

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION III

Webinar

December 10, 2020

TRANSCRIPT

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Other observers and participants attached.

The Full Council of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened via webinar on Thursday, December 10, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Mel Bell.

MR. BELL: If we can go ahead and shift whatever we need to to put us in Full Council, and we will be in Full Council Session III, and that will take us home. All right. I will start us off here, and so first would be Approval of the Agenda. Are there any necessary changes to the agenda or additions? Seeing no hands, then the agenda stands as written and is approved.

The next item is Approval of Minutes, and that would be from I guess the last -- We have so many council sessions now, and any changes, necessary changes, to the minutes? I don't see any hands, and so we'll consider the minutes approved from the last meeting. That takes us to the first agenda item, the Council Staff Reports. John, I guess you're up first.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Mel. I just wanted to make a few comments on how our operations have been going for the last few months. As we suggested, after September, we went into a really busy time in October and November, and there were a lot of SSC meetings and AP meetings and workgroup meetings, and it's just really been a busy time. I mentioned, during the Executive Committee this morning, we've had the busiest year the council has ever had, measured by the number of Federal Register notices we've submitted and the number of briefing books that we have prepared. We're up about 30 percent, from say operations in 2017, and it's been ramping up every year, and nothing slowed down one bit this year, which is quite astounding, given the impact of COVID.

I think the reality is, if staff had spent as much time on the road and traveling as they normally do, we probably would not have gotten as much done this year as we did, and so that's sort of the flip side of not traveling, and it certainly makes meetings like this more difficult, but it will be something that we'll be thinking about, when it comes to some of the shorter meetings in particular, next year and thinking about more of a balance between some remote meetings and in-person meetings and that sort of thing.

As we look ahead to the next quarter, I think we're all aware of the COVID situation around the country, and certainly in the Southeast, and we'll need to be thinking about the March meeting, which looks to be likely a webinar meeting, unless things greatly change, and we're looking to NMFS, which is certainly an influence in what we end up doing ourselves. We are planning, likely, to have meetings, certainly in the first quarter, of any AP or any SSC activity, will be remotely, going into the first quarter of next year.

It has affected stuff, as most folks know, and we normally get together as a staff and have a holiday party the week after this meeting, and, due to COVID, we're just not able to do that, and staff recognizes that we're out of the office, and we're out of things like that, and it really has an impact, I think as all you guys realize, and I think it's been a really incredible year, and who would have thought it, but here we are, and I just wanted to say, at the end of the year, that in my first year coming on Executive Director, I never could have imagined it would have been handled like this, but, you know, hats-off to the staff.

The council staff has just done an amazing job in a record-setting year, and we can't thank them enough for all that they've done, and we certainly appreciate all the support of the council and the kind words you all have had for our staff and recognizing the hard work that they're doing, and

so, with that, unless there's questions -- Speaking of hard work, we can hand it off, and we're start hearing about some of the other hard work that's been underway from Brian and Myra.

MR. BELL: Okay. Any questions for John? John, welcome to your first year, and you're probably wondering what you walked into, related to everything going on, but certainly nobody planned any of this. If there are no questions for John, then we can go right to the next item, which would be the Allocation Tool Development Update and Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you all remember, we came to you in September, and we brought to you the idea of how we were looking at using decision trees as a potential tool for you to use to help make some allocation decisions, and so we took all the information that you gave us, the feedback and everything, and we developed a workplan, with some terms of reference, and so we now have -- To help us drive and decide how this whole process is going to work, and we put together a workgroup that is going to be the core membership to put this together, and I was a part of that, and I will be until the end of next week, but then it also includes John Hadley, Christina Wiegand, Mike Schmidtke, and Scott Crosson from the Science Center.

There is four terms of reference, and they kind of go in step-wise order, and the first term of reference is going to be to -- It will be completed by the March 21 council meeting, and what the plan is for that is, by then, is that -- If you will recall, there were five decision trees that were going to be developed, and those five decision trees, and this is going to be a good test for me, and that would be stock assessments, landings, biological and ecological issues, economic, and social science issues.

They are going to develop the questions and then determine the order and the branching of each of those questions, as well as they were going to write a description of the decision tree approach and then how to use the decision trees, and then, based on some of the discussion that you all had, they were going to -- There was some concern that potentially the -- How the decision trees might be used might be a little too prescriptive, and one of the things we wanted to point out was that -- Remember that this is just one tool in the toolbox that you all could use, and the idea was not that this was going to be prescriptive, nor was it going to tell you exactly what to do or how to do allocations, but the point was it's going to help you maybe figure out the kinds of things that you might want to focus on when thinking about allocations for a given species.

Anyway, we wanted to revisit the notion of how to weight the results of the decision trees once you've gotten through all five of them, and so that is going to be looked at, all before the March council meeting, and so there is things that are well underway already to prepare for that. In March, you will get an update again, and one of the things that is of concern, of course, is that the timing -- The schedule for this is fairly ambitious.

Right now, we think that there's a good possibility that this is going to happen, but one of the concerns is that, in Terms of Reference 2, there is going to be a period of review, and what we wanted to do is to get SERO and the Science Center both to review the progress on the development of those decision trees and get input, as well as the SSC and the SEP, and both of them will be meeting in the spring, and we also wanted to get input from the APs, particularly from the Dolphin Wahoo, Snapper Grouper, and the CMP APs, and not all of them will be meeting in the spring, and we thought that it might be difficult to get the entire APs to weigh-in, specifically on those things, and so one of the things that's under consideration is perhaps having a joint meeting with

the Chairs and the Vice Chairs of those APs and going over the decision trees and the process and everything with them and getting input.

Those reviews will consist largely of looking at the questions and the branching logic and the completeness of the issues covered by those decision trees, and then the recommendations that those groups would provide would be included in modifying the decision trees.

The third terms of reference would then be to beta test the decision trees with the council, at the June council meeting, or at least that's the plan right now, and the thought might be that it would be a good idea, perhaps, to have SERO and the Science Center review the whole thing again once the council has looked at it, so they could see what would be, perhaps, a more complete product, and just to have them weigh-in and give additional advice, and, of course, the council gets the final say.

The Term of Reference 4 then would be, after the council has weighed-in and we have gotten some additional feedback on the full process from NMFS, is to -- A blueprint document then would be put together that would then be closer to a final document that describes all the allocation decision tree approach and how it would be applied, and that would be presented to the council in September of 2021, and so that would be presented to the council, and the council could give final input on what they thought about that and how they wanted to use it and apply it.

Again, remember that this is just a tool in the toolbox, to help you figure out how you're going to, or perhaps want to, apply this in making allocation decisions for the future, and remember this is not going to tell you X amount goes to the recreational sector and Y amount goes to the commercial sector for a given species, and the idea is to help you focus and narrow down on what are the individual factors that you might want to consider that are the salient for a given species and what aspects of those factors are the things that you might want to hone-in on.

Anyway, that's where we're standing with that, and you'll get another update in March, and, by that point, the decision trees themselves ought to be well underway. I can tell you that this project is in really good hands with this group who is leading the development of all this, and we've had some good discussions up to this point, and I think it's going to be very successful from here on out.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, Brian, and I know you're handing it off to good people, but we certainly appreciate all of your hard work and leadership and getting this to this point where you can hand it off. Are there any questions for Brian right now? I don't see any hands. Okay. No hands. All right. Well, thank you, Brian, and we'll shift to the next item, which would be a Climate Change Scenario Planning Update from Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Mel. I just have some notes to share with you, and I don't have any visuals, and so sorry, but just a little bit more talking, and so bear with us. The Northeast Region Coordinating Council, the NRCC, discussed this scenario planning at their meeting that they had at the beginning of November, and so I will just summarize some key points from the discussion, which I myself did not listen-in on, and so this is being summarized from notes that were kindly sent to me from Mid-Atlantic Council staff.

It looks like all the groups agreed to participate, and it was noted that the South Atlantic Council was very interested in participating, and this was supported by the group. The Nature Conservancy has received funding towards this project from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and those funds are going to go through the commission. It looks like there were still some concerns expressed about the councils accepting money outside of their grants, and so some folks felt that having the commission handle the money would address those concerns, but there was still a request to double-check with NOAA GC on that issue.

The TNC funding is intended to be used for hiring a facilitator, hosting workshops, paying for invitational travel and some other miscellaneous expenses of the project. It looks like the NRCC is going to serve as the steering committee for this project, and there was some concern about the frequency of meetings that it's going to require, but it looks like that's just how they agreed to proceed, at least for now, and it was noted that the South Atlantic should probably be represented, at least on any relevant discussions, and they raised the possibility of NRCC sub-committees, but they didn't opt to do that at this point.

Recall that, in my previous summaries, I told you about this scenario planning working group, and I sat in on that working group for a couple of their meetings, and we came up with recommendations that were passed on to the NRCC, and that group had recommended that an ad hoc committee be formed. The NRCC was not inclined to form one at this point, given the additional resources it would require and complications to the governance structure, and so they opted to leave that be for now.

There is going to be a core team that will be formed along the lines of our recommendation for a smaller group of technical staff from each organization, and details on how that team is going to be formed are still being fleshed out, but it sounded like each group was going to appoint a representative or two, and, from our staff, Roger is going to be taking this on, moving forward, and so, once the core team is formed, we are going to start to look at a more specific plan and timeline and work on identifying the goals and key questions for the project. We'll help with maybe hiring the facilitator and then likely plan for some kind of a scoping process. Mel, that's my summary for now. Are there any questions?

MR. BELL: Any questions for Myra about that? I'm glad that we're staying plugged into this, and, gosh, I don't know how many meetings ago that was, where we kind of tried to pull folks together to talk about working together in this area, and then things sort of got underway, but I'm glad that we're plugged in. Any questions? No hands. Myra, did you want to mention the workshop on Friday?

MS. BROUWER: Sure. We have not been involved in planning that, and so my understanding is this is entirely being driven by Pew, and it's going to take place on December 18, and I believe it's in the morning, and I don't have my calendar in front of me, but that will be a really good way for folks to become more informed as to what scenario planning is, and, sorry, Mel, but I have not yet seen an agenda for that workshop, but it would be really informative, if people have time for yet another webinar, and that would be great. Thanks for bringing that up.

MR. BELL: We'll make sure that everybody has got the agenda and all, and I think they were in an email notifying, but that would be good, if you want to kind of get your head in the game a little bit on this stuff, and that is a Pew effort. Thanks. Okay. Any other questions right now? I don't

see any hands. Then we have Item 2. Genny, are you -- This says SSC Recommendations on Items Not Already Covered, if needed. I am not sure if we decided that it was needed or if Genny is here.

DR. NESSLAGE: I am here. There is just one little thing that I wanted to bring to the council's attention, and do we have time for that?

MR. BELL: Yes, ma'am. Please.

DR. NESSLAGE: Thank you. I just wanted to let the council know that a small group of us have gotten together, and, really, it's our Executive Committee, the current chair, vice chair, and former chair, along with Chip and Mike and Steve Poland and one other SSC member, and we've gotten together to see if we can brainstorm some ways to improve efficiency of our meetings.

We really do need to be able to increase our throughput, given we have pretty packed agendas, and, as the council knows, there's a lot of important issues coming down the pike here, and so what we're planning to do was reach out to some of the other SSCs around the country, to see how they handle some of the things that we've choked on recently, or hiccupped on, I should say, including how to handle disagreements about working group reports and their wording and things like how to more efficiently come up with consensus statements that the group can agree upon and things like that, and make the most efficient use of our webinar and in-person meeting time, when that's allowed again.

We hope to come up with some recommendations, and we've already come up with a few ideas that we're hoping to try to implement, and, at our upcoming meeting in January, we'll see how that goes and continue to revise and improve, as we move along, and I don't know, Chip, if we need formal approval to continue, or to really get into that work, from the council, or if we can just get your general blessing, but we hope to be able to address all of your concerns a little bit more efficiently if we do this. Thank you.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Genny. Go ahead, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I don't think there needs to be an official recommendation, but we just want to make sure that the council is aware that this workgroup -- That the SSC has this workgroup going on in the background, and I see Steve is there, and he can provide additional details.

MR. BELL: Go ahead, Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Mel, and thank you for that, Genny. The meeting we had last week was very productive, I felt like, and I wanted to raise this issue during the Executive Committee, when we were looking at our workplan, because there were a few things, out of our conversation last week, that I felt like the council needed to hear.

Certainly, like Genny said, there's frustration among the SSC, and not necessarily on workload, but not being able to throughput, as she put it, everything that we ask of them, and so this is an effort on their part to figure out how the SSC can operate more efficiently and make sure that they provide us with the scientific advice on everything that we ask of them, and I wanted to bring this up during the discussion on workflow and kind of long-term planning, so that we're all aware of

that, and cognizant of that, when we're tasking the SSC with certain things, and there are a few examples throughout the meeting this week.

When Genny was giving the SSC perspective on a few items, where she said that they just didn't have enough time to address certain issues, or all of the issues, related to an item, and so I just wanted to make sure that we as the council acknowledge that and keep that in mind as we ask things of the SSC.

Also, there was some discussion about confusion among the SSC, as far as what the council was prioritizing, as far as everything, and I think, at the last meeting, they spent a little bit more time on certain items, as opposed to others, and it just wasn't communicated from the council kind of what we felt like we needed, and so I also wanted to make the council aware of that, and I hope we can try, in the future, to communicate a little bit better with the SSC, and me as the liaison, and I could certainly be that voice for the SSC, but I just want to make sure that that comes up during our regular council discussions on items, and so I can better communicate that to the SSC, and so those were two things that I wanted to raise, Mel.

MR. BELL: Okay. Well, thanks, Steve, and thanks, Genny, and, yes, indeed we ask much of you, and we do rely upon your ability to throughput efficiently, but we can certainly improve the ways in which we communicate and task you guys, and anything we can do to help work together to make the whole system run smoother is certainly desired, and so thank you for all you do, and we'll definitely work on that. Okay. The next item I have is the Outreach and Communications AP Report, which will be Scott Baker, if Scott is onboard.

MR. POLAND: Mel, I think Chip had his hand up.

MR. BELL: I'm sorry. I didn't look at my screen. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: It's quite all right. As they're bringing that report up, and Scott is getting ready, what I will do is just make sure that staff is doing a better job of communicating with council leadership, as well as the council liaison, to communicate what they feel is most appropriate. That way, you guys don't have to really bog down the Full Council meeting, and we can just talk with a subset of you guys, to make sure you're okay with the order of the SSC agenda, thinking that the most important items will come first, if it matches up with the presenters' schedules.

MR. BELL: That's fine, Chip, and the point is that we need to just somehow communicate clearly what the priorities are and what we expect, and, when we ask things of them, just make sure they understand exactly what we're asking, and so that's one way to do that, for sure. Thanks. Okay. All right. Are we queued up for Scott?

MR. BAKER: I'm here.

MR. BELL: Proceed when ready.

MR. BAKER: Great. Thanks for having me. I will just provide a quick update of our Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel meeting that we had back in October via webinar, and that was led by Cameron. We had sixteen members of the panel attend.

We talked about several different things, many of which I will skip over, because you have already talked about them a little bit, like the Citizen Science Program and things like that, but the first thing we talked about was the best fishing practices campaign. We essentially went through a lot of the materials that staff had put together with regard to Regulatory Amendment 29 for snapper grouper, particularly the web page and the outreach strategy and the distribution channels for that information.

In general, I think everybody that attended was very happy with the work that the staff had done with regard to that, particularly with the information on social media and the information in tackle shops. A lot of the AP members commented on the collaborations between the state and federal agencies, which is great, and the positive feedback and support for stakeholders, and it's certainly an initiative, I think, that the industry can get behind.

Some of the AP members did recommend that, if we have to, if we have the ability to, in the future, of course, to go back to at least having some in-person seminars, or in-person meetings, with folks. We did spend quite a bit of time on the Citizen Science Program, with Julia and Allie, but a lot of that was already discussed, and so, for brevity, I will skip over that.

I will say that one of the things that came out of the discussion with the Citizen Science thing was that it seemed to be the use of fish pictures were pretty consistent across a lot of our discussions, and that the use of pictures, while simple, really seemed to engage people, and particularly when there were efforts to look at fish pictures with identification quizzes and things like that, and that type of thing really seemed to engage people and bring people to the content.

I guess I'm kind of over-speaking to what I just said with regard to the Citizen Social media strategy, and Allie talked about that, and Julia talked about that previously, but the staff has been really great in trying some new templates to use for social media. By and large, all of those measures tended to increase engagement, following the introduction of the branded posts, and, again, especially related to fish identification, and so, if there's one avenue to get more people engaged with what the council is doing, it might be through something as simple as fish identification, and I think we all know how successful FISHstory has been.

With regard to the social media strategy, there were some comments that, on every email communication that the council puts out, if there was a way to make it easily shareable, via social media, and we also looked at -- We had a lively discussion about using videos within Facebook, as opposed to YouTube, and apparently there's a bunch of different algorithms and things like that, and all that gobbledygook that happens behind the scenes that probably none of us have a very good handle on, but, apparently, it's very important how things get shown and what doesn't get shown.

On to MyFishCount, and we heard a brief update on that. Again, one of the things that kind of came back towards participation was, again, the use of fish pictures and how anglers might be able to participate, because they might be able to share their information.

Moving on to Item 4, we learned about the commercial Fish Rules app, and that is scheduled for beta testing by the end of this year, and it should be available in the spring. Some AP members commented that that should be very helpful, particularly for the commercial fishermen in the Florida Keys, which have to navigate between opposing council regulations.

We heard a brief update about the for-hire electronic reporting outreach strategy and the informational toolkits that will be developed. There was lively participation from the state agencies and wanting to help to get the word out on the feds behalf, and we also had kind of a slew of member updates, and I think this is something that Cameron had started, and we had some updates prior to the meeting and during the meeting.

I will just highlight one that I found really interesting, which is the Georgia Department of Natural Resources typically hosts a multiday large outdoor event called CoastFest, and, due to COVID-19, they decided to move this completely online, and so they had nine livestream events over a three-day period to showcase Georgia's marine resources, and they did a lot of livestreams over Facebook and YouTube, and, by all accounts, it sounded very successful.

Moving on, I was elected again as Chair, and Shelley Krueger was elected as Vice Chair, and, finally, we had a little bit of discussion about the Sea Grant and National Marine Fisheries collaboration on the red snapper research projects and the greater amberjack research and visioning project, and that concludes my report, and I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

MR. BELL: All right. Well, thank you, Scott. I appreciate it, and I appreciate you serving as the chair again and all of you all's contribution. We were talking, recently, about the things that go on in the world of outreach and communication, and, honestly, you guys are kind of the -- I call it the pointy end of the spear for our message to get out and be able to communicate with the people that the things that we're dealing with impact, and so, I mean, we couldn't do what we need to do without you guys, and so we really appreciate that. Any questions for Scott about anything in the report? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Not for Scott, but it's outreach related, and so I will wait a second.

MR. BELL: Okay. Any questions? Okay. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: During the lunch break, I ran to the dock, because I had to run an errand to Mark, and he was all excited, because he had just told me that a NOAA officer, I assume a NOAA Law Enforcement officer, had just been down there, and, yes, he was excited about it, and he had, according to Mark, typed some numbers in his phone, and, all of a sudden, now, magically, he will get text messages that are basically what sounds to me like the NOAA -- Like the blue papers, the trifold blue papers, that we used to get, and I forget what it's called, but like update bulletins when we have closures and certain regulations go into effect.

Maybe we've been sleeping and we missed it, and you all know about this, and you're rolling your eyes, because it's old news, but, on the off chance that it's not old news, it was really exciting for us, and really helpful, specifically because I know now that a lot of boats are able to get text messages, and not necessarily have the data plans that provide emails, but text messages are easy, and so to get that kind of information over text was really interesting, and I just wanted to see if we were just way behind the times or this is something that's really new and exciting that we can let people know about that NOAA is doing.

MR. BELL: All right. Cameron, did you want to weigh-in on that?

MS. RHODES: Yes. Thanks, Mel. Kerry, that's something that's been around for a couple of years now, and I can't remember exactly when that was implemented, but they do offer those text message updates, which showcase information that's provided through their traditional Fishery Bulletins, and so that's been going on for a bit. Kim might remember when exactly that was implemented, but I know it has been around for a number of years at this point, but it is a really great function, and it's a really nice thing to be able to access from your cellphone.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, I feel stupid, but thank you. I'm just glad that it's out there and getting used, because it is really helpful.

MR. BELL: You're not stupid by any means. I can't keep up with this stuff myself. Steve.

MR. POLAND: You're not stupid at all. I was not aware of it, and so I would like to know how to sign up for it.

MR. BELL: All right. See? There you go. This technology is great, and, I mean, we do have the ability to reach out in so many different ways now, and I'm so glad we have folks on staff that know how to do all of this stuff, because I sure have no clue sometimes. Rick.

MR. DEVICTOR: I can send around how to sign up, and I think Cameron maybe touched upon this, but we do have how to sign up for text message alerts at the -- We try to put it at the end of most bulletins we send around, but I will send that out.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Rick. Cameron, did you want to add something?

MS. RHODES: No, and I was just going to say what Rick just said there, that you can access all of that information at the bottom of the bulletins.

MR. BELL: All right. Okay. Anything else on this item? Scott, thanks for the report. I don't see any other hands, and so that will take us to Item 4, the SEDAR Steering Committee Report. Chip, are you going to handle that?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, sir, I am. Page 4 is the start of the meeting summary, and it provides a really brief outcome of what occurred at the meeting, and we're lucky enough to have three of the people that were at the meeting, including the Chairman and Clay Porch, as well as John Carmichael and Mel Bell, and they were all in attendance at the meeting, and Steve Poland was there as well.

The first thing that they really went over was the SEDAR process, and this is changing from -- They were talking about the change from the update, standard, and benchmark assessment approach to the new operational and research track assessment approach. The research track has really been worked on in great detail, figuring out how to do that, but there's not a lot of great detail on the operational assessments, and so Julie has gone around and talked to the different councils, as well as SSCs, to let them know exactly what is coming and what's been proposed for these operational-style assessments and also what these topical working groups are going to entail.

One thing that the Steering Committee requested was the Julie provide them a guidance document in the spring of 2021. One thing that they want to make sure that is in this guidance document is

they're going to be able to include and figure out how the public is going to be able to be involved in the process and make sure that everything is transparent.

The next item that they talked about was the SEDAR projects and schedule, and I want to skip that just for a second, because there's been an update to this since the end of the meeting, and the Science Center came back and provided some responses to some questions that occurred at the meeting, and that's provided in the Attachment FC3 A2a, I think is what it was, and so, if you scroll down to Other Business, which is about halfway down the other page.

Under Other Topics, you can see that there is a procedural workshop proposal, and we haven't been able to do -- SEDAR hasn't been able to do many procedural workshops in the past, due to potential budget constraints, and, luckily, we're going to have some funds from last year and not traveling, and that could be used to put this procedural workshop together. What they're going to be looking at is combining -- Doing an index development using fishery-independent survey data that varies over space and time. Not only does this occur in the South Atlantic region, but it occurs in the Gulf region too, and so it will be important to get different points of view and figure out how to do this most appropriately.

The next thing that they brought up was a search tool for research recommendations that come out of SEDAR, and that is up on the SEDAR website. If you ever want to look at some of the research recommendations that are coming out of the stock assessments, those are now all organized, and a big thank you to Kathleen Howington for doing that.

Then, if you scroll back up, we can flow into the next one as well, and, during the discussion of the priorities and schedules, there is going to be a shrimp assessment process update. There is five working groups that have been established for this, and that's being done through the Science Center, and then they just wanted to have some discussion of exactly how this is going to work out through time. They were also provided an update on the Great Red Snapper Count. Additional information has come out since then, and Dale Diaz, as well as Clay Porch, could give additional details that weren't included in our report here.

The next part is really where it's important to the South Atlantic Council. If you look at Number 1 under that SEDAR schedule modification, there was a request by the Science Center to move the start date for the Spanish mackerel from 2021 to 2022, and there was a bit of a pushback from the South Atlantic Council reps that were there, as well as Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission staff that was there, and they requested that the Spanish mackerel assessment actually continue to occur in 2021. There was some discussion that ensued from that, and there was indication that, if we did want this to occur in 2021, there could be some other impact.

If you go to the other attachment, the FC3 A2a, you can see that the Science Center did provide some additional information. If you go down to the update, you can see that they were able to get the Spanish mackerel operational assessment scheduled in 2021, and the consequence to that is going to be the pushing back of South Atlantic black sea bass into 2022, and, if you scroll down, you can see exactly how the planning is going to work out.

In the fourth column, under the SA Team, you can see there is the proposed timeline for the Spanish mackerel operational assessment. Then, in Column 3, you can see that black sea bass is now

starting in 2022, and they will provide information into -- It will be provided to the council in 2023. That is all I had.

MR. BELL: Thanks for that, and we certainly do appreciate being listened to, related to the importance of getting that Spanish mackerel assessment, and we appreciate Clay's willingness to do what needed to be done to help us keep that thing on track, because you heard yesterday, at the public comment period, that we did get a lot of input on Spanish, and we've indicated that we didn't really want to touch Spanish in a meaningful way until we got that assessment under our belts, and so thank you so much for that. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Mel, and I just wanted to relay my appreciation to Clay and the Science Center for working with us and keeping that Spanish mackerel assessment on track, but I did want to ask -- During the CCC meeting on Tuesday, NMFS provided an update on impacts of COVID, and they said they are back to Stage Zero, in terms of reopening their facilities, and I'm assuming that Stage Zero means no onsite presence or anything like that, and I just wanted to ask if there's a potential for that to impact this timing, or is the Science Center far enough along on prepping for the Spanish mackerel assessment that they don't think that this will affect anything?

MR. BELL: Clay, is that something you can comment on?

DR. PORCH: I think, at this point, we'll be okay. We had people that were able to come in for a little while and get the things they need, and some of them are able to take some of the equipment home, and so I think we're going to be okay for Spanish mackerel. Of course, a lot will depend on how long this continues, and it might affect other species.

MR. BELL: We realized when we met, and I guess you all were at Stage 1 or whatever, and so life was a little different, and so, yes, this is a new development, and so anything you can do to help us out and staying on schedule, we would, obviously, appreciate it.

MR. POLAND: Thank you for that, Clay.

MR. BELL: Anything else? Any questions for Chip or any other comments on SEDAR or the report? I see no hands. That takes us to the next item, which would be the NMFS and Science Center reports, and, Clay, were you going to introduce John? I had you down here as introductions for John.

DR. PORCH: Yes, I was going to do that. I can go ahead and start, if you would like.

MR. BELL: A virtual introduction is just all we can do, but please.

DR. PORCH: I think I would kind of give you a little context first. As you may have heard, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is going through some fairly major changes. For the first time ever, we now have an operational strategic implementation plan, and that plan focuses on forming services that make up the core of our mission, and it's basically the science advice supporting fishery management plans, ecosystem-based management, the conservation of marine mammals, sea turtles, and other protected species, and, of course, all of the data that feeds into those three things and other things.

We have a strategic plan now, and, at the same time, we've been reorganizing our supervisory structure, to move away from this legacy geographic structure that we now have to a more matrixed organization, where the supervisory units are functionally aligned, and the whole idea is to make us more efficient and more effective with the dwindling resources we have, and then also enable us to better focus on the core elements of our mission that I have just discussed.

Heretofore, if you looked at the way the different labs operated, they tended to branch out into many, many activities, not all of them related to core activities, and so we're trying to gradually reposition our assets so that they meet the main things that we need to pay attention to, and it means we'll have to drop some activities.

In that regard, NOAA has approved the first two phases of our reorganization proposal, and we're just now submitting the proposal for the third and final phase. Hopefully that will all be approved soon, and then I can make a presentation to the councils on exactly what we're doing and what those changes will mean for the council, but the good news is that one of the changes that I've been able to implement -- One of the first changes that I've been able to implement is actually to create a new Deputy Position for Council Services.

As I think all of you know by now, we serve more councils than any other Science Center, plus we are also involved, more involved, with HMS at Headquarters than any other Science Center, and so we're spread pretty thin, and I personally am spread pretty thin, trying to cover thirteen or so council meetings a year, HMS issues, ICCAT, protected species, and a bunch of other meetings.

In fact, it's funny, but, when I first came onboard, I got calls from both Gregg Waugh and Doug Gregory to encourage me not to try and cover everything by myself, as my predecessor did, and so, also, during all of our various strategic planning processes, we heard a lot from the councils about a desire for us to improve customer service, including better communication and support for council meetings, as well as more timely and more frequent stock assessments and other science advice.

I heard you loud and clear, and it took a little while to get the changes accepted, entered and accepted, into the system, but I am happy to announce that, a few months ago, we hired our new Deputy Director for Council Services, who will focus on all of these things that the council has been asking for and help us, as a Science Center, get better organized to meet all of those challenges, and that is Dr. John Walter.

John got his PhD from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and he's been with us for about fourteen years, conducting stock assessments and providing management advice to the councils, as well as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna. He has served in a number of leadership positions, including currently as the Chair of the ICCAT Western Bluefin Tuna Committee and as the Co-Chair of the National Marine Fisheries Service's National Management Strategy Evaluation Working Group. He's got tons of publications, and he has collaborated with folks throughout the region and all over the world, and so, without further ado, I will hand it over to John to say a few words, but we're super happy to have him.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Clay, and welcome aboard, John, in this capacity, and I guess you can't see us, but we're not bad looking.

DR. WALTER: Well, you can put an avatar up, if you don't want to see what you look like, but sorry I can't be there in person for this introduction, and thank you, Clay, for the introduction, and thank you, Mel, for welcoming me into the council meetings. I look forward to being there in person and being able to interact with everyone at the council and the council staff, and I look forward to creating a lot more productive working relationships, and I think that we can definitely do a lot of good things, and I'm excited about the position, and I think that the future looks bright.

Having this additional position and additional person to cover things was particularly important this week, when we had competing South Atlantic and Caribbean Council meetings, and the Center was able to cover them both, because I was in the Caribbean, and Clay was in the South Atlantic, and that, I think, well illustrated the need for this position, and so thanks, everybody, and I look forward to meeting in-person soon.

MR. BELL: Well, thank you, John, and, yes, we do look forward to actually meeting you in-person, and Clay is right, and we realize this, and it doesn't seem like the folks that count realize it, or sometimes, but you all's Science Center has so much area of responsibility to cover and all, and it's just amazing that you do what you do, but we do appreciate the efforts to improve efficiency and improve customer service and all that, and so we look forward to working with you all, and welcome again, John. Okay. The next item under the Science Center was the Commercial Electronic Logbook Status, and I guess Julie Brown is going to drive us through that.

MS. BROWN: Thank you. Again, my name is Julie, and I have been working for the logbook program for about almost two years now. Before I get started though, I will just thank Myra for advancing the slides for us and being our virtual Vanna White for this show we've got going on here. I am going to be extremely, extremely brief with this update, because a lot of it is reiterating what we went over at the last council meeting.

One thing that we are happy to announce is that we are more or less finished with a finalized version of our technical requirements document. For a long time, we relied very heavily on eTRIPS being kind of our all-star app that is being internally developed with ACCSP, as you know, but, now that we have this technical requirements document ready, it's always been our intention to invite other outside vendors to also produce e-logbook software, and so we do have that available, and, if there's anyone out there listening, please, by all means, get in touch with us, and we will start coordinating new development.

The other thing that I did say at the last council meeting is we have a view, finally, from the database at ACCSP, where they are pushing data from their database to our database, and so that was a major development that happened over the summer, and we can use that to now test the data flow.

Our applications at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center are completed, and ACCSP applications are being updated and reconciled, pretty much on a weekly basis, and, at this point, the main focus of our work behind the scenes is integrating and mapping the ACCSP data into our existing database.

Just a little bit more on that subject, and, like I said, that is the main course of action that we're working on behind the scenes right now, is the mapping, which is dependent on the functionality of eTRIPS. eTRIPS, right now, does undergo very regular updates, and so, if there are any snags

or bugs in the application, we're not really able to test the flow of data from Point A to Point B to Point C, et cetera.

On our backend, we are creating the new variables in our database, and we're working with ACCSP to get their variables to reflect what is going to be in our requirements, and so that's an ongoing process, and then this last little bullet point, we can actually change from a bullet point to a checkmark, because, in the time between this being submitted to the briefing book and today, we actually have a self-creation tool from SAFIS, where, previously, only users, or only permit owners, who had their permits that were owned by a person would be able to use the self-creation tool, because it relied on a birthdate, but, in the time since then, we've actually updated that so that any permits who are owned by an LLC or business are also able to use that self-creation tool, so we can change that from a bullet point to a checkmark.

I always like to use this opportunity to remind people that we do have our fisheries electronic reporting system up and running. We have a little over 300 active participants using that right now, and it's pretty easy to set up, and they're able to submit the no-fish reports online electronically, and those are used to update the user's compliance in about fifteen minutes. Because of this, we are no longer accepting faxes or emails of no-fishing reports. They all need to be submitted either through the mail or through the FER website.

Just a quick summary, and, again, we have the technical specifications document available for any third-party vendors who would like to get in touch. This tech specs document would reflect the program as it is rolled out on a voluntary basis, and we can't promise that that would necessarily be the same technical specifications that would be finalized for the mandatory program. However, we don't expect that to change very much.

Behind the scenes, our big project is using the eTRIPS application to test data flow, and we're providing regular feedback to ACCSP, to get their application up and running in accordance with our specifications, and we have the account creation tools available now for new users who are both person entities and business entities, and, although it's not perfect, we're working in cooperation with ACCSP and the SEFHIER program to come up with a protocol for how we're going to deal with any hiccups for users who have errors or issues following those directions. That's it, and so a really short update. Any questions?

MR. BELL: Thank you, Julie. This is one of the few programs that I think the fishermen have been begging us for for a while, and so it's nice to be popular in that way, in that they actually want to -- I mean, we even heard about this morning, and so that's a positive thing. What's really obvious from your presentation is there's a lot of detail that goes into -- It's one thing to make the data kind of come in the front door, but then, when it comes in the front door, getting it to the right place and the right form, and there's a lot of detail in that, and, like a lot of things, the devil is in the details, and so any question for Julie about where we are with this right now? No hands. It's a talkative bunch today.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mel, we have Dave Gloeckner from the Science Center.

MR. BELL: Hi, Dave. Welcome. Go ahead.

DR. GLOECKNER: Some of the holdup here has been that you've got other programs that are implementing very soon, like SEFHIER and the Northeast VTRs, and, right now, we don't have any pending implementation dates, which has slowed down development with ACCSP. They are prioritizing those other programs, and so I think it behooves us to start moving down the path of developing an e-reporting amendment for the commercial sector, and I'm sure the fishermen would like to see an application developed very soon as well, and so that's just a recommendation that we probably need to start moving down that path.

MR. BELL: That was actually made by a fisherman this morning, or somebody from the industry, I believe, as well. Jack.

DR. MCGOVERN: I think the Gulf Council has begun developing an amendment for commercial electronic reporting too, and an amendment for the South Atlantic was discussed early, and it may be in that table that was shown earlier, and I don't know, but there could be a joint amendment between the Gulf and the South Atlantic for electronic reporting.

MR. BELL: Okay. Like I said, I mean, we've heard folks, and they want it, and that's what it's going to take to eventually get this done, and we'll have to, obviously, factor that into our priorities, which we went through this morning. Okay. Well, thanks for that input. Any other questions or comments related to this right now? All right. No hands. Okay. Well, thanks for the report, Julie, and the input, Dave. Let's go to the next item, which is SERO Reports. Rick, are you going to handle the two of those?

MR. DEVICTOR: I sure will, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I will give a short report on this, and I just wanted to update you on the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program, and this is very similar to presentations that I've given at past council meetings, where I'm just going to go over, briefly, the requirements, just to remind you of those, the timeline, and just one slide on what have we accomplished to-date, so far.

Hopefully you saw the Fishery Bulletin that we sent out on November 24, where we reminded fishermen of the upcoming regulations, and we announced some outreach tools for fishermen, and I will go over some of those outreach tools, and I know Cameron has been doing a great job emailing council members and AP members, to remind them of the changes in the reporting requirements, because I think we're at that stage now where we're a month away, and we want to get the word out as much as possible.

I always like to remind you of what the regulations will be. In the South Atlantic and Gulf, the owner or operator of a charter vessel with a federal charter vessel/headboat permit will be required to submit an electronic report for each fishing trip. What that means in the South Atlantic is you're going to have to submit reports weekly, no later than Tuesday of the following week. A reporting week in the South Atlantic is Monday through Sunday, and, of course, you can do a no-fishing report for up to thirty days, and that has to be through approved software.

The Gulf is a little bit different, and they require you to submit a report before offloading the fish, and they also have a hail-out requirement, where you put in your expected return date and time and landing location. Of course, the purpose of that is so port agents and law enforcement can meet you at the dock, if needed, or for further sampling or what have you. The Gulf of Mexico

also requires a location tracking device, a VMS, that is currently affixed to the vessel and always on, and that can be satellite or cellular-based.

Then, at the bottom, you can see those two bullet points, and I always like to remind people that you must report regardless of where you're fishing or what you catch, and so, if you're fishing in state waters off of Maine, and you have that permit, you are going to have to report that catch, and, of course, we talked about vessels with both permits, and, if you have the Gulf and South Atlantic on the same vessel, even if you're just fishing in South Atlantic waters, you will have to abide by the Gulf regulations, and so there's a little synopsis of the regulations that will be in place.

I show this graphic each time, and it's basically the timeline for the rulemaking, and so the final rule published earlier this year, and, as you recall, you all talked about it in June, and you recommended to NMFS to push that date back, because of the impacts to the charter industry through the pandemic, and so we published a correction notice on August 7. In that notice, we had an effective date of January 4, and so that was the effective date, and then the Gulf is in two phases. I talked about the logbooks and the hail-out, and so that will be one day later, January 5, and the VMS requirements are to be determined, and so we'll announce that at a later date, and we want to give people more time to get ready for the requirements and get the equipment and also for NMFS to get approval on those various units that could be used for VMS. That's the timeline.

This is just one slide showing behind the scenes, but there has been a lot going on. We have always said this is a new program, and there are thousands of permits, and it's upwards of over 3,000 permits that we're talking about here, and so we just want to work to stand up the program at this stage and get it running. That meant develop specifications for the software and then work with the software vendors so they could develop that software, and the software, of course, takes the data from the fishermen to NMFS and then to ACCSP.

ACCSP, it was decided early on, would be the data warehouse, and so we had to work with them very closely over the last year or so, and so they will be able to store the data and then access the data and all that, and we had to work very hard on an information-sharing agreement, and I won't bore you with those details, but that was a huge hurdle, but we got that worked out. In a nutshell, we just want to be ready on January 4 for fishermen to be able to download the software and begin providing data.

Now we're starting to think ahead a little bit, and we're thinking in terms of compliance and QA/QC, and, of course, compliance means what if we're not getting these reports, or we're not getting no-fishing reports, and what do we do? Right now, we're talking about we would call the fisherman up and say, hey, we haven't gotten a report, and work with them that way, but, maybe in the future, there will be some type of email, automated email, that can be sent out, if we're not getting these reports.

Also, QA/QC, and we want sort of flags to go up in the software program. For us, say someone landed a lot of fish that they haven't landed before, or in an area that we weren't expecting, and we want some sort of flag to go up, where we can look at that, and maybe they just had a real good day of fishing, and so maybe it's real, and maybe it's actually what they reported, what they caught, but we can reach out to them and check with them on that.

What we're going to do is here is base it on the application developed for the headboat survey. The headboat survey has been doing this for a long time, and so we can look to them on their application for QA/QC and compliance, and so late or missing reports will be flagged, and the compliance team will reach out to the fishermen, if we're not getting those reports, and then this program will run nightly validation checks and flag potential errors, and the QA/QC team will reach out to the fishermen to confirm that data or make the corrections, as needed.

We have been working on that, compliance QA/QC, and we have hired, or are about to hire, several teams here of twelve people. Again, this is a new program with thousands of permits, and so we're taking it seriously, and we have a QA/QC team, and it's going to be made up of four people, and, again, they will look for those flags and look to correct the data, if needed, and we have a monitoring team, and we're going to be hiring three people, and they will work with VMS and declaring the trips, what if a vessel left the dock, but never declared a trip, for example, and they will work with approving landing locations in the Gulf.

Then a compliance tracking team, and so, again, they will be monitoring if we don't get those reports, and they will take action, if needed, like calling people up and such, and, finally, customer service. I will talk here in a moment about the toolkits, but we are getting lots of calls, and my phone has been ringing a lot, and so we need people to help answer the phones and help answer the emails and get people signed up. That is behind the scenes.

We've been trying to use every outreach tool that we have, and so, of course, we sent out letters to permit holders, and we have their addresses, through the Permit Office, and so we've sent out three mailings to them, once for the effective date, once when we delayed the effective date, and now we just sent out toolkits, and I just got mine last night in the mail. We're really proud of these, and we had a lot of help from Gulf staff and Cameron on the South Atlantic staff, and I can't thank you enough. They turned out really good, and permit holders should be getting them, or maybe some got them today, and I will talk a little bit more about them in a second.

Fishery Bulletins, of course, and we all know our bulletins, and this is one of the primary ways that we communicate with fishermen, and, again, we sent out that one on November 24 to remind them of the requirements. Just to say that, throughout the outreach material, you will see language that we want to assure fishermen that we want to help them and assist them as we start this new data collection system, and we hope that they have patience with us, and we'll have patience also, as we work together to have these fishermen start reporting.

The Fishery Bulletin also announced the website and toolkits and webinars and videos and all of that, and so the website -- We have a website, and the big thing on that is the approved software, and so, right now, in the South Atlantic, there is VESL and eTRIPS that people can use, and they can download that software now and practice reporting, if they want to, but that's on the website, and we've heard from people, and we're tweaking the website and improving it, so it's more clear that people know where to download software and then how to sign up for an account, because you have to do that, also.

Webinars, we have a bunch scheduled, and we're about to send out a Fishery Bulletin, maybe Friday or maybe Monday, to remind people and show them how to sign up. On December 15, there will be two webinars for the Gulf requirements, and December 16 for the South Atlantic requirements, and Cameron has set up some with communication professionals, and I believe that's

December 12, and state representatives on December 17, and we have had webinars with port agents, and we have more set up for OLE and port samplers and all that, and so we've been very busy with these webinars, but those will be occurring next week for the public. We want to not show a long PowerPoint at these webinars, and we want to really be hands-on and walk people through helping them sign up for accounts and downloading the software.

Videos, we have very good-looking videos, and there's three short ones that walk you through the new requirements, the purpose, how to get started, and they're very professional, with the voiceover, et cetera, and we hope that people watch those first and get a lot of information through those.

Toll-free lines and emails, we have a toll-free number, and it's been very busy, and we're working on getting an IBR line, and that's one where you press one for general questions and two for monitoring, three for VMS, four for permits, et cetera, to get people to the right place as quickly as possible. Finally, rack cards, and this is something -- We're going to start the intercept survey, and we got some money for that, and so we're going to start that in the Gulf, and these are cards that you can hand for asking them questions, explaining why I'm about to ask you questions and the importance of the program. I know MRIP uses those, and they're quite effective.

At this time, I was going to walk you through some of the toolkits, Mel, but I know you're up against some time, and so maybe it's best if I don't do that. They are in your briefing material there, and these are toolkits that are folders, and they get sent to all permit holders, and they have what we call step sheets on different -- If you just kind of scroll through that, but there's a letter outlining the requirements, and, again, those words of we're here to help and we truly respect your time and business operations, and it's a big transition.

If you want to scroll through real quick, we can do this in like a minute, and so who is required to report, and we want to be very clear that, if you have these three permits, you're required to report. This page is devoted to we know you have other permits and have to report through those permits too, whether it be to the Gulf of Mexico or GARFO or HMS or South Carolina, and you have to report charter vessels and headboats, and so we want to be very clear on what do you do. Some software will allow you to just use one software to report, but some won't, and it depends on what software you choose.

If we scroll to the next one, we have FAQs on the back, and so these are the questions that we keep hearing over and over again, and we just want to be as clear as possible. The first page is who reports, and now what do I report, and we've broken this down into trip information, catch, economic information, and these were all things that you had in your FMP that you submitted to NMFS that you wanted collected. You can see right there, with economic information, with the trip fee and fuel used and fuel costs, we brought that in this bubble here, because we had gotten lots of questions and comments of why are you requiring me to give you fuel used and fuel cost, and so we wanted to highlight that.

There's just one more page that I want to point out, and we have the FAQs on the back, like what if I don't plan to fish, what if it's just a pleasure trip, what if I submit incorrect information, et cetera. Finally, one of the most important pages is getting started, and we just told them who has to report and what you need to report, and then people call us and say, okay, what do I have to do, and we outline this in the South Atlantic through a four-step process, where you decide how to

want to submit your reports, whether it's a computer, smartphone, or tablet. I just got a call today of someone that didn't have a smartphone, and they didn't have a tablet, and they just have a home computer, and so what do I do, and, especially in the Gulf, where you have to submit your reports before offloading, and so I had to walk them through that.

Then you select a software program, and so I talked about those two software programs that are on our website, and you get to choose. They're both free. Then you download the software on your device, and, finally, you set up an account, and I know that some people have trouble with that, and you download the software, and now you have to do an account, and it's a self-creation account, but we're finding that say you put in "Mike" instead of "Michael", and something pops up, and that's when they need to call us, and we can help them set up those accounts.

That's basically the four-step process, and people can do that right now, and they can start reporting, for practice, and then it's effective on January 4, and so this is just the South Atlantic toolkit, and there's a whole other one in the Gulf, where they have more steps, because they have those other requirements. I think that's about it, and it's taken a lot of work to get to this stage, but we're ready to go on January 4, and I would be happy to answer any questions. Myra, thanks for scrolling through that.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Rick. I appreciate that, and, yes, this is something that we've been talking about and has been coming for a while, and we appreciate the quality of the outreach tools you have there. I will tell you, just from personal experience -- You know, we've had a logbook system in place since 1993, and we converted it over to an electronic capability a few years ago, and most of our 140 or so guys, I think, are using that, but, even with that, there's a lot of -- It's a good thing you've got a help desk, or some help desk people, and expect a lot of calls and a lot of questions.

We have kind of been bathed in this stuff for a while, and we get it, and you will be surprised at how it will just seem like this just happened yesterday or something, and so you've just got to work through it and bring it in as it takes, and it make take a little time, obviously, for compliance to be at a level we would like, but we're going to be in the education and outreach mode for a while, and a little bit of hand-holding, and it will get there, but it's just were down to the wire here on about ready to start, and so, when you flip the switch, I guess there is no anticipation that it's going to be 100 percent up and running, in terms of compliance and everything, for a while, but thank you, and I appreciate it, and I'm glad we're finally at this point, realizing that some of our folks in the Atlantic might hold a Gulf permit, in which case they have to go with the Gulf, and so that route, but any questions? Anna, I see your name.

MS. BECKWITH: Thanks. I've been messing around with this for the last couple of weeks, since we got that Fishery Bulletin, and I recognize that we're about three weeks out, and that there's actually a lot of time to fix through the kinks, and I haven't been home for a while, and so I haven't gotten my toolkit, but, even with my sort of being part of the process and having intimate knowledge of everything, I had a fair bit of trouble following from that Fishery Bulletin through being able to download and find the self-creation page, and I get that that original link that was in the Fishery Bulletin has been updated and some additional links have been provided, and I think it's getting a little bit clearer, as time goes on, and you guys probably get some feedback and some questions, but even that self-creation page was nowhere to be found until I called Fran at the help desk for eTRIPS.

I think there's still a fair bit of challenge, and I think one of the main things that we have to think about, as we do outreach, is this is not something that our charter industry really wanted to do, and so this is something we have handed to them and said, you know, it's time, and you're going to do this, and we need you to do this, and the more clear and simpler and more obvious that you can make the steps for all of our ADD and ADHD captains, such as my husband, I think the smoother it's going to go.

Short of seeing the toolkit, which I haven't gone through, and going through the websites and the ACCSP website, and having to end up in the Harbor Lights and call the help desk and discuss probably, with Fran, for about thirty minutes, just walking through stuff, and I think it could be easier, and, as you guys work through some of the suggestions that folks made, and I think it's going to be tough, and I am concerned that the captains that didn't really want this to start with are going to hit some of these roadblocks, and not really want to follow through until they are really frustrated and forced to, and it's just going to be an interesting process, but I think, in short, I don't think it's as clear as it can be.

As you guys receive feedback, I certainly encourage you to take that feedback and make those adjustments on the webpage, and, if you think it's insultingly obvious, it's not clear enough, and I think that is the design aspect and the outreach aspect that you guys need to keep in consideration, but, yes, I'm excited, and I sort of have a log-in at the moment, and my eTRIPS isn't quite set up right, because some of my permit stuff isn't coming up, and it's not really letting me do a do-not-fish report yet, because it's missing a permit, and there's some weird things even happening on our own personal account, and so good luck, and I'm rooting for you, and I am sending all kinds of feedback to Cameron and to Fran as I work through this stuff from my perspective and trying to look at this the way that our fishing guides are going to look at this.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Anna. Rick, do you want to respond?

MR. DEVICTOR: I was just going to say thank you for those comments, and, yes, I would be happy to also work with you, and I know Cameron did send us your first comments, and we met about that and talked about it, and I think we still have some work to do, and that was one of my goals. When we had the website, there was too many clicks, to start off, to get somewhere, and I do agree with your comments that you had to go down to the page and maybe click on "SAFIS", and people don't know what SAFIS is, but it sounds like we still have some work to do. We have a meeting tomorrow with ACCSP, and I will commit to bringing that up tomorrow morning, and I may reach out to you with some specific questions too, and so thank you, Anna.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, and I've sent Cameron some additional information, even today, that maybe she can share with you guys at the meeting tomorrow, but I'm here, and I am happy to assist, because I think like a fishing guide, and the way the guides are going to work through this, and so I'm happy to help in any fashion that I can to make this easier for my very, very hard-headed crowd.

MR. BELL: Thanks, Anna, and, Rick, just be prepared to adapt to -- You're going to learn what you may have to kind of tweak as you get into this, but just -- You're going to have to be prepared to adapt. Cameron.

MS. RHODES: Thanks, Mel. Just as like food for thought for the council moving forward too, I don't really have the ability, as the council staff lead, to make any kind of real changes on the NOAA Fisheries site or with any of the software programs that have been approved for use as part of the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program.

I would encourage folks to -- You're more than welcome to include me on these emails, and I'm happy to be involved, but I think it also makes sense to direct things to Rick DeVictor and to Karla Gore, so that they can sort through those things on their end, since I don't really have the ability to make those kinds of changes to their sites and things like that, but I am more than happy to be kept in the loop, but I just wanted to clarify that council staff doesn't really have the ability to make any kinds of changes to these software programs.

MR. BELL: That's a good point, Cameron, and some of the folks might naturally just come to us, because they're used to communicating with us about issues and things, but we don't have the fix, and the fix lies with the folks that have control of that, but, yes, that's a good point. I'm sure that our phone will be ringing off the hook some as well.

Any other questions or comments related to this? I am not seeing any hands, and so here's what I would like to do. We've got one more presentation from Protected Resources, and then, after that, we'll take a bio break before we get into committee reports and the rest of the meeting. Jenny, if you're doing this and onboard, we can start when you're ready.

MS. BROUWER: Jenny is on the webinar, and she did indicate that she was going to be sort of in and out of another meeting, and I'm not -- Hold on.

MS. LEE: Great. Thank you. Good afternoon, everybody. I will get started here. First, I just want to make sure that you all are aware of our proposal to designate critical habitat for five ESA-listed corals, and this has been on your radar as something that we've been working on, and our proposed rule published on November 27, and so, once again, you can see there in your briefing that it's for five of our ESA-listed corals within U.S. waters of Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Navassa Island, and the Flower Garden Banks.

The proposed coral habitat consists of substrate and water-column habitat characteristics essential for the reproduction, recruitment, growth, and maturation of the listed corals, and so you're already familiar with our Acropora critical habitat that is in place already, and the only difference here is that one is specific to substrate only, and this proposal does include that water-column habitat.

It's proposed for most of the geographic areas occupied though by threatened corals, including a total of twenty-eight mostly overlapping specific areas. The proposed designations include waters from zero to ninety meters, depending on the particular depth distribution of each coral, and so, with our Acropora critical habitat, it was the same, and, in this case, now we have distinct designations for each of the corals, based on their habitat, and you can see critical habitat doesn't include things like harbors and navigation channels and other managed areas, and there's a couple of areas that either are prohibited or excluded, and you can see the Key West Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan Area and then the Navy's South Florida Ocean Measuring Facility.

Just as a reminder, if we move forward with a final designation, essentially, it creates a second obligation under Section 7 for federal agencies to conduct -- When we're conducting Section 7

consultations on their actions, and it is a management tool directed at federal activities, and so non-federal activities are not directly affected, but, if they receive federal funding, or a require a federal permit, they can be indirectly affected. Again, this is a proposed rule right now, and I have put links so that you can learn more about it, and feel free to reach out with any questions you have.

Other than that, for other actions, for Section 7 consultations, just an update, and we did receive a ruling, and the D.C. District Court did rule against us in Oceana's challenge of the 2014 shrimp biological opinion, at least in part, and the court granted the plaintiff's motion for summary judgement, and so it remanded the opinion without vacatur, and so meaning it's still in place for now, but, as you know, we already have reinitiated the consultation, for multiple reasons, and so now we just -- The court has ordered NMFS to have an opinion completed on or before April 30 of 2021, and so that's coming up.

Other that, for consultations, there's really not anything new to report, and I did put in your briefing just a little piece of information that you might be interested in as far as the NOAA action plan on coral interventions. If you're interested in that, check it out.

Then, for marine mammal protection actions, or news, I have an update for you on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, and so, in this case, NMFS has drafted a proposed rule to modify the take reduction plan and associated draft environmental impact statement. The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan proposed rule focuses on the lobster and Jonah crab fisheries in the Northeast, and it's at OMB, and so it's in the works. We anticipate, when that does publish at some point, six to ten public hearings, or public meetings, and we would have a forty-five to sixty-day public comment period.

I do want to also point out that the next set of Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team meetings will focus on gillnets and the remaining trap and pot fisheries coastwide, and the purpose of the meeting will be to assess the effectiveness of the existing TRT and Magnuson-Stevens Act measures in those fisheries, identify remaining threats, and develop recommendations for additional measures aimed towards reducing right whale mortality and serious injury by 60 to 80 percent, as well as for reducing humpback and fin whale entanglement, and so just a heads-up that the SERO Protected Resources Division will be reaching out to SERO stakeholders on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to coordinate, and SERO will keep you informed as the process develops.

Moving forward, an update on the unusual mortality events, and I guess the information that is updated and key here is that there's a preliminary estimate different from what you had previously, for the previous year anyway, and the estimate is 366 right whales estimated for alive in January of 2019. That number, if it remains through peer review, would represent a decrease from the estimate reported last year, which was the 412 in your last report for January of 2018.

The estimate is preliminary, and it will undergo further analysis and review, but a continuing population decline that began in 2011, coinciding with the oceanic regime shift and redistribution of whales that was anticipated. However, that preliminary number is lower than expected. Other than that, I think the information on mortality is what was in your briefing before, with 2020 -- It may be updated, but one mortality of a calf by a vessel strike off of New Jersey, and that was back in January, and then four serious injuries, and one notable case caused by a vessel strike to a calf in the Southeast, and there's that hyperlink, and, again, that's not new.

Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan proposed rule development, you've been hearing about this for a while, but, essentially, it's in clearance, and it's expected in the future, and so just stay tuned, and there will be a webinar during the public comment period. I don't have any updates on the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan.

The last one here I have is the marine mammal deterrents proposed rule, and my understanding is that someone did request an update on the depredation by marine mammals guidelines, or specific measures, and the marine mammal deterrents rule here, and so the proposed rule for the deterrents rule came out on August 31, and so, actually, we missed it in the last brief, and it kind of just hit, but the public comment period has closed now, and we did present the proposed rule and information, as well as information on dolphin depredation, at the October Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting, and so there's a presentation in your briefing book, if this is the topic that you wanted more information on.

Down the road, as an FYI, we can always present more information, if the council is interested, but, for now, you have that background, and, if you looked at the Gulf Council site, I'm sure you could dig up the minutes and basically get a redo of the presentation.

Anyways, while the guidelines and specific measures are not mandatory, the MMPA provides protections from liability under the MMPA for take resulting from using deterrents measures by specifying that any actions taken to deter marine mammals that are consistent with the guidelines or specific measures are not a violation of the Act, and so, in the proposed rule, it's important to note that NMFS has not evaluated the deterrents for effectiveness, and the rulemaking also includes prohibitions on certain deterrent methods that NMFS has determined, using the best available scientific information, would have a significant adverse effect on marine mammals.

Again, a summary of the rule, and the rule itself, and supplementary information, and a helpful fact sheet, actually, is all available on that website, and so, if you're curious and want to learn more, that would be a place to go, and then, of course, reach out. I think that concludes the information I have for you.

MR. BELL: All right. Well, thank you, Jenny, for all of that. A quick question. Those whale mortalities back in the 2017 to 2019 period, were those ship-strike-related mortalities, or is a mixture or what? I'm just curious.

MS. LEE: I don't have that information readily -- I have a helper. Yes, it's a mixture.

MR. BELL: Okay.

MS. LEE: If you look on the UME page, you can find some detailed information on that. I think I have a link in there, too.

MR. BELL: Okay. Any questions for Jenny? No hands. Okay. Well, thanks again, Jenny, for presenting all of that to us, and we appreciate your report. Folks, if we could go ahead and -- I will give you ten minutes, and come back at 3:40, but we will start at 3:40.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. BELL: It looks like we're reaching the critical mass here on folks. I do miss the opportunity to have coffee and a council cookie, but I'm just making my own coffee, and I probably ought to stay away from the cookies, I guess. We'll wait a second here and see if we can get a few more folks onboard.

Let's go ahead and get rolling. We're at Item Number 8 on the agenda, which is Committee Reports. The first committee report will be Snapper Grouper, whenever you all are ready.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The Snapper Grouper Committee met earlier this week and approved the minutes from the September meeting and the agenda. Then we got an update on the status of amendments under formal review, and then we moved into the yellowtail snapper stock assessment.

We had a discussion on that, and I had a lot of questions for Genny, and then we have some language highlighted here, and so, after further discussions offline, I am proposing this, which would be to start a joint Amendment to set a new ACL for yellowtail snapper, with the South Atlantic Council as the administrative lead for this amendment, because this would have to be a joint amendment with the Gulf Council.

Then, secondarily, to ask the leadership of the two SSCs, and so this would be the Gulf and South Atlantic Council SSCs, to develop a game plan, that the councils will review, for how to deal with developing ABCs for jointly-managed stocks with two different council ABC control rules. This problem was basically surfaced with the yellowtail snapper stock assessment, but it will come up again in future assessments, such as with the mutton snapper stock assessment, which is the next assessment that FWC will be working on where we have a shared stock.

This leadership group of the two SSCs should also address how to deal with the differences in the Stock Synthesis and Beaufort Assessment Model when applying the ABC control rules, and so you probably remember that there was a lot of discussion between myself and Genny about how the SSCs, the joint SSCs, had come up with this suggested ABC, and so this is trying to get at some of those problems that were surfaced as part of this yellowtail snapper stock assessment. I will stop here, to see if there's any discussion on this item that I am suggesting here. Mel.

MR. BELL: I just wanted to thank you for clearing that up, and that was a -- We were kind of a little fuzzy about that, and I think that does define a path forward for us that would help us out, not only now with yellowtail, but as we move forward into our other assessments, and so, yes, thanks for doing that, and I think that's a reasonable approach, in my estimate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, guys, for letting me spend some time offline trying to figure out how to respond to some of the things that Genny had surfaced as part of going through this assessment with two SSCs. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I think this is a good way forward, but I just wanted to ask about the direction for the leadership of the two SSCs, and is that sufficient, or do you think we need to define a little bit better, or should we leave it up to the SSCs to identify their own members to participate in this?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great question. I don't know if I have the answer to that, and I don't know. I would, I guess, like to hear what other folks think, if it's good enough that the two SSCs can choose their own people. Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: Just, when I think of a joint amendment, I usually think of something like mackerel, that one council is the designated lead, and it's one amendment that the two councils share. Just bear in mind, in this case, it's different, because there will be an amendment of the Snapper Grouper FMP and then an amendment of the Gulf FMP, and they need to be closely coordinated, obviously, but it's not really a joint plan, and so there's not really -- You can informally agree that one council will be the lead, but, basically, one is a Gulf plan, and one is a South Atlantic plan, and so it's a little different.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that. Great clarification, Roy. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Again, I am just going to go back to the suggestion I had yesterday too, is about the group addressing how to deal with the differences, and I think it would be very helpful to have some of the Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff that have been involved in looking at the performance of those two models involved in that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's also a great suggestion, Carolyn. Is there any way that we could also note that here, Myra?

MS. BROUWER: Absolutely. If you will please remind me what you just said, and it's late in the day, and it just slipped my mind. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: To engage those people who are at the Fisheries Science Center that were doing that performance comparison between the two models, and it would be probably good to see the insight on what they find are the differences, and, like I said, Clay can talk more to the specifics of that, but I just knew that Kyle Shertzer et al, were involved in basically running the Beaufort Model alongside of an SS3 model and looking and seeing how the performances worked and where they were different.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you. Does that capture it?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It looks good to me. Carolyn, I assume that that looks good to you?

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Great. Genny.

DR. NESSLAGE: Thank you. A couple of thoughts, if I may. First of all, are you asking the leadership to bring that directly to the council or have our respective SSCs provide feedback before bringing it to the councils?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think that you guys would discuss it amongst yourselves and then bring it back to the councils.

DR. NESSLAGE: Okay. That would be good to just -- This makes it sound like Joe and I are just going to make the decisions, and I would rather not be in charge of making the decisions, and so, if that could be clarified, I would appreciate that. Thank you. Then my concern is that this isn't - - As Clay pointed out, this isn't really a model performance issue, and this is a modeling style issue and a philosophy issue, and I'm not sure that -- Well, we could attack this problem from the point of how do we set ABCs, given the difference in modeling styles among the different shops, but then your species, or fisheries, that are managed by both the Gulf and the South Atlantic are going to be treated differently than the species that are just South Atlantic versus just Gulf species.

I'm not sure if you want that. If you do, that's fine, but, if you don't, then, really, this goes back to being a modeling style issue and approach to providing information to SSCs for ABC and catch level recommendation setting that really I don't know that the SSC leadership can solve. We can help inform, but I'm not sure -- I think this is a much bigger issue, and am I making any sense?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, you are, but I'm going to let John speak to this, and I see he put his hand up.

DR. NESSLAGE: Great. Thanks.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Genny, I think you were making sense, and you were making really good points there. Really, the hope here is to come up with some way of dealing with the fact that we do have these joint stocks, and we have the two different ABC control rules, and they may use different modeling approaches than either one or the other does, as you recognize, and we came out of yellowtail, and it took a couple of joint meetings to get through that, and so can we come up with some sort of ground rules or process or something to help the two SSCs do this a little more efficiently in the future, knowing that you're going to be faced with issues like this?

I think the leadership is free to bring in other people from your SSC that are really engaged and knowledgeable about this issue and just think some about how do we handle it a little bit better in the future, and not really knowing how that may turn out, and recognizing that you're exactly right, and it probably means these joint stocks will be handled potentially different than the stocks that are managed by one or the other council exclusively, which we kind of deal with anyway.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Genny, does that help?

DR. NESSLAGE: It does, I think, if you don't mind just a couple of things for clarification. I would suggest, in the first bullet, that you include FWRI modeling staff as well, the analyst staff, if that's possible, if you don't mind, and then the second bullet -- Are we talking about having a joint SSC meeting again to discuss this, or is this the leadership will discuss it jointly and then bring the proposals back to our SSCs? That's going to take a while.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We think a smaller group, a subset of the SSCs, would be fine to get maybe a strawman worked out of our solutions, and then, ultimately, yes, we'll have to go through the full SSCs, probably, and be reviewed by the councils as well, so they know how it will be handled, and so that's one reason to get started on this now, looking ahead to mutton being a few years out, and hopefully this gives time for this to happen without you guys having to go into a full panic mode to get a whole bunch of stuff done in really short order.

DR. NESSLAGE: So this doesn't need to be done for yellowtail right now.

MR. CARMICHAEL: No, it does not.

DR. NESSLAGE: Thank you. I appreciate that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We're looking ahead to like mutton in 2022.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Right. All right. I see more hands going up. John Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thanks. Really, what we're talking about is what probably needs to happen is what we brought up before about the councils' SSCs getting together, the Gulf and the South Atlantic, to harmonize the control rules, to some extent, because, even if we dive into the two modeling frameworks right now that we have, BAM or SS, it's not 100 percent certain that those are the two models that we're going to take forward for every stock in the future, and it's likely that we will use, potentially, even different models, as we develop new and better ones, but the control rules have to be able to handle those differences.

Since the Gulf is now a little more SS-centric, but not entirely there, I think what we are talking about is that joint working group of SSCs to try to harmonize them, and maybe, Genny, that's the path forward, because, even if we reconcile the two models and said one does it this way and another does it this way, we can't always go back and say we prefer this model, because we are largely stuck on continuity, and we use the model that suits the job, and so that's, I think, what we probably need to focus on, is harmonizing those, to the extent possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't know if "harmonize" is exactly the right word, or just make a determination of, when tasked with these joint stocks, how the two SSCs are going to deal with the fact that there are two totally different control rules, and what is the path forward on that, and so I don't know if the word "harmonize" is exactly the right word.

DR. WALTER: Well, from a Center perspective, given that we've got -- The more those control rules could be made similar, the better for us, because, otherwise, it challenges us to be giving -- Using one recipe to bake the cake on one side and a different recipe to bake a cake, when the recipes generally yield a similar cake, and that's the challenge for us, is meeting both of those, and, the more they could be similar, it would be better for us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I hear that, and I think that that's part of what this group needs to discuss, and I see more hands going up as we're having this discussion, and so, if you don't mind, can I go to the other hands that are raised there, John?

DR. WALTER: Absolutely. Please. I'm done. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. My comment earlier, Genny clarified that, and it sounds like she's clear in the direction to the SSC, and she's clear on that, as far as how to approach this discussion, but, to me, I think when we were talking about this offline, and then during the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting a couple of days ago, I was envisioning more along the lines

of the two SSCs, or workgroups or leadership or what have you of the SSCs, just coming together and trying to hammer out maybe some guidance, or at least some procedures, with how to apply control rules -- Or apply control rules to stocks that cross jurisdictional boundaries, and, to me, that seems like a priority of this.

Then the discussion of looking at SS3 and the BAM Model and the differences in those models and how uncertainty and all of that is incorporated in those models, that's kind of a secondary ask, because that's something that has come up from time to time, but, to me, the priority of this workgroup is to come up with some guidance on some standard procedures on how to apply control rules. I hope that makes it a little clearer.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, Steve, and that was very helpful. That was exactly what I was thinking, and dare I say another workgroup, or something of that nature, that would develop the procedures for stocks crossing jurisdictional boundaries and that that takes precedent over SS3/BAM Model issues, that that was kind of a secondary thing that came out of the discussion earlier this week, but I agree with you that some type of procedure for how to handle these cross-jurisdictional stocks. Genny.

DR. NESSLAGE: Thank you. To take John's analogy a little bit -- Or metaphor, or whatever it is, a little bit farther, the SSC is being asked to bake a cake, but we're given different ingredients, right, and it doesn't, I think, really matter so much, as Clay pointed out as well, whether it's SS or BAM, but it's how much uncertainty is incorporated into the estimate of the OFL, the distribution of the OFL, and, if the different shops, and/or different assessments, are providing -- If they're using different approaches for providing that information, or that estimate, of the distribution, we are going to have to select an ad hoc level of uncertainty, and just so the council -- I'm fine with that, if that's the kind of guidance you would like us to provide for jointly-managed stocks, but recognize that this will not be as scientifically informed, for those stocks, as perhaps some of the other advice that we're getting from, for instance, the MCB approach that Beaufort uses.

These stocks will be treated differently, and I just want to make sure the council recognizes that upfront, and it's -- I guess I am still concerned that there is this difference in philosophy across the Southeast Center assessments that has not been resolved, and that's going to continue perhaps even when they are not jointly-managed stocks as well, and it just happens to be really obvious in this case, but, as Clay mentioned, for instance, the previous gag estimate had a really tight estimate and low uncertainty, just because of the way that the model was constructed, even though it was in BAM.

This is -- Perhaps I mischaracterized it, or we mischaracterized it, in our report, but this is an issue that has popped up for other SSCs as well throughout the country, where the assessments are not providing the level of uncertainty estimation that the SSCs need, and, if they're not, then we have to pick these ad hoc buffers, if you will, and, as long as you're comfortable with that, that's fine, and we can go through and do what you're asking, but I just want you to be clear that that's what you're asking for upfront, and does that make sense?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kind of. I feel like this discussion would come out as part of this group and that you guys would have a discussion on that and report back to the council. It's partly about an ABC discussion, but it's really about the level of uncertainty in the model, and, to me, these are all things that would come out as part of this workgroup discussion.

DR. NESSLAGE: Except that that bullet right there, and maybe I'm just misunderstanding, says control rules need to be able to handle differences in models used, and my argument is that you might want to consider that we, perhaps alternatively, come up with best practices for providing information using our existing assessments, no matter what platform is used, for providing adequate uncertainty estimation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I think we could change the bullet to that, if that helps, Genny.

DR. NESSLAGE: Yes, it does. It's a big -- I know it may not seem like a big difference, but it's a huge difference to us modeling nerds. Thank you.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We're not trying to overcomplicate it or get into all those issues, and you're going to get a model for a stock, and it's going to use one or the other methods, and you're going to have two councils will different control rules, and what are the best practices for resolving that, and that's really it, and it's going to play out over a couple of years, and so there's going to be issues that pop up, and we can't resolve them here today, and we don't even know what they all are, and we're going to depend on you all to tell us that.

MR. POLAND: Exactly.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so there's a -- Myra is typing there on the board, and, Genny, make sure that you think that that covers what we just discussed. Does that look good?

DR. NESSLAGE: Again, and perhaps I'm not explaining well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What if that bullet just said, "best practices for resolving use of different control rules"? What if the bullet just ended there?

DR. NESSLAGE: That is one issue that certainly needs to be resolved, and I agree with you all completely, and the second issue though is that we're being provided different information for setting the ABC, based on the different modeling platforms, and that's not consistent across assessments or labs, and so that is almost a second bullet.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's a separate bullet. I agree, Genny. I would put it as a separate bullet about consider the use of different modeling platforms, that the workgroup consider the use of different modeling platforms.

DR. NESSLAGE: Or, again, develop best practices for providing uncertainty, something along those -- Sorry. I'm putting words in the council's mouth, but I want to make sure --

MS. MCCAWLEY: No. Go ahead. For providing uncertainty across different model platforms.

DR. NESSLAGE: Exactly. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Now I'm going to go back to our hands. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just keep in mind in this that, ultimately, the ABC control rule is a creature of the fishery management plan, though the SSCs have flexibility in applying the control rules, and I think the Gulf's explicitly has a lot of flexibility built into it, but there's a council role in all of this, and the FMP, the respective FMPs, their ABCs need to -- Maybe they need to be revisited or to take into account these types of -- I don't know what you call them, but cross-boundary stocks, almost. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep, I think that's a great point, and I'm hoping that this group can talk about that, and then, if there's changes needed, then that can come back to the council, and we can discuss that. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. It's better now. However, I think it would be better to develop best practices for ABC control rules, period, and not resolving the use of different ABC control rules. I would go back to John's comment, and I really think that the working groups that are developing ABC control rules for the South Atlantic and Gulf should be working together and looking at other ABC control rules, because there has been a lot of thought put into this already, and so I would really like to encourage not just thinking about what do we do when the control rules are different, but how do we make them more compatible.

Then, the second one, I think we've hammered out a little bit better. I mean, the issue is really how well each platform models uncertainty, and there is no consensus across the agency of the best way to do it. The BAM applications in the South Atlantic do tend to give wider intervals of uncertainty, broader and larger variances than the SS assessments in the Gulf of Mexico, when you're looking at single models, but the reality is that most of the uncertainty would be in alternative states of nature, like if you vary the natural mortality rate or you vary some more fundamental areas in the model structure.

I think best practices for providing uncertainty estimates would be useful, and I don't expect that we'll necessarily get to a resolution, but that will lead us down some pretty complicated paths, like ensemble modeling, et cetera, and so I don't know what this working group would come up with, but what I would like to see is any discussion of this kind of being integrated with how you structure the control rule, and that gets into the comments that I mentioned before about maybe specifying a minimum level of variance, using the Ralston et al. approach, and there is other ways that one could do it, and so I'm all for looking at commonalities, not only in how we might provide uncertainty estimates across platforms, but also in how we structure those ABC control rules.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Clay. I like that. To me, that's kind of a bigger, broader discussion, and I don't know if I would change this bullet here, since I feel like we have a very specific issue that needs to be addressed. I do like the thought of having folks think about that relative to broader ABC control rule issues, but I think I would leave the bullet like it is, just so this group understands kind of how this came about and, minimally, what we think needs to be worked on here. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you. I just wanted to speak to kind of how we got to where we were with yellowtail snapper. In the beginning, it wasn't very clear who the lead was for developing the ABC, and then we clarified it to the SSC that it was going to be the South Atlantic. They were going to be the lead for it, and so they were going to use their ABC. However, there was a lot of

concern with the amount of uncertainty between the OFL and the ABC, and that led to a whole different conversation and considering the Gulf's ABC control rule.

It was really the issue with the minimal difference between the two that led to a lot of this confusion, as well as multiple model structures, and I think it's going to be good to clarify this, but it was set up pretty well who was going to be the lead for it. In the second meeting, it was set out pretty well who was going to be the lead for it, and that was communicated to the different SSC chairs, and I felt like we went along pretty well until we hit the hiccup of very little variance between the OFL and the ABC, and that led to a lot more discussion from the SSCs on that, and Mike E. can probably talk a little bit more about that issue.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Chip. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I am hesitant to get into the weeds of things too, but I know, just back to John Walter's comment, where we were talking about the models and the ABC, and I was looking at the language, when we were going over the ABC control rule, and I know we've been through many iterations, and I can't remember where a lot of the changes got made, but, as sad as it is to say, I'm looking at a 2009 version of the control rule, where we were pretty generic in what that first tier was supposed to be.

We didn't specify the modeling, and we basically talked about whether or not models could be specific things, and that assigned the tiers, and we didn't have DBSRA and the other models specifically on the frontend of those, and so, I mean, I think I understand where John is coming from with his comment, and I think that's one of those things that, again, we need to go back and decide if we're being too prescriptive on the frontend, and maybe that's leading to some of it, too. If we're painting ourselves in a corner by saying, well, we're going to do a specific model type, and that's the tier, and we don't have anything that's an alternative to slide into without doing another tier, but that's all part of this process.

I think we just need to figure out what's the best way to work these so that you can kind of mold them across jurisdictions, as need be, and does it really -- As Genny is saying, maybe it's not so much the fact that you're looking at an SS3 versus a BAM, but, if both models handle things very differently, and the output that comes out of it -- As she's saying, it's a philosophy thing, and it's not necessarily a model thing, and so I think that's -- Again, it's going to come out with those discussions, but I just wanted to throw that out there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Carolyn. I think it's going to come out with the discussions too, and I appreciate all these points, really great points, and really great things to think about, and I don't know if we need to solve it today. Mike.

DR. ERRIGO: My comment has to do with the second-to-last bullet there, the uncertainty across modeling platforms. Genny, I agree completely that that is an issue, but I think it's a much larger issue than this workgroup can tackle. I don't think it should be part of this workgroup's charge. It seems like more of a SEDAR issue, where you can get together people from multiple areas and modeling experts and things like that and come up with best practices for how to model uncertainty. It seems that this workgroup of just getting together the SSCs, and maybe people from FWRI and the Center, is not the workgroup to tackle this issue.

I think it's better to have a narrower charge, and then I think we would be able to accomplish a lot more, in my opinion, and so focusing on the control rule, and having the control rule be flexible enough to handle modeling platforms that provide different levels of uncertainty I think is a better use of resources.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm hoping that the group can talk about that as well, and I do see what you're saying, Mike, and so let's go to Steve and then Carolyn, and I'm going to try to wrap this discussion up. I'm excited that everybody is excited to talk about this and to think about this, because some of the thoughts that you guys are having, while a little bit more sophisticated than the thoughts I had when I first started asking all these questions about the yellowtail assessment, I do think that there's ramifications here about species that cross these jurisdictional boundaries, as well as the fact that we're going to run different models for some of those species as well. Steve and then Carolyn and then Genny, and then I'm going to try to wrap this up.

MR. POLAND: Thanks, Madam Chair. I wanted to go back to Chip's comments. I mean, to me, that was the issue to be addressed. When you have a stock managed by two councils, and one took the lead on it, and so, to me, I would assume that that lead council's control rule would apply, and so, to me, that's really all I was expecting, when we started this conversation through the two SSCs to discuss, is coming up with some guidance, or a standard procedure, for other situations like this. When you have a jointly-managed stock, go ahead and figure out on the frontend which control rule is going to apply, so it doesn't bog down the discussions later on. To me, that's where I envisioned this going.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Steve. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: This is outside of the scope, but, again, as we're having these comments, and back to Mike's comments too, I mean, some of this stuff, we -- I am looking back at, again, our annual SSC workshops, those national SSC workshops, all the way back to 2008, and these have all been key points that we all addressed in those meetings, and maybe that's the time now, is to bring the SSCs back together and let's talk about what's going on with uncertainties, because the variance inflation, versus how we were doing it with the Monte Carlo simulations here in the Southeast, I mean, they were all across-the-board, and different regions were all handling them differently. If there's going to be synergy, maybe now is the time to be talking about what we've learned in the last twelve years, instead of trying to think that we haven't been there before.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Carolyn. Genny.

DR. NESSLAGE: To follow-up on Carolyn's and Mike's comments, I agree that that second-to-last bullet is a huge monster question that would probably be better served as either a SEDAR group or a national SSC project, and I just think I was trying, in my report of the yellowtail -- The SSC's response to the yellowtail assessment, that this is an issue we're highlighting because the information that we really need to set these ABCs is not being provided consistently from assessment to assessment, and it's not because these aren't sophisticated assessments.

These SS3 models are very sophisticated, and these are not data-poor stocks. These are pretty fancy statistical catch-at-age and/or length models, and they can provide more realistic estimates of uncertainty for our benchmarks than they are currently being provided, and so we wanted to

highlight that, as joint SSCs, to the councils, to point out the fact that we're not being provided the information we believe we need.

Now, we can put a band-aid on that and just keep the top bullet there and develop best practices for different control rules when we're provided with different levels of uncertainty estimation, and that's probably the low-hanging fruit, and so I will be happy to get rid of the second bullet, and perhaps the national SSC leadership and the Center leadership can work on this bigger problem as time goes on, but just recognize that this is an issue. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Genny. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thanks. Just to let you know that this conversation is happening at a national level, and characterizing uncertainty is hard. It's not like we have the situation with the weather, or a hurricane track, for example. Eventually, you know exactly where the hurricane hit, but we never know exactly where the stock is, and so this has been going on for many years in the scientific literature, this kind of debate, and it's likely to continue to go on, and so I doubt that we'll come to a resolution, but I think we could have -- We could set some guidance for what the councils would like to see and try and be more consistent.

I guess the other point I would make though is the reason why this is evident to you is because we have some jointly-managed stocks, or occasionally we have one group do an assessment, like king mackerel, for the South Atlantic that normally works in other venues with SS, for example, and so it becomes evident to you that there's a difference of philosophy, but, if you looked across every single council, you would see the same thing.

The groups that provide information to each of the different councils tend to do things in different ways, and so, if you look at how the Mid-Atlantic gets information, even between the Mid-Atlantic and New England, and then you compare that with the North Pacific and the Pacific and the Western Pacific Councils, and you will see they all do things a bit differently, and that's because characterizing uncertainty is hard. I mean, there's all those things that we don't know that we don't know, and so Rumsfeld was right, and it's not an easy thing to do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Great points. Thank you, Clay, and so I think that we can delete that second bullet about developing best practices for providing uncertainty across models. I think it's fine if the group, the workgroup, wants to discuss that, but clearly it's a bigger issue, and maybe the two SSCs will end up having a discussion that goes to a broader national discussion, if that's what you guys want to have, and we don't want to stop that, but I agree that the development of best practices for resolving the use of different control rules is probably the most immediate need here.

With that, I don't see any more hands, and I feel like we've had good discussion, and I'm hoping we don't need to discuss this anymore, and I hope that it's clear what we're asking folks to do here. Myra, is this good, that this is direction to staff, or does this need to be made in the form of a motion?

MS. BROUWER: I think it's fine that it's direction to staff, Jessica. I will clean it up a little bit. If it's okay with you all, then I'm fine with it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am certainly okay with it, and I appreciate you capturing this for us. If anybody has any issues about motion versus direction to staff, then please speak up, and then I think this will come back. We'll have to add it into a timing and tasks motion at the end. All right. I don't see any hands.

Let's move on to evaluating the need for conservation and management of nine snapper grouper species. We had a good discussion on this, and we got some input from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, and we talked about what the SSC had discussed, and, ultimately, we provided the following direction to staff, to not consider margate, yellowedge grouper, yellowfin grouper, silk snapper and cubera snapper for removal from the Snapper Grouper FMP.

Include possible action to evaluate species for need of conservation and management under the Snapper Grouper FMP in a future unassessed species amendment and work with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center on a possible approach for setting a single ACL with an assessed indicator species for the data-poor species.

Then we moved into the wreckfish ITQ modernization, which is Amendment 48. We discussed an options paper and talked about the input that came from the wreckfish ITQ shareholders meeting, and the committee provided the following direction to staff. To retain the current goals and objectives for the wreckfish ITQ program without modification. The committee recommended no substantial changes to the program, other than modernizing existing systems.

Include an action that would consider the following recreational allocations: *de minimis*, 1 percent, and a percentage between percent and 5 percent. Corresponding commercial allocations would be 100, 99, and between 99 and 95 percent. The no action alternative would retain the 95 percent commercial and 5 percent recreational allocation. Develop actions and alternatives to transition from the current paper-based system to an electronic reporting system. Develop actions and alternatives to modify the commercial fishing year and include an alternative for a calendar fishing year, to alleviate potential administrative issues associated with resetting the IFQ computing systems.

Obtain input on offloading requirements from the Law Enforcement AP, perhaps with additional input from a shareholder representative, and develop an action and alternatives to modify the current offloading time and site protocols. Develop an action with alternatives to address issues with wreckfish permit, and develop an action to address economic data collection, and I will stop there, and to develop actions to implement a cost recovery program to include where all participants would follow the same timing for payment. This amendment would also include the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan goals and objectives that were approved from the vision blueprint that have yet to be added to an FMP.

The committee made the following motion, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move, to approve the Snapper Grouper Amendment 48 for scoping during the March 2021 council meeting. I move that on behalf of the committee. Is there any discussion of this? Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, we'll consider that motion approved.

Then we went into red porgy, and the committee provided the following guidance and made the following motions. We made a motion that failed to adopt Alternative 3 as the preferred. The motion that passed was a substitute motion, which then became the motion, to do not select a

preferred alternative prior to scoping, and this is under Action 2. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion here? Any objection? Seeing none -- Is somebody trying to chime in here?

MS. BROUWER: I'm sorry, Jessica, but did you read the substitute motion that was approved? I'm sorry, but I missed it if you did.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, I didn't. **The substitute motion that became the main motion, and I'm sorry, and thank you for catching that, was to select Alternative 2 under Action 2 as the preferred, and so, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion of that motion? Any objection? All right. That passes.**

Then we had this bulleted list of items that will be considered in the red porgy analysis, and I'm not going to read all of these, and there's a number of bullets here. Then we went into greater amberjack, Amendment 49, and requested that the IPT explore a range of optimum yield values, separate from the total ACL, and additional allocation options and requested that the AP discuss and provide input on potential changes to management measures that could be incorporated into this amendment, and that would happen at the AP's next meeting in April.

We didn't have time to cover any other Snapper Grouper AP recommendations, and there was no other business to come before this committee, and so we now have a timing and tasks motion. Myra, do we need to add something about this SSC workgroup and about starting this yellowtail amendment?

MS. BROUWER: I think I would like to add a bullet, and I see, over here as well, that the third bullet down talks about a joint amendment, and so I would ask for permission to change that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. BROUWER: Perhaps delete that word, and so I would just simply refer to guidance about a creation of a workgroup, and does that work?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That sounds great, Myra. I see Monica put her hand up. What have you got, Monica?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just some further editing on that one bullet. Since it's not going to be a joint amendment, the South Atlantic wouldn't be -- You don't need an administrative lead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so Myra deleted that. We're changing it to "in cooperation with the Gulf Council".

MS. BROUWER: If that's okay, with you, or "collaboration", or some other word that entails that we would work with them, but not do a joint FMP, or amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, I like it. Does that work, Monica?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, that's great.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. All right. We would need somebody to make this timing and tasks motion. Steve.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to direct staff to do the following: include action to evaluate species for need of conservation and management under the Snapper Grouper FMP in a future unassessed species amendment. Work with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center on possible approach for setting a single ACL with an assessed indicator species for data-poor species. Prepare the wreckfish ITQ modernization amendment (Amendment 48) for scoping during the March 2021 council meeting. Start an amendment in cooperation with the Gulf Council to set a new ACL for yellowtail snapper. Refer to guidance under yellowtail snapper to create a workgroup. Conduct scoping hearings for the red porgy amendment (Amendment 50) in winter 2021 and bring back comments to the committee at the March 2021 meeting. Schedule online public seminar for red Snapper diet composition using DNA barcoding of fish prey, potentially from MARMAP. Prepare greater amberjack amendment (Amendment 49) draft scoping document for the committee to consider during the March 2021 meeting.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Jessica. I failed to scroll down to let you all see the second-to-last bullet was -- We've been approached by staff from the SC DNR, the MARMAP program, to potentially do one of these public seminars, and I thought, if the committee wanted to, we could start looking into scheduling that, and so that's why that was put in there with a question-mark, and so, if you all agree, we'll just leave it, but that's what that's about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think it's okay, but let's get a second here, and then we can have discussion, and, if someone has questions or comments about that, they can bring it up.

MR. BELL: Second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I heard a second, and I believe that was Mel. All right. So this is now under discussion. Any comments on this timing and tasks motion, including any concerns about scheduling this online public seminar about this red snapper diet composition? All right. No hands. I am going to assume there is no comments or questions on this motion. Jack.

DR. MCGOVERN: I have a comment about something else.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is it pertinent to this timing and tasks motion, Jack?

DR. MCGOVERN: Well, it is related to that, and I think you're talking about starting a new yellowtail snapper amendment, and is that right? We have an existing amendment from a while back, Amendment 44, I believe, and we could just continue with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Great point. I don't know if staff needs to figure it out right this second, but, staff, do you want to look into that and then figure out what its number is and figure out if we want to bring that particular one back?

MS. BROUWER: Jack is correct, and thank you for bringing that up, Jack. It is Amendment 44, and it was started several years ago and paused, and it would be fine to continue that assessment, and so, if it's okay with the committee, I can change the wording on the timing and tasks motion, or this can just be direction to staff.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am fine with it being direction to staff. All right. Any more discussion of this timing and tasks motion? **Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, with Myra getting that extra little point on there, this concludes the Snapper Grouper Committee report.** I am going to assume that there is no other business to come before this particular committee, since there was no other business earlier in the week, and I'm going to turn it back over to you, Mel.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, Jessica. Nice job with all of that. We'll shift immediately, as soon as you all are ready, to the next one, which I believe is Mackerel Cobia.

MR. POLAND: The Mackerel Cobia Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council met via webinar on the evening of December 9, 2020. The committee approved the minutes from the June 2020 meeting and the modified agenda. The committee first discussed CMP Framework Amendment 10, which is an action to modify king mackerel catch levels.

Following that discussion, the following motion was approved. **Approve Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 10 for scoping.** On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition to approval of the motion? Hearing none, the motion stands approved.** Following, the committee provided direction to staff, and you can see the bulleted list, and I'm not going to read that, but it's there for reference.

Next, the committee discussed CMP Amendment 32, Gulf cobia catch levels, and we received a presentation from staff from the Gulf Council on the recent assessment results for Gulf cobia and Gulf Council action. We provided the following bulleted list of input for consideration, and no motion was passed for that agenda item.

Following that, the committee received an advisory panel report from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Chair, Ira Laks, and he provided a report on items not discussed in the previous two agenda items, including input on the Citizen Science Program, Spanish mackerel, and changes in advisory panel membership. With that, the committee has the following timing and tasks motion, and I will entertain that motion from anybody. Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: **I move we adopt the following timing and tasks: continue work on CMP Framework Amendment 10 and prepare a draft for discussion and scoping at the March 2020 meeting; continue working with Gulf Council staff to develop CMP Amendment 32 for additional review at the March 2020 meeting.**

MR. POLAND: Thank you. Does that motion have a second?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Second.

MS. WIEGAND: **Myra, will you change those dates to 2021?** Thank you.

MR. POLAND: Fabulous catch. All right. Is there any discussion on the timing and tasks motion? **Is there any opposition to approval of the timing and tasks motion? Hearing none, that motion stands approved.** Unless there is any other business to come before the committee, that concludes the Mackerel Committee report. Thank you.

MR. BELL: All right. Thank you, Steve. We'll set up for Dolphin Wahoo. Anna, when you guys are ready, fire away.

MS. BECKWITH: Thank you. The Dolphin Wahoo Committee met on December 9 by webinar, and the committee approved the minutes from the September 2020 meeting, as well as the agenda. We received the status of amendments under formal review, and we received a summary report from the October 2020 Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel meeting.

Then we went into discussion on dolphin wahoo management measures in Amendment 10. We discussed the amendment and provided the following guidance, as well as made the following motions. **Our first motion was to approve the IPT's suggested purpose and need statement in Amendment 10. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.** If there is any opposition to any of these motions, I encourage folks to just unmute and let me know.

Our second motion was to approve the IPT's suggested edits in Action 3. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Motion 3 was to select Alternative 3 as a preferred alternative in Action 3. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Motion 4 was to approve the IPT's suggested edits in Action 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Our fifth motion was to select Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative in Action 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Motion 6 was to choose Alternative 5 as the preferred in Action 5. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Motion 7 was to add Alternatives 5, 6, and 7 to Action 6. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? The motion carries.**

Motion 8 was to select Alternative 5 as the preferred in Action 6. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Motion 9 was to move Alternatives 6 and 7 in Action 6 into the Considered but Rejected section. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.**

Then we had some additional direction to staff for Action 6, to examine some vessel limits and bag limits and examine these combinations of bag limits and vessel limits, given whichever would be less.

Motion 10 was to select Alternative 2 as preferred in Action 7. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries. We also had some direction to staff under Action 7 to revisit the geometric versus arithmetic mean and provide some examples.

Our eleventh motion was to select Alternative 2 as preferred in Action 8. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Our twelfth motion was to accept the IPT edits to Action 9. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 13 was to select Sub-Alternative 2b and Alternative 3 as preferred. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 14 was to select Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 as preferred in Action 10. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 15 was to add sub-alternatives under Alternative 3 in Action 11 of thirty fish per vessel. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 16 was to add a sub-alternative under Alternative 2 in Action 11 of thirty fish per vessel. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 17 was to add an alternative that is the same as Alternative 3 in Action 11, but includes Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 18 was to select Alternative 1 in Action 12 as the preferred alternative. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 19 was to approve -- Well, should we discuss adding the potential action for vessel and trip limits before doing this motion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I was thinking the same thing.

MS. BECKWITH: I was like don't start saying. Okay. John, talk to us about the kerfuffle that we will put ourselves in if we add an action to consider wahoo trip and vessel limits.

MR. HADLEY: Sure. I guess the bottleneck there is the analysis, and that's something that we can obviously try very hard to have before public hearings, but I can't make promises. I'm not the one doing the work on that, and I know, with the holidays coming up and whatnot, that that's -- That's something we'll work hard to do and get done, but that would be the one issue, is having that ready to go before public hearings, but, as far as the amendment, as long as the council is okay with -- If you can outline exactly what you're thinking about presenting in the amendment, as far as an action and alternatives, and you're okay with the IPT presenting draft language to the public, potentially, if we can have that analysis ready, then we can certainly add that to the amendment going forward, but just knowing that that draft language will be presented before the council gets to review it, if that's your intent, to send that out to public hearings, and knowing that the analysis might not be ready until March.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, and I think I would be okay with the IPT setting up language and us seeing it -- If they can get it done before public hearings, and I think certainly the bag limit reduction would be down to one per person, as that would be the only choice, and I guess a vessel limit would be probably -- I would put three, four, six, I don't know. How about folks throw some numbers out there? Jessica, what are you thinking?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, first, I wanted to agree with you that I'm good with this going out to the public without us seeing it again, and I like what you've suggested so far. Since we don't know what this is going to look like, and not that I like this, but I would rather have a lower bag limit than a closure, or a lower vessel limit, I'm sorry, than a closure, and I'm wondering -- I think you said three, and I can't remember what you said, but can we get one that's two also into that range, just in case?

MS. BECKWITH: How about we do two, four, and six?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

MS. BECKWITH: Because, right now, a charter, a six-pack charter, could conceivably bring in twelve, and, if we want to drop it back down to one per person, I could see it being either six as a vessel limit, or maybe four, if -- You know, one per person or four, whichever is less, kind of scenario, if we needed to go that route, but I can't imagine going under two, and the difference between two and three is probably not that -- I can see us doing two, four, or six, would be likely, but, John, what do you think?

MR. HADLEY: I was just going to suggest potential consideration of up to an eight-fish limit, and I know that that was the limit that the Dolphin Wahoo AP mentioned, and this was the in the context of an accountability measure, but that was a number that was thrown out there, also keeping in mind that, on a six-pack charter, captain and crew, I believe, can retain the limit as well, and so it would be eight fish total, if you had six paying passengers, a captain, and a crew member.

MS. BECKWITH: Okay. That sounds good. Art, go ahead.

MR. SAPP: I need to be heard saying, because I'm hearing it from my guys, that people that are good at catching these things are getting better at it, and seeing more and more of them, and they're

telling me that they believe that wahoo is the next red snapper. I don't believe that they're in near the trouble that we believe them to be at this council, but I had to go on record. Thank you.

MS. BECKWITH: Art, just to that point, I don't think that we think they're in trouble, but I just think they're not an assessed species, and, based on the ACL that we've been provided, given our ABC control rule, we recognize that, because of availability, or people are fishing for them more, or catching them, that we are bouncing up against a closure, and so it's more likely that this would be the next cobia than it would be the next red snapper, but, Mel.

MR. BELL: I'm okay with the approach and in terms of taking what the IPT comes up with. I mean, the IPT would have -- They would be able to do that in time, I'm assuming, John?

MR. HADLEY: We can certainly come up with the language. The analysis, I know we'll certainly do our best, but we'll see there, but we'll certainly try our best to get that done ahead of time, but I can't necessarily promise that beforehand.

MR. BELL: Right. Well, here's an even goofier question. I mean, can you develop the language and then can we see it, and can that be sent to us before the meeting and all? Is that possible?

MR. HADLEY: Sure, and that's something -- We have an IPT meeting scheduled for January 4, I believe, and the IPT could review draft language and then send it to -- I don't know if you're okay with maybe the Chair and Vice Chair of the council and the Dolphin Wahoo Committee for review, and if the council is okay with that, and we're going for a quick turnaround, because there is probably -- We'll probably be jumping up against the briefing book deadline for the public hearings, but I think we can make that happen.

MR. BELL: Well, we can lay eyes on it that way.

MR. HADLEY: Absolutely.

MS. BECKWITH: I mean, I'm okay with that, Mel, having you look at it, and I can look at it, and, obviously, Steve, and I think Art is the Vice Chair of Dolphin Wahoo, if he wants to look at it. I mean, that's all good, and I just -- I am comfortable with having you look at it or the IPT. Whichever gets it done, I'm okay with.

MR. BELL: It just keeps it moving.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes. Okay. It sounds like you don't need that in the form of a motion, and direction to staff is enough, John, or did you want that in the form of a motion?

MR. HADLEY: I mean, I think that's okay as direction to staff, as long as -- It sounds like, for the most part, council members are okay with considering it. If that's not true, then maybe a motion would be helpful, but I think, in this case, direction to staff would be okay, and we could come back to it, and they would vote for -- Either way, you would be voting for approval of it in Amendment 10 at the March 2021 meeting.

MS. BECKWITH: Okay. All right. Sounds good. Okay. Then let's get back to that last motion, and then we'll do the timing and tasks motion. **Our last motion, Motion 19, was to approve all**

actions in Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10, as modified, for public hearings to take place before the March 2021 meeting. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.** I'm sure that Steve would be happy to move our timing and tasks motion.

MR. POLAND: I wouldn't use the word "happy", but I will make it. **Move to approve the following timing and tasks: conduct public hearings for Amendment 10 before the March 2021 meeting; continue work on Amendment 10 for review at the March 2021 meeting.**

MS. BECKWITH: Do I have a second to that motion?

DR. BELCHER: I second it.

MS. BECKWITH: Thank you. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.** Is there any other business to come before the Dolphin Wahoo Committee? Seeing and hearing none, we conclude our business. Thank you.

MR. BELL: All right. Thanks, Anna. Next would be Steve and the Habitat Ecosystem, when you guys are ready.

MR. POLAND: The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council met via webinar on the evening of December 8, 2020. The council quickly dispensed with approval of the revised agenda and the minutes from the March 2020 meeting.

We discussed Coral Amendment 10, and we received a presentation from staff on the options paper, as well as input from the Chair of the Habitat AP, the Coral AP, and the Deepwater Shrimp AP. Staff discussed the amendment, and we made the following motion. **Move that we choose Option 2a as preferred. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Hearing none, that motion stands approved.** Next, the committee received multiple presentations on the Ecopath with Ecosim model development and review.

MS. BROUWER: Steve, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I think you skipped over Motion 2, to approve the amendment for scoping.

MR. POLAND: I am so sorry. **The committee made the following motion to approve Coral Amendment 10 for scoping at the March 2021 council meeting. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Hearing none, that motion stands approved.**

Then the committee received multiple presentations on the Ecopath with Ecosim model development and review. Presentations were provided by the modeling team and staff on the model development and application in support of fishery management. Council staff provided input on the EwE model, as well as provided an overview. The SSC Chair presented the South Atlantic EwE model review and SSC recommendations from their October 2020 meeting, where the SSC endorsed the review as presented and included a recommendation to establish a standing ecosystem model workgroup to support future model development and application.

The committee expressed support for the South Atlantic EwE model team to work with the SSC Ecosystem Model Workgroup to complete the Ecosim review and, working with the SSC Chair, establish a process to address one or two of the priority questions noted below, and there is a screenshot from one of the presentations that the committee received, where we discussed potential application of the EwE model and a couple of questions relevant to our fishery management needs.

Following, the Habitat Committee discussed the creation of an ecosystem program blueprint workgroup, and staff provided an overview on council habitat and ecosystem mandates and Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management AP responsibilities and functions and other support from the habitat program. The committee discussed development of a habitat and ecosystem blueprint and established establishment of a Habitat and Ecosystem Blueprint Development Team to discuss the scope and process to develop an overarching document.

Following that discussion, the committee passed a motion that the council establish a Habitat and Ecosystem Blueprint Development Team. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Hearing none, that motion stands approved.

Next, we received advisory panel reports from three previous Habitat AP meetings. The Chair of the Habitat AP updated us on work and discussions that the AP has had with BOEM and wind energy projects and updates on ongoing research and newly mapped and characterized deepwater coral ecosystems in the South Atlantic. She reviewed technical presentations characterizing sand shoal habitats and the science behind that and revisions to the council's policy statement on beach dredge and fill and renourishment and large-scale coastal engineering.

She reviewed input that the AP provided to NOAA researchers developing NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center South Atlantic Climate Vulnerability Assessment and the South Atlantic Ecosystem Status Report. Then she discussed continued support and work on the council's FEP II. Following that, we had one agenda item that the committee was not able to get to and deferred to the next committee meeting.

With that, before we adopt the following timing and tasks motion, we had some discussion, during the Executive Finance Committee, on the workplan and timing, and there was some confusion, or there were some differences in timing, for the Coral Amendment 10. During committee, we had discussed -- In the options document, the timeframe had the council taking final approval in September, but, during the Executive Finance Committee, we modified that on the workplan to show council action in June, and so I wanted to bring this up, in case the council wanted to modify this timing and tasks to reflect our discussion earlier today. I see I have two hands up. Chester, go ahead.

MR. BREWER: I did not raise my hand to speak to the timing and tasks, and so I will wait for a little while, until that issue is resolved, and then I will put my hand up again.

MR. POLAND: All right. Thank you, Chester. Jessica.

MS. MCCAULEY: To speak to the timing and tasks motion, based on what happened at Executive Finance, I agree that -- I think it's fine to try to finish up that Coral Amendment 10 at the June meeting, as opposed to the September meeting. I feel like that there's not a ton of work

that needs to be done on it, and there was work done on it in the past, and I think it would be great if we could free up some more staff time and finish this one meeting sooner.

MR. POLAND: All right. Thank you, Jessica. Mel.

MR. BELL: I agree, and I like that approach, and we freed up a little time, and so good.

MR. POLAND: All right. Do we need to modify the language in the timing and tasks to reflect that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think I would.

MR. POLAND: All right. Myra, I guess, under Bullet 1, and I was going to see what you wordsmithed.

MS. BROUWER: Is this okay with you, Mr. Chair?

MR. POLAND: Yes, ma'am.

MS. BROUWER: While I have the mic, if you don't mind, this wording here in italics -- I had suggested to Roger that he stick it in there, just to bring attention to the fact that this may affect some timing issues, and so I just wanted you all to be aware, and I don't know that those discussions took place specifically for these two items in the Executive Committee, but just to make sure you're aware. Thank you.

MR. POLAND: Thank you, Myra. We didn't get around to discussing these items in the Executive Committee, and I was going to pose a discussion to the council, after we took care of --

(There is a gap in the audio recording of approximately fifty-five minutes.)

DR. BELCHER: -- Moving forward, this is where we're at, and they're supposed to recommence next week to do that second cut, and then they'll move forward with the remaining five cuts, and so are there any questions?

MR. BELL: That's an amazing salvage job.

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and MDSU is not there anymore. They've transitioned over, and they have got their own dive crew now.

MR. BELL: Well, it's a big one.

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MR. BELL: All right. Any questions for Carolyn in general? I don't see any. As we're transitioning out of this, I forgot about CARES, and my comment on CARES is I never thought it would be this hard to give away money, but we're dealing with that, too. All right. Thanks, Carolyn. Jessica, do you want to cover Florida?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Mel. We are still in COVID mode, and I'm not going to go into the details of that. I'm going to talk to you about what's coming up to our virtual FWC Commission meeting next week, and there are lots of topics that you guys might be interested in. We will have a lengthy presentation on sharks and focus on the shark predation issue, and our commission will talk about some avenues that they might like to pursue on that front.

We will be bringing a draft rule for Western Dry Rocks, and you guys might remember that this is an area off of Key West, and it's in state waters, and it's a multispecies spawning aggregation, and so we have mutton, and we have permit, and we have a number of grouper spawning there, and this was actually an area that the council recommended during the mutton snapper discussions. The council recommended that the FWC at least do a seasonal closure at this area, and that didn't happen during the mutton discussions, and it's coming up again as part of the sanctuary discussions, and so the commission will look at a draft rule and hold workshops in early 2021, and then hopefully take final action on this maybe in the spring of 2021.

We'll also be bringing what we call a review and discussion pre-rulemaking on permit, pompano, and African pompano. We've had a number of requests to make changes to those rules that are in state and federal waters, and so we'll be starting to work on that. I talked to you guys before that we are bringing rules for flounder changes for state and federal waters, and we're hoping that the commission takes final action on that next week.

Another item that you guys might be interested in is we are going to start talking about lobster casitas, and so we will be starting to look at that, starting with the discussion next week, and we have a white paper just completed on using casitas for using management in the lobster fishery and how that would affect the other portions of the fishery, such as the trap portion of the fishery, and then, last, but not least, at the February commission meeting, our commission will be speaking again on goliath grouper and whether or not they would like to consider some type of limited harvest opportunities for goliath in state waters.

These are webinar commission meetings, or at least the December one is, and we're unsure, at this point, about the February meeting, and I can send you guys some links, if you would like to watch our commission meeting next week. Right now, the bulk of the marine items are on Wednesday the 16th.

MR. BELL: Okay. Thanks, Jessica. Yes, that would be -- I mean, it's like we can't get enough virtual meetings, but a couple of those might be interesting, if you don't mind passing the links along. Was that it?

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's it, and I will stop there, but I see Tony has his hand up.

MR. BELL: Okay. Tony.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jessica, with the goliath grouper harvesting, what's the -- Has there been any consideration about the fact that they're long-lived and slow-growing and that they could become bioaccumulators, and so there might be a consumption issue?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Oh, yes. We've talked about it before, and the commission talked about this -- The last time was in 2018, and they did discuss all of those things as part of their consideration

for limited harvest, and they decided, in 2018, that they did not want to consider harvest in state waters, and so we're actually bringing back that same information and a similar limited harvest opportunity proposal in state waters, but, yes, bioaccumulation of mercury and the unique life history of goliath -- All of those things are part of the presentation.

MR. DILERNIA: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. BELL: Any other questions for Jessica? I don't see any hands, and then we can roll right into our liaison folks, and so, Tony, have you got anything from the Mid that you want to pass along?

MR. DILERNIA: Well, I've got my liaison report, and it sounds like now is the time, Mr. Chairman, correct?

MR. BELL: That's right.

MR. DILERNIA: Very good. Thank you. First of all, I would like to alter my report by -- Just a personal note to Regional Administrator Crabtree, and I want to thank him for all the years that I have worked with him, and it's been a pleasure and an honor to work with Roy, and I will miss him at the council table, although I'm sure we'll see each other socially. Although at times we may disagree, and the majority of the time we do agree, and it's really been a pleasure to work with you, Roy, and good luck to you in your retirement.

DR. CRABTREE: Thank you, Tony.

MR. DILERNIA: My pleasure, Roy. As far as my report is concerned, well, the Mid met in October for four days, and the October meeting was a bit light. What we did was we revised our 2021 specifications for spiny dogfish and adopted new specifications for 2022. We reviewed our previously implemented 2021 specifications for chub mackerel, and we did not recommend any changes.

Just like you did, we received a request for a response to an Executive Order, Executive Order 13921, and we approved a list of eighteen recommendations, and I believe your council, Mr. Chairman, may have received a copy of our letter responding to that request. If not, I'm sure you're going to have a copy made available to you.

We also had a joint meeting of the council and the SSC to continue to support open communications and continue development of SSC activities in support of council priorities. We revised and finalized the range of alternatives for the bluefish allocation and rebuilding amendment, and that we did in conjunction with the ASMFC. For some folks who don't know it, at times, we have jointly-managed species, and the most common jointly-managed species are bluefish and summer flounder and scup and black sea bass.

In order to ensure that we have comparable regulations, we meet jointly with the commission for the recreational specifications for those species, and so, when we developed our bluefish allocation rebuilding amendment, we did that jointly with the commission.

Then the council received a report from the Executive Committee regarding the draft deliverables for 2021, and that draft will be reviewed again in our next meeting, and that helps me transition to my next topic, which is our next meeting, which is next week, and we will meet again next week, via webinar, and we will finalize our implementation plan at that time, and we'll receive an update on habitat activities, including updates on offshore wind. Offshore wind is big in the Mid-Atlantic, and so we've been closely monitoring offshore wind developments.

To that point also, Mr. Chairman, if I may, the State of New York has asked me to serve as the liaison between the New York State Research Development Authority, Energy Authority, and the recreational fishing community. If there are any recreational fishermen that have questions regarding the development of offshore wind, they are free to contact me, and I will be happy to answer any questions and provide any information they may want. Let's see. What else?

Then, on Tuesday afternoon of next week, we will meet jointly again with the commission, and we will set our specifications, the recreational specifications, for scup and the recreational specification of black sea bass and for summer flounder, and then, on Wednesday, we will looking at -- We're trying to reform, or trying to refine, a way to change perhaps the way we manage our recreational fisheries, and so there's a working group that has been titled the Recreational Reform Initiative, and we will receive a report from that group.

We're also working on a summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass commercial and recreational allocation amendment. Just like you all did, we received updated recreational landings, which would affect what has been the traditional commercial/recreational split on those species, and we have a committee that's working on how we may reallocate the quota between the two user groups.

We have a black sea bass commercial state allocation amendment that is up for review, or perhaps even final action, at our next meeting, and, finally, we have an update on right whale issues, and that's all happening next week, and I will be happy to answer any questions, and I invite Dewey Hemilright, if Dewey has anything more to add to my report, and I believe -- I think Chris Conklin was your liaison to our last council meeting. I will take questions, and I will hold back, if either Dewey or Chris have any additional comments to make.

MR. BELL: Okay. Any questions for Tony about what he has presented so far or anything? I don't see any hands, and does Dewey have any other input? Okay. It looks like maybe you got it covered. I will be -- I guess I will be virtually with you, at least next week, for the joint Mid and ASMFC stuff, and so I'll be there for a little bit.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you.

MR. BELL: All right, and thanks, Tony, so much, and have fun with that wind energy stuff, and that's interesting.

MR. DILERNIA: It is. For the recreational community, there's lots of aspects I think that are positive. The commercial guys have some concerns, but, again, I am very happy to answer any questions, and I will be posting a YouTube video called Offshore Wind 101, and that will be posted the first week of January, and folks can visit that to get the basic 101 on offshore wind. Again, thank you very much.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Tony. We appreciate you being here.

MR. DILERNIA: It's always a pleasure.

MR. BELL: We will go to the Gulf next, and were you going to queue something up for that, someone? There we go.

MR. DIAZ: There you go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief, and I just have a few items. First, I want to let you know that the next meeting of the Gulf Council is January 25 through 28 of next year, and a lot of the items that I wanted to discuss you all covered very well during your committees, and that being yellowtail, mackerel, and cobia, and so I'm not going to go into those, and the main thing in my report that I wanted to mention to you is we did get a presentation from Dr. Greg Stunz about the Great Red Snapper Count.

The long and short of it is that, at the end of the day, at the end of the study, the research, it turns out that there is about 110 million red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico, and that's about three times as many as we were estimating under the SEDAR data assessment and review stock assessment process, and so that's the big thing that came out of it, and those are preliminary results, until they announce everything to be final, and so bear in mind that's preliminary.

I did want to mention to you all that this is one of the best presentations that we've had given to us at the Gulf Council, and there is such a wealth of information of the things that were done with this count. They have new gear that was developed to do population counts in a lot of different environments that we just couldn't get counts in before, and, at some point in time, it may be well worth your while for the South Atlantic to actually get that presentation, and it's just a lot new, ground-breaking stuff, and, like I said, it's the best presentation that I've seen in a long, long time.

That's the only fisheries issue that I plan on covering, but I do want to thank you all for your hospitality, and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is well run, and I'm impressed every time I come here, and I always get good ideas from you all, and you all are doing innovating things, and I've already sent Carrie an email with some bulleted points on some of the ideas that I took back from this meeting, and I just wanted to thank you for your hospitality. One last time, I want to say congratulations to Roy, and I hope you have a great retirement, Roy, and, lastly, I hope that everybody has a merry Christmas. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Dale. It's always good to have you, and eventually we'll get back together in real person, and that will be great, and, yes, the red snapper count -- We're kind of entering in a greatly-reduced effort here, and so it's not quite the Great Red Snapper Count, and I'm not sure what we'll call ours, and it might be the lesser or something, but, yes, that is an -- That would be of interest, I think, to folks, to kind of check that out, and so we do appreciate your input. Any questions for Dale? I don't see any. Thank you, Dale. That takes us to the Regional Office. Roy or Jack or somebody, do you all have anything you want to pass along at this point?

DR. MCGOVERN: I have one thing, Mel. I just want to bring to the attention of the council that there's going to be an update of the regional electronic monitoring and electronic implementation plan, and this was a plan that was developed in 2015, and it's getting updated now, and the lead on it is Jessica Stephen from our office, and Dave Gloeckner, I believe, is the lead from the Science Center.

It's supposed to be completed by March 26, and we're going to be working with John and you, Mel, to figure out how to have the council review and provide input before the March deadline, and, Dale, we'll be reaching out to Carrie and Tom about it too, and there are also going to be annual updates to the plan, so there's more room for council input along the way.

The other thing, will I have the mic, is I just want to thank Brian for all his service to the council, and also for his interaction with the Southeast Regional Office, and I feel like he's really helped us out and allowed for a synergistic kind of approach to developing all these amendments, and, also, I want to congratulate Myra for being a new Deputy and taking Brian's place, and I know she's going to be awesome, and then we're all going to miss Roy, and you guys see him in his role as a council member, and he's done a lot for management of fishery resources in the Gulf and the South Atlantic and the Caribbean, and I do believe that fisheries are doing better because of him, but he's really done an outstanding job in the office too, with his leadership and example and his sense of humor, and he's really made our office a much better, happier, and more productive place. That's all I have to say, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BELL: All right. Well, thank you, Jack. I appreciate that, and I do appreciate the update on the implementation plan, because we did have a question about that, and so we look forward to reengaging with you guys on that at the appropriate time. Any question for Jack?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thank you, Jack, for the kind words there. I appreciate it.

MR. BELL: All right. Okay. Clay, do you or John have anything that you want to pass along?

DR. WALTER: I think Clay had to sign-off, to go take a kid to football practice, and all I wanted to say is that I hope that everyone has a good holiday, and I guess this is the last of the council meetings for this year, and, in fact, Roy's last council meeting overall, and so, on behalf of the Science Center, I want to thank him for his service, and we look forward to working with whoever steps into that position and continuing our good relationships with the council and the Regional Office.

MR. BELL: Thank you, John, and, again, welcome aboard, from our standpoint, and we're going to enjoy working with you, and we appreciate you being here now. Any questions for John from anyone? I don't see any. That would take us to NOAA OLE.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I am last, and so I will be very short. The report was sent out to staff, and so hopefully that's made it out, and that's twenty-one pages long. There were 156 open incidents in the South Atlantic in the fourth quarter, and twenty of those had summary settlements issued. Five were forwarded to General Counsel, and the remaining were handled with fix-its and compliance assistance or written warnings.

Summary settlements ranged from \$275 for retention during a closure to \$1,500 for permit violations, and, of those twenty that were summary settlements, four were for closed area in the South Atlantic, four were for fishing in the National Marine Sanctuary closed areas, three seasonal closure violations, two bag limit, two permit violations, one commercial and one charter, and the others were a variety of undersized and gear violations and National Marine Sanctuary grounding violations.

The five cases forwarded to General Counsel, one was a TED violation, one was a variety of HMS violations, electronic monitoring, spatial incursion, and ICCAT. One was exceeding the bag limit and lacking permits, and a second was one for lacking permits, and the last one was for possession of undersized fish.

One thing that I wanted to comment on is Roy, with his thirty-years-plus of fisheries expertise, mentioned VMS early on in this council meeting, and so I thought I would just give a quick highlight, and it's contained in the report as well, but there is 1,038 vessels with VMS installed between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils. 856 are in the Gulf region, from Gulf reef fish vessels, and there's 104 in the HMS fishery, which is the pelagic longliners, in both the Gulf and South Atlantic, which leaves there is seventy-eight VMS vessels in the South Atlantic, and those are all rock shrimp.

For comparison, there are also 920 vessels equipped with VMS units in the Northeast Division, and just a reminder that the Gulf Council, the HMS fishery, and the Northeast Council all use VMS for extensive data collection, to include catch reporting, set reporting, declarations, pre-arrival notices, in addition to the original benefits of location data, to assist law enforcement with the myriad of MPAs and SMZs that the council continues to employ to protect our resources.

Finally, after eleven months, our three new enforcement officers are actually onboard, and that's Cape Canaveral, Miami, and the USVI, and the Cape Canaveral officer is already undergoing field training and is down at the docks with his field trainer, while the Miami and USVI officers are completing other training.

From this council, I took note of the mackerel concerns voiced during public comment, and so I will work to ensure that that will get some extra attention off of Florida, with my new enforcement officer there, and I also took note of the request for more law enforcement in North Carolina, and I personally called and passed that to my one North Carolina enforcement officer, who is actively completing his fiftieth boarding this week checking bluefin tuna boats coming into Morehead City, and so my one guy is actively employed and doing the best that he can.

Our only special agent hiring announcement just closed, and we'll be filling positions in a vacant position in Charleston and adding a fourth special agent in Miami that will focus on IUU and other issues in south Florida, and, finally, on behalf of the Office of Law Enforcement, we would like to say a collective thank you to Roy as well, as we could not have asked for a more ardent supporter of law enforcement in a Regional Administrator. He was always keenly aware of the challenges and limitations that we experienced. We wish him the very best in retirement and an abundance of as many lingcod fish as he can manage in retirement. That's all I have, unless there are any questions, and I wish everybody a happy Hannukah, a merry Christmas, and a happy new year.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Pat. I was glad to hear that you guys are finally getting some folks onboard, because it always amazes me how much area you have to cover with such few people. Any questions for Pat? All right. Thanks for sticking with us, Pat. We appreciate your report, and I think that's it, because I believe we don't have a Coast Guard report, and so that finishes the reports.

That takes us to Other Business. Is there any other business to come before the council? You all must be hungry. Okay. No hands and no other business. John, the only thing on there was upcoming meetings, and do we need to discuss anything about upcoming meetings? I know it seems that March will probably be in the virtual world, but I'm not sure what you wanted to discuss beyond that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mel, thank you, and just one last little bit of business before going into that, and I did want to extend a thanks on behalf of all of us to our SSC Chair, who has been here all week, and we have really appreciated Genny's efforts and discussions and participating in the discussions, and also our AP chairs, who have been in and out this week, and I think it's really been great how we've been able to get them more engaged.

SERO staff, we really thank you all for your help in getting the briefing book together. There's a lot of documents in here, and we've really limited the number of late documents, and that folder doesn't have much in it these days, and what it does tends to be late-breaking stuff that we knew was going to be in there, and so we definitely appreciate you all's efforts in helping us get the council better informed.

Just one last shout-out, and, as you all know, we've talked about the MyFishCount program that the council has been working on for several years, and that chapter is coming to a close here at the end of the year, and it's going to be taken over by the Angler Action Foundation, Brett and company, and you all know those guys, and our staff on that, BeBe, has just done an outstanding job promoting that project and really getting it a lot of attention on a higher level, and some just - - There has been some amazing awards and stuff given out through that and promotions that have come from different manufacturers, and so it's been great to see the interest in that and see that the awareness and spreading the word on that thing has happened, and so I feel like we're passing that thing off in really good shape to those guys, which will be nice, and we look forward to that program continuing to evolve and providing information, hopefully, that we can start using in management, and even someday stock assessments, which will be great.

I just didn't want to end without saying that, and I know it's been a long day, and everybody is most definitely hungry, and, Mel, I will just say, on the meetings, you see what we have on the docket so far, and, as usual, April will be a very busy month, and we have a few things coming up in January.

Right out of the gate, we're going to have that SSC meeting to look at the snowy grouper assessment, primarily, and then we've got the Law Enforcement AP in February, and we'll be doing some scoping, and we'll be doing some more scoping between now and March, and then we have the March meeting, which is in early March, and so that's going to come up on us really fast after the first of the year, and so, you guys that are committee chairs and such, can look forward to hearing from staff in early January about agendas, as we start planning for that meeting, and we haven't closed the book on this one yet, but we will already start thinking about the next one. Mel, that concludes my comments on there, and I would be glad to take any questions on any of the meetings, if anybody has any.

MR. BELL: Any questions on meetings, folks? As Steve pointed out earlier, hopefully nobody is suffering from virtual meeting toxicity syndrome, but that may become a new thing, and I don't know. Okay. Then that's all we have, and I do appreciate --

DR. CRABTREE: Mel, could I have the final word?

MR. BELL: Yes, sir.

DR. CRABTREE: I would like to make a motion.

MR. BELL: Okay.

DR. CRABTREE: First, I would like to say congratulations to Brian, and we'll have to meet in central Florida and go racing in the streets one day. To Myra, congratulations on your job. You're going to be great. Thank you to all of you. With that, I would offer a motion to adjourn.

MR. BELL: Very well. Do we have a second? We have a mass second. All right, guys. Have a great Christmas, and happy new year, and I know that everybody is going to be done with 2020, and so we will see you guys again in 2021, and so everybody have a good one. Thanks again, Roy and Brian, for your careers. We really appreciate your contributions.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 10, 2020.)

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SAFMC December Council Meeting

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Allen	Shanae
BYRD	01JULIA
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Porch	00Clay
Pugliese	Matt
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Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Spanik	Kevin
Spurgin	Kali
Stafford	Mimi
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Sweetman	CJ
Travis	Michael
Vara	Mary
Walia	Matthew
Walter	John
Whitaker	David
Wiegand	01Christina
Williams	Erik
Willis	Michelle
Wilson	Scotty
Woodward	00Spud
brewer	00chester
collier	01chip
crabtree	00Roy
crosson	scott
poland	00steve
sandorf	scott
thomas	01suz