

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SNAPPER GROUPER ADVISORY PANEL**

**Webinar**

**September 24, 2020**

### **Transcript**

#### **Snapper Grouper AP Members**

James Hull, Chair  
Randall Beardsley  
Richen Brame  
Jack Cox  
Robert Freeman  
Lawton Howard  
Deidre Jeffcoat  
Chris Kimrey  
Randy McKinley  
Harry Morales  
Fentress Munden  
Andy Piland  
David Snyder

Robert Lorenz, Vice Chair  
Vincent Bonura  
Tony Constant  
Andrew Fish  
Richard Gomez  
Rusty Hudson  
Dr. Todd Kellison  
Andrew Mahoney  
Chris Militello  
David Moss  
James Paskiewicz  
Cameron Sebastian

#### **Council Staff**

Myra Brouwer  
John Hadley  
Allie Iberle  
Dr. Michael Schmidtke

Mr. Brian Chevront  
Kathleen Howington  
Cameron Rhodes  
Christina Wiegand

Other attendees and invited participants attached.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened via webinar on September 24, 2020 and was called to order by Chairman Jimmy Hull.

MR. HULL: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the very first Snapper Grouper AP webinar. Council staff has provided us with lots of information to work with, and, of course, will be guiding me and you through this first webinar and the entire -- Which is a very small agenda. At first, I would like to ask if there's any public comment from anyone that may be on that is not on the AP, and so, if anybody has public comment, please provide it now. I don't see anybody that has raised a hand. I will also ask for public comment at the end of the meeting.

I think a good thing to do -- We have a lot of AP members on today, and there's a lot of new people on the AP, and I would like to, at this time, if that's appropriate, Myra, to have everyone introduce themselves, and I don't know how we would keep everybody from talking on each other, but maybe I could call their name first and they could introduce themselves or something, or how would we handle that?

MS. BROUWER: I think that would be fine, Jimmy. You've got the list of the AP members that I sent you yesterday, and so I would just simply call on folks. That would be the easiest and most orderly way.

MR. HULL: Yes, ma'am. Okay. Good morning, everybody. My name is Jimmy Hull, and I'm the Chairman of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel. I fish out of Ponce Inlet, Florida, and I am predominantly a commercial fisherman. Robert, are you there?

MR. LORENZ: Yes, I am. I'm Bob Lorenz, and I live in Wilmington, North Carolina. I am a recreational fisherman, and so I represent the private recreational fishermen, and I basically fish out of Carolina Beach and Wrightsville Beach Inlet here in North Carolina, and I'm entering about the sixth year on this AP.

MR. HULL: Thank you. Vincent.

MR. BONURA: Good morning, everyone. Vincent Bonura, commercial fisherman and wholesale dealer out of Florida and the Florida Keys.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Vincent. Dick Brame.

MR. BRAME: Good morning. I'm Dick Brame, and I'm the Regional Fisheries Director for the Coastal Conservation Association, and I used to be a very avid snapper grouper fisherman.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Dick. Randy is not attending. Jack Cox. Okay. Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: Hi, guys. This is Chris Militello out of West Palm Beach, Florida. I'm a marine insurance guy, and I'm new to the board. Thanks for having me.

MR. HULL: Welcome, Chris. Thank you for being here. We look forward to meeting you and talking to you further. Robert Freeman. Richard Gomez.

MR. GOMEZ: I'm here. I'm Richard Gomez with the Key West fisheries, and I'm a charter boat owner and captain, and I'm representing the lower Keys.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Richard. Lawton Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Hi, Jimmy. I'm Lawton Howard, and I fish out of St. Simons Island, Georgia, and I'm a recreational fisherman, and I'm pretty adamant and avid about protecting and doing what we do. I just see this as a great need, and I just want to say, right now, that I appreciate everything that everybody is doing.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Lawton. Rusty Hudson.

MR. HUDSON: Good morning, Jimmy. I'm Russell Hudson, and everybody knows me as Rusty, and I've been deep-sea fishing out of Daytona Beach since the early 1960s, and I've participated in recreational, for-hire, and charter boats and headboats and commercial boats and shrimp boats, and now I'm just a consultant trying to look after the industry by participating in science and management meetings. Welcome.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Rusty. Harry Morales.

MS. BROUWER: It looks like we're having some audio issues with Harry, and so let me see if I can reach him and help him out.

MR. HULL: Okay. Randy McKinley.

MS. BROUWER: Randy is not going to make it, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Okay. Right on. New member Andrew Fish. Good morning, Andrew.

MR. FISH: Good morning. Hello. My name is Andy, and I'm a commercial fisherman, full time, out of Port Canaveral, Florida. I hook-and-line and spearfish, and I summertime in North Carolina commercial fishing. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Andy, and welcome. Andrew Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY: This is Andrew Mahoney, and I'm a commercial fisherman in Bluffton, South Carolina, and I fish out of Port Royal Sound, adjacent to Hilton Head there, and I'm happy to be here.

MR. HULL: Welcome, Andrew. Thank you. Tony Constant.

MR. CONSTANT: Good morning. I'm Tony Constant, and I live in Beaufort, South Carolina. I am a recreational fisherman, and I've been a charter/for-hire in the past, for about twenty years, and, currently, I'm also a member of the South Carolina CCA state board. It's good to meet everybody.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Tony, and welcome to the Snapper Grouper AP. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Good morning, everybody. I'm David Moss, a recreational fishing representative out of south Florida.

MR. HULL: Good morning, David.

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, we've got Harry on the line now.

MR. HULL: Go ahead, Harry.

MR. MORALES: Good morning, guys. Sorry for the technical difficulties. Harry Morales, a recreational fisherman out of Hilton Head, mostly offshore between Charleston and north Georgia.

MR. HULL: Good morning, Harry. Welcome.

MR. MORALES: I'm glad to be a part of this. I'm looking forward to it.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Harry. We're glad you're here. Welcome. James Paskiewicz.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Good morning, everybody. James Paskiewicz here, and I'm representing yellowtail fishermen and spiny lobster fishermen in the Florida Keys, and I'm also a wholesale dealer/broker for my peers. Thanks for having me, and let's have a great session today.

MR. HULL: Thank you, James. Andy Piland. I know Andy signed-on, but maybe he slipped away for a second. Andy, are you there?

MS. BROUWER: I am not seeing Andy Piland on my list.

MR. HULL: Okay. Never mind. I got him confused with another Andy then. Okay. Cameron Sebastian.

MR. SEBASTIAN: This is Cameron Sebastian, Operations Manager with the Hurricane Fleet, Little River Fishing Fleet, and Coastal Scuba. We run charter boats, headboats, shrimp boats, and we do commercial fishing, and we run a full-service dive facility, and we've been operating those things in the north Myrtle Beach, Little River, and Calabash area since the late 1980s.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Cameron. New member Chris Kimrey.

MS. BROUWER: Chris couldn't make it today.

MR. HULL: Okay. All right. Dr. Todd Kellison.

DR. KELLISON: Hi, Captain Jimmy. Good morning, everyone. I'm Todd Kellison, and I'm with NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and I'm a non-voting member of the panel.

MR. HULL: Good morning, Todd. Thank you for being here, and the only other one I have on the list that I don't know if they're here or not would be David Snyder.

MS. BROUWER: I don't see David on the list.

MR. HULL: Okay. All right. There is the board members and the introductions, and my job here, as the chairman, is to make sure that everyone is involved, and so we've been set up by staff with a pretty easy method to communicate here, once you get your technical issues out of the way, which is forever, but we've got it.

MR. COX: Jimmy, can you hear me?

MR. HULL: I think I can hear you. Hello.

MR. COX: Hi. I'm sorry about all the difficulties. I've got one of these fancy MacBook Aairs, and I don't know to use it, and so my apologies. Thank you for having me on this morning.

MR. HULL: Good morning, Jack. If you want to, real quick -- We just did introductions, and so why don't you just introduce yourself to everyone, and we have quite a few new members, and where you fish out of your representation.

MR. COX: Sure, Jimmy. My name is Jack Cox, and I'm a commercial fisherman and dealer, and I've been in the fishery since the 1980s, and I'm still participating in it. I'm in North Carolina, Morehead City, and I just want to say I'm glad to be involved in the meeting this morning, and I'm looking forward to giving some comments and maybe give back some of the experience that I have in the fishery.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Jack, and I would just say I bet, if your computer was like an old LORAN-A, you would have had it figured out.

MR. COX: Jimmy, I would have. This technology is killing me these days.

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, we just got Bobby Freeman on the line, and so if you would like to --

MR. HULL: Right on. Bobby, introduce yourself.

MS. BROUWER: Bobby, can you hear us? I am not sure what the trouble is, Jimmy.

MS. RHODES: I will investigate, Myra. Carry on.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you.

MR. HULL: Okay. We have a couple of things we have to go through here, and we have to approve the agenda that is before us, and so the way that I think we can vote on these things, and Myra will correct me if I'm wrong, is by consensus approval. If you don't approve of something, and you need to vote against something, or you need questions or comments or concerns, then raise your hand or type something in the question box. We're going to -- This is new to me also here, folks, and so we're going to try to go ahead and have an approval of the agenda for this meeting, which, basically, the agenda is pretty simple, and we have a task before us.

The task before us is to develop a fisheries performance report, using your experience and your observations on the water and in the marketplace, and, once this is completed, it will advise and complement the scientific and landings data and the council itself, and so pretty much that is the agenda overview, and then we will also have an Other Business opportunity, after we get done with this fisheries performance report, and so it's a pretty simple task that we need to perform, and I'm glad that it is on this first one, and so is there anyone that does not approve the agenda? Raise your hand.

MS. BROUWER: I am seeing no hands raised, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Right on, and so that is approved, and we'll go on to the next approval, and that will be of the previous meeting minutes, and it's been a long time since we have met, and we've been in limbo, and so I would like to ask for the approval of the previous minutes, and, if anyone has something that they would like to talk about, or they don't approve of them, raise your hand.

MS. BROUWER: No hands, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Okay. The minutes have been approved. At this point, I think that we need to probably turn it over to you, Myra, to give us the preamble, possibly, into the task at hand.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you. Yes, and so what I'm going to do is walk you through information that we have been able to gather, basically just to give you some background of the kind of information that we can share with you regarding gag grouper, and so we'll go over commercial landings and recreational landings, and we'll talk about seasonality and life history, and let me pull that up on my screen. Just give me a second.

This is the information that was included in your briefing book, if you read your agenda and the overview, and there was a link that takes you to this page. This is just a nice little tool that Chip and others at the office have developed to make it a little bit easier for us to show you information, rather than putting together lengthy documents, and we have this little online feature to help us sort of show you trends, and so I'm just going to expand this, just so you can see it a little bit better.

In the past, and let me just show you, we have done fishery performance reports for other species, and so all that information is available, and all the past reports that you guys have put together are available here. The information for past reports that we've done is also available in this little tool, and then what you are currently tasked with doing, which is the fishery performance report for gag grouper, is in this little tab, and so everything is nicely packaged together, and you can access all of this information, and we try to keep it updated as we go along. It's kind of -- There are so many species in the snapper grouper complex that it's taking us a little while to get through all of these fishery performance reports.

For those of you who are new to the AP, the fishery performance report basically is just a narrative of the fishery for a particular species within the snapper grouper complex, and we put these together to give the analysts, the stock assessment people, the scientists who are putting together stock assessments for these species, a different perspective, a perspective from you folks who are out on the water and who are encountering these species for your fishing activities that you do, commercial or recreational, so that they can just have a better picture of that particular fishery, and that's the purpose of these reports.

We try to get information that's not easily obtained through other methods, and so we'll ask questions about basically your opinions, changes you've seen over time, and not just in abundance, but where the fish are, market trends, and things like that, and so that's what we're doing today, and so I'm going to start by just sort of giving you an overview of the life history for gag, and this is information that came out of the last stock assessment report for this species, which was done a while back, and so that was SEDAR 10.

SEDAR stands for Southeast Data Assessment and Review process, and so it's the process that we use in the Southeast to conduct stock assessments for managed stocks, and so SEDAR 10, I believe, had data that were used in that assessment that went through 2012, and so we are in the process of doing another stock assessment for gag that is getting underway this year, and so this fishery performance report is going to inform this new stock assessment that we have going on.

The life history information here, this is just the length-weight relationships, where you've got your total length, in inches, on the left, and then age on the right, and, as you can see, as fish age, they just sort of quit growing very much, and they just get fat, but they quit getting long, and that's what this curve is showing you here, the asymptotic length there, and the length-weight relationship is here, based on just scientific information, and then this is an interesting one.

This bottom one shows you the maturity, female maturity, for gag, and so what this curve shows you is, if you look at the 50 percent -- At this level here, 50 percent of female gag are able to reproduce, are able to spawn, and so the 50 percent maturity is a good metric for fishery managers to kind of set things like minimum size limits, for example, and you don't want to set a minimum size limit that is too low and you're going to be harvesting all the fish before they have had a chance to spawn at least once.

For gag, the minimum size limit is twenty-four inches, and, as you can see from this curve, the 50 percent female maturity is larger than that, and it's larger than twenty-five inches, and it looks like it's about twenty-six inches, according to this information. I am going to pause here for a second and see if there are any questions. If there are questions, please raise your hand. Are there any questions so far? It looks like Rusty has got a question.

MR. HUDSON: Can you scroll down to that second chart, the one that had the weight, whole weight? Is that twenty pounds whole weight, at the upper end?

MS. BROUWER: Yes.

MR. HUDSON: Wow. I've had forty and fifty-pounders. Anyway.

MS. BROUWER: These data, Rusty, are from that SEDAR 10 assessment.

MR. HUDSON: Oh my goodness. That's before Rusty. Okay. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Any other questions or clarifications, before we move on? Okay. So the next thing that we have is the index of abundance, and so the index of abundance is the information that comes from scientific surveys, long-term surveys, that have been conducted in our region for many years, and this information is what was included in the most recent stock assessment.

However, I wanted to bring this over, and this is something that you guys received from Dr. Wally Bublely last fall, if you remember when we met in-person at the Town & Country, and so I wanted to bring his presentation back up, and I'm not going to go through it. If anybody is interested, this is all available in the briefing book archives on our website, but I wanted to bring up the slide for gag.

This is more recent information than what we have in the online tool, and you can see the figure down here, and this is the relative abundance based on the fishery-independent survey that is conducted in the South Atlantic, and this is using chevron traps, and so you can see, over here, the -- This is mainly like high-abundance and low-abundance and absent, and this is based on their sampling, but you can see, after 2010, the relative abundance has gone down, and so I just wanted to bring that up for you all to see, in addition to this information.

Then I'm going to move on to landings, and we'll start with commercial landings, and, over here, you have the range of years for the time series, and so that's what is being displayed currently. If you wanted to see a different set of years, you just simply move the little bar along, and so, if you're interested in just a subset, you can use this little tool to do that, but I'm going to just show you the entire time series, since that's the entirety of the dataset that is available to us.

Here you have landings in pounds whole weight for the commercial sector by year, all the way through to 2017, I believe, and clearly a downward trend over time, and the highest landings are here, and it's just close to 800,000, back before the spawning season closure was put in place. That spawning season closure was put in place in 2009, the shallow-water grouper closure that is currently in place from January 1 through April 30.

Scrolling down, you have commercial landings by state, and so we have them color-coded here, and North Carolina is in the blue, and Georgia and South Carolina have been combined to protect confidential information, and that's depicted in green, and you've got Florida in the pink color. Again, these are pounds whole weight by year by state, and we really don't have any information to show you that's available currently on the releases of gag for the commercial sector. Again, I'm going to move over here, to see if anybody has any questions so far. If you do, please raise your hand.

MR. HULL: Myra, I have a question that I'll start with first, and then we have a couple other questions, if we may. My question would be to Dr. Kellison, if he could answer it. When you go back to the life history of the gag, and they show that a maximum age at thirty years of age, would you think that they have actually -- Is that counted from possibly animals that were actually observed, and the otoliths counted, or do you think that that is just an assumption?

DR. KELLISON: Thanks, Captain Jimmy. I mean, typically, those values are based on observed otolith counts, and so I can try to do a quick scan of the literature, while the discussion goes on, to see what the basis of that is, but I would guess that it is actually observed.

MR. HULL: All right. Thank you. I would like to recognize Tony. Go ahead.

MR. CONSTANT: Thank you. On the chart that showed the abundance of where the abundance and the absence were on the east coast, it showed an abundance up around the Outer Banks, as

well as the South Carolina area, and I was just wondering -- Would that directly be collated with the amount of reef that are either manmade, or I know the North Carolina area has a lot of ships, and South Carolina has a lot of manmade reefs as well, and that could be the reason why they're abundant in those areas.

MR. HULL: Tony, I think that that's a good point, and there's been a lot of discussion about artificial reefs and if they -- There is still questions as to whether they actually produce new habitat or they shift animals to that habitat, and I think there's a lot of opinions about that. I think they should be building artificial structure all the time everywhere, but that's my opinion, and I know that that is from -- That data that you're referring to is from the chevron trap fisheries-independent sampling, and so that is -- Those are animals that are caught with the trap.

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, I think maybe Todd can address that and kind of give the AP a very brief summary of how that survey is conducted.

MR. HULL: Yes, and that would be great. Go ahead, Todd.

DR. KELLISON: Thank you. I think probably, Myra, if you scroll back to the presentation for a while, and there's probably a figure in there showing where sampling occurred that year, but I would just say that, typically, that survey is about 1,500 traps with video cameras in the water every year, and it's pretty good spatial coverage throughout that region that's shown on the figures there, and so those 1,500 samples are pretty well distributed across the region.

There are some areas where there is not a lot of hardbottom, but hardbottom is distributed. I mean, in general, it's distributed throughout the region, and so certainly there are some areas that have more hardbottom than others, but those -- I think those patterns that you saw for the -- That we might call like a heatmap, with the warmer colors, and the reds, represent high abundance, and the cooler, or the blues, represent low abundance, and those I think are real patterns.

There are areas in the region where a lot of traps and video cameras are going in the water, but there is few, or no, gag catches in those traps, and that's only the trap data, and I don't think that we have the video data to show. Also, there was a discussion about artificial reefs, and so I would just note that that sort of targets hardbottom habitat, but it does not sample artificial reefs.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thank you for that, Todd. Tony, that was -- He kind of answered your question somewhat there, as to the sampling is not of -- That you see there is not from artificial reef areas, and it's from hardbottom.

MR. CONSTANT: Right, and that actually would probably coincide with it. If he's sampling hardbottom, and the groupers that are abundant are in areas where the reefs are, that he's not going to sample a gag if it doesn't exist, and, if it exists where the reefs are, that may be the common denominator.

MR. HULL: It may well be. There's a lot of discussion that I'm glad you're onboard about artificial structure, and so we'll be getting into that, I'm sure. I would like to recognize Cameron now.

MR. SEBASTIAN: With the graph on reduction of commercial landings, I was wondering if there's been study done, in that same timeframe, with the loss of fish houses and with the loss of commercial fishermen participating, and is there any correlation between the actual effort being put in and the landings decreasing, versus just the numbers decreasing on their own?

MS. BROUWER: Cameron, I don't think there's been that specific study that's been done, and I know that we did a profile of the commercial snapper grouper fishery in general a few years back, and the social scientist, Kari MacLauchlin, and some of you may remember her, did sort of a snapshot study, and there was information in there regarding diminishing fish houses and that sort of thing, but that is precisely one of the bits of information that we always ask the AP about, because we don't really have a good dataset that is showing what's going on, in terms of diminishing ways that fish can be brought to market, and so there isn't anything, that I am aware of, that is going to be able to correlate that particular factor with the decrease in landings right now.

MR. HULL: Okay. Does that -- Any other questions or comments or concerns on the current discussion? Back to you, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. Moving on -- Cameron apparently --

MR. HULL: Cameron, go ahead.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I just accidentally hit something. No problem.

MR. HULL: Okay.

MS. BROUWER: All right, and so, staying with commercial --

DR. KELLISON: Myra, could I add something? I'm sorry, and I had my hand raised, but --

MS. BROUWER: Sorry.

DR. KELLISON: Is there any way for me to send you a figure or to share my screen, very briefly?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and let me -- Is that okay with you, Jimmy?

MR. HULL: Definitely, and I didn't see his name there, and that's why he wasn't called on, but, yes, whatever he wants to help provide us for information, definitely.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. Todd, I'm going to make you a presenter.

DR. KELLISON: I just wanted to briefly show -- The figure on gag distribution that we were talking about from Dr. Buble's presentation, I just wanted to note that that's the trap data, and gag aren't -- So different species have sort of different propensities for going into a trap, and some species go in very rapidly, like black sea bass, and gag we catch less frequently, and so our gears are traps with video cameras on top, and so, often, we will see gag in the videos, but we won't have caught them in the traps, and so this is just a -- This is a paper, and it's a little dated, and it's from 2016, that I just wanted to show a figure.

This is the same kind of heatmap, and it's from multiple species, and so I'll try to make it big, so you can focus in on gag. This is gag in the center of the screen, and so the interpretation here is the circles, both red and black, are where the trap and video gear was sampled, and I'm not sure if this over a couple of years combined, or maybe it was just from one sampling year, and I can go back and check, but the broader message is the black dots are where gag were not seen on videos, and the red dots are where gag were seen on videos, and so you see a much broader pattern of gag distribution from the video gear than you do from the trap gear.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Todd. That's very informative with the video, whereas, with the trap, like you said, there is areas where they didn't trap any at all, almost as if they weren't present, but, with the video, you show that they at least swam up close enough, or at 343 of them did, in the video, so that you could document that.

DR. KELLISON: Myra, I can send this paper, if that would be helpful.

MS. BROUWER: That would be great, and I can pass it along. I'm going to take control back.

DR. KELLISON: Yes. All right. Thank you, everyone.

MR. HADLEY: In the meantime, we have Andrew Mahoney with his hand up.

MR. HULL: Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: I'm here, and I just had a question about the graph on landings, if it's taken into consideration about regulations that are put in throughout that graph that may affect the number of landings, indirectly or directly.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, Andrew, and so you can see -- There is a shallow-water grouper closure that went into place around here, this time of year. I mean, we don't have a figure that shows you where the various regulatory changes happened, but that was a big one for the shallow-water groupers, and there is --

MR. MAHONEY: What about circle hook regulations and when that happened? I think that was 2011 or something.

MS. BROUWER: Circle hook regulations went into place right here, between 2010 and 2011.

MR. MAHONEY: Okay. Where it drops down again.

MS. BROUWER: Yes.

MR. MAHONEY: Okay. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and so I was going to move on to the monthly landings for the commercial sector, and so, predictably, you have a spike in May and June, because that's when grouper opens up, and these are data from 2000 through 2018 for the whole South Atlantic, and

then, moving on to economic information, and, here, I will invite John Hadley to chime in, and I'm basically just going to show you these graphs.

The top one is the ex-vessel value, in dollars, by year, and then the adjusted dockside price for gag by year, and, again, that's the same time series. Then economic information, in terms of sales, are presented right here in this top graph, and you've got dollars on the Y-axis and years on the X. The same information here, in terms of income and in terms of jobs. I don't know if, John Hadley, if there's anything in particular that you wanted to point out.

MR. HADLEY: I mean, I think you went over it pretty well. If there's any specific questions, but I will say, for the commercial economic impacts, they're really driven by the ex-vessel value, and so that's the main input into the model that comes up with these economic impacts, looking at sales, jobs, or income, and then, on the recreational side, you will see that that model is really driven by the effort estimates, and so effort estimates by mode, and, for gag, you're looking at private vessels and for-hire vessels, and the number of trips between those modes is really what drives the model outputs for the economic impacts, but I would be happy to answer any questions on the gag economic impacts.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, John. It looks like we've got a question.

MR. HULL: Harry.

MR. MORALES: When I was playing with this -- I guess my question for you is you have the commercial sector selected, and we're talking about the entire economic impact, and is there a reason why we're only looking at commercial versus the combined?

MS. BROUWER: We're just not there yet, and we do have -- I was going to walk you guys through by sector and then look at the combined.

MR. MORALES: Okay. Got it.

MR. HULL: I have Rusty up with a question. Go ahead, Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Can you go back to that year 2000 through 2017 or whatever on the landings, particularly where it starts the January/February together?

MS. BROUWER: Are you talking the monthly, these?

MR. HUDSON: Right there. That's it, and so you see that January/February stuff, and you start thinking in terms of before the shallow-water grouper closure, and, back in the 1970s and 1980s, we could go like, as an example, around the Flagler/Volusia County line, in fairly shallow water, but we get large aggregations of female gags right there in that area at that time of the year, and that protection should be having some benefits, being in place now for a decade, but, just going back in time, you could just go up there and commercial fish them and catch a box full in a day of those size, and so that was something that got took away from us once that shallow-water grouper closure occurred, and so I just wanted to throw that out there.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Rusty.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Rusty. I have selected just the years 2000 through 2009, and so that's what is showing on your screen right now, because that's when the shallow-water grouper closure went into place, and so this should be reflective of landings prior to the shallow-water grouper closure, and you can still see the same sort of trend there, with March and April being very low landings.

If there's no more questions, I will switch over to talk about recreational, and so I've already shown you the life history and index of abundance, and so we'll go straight into the landings, and so here are recreational landings for gag, in pounds whole weight by year, and you can see how much noisier the data are for the recreational sector, and then we've got it broken down by state, Florida being dominating, in terms of recreational landings of gag in the South Atlantic for that time period, and we don't have anything to show you based on numbers of releases of gag.

Then we have the same information broken down by wave for the recreational sector, and the economic values, which there aren't any for the recreational sector, but we do have information on economic impacts, which is what John Hadley was just talking about, mainly driven by that effort estimate, and so you've got it in terms of sales, up here on the top, and in terms of income and jobs.

Then someone asked for the combined, and so we can certainly do that as well, and so here is the combined landings overall for the time series, and so that's annual landings on the top by state, and then it's broken down by wave. This is kind of a quick summary, and it's intended for you guys to sort of get thinking about the fishery, and, Jimmy, I will turn it back to you.

MR. HULL: Thanks, Myra. I see that Robert has his hand raised. Go ahead, Robert.

MR. LORENZ: I just had a question, and there was somebody on that was stating -- I am going to go back to the economic value for the commercial sector, and it's just something out of interest, and it can be used anywhere, but landings are moving, and I was looking at -- There is economic value, and then what is sold, and is one of the parameters, or something that may be of increasing interest, maybe to the commercial and the seafood industry, and is one of the parameters what the margin is on a given species?

For instance, I am told, around here, that gag are, ex-vessel, or at the dock, seven or eight-dollars a pound, and then you clean it, and it's at a retail seafood shop, where I shop, and I'm paying twenty-two to twenty-six dollars a pound for a filleted product, and so of interest to me, with an interest in economics, would be an interesting thing to track would be, as the landings go down, is there work being done, or is one of the studies what the margin is that's maintained on that total economic value?

In other words, is that compressing at all -- I mean, from seven or eight dollars to twenty-six, and you eventually can't move that top-end retail as much, and so I was just wondering how that works, and is there going to be a period of time where the animals are less abundant, but the price is going up, and so certain people, the fishermen and the wholesalers and the retailers, are whole, but there will be a point where there will be compression there, where you just run out of people wealthy enough to purchase the product, and I'm just wondering if that's involved in the economic studies.

MR. HULL: Bob, I think that John, of course, is the expert on this. From my perspective, if I can answer briefly, as a restaurant owner and a fish market owner, yes, there is a price point, eventually, where you're going to have the consumers resist if the product is just too expensive to move any volume of it. We haven't reached that point yet, but the price of filleted, Florida-produced gag grouper continues to rise, and so I don't know if that helps answer your question, and, also, it doesn't show --

I thought you were going here, but it's the same with the recreational sector, and they do -- I'm not sure how they got the total values there, but, on the commercial side, it's just vessel price that they start with, but the expanded-out benefits of that product and prices is not included in that, and you could also look at the jobs produced. It strictly looks like it's boat jobs, vessel jobs, and not all the other jobs that would be generated by that product in the marketplace, in a restaurant setting or a market setting, all the people and equipment and supplies that are needed to serve that product to the consumer. Maybe John has some more to add to that. John.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and, Bob, that's a very good point. I think that's a noted gap in the data that we have available, and so we have margin information that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has been essentially using logbook information, and they have come up with a pretty good process where they can run -- Hopefully they can update this every year, where we can look at estimated margins on snapper grouper vessels and specifically pull information for gag grouper trips, but that's only on the harvesting side.

As it moves towards retail, that's the kind of data gap in the information that NMFS doesn't really have, and it's, obviously, a very important part, and I think if -- I'm sure that people on this webinar have a great deal of information on that, and I think that's one strength of these fishery performance reports, is that it helps at least address some of that information and that data gap, but, to specifically answer your point, the economic impacts shown don't necessarily -- At least the values shown here, the ex-vessel values, we don't have great information on what happens between the -- Essentially from dockside to consumer, and so that's something that would be great information to have, but it's just there's not necessarily a tracking mechanism in place to gather that information. I hope that helps answer the question.

MR. LORENZ: Yes, and thank you very much, John, and thank you, Jimmy, because, I mean, actually, I was relying on you and on Jack, and that was in the back of my mind, is, obviously, what your margins are, for gentlemen like yourself, is going to be confidential information, but just out of general interest was are you -- It would have been are you seeing your margin compress a little bit from what you're paying or it's costing you off the boat to what you're able to get at retail, and so I just think that's a very interesting aspect, just keeping an eye on what your margins are, because that's how healthy your business can operate, and so it's just interesting. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Right on, Bob, and just one more additional comment on it, as a fish dealer and market and restaurant owner, and we have been able to raise the sale price as the price has increased, and fresh, local grouper is such a phenomenal product that people -- It's marketed as such, and people are willing to come on and pay it, because they realize what they're getting and the cost it takes to produce that product. Rusty, did you have your hand raised?

MR. HUDSON: Yes, I did. Could I see the yearly landings commercial again for that 2000 through 2010, the March and April? I see the little note down at the bottom and the lower than

three years not displayed, because of confidentiality things, plus we had a pretty significant decline in the number of commercial snapper grouper fishermen, boats and stuff like that, since the 1990s, and so this right -- That little March/April drop right there, I believe, is just because you can't reveal all the information, it looks like to me. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Rusty. I have another question from Chris Militello.

MR. MILITELLO: Just a quick question. What does ex-vessel value mean?

MR. HADLEY: Ex-vessel value is looking at the dockside price, and so it's essentially an estimate of what the commercial fisherman is getting for that product. It's basically the transaction between the harvester and the dealer.

MR. MILITELLO: Okay. All right. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, we've had a couple more AP members that have joined, and so if we could just pause for just a minute to get them unmuted.

MR. HULL: Yes, ma'am. Stand by.

MS. BROUWER: Go ahead, Cameron. I'm going to let you do it, because I can't see everybody's list right now.

MS. RHODES: Okay. Bobby, it looks like you must have hopped off and back on, and so we're going to unmute you. Dave Snyder, we'll go ahead and get you unmuted on our end, and if you guys want to do a sound test. Hi, Dave. Then Randy Beardsley, and let me get you unmuted. All right. If you guys want to do a quick sound check, we can do that real quick, or we can carry on. Whatever is preferred, Myra and Jimmy.

MR. FREEMAN: I'm here. Can you hear me?

MS. RHODES: We can hear you. Thanks, Bobby.

MR. HULL: David Snyder, are you there? Can you chime in and say hello?

MR. SNYDER: Hello, everybody. Sorry I was late.

MR. HULL: Very good. Randy Beardsley, can you unmute yourself and say hello?

MR. BEARDSLEY: Can you hear me?

MR. HULL: Yes, we do. Thank you. Welcome. Okay, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jimmy. At this point, unless anybody has any more clarifying questions, I would like to get started on the fishery performance report and let everybody else speak, and so I'm going to bring up the questions that were sent out, and so these are the questions to put together the report, and so, Jimmy, I think we could just go one-by-one and let the members

raise their hands and give their input, and I think that would work well, and, at some point, perhaps a short little break, when it's convenient, might be a good idea as well.

MR. HULL: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. AP, this is the meat and potatoes of what we're doing here today, and so I'm going to go ahead and read the question, and then, whoever wants to answer, I'm going to let you speak in the order that you raise your hand, and so, while I'm reading it, you may want to raise your hand right away to get in there. Number one, have there been substantial changes in the gag fishery, and, if so, when and what do you think caused the change? Let's go. Does someone want to have some input on this question? Go ahead, Jack.

MR. COX: I was just going to say that -- Technology is what I'm going to say, being that I'm a product of the 1980s when I entered the fishery, and I've made pretty much a living on the gag fishery, and the technology. I mean, the more participants, and the recreational sector has -- You know, it used to be, here in our area, we would catch a lot of species that we don't have anymore, and so it's putting a lot more pressure on the gag resource, and so I'm going to pretty much say the biggest substantial change that I've seen is the technology and how easy it is to find a fishing spot, and so there's no more places out there where the fish can hide, like there were back years ago. Thank you, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Jack. That's great input, and I would concur. Next, I have Andrew Fish.

MR. FISH: I would double-up on the fishing pressure, for sure, on the recreational, and not so much the commercial, but there's definitely more part-time commercial pressure, and then, of course, the red snapper. As far as the hook-and-line fishery, a lot of fishermen have trouble getting through the red snapper to get the grouper a chance, is what I would say.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Andrew. That's a good comment. Surely someone else on the AP has some opinion on this and can help answer this. We're going to need more than just two inputs here. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: I can't say that I've seen a substantial change, but the change that I have seen over the last two or three years seems to be a little bit better. It seems like, in the Charleston/Jacksonville area, we seem to have a steady increase in size. Most gags that I have been landing have been between the low thirties to thirty-eight inches, and it seems like we're getting a lot of fish in the thirty-four to thirty-six-inch range, and I do agree with Andrew that the amount of snapper is getting to be ridiculous. You cannot get a bait down, and, even if you're jigging, you're pulling up all different sized snapper, which that means that there's a whole lot of aggressiveness going on on the bottom down there. That said, I haven't really caught a lot of smaller gags, which has been noticeable over the last two or three years.

MR. HULL: Right on. I would concur with your comments. Next, I have Harry.

MR. MORALES: Well, I would say to you that, for my personal experience, in the Hilton Head offshore area, in the let's say eighty to 140 foot of water, it was pretty common for us to be able to catch two or three gags of decent size, and, of course, I would say, the last several years, for us, they've been non-existent whatsoever.

This year, especially during the snapper open season, we began catching, and I've been hearing from my other friends that we've been catching undersized gag. They are everywhere from twelve to eighteen inches. On occasion, maybe a twenty-four inch, but we're not catching the thirty-plus-inch gag. For us, they're non-existent, and a friend of mine -- Well, it was a black grouper, but he was in 175 foot of water jigging, and he was able to get one, but we're not seeing much. We are experiencing an incredibly over-aggressive red snapper, to the point that you can't use a live bait, because that's all you're going to bring up.

MR. HULL: Right on. I would concur with your comments, also. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I've been diving out off the South Carolina/North Carolina coastline since the late 1980s, and what I see underwater is there's still actually -- The same areas that I've been going to, there is still a relatively good mix, large and smalls, and that's been relatively consistent. What I don't see as much, just because of pressure, and you don't hit what I would call hotspots, where you have the large congregations of shootable size grays down there, but, as the other gentleman just mentioned, my charter and headboats, they're catching undersized grays in fifty or sixty feet of water, on a pretty consistent basis, and that, a couple of years ago, was almost never ever seen.

It's a hodgepodge of what's really going on out there, and hopefully we figure out some of the answers to the questions of the best ways to manage it and keep it going. I will say that, over the past ten years, I have personally seen a lot more pressure from recreational top-side fishermen, and recreational divers as well, and, luckily, a lot of the recreational divers aren't as proficient, but, with the advent of powerheads becoming legal in our area, that could change, because anybody can pull a trigger and put a bullet in a head, and it's a done deal.

MR. HULL: Right on. Thanks for those comments. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Jimmy. I did just want to add, for my zone here in the Florida Keys, we have seen very little change, even though it's not a species that we typically harvest commercially, and I might see three to five a year, personally, and I did just want to add that we had seen very little change over the past few years.

MR. HULL: Thank you, James. How about Andrew?

MR. FISH: I raised it, but then I put it down, but I would add that we do get a lot more predation to the sharks on the gags than any other fish too as well, and I don't know if that's part of our discussion here either, but I would just like to add that.

MR. HULL: It's definitely part of our discussion, and point well made. Chris, you're next.

MR. MILITELLO: In the West Palm area, we were catching a lot more last year than this year, and a lot of reds too, but, if I went north, to fish in Canaveral and stuff, like everyone else has said, the snapper are just out of control, but, if you go out to like 250 and drop, we were catching gags pretty much no problem, and there was some bigger snapper, but it seemed to be all right, but now it's died off this year in the Palm Beach area, and I don't know what to attribute to that. We do have the shark battle here, for sure.

MR. HULL: Thank you for that. Next is Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Going back to the abundant snapper, one of the conversations we've had locally is that the sea bass came back strong, and we've been talking about the aggressiveness of the red snapper possibly eating the juvenile sea bass, and this could very well plan into effect with the gags, when you have the juvenile fish and these larger snapper eating them, and, basically, they're afraid to stick their heads out.

MR. HULL: Point well taken. Richard Gomez.

MR. GOMEZ: Just for us in the lower Keys charter/for-hire sector, nothing has changed in many years for us. The gags remain a seldom-caught byproduct, when we are bottom fishing, and I can only say that there are a few more on the Atlantic side inside of the reef, on the rock areas in there, but, all in all, we seldom catch gags in the lower Keys in the charter/for-hire sector.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Richard. Next is David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question to especially some of the divers up there, and I was just curious, particularly when you're diving, what -- I know we see a lot of the red snappers, and we would like to blame it on them, but what about lionfish? Are you guys seeing a lot of lionfish in traditional gag grounds, and I'm wondering what effect that could have, particularly on the smaller of the species.

MR. HULL: Here comes a diver, a couple of them. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: The lionfish are sort of spread out, but what I see up here in the Carolinas is they are usually out past seventy or eighty feet, is where you find them, and they are not in huge, huge numbers, like I would consider them -- I mean, they're definitely a threat, but it's not like they are taking over areas on any particular live-bottom site or ledge site. We might see a few of them. Now, on some of the wreck sites, they have gathered in hundreds, to maybe a thousand of them, but, as there has become a market for lionfish, those have been totally thinned out, because the guys will go out and shoot them and bring them back and sell them, and so it doesn't seem to be an overall massive issue in this area, but it definitely would have a negative impact on the juveniles.

MR. HULL: Okay, and so that was from the Carolina area. Andy Fish from Florida.

MR. FISH: I would definitely agree with what the previous guy just said, that they -- Whatever, like eight years ago, when the markets first became feasible for us to go shoot them, we did definitely take care of some serious business on those, and they have not come back in any kind of harvestable numbers worth our time, and they're mostly in the deeper waters, like eighty and out, and I think they're real susceptible to tide, and they're real susceptible to swell, and they don't like any of that, and you always find them hanging outside and upside down and getting away from the current and getting away from the heavens, but I do not see them being a huge threat, in my opinion.

MR. HULL: Right on. That's good information. Thank you. We're still on Question 1, have there been substantial changes in the gag fishery, and we've gotten some really good input. I think that, from assessing everybody's comments, from my point of view, and my opinion, it's that, yes,

there was a decline and a change, in my area, but it's been getting better, and that's pretty much what everyone has said, that either there wasn't a lot of change, or they don't have a lot of gags, or things seem to be improving, and that's the way it is off of Ponce Inlet. The fish are hanging around a little bit longer before the closure, before they move, and they're showing up in better numbers after the opening, and so it's been going down, but it looks like things are improving. Do we have some more comment on this? If not, Myra, do you have enough on Item 1?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, Jimmy. I think that's fine. I mean, there's going to be a good bit of overlap, because a lot of these questions just overlap, and so you guys can just move on, and I will piece it all back together.

MR. HULL: Okay. Right on. We're going to go ahead and move to Question 2, and there is some overlap. When you start answer one question, a lot of times, you answer other ones, but there may be people that haven't chimed in yet and want to chime in now, and so catch levels over the past ten years. When and where are the fish available, and has this changed? Would someone like to answer that bullet point on catch levels over the past ten years? Raise your hand. I know that some of the guys from the Keys have said things haven't changed, that they're seeing the same amount of fish in the same places, and so that's good input for the very southern end. Jack, Go ahead.

MR. COX: Jimmy, I just wanted to say, as far as catch levels go, I continue to see a pretty drastic decline in our gag fishery here where I'm at, and there's more and more effort going offshore to deeper water, because of the shallow water getting hit pretty hard. Thank you, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Right on, Jack. Thanks for that input. Harry, you're up.

MR. MORALES: I don't know if I said the Betsy Ross area and if that makes sense to anybody, but, if we're comparing ten years ago, our people could go to the Betsy Ross, or they could go to the hump, and so you're talking about fifty to eighty feet of water, and you pretty much could catch grouper all day long. Today, if you were to try to do that, outside of the sharks and the black sea bass, you won't get to see a gag. You've got to be in 120 to two-hundred-and-some feet of water, if you're going to be catching them, and, this year, when I started catching them, I was in 110 feet of water.

MR. HULL: Right on, Harry, and so that's off of South Carolina, and so you have seen when and where, and you've basically said you're having to go to deeper water to encounter them.

MR. MORALES: Yes.

MR. HULL: Right on. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: In Port Canaveral, here again, I would speak for our recreational guys and our charter guys, and a lot of those guys are definitely fishing 180 feet and deeper now, and the big joke is the deep used to be 180 foot, and now guys are out in 220, 240, and 260, looking for the groupers, and I would say it's a definite decline in the last ten years.

MR. HULL: Right on. Thank you, Andy. Tony, you're next.

MR. CONSTANT: The comments recently about South Carolina and the Betsy Ross, I have to agree with what he's saying. The Ross does get a lot of pressure, and it kind of reminds me of the Islamorada Hump, something to that effect, or maybe not quite that bad, but we definitely go deeper. The grouper I'm mentioning, that I feel that are doing better, we're going to 150 feet, where the Ross is between sixty and a hundred, or sixty and eighty, and it's a on a cliff. I would not grouper fish on the Ross now, and he is right that, ten or fifteen years ago, you could, and so we're going more to private numbers in much deeper water, another twenty miles offshore.

MR. HULL: Right on, and so your comments line right up with what they're saying in Florida and North Carolina, going deeper, in general.

MR. CONSTANT: Exactly. It's deeper.

MR. HULL: Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: I will just throw in, for private boats, these are folks going out in twenty to thirty-foot vessels. In the past ten years, it has declined considerably in where you could catch, at this time of year, maybe sixty to ninety feet of water, which basically is ten or twelve miles or eighteen miles out, and so the people that -- There's people like me who say they're not abundant, or they're not good at catching them, and so I haven't caught that many, but some that are better are pretty much -- They talk about they're going deeper, which confirms what everybody else says.

In the past ten years, everyone is more inshore, and we have, within eighteen fish to the beaches, a lot of these little outcroppings that some folks say that -- Going back twenty-five years here, off this part of southeastern North Carolina, there were fish, very catchable fish, in thirty to sixty feet of water. There's a commercial fisherman here who does crabs now, but he was telling me that, just in thirty to sixty feet of water, and five to ten miles off the beach, and maybe, if Randy McKinley was here, and he's not here, but he fishes those areas commercially, and he possibly has heard of that, but, when you go back twenty-five years, there were rather abundant in some fairly shallow water.

MR. HULL: Right on. Thank you for that input. Let's go to the next bullet point. Has the size of the fish changed? Let's go back -- Cameron, is yours to this bullet or the previous? Go ahead, Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: Like you said, it's going to answer, I think, multiple questions, and so, I mean, in our area, or, for that matter, really any area, you pick any inlet in the last twenty-five years, and the amount of new people who have moved into the area, and do a circumference within fifty miles of the exit of the inlet, and you're going to have the pressure has definitely increased substantially, just because of the number of people who are moving into the area, and a lot of them are retirees, and a lot of them have excess cash to buy boats with, and so they hit the easier areas where they get to.

When we're diving, and, my charter/headboat guys, they all know that, and they try to get outside of those bubbles, and they still do relatively well on larger-sized fish and nicer fish, but they're having to extend outside of that thirty to forty to fifty-mile bubble, where the average individual can go hit on a regular basis.

MR. HULL: Right on. So effort, increased effort, has definitely -- It has a big effect on the bottom and where you fish and how much effort is put on that bottom, and obviously it's affecting it. I think, for me, the question is, okay, as the effort pushes to the deeper water, what's going to happen, and so go ahead, Jack.

MR. COX: Jimmy, back to your point on, as the effort does go to the deeper water, we're going to see an increase in size, but less abundance of fish, Jimmy, since I've been in the fishery, and I was gag fishing pretty heavily in the 1980s, in high school, and I've seen a -- I would say the average-sized fish has dropped four or five pounds since the 1980s. It used to be our average-sized fish was an eleven or twelve-pound fish, and we're seeing a whole lot more eight to ten, seven or eight or ten-pound fish, and you don't see the good, strong, twelve-pound class of fish, or fifteen, that we used to catch. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Yes, sir, and I agree, those cookie-cutter fish, lots of females. Go ahead, Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I would say, as we look at how many fish, and how many gag, are out there, when we get outside of those bubbles, there are only certain fishermen that can make it out there, and, out in the deeper water, especially if you're in the Carolinas, you have to have a certain sized vessel, and you have to have a certain amount of knowledge, and so I think, in the future, that could still be -- Those could still be limiting factors in the overall uptake, so that the deeper-water species -- I don't know, and they may or may not remain semi-protected, just because of the environment they're in and the distance that individuals have to travel to get out to them. It would be interesting to set some of the traps down in those areas that are definitely outside of what I would say the -- The forty to fifty-mile bubbles along the coastline and see how the species are doing in those areas.

MR. HULL: Yes, sir. Good comment. Maybe, down the road, we can get with Dr. Todd and see if they're running the video out there in some of that deeper water with the trap. Go ahead, Randal.

MR. BEARDSLEY: I would concur with the other fisherman. On the recreational, in Ponce Inlet and down to Canaveral, we've had to go further to the ledge to find larger fish, and one thing we have seen in our estuaries, coming back into Ponce Inlet, is we've been catching a lot of juveniles, more than I have seen before, inside Spruce Creek and in and around different areas, some of the larger and deeper holes coming into the inlet.

MR. HULL: Thank you for that. David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is, again, probably more to the divers, and it's a curious thing, but I was wondering if you've seen the abundance shift out to deeper water and stuff and what the temperature of the water is when you guys are diving, if they're seeking those cooler climes, and if those cooler climes are pushing further and further out or what that's doing, and it's just, again, a question.

MR. HULL: Andy.

MR. FISH: Most of my diving is in the summertime, for me, and that's when I'm in North Carolina. Up there, I don't really see the cooler temperatures, like I have done in most of my diving days here in Canaveral, when I was younger, before I got the nice, bigger boat, but, here in

Canaveral, it seems we have had much cooler water, and, when I say cool, like it's been sixty-eight to seventy-four, is a lot of reports I'm hearing, for our area, from eighty feet out to our divable depths. Our main reef here is like 135 is our deep reef that most of your guys aren't going go deeper than, but it has been cooler than normal for our area here in Canaveral.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Andy. Cameron, you're up.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I mean, our bottom temperatures have been relatively consistent. In the last two or three years, I would say they've been maybe a little bit above average for heat, and we occasionally will get a cold-water influx during the main season, where it will be eighties, and, all of a sudden, it will drop down to the low seventies, and I really don't know what causes it, but, in our area, the bite will definitely slow down when, all of a sudden, it's really warm, and then the water is -- You get this cold layer that rolls in, and it will drop the bite down for the guys on the charter and headboats, for sure.

MR. HULL: Right on. I would like to summarize a little bit here, so we can move further. When and where the fish are available and has this changed, I think that we -- If we can concur on this that, yes, it has, in general. In most areas, it's deeper water. In the Keys, not so much. Has the size of the fish changed, and, if so -- That was kind of a mixed report there, with most saying that they're not seeing too many of the younger fish offshore, but maybe some fish in the estuary, and also going deeper, effort going deeper, at least on the professional level, and that, yes, it's, obviously, going to be larger fish offshore. Does everyone agree with that, or does that pretty much catch it?

Has there been effort shifts to and from gag? I think that we need to weigh-in on that a little bit, because effort is very important to the analysts, and, while you're describing the effort, you might as well go ahead and talk about discards in the commercial sector and the recreational sector and chime in on that. Looking further, what's your gag bycatch, which is going to go with possibly discards in the closed season, and then, finally, how feasible is it to avoid gags during the closed season, and so would like someone like to chime in on this, specifically the effort to or from gag and the other things that go along with that effort, like discards and avoidance? Harry.

MR. MORALES: I probably have the least to add to this, and so that's why I will go first. Given the fact that snapper was taken off the table, we initially were interested in the grouper, but, of course, we weren't catching any grouper, and so we shifted over to vermilion and to trigger, and so that became our outing, because we're going out -- Typically, I go out thirty to fifty miles all the time, and so, if you're going out that far, you're looking to come home with groceries, and we couldn't keep the red snapper, and, in fact, for a while, we weren't catching them anyway, and so that's what we did to shift away from the grouper.

As far as discarding, this year is the first year that -- I'm going to assume that every time I threw one back is what you're calling discarding, and so, this year, I had a chance of throwing back over a half-dozen, which, in the previous three years, I didn't catch half-a-dozen, and so that's my take on it.

MR. HULL: Well, I think your comments are very relevant and very good, and I agree with them, for my personal fishing off of northeast Florida also, and so very good comments. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: As far as the efforts, they have increased dramatically. I mean, the scale is going to spike there. First off, the distance that we're traveling through the Atlantic is -- Every trip is going to cost you another couple hundred dollars in fuel. Fifteen years ago, or twenty years ago, we were using dacron line, and now it's -- The lines and equipment we're using is so much better, and, to me, I'm not going to tie a leader on unless it's fluorocarbon, and so everything you're purchasing is costing more, as well as the efforts, and the gags seem to be very picky, and you can't have a drift going, and you've got be fairly still, and you've got present your bait, and it's just a lot more work overall to catch this fish, and the effort you have to go and the distance you have to travel.

As far as discards, it seems like I do discard a few short gags when the snapper are around, and I don't know if it's an aggressiveness between the fish. When there's a lot of snapper around, we don't seem to catch the big gags, but definitely an increase in effort.

MR. HULL: Would that be an effort overall, for all species, or effort for gag in particular, and like you just make a trip that you're going to concentrate on, like he said, anchoring down and fishing strictly for gags, and do you see more effort in that?

MR. CONSTANT: I see different -- Snapper, to me, the closures have worked. I think it's another -- There's another day for this, but it's time to release that a little. It used to be that you didn't catch that many snapper, and now you can't get away from them, and so the effort on snapper is less, and you can almost throw a bottlecap down there and catch one.

The efforts for trigger is a little bit harder, since they've been the byproduct of not being able to - - They've been overfished a little because of the snapper closures. Sea bass, I still think all these snapper are eating some of the juvenile sea bass, and we -- If you want to target them, you can still get them close in. Tilefish, you're still having to run deep to, but, gag in particular, it seems like there's a little bit more effort than other species.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thanks for that. That's all good information, and a little more effort on gag. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: From the commercial aspect, when the b-liners are open, and especially now that you can get 1,500 pounds of b-liners, my guys are all talking like, hey, we want to run out and get our b-liners, and, hey, if we catch some grays and some scamps, great, but the effort is going to be made on the b-liners, where the greatest revenue can be derived in the shortest amount of time, with a three or four-day window of good weather. Now, if they can go out and stay five or six or seven or eight days, then, yes, they're going to try to get their thousand pounds of grouper species as well, and, for the last two trips that they made, they had some really good weather, and they were able to limit out on all of their catches.

For the recreational and charter/headboat side, we really don't change our effort much at all. I mean, we're going to the same areas. The guys who want to try to catch grouper are floating down minnows, and the guys who are trying to catch bass and snapper and porgies and triggers are using squid, and so our effort doesn't change a whole lot. As far as feasibility on trying to avoid it, in the off-season, all there is, for us, mainly b-liners and bass, and so we're not chunking down whole minnows to try to catch grouper, and so it greatly reduces the bycatch during the closed season.

MR. HULL: Great comment. That makes perfect sense. Thank you. Chris.

MR. MILITELLO: Like right now, I don't think we target them specifically. We'll go out to catch muttons or other snappers, and, if we get one, great, but it's not like a target thing. We can go three miles here and we're in 300-plus, and so it gets hit pretty hard in the West Palm area, and that's why I think you don't see as many. I don't go out and just to catch a grouper. Usually, it's lets go catch some snapper and then you go get a grouper, and that's what we're seeing here.

MR. HULL: Right on. Jack.

MR. COX: Jimmy, I'm just going to go down a couple of these four bullet points here. It says how often are gag discarded during the open season, and I'm speaking on the commercial half, and I'm going to say that we have a fair amount of discards going on of gags, of smaller gags, and so we are seeing some recruitment, which is a good thing, a lot of smaller fish. What are the reasons they are discarded during the open season, and they're undersized, would answer that question.

How often are the gags discarded during the closed season? On that bullet point, I'm going to say that not very often. You know, I love the way that we manage our shallow-water grouper complex, because, when it's closed, it's closed for all shallow-water, and so we're fishing with a smaller hook for the sea bass, if we're back inshore. With those smaller hooks, most of the time -- We may interact with a few of the juvenile fish, but that's about it, and not very often, and we're using smaller bait.

On the third bullet point, do you encounter gag as a bycatch when fishing for other species, sometimes, if you're fishing for the snappers or something, you will catch a few of those, but that's okay, because usually the season is open as well for commercial, and we don't have a problem with the discards on that.

How feasible is it to avoid gags and other shallow-water groupers during the closed season? It's easy. We just use our tackle and scale back and smaller baits, if we're back inshore, and, like I said, here in North Carolina, we're basically just fishing for the sea bass. That's my comments on that, and thank you, again, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Those are great comments. Thank you, and I concur with most all of that. In northeast Florida, we fish very similar to everyone north of us, and we have -- We mostly target vermilion and triggerfish, and, lately, since we are seeing a few more gags, some gag targeting, also. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thanks, Jimmy. After bringing up the point of discards, and maybe seeing a few more undersized fish, I have to ask the question of what is the perception of the efficacy of the descending devices? One, just overall, are they being used, are they working, and are they beating the sharks? I don't participate in the commercial gag fishery, and most of my experience is in relatively shallow water, and so I can't really comment on the descending device, but I would like to hear some feedback, something that has been kicked around.

MR. HULL: Well, those are great points. Obviously, descending devices are required, and hopefully, if you have it on your boat, you're using it. Jack, go ahead.

MR. COX: Jimmy, to his point, it's kind of early on to make a comment on the descending devices, because they're just getting deployed now, and so next year I think would be a great time to go back to that question, but the fish are hearty. I'm trying to remember -- Somebody walked in and interrupted me for a minute, and would you repeat that question again? It was going to the descending devices, and I wanted to speak on that, but I don't think we're feeding many sharks with -- Our gags, as small as they are, and as fast as they are, when we discard them, they shoot right back down to the bottom pretty quick. I'm not saying a few of them don't go to the sharks, and we definitely have a shark problem, but I am not seeing the sharks coming up and eating those things. Does that answer that question?

MR. HULL: I think it does. James, does that answer the question for you?

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Certainly, Jimmy, and you know I really feel like that's a spot-on representation of that species. I mean, when we do see them here, they are very hearty, and they are very fast, and so, I mean, I would like to think that the efforts that we're putting forward to give them the best chance of surviving being caught on a hook-and-line. I think that we're doing the right thing there, and I also think that it has the potential to work, and so I agree with that all the way, and so thanks for answering that.

MR. HULL: I think it was good information from both of you. I can tell you that I know a lot of people in my inlet are using descending devices, both recreationally and commercially. However, the shark depredation is serious with hooked fish, and there are some people that will give up maybe ten or fifteen fish to sharks just to try to catch their bag limit, or some fish, and so I know that -- That's personal behavior, of course, but there is quite a bit of shark depredation on hooked groupers, with the time of the fight. Cameron.

MS. RHODES: I just wanted to bring up a study that was actually recently brought to our attention, maybe a month or so ago, and that study was evaluating shark depredation and looking at the differences between depredation and seeing when a fish was ascending, and so when you were first reeling up the fish, as opposed to when that fish was released using a descending device, and it found that most depredation occurs when the fish ascends, rather than when that fish is returned to depth using a descending device, and so I can distribute that study, if that would be of interest to folks.

I think it's pretty preliminary at this point, and it was looking at a dataset with a thousand video images, and so there's definitely still room for lots of growth on this, but I would be happy to send it around to folks with concerns about shark depredation on descending device usage and things like that.

MR. HULL: Cameron, thank you for that. Yes, I would appreciate it if you would send it to the entire AP. I think it pretty much concurs with what we're seeing, I'm seeing, and it's definitely on bringing the fish in is where most of it is going to happen and not on descension. Rusty.

MR. HUDSON: Thank you, Jimmy. I would like to get you and Jack Cox, and any other commercial wholesaler, to chime in on what was your gutted size average of your black bellies, being the small gags, or females, and then they turn into the big black bellies at a certain point, usually thirty-five or forty pounds, and I'm really bothered by that thirty-pound whole weight that

they have from SEDAR 10, because I know I have had forty-five and fifty-pound gutted black bellies, and so if you and Jack could weigh-in on that, from what you have seen historically. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Well, just to briefly weigh-in on it, without going back and looking at my records, yes, I have seen lots of big black bellies, and I saw some recently. I've seen a lot more bigger animals than I have smaller animals recently. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: My point was already covered. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY: I wanted to add about the descending devices. When the gags are closed, there's just not as many sharks around during that time of the year for us here. Anyway, that's all.

MR. HULL: Thank you. Jack.

MR. COX: Rusty, following up on that, I hear what you're saying. I've got a lot of documented -- Not a lot, but I've got probably fifteen pictures of the fifty to sixty-pound gags, the black bellies, that I caught, mostly in the 1980s and the 1990s, and I don't go to that deep water like I used to, but, yes, I've got some documentation on that, if you need it, whether it's through DMF, on my certificates, or whether it's pictures. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Jack, thanks. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: I don't think that chart was showing that's the biggest that they're getting these days, but I think that was just showing that, at that age, that's the size they were, I'm hoping.

MR. HULL: We would have to go back, to that data provider, and see on the axis, why it only went out -- I think the issue of what Rusty was trying to say is that it didn't show larger fish at all, and maybe -- It's coming up here now. Total length in inches and weight relationship, and so we have the weight axis of twenty pounds, and then we have a length axis going out to beyond thirty-five inches, and it's showing that that's a twenty-pound animal. I don't know, and maybe -- I don't know whether staff or Dr. Todd could weigh-in on that question of why we're not showing larger weight of animals beyond twenty pounds, because there definitely is a lot of bigger animals. They get a lot heavier than that. We'll give you time to think about it or something, or come back to it, and I can just keep going with comments from the AP fishermen.

MS. BROUWER: Let's do that.

MR. HULL: Vincent.

MR. BONURA: I was just going to put in there that I had one boat off of Broward County in the past years that he's been targeting them, here and May and June, and he's caught quite a few fish, and his biggest one was a fifty-one-pound female fish, actually.

MR. HULL: Wow.

MR. BONURA: Yes, and that was a beautiful fish that he caught off of Broward County this year. Then, as far as bycatch, I would add that that amberjack fishery -- We catch a few in the amberjack fishery, and, in the Keys, I guess I would have to agree with James and Ritchie on -- I haven't had a whole bunch of fish that were caught there, but I haven't seen much change either in that fishery down there.

MR. HULL: Right on. Thank you for those comments. Harry, you're up.

MR. MORALES: I was just wondering if we were really dealing with what the research vessels observed, versus what the actual estimates are.

MR. HULL: You know, that is a good question. Most of those graphs, I think, are formulated from the fisheries-independent chevron trap video data, and, to get the ages, they can determine it from a length-age relationship, which is tough to do when a video -- You get the length of an animal that reaches its maximum, and I believe where that is, what, nine years, or ten years, of age, and so, after that, you're not going to be able to determine an age from just a length measurement, and they have to get biological information from an otolith and count the rings in the otolith, and so it could be that -- If that's true, and I'm just guessing, but, if that information goes along with what you just stated, if that's what they have caught, or if they're just using a length-at-age-based formula, and so those are questions, and it doesn't go back to answering, unless we know for sure how they did that, Rusty's concerns that they're not showing the larger animals. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just to clarify, the data that I was showing you came from an old assessment, and so the assessment that was concluded back in 2013, I believe, and so I would have to go back to that document and figure out where the sample came from that contributed to these data, but it's something that maybe the AP could reiterate, that these length-weight relationships need to be looked at more carefully and revised, which they will be in the upcoming assessment.

MR. HULL: Right on. I think that ought to conclude that for now. Rusty, does that satisfy your initial question?

MR. HUDSON: Sure does. Speaking about females though, I did have a forty-pound gutted one time, but that was the biggest I ever had, and so that sixty-one sounds awesome, and I had seen sixty-pound gutted, but those were rare, and usually forty-five or fifty-five-pound black bellies, and I just want to throw that out there, because we know what we were fishing for, and it was the big ones.

MR. HULL: Right on, Rusty. Thanks. Jack, go ahead.

MR. COX: Rusty, check your phone. I just sent you a picture of an eighty-pounder I caught back in the 1980s.

MR. HULL: Wow. We're going to move on, if there's nothing further on -- Do we need to take a break, quickly, Myra or AP members?

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, I was thinking it might complicate things a little bit more if we do that, and I was just going to suggest that, if folks need a break, just go ahead and take it, and certainly,

if you do need a break, Jimmy, we can carry on while you take a break. I kind of don't want to lose the momentum too much, and we only have an hour left.

MR. HULL: I agree. Let's keep moving. If you need to take a break, take it and come right back. Okay. Social and economic influences. For the commercial sector, how has the price demand for gag changed? How has demand for the charter/headboat trips targeting gag changed? Among the species you target, how important are gag to your overall business, charter or commercial? What communities are dependent on the gag fishery? Have changes in infrastructure, like docks, marinas, and fish houses, affected fishing opportunities for gag? How have fishermen and communities adapted to the changes in the gag fishery?

Let's dig into this and answer all of those at the same time, and so I'll give you a minute to think about it here, and then let's dig into this. I can tell you that, while we're waiting on some more people to chime in, I will. The price of all locally-produced domestic fish has increased in Florida, and the demand for gag is ever increasing, and the price is ever increasing. As far as charter/headboat trips targeting gag, that is -- When they catch gags on these trips, they start to target them more, obviously, because they have success, and so people see the success at the dock, and they will book more trips for gag, when they have success, and that has been on the increase in the last couple of years.

Gag, of course, would be very important, and it's a prized catch. It's a very valuable catch, and so it's very important to all sectors and communities, and all of the fishing communities could be dependent on gag, when the fish is available, and it's something that you definitely want. They're very dependent on it, when it's available.

The infrastructure, of course. We've been losing not only commercial docks, but recreational access, such as marinas, and I know that there's been proposed marinas for the recreational sector that have been denied and have been harder to develop new locations for infrastructure for both recreational and commercial, and on the commercial side in particular. There have been big losses, which, of course, affects access to the fishery and the economics of that.

How we adapted to the change, well, we answered that. We're targeting -- We're changing our gear, with smaller hooks and fishing in the upper column of the water, and we're fishing for vermilion and for triggerfish and for bass and trolling for mackerel. Luckily, there's other species that we have opportunities to partake. Cameron, go ahead.

MR. SEBASTIAN: For any of our fisheries, for the charter/headboat, which we are operating a relatively large operation, the crucial thing for us, and, as Jimmy mentioned, the grays are sort of like a prized fish. When the guys go out there and they pay \$125 for a headboat, and one of them -- Maybe just one or two guys on the whole boat happen to catch a gray, but that sends excitement through the entire boat, and so the value of the ability to be able to go out and fish and catch gray is absolutely crucial for our headboat and charterboat industry.

As things go down the road, the one thing that absolutely devastates charter/headboats is when a particular species gets shut down, and that is the most devastating thing that can occur to the charter/headboat industry, is when a particular fish or species gets shut down, because then the guys who want to go out there and fish for them -- They just don't go, period.

As far as some of the other items, the infrastructure, in our area, is becoming challenging. We've been working for like three years to get an existing dock opened up, to where we can move a majority of our vessels, and it's just a nightmare, and the reality is that a lot of the marinas in our area don't want to deal with the charter business, and that's why we're looking, and they don't want a bunch of people coming down -- They would much rather have a boat that sits there and gets moved once a month than have twenty people every three hours, or every four hours, coming down to get on boats, and so it's becoming a limiting factor in the growth of the charter/headboat industry as time moves forward, and so the grays, all the way around, commercial, charter/headboat, spear fishermen, the same thing. The guys who own their own recreational boats, although they're not the greatest at it, that's their illusion, is they want to go out and try to find grays, and, if that goes away, or if that gets taken off the market, that will affect our whole overall industry, from commercial to recreational to spearfishing and whole nine yards in our area.

MR. HULL: Good comment. Thank you. Chris.

MR. MILITELLO: I am in the marine insurance business, and, since this whole COVID thing started, I've been crazy, crazy busy, and I'm just curious, and I know we're not going to know right away, but there is a lot of people that own boats now that didn't own boats in the past. I mean, marinas down here are getting \$500 or \$700 or \$800 for a thirty-foot boat to be docked in the marina, and so I'm curious. Like I said, there's a lot more people with boats now, and so I wonder what's going to happen in the near future.

MR. HULL: Good points. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: In our area, Beaufort, South Carolina, I don't see a lot of commercial -- Not so much commercial, but charter/for-hire, targeting gags. Most of the gags that I see caught are by seasoned fishermen who know what's out there and who go out and target and catch a few and go catch something else, and they're targeting each species that they're after. Over in Hilton Head, I believe there is a good group of guys who can go out and target a trip, but just to target gags is a pretty expensive trip for someone to charter, and it seems like, with bottom fishing, they kind of hit something else.

As far as the marinas, our area is the same way. Everybody is buying a boat now, and the marinas are filling up, and I see more reluctance to charter/for-hire boats tied up to marinas. What we see around here is more leaving them for individuals or either coming to a marina and getting someone, and there's just not a lot of marinas that want a lot of that business in and out of there. To me, they should, because foot traffic equals dollars, but that's just not what I'm seeing in the Beaufort area.

MR. HULL: Right on. Thank you for those comments. David Snyder.

MR. SNYDER: In the restaurant industry, it's as prized as ever before, and it's one of the more popular fishes, period, no matter what we put on the menu, and people want it, and I don't see that stopping. Even as we introduce new species and try and push those new species, people are going to order it. Thanks.

MR. HULL: Thank you for that. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: Here in Canaveral, again, our charter guys are generally not directly targeting gag grouper at all. They're going for their king mackerels and that kind of stuff, and a lot of that is because of the sharks and the inability to actually target and catch a gag grouper. That's what I've got for that.

MR. HULL: I agree with you. It's pretty hard to target gags off of our coast, because you're going to catch red snappers, mostly, bottom fishing with a big bait, or a little bait, but so, on Item 3, guys and gals, do you feel like we have answered their questions adequately there? If not, then I think, to summarize it -- Have you got enough on that, Myra?

MS. BROUWER: I think so. I think that was a good discussion, and we can move on to management measures are next, and, if you will allow me here just a couple of minutes, I wanted to just make sure that everybody is up-to-speed on what those regulations currently are. For gag, the commercial ACL is at 347,301 pounds gutted weight, and that's 51 percent of the total ACL. For the recreational, we have 359,832 pounds gutted weight, and that's 49 percent of the total, and these catch levels were implemented fairly recently, in 2015.

For the commercial side, this current ACL includes a reduction of about 27,000 pounds, and that's to attribute for discard mortality when gag closes and other shallow-water grouper remain open. That was put in place when there was actually an accountability measure for the commercial sector, where the harvest, commercial harvest, of gag would close, and there was the potential that other shallow-water groupers would remain open. With the current assessment that's underway, that buffer there to account for that discard mortality is going to go away, because the new assessment is going to be able to adjust for those discards within the assessment model.

The trip limit for commercial is at a thousand pounds gutted weight, with a reduction to 500 pounds when 75 percent of the commercial ACL is met, and the minimum size limit for both sectors is twenty-four inches total length, and I guess -- Bag limits, one gag or black grouper within the three-grouper aggregate. Thank you for that. Back to you guys.

MR. HULL: Thanks a lot, Myra. On management measures, you need to think about the fishery and how it's being managed with the size limits that we have in place and the trip limits and the bag limits and the seasons, et cetera, and, of course, management is addressing the stock status, and, in many cases, the length that the fishery stays open.

I mean, management has to consider so many things to come up with these different criteria to make the management measures in place, and so, with all that in mind, and particularly your fishery and the shallow-water closure that we have, and the length of the fishery, I think it would be -- Think about when was the season closed in the last few years, and that would -- Recreationally, I mean, you want to keep these seasons open as long as you can. Commercially, you want to keep them open as long as you can. In some cases, some people have a different point of view, and they want to catch the fish and get it over with and move on to some other species. With all that in mind, do we have some good comment on management measures, without getting way into the weeds, because we still have a long way to go here. Jack, go ahead.

MR. COX: Jimmy, I want to reiterate that I've been in the fishery since the 1980s, and I have some concerns about the fishery, the gag fishery, and that's why I am on the call today. I was a participant -- Well, I was a participant observing the SEDAR update in 2014, and the status of the

stock was saying that we were experiencing overfishing, and there was some uncertainty on how much overfishing was occurring, but, just staying in tune with it, man, we've got some work to do here, in my area anyway, and I don't know how we're going to do it, but we've got to rebuild this fishery if we want to see -- If we want to see -- I'm not trying to get it back to what it used to be, but certainly get it to where people can have the opportunities that we've seen in the past.

With that said, I would consider moving the spawning season through May, and I think these fish need all the help they can get, and I know, with red grouper, that would kind of coincide with the measurement there, and I think we have -- If I remember right, we set an amendment that put the red grouper fishery through May, to give them a little help.

I think that, on the recreational side, we've talked about for years that we need to know how much effort there is in it, and we've talked about recreational stamps and some kind of permitting process, but we've got to get a grasp on how much take there is, how much effort there is, in the fishery. We don't have that on the recreational side.

Personally, I have always been a proponent of the SMZs, and I would love to see one in shallow water. We've got a place here that these fish come in, and they will stay in this area May through June, and they're in about thirty to fifty feet of water, like somebody had said before, and it would be a fantastic place to have a three-square-mile area of a shallow-water SMZ to protect the gags.

I have dove on that place for many years, and spear fished, and it was not uncommon to go under a ledge and see fifty or sixty or seventy-five fish, and we were catching anywhere from 600 to 800 to 1,000 pounds in a day of those fish, and you don't -- There's no way you would go there now and even catch 150 or 200 at that time of year, but I think that the council should consider -- This is a serious situation, and I think that's why we're all kind of coming together here to try and figure out ways to mitigate it and to help this fishery, and so those are my comments on it. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Jack. Tony.

MR. CONSTANT: Thanks. As far as the grouper closure right now, I would think of that as a spawning closure, and not so much a closure, and it's a management tool that was used to allow these groupers to spawn, which I think we need to keep that in place, for sure, and one thing -- When we start talking closures, you've got to look at that as a failed management.

If we can manage without having widespread closures, it means we're doing our jobs better in managing, but I totally agree with a spawning closure, and I think we need to address that towards more species as well, and so, if we kept that in place -- To go back to what Myra was going over on the graphs earlier, it showed that 50 percent of the females spawn at about twenty-five inches.

Currently, we have a size limit of twenty-four, and that means that there is some fish, some females, that are getting caught before they spawn once, and so maybe there is an issue where we need to raise the limit to twenty-five, or possibly twenty-six, inches, in order to make sure we get the 50 percent of the females, and maybe that will bump up to 65 or 70 percent of the females who actually spawn, and, if one inch, or two inches, gets that female to spawn twice in her life before she's caught, I mean, that should help the species a lot.

Being as I was -- I am more involved with recreational, and not so much in the commercial fishery, but the bycatch of the commercial does concern me, and Myra brought some numbers up a minute ago, but I think we probably ought to look at the bycatch on the commercial side a little bit. I don't know how we could help it, to decrease it, but I do think maybe that extra inch, or extra two inches, may help get more female spawning, out of the 50 percent range and to the 75 percent range.

MR. HULL: Thank you for those comments. Robert F.

MR. HADLEY: Robert Freeman, I'm sure you unmuted on this end, but we can't hear you.

MR. HULL: Let me come back to him. Let's go to David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really participate in the gag fishery a whole lot down in my neck of the woods, but, just to mirror what Jack said earlier, I think really what we need to work on, for a management tool, is figuring out how many people are actually fishing for and keeping these fish. I know we've talked about that numerous times on this AP, and we haven't really gone too far with it.

One other thing I just wanted to throw out there, and I will kind of be the bad guy with red snapper for a second, and I know a lot of people think that the red snapper, I guess, is the main culprit in maybe eating a lot of the juvenile fish or something, and I think it was -- I could be wrong, and so I might be putting a bad stab here, but I think it was Dr. Clay Porch who had said that the red snapper are still nowhere near original abundance, and, when they were, at one point in time, there was no issues with gag grouper.

He said it in reference to red grouper, I believe, but I'm sure the same could hold true, and so, if they are both in some sort of equilibrium or something like that, it shouldn't affect one another, and so there could possibly, and probably is, be something else going on with both gags and reds. I'm just kind of throwing that out there, and I don't know, like I said, 100 percent of the science behind it, but I just remember him saying something about that a little while ago, not too long ago.

MR. HULL: Thanks a lot. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: Thank you, Jimmy. I really wanted to agree with what Jack's points were on the recreational pressure and, really, accountability. I mean, when I'm on the water, as a commercial harvester, I feel like I am in the absolute minority, and I'm not seeing my peers on the water so much as I'm seeing boats with three and four motors on them, and I have to scratch my head and wonder what's going on out there. I mean, how much -- This isn't just gag specific, but we can pretend that what I'm saying is gag specific, but how much pressure is really being put on these other species when range isn't an option, and it's not a problem, especially in nice weather. It's something that we really do need to take a look at.

Back to what David was saying on the red snapper abundance, has there been, quote, unquote, better management of red snapper, to where we may be seeing those rebound a little quicker than red grouper and gag grouper, so, if we do our best job to manage those two species, maybe we'll see that equilibrium back in check in ten years or so, and, I mean, we have to kind of kick that around. I feel like red snapper has been under a little bit more of a stringent management plan than what the groupers have been, maybe in the last decade or so.

MR. HULL: No doubt. Thank you for those comments. Harry.

MR. MORALES: When I dealt with the shutdown of the red snapper, and, of course, I thought offshore fishing was coming to an end, and, now, I think Myra sent out the information in preparation for this meeting, and I had the opportunity -- I couldn't get through all 176 pages, but I found it fascinating that our research vessel was able to document the fact that, out of their chevron traps, originally, ten years ago, they would have one red snapper out of every other trap, and so 0.5 datapoint. The 2018 environment had 1,800 traps, and the snapper were 1.0, double the amount, which supports the fact that the red snapper has come back, and, in my opinion, while I thought the red snapper shutdown was draconian, it, I believe, has in fact served its purpose, and the red snapper now are bigger, and they're healthier, and I would argue they are plentiful.

The grouper, the gag fell off, and while I thought the spawning shutdown was a step, in my opinion, it's always been an inferior step, and way too small. From a management perspective, if that's what we're talking about, is managing, then I would say to you that we're not. We're not, because they aren't coming back as strong, and they're just kind of piddling along, and hopefully -- We're sort of in the hope-and-pray business, which I don't necessarily agree with.

Hilton Head fishermen will tell you to shut down the grouper and give me back the red snapper. I mean, it's a prized fish. If we're going to stick with this existing spawning, then, yes, then you're going to have to extend it into -- Take away let's say two months, and take away December, and take away May, and let's get more aggressive. I was reading, in those notes, about the recreational fishermen getting stamps or whatever, and we simply have to be more aggressive in the management, and I believe that that will then protect the future of the fishery. I'm done.

MR. HULL: Those were great comments, and a lot of people will agree with you, on many of your points. Let's try Robert Freeman again.

MR. HADLEY: I think Robert may still be having some microphone issues.

MR. HULL: Maybe he can type something in, some comments.

MR. HADLEY: Okay. Sounds good.

MR. SEBASTIAN: The point the gentleman brought up earlier about the female size and being able to reproduce at the twenty-five-inch range, to me, when I look at all the management possibilities, and how it affects overall business, once again, any closure or shutdown or an extension of a shutdown for a species, is always devastating for the charter/headboat industry, because, if you can't at least put the illusion out there that the fish are there and they can be caught, then certain individuals aren't just aren't going to go, period.

From that aspect, bumping a twenty-four-inch fish to a twenty-five-inch fish, if that's going to be a consideration of a management tool, then that would be much preferable for the recreational charter/headboat side than an extension of a shutdown, especially in May. I mean, May is a crucial time for charter/headboats, where we've got -- I mean, it's plain and simple. People who charter Gulf Stream trips wait until May. They don't charter them in March and April, because they know they can't catch grouper, and so, if they can't have the chance of at least catching some, they're

not going to charter, period, and so then that would put the whole entire start of our charter season back for those deeper trips for a whole other month, which would be financially devastating for the charter/headboat part of the business.

MR. HULL: Very good points. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I have to wonder about more extreme management options, and maybe extreme isn't the right word, but, just off the top of my head, I'm thinking, if we were to open red snapper in place of grouper, and in place of the shallow-water grouper complex, essentially, keeping the current spawning closures in place, if we alternated one year of grouper and one year of snapper, keeping recreational bag limits the same as what they are, essentially over a two-year period, you would cut the recreational bag limit in half for the grouper complex, and reintroduced a recreational harvest of the red snapper, or possibly even the commercial as well, and these species complexes won't be being targeted year in and year out, and we might get a better opportunity for a new recruitment class by giving some time off. I mean, maybe I'm getting off topic here a little bit, but I am kind of onboard with we're really not doing enough. We are in the hope-and-pray business right now, and there is plenty that needs to be done here to help these species rebound.

MR. HULL: Agreed, and, you know, the other uncontrollable factor is environmental factors, to go along with how well we can build back these stocks with the management measures, but Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: It actually scares me to even say this, but I've said it in a couple of meetings, public hearings and that stuff, but, to me, the gag grouper is in way worse shape than the red snapper ever was, and there needs to be something done, before we're in the situation where we have to close it, if it's deemed overfished by some stock assessment that -- So I'm just in favor of anything, and then something needs to be done, in my eyes.

MR. HULL: Thanks for that, Andy. That pretty much chimes in with what we've heard. Jack.

MR. COX: Jimmy, I've just got to add something here. Jimmy, enforcement is just not doing the job they used to do on the water, whether it's intercepting the boats, and the Coast Guard is doing their job pretty good offshore with the commercial guys, but I remember the days when there were two or three of the small state boats checking the guys, the smaller boats, coming in, to see what was on there and how much overharvest was going that is going underreported, and so that's a concern, to me, because we just don't see -- They're just not on their game like they used to be, and I just had to put that out there. Thank you.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Jack. Those are some really good comments from you guys. James.

MR. PASKIEWICZ: I couldn't agree more with Jack on this subject, and I hate to throw my local law enforcement under the bus on this, and I know that it's budgeting problems, and I know that it's the funds aren't available to put the men and women on the boats, or the boats aren't available, and, I mean, I have a great working relationship with the FWC here in the Florida Keys, and I get the problems that we're facing, but I really -- We do have to come back to this, that all of our management tools, and all of the rules and regulations that are in place, are meaningless without enforcement.

I mean, just absolutely meaningless, and so, I mean, I know it's not our charge to really point this stuff out, that we have to put our best foot forward for the species at-hand, but, I mean, we need help. We absolutely need help, and so, I mean, if putting our foot down and saying, hey, we would like to see more boats being pulled over and see what they have -- You know, maybe not even focus on the safety inspection, because that seems to be the norm around here. When a boat gets pulled over, it's basically for a routine safety inspection and not so much for what is being possessed on those boats. I mean, occasionally, these guys do get caught with over the limit or undersized and all that, but it's just not happening enough, and so I am really onboard with that.

MR. HULL: Right on. Those are very good points. David.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Jimmy. I completely agree with what the last two speakers just said, and one of the things that I think we have to remember is we are bound by the tools that are in our toolbelt, so to speak, through Magnuson, and so some of these ideas, while they're not necessarily bad ideas, there's only so much that we can do, through Magnuson, and one of things like raising the size limit to something where we can ensure that these fish have a couple of spawning seasons before they're harvested is a good idea, or possibly lengthening the spawning closure.

If that's what we want to do, that's fine, and I kind of feel two ways about both of those things, to be honest with you, but I get it, but we've just got to remember that there's only certain things that we can do, through Magnuson, to have an effectual change, and one of those, of course, is trying to push through with some sort of accountability for the recreational side too, which I know was brought up in the beginning, and a couple of people have echoed support about that. We just need to, I guess, keep pushing that narrative until something actually happens along that line.

MR. HULL: David, points well taken, and, of course, we have -- The AP, as a whole, in the past, has recommended to the council that they do just that on the recreational sector, that we do have some type of accountability to the -- I mean, every day, the number increases, and you heard from the people that are in the business of selling and insuring boats, and what we all see on the water is it's a huge, huge sector, and it's growing every day, and there's absolutely no limitation to selling that dream of running offshore and fishing in a boat like that, and so those are management measures that the council can make.

As far as size limits and trip limits and bag limits and seasons, those are what the council can do, and these discussions are going to come up, as the council decides to do that, and that's where we have to -- As an AP, we'll be involved in those. What else do we have here on management? The ACLs, obviously, the stock assessment that's upcoming, we're going to get a new stock status, and it's going to go through the SSC, and we're going to get new catch levels, and so that's coming.

In the meantime, what can the management do? I think we've given them something to think about, and we've been stating all along that we need accountability for the recreational side on the offshore bottom-fishing sector somehow, some type of permit, some type of tag, some type of something, so that we can try to get a handle on how much effort is there and how many fish are being caught and how many fish are being discarded and on and on. Anything else on management measures? Okay. Let's move on.

Environmental factors, ecological, habitat, have you noticed any unique effects of environmental conditions on gag? What are your observations on the timing and length of the gag spawning

season? We have already addressed some of that, and we have some thoughts on that. Have you observed pre-spawning aggregations? Have you noted any changes in aggregations? We have addressed some of this. Do you perceive that abundance of gag has changed? We have pretty much talked all about that.

What do you see now in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish and large fish? We've answered a lot of that. Has there been any shift in catch, inshore or offshore? We've answered that, also. How have sea conditions, monthly or seasonally, affected fishable days? Well, that's the weather, sea conditions, where we've seen them with weather changing. Have you observed changes in catch depth? Yes, and we've described that as deeper. Have you noticed any change in the species caught with gag over the years or seasonality? There it is, guys.

If you want to just say something else about a lot of this, which we've already answered a lot of it, but maybe you want to reemphasize some of this. I would say that we have answered a lot of this. You know, the environmental conditions on gag, a lot of people think that the water is getting warmer and that the fish are moving further north, and I personally have seen some of that, especially in the bass fishery off of the east coast of Florida, their very southern end, and so I'm going to assume that probably gags may be doing the same, and I don't know that for sure. The length of the spawning season, we discussed. Some people are in favor of extending that and making it longer. Cameron, go ahead.

MR. SEBASTIAN: I mean, I think, in everyone's history, this is the first time that pretty much the entire east coast of the United States was shut down due to COVID, and so, for a two-month period, in my view, almost nothing was brought in, and nothing was caught, and everything remained the same. It will be interesting to see, in the future, and, I mean, we're running at a guaranteed 25 percent less capacity now than we have in the past, and, until we get a handle on the global pandemic, I really don't see that -- I don't see that changing.

I think the public and the charter/headboat industry is going to be less people onboard the vessel, and we don't want to be crowded, and we don't want to be packed in, and, you know, we'll have to be able to meet those needs, and, from our end, there could very well be a large reduction in the amount of pressure from the headboat industry side of it. What we've seen is more people want to charter their own boats and do that type of thing, and so I think the COVID issue is going to have a major impact on the fishery overall. When it first came in, the commercial side just shut down totally, because there was no market, and so that's two months that, in my opinion, the oceans remained untouched, and we'll see how that plays out in the future.

MR. HULL: Points well taken, especially for the for-hire sector, a decrease in business, but I think that, on the recreational, the private rec side, people are buying boats, and they can get off there themselves, and there was probably an increase, or I know there was in my area. David Moss.

MR. MOSS: Thank you, Jimmy. Back to the environmental and ecological effects, one of the things we haven't really touched on a whole lot is like the nearshore and inshore estuarine habitat and the degradation of seagrasses and stuff like that, and what has that done to juvenile fish that use it as a nursery, and not just them, but also the forage fish, and the forage fish use it and then move offshore eventually, and they really feed those mature fish, but certainly what has that done to the juveniles as they come -- As they are inshore and they use it as a nursery? If there is no

seagrass habitat, where are they going, and what are they doing? Are they just exposed to early predation?

MR. HULL: Points well taken, indeed. You know, there's been -- We've had a lot of weather, a lot of hurricanes, and that tears up our bottom for weeks, to recover from the swell and the extra current, and so the coastal development inshore, and there's definitely some environmental factors that contribute to the success of all of these species. I think that we've answered -- Some people, up off of the Carolinas, it seems like you are seeing some recruitment inshore of smaller animals. Off of my area, no, not so much, the smaller animals, and we are seeing bigger animals. Andrew M.

MR. MAHONEY: I just wanted to ask if there was any possibility of a separate season for the for-hire and recreational sector.

MR. HULL: Well, the for-hire and the recreational are linked together under the same ACL, and I would assume that, to separate the season, that it would take something from the council to separate somehow. I don't know -- They have shown no desire to do that in the Atlantic so far, and there is separation in the Gulf, I believe, in some bottom fisheries, and so that's a really good point to make, and a good question to put out there to staff or the council.

MR. MAHONEY: Got you. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, you're exactly correct that the council would have to first split the recreational sector into the two sub-sectors, if you will, and they have not had those discussions, and so the ACL, as you said, is for the entirety of the recreational sector, private and for-hire as well.

MR. HULL: Andrew, I think that's something that you should bring up at the next -- When there is open comment on different ideas, and it's been brought up before, but it just hasn't gone anywhere, and it would be a very contentious move, I believe, for the private recreational sector to split out the for-hire. However, being a for-hire guy myself, I would love to have a separate quota to fish off of. Is there anything else on this environmental, ecological, and habitat? Robert.

MR. LORENZ: Just to the last comment, and I don't know if there's -- Separating of the sectors within the recreational area, I know, for myself, that's one of the reasons that I have kind of been pushing all these years, the whole time I've been on this AP, for registration, and I say it every time, and -- No area needs it more than the South Atlantic, to account at least for who we are, because, yes, you're getting to this fairness aspect of the recreational fishermen, the private, and not knowing who we are or where we're going or what we're catching, and we're increasing looking at what's going on in the commercial industry and the for-hire.

I can more than sympathize with the for-hire industry to want to have their own ACL, and that I see more likely than a separate season, but you were right, Jimmy, in your comment that it would probably be very contentious in the recreational sector, and probably scorned by a lot of the NGOs that are going to come right out against that initially, and so I was just wondering if Dick Brame was still on the call and might want to make a comment or weigh-in on that, because that's never very popular. I think you need to push more for the licensing first of the recreational sector before

the sector separation, but I can see why the for-hire would like to do that. I was just wondering if anybody from the NGO community --

MR. HULL: Any ideas on that from the NGO representative, or anyone?

MS. BROUWER: Jimmy, I see that Dick is on the line. Dick, did you want to address that?

MR. BRAME: Well, I mean, it certainly is very contentious. You're talking about the sector separation?

MS. BROUWER: Yes.

MR. BRAME: I can understand why those in the for-hire community would like to see it, but it's a very contentious issue, and there's a lot of bad feelings in the Gulf that are still there.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thank you for that, Dick. I appreciate it. I think that we've pretty much gone through this pretty good on the Item 5, the Environmental, Ecological, and Habitat discussion and recommendations. Let's move on. I also saw -- Let's get through Item 6, and then I think Dr. Kellison may have some further information for us. Andrew M, you're up.

MR. MAHONEY: I just wanted to say that -- I'm not in the for-hire sector, but it seems like a smart thing for me, and that's all.

MR. HULL: Okay. Let's move on to, I believe, the last item, which is Other, and is there anything else -- We've discussed a lot here, but is there anything else important for the council to know about gag, and are the current monitoring efforts, the trap index and catch estimates, sufficiently monitoring the stock? Let's dig into these two, real quick, and I will wait until somebody gets up, and I will talk until then.

I think that the council needs all the information they can get about gag, about every fishery, to make great decisions for management, and, as far as the current monitoring efforts, from my point of view, obviously, the fisheries-independent trap index has been long-running, and it's what we have, and it has a video camera attached to it, and so it's something that is very, very important, and we need it to continue, but I think we also need a fisheries-independent hook-and-line survey, sampling the fishery the same way that we fish for these animals.

You know, if we had a hook-and-line index, fisheries-independent, that could actually be done cooperatively with fishermen, whether it be vertical lines or a long-line survey, we would have a whole better picture of what's going on, not only with gags, but every other snapper grouper species, and so that would be my comment, that, no, it's not sufficient, and we need to continue with the trap index, and the video, and enhance it, but we also need to add a hook-and-line survey, and my recommendation would be a longline survey, ongoing, year-round, across the entire region, so that we could get a better picture of what's going on here. I believe that's going to be Dick Brame, please.

MR. BRAME: I couldn't agree with you more, Jimmy. In order to reliably manage a recreational fishery, you have got to have some index of abundance, annually, because the recreational fishermen are fishing on the stock as it exists today, and not how it's projected to be, and so I agree

that this probably the most important question, to me, in this whole exercise, to get across to the council, is we need some reliable estimate, annual estimate, of abundance for the important recreational species, and not just gag, and not for all of them, but I'm talking about the top-ten or twelve, but you can't manage a recreational fishery without knowing what's going on with the stock, very well.

MR. HULL: Right on. Thank you. Andy Fish.

MR. FISH: As far as like all the information from our logbooks that we fill out on the commercial side, and we enter our longitude and latitude and our hours fished and our amount of hooks and our dive time and all that stuff, and is any of that stuff, all the data, collaborated and put into any -- As part of these assessments? I mean, I know it's our ongoing catch, but shouldn't that be put into some kind of graph of some sort and trended, in the same sort of way, instead of these -- Or in coincidence with these stock assessments? What I'm questioning is, is all that put into data, and is that taken and scientifically analyzed, I guess, and I don't know.

MR. HULL: Andy, I know that staff will chime in here, but, yes, it is, but it is -- They take your landings data from your logbooks, and it's calculated, and it's graphed, and the poundage -- You saw some of that already, and then, if it's intercepted -- If you get an intercept, and your fish are sampled, then that information from the sample also goes into that, and that, of course, is going to be your fisheries-dependent data, but, yes, your logbook and all of that stuff is recorded, and it's used in the assessment. Myra, do you have anything to add to that?

MS. BROUWER: Not really, Jimmy. You've covered it, and I just wanted to reassure Andy that, yes, all those data are included, and the analysts spend months and months selecting what data are going to be included in the model and discussing how to optimize the information to go into these assessment models, and so it's a very lengthy process, and fishermen are involved. If you're interested in finding out more about it, Kathleen Howington is the SEDAR Coordinator for the South Atlantic, and you can chat with her, and there's also plenty of information on the SEDAR website, as far as how all of this is conducted, but we can talk about that more offline.

MR. FISH: Thank you.

MR. HULL: Just one more comment on that. You know, the more that you can have your catch observed, rather than just a self-reported data, the more valuable it is, and so, I mean, if you can get a port sampler to sample your catch, that information is really weighed heavily, and it has more weight, than the self-reported information. Cameron.

MR. SEBASTIAN: As far as the monitoring effort goes, and I could be totally wrong on this, but it seems like we're dropping giant traps, and I know, when we used to trap for sea bass, you toss a trap and, hey, if it hits near the area you're wanting to target, awesome, but, a lot of times, it's off-track, and, as I know from seeing it underwater, I mean, if you're off by twenty or thirty or fifty or a hundred feet, you're not going to see anything at all, period.

I would think that an investment in the monitoring techniques that they're using could be greatly enhanced by remotely-operated vehicles that go straight down a live-bottom area, or straight down a ledge, and that, to me, is the real -- It's really the only true way that you're going to ever get an accurate idea of what's really going on. Other than that, we're pretty much putting on a blindfold

and throwing darts at a wall and hoping that we get pretty close, and then they're making dramatic decisions that affect everyone here's livelihood and things of that nature, and so the monitoring effort should be able to take the next step up, with the technology they now have in cameras and remotely-operated vehicles and GPS systems, and you should be able to see exactly what's down there, if the effort is put into it and the money is put into it.

MR. HULL: Thank you. I think we can all agree with that, every bit of it. Bob Lorenz.

MR. LORENZ: I just want to present just one little bit of information and something that happened with me about two weeks ago, and it's with respect to the need for ongoing monitoring, and particularly of the recreational fishermen and fisheries. I was asked -- It was a National Academy of Science -- Actually, one of the participants on it that we all know was Michelle Duval, who was our chairwoman for the SAFMC prior to her leaving to move to Pennsylvania.

I was asked to be sort of a guest person speaking, with respect to how useful MRIP is for monitoring our catch. Their focus was for species that require inline monitoring, perhaps due to an ACL, where it would impact the fishery in-season, but I think it has some validity here, at least for an idea with what we're discussing, and that is how to have ongoing information on what catch and effort is. I can talk to anybody offline about this, but one of the ideas that I thought up was, you know, a lot of us say that MRIP is inaccurate, but that is where your port sampling will come from, and, as I stated, I think it's mainly due to there just isn't enough sampling going on.

I asked them to consider an index, and I know we've talked about what kind of tools, and there would be a couple of things, where you would -- You might -- The recreational fishermen, for the time being, since we can't seem to get a license or a stamp out there, would be for us to have a way of weighting what happens on MyFishCount, and, there, you have voluntary recording of what's going on, and then, in addition, we would have things like MRIP going on, which would be from the port sampling. Then, in addition, if we could ever get some kind of registration or a reporting at least of the most critical species by the recreational sector with a license, and that would be the third component.

Right now, we're relying a lot on MRIP for the recreational sector, and it's not rugged enough, and they are looking for ways to strengthen that. One of the other things I have thought is maybe blend in a portion of what we have now as some kind of voluntary reporting of MyFishCount, and so I just wanted to toss that out to everybody, and anybody that is familiar with the charter or headboats or private recreational fishermen, and I would be willing to discuss that more, but I was given an opportunity for a pretty lengthy discussion, about two weeks ago. For twenty minutes, I was allowed to present. Thank you.

MR. HULL: That's wonderful, Bob. Thank you. I think we can all agree with all of that, and I think we're running short on time, and so I'm going to hand it over to Myra. Go ahead.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jimmy. I just wanted to clarify one thing and then give you all an update, and the clarification was just going to be that the trap index does in fact include a video index as well, and so the traps are fitted with cameras, and that is to verify, because there is a certain uncertainty, I guess, that results from whether certain kinds of fish are actually going to willingly go into a trap. The things that Cameron had brought up, that there is additional changes

that are being done to some of these scientific surveys, to improve and validate the information they're providing.

Besides that, one thing that I wanted to just give you an update on is the council is going to be holding a special session in November, after you guys meet on November 4 through 6, and they are going to be meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> to specifically talk about management, recreational management, and so they're going to be talking about MyFishCount, and they're going to be talking about the things that had, at one point, been proposed under Amendment 46, which was some kind of endorsement or a permit or a stamp, things that the AP has been bringing up to the council for a number of years.

They're also going to be talking about possible changes to accountability measures, and so there's going to be a whole session of the council that is going to be talking only about recreational management, and that's coming up in November, and so I'm going to keep you guys updated on that. As usual, the council meetings are public, and so AP members can sign onto the webinar and listen in on those discussions.

Besides that, if you will allow me, Mr. Chairman, to keep going, I just wanted to remind everybody that we do have that meeting in November coming up. When the council met last week, they went over items for the agenda for you guys to discuss in November, and so I will be sending out a preliminary agenda with information about the webinar, kind of like I did for this one, and so that's going to be coming your way, and then we'll have plenty more time to discuss many other aspects of the snapper grouper fishery, and so be thinking about things that you want to bring up. We always have a lengthy Other Business session during our Snapper Grouper AP meetings, which is great, and then I'll just be sending out a preliminary agenda in the next few weeks. Back to you, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Myra. You guys, thank you for your participation in this. You really did a good job, and I think we provided a -- When Myra gets done compiling all of this, we're going to have a great product for the council. I'm very proud of you all, and thank you very, very much. I appreciate it. Back to you, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jimmy. What's going to happen with this report is I will get the recording, and this webinar has been recorded, and so I'll go through it all and compile it into a document that I hope to have ready for the analysts that are going to be undertaking the assessment for the gag stock sometime at the end of October, and so I'll be sending out a draft for review in the next few weeks, again, when I put it all into writing, and that will be coming your way, but thank you all so much.

It was a great turnout, and I really appreciate those of you who were just given two days' notice that this was happening, and thank you for making time to do this, and, again, I'm really sorry that we're not in-person, which I really look forward to our AP meetings, and so I miss you all, and thank you so much.

MR. HULL: Right on, and, again, be on the lookout, because we're going to have another webinar on November 4 through 6. Is that correct, Myra?

MS. BROUWER: That is correct.

MR. HULL: Okay. Be on the lookout, guys, and so, if Myra says it's over, I am going to hit the gavel here, and we're done.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 24, 2020.)

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Transcribed By  
Amanda Thomas  
January 11, 2021

# Snapper Grouper Advisory

## Attendee Report: Panel Meeting

Report Generated:

09/24/2020 01:38 PM EDT

**Webinar ID**

723-607-563

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