with the South Atlantic, and we discussed managing African pompano, and we sent a letter to FWC. We discussed the modifications of fishing access in the eastern Gulf for the protected areas, marine protected areas, and we also discussed Amendment 53, or started working on 53, for red grouper, which I don't have a lot of knowledge of, and I already told Jessica, and it's not my area, and maybe, if you have any questions for us, you can answer them. I'm up in Louisiana, and I'm not down in south Florida.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that. Yes, there's some things going on with red grouper. There was a red tide in southwest Florida, and fishermen have been telling us for a while that red grouper

they don't feel like are doing well, and the stock assessment recently came out, and I think that's going to be some management changes needed, but it's really early in the process. Thank you for that report, and thanks for being with us this week. Any questions? All right.

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

MS. MCCAWLEY: Not doing too well. We've been hearing that too, and lots of people are seeing the small ones, and so that's good. For Florida, a couple of things from us. We had a commission meeting a couple of weeks ago. In addition to talking about the sanctuary, we passed some final rules for Biscayne National Park, and so I gave you guys a presentation at a previous council meeting, and so these were final fisheries rules for the entire park, and so this includes state and a little sliver of federal waters.

Also, we had a final rule for Gulf red snapper, and so this was the state management rule, and so that's being finalized right now, and the commission approved it, and they also finalized our Gulf red snapper season, which will be June 11 through July 25, and so forty-five days, as Chester mentioned earlier this week.

We also had a draft rule for what we're calling state reef fish survey, and so you also heard Chester talk about the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, which is in place, and it surveys a number of offshore reef fish, and this is a draft rule that would put this in place for the Atlantic coast, and so people would have to sign up, and it's a free permit, but get this add-on to their license that indicates their intent to go out and harvest thirteen species of reef fish, and this is an add-on to the MRIP survey, and we send out paper surveys to get back what people are fishing for within that month time period, and so they're monthly surveys, and there's an also an increased dockside component to this as well, and so this is still moving through the process, and this was just the first rule hearing for it.

It's also moving through our state legislature right now, to consider funding this on the Gulf and the Atlantic side. It had been funded in the past with oil spill money, and that expires on June 30, and so we're looking to continue the Gulf component and then also move it over to the Atlantic as well. The Gulf Reef Fish Survey was instrumental in us being able to do the state management for Gulf red snapper. I will stop there. Any questions? All right. I will move around the table over here to Tony.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. The Mid-Atlantic Council met in Duck, North Carolina from February 11 to 13. If anybody knows Duck at that time of the year, the only thing that's in Duck are council members and ponies on the beach. Before I get to the council meeting, just a note about the ponies. They seem to -- There's a lot of wealthy homes up in that section of North Carolina, the Outer Banks, and they all are up on stilts, and, the ponies, they're not dumb.

There is nobody living there at that time of the year, and so the ponies like to hide inside the garages to get out of the wind and stay nice and warm, and they're not underappreciative either. As a thank you for living in the garages all winter, they like to leave a lot of fertilizer there, and so, as I drove along the beach, my wife and I were really amazed to see how many homes were blessed with lots of fertilizer from the ponies. Maybe it gives new meaning to spring cleaning when the folks show up there.

Anyway, it was an interesting -- It was a good visit to Duck, and we did a few things. We appointed four new council members to our S&S Committee, and we also approved a public hearing document for mackerel, squid, and butterfish goals and objectives for the Ilex permit amendment, and we opted not to select any preferred alternatives. The Ilex fishery, which is the offshore squid fishery, for years was underfished, underutilized, and we're starting to now close that fishery, as we reach the quota each year, and so it's clear that that fishery is fully capitalized, and we're going to have to take some actions to address it.

Again, we received an update on the Ilex working group, and we approved our 2020 implementation plan, and we received a presentation on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center survey and data collection programs, and I spoke earlier today about how I, myself, was impressed with how far the Northeast Fisheries Science Center has come in conducting their survey work and collaborating with industry in getting new work done.

At one time, industry members just had no use for anything that came out of the Science Center by way of surveys, and the Science Center leadership has gone a long way to building confidence between the industry and the survey results, and so, again, the Science Center leadership should be congratulated for that, and, finally, we received the same presentation on the Kitty Hawk Wind Project that you received today. We received it a few weeks ago.

Our next meeting will be in Galloway, New Jersey, which is just north of Atlantic City, and it looks like it's going to be a pretty busy agenda and meeting. I would be happy to answer any questions that folks may have.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Tony. Any questions for Tony? All right. Moving around the table, Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thanks, Madam Chair. The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries was notified of awarded funds for a fishery disaster relief following Hurricane Florence in 2018, and I think we were notified that we were awarded approximately \$7 million. We are currently just getting started on the spending plan and coordinating with NOAA staff, and we haven't done one of these in a long time, and so I know we have reached out to FWC in the past, and they have offered support, and we're appreciative of that.

Bluefin tuna fishing was outstanding this year, and some folks were worried, because the fish showed up prior to the season opening in December, but they stayed around, and, with the added shifted sub-quota in January, fishermen were able to fish and fill that quota out, and it closed a couple of weeks ago, and they are still fishing the area, and the recreational boats are still targeting those fish.

Artificial reef activity, there's been a lot of activity off of the Outer Banks. A ship was sunk at the end of last year, and they're still deploying bridge material from the Bonner Bridge on approximately three reefs off of Oregon Inlet. Moving more inshore, I had mentioned the division's efforts to modify all our net management in state waters, and that will be a long task, and that's something that staff will be working on for the foreseeable future.

Moving to our state commission, our commission recently adopted an amendment to the blue crab fishery management plan, and the division recently completed a peer-reviewed stock assessment

of blue crab, and this was the first assessment of blue crab in the state, and it showed that the stock was overfished, and, to rebuild the stock, we needed a whopping 2.2 percent reduction in harvest. The Marine Fishery Commission acted, and the changes to management will certainly meet that reduction.

Staff is currently working on numerous plan amendments to speckled trout, southern flounder, and our shrimp state FMPs, and we are ramping up our numerous fishery-independent surveys for the year, and some of these surveys do provide data for some of our managed species and go into SEDAR stock assessments, namely our component of the SEAMAP survey and our independent gillnet survey in the state.

Since everyone south of me has mentioned shrimp, just a little bit on shrimp in North Carolina, and it was another good year. We really finished strong, and a lot of the fishermen are certainly saying that it's shrimp coming out of the Chesapeake Bay, and there might be some validity to that, because there's still a lot of boats working the Outer Banks, from Cape Hatteras up to Rodanthe, well into the winter. I mean, in years past, that fishery has kind of petered out by Christmas, but we saw landings well into January with that. With that, I will take any questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any questions for Steve?

MR. BELL: Your brown shrimp landings were kind of off, white shrimp up and brown shrimp down?

MR. POLAND: Please don't ask me about shrimp.

MR. BELL: Well, I heard that, but I know your white shrimp are a lot bigger.

MR. POLAND: I think that's correct, Mel. Brown shrimp is down, and I think pink shrimp has been down for a while now, and that's something that we plan on looking at in our review of our shrimp management in the coming year-and-a-half.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Lieutenant Commander Montes.

LCDR MONTES: Good afternoon, everybody. I will start off with the bad news. This is my last -- I know most of you I have talked to about it, but this is my last Full Council meeting. I have received orders to the Coast Guard Cutter Diligence, which, if anybody came on the tour of the Coast Guard cutter that was right next to us in Wilmington for the last meeting, I will be the XO for her come this summer at some point. I haven't gotten all those details ironed out yet, and I'm excited for the transfer, but we're still working on identifying who my replacement is going to be. I've got a person in my mind, but I just have to convince my bosses that what I think is right -- Or just convince them that what I think is what they also think, and then I will tell them it was their idea.

We will make those notifications soon to council staff, and to the Chair and Vice Chair, when we have it, and, with luck, I will be here in Key West for the first day, to introduce my replacement and make it as smooth of a transition as possible, and then you guys will see me book it north, so I can go move my family up to Pensacola, Florida.

On the note of current efforts, right now, we're at about two-times the amount of boardings in the South Atlantic that we typically see for this time of year, and we're at about 500 boardings conducted since October 1, and so our effort is up, and I have been leaning on my guys, to make sure that they get out there and they get offshore and they work with our state partners and get out there, and they're really hitting it hard. With that increased amount of effort comes also an increased workload for cases, when we discover discrepancies.

However, just looking at the South Atlantic, we only have seven of those approximately 500 boardings that have resulted in a fisheries violation being issued, which is a 99 percent compliance rate, and so we're seeing a very good compliance rate within the South Atlantic region when we're conducting these boardings, and so that's good.

The one note that I will continue to -- I have said it a couple of times, and it's still a priority for us, and we're still out there enforcing this, are crew-manning requirements in accordance with -- I forget the official title, but the crew manning requirements that require a U.S. citizen to be the master of a fishing vessel and the crew to be comprised of at least 75 percent U.S. citizens.

We continue to see people employing folks with expired visas, and so they are no longer permitted to work. They don't have the H-2B visa anymore, and, just this week, we had another case off of the Keys, within the South Atlantic side of the Keys, and not on the Gulf side of the Keys, where the master of a federally-documented fishing vessel was not a U.S. citizen, and so we're having problems with this, and we are tackling them as they come along.

We have actually streamlined our process. If anybody has heard any rumblings of the Coast Guard taking entirely way too long to take care of these cases, we're working on speeding that up, and we've been working internally, in order to make sure that we document everything properly and then turn over, if appropriate, to the authorities on the beach.

On a positive note, and I will end on a positive note, some folks heard recently, particularly in Charleston, that the Coast Guard is expanding our footprint in Charleston, and so we will be -- Currently, we have two major cutters, and the Hamilton and the James are homeported there, and I believe we're supposed to have up to five national security cutters, and then an additional three or four of our brand-new offshore patrol cutters will be eventually stationed there.

Now, when I say eventually, I am talking about 2024 to 2026, and so, by the time I'm probably balder and grayer than I am, and probably not wearing a uniform anymore, we'll have a serious footprint in Charleston. It's going to be our major hub for major cutters on the east coast, and so I'm excited to see that change coming. Hopefully that means a little bit more offshore presence for us with the enforcement side of things, but we'll see where the tasking comes for those folks when we finally get the ships online, and I will stand by for any questions, if anybody has any.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and thank you for your service. We look forward to seeing you in Key West, at least for one day, and meeting your replacement. Tony, did you have a question?

MR. DILERNIA: Not a question, but a comment. Commander, your district includes the southwest section of Florida, does it not, the 7th District?

LCDR MONTES: Yes, it does.

MR. DILERNIA: I just wanted to pass the word, if you would pass the word to the CO of I guess the St. Pete station or whatever, but I was recently boarded by a small boat that conducted a safety boarding, a fisheries boarding, and they did an excellent job. They were very professional, and they were very efficient, and they were on and off. The youngsters that did the boarding were excellent, and, if you could pass the word up there, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

LCDR MONTES: That was off of St. Pete?

MR. DILERNIA: Yes, sir.

LCDR MONTES: Okay. I will pass it along. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any other questions? All right. Moving down to the NOAA side of the table, Clay, have you got anything for us?

DR. PORCH: I've got lots of new things. As some of you have heard, we're actually making a lot of changes at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and, if I had four or five hours, I could run through them all, and I'm not kidding, but I'm not going to do it now. Some of the things though that we're changing, just to give you a flavor, is we're actually reorganizing our whole structure and trying to figure out a better configuration for the organization.

As you know, we have labs from Galveston all the way to Beaufort, six labs, and people scattered all around and doing a myriad of things, and we're just trying to get a better handle on how we can create an organizational structure that will help us better serve our mission, and, along those lines, we are also looking at our resources and doing some reallocations, and we call it priority-based resourcing, and one of the fruits of that is what you just saw, in that we have allocated resources to do the bottom longline survey, the industry-supported bottom longline survey.

We are really excited about that, but, of course, like any change, there is a lot of challenges associated with it, and so bear with us as we go through our growing pains, and the only other thing I would mention is that we're working much more closely with the Regional Office now. For the second year in a row, we've had a strategic planning meeting, and it was last week in St. Petersburg that we all met, the leadership teams from the Regional Office and the Southeast Center, and we've been going through our geographic strategic plan, which you all had a chance to contribute to, and we're just figuring out the best way that we can actually implement a strategy to it and how we're going to achieve all those lofty goals, and I will leave it at that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Clay. Any questions? All right. Moving down the table, Monica or Roy?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I do not. Clay took up all the time.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I know. Roy or Jack? All right. I'm going to go around the table over here. NOAA Law Enforcement.

MR. SMITH: I believe everybody received the OLE report earlier in the week, because I had a number of questions on it, and so hopefully everybody had a chance to read that, and I'll just give

you a quick summary of some of the things that were contained in there. We had 116 incidents, and twenty resulted in summary settlements, which is the equivalent of our ticket, and three cases were forwarded to General Counsel, and the remaining were handled with compliance assistance, fix-its, or written warnings.

Summary settlements ranged from \$300 for undersized fish to \$4,000 for conducting charter operations without the proper federal permits. Of those summary settlements, twenty total, consisting of six fishing in the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary, four undersized, three bag limit, two seasonal closure, two charter permits, one TED BRD violation, and then one closed area violation. Of the cases forwarded to General Counsel, there were two closed area bag limit violation cases, one harvest possession of marine species in the sanctuary, and one closure, bag limit, and not in whole condition type of cases.

Other items of interest for OLE is the three individuals that we hired back in November are still waiting for their hiring completion physicals and psychologicals. The government does not move at a snail's pace. I say it's a handicapped snail. We're waiting for those three, which, again, are for Cape Canaveral and Miami, which are in the South Atlantic, and then one in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

During that time, our Charleston Special Agent, Al Samuels, has retired, and so that created a vacancy for us as well, and so we constantly have a churn, and there is two cases that I just wanted to highlight that were in that brief that I have had some questions on. One was the criminal disposal case, and that was a commercial vessel that dumped grouper and deepwater grouper upon approach of the Coast Guard Cutter Cormorant, an eighty-seven footer. In researching that, through the investigation, it was found that individual had a prior case with North Carolina Law Enforcement, and we pursued a criminal prosecution, and that individual pled guilty and was sentenced to twelve months intermittent confinement, a \$1,200 fine, and five years of probation, and so we're hoping that sets the tone to entice other people not to do that.

For anybody wondering what twelve months of intermittent confinement is, that means that he can serve his time on the weekends to complete that twelve months. Do the math, and that's three straight years of every weekend in jail. I just wanted to highlight that case.

Then there was also a recreational NOVA that General Counsel just settled for \$13,900, which is considerable for recreational, and that was for having shark fins and twenty-six undersized sea bass, and so that's a rather large NOVA on a recreational vessel, but those are just some of the things that I wanted to highlight out of the report.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you so much, and thanks for sending that report around. Any more questions?

MR. POLAND: Thank you, and, on behalf of DMF, thank you for the cooperation and assistance on that particular case, but I wanted to ask you, real quick, is I saw there were ten HMS incidents in North Carolina during this last reporting period, and can you go into a little bit of detail of what those were? Were they mostly bluefin tuna, I assume, or were they permit issues or reporting issues?

MR. SMITH: You're saying ten --

MR. POLAND: Ten HMS.

MR. SMITH: I don't know which part of the report you're referring to.

MR. POLAND: The very first part, the number of incidents by law, regulation, program, and location. In Quarter 1, it just has ten, and then --

MR. SMITH: We have a new enforcement officer, Mr. Miles Dover, that is stationed in New Bern, and he's been up and down the coast. I get more phone calls about his arrival and presence, and I just, in the last two days of the bluefin season, Sunday and Monday, we sent him up to Wanchese, and he did fifty-four boardings on Sunday and Monday, and so a number of cases have come out of that, but those instances -- Again, some of them are handled with compliance assistance, and some are handled with written warnings or fix-its on the spot, and so I think there's two cases that will ultimately be summary settlements or NOVAs that came out of those, and the rest were rather minor in nature, but, again that's my EO up there, enforcement officer, who has been very proactive, and he's from that area, and he's an avid saltwater fisherman, since he was four years old, and so he's making his presence felt up there, as I get a lot of people calling me about him showing up over and over again.

MR. POLAND: Thank you for that. He is certainly making the rounds, and I'm hearing about it too, and I appreciate his presence up there, and so thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Any more questions? All right. Thank you. Did we cover everybody? Is there any other business to come before the council? All right. I'm going to turn it back to John to talk about upcoming meetings.

MR. CARMICHAEL: A few things to highlight. As is often the case between our March and June meetings, we have AP meetings, which will be coming up in April. We have the I&E AP, we have the Snapper Grouper, and we have a Socioeconomic Panel. We have our SSC meeting, which will also be happening in April, and that's going to be a challenging one, because they do have four stock assessments, and I will point out that that's the same week as that Atlantic Science Coordination Workshop, and so quite a few folks will be at one and then rushing to the other, and that's affecting the time, and so April is going to be, as usual, a very busy time.

There is a SEDAR Steering Committee meeting in May, and there is the CCC meeting, which is planned for Hawaii in May, which I mentioned, and we're watching the COVID-19, and that may have an impact on things that we have going on, and we should hear some more next week about federal implications on council travel related to that, and so that's a late-breaking item that's just come up. It will be our typical very busy time coming into March and April.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Then the June council meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Then, of course, the June council meeting, which you all know. Everybody knows about that, and you will get the memo pretty soon. It is in Key West, and so don't forget, and I was going to say to Tony that I think that a lot of people here actually do know what it's like to be at Duck in February, because we could not get anyone to come as a liaison.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Exactly.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that's a sign that we know about Duck, but we're covered for the rest of the year for you, at least.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, everybody, and be safe going home. We are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 5, 2020.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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3/5/20

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Tony DiStemia
Devey Hemilright

FULL COUNCIL - ROLL CALL VOTE

Date: March 5-6, 2020

Meeting Location: Jekyll, Island

Issue: Shrimp Amendment 11 (motion #4)

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MS. BECKWITH	X		
DR. BELCHER	X		
MR. BELL	X		
MR. BREWER	X		
MR. CONKLIN	X		
DR. CRABTREE	X		
DR. CHRISTIANSEN	X		
MR. GRINER	X		
→ MS. MCCAWLEY	X		
MR. POLAND	X		
MR. SAPP			
MR. WOODWARD	X		
MR. WHITAKER	X		

ABS