

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

HABITAT PROTECTION AND ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Westin Jekyll Island
Jekyll Island, Georgia**

March 4, 2020

SUMMARY MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Tim Griner
Jessica McCawley

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Dr. Chip Collier
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John Hadley
Roger Pugliese

OBSERVERS/PARTICIPANTS

Shep Grimes
Dr. Clay Porch
Dr. George Sedberry
Tony Dilernia

Dr. Jack McGovern
Rick DeVictor
Dr. Wilson Laney
Erika Burgess

Other observers and participants attached.

The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Wednesday, March 4, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Steve Poland.

MR. POLAND: All right. Good morning, everyone, and let's get started. We will convene the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee. The first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Does anybody have any additions or deletions or modifications? I will read through who is on the committee. It's myself as Chair, David Whitaker as Vice Chair, Bob Beal, Carolyn, Mel, Chester, Chris, Tim, Jessica, Art, and Spud. With that, any modifications to the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda stands approved.

Moving on to approval of the September 2019 committee minutes, it's been a little while since we've met, and so I'm sure that everyone went back and refreshed themselves of our previous discussions, and so does anybody have any additions, deletions, modifications for the minutes from 2019? Seeing none, the minutes stand approved. With that, I'm going to throw it over to Roger and Wilson to give us the Habitat and Ecosystem AP report.

MR. PUGLIESE: Just a couple of quick statements before Wilson gets into the details. The advisory panel did meet back in October, and a lot of key activities are moving forward, and Wilson will at least touch on the highlights of those, and they are setting the stages from everything from ecosystem modeling to addressing issues under the FEP implementation plan to the actions by NOAA to support some of the broader ecosystem activities, including the climate vulnerability analysis and other reports that are going to be key to the council moving forward with additional efforts.

Some of the other ones include the continued work with our partners in mapping and characterization of deepwater ecosystems, and, with that, I'm just going to roll it over, because I think it will set the stage for the upcoming meeting. The AP is going to meet again in April, and there will be some follow-ups that are really going to feed into actionable items for the council in the future.

DR. LANEY: Thank you, Roger, and thank you, Steve. In the interest of brevity, I am just going to go through the highlights of the report, and you all have the whole summary, and you have all the links to all the presentations, and I would encourage you to click on some of those and look at all the detailed information that was provided to us, and so I'm just going to go through the major headings and cover the highlights that Roger and I pulled together.

I will say that our Habitat AP Chair, Anne Deaton, with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, is unable to be here, because she's at a very important habitat-related workshop in North Carolina today and tomorrow, and the other thing is I always appreciate the fact that Steve was there, as the Council Chair, and David was on the webinar, as the Vice Chair, and so it's always great to have council members sitting in directly on the meeting.

The first thing we heard was a briefing from Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff on the South Atlantic ecosystem status report and the South Atlantic climate vulnerability assessment. Todd Kellison and Mike Burton gave us that information, and Steve and I are both participating in the climate vulnerability assessment, and I look forward to continuing work on that. The only suggestion I think the AP made to Dr. Kellison was that it would be nice if they could take a look

at species diversity as part of the list of metrics that they were looking at for the ecosystem status report, and I think Todd indicated that he would check into that, and so I think that would be good, and I will say too that anytime, as we're going through this, Steve or David or Roger, if you have additional things you want to say, just chime in there.

MR. POLAND: The South Atlantic ecosystem status report, I think Dr. Kellison advised us that a draft would be done in 2019 or early 2020, and I just wanted to look over at Clay and see if they're still on track for that or if he could provide any updates on when that report might be available to the council and the committee.

DR. PORCH: I am sorry, but I was doing something else. What were you asking me?

MR. POLAND: The South Atlantic ecosystem status report, do you have any updates on when that report might be available?

DR. PORCH: I don't, but I can get that for you.

MR. POLAND: All right. Thanks.

DR. LANEY: Moving on, the second topic was energy development in the South Atlantic, and the council is going to hear from Avangrid on Friday, or at least it's scheduled for Friday, to hear about the Kitty Hawk wind project, and so I'm not going to say any more about that. The advisory panel continues to be very much impressed by how much survey and monitoring work BOEM is funding and how they are making those data available. If you haven't had a chance to go to the BOEM website and take a look at what's available there, you might want to do so. It's a tremendous amount of information, and it's very open and transparent, and that's a wonderful thing to have available. Avangrid is also going to attend the April AP meeting, and so we will continue to get updates on Kitty Hawk wind.

The number three item was the bullet and frigate mackerel as EC species, and the AP continued to support that, and I'm not going to say any more about that. The council has already discussed that and taken action on that one this week, and thank you for that.

Number four was our Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary discussion, and we gave you that detailed report at your December meeting, and so I'm not going to say anything else about that one as well, and I will give a thank you to Chair McCawley for sending out the AP recommendations in advance of this meeting too, so you all had the benefit of that, and the only thing I would add, Jessica, is that, I guess from the AP perspective, it would be interesting to see how the individual AP's recommendations compare with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation recommendations and compare with what the council ultimately decided to comment on, and I think that would be of interest to AP members.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Yes, we can certainly do that, and so FWC is still working on our commenting letter, and we have until April 30 to complete our letter, but we did look at the Coral or Habitat AP's comments, because you saw, in the presentation that Martha gave, we're kind of focusing a lot of our comments through the lens of coral restoration and recovery and how that should be the focus of the plan and how all the nurseries and restoration sites should be covered, because you saw, in some of our maps, that they are not completely covered, and so a lot of our

comments are about how this is a last resort situation for coral and that they really need to focus everything on that.

Chester brought up water quality, and we're talking about water quality, education and law enforcement, and just how everything needs to come together in the plan for these coral restoration efforts, and we haven't talked a lot here about the disease event, but, as you know, it is catastrophic, and so many agencies are coming together to try to do everything from get those corals out of the water and sending them around the nation and the world to try to preserve their genetic integrity, and that's definitely a last resort situation, and FWC's comments are going to reflect all of that, and we did look at the South Atlantic Council's AP comments, to see what we could pull from that as well.

DR. LANEY: Thank you very much for that. It was a challenge in reviewing that DEIS, because it is large, and it has so many components to it, and so the Habitat AP, and I think the Coral AP, followed suit and just said, hey, we can't go through the whole thing and talk about every single element of it, and so that's why we just went with a recommendation for one alternative.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to add to that, I agree that it's challenging for us. I mean, it's taken many, many hours for us to dig in, and that's why we looked at the AP's comments, and, just like you're suggesting, it's hard to figure out if you want to choose one of the alternatives for each one of those eighty-something actions, or do you want to suggest something different, and that's another reason why we were thinking, hey, maybe we need to go back and look at those sixty areas from the lobster amendment, because, at that time, it was just the Acropora corals that were listed, and now you've got additional listings.

Following Hurricane Irma, it seems like some of those sites don't even have those corals in them anymore, and so we probably need to update that list and look at state and federal waters, and I think that some of those sixty areas could be opened back up, because, between the disease and the hurricane, those corals just aren't there anymore in those places. They are not in the right places, and so, yes, we've been working hard, because I agree with you that the plan is massive, and it takes a long time to get through and to try to parse out every little action, and that is what FWC is doing, and we're trying to make some recommendations for, like I said, all those restoration and recovery sites that you saw on the maps, and some of them are just outside the areas that the sanctuary is suggesting, and FWC is all over it.

MR. PUGLIESE: I think the AP would have really, if the time had been able to be able to look at the missions and -- Because we knew that there was a lot that the advisors knew, that a lot had been done to build to this point, and a lot was still going to happen, and I think that messaging is on par with everything, and it's the critical nature, and that's what I think was really coming out of the Habitat and Ecosystem, especially, the critical nature and how to try to address it, and I think the mission sounds as if you're really getting into the core of adjusting, to do the most you can at this point, instead of just allowing it to continue on, and I think that was the big take-away from the AP.

DR. LANEY: I think the key word there is "crisis", and the assaults just on the ecosystem continue, and I know Bill Kelly and I were talking earlier in the week, and Bill is going to bring some things to the council's attention during the public comment period too, some additional assaults that are ongoing to south Florida ecosystems.

Moving on, the Ecopath and Ecosim update was given to us by Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute staff, Lauren Gentry and Luke McEachron, who are doing amazing work, and you guys are going to hear a whole lot about that, and the SSC and the AP will be reviewing that again at their April meetings, and so you all will hear about it at the June meeting, and so, again, I'm not going to go into any details on that. If you are interested, catch Roger or me or Steve or David later.

Number 6, one of the most exciting presentations and a lot of really tremendous information that we got, came from the NOAA staff, Kasey Cantwell and Heather Coleman. They gave us a very good and thorough briefing on mapping of the South Atlantic deepwater ecosystems, and I will just remind the council, once again, that we, we being humanity in the broadest sense, know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the habitats on the bottom of our own oceans on the planet here.

The Windows of the Deep project and the Deep Search expeditions that are occurring on the NOAA Research Vessels, the Ron Brown and the Pisces, I think, have done a tremendous amount of mapping in the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council priority areas, and so it's just great. I mean, they have taken the council's recommendations and advice to heart, and they have been out there mapping away.

Again, I would encourage you all to click on those links, and especially view the videos, and I can't remember. Roger, do you remember? Are they going to be doing more work in 2020, and they do it interactively, and so you can actually go to the ship and participate vicariously, as they're doing that work.

MR. PUGLIESE: We have been really lucky, and this collaboration is addressing very specifically council needs, and it was amazing, stepping forward from year to year and being able to eliminate some of the areas that they had mapped, that we had kind of identified as high priorities and moving on to new areas, and even outside the bounds in some of the deeper zones, and there's really some of the true exploratory areas and finding new things, and I think that's one of the reasons the director of OER is planning on attending our June committee meeting, to provide an overview and context of all of this, because they really wanted to highlight how they are meeting the council's needs and addressing the long term, and, the more they look, the more they find, and some of the more intense systems have been located, even outside, and so I think those will be highlighted at the upcoming -- Both the AP in April, but then primarily by the OER Director at the June meeting.

DR. LANEY: Yes, and these are not just deepwater corals. These are methane seeps and hydrate seeps and things like that, some of these really unique benthic organism communities. The Number 7 thing was our update from, again, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center South Atlantic fishery-independent survey briefing, and Marcel, Dr. Reichert, was in Holland at the time, and so Wally Buble and Tracey Smart of South Carolina DNR gave us that briefing, and they did a great job, as always. Again, that's a briefing that the council will be getting, I think, at the June meeting, or maybe the September meeting, and I'm not sure which, but you all will hear the same thing that we did, and so they always do a great job, and it's always interesting to hear what sort of things they are encountering out there.

The eighth item that we covered was the South Atlantic Citizen Science Program input, and we did it a little bit differently this time, and Julia was with us on the webinar, and she walked us through a presentation looking at each of the citizen science priorities, and the entire AP gave her immediate feedback on that, and so, if you're interested in what the AP members had to say, I believe that document is available, because Julia just captured all that information as we were walking through that presentation, and, basically, I think what the AP members did was to provide feedback on which items they thought were very appropriate for citizen science participation and which ones were perhaps a bit more on the technical side and might not be as suitable for citizen science, and so, in a nutshell, that's the feedback that we provided to Julia.

Then, finally, I think one of the most productive aspects of the meeting was that we had training sessions, and the training sessions by Tina Udouj and Warren Gentry both focused on the Ecospecies software and how to do queries with that, and then, also, they provided training on updated web services access, and, Roger and Steve, if you guys want to say anything more about that, feel free to do so. Again, that was something that was very useful.

While we did break ourselves up into two groups, North Carolina/South Carolina and Georgia/Florida, and one group was in a breakout session, while the other group was in the training session, and the breakout sessions basically walked through the council's two-year roadmap, looking at each chapter, while briefing us on what the individual states and the agencies and institutions were doing that related to the chapters of the roadmap, and I found that to be an extremely useful exercise.

If you want to see the details, and we did put a lot of the details in this particular report, and it's on pages 9 through 17 of the report, and, again, I'm not going to go through the details, but the AP discussions and the deliberations and expressions of concern resulted in a recommendation from the AP for action.

The way we left it was we actually had motion passed, and the motion was ultimately withdrawn, but Roger and Anne and I were charged with putting together a draft recommendation, and Roger will address that in a moment, and that's been coordinated with the full AP and with Steve, and David as well, and so I will just stop at this point. If you all have questions on any of the particular items in the summary report, we'll be happy to try and answer those. Otherwise, I will just turn it over to Roger for further discussion.

MR. PUGLIESE: Just stepping back one quick second with regard to the Ecospecies and some of the other activities, we are really at a very interesting convergence point, because a lot of the work that was done by Lauren Gentry and others to get say all the detailed species information is being integrated directly into the Ecopath/Ecosim model. A lot of the work that the council has been collaborating to build the online web services, the spatial information, is going to be drawn on as we move toward Ecospace. Ecospace is part of the Ecopath with Ecosim modeling.

Lauren is a very key participant also in the climate vulnerability, because she can draw the information out from the Ecospecies information system, and so it's been -- The investments into this coordination across these are all kind of coming together to really provide key pieces of different things that the council has been involved in and moving us into the future.

MR. POLAND: To add onto that, Roger, I really don't think I can emphasize how much work and information that that group has compiled to feed into that model. I think, as far as references for diet, life history, kind of everything for a species, I mean, it's in the tens of thousands now, I think, in that database, and it's pretty fascinating to go through there. If you're like me, you can just get lost in looking at what do scamp eat and that kind of stuff, and so they put a lot of work in there, and that's a huge trove of information. With that, does anybody have any questions for Wilson on the October AP meeting? He covered a lot. They talked about a lot.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Wilson, did you all talk about the wind project, or did you all just receive an update, but you didn't have a discussion? Can you talk about that wind project a little bit?

DR. LANEY: We did talk about it, and I think, mostly, we were just receiving information from Brian Hooker of BOEM, to let us know what they have done. I mean, it's really comprehensive, and they have surveys going on, aerial surveys, underwater surveys, every kind of survey you can imagine, and I have always told Brian, in particular, how much we appreciate that, those of us in a position to have to review these things, because certain other agencies, who shall remain nameless, have not been, one, as comprehensive, in terms of funding the monitoring and survey work, and, two, in terms of providing those data to all the agency personnel for use in review, or even analysis, and Brian made it clear to us that, for most of those data, as soon as they are collected and posted online, they are available for researchers to use, if they want to even carry the analytical work further than the contractor has taken it.

Now, some of it is proprietary, and some of the sub-surface I guess sampling that they do is proprietary, and there is a moratorium period on release of those data, for maybe a couple of years, but I think all of them, ultimately, get released, and so, yes, we did have that discussion.

MR. PUGLIESE: I think it's really critical, and we were kind of before some of what you all have done, and so we didn't get the benefit of having a lot that literally was right on the heels of this meeting being completed, and we've been working closely with them, both Craig Poff, and we haven't had a chance to work with Rick yet, and so I think that's going to be really important as we move forward.

Right now, we're still in that very kind of testing phase, and even though it's scheduled to build all of that out, I think it's queued to have as much input and have as much coordination, and they have been very on the front-end of saying that they're going to take the fishermen's recommendations and the habitat recommendations and all these different things as we move forward, and so I think -- I keep on trying to emphasize that both with -- Also with BOEM, is that we are in a very different situation in the Southeast.

There is a lot of support to move this forward and coordinate and collaborate opportunities for enhanced artificial reef capability, and, I mean, there's just so much more that can be done, and I think the messaging is getting between everyone, and so, as we move forward, I think we're in a good position for all the states, and this one very specifically, to be kind of a testbed for the whole system.

DR. LANEY: One question that was asked, Jessica, that remains unresolved, if I remember Brian's answer correctly, is where are you going to go ashore with the transmission cable from the towers to the shoreline, and so he, I believe, and, Steve and Roger and David, correct me if I

misspeak, but I think they said all the options are still on the table. They had some corridors shown on some of the maps that they provided to us, one that would go ashore in North Carolina and another one that would go ashore in Virginia still, and so they are still looking at that.

MR. POLAND: I think, at that time, all the options were still on the table, and I don't know if they've refined that, and I'm sure we'll hear about that on Friday, but I just also want to underscore the willingness of them to share the data. The biological data is up fairly quickly on the web service, and it is pretty interesting to go look, and the aerial surveys are fascinating. I check on it from time to time and see when it's updated, because I like to see the big schools of bluefin tuna off the coast and stuff like that, but, yes, they've been really willing to share that data.

MR. PUGLIESE: One last -- With opportunities like this, and we don't have structure offshore in our Southeast area, and one opportunity that I see is the opportunity to collaborate with our Ocean Observing Association, and these areas can become a core part of the Ocean Observing Network and collect everything from the oceanographic information to eDNA to who knows, but that issue of coming to land and that -- I also was working at one of the last observing meetings, and talking to a number of different key people, the marine technology side, about the opportunity to maybe - - This could be a stage to create a corridor offshore, from nearshore to offshore.

If they're going to be using that track, that could be actually something that builds what we are looking at as potential sentinel sites, having something that collects information nearshore, inshore, in the middle of the system, and then send it off and connect into the offshore system, and so the opportunity for collaboration on these things is huge, and there seems to be a willingness from all parties to do this, and so it's hopefully only good things.

MR. POLAND: I know the council has commented to them in the past, as far as our willingness to work with them, or at least for them to be open for researchers to place equipment on these windmills and transmission lines and that kind of stuff, and kind of facilitate that type of research, and they have, to this point, seemed real willing to accommodate that. All right. Anything else? Any more questions from the committee?

DR. PORCH: Just getting back on your question, I just spoke with Todd Kellison, and he expects the ecosystem status report to be completed in July now, and then that would mean that it would be ready in time for the October SSC meeting. It's just one of those situations where we're spread thin, having four ecosystem status reports that we're trying to develop, but they have basically completed all the technical analyses, and it's just wrapping up a few loose ends, and so that's where we are.

MR. POLAND: All right. Thank you for that update, Clay. I appreciate it. Any more questions from the committee? If not, I will turn it back over.

MR. PUGLIESE: Hopefully we'll have the opportunity to at least maybe look at more of the details of the draft at the April AP meeting, maybe, and I talked to Todd about that, and I know he's been buried in tasks with the fishery-independent survey workshops and all these other things too, on top of everything else, and so I know he's going in twelve directions, but I think it's going to be critical, because, at the last AP meeting, the AP was a little concerned that they didn't have enough to respond to.

They had kind of the outsides of it, but they really would want to get into more detail of some of those before it's finalized, which I think would be very useful, and that was a message that definitely was from that, and plus it was remote last time, which was very -- It didn't quite work well, and so hopefully we can sort all those things out and help, because that group can provide some of the most direct input on what the inputs or outputs can be.

DR. PORCH: I just want to take this opportunity just to mention that one of the things the Center is doing is looking at realigning our resources, including repositioning some folks, so that they are able to provide more support to these ecosystem issues and working towards ecosystem-based management, and so it will take a little time to get that accomplished, but it is a very active effort that we're undertaking at the Center, and, at some point fairly soon, I will probably give a presentation on that, so you can see exactly the scope of what we're talking about.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Clay.

DR. LANEY: I know you all would consider it out of character if I didn't at least mention American eels at a council meeting, but I will mention them in the context of the fact that there is a lot going on on South Atlantic river systems relative to improving access for diadromous species, and not just American eels, but the whole suite of diadromous species.

There's a lot of stuff going on on the Cape Fear River with respect to the locks and dams, and funding has been found, I think, to improve the structure at Lock and Dam 1, and there is a lock weir there, but, based on studies that were done by NC State and NC DMF, striped bass weren't using it as much as American shad, and hopefully Atlantic sturgeon, were, and so there are going to be some improvements made there, and there's a lot of discussion going on about providing passage at Lock and Dams 2 and 3.

There are improvements in the works on the Savannah, and also on the Santee-Cooper, and so there's a lot of stuff going on out there from an access standpoint that should begin to hopefully restore some of the ecosystem services functions of these systems, and ultimately help to restore the clupeid prey base and American eel prey base in the South Atlantic ecosystem.

MR. PUGLIESE: Just following up with the discussion earlier on about the advisory panel -- Getting back to the breakout sessions and looking at the FEP implementation plan and looking at highlighting key activities that are going -- The advisory panel had a lot of discussion about, as a follow-up to some of the climate discussions and section and climate components of the FEP implementation plan and the roadmap, to begin to address updating and refining and maybe potentially creating addendums to policies, to make sure that some of these are up to speed.

There were some very specific items that were raised by habitat conservation about opportunities, that maybe that could be refined, and then they could actually use it in the consultation process, and so the advisory panel discussed this. The advisory panel discussed this, and, as Wilson had indicated, had made a recommendation to -- Basically, it was a charge to begin the process, to look at -- One would be the -- The first one would be the beach renourishment and large-scale coastal engineering policy statement.

A statement was circulated through the advisory panel with the members, and all members that did respond responded positively to moving forward, and this was the statement that was provided,

and, based on that, basically it was to address -- Based on their discussions, it was to address revisions to policy statements, and specifically, begin the process by looking at this, and what we have is a draft of a motion to charge the AP with that.

MR. POLAND: Thanks, Roger, and so the AP has asked for our direction for them to update their policy statements for a number of things, and does the committee feel like this is something we want to do, ask the AP to update the policies on beach renourishment and large-scale coastal engineering policies and beach dredging and filling? If so, I would entertain a motion to direct the AP.

MR. BELL: **I will make that motion.**

MR. POLAND: All right. Go ahead.

MR. BELL: **I direct the Habitat AP to update and create an addendum to integrate and address climate change issues and beach dredging and filling, beach renourishment, and large-scale coastal engineering policy statement.**

MR. POLAND: We have a second from Chris Conklin. Any discussion?

MR. PUGLIESE: Just I think one of the key things, as I had mentioned, is there was comments specifically from Cindy Cooksey, who is the Vice Chair, and she's with Habitat Conservation, about some of the research and some activities that were being completed, and I think -- While this initiates the policy, I think there's a desire to get some of those done, and so that actually could be integrated into the policy, and so I think it's not as if they're going to have it on the table that the council has to move immediately, and I think they're going to make sure they've got all their ducks in a row to get that, so it's useful to the states and to habitat conservation.

MR. POLAND: If I remember correctly from the AP meeting, I think Steve Ross and others were bringing up some recent research that kind of shed some light on the efficacy of beach renourishment and dredging in coastal areas, near-coastal waters, and effects on productivity in those areas, and so it seems like the research has been updated, and so I feel like it would probably be prudent to ask the Habitat AP to update our policy statement on that. Is there any more discussion on the motion on the table? **Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.** Do you have anything else, Wilson and Roger? All right. Then do we have any other business from the committee?

MR. BELL: Just a question. I recall, several meetings ago, and I can't remember which one, we had some colleagues come down from the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic, and we were talking about changes in fisheries that we may be seeing related to the climate change, species shifting ranges and that sort of thing, and we agreed that was something that, particularly on our coast, with the range in latitude, that the three councils needed to kind of work together and figure out how to deal with that, and then I may be blending this with some CCC meeting discussions, and it came up there as well, but, in terms of moving forward with that, I know there's a meeting coming up this year, and I think it's focused on the science aspect, and is that sort of where we left that? That's the next step?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Good questions, and so that meeting is scheduled -- That's the science aspect meeting, and it's scheduled for April 27 through 29, and I just call it the species moving north, and that's not it. I think it's actually NOAA Fisheries Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop, and so species moving north, but, yes, after that, we need to schedule one that is more on the management side and maybe get the councils back together, and so it's still moving, and this is just the science piece, and the management piece still has yet to be determined or scheduled.

MR. POLAND: Who is involved from our council?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel and I, as well as John and Roger, I believe, are all involved.

MR. POLAND: All right. Thanks for that update.

DR. LANEY: Just that shifting distribution issue is the reason that we asked Dr. Kellison to try and take a look at species diversity and pull that out of the fishery-independent data as well.

MR. POLAND: All right.

MR. WHITAKER: Sort of related to that, last year, at I believe the Snapper Grouper AP, one of the members mentioned that shallow-water grouper in Florida are moving offshore to deeper water earlier than before, and so, while they're not moving north-south, they may be moving offshore, and they may be less accessible to fishermen, and so, if we're looking at fishing mortality or harvesting of spawners, et cetera, there may be some shifts there occurring because of climate change, but not the north-south direction, and the east-west direction, and so I just wanted to mention that, and I mentioned it to Todd Kellison, and he said that they didn't have direct data on that, but they were interested in looking at it.

MR. POLAND: Thanks, David. I know that, at least up my way, I have heard from fishermen, and I've experienced it myself, some differences in inshore and offshore movement of a lot of species in the last couple of years, this year in particular, and, granted, it was a very mild year, and I think anyone that duck hunts can recognize that it was a warm year, but, certainly, things like black sea bass and gags and stuff not moving as far inshore, and showing up at times where you wouldn't expect them, and so I feel like there are similar things probably going on throughout the entire region, in that regard. Anything else from the committee? All right. If not, I will adjourn the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee, and I appreciate the discussion.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 4, 2020.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
April 13, 2020

3/4/20

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