

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION II

**Westin Jekyll Island
Jekyll Island, Georgia**

March 9-10, 2023

TRANSCRIPT

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Gary Borland
Tim Griner
Kerry Marhefka
Tom Roller
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Dr. John Walter

Dale Diaz
Dewey Hemilright
Dr. Jack McGovern
Thomas Newman
Monica Smit-Brunello

Other attendees and invited participants attached.

The Full Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Thursday, March 9, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Welcome to Full Council Session Number II, and, just to give you all a little bit of an idea of what changes have occurred, Lieutenant Box is not available to give the Coast Guard report, and so, where we had talked about that earlier in the week, him presenting today, he's not going to be able to, and so we won't be doing that. As we go down the list of items that we have left, Monica had asked, earlier in the week, about talking during Snapper Grouper, and I'm saying it out loud, so I don't forget, but we're going to have you speak to the wreckfish when we go into the Snapper Grouper report. Coming down the list, we've already gone through the litigation brief, and so, John, we're going to shift it to you for the staff reports.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right. Thank you, Carolyn. Let me call this up. I've got a few items that I will highlight. This is in the briefing book, but just a few pieces to note on here, the highlights part. First of all, in the citizen science, the Release 2022 data summary went out, and everybody was provided links to that, and it's here as well. That's a really interesting report that shows the data that's been collected and what they've been doing, and so, you know, I encourage everybody to take a look at that. It was very interesting, and there's other bullets here about other activities that have been going on. SciFish continues.

FISHstory, I wanted to point out that they've begun to gather additional photos for the FISHstory project, and this has been going on for a number of years, and one of the ideas, when this started, was to try and reach out and get photos from other areas, and we've been successful in making some progress at this.

There's a lot of interest from captains, as you see here, from other parts of the coast to start sharing photos, and they found this amazing trove of photos up at the Outer Banks, in Manteo, and we're looking at getting that for project use, and so this has been great, and it really shows that project has a lot of applicability. There's so many historical photos there, and there's no end to kind of the things that can keep coming from this, and we can get a better indication on what our fisheries might have looked like back before we were really collecting data, and, you know, there's other things in here, and, like I said, I will just highlight a few.

One thing that's coming up that we're excited about is the Citizen Science Program initial evaluation of the project, and so a big part of doing this was not just to go out and do this program and build it, but then to be able to come back and see how it's doing and if we're making progress on the goals and objectives that were come up with when this program was initially developed, and so we're working with Rick Bonney, who has just been incredible and supportive and a great resource to us throughout this whole thing, and we're working on the evaluations, and I think we have contractors lined up, and so Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes and Tracy Yandle, and both associated with our SSC and SEP. Tracy was, before she went back to New Zealand, and Jennifer is now, and we have worked with her and a student of hers, and so great folks who know us, who know our fisheries, who know our region, and know this program, and so I think they're going to do an outstanding job on that.

Looking at the communication update, one exciting thing here, which I think you'll find useful, is we've started to archive meeting briefing books going back in time, and we have a few years on

there, from when we started the new website, but there's now been a tool developed that allows bulk uploading, and so we're going to go back as far as we can in the period that we've been doing electronic briefing books, and put as much information like that as we can within an archived area, and so, if you, you know, start wondering about a meeting and what was provided maybe ten years ago in a briefing book, all that stuff will be on the website, and it will make it a lot easier for you to just get whatever you're interested in.

Hopefully you noticed, this week, we have a new public comment tool, and we've been using the Wufoo tool for quite a while. It wasn't ideal, particularly in terms of using it look at comments and navigating the screen display that you got, and so a new form has been built, using Google Forms. Those of you familiar with the Gulf, it's a very similar system to what's been used there, and hopefully it's easier to users, as well as easier to you guys for looking at what the comments are, and so we're excited to finally have that up and running for you.

There's a few more other things, you know, and we continue to add improvements and more content to this new website that we have, and so, you know, anytime you think of something that you think might be useful, by all means, reach out to Nick. He's always, you know, glad to hear feedback and what you find useful and what you think maybe could help it.

The CCC Communications Workgroup, and the CCC has, you know, a number of groups, and we've talked about some of them here this week, and the communication group is all the communication professionals from all eight councils. They meet occasionally, and they recently got together, in February, to go over a number of issues about how the different councils have approached communications.

It's been good, in the post-COVID world, for council staffs nationwide to get together and share tools about what was learned then, and, you know, for most of us, our practices have changed significantly, as people have become much more comfortable in the electronic world, and so, you know, the feedback I got was that was a really great meeting, and they covered a list of topics that was truly impressive, but folks did a lot of homework going into it, and, you know, I talked with Emily from the Gulf, down at MREP, and she said just folks came so well prepared, and they were really excited for the meeting, and they really thought it was a great use of their time to get together and share notes and best practices, really.

I mentioned MREP, and that was also held recently, in February, just a few weeks ago, and we had a few council members that were there. Captain Judy and Laurilee were both there at MREP, and we had a number of staff folks that were there, and it was a really good session. You know, it's always great to meet people who are new into the system, in a lot of cases, and wanting to learn more about this whole council world.

ICAST is coming up in 2023, and we'll have a presence there, like we normally do. We're really building on the idea of tackle shops being trusted and effective sources for communicating to anglers, and we're going to probably be going into this ICAST trying to focus on the tackle shop owners and such who are walking around the floor and try to get those who are involved in selling stuff to snapper grouper anglers, and others, to really be aware of the requirements for descending devices and circle hooks and all that stuff, and, you know, we're trying to make inroads with them, so that, you know, like tackle shop owners may come to us when they have a question, instead of taking the rumors that swirl around the docks and the parking lots and stuff.

A couple of new items added on here that I wanted to highlight, and one is SMZ, and so our special spawning management zones. We have some that will sunset in 2027, unless we take action, and so The Nature Conservancy has been working with Will Haymans at LGL to evaluate some of the SMZs that are out there, and we've been talking about trying to get these evaluated, and we're looking for opportunities to get some funding, so folks can get out there in the zones and see what is happening and see what they're seeing, as far as spawning fish and such, and, you know, Will just has a great record of doing this kind of work in the South Atlantic, and so we're pretty excited to see that this is coming together, and we're optimistic that this is going to give us some evaluation and information.

Then the last part I want to highlight is the National Draft Seafood Strategy, and we've heard some mention about this, and I know Shery McCoy mentioned it in her comments the other night, and the importance of it, and the important thing to note is that written comments can be submitted online until March 16, which is one week from today, and so NOAA provided a slide on this, that just highlights what it's about. You know, there's four objectives in the strategy: sustaining or increasing sustainable U.S. wild-capture production, increasing sustainable U.S. aquaculture production, fostering access to domestic and global markets for the seafood industry, and strengthening the entire U.S. seafood sector.

Those of you involved in these aspects of seafood harvesting and seafood retailing, et cetera, just make a note that written input is due by March 16, and there's an online form in there that you can go to and provide your input. They did have a couple of verbal comment periods. As you can see, they weren't exactly conducive to our discussions, and, you know, with the timing of this, we didn't have time to get a presentation on the agenda and get comments in, and so I'm just encouraging, you know, folks, as individuals, to send comments on the strategy. That concludes the report, and I will be glad to take any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Any questions for John, or discussion about any of the points that John brought up? Mel.

MR. BELL: It's not a question, and it's been said several times at the meeting already, but I'm seeing a lot more than I used to related to maximizing our wild-caught fisheries and all, and we're just losing infrastructure like mad, and I don't know how, you know, we deal with this at a high level, but I know I'm seeing it in South Carolina, and other states are seeing it as well, but, if you've got no place to tie up your boat, or offload, or facilities to handle catch and all, you know, how do you maintain, and it may not be as bad in other regions, but we have some examples this year, in South Carolina, that are hitting us, and I have just noticed that, and it's not an easy thing to deal with, because, you know, it's ownership of private property in areas, a lot of times, and, you know, you see folks reach a point where they get a good offer on a nice piece of waterfront property that used to have seven or eight shrimp boats there, and, you know, now it's going to be condos or something, but, you know, that's a problem they're facing. If you can't maintain infrastructure to support the fisheries, how do you have fisheries? I'm just venting, and I'm sorry.

DR. BELCHER: Good comments. I've got Tom and Kerry. Laurilee, did you want to say something after that? Okay. Dewey.

MR. ROLLER: I wanted to join Mel in his vent here for a second, because I feel the same. That's something that I see in my home community, fishing community, as well as all the communities in North Carolina, and it's not just the wild-capture commercial fisheries, and it's also a lot of our general fishing infrastructure, like the for-hire industry, and it's becoming harder and harder and harder to have just a place to clean fish, right, and not just a place to launch your boat, and not everything can operate at public boat ramps, and it's changing the entire face and economy of our for-hire sector, and I wonder what that will look like, going forward, because, you know, one negative about it is, when it all becomes really consolidated, maybe around just a couple of fish houses, or a couple of, you know, semi-public docks, that's also not good for industry as well, because that leads to less competition, right, and so I don't know what we do about it, but it is a huge concern in all our communities.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Tom. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am guessing it's not appropriate for the council to make a comment during this comment period, or else we would have talked about it, and is there a way that we could comment as a council that could be very general, obviously, and I'm not saying that commercial fishing is the most important thing in the world or anything like that, but there are, I think, certain things that we all do agree on, loss of infrastructure, and I think, regardless of where you stand on a lot of issues, I don't believe that there has ever been a sitting body of the South Atlantic Council that has ever said, you know, all wild-caught fisheries in the U.S. is bad.

I mean, there might be some general things that may be more challenging, and, if it's not appropriate, I accept that, but I'm sitting there looking at the comment period and thinking that a comment from this body would weigh more heavily than a comment from, you know, me as an individual, or Tim as an individual, and I do believe there's a way that could be said that could just hit the highlights that were things that we all agreed on as a council, without getting into the sort of like allocation and all that crazy stuff.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The main reason we didn't bring it that way is because of the time period that we have, knowing that we basically have a week after the meeting, and it can be a little difficult to get, you know, a formal council comment developed in that time. If folks have some thoughts they wanted to share, we could consider it, to see if we could get something prepared for the council chair's signature in the next week.

DR. BELCHER: Sleep is overrated. It's fine.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Maybe just focusing, you know, on infrastructure and stuff is one thing, because it's something we have heard about. You know, I think folks probably support the objectives, see them as valid. The question is, you know, how you go about achieving them and express the concern about the loss of access and infrastructure, which, actually, as this was being said, I was thinking about, you know, the effort that will be coming along later in the year about the recreational program goals and objectives and policy, because access is just as important there.

You know, for us, we normally think about anglers in boats, but I think, increasingly, even shore-bound anglers are losing access to so many places in our coastal communities where they could just go down and fish and access the water, and, as condos and fences get built, everyone is losing that, and so I think it's -- You know, it's definitely an issue that transcends all of our sectors.

DR. BELCHER: So, Kerry, thanks for that point, and, yes, I mean, whatever staff can do, and, if that's something that the group feels strongly about, I'm willing to do whatever we need to do. Dewey, and then I had Tom.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Just to follow-up on Mel's comments, dockage in northeast North Carolina is becoming a premium, of where to dock at, and a lot of folks don't have trailerable boats. We're still in the industry, and we don't have trailerable boats, and so it's put a lot of folks in a difficulty in where to tie up at, who allows you to tie up. Luckily, we have enough infrastructure around that you could be packing at one place and tying up in somebody else's thing, and they allow you to do that, and so we're fortunate there, but it's coming at a premium here in the near future, probably.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Dewey. Tom and then Laurilee.

MR. ROLLER: Just for a quick point, I mean, when we think about national seafood strategy, you know, we tend to think about it only in terms of commercial, and, granted, our fishing communities are very interlocked, but, you know, a lot of our shore-bound anglers, for-hire customers and recreational fishermen, they're also seafood consumers, right, because they're going out to catch fish, hopefully to eat, and, while some people catch and release too, they are still consumers of this product, and I think that it's helpful to think about seafood strategy a little bit more broad than just, you know, purchasing at retail.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Tom. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, there's a safety issue also that needs to be considered. If you're fishing down off southeast Florida, and there's a hurricane coming, you've either got -- If you can make it Port Canaveral, you might get lucky and find a place there. Otherwise, you've got to run all the way up to Jacksonville, or else you've got to go around the Keys and all the way up to what's left of the docks at Fort Myers, but they were wiped out, and so now you have to go all the way to Tampa, and, for the large shrimp boats, they have nowhere to go, literally, and that's an issue.

Would it be -- Would buying docks -- You know, like they have, up in New Bedford -- I guess they have like big public docks that are owned by the city, and would the infrastructure money, or some of the Inflation Reduction Act money -- Could waterfront communities apply for that, out of those two pots of money, to purchase some area that they could keep open in perpetuity for commercial and recreational fishing?

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I know one thing that we've tried to do in Georgia, and have had some modest success, is, when there are fisheries disasters, and there's a lot of money allocated, is trying to get folks to take the long view, instead of the short view, and I believe, and Carolyn can correct me, but I think that we invested some money in a rail, so that it would be a safe -- Did that not work? We were trying to invest in a rail, so that folks could be hauled out, because those places were falling to the gentrification too, and so, you know, I think that what you need is a combination of industry people and community leaders and policymakers to sit down and recognize the extent of this problem, and stop giving it lip service, and actually do something about it.

You know, everybody talks about tourism, tourism, tourism, and, well, people come there for the aggregate of beaches and fresh seafood and fishing opportunities and all those things, and it's just -- You know, I think, when there are disasters declared, and monies made available, it would be prudent for the folks in the affected community to think more long-term than just immediate short-term, and I know, when -- I mean, you've got bills to be paid, and so forth and so on, and it's easy to say that, you know -- It's easy to say it rather than do it, but I think that's -- Ultimately, we're going to have to have more than just talking, and I think maybe the letter from the council can maybe describe maybe a better strategy to deal with this, and I think you're right. I mean, there's a lot of money that is flowing out of our overextended federal budget, but I won't go there, but, you know, even if you're cutting grass on somebody else's field, you can make hay out of it, and so I guess that's the best we can do.

DR. BELCHER: I will quickly speak to what Spud was talking about, and so our 2018 disaster funds that we got -- When we had money that came out in 2013, and, basically, we go to our shrimp advisory panel, because it was for the shrimp fleet, to get ideas from them on what they would like to see us look into for projects. Most of the time, with the documents we get from National Marine Fisheries, they would prefer that you not do direct payouts, and they would rather see it, again, as Spud said, go into the long haul, but, at the same time, your industry is looking for a lot of recovery, from whether it's small business loans or whatever that they had to take during that time window, and it was a five-plus-year lag in between the actual disaster and the money availability.

2013 was pretty much direct payouts, and the money was -- We had maybe \$100,000 that went towards research for blackgill, because that, at the time, was thought was caused the 2013, or it was part of it, and then we put money into that commercial fishery program through the technical college, and so that kind of gave them seed money to start to support -- Especially in that area, and it's a non-educational scholarship, in the fact that, if there's a need, the student just has to bring the receipt in, and he's reimbursed for everything, up to and including his licenses, while he's a student.

When we got the 2018 money, it was substantially more, and we only have a couple of operational railways, really, in the State of Georgia, and, with that, we went and talked to a couple of different places, and we were trying to figure out who had storage of shrimp boats, to start with, and access to a railway and all of that, and we were talking with them, and we found an area that actually fit the bill quite nicely, here in Brunswick, and part of it was property that had been owned by the city, and it had been where the public works had been.

They knocked the building down, and it was a vacant lot, and it was literally adjacent to the old railway, but you're working with the city, and the city is looking at it from city needs, and their preference was not to have a working yard there, and so, even though it was a really good, and travel -- I mean, Doug put a lot of thought into it, but we just did not get the balance that we needed between Brunswick and the area, and so that put us back to the table, with -- We're still doing direct payouts.

We talked about co-ops. There's an inherent distrust, within the industry, for one another, and I'm familiar with Farm Bureau, from my experience with having horses and stuff and knowing that, in unincorporated areas, it's very difficult for you to get homeowners insurance, because you don't have anything but a volunteer fire department and that kind of thing, and so you pay into this co-op, and then they very much network, and so you get group insurance, by being networked

together, and they will help you through different processes, and a similar thought was can we take the money and invest in something that maybe becomes a fishermen's bureau.

They don't want that, because, again, everybody has got to trust everybody in the process, and so where we ended up, which ties in with what Julia's CitSci is doing, is Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes is doing a project, in cooperation with UGA, that we're going out, and we're inventorying all the -- Basically the fishing houses that are out there now, and they're going to go and look at it, in terms of what the health of the facility is, because, initially, we were like, well, maybe we can help put docks up, you know, rebuild docks that are hazards and that kind of thing, but, because of your timeframe, and permitting issues, we can't guarantee that the money can get to them before the time runs out.

What Jennifer is doing is doing that, and she's also looking at it from vessel triage, and so going out to the boatyards, finding out what it costs, what are the general things that people haul their boat out for, and then working through the yards, to basically let them be the vendors with the state, as opposed to every individual, where I give you \$50,000 in support of your boat, but I really have no control over how you spend the \$50,000 at that point. This would be you haul your boat out, and we have, you know, a Chinese menu of things that you can do, and you submit -- You come in and you get your boat work done, and it goes through the boat yard to the state for reimbursement, and so we're making sure that the fleet is being basically reinvigorated, to the best of our ability, and so that's how we've kind of had to take that approach, but that five-year window just compresses you on what you can do.

At the end, we were like, well, once we pay out on the vessels, maybe people need ice machines or something, and there's a doable amount, and we'll start coming back towards the infrastructure support, but long story short, but that's how we were looking at our 2018 monies, to move forward, but, yes, I wish it was as simple as we could property, but it was just disappointing to know that everybody had, well, if you're going to do that, it would be nice if there was a restaurant, and you're like, yes, that's not -- Or the noise factor, and we've got residential areas around there, and the noise, and so those are the -- You're trying to find that balance. Everybody says, yes, it's great to have those boats, but it comes at a cost. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I was going to say that we've got some really great points here, and so I just wanted to run through a few that maybe make their way into a rapidly-drafted letter. First, you know, just following-on the discussion, it sounds like fresh seafood is an important tourism draw, in many coastal communities, and so it's not just the industry, but what the industry is providing, and, you know, in a lot of places, the seafood industry does support communities. You know, it's important for jobs and economics, et cetera.

Infrastructure is certainly critical to the entire industry, and I would say infrastructure is probably critical to communities. You know, NMFS talks a lot about communities, and supporting communities, and so I think bringing that in there is good. That you must address, you know, preserve, provide the infrastructure, if you're actually going to sustain the wild-capture production, you know, and, if you're going to strengthen the U.S. seafood sector, they've got to have the industry, and they've got to have the infrastructure, that allows them to do that, because, otherwise, they're going to lose out.

Possibly work with communities, municipalities, et cetera, to maybe expand or support infrastructure, you know, rebuild it, keep it alive, maintain it, potentially through grants, through things like the Inflation Reduction Act, which is lots and lots of money, and no one really knows where all that's going yet, but that certainly seems like opportunities, and it does seem -- My understanding, of some places where I've been, and I see that there's like commercial docks that are maintained by municipalities, and, you know, there's a great big one like outside of San Diego, and it seems like the city, you know, gets together, in many cases, on the west coast.

The cities will get together and provide that for the commercial fishing industry, to give them a place and support, and I haven't seen that as much on the east coast, necessarily, but it's certainly an idea that the west coast has used to great advantage.

Then one thing that we haven't really talked about is the idea of imports, but we've talked about that relative to this strategy in the past, and I think it's pretty well accepted that, you know, imports do pose quite a threat to the national -- To our national seafood industry and certainly to, you know, sustainable capture and production, when everyone is always competing with a much cheaper product, as we see across so many of our U.S. industries.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Chester and then Kerry.

MR. BREWER: I don't know how you stop the imports. I just don't know how you do that, and so, coming back at it from the other side, I think about a program that they've had in the Gulf, which is Gulf wild shrimp, and they have gotten in everybody's head that Gulf wild-caught shrimp is an absolute luxury item, and they charge for it that way, and, I mean, they charge a lot of money, and the product is delicious.

It's great, and so I'm wondering if we could throw something in here, and maybe it would be effective, and maybe it's the wrong place, but some sort of a really not even just regional, but a national program where you're promoting wild-caught -- U.S. wild-caught seafood and working that around to be a luxury item. Perhaps, you know, while you may not be able to, you know, dump all this crap that comes through -- Well, you would be able to better support our commercial fishermen and, with some money, maybe deal with some of these really serious problems that we're talking about.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That's a good one. That's not what I was going to say, but I'm supportive of that, 100 percent. I was thinking that, in addition to those bullet points, talking about maybe the graying of the fleet, and sort of how there needs to be a strategy to -- I don't know what the right word is, but to lower barriers of entry for young fishermen, and whether that is through vocation programs or whether that's through some kind of financial infrastructure that, you know, allows fishermen to buy permits that are otherwise cost-restrictive, and I don't know that we need to be that prescriptive, but these are the thoughts in my mind.

Then I think this might be a really good place to bring up the fact that good fisheries data does in fact help the seafood industry, and, you know, this shouldn't just be about marketing the seafood, but it needs to be about the long-term vision, and data is incredible important, and so I think this is a good place to talk about that, too.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: On the idea of marketing, that's sometimes controversial, when like the CCC and councils get talking about it and whether or not, you know, folks think that's an appropriate role for the agency to get involved in, you know, and so I just wonder, and is that something that people think we should suggest, you know, that like marketing, the importance of -- The value and the unique nature of the wild-caught domestic seafood, the fresh seafood, is worth, you know, maybe NMFS having a program, and, even if they didn't do it, there are certainly plenty of organizations, and universities and others, that could be experts in this that could go out and put together such a campaign.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Jessica and then Laurilee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's a great thing to add to the letter. I think it's needed, and I can tell you that -- You know, Chester brought up this Gulf seafood program, and so the Gulf States Commission, their interstate commission, worked on marketing and having like little QR codes on tables at restaurants and all kinds of things like that, and so I think that's it's appropriate for our letter, and I'm not saying that it should be up to the councils to do it, but I think it's appropriate that it's included in there as one of our comments.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Maybe they can work with the National Restaurant Association, which is one of the most -- It's one of the biggest employers in the whole United States, and they could work through their restaurants, to try to educate their restaurant owners as to the value of wild-caught seafood, versus imported.

MR. WOODWARD: I think that's an appropriate role. What I think maybe the focus of it needs to be -- If you look at what a consumer is told these days, you've got NGOs out there that are doing their own certification programs that sometimes run contrary to what we know and believe, and, you know, you end up with a confused consumer, and so maybe, you know, the emphasis of it needs to be let's figure out how we can make sure that the consumer is getting factual, accurate information and not necessarily depending on groups that may have an agenda, or not, when it comes to how they code something green or yellow or red.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Okay. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think Kerry made an excellent point on the data, and I kicked myself for not thinking of that, and so thank you. That's critical to industry, right, and good data is absolutely critical, and I think you can -- You know, you can add to that the fact that uncertainty, and the buffers associated with uncertainty, have a direct impact on what can be harvested, and, thus, the economic value of the industry, and so, you know, there is the cost of collecting data, but it doesn't seem that we very often look at, you know, what's the value of that foregone yield that's tied up in buffers.

You know, we have -- Like our golden tilefish fishery has an enormous poundage buffer, because of uncertainties in that assessment, because of not having information on young fish and not really

getting an insight until the fish are six or seven or eight years old, and knowing cohort strength, and it works out, in the projections, as a lot of uncertainty, and that's a huge cost, you know, on a resource that's fairly valuable, and so maybe having that factored more into, you know, what's the real cost of not collecting data, compared against the cost of data collection programs, which, you know, we know that our region, because our poundages tend to be kind of low, is not always getting the same attention towards surveys and such as where there is, you know, fisheries that are landed in thousands of metric tons, and, you know, lots and lots there, but I think, relatively speaking, within our coastal communities, our resource is incredibly valuable.

MR. ROLLER: We've had this discussion, and I agree with you, but, when we talk about our nation's fisheries as a whole, our region is very different, because we also have this huge recreational component, and we are the biggest recreational component. If you look at the Mid-Atlantic and New England and the Pacific, it's much smaller, at least in terms of federal fisheries, and so, when we talk about national seafood strategy, sometimes I feel that that sector is very secondary to it, because we're so different than all the other regions, and I think, when we talk about healthy fisheries communities, I think that that's -- It needs to be part of that discussion, even if we're directly not seafood providers. It's just simply to recognize how different the Southeast is, compared to the rest of the country.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will try to work that in, healthy fishery communities. I like that.

MR. ROLLER: Healthy fisheries take care of the fishermen.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Last thing, and I just want to say thank you. I appreciate -- I did not anticipate sort of having the time to have this discussion, and everyone being so supportive of this idea of writing a letter, and I recognize that puts burden on probably the two of you that I didn't mean to do in a week, but I want to say thank you, because I think it means a lot, and I think it will mean a lot to the constituents, and I just appreciate you all being open to doing this.

MR. CARMICHAEL: What are you doing Tuesday afternoon? I'll help you unload fish, and then you come over and we'll finish the letter.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Further comments or discussion on this? Okay. I think it's good, and, like I said, I definitely think it's worthwhile for us to write the letter as well.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I feel like, with that discussion, we've got a great foundation for a letter, and it shouldn't be too difficult to get it out, and this is an important topic, and so I'm excited that you all were willing to put ideas on the table, to brainstorm this and come up with some excellent topics, and so thank you.

MR. PUGLIESE: Hello again. Good afternoon, and I would like to bring forward our Shrimp Advisory meeting report. We did have a Shrimp Advisory Panel meeting webinar that was set and ran on January 18, from 1:30 to 3:30. As you remember, that was so that we could get a couple of things in discussion from our panel members, one being the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary blueprint, and we did have a presentation by Beth Dieveney. We did have a number of other members, and so we had a full contingent, with Joanne Delaney and Steve Werndli, with

their staff, as well as Danielle Schwarzman, their chief economist, with National Marine Sanctuary Headquarters, and Amy Freitag, a spatial ecologist, and so we had a whole group to be able to answer questions from the AP members.

At this meeting also, we did notify the Gulf AP, so that they were able to provide comments during the subsections, and also ask questions during that, and we did have a number of our Deepwater Shrimp AP members also listen and provide comments, and council members, including Laurilee and Mel.

Panel members, they're fairly straightforward here, because the intent of this was to get the comments to them, but also so that we would have them in finalizing the draft of our letter on the conservation blueprint for the Florida Keys Sanctuary proposed rule, and some of the core comments really got to concern over imposing regulations that were not necessarily needed, and potentially could interrupt the commercial and recreational fisheries, concern over that traditional fisheries are not going to be allowed, with some of the boundary expansions, concern over those temporary regulations and emergency regulations, and adaptive management may override those traditional fishing operations.

There was concern of how some of the additional no-take areas and the enforcement issues -- Because the sanctuary doesn't have enforcement officers and relies on state, Coast Guard, and federal National Marine Fisheries Service agents.

The Gulf Shrimp AP was identified as opposing the emergency rule that was proposed, that capability, for two reasons, that the rule actually was not necessarily defined, and the potential exists to go beyond the six months and up to a full year of implementation, and there was concern over the fisheries data used to evaluate the traditional fisheries and concern over knowing what the socioeconomics would be and not knowing what the emergency could be. A lot really did focus on that whole definition of "traditional fishing" in our final comment letter, and the council did oppose the use of the one that's in the proposed rule, and I think, when we get into the next discussion on the Keys Sanctuary, the protocol, the intent is that, as that gets moved forward, that that definition be used in the final rule for this. We did provide a comprehensive letter in advance, based on the extension that the council was provided, on the conservation blueprint for the sanctuary.

That brought us to the next major topic area that the AP was going to address, and that had to do with the increasing frequency of rocket launches and temporary closures, and, during the December council meeting, Laurilee did bring up that issue of the rocket launches and how, at Cape Canaveral, the increased frequency, and it was just becoming to be significant, and, really, it was going to expand, which I think is pretty obvious in what you're seeing on almost a day-to-day basis nowadays.

In addition, some of the core discussion had to do with the issue of temporary safety zones, and, again, the council weighed-in early on a comment on the activity in creating those safety zones, and we did in the queue on that, and we had an opportunity here to be able to highlight not only that, but also the issue of the debris that was being -- That was occurring and being identified in conjunction with those areas.

Then members, and, really, this did go beyond some of the members, and some of the other participants highlighted a lot of the key points that were made relative to this space activities and debris, with some things you've already discussed, and a lot of this I think was touched on earlier on, in our habitat discussions on space activities and the increased launches seen off of Georgia, the continuous increase, and, also, the concerns over debris and the safety issues and how that was ultimately going to affect fishing.

There was uncertainty on what this is going to -- What the future brings with increased regulations and how -- You know, if you have this much high activity, how often -- How many areas are going to be impacted for fishing, and it was highlighted that the rock shrimpers were concerned over two issues, debris, as indicated, and concern over the debris not only in their areas, but also in potentially the Oculina Bank HAPC and, with all the regulations put on them, the concern that if this debris is impacting areas within that protected system.

Also, it was discussed earlier on, the accountability of what actually is going on and who is taking account of this and how much it is and how it is affecting our essential fish habitat in the regions that the council manages. There was concern, again, raised over the Georgia issues, on the Camden space port that was proposed and what kind of spatial conflicts, and hopefully -- We'll see what ultimately comes, and, if Spud is correct, then maybe some of those issues may be gone, but you never know. Also, when you have closures, it's going to impact the south side of Jekyll Island, off of Cumberland, if, you know, you do see the activity begin to move into Georgia.

In addition, there was really some positive side, that they were actually beginning to discuss the space port with fishermen earlier on in the discussions, and that may have led to some of the decisions that are now potentially moving forward on whether those are going to actually happen in that area, and, as I think Laurilee raised earlier on, she feels like it's almost some afterthoughts on activities and engagement of the fisheries into that, given some of the level of some of the fines that are identified for entering some of these different zones.

Another habitat-related one was the concern over not only the debris, but hydrogen and toxic oils, toxic substances, being released during the recovery procedures and what that impact may have relative to essential fish habitat or coral bottom areas, and those -- Hopefully we can have some discussions of that when we have our coral and habitat joint session addressing space activities.

A couple of last ones are a concern when, working straight off of Canaveral, that you would have to go maybe more than twenty miles one way or another, and I think, again, this is an issue that was raised before, on when you have the safety zones established, depending on when the times go, and that's, you know, going to have some complications, and you can't actually drag back through those areas when they're closed.

Fishermen also had identified a lot of debris being caught, and we were able to -- We did project -- Mike Merrifield did provide some images, and Laurilee provided them directly to Cindy Cooksey too, and so there's a pool of -- There's a number of different things that have been recovered in activities by the shrimpers documenting a lot of these different types of debris that has been found offshore, and, again, it's only going to increase, and, also, that there's a need to understand the impacts, in terms of lost fishing time, debris, toxic substances, in quantifying those impacts in launch and recovery and what is being discharged.

That was -- We did only have two of our AP members, Gary Exley and Bryan Fluech, but we did have a number of the Gulf AP members, and our Deepwater Shrimp also provided comments, when appropriate, in here, and they made questions for this, and I think some of the reason was that, despite us trying to do it, it still was primetime fishing, and so that's the balance we play with that. Any questions or comments or additions that Laurilee may want to --

DR. BELCHER: Spud can help with this too, and it's funny, and I just pulled up for an update on what's going on with the Camden Space Port, and the last update was in February of this year, that the Supreme Court ruling could be the final blow for Space Port Camden plans, because the county challenged their commissioners over the feasibility study, because it was never put to a vote to the county residents, and it ended up basically causing a slowdown of everything, and my understanding is the contract between the landowner that they were looking at and the county has also been null and voided.

I know that, again, the commissioners were not happy with what they were told, and there was kind of some interesting play about the numbers of people that voted and commissioners making a point about, well, it's a low number, and there was comments back about, well, that was actually more people than voted for you kind of things, and so there was a lot in the county that was going on with that, and, the last we knew, it was pretty much up to the Supreme Court's decision of whether it was going to move forward, but most folks are pretty confident that it's pretty much dead in the water. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Good for you guys for fighting it. We never had that opportunity. KFC was established back during the Cuban missile crisis and the Cold War, and the community had zero input. We were just driven off our land, and the space port is there, and so, the launch that Spud was looking at, that's one of three launches this week, and the first one was yesterday, and it got scrubbed, and so now, just this week alone, we're looking at four closures, and the rocket that didn't go off yesterday, but may go off on Saturday, it's the world's first 3D printed rocket, and so it's lighter than a conventional rocket, and it can be made much, much faster than a conventional rocket, and it's going to open the door to a lot more launches, and so that's where we are. Thank you.

I appreciate -- Oh my goodness. I appreciate you all's support. I really do. It really means a lot to us, and, I mean, we're fighting so much there at the Cape, and we are now the busiest cruise ship in the world, and they want to put an LNG facility in, to service all the cruise ships, and we've got all the rockets going off, and we're just -- We have a lot of challenges, and so we appreciate you all's support. We really do.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: You pretty much summed up the situation with the Camden Space Port, but the one unfortunate consequence is that Camden County spent approximately \$12 million of public funds, and all they have now is a permit for a place they don't have, and it's kind of a sad situation. There's a lesson there, I think, for a lot of communities that see -- They get stars in their eyes, literally and figuratively, about space travel, and it's oftentimes not what it appears to be, and so hopefully we're done with our experiment in space travel.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for Roger? Okay. Thanks for the update, Roger. Don't go too far. Next, we have the Florida Keys presentation from Beth, and it has Roger as being over the -- Do you need a couple of minutes? Do we need to check and see if Beth is available?

MR. CARMICHAEL: She's on the webinar.

DR. BELCHER: She's good to go? Okay.

MR. PUGLIESE: I think it's because I've been working with her with the Habitat AP, with the Shrimp AP, with all these multiple -- She's been providing a lot of input across a number of different meetings.

DR. BELCHER: Okay.

MS. BROUWER: Let me pull up your presentation, and you'll be good to go.

MS. DIEVENY: While you're doing that, I just want to thank you for inviting us, once again, to present to the council, and my apologies that I am doing this remotely. I do love attending your meetings, and I do love Jekyll Island, but I just wanted to acknowledge that I think several of my colleagues are in the room, and I didn't see them on the actual webinar, and so hopefully they're in the room, but they can also answer questions, and provide comments, if needed, on this presentation and this topic, and those include, from National Marine Fisheries Service, Rick DeVictor and Monica Smit-Brunello, and, from FWC, Jessica McCawley.

This presentation, as Roger noted in the Shrimp Advisory Panel update, is about another component of our restoration blueprint rulemaking process, and that is that we have a number of cooperative management agreements. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is within -- A portion of the sanctuary is within state waters, and so we cooperatively manage the sanctuary with our state partners, primarily FWC and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and, to provide guidance and framework for that cooperative management approach, we have a series of agreements. As part of this process, we are in the midst of also reviewing and updating those agreements.

One of those agreements is the protocol for cooperative fisheries management, and so I'm just going to give a brief overview of what that is and where we are in the process and high-level next steps in the effort to review and update this agreement.

The protocol for cooperative fisheries management is, as I noted, one of several of our cooperative management agreements, and this agreement was originally developed in 1997, when the initial regulations and management plan for the sanctuary were implemented, and it has not been updated since that time. I will give some highlights of the main areas we're reviewing and updating, but it's in need of being updated and brought into who the partners are today and what the main opportunities and ways we want to collaborate and work together. It is an agreement between National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Ocean Service, and the state agency previous to Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

It recognizes multiple jurisdictions and authorities for fishery regulations in the Florida Keys, and the map there, as I'm sure you're very familiar with, shows that Florida -- The federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, in blue and pink, and state waters is in the darker blue, and then the boundary of the sanctuary, the existing sanctuary boundary, is the pink-dotted line, and so lots of jurisdictions overlapping, and the intent was to provide flexible management for fisheries regulations, while also retaining state, federal, and public involvement and engagement in that process.

The protocol does describe the roles, and outlines the process, for these entities for how we would coordinate on ongoing fishery management in the sanctuary. I did include a link, the full link, because I'm not sure if the presentation in your briefing book is able to be hyperlinked, and so, if you want to see the original 1997 document, it is -- You can find it at that place.

As I noted, the 1997 agreement, the signatories were the Florida Marine Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service, both as its own entity and as a signatory as designee for the fishery management councils, and the National Ocean Service, which is the line office within NOAA where the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries fits. As I've already stated, we are updating this as part of our overarching rulemaking, where we are with viewing and updating sanctuary regulations, our management plan, and the suite of cooperative management agreements, this being one.

This slide, just at a very high level, identifies the key topics that we are looking at and addressing. We, obviously, want to the signatories, and the parties to this agreement, to be updated and accurate, and so, of course, updating to ensure that FWC is the party on the state side. Then clarifying respective authorities across the jurisdictions, FWC, NMFS, the councils, and ONMS. Reviewing the process for how we will communicate and coordinate among the signatories for future fishery regulations, fishery management actions, in the sanctuary, and, as noted during the shrimp update, including a new section for traditional fishing.

As Roger noted, in the draft rule, we do have an updated proposed definition for "traditional fishing", and is being evaluated as we look at all the public fishery management council and agency comments on that draft rule, and so the final rule will have an updated definition for "traditional fishing", and, within the protocol, within the agreement, the intent is to further clarify what traditional fishing activities are and to develop a process where all parties would then evaluate, when new or modified fishing activities, gear, et cetera, are being considered and how those might be updated to be included as traditional fishing.

Finally, this is our estimated timeline, and it's a very high-level estimated timeline, but it shows the three main components of this entire process, the top being updating this protocol, and the middle is the actual rulemaking, and then evaluating public agency comments and developing that final rule, and the bottom is our NEPA process, and so developing an updated final environmental impact statement as we develop that final rule.

As you see, all of those processes are intended to align and be ready for final document preparation, clearance, and public release at the same time. We do, with our state partners, do want to review and update these management agreements to release as we release updated regulations, management plans, and the final environmental impact statement, and so, right now, at that top line for the protocol, we are working internally within NOAA, across the National Ocean Service,

and with our NMFS partners, and are soon to be coordinating again with our state partners, on that agreement, and we'll engage the fishery management councils as well and move this through review, agency review, and input and then final development, as we release the rule and FEIS for final review, clearance, and public release.

I will just acknowledge that we did receive a draft submitted by our FWC colleagues, back almost close to a year ago now, in June of last year, that FWC had coordinated with both the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, as well as within some of the NMFS colleagues, and so we are working on that draft currently, to have discussions about the next versions of that draft. My final slide is just closing, and so I'm happy to take any questions or comments. As I acknowledged, there are other people in the room who are also involved in this, and so may also be able to provide some context and answers as well.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Beth. Are there comments or questions for Beth on the presentation?
Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let me try to explain a little bit more. The Gulf Council had asked for a presentation like this, and so Beth was kind enough to also offer this to the South Atlantic Council, and so there's a number of things happening here. You heard Beth talk about the restoration blueprint and the comments that both councils provided, and FWC is providing comments as well, along with DEP, and we actually got another extension for our comments, and so our comments will be due at the end of March.

Beth also made reference to a number of these agreements, and so the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary has about I think it's nine, maybe, agreements in place, and one of them is this co-management agreement that says the sanctuary, DEP, and FWC kind of manage the sanctuary together, and then one of the ones that Beth was mentioning is this cooperative fisheries protocol. It's very old, and it doesn't even refer to the FWC, and it refers to our former agency, the Marine Fisheries Commission, but that fisheries protocol is -- It directs the way that the fisheries rules work inside the sanctuary, among what's now the FWC, the sanctuary, and the two councils.

As Beth mentioned, we have been working with the staff of both the councils, our staff, our attorneys, to try to update that agreement. All of these agreements have to be updated before their final rule can be released, and it will all come out kind of as a package, and so one of the things that Beth is highlighting that's inside one of those agreements, and it's in the fisheries protocol, but it's also in the draft rule, is this definition of traditional fishing.

It was a point for comments from the South Atlantic Council, the Gulf Council, and from the FWC, and it will be in our comments as well, and it was brought up both Shrimp APs, on both sides, both the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and so it's a big deal. Unless you're kind of mired in all of these different sanctuary processes, it's a little bit challenging to understand exactly the ramifications of this, but, basically, it kind of freezes the definition of the fisheries that were in place in 1996, at the establishment of the sanctuary, and so it's referring back to all the fisheries that were prosecuted, the species, the seasons, the gears, and it just kind of freezes it at that definition, and it calls that traditional fishing.

It's not clear that it even allows lobster traps, exactly, but it certainly would not allow new gears, things like innovative gears, and like lobster traps would not be allowed under that current

definition, and, also, any new species that are regulated, and so I'll give you an example. We now, at the FWC, have regulations for barracuda and blackfin tuna, and those were not regulated in 1996. but they are regulated now, and so they wouldn't really be included as part of this traditional fishing definition, and so it was definitely brought up by, as Laurilee mentioned, the Shrimp APs.

It is a big deal, and it's something that is being worked on as part of this process, as Beth mentioned, because it is inside that fisheries protocol document, and it's in the rule, and so it will have to get figured out before this can be finalized, but we've been working with the staff of both councils, Monica, Mara at the Gulf, and others to try to work on these protocols and cooperative agreements, to get them ready, as part of this process.

You also saw, from Beth, that they're thinking, and it's a guesstimate, that we're talking a timeline that probably extends into 2024, and it's not like this is going to happen next month, or even in the next six months, but it's being worked on in the background, and so I will stop there. I'm happy to help answer any questions from folks, as well as I'm sure Beth can answer questions as well, and so I just want to provide some context and insight.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that. Go ahead, Beth.

MS. DIEVENY: I was just going to provide two more pieces of context of what Jessica just shared, and thank you, Jessica, and one is that the agreement will clearly identify the authorities that exist for fisheries regulations, fisheries management, and the authorities that FWC has, that NMFS and the councils have, through the Magnuson-Stevens Act, as well Florida Keys, through the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and so the agreement identifies those, acknowledges those, and it's really about how do we coordinate and communicate as those are executed.

Then, second, just to provide a little bit more context for the traditional fishing definition and why we have a traditional fishing definition, it's because we have prohibitions in the sanctuary, a few of which -- One is impact to the seabed, the benthic habitat, discharge, and a proposed new fish feeding regulation, and so to allow fishing activity that could impact the bottom, for example lobster traps, to allow chumming and other activities, in the event of traditional fishing activities, we have to have a definition to be able to exempt those activities from these existing prohibitions, and so that's sort of a little bit of context of why we have the definition, to be able to exempt traditional fishing activities from these other prohibitions.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am just trying to figure out what is needed of us here. As the Gulf liaison, I can confirm that this was deeply discussed there, and it sounds like everywhere is aware of what the issues are, and it's being managed, and so you don't need any more confirmation from us that this council is also concerned about that, and it's all being fleshed out? Okay.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't think so. I mean, just I think this is partly to let you know that there's a lot of nuances to the sanctuary, and a lot of pieces, more than just the rulemaking, and there are these agreements, and that will be get updated, and it is important. I think it's important to you guys, and it's definitely important to the Gulf Council, and it's important to the FWC, and those agreements matter, because it will, as Beth is mentioning, talk about the authorities for regulating fisheries in state and federal waters inside of the sanctuary.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Great. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just to add to this, I mean, we are, obviously, heavily engaging with the sanctuary on this, and with FWC, and I think we have a call coming up in April, about a month from now, and, in the previous version of this, NMFS was a signatory on behalf of the councils, and so we'll continue to, obviously, engage you on this effort. Like any good process, there's lots of attorneys involved that are giving guidance, and this may become like a memorandum of understanding, or a memorandum of agreement, that we'll have to work out, but, ultimately, at the end of the day, I think this is a good thing, in terms of the coordination and the complexity of, obviously, managing within the sanctuary boundary, given all these jurisdictions.

DR. BELCHER: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Two things. One, I guess we're looking at not having NMFS be the signatory for the councils, but having each council's Executive Director sign on behalf of the council, and so we think that's fine. We're not sure why exactly it was done this way, but we're looking into that.

The other one is a question, I guess for Jessica, and Beth, or Beth, and the idea of having traditional fishing -- I guess clarifying traditional fishing activities and developing a process to evaluate new or modified fishing activities, those sorts of things, having that within the protocol, and I understand there are other agreements, I guess, going on between the sanctuary and different partners, or maybe even FWC, and I'm not sure what those all are, and is the protocol going to be the only place where the traditional fishing is -- Where kind of that process is clarified in the protocol, or will it exist somewhere else, in one of these other agreements that the entities have for this?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Beth can correct me, but I think it's also in the permitting MOA.

MS. DIEVENY: I will have to look at the current draft of that, because I was going to respond that it will likely be solely in this agreement, as the agreement focused on coordinating across fishing activities, but I will definitely -- That will definitely be one of the topics and areas we look at as we review these agreements and what makes sense for referencing across agreements versus having solely in the issue-specific agreement, and so I'll add that to our list to consider as we move these agreements forward.

DR. BELCHER: Further comments or discussions or questions for Beth or Jessica? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I just want to make sure that I understand. You know, the words "traditional fishing", you know, it sets our hair on fire, because we feel like it's going to lock in certain activities and that there would be no room for new and better technology, and so there's a bullet there that says, "develop a transparent process to evaluate new or modified fishing activities and other relevant changes to fisheries management", and so does that mean that, you know, if -- I guess you guys -- Somebody is going to evaluate some new methodology for fishing and then pass judgment on it, over whether it's going to be allowed inside the sanctuary or not, and is that -- Am I reading that right? Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, that's correct, and so part of this will be detailed in the protocol on how, if the sanctuary is going to do something that would affect fisheries in federal waters, how that would be coordinated with the councils, how the councils could respond to that, and, likewise, if the councils were going to do something that was inside the sanctuary, how the sanctuary could comment to the councils on particular fisheries rules, and so part of that would be detailed in the protocol, and I would say it's yet to be worked out yet.

MS. DIEVENY: Just to follow-on, the intent of the "traditional fishing" definition is to sort of develop a baseline. The intent is not to impede the development of new gears and innovation and better methods at all, and we would use the protocol as that mechanism to outline a process to coordinate that evaluation and review, and, primarily, the intent, from the sanctuary's perspective, is ensuring that sanctuary resources are protected and not impacted by any changes in fishing activities or gear.

DR. BELCHER: Mel.

MR. BELL: This is just a technical question, maybe for Jessica, and so, yesterday, we had a little public input related to this topic of gears, or traditional fisheries, and there was some discussion about traps, lobster traps, versus -- I didn't understand what the --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Casitas.

MR. BELL: What is that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It is currently an illegal gear in Florida. It's legal in other countries, but "casitas" is a Spanish word, and it's a little device, and it could be made of various things, like a car hood, or some other material, and it's aggregating lobsters, and so there has been discussion, kind of along with the sanctuary plan, but other discussions as well, by the FWC, as to whether or not they want to look into possibly legalizing a casita fishery. I would say that the sanctuary doesn't want that, and the commission is discussing it, but it is currently an illegal gear in the State of Florida to use in the lobster fishery.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Casitas are being used in the Bahamas, but it's a totally different thing. The way they do it in the Bahamas is they're taking lobster traps, and they're stacking them on top of each other, and they're making like lobster condos, and then they dive, and they pull the lobsters out of the casitas, which are basically lobster traps. In the Keys, you've got divers, and they're hauling all kinds of -- They've got refrigerators and fifty-five-gallon drums, and they're littering the bottom with trash to make it easier for them to go diving and get lobsters, and it's -- I hope they don't even consider allowing a casita fishery, unless they do it the right way, and unless it doesn't impact the existing trap lobster fishery that's there. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to be clear, it is illegal, and so, technically, people should not be putting down objects inside the sanctuary, in state or federal waters, to attract lobsters and then remove them, and so that is illegal, and there was a recent bust on this, and we have a press release about it, and so not legal now, and I just want to point that out.

DR. BELCHER: Chester.

MR. BREWER: The statute of limitations has run, but those casitas are very, very efficient at catching lobster, particularly if you have about four guys that, when you flip them over -- The preferred casita is a car hood, and you flip them over, and you're got four guys, and the lobsters start running all over the place, trying to get away, and you can catch a bunch of them, but I don't do that anymore.

DR. BELCHER: So other further comments or questions for either Jessica or Beth on this? Okay. Thank you, Beth, for your time this afternoon.

MS. DIEVENY: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. The next item on the agenda is a Southeast Regional Office report, and it has Rick down for this, or is Andy doing this?

MR. STRELCHECK: I will let Rick off the hook. We were commenting, on this side of the room though, about is space junk casita material, and so -- All right, and I have a number of items that I just wanted to cover, and so you have, in the briefing book, the Protected Resources report, and just a few things to highlight.

The North Atlantic right whale vessel speed rule public comment closed at the end of October, and we're still going through those comments at this point, and we have not moved forward with any sort of final rule there, and so more to come on that, as that moves forward. My understanding is staff is talking with your staff about having a presentation and discussion of I guess what is now called on-demand gear for black sea bass pots, and so ropeless gear, essentially, that has been tested and used in both the black sea bass fishery as well as the lobster fishery, and so that is something that we would like to try to bring to you in June, but, if that timing doesn't work out, obviously, at the next upcoming council meeting that we could have that discussion.

The other thing of note, and then you can certainly look through the rest of the Protected Resources report, is the coral critical habitat final rulemaking, and so we are reaching close to a final decision on that. I would expect that that would publish sometime this summer.

SEFHIER, we talked about that earlier this week. One of the big issues there is that Congress had directed funding specific to the Gulf program, which, obviously, then indirectly benefits our work on the South Atlantic program, and so we are spending some time, obviously, understanding the implications of this and how staff funding will be able to be used, or not used, to support, obviously, the South Atlantic program, since the Gulf program has been set aside, and so I just wanted to kind of flag that for you at this point as an ongoing issue that we're working to resolve.

A couple of weeks ago, I did share with John Carmichael that we are embarking on a new geographic strategic plan, in coordination with the Science Center. Three years ago, or more, you

had an opportunity to comment on that geographic strategic plan, and we're rapidly working toward a draft plan to update -- It needs to go to our Headquarters office at the end of April, and John and I have just had some preliminary conversations about us being able to share that with, you know, leadership of the council, possibly the chair and vice chair, however you guys want to comment on that. Unfortunately, there's a short turnaround time, because we were given limited time, and we're hoping that there will be more time and that we can come back and talk to you about that broader geographic strategic plan, but we definitely want to get input from the councils, in terms of priority actions, goals, and objectives that we're working on.

Something of note that I think will be brought to you in June is my team is working closely with Christina, as well as other members of the CCC Equity and Environmental Justice team, and we have received funding to conduct twenty focus groups throughout the Southeast, from North Carolina to Texas, including the U.S. Caribbean, and there's going to be at least seven focus group meetings in the South Atlantic, from North Carolina down to Jacksonville, and then another couple of meetings in south Florida, and so we're going to come and give you a presentation, more in terms of the details of that, but, ultimately, it will be moderated sessions, and the goal is to be with diverse groups of people, underserved communities, how we can better engage and involve them in our fishery management and conservation efforts and get input in terms of improving kind of intersections between the work we do and the involvement and engagement of those underserved communities, and so more to come on that.

Then the last thing I will note, and, Dale, certainly chime-in, and so, at the Gulf Council meeting, we spent a lot of time, in January, talking about the need to improve the IFQ program, the commercial IFQ program, and so we are kind of embarking on some efforts to refine the goals and objectives and try to make some changes to the commercial IFQ program, but, kind of parallel to that, I thought it was important that we begin a recreational fisheries initiative in the Gulf of Mexico, and I think it's very relevant to the South Atlantic and why I wanted to mention it, and I expect that it's going to be a multiyear process, but it has -- As I kind of characterized it during the meeting, it's more of a roadmap at this point, and we're going to be talking with the Gulf Council about how to kind of move forward with the timeline and implementation, but it focuses on everything from goals and objectives that we want to accomplish with recreational fisheries management, how, you know, regulations and management has changed over time, to looking at how we implement accountability measures.

You know, really, with the end product, kind of the outcome of this, you know, how do we better manage, and innovatively manage, our recreational fisheries, and so that is something we're just embarking on, but I look forward to working with the Gulf Council on, and certainly I think, as we make progress on that, I will be wanting to talk to you about, you know, potentially doing something similar. I think it does align with the MSE process a little bit different, in terms of there is some activities in it that I think are more tactical, in terms of things that we could be doing to help improve our recreational management in the near-term, and so I will stop there and open it up to any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Andy. Questions for Andy at this point? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: My questions aren't related to anything he just talked about, and so do you want me to wait and see if there are other questions?

DR. BELCHER: I will let you discern whether you think it's an appropriate time or if you want to wait. How's that?

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, I want to talk about the Permits Office, as I always like to do. About twice a year, I get to have the lovely interaction, and so not just that, but I was wondering on the status about sort of, you know, the electronic system is up and running, but we all notice there is still -- There is glitchy -- One of the things, in particular, that several people have talked to me about, and that Tim and I both get frustrated with, is sort of the inability to, when you do the FOIA request for permits, it still comes up in CSV files, and it used to come in more of a, I don't know, but a tabular form. I'm, you know, smarter than the average bear, but, you know, getting files in CSV files and then converting them to something that's actually useful is very difficult, and that happened after the new system.

Also, and I would like to, on the record, thank Rick DeVictor, who has been dealing with both Tim and I today, as we have been trying, for a while, and Tim longer than -- For like a long time, to handle renewals, and, for both of us right now, our dealer permits. It's not smooth.

It is usually something that, you know, right before your permit is about to expire, is worked out, but not without a lot of phone calls, or a lot of back-and-forth, and, you know, if it's hard for me, and if it's this much for me, I -- You know, it's hard for everyone, and I'm getting a lot of fishermen, you know, still really frustrated, and I guess my question, in all of that, is, is this growing pains, as, you know, the new system is coming up online? Is this something that, you know, in the future, you feel pretty confident that will be smoother? I guess I will just stop with that, or do we have bigger issues, I guess.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks for that, and, Kerry, we can talk offline, and I would really like to put you in contact and have you spend some time talking with my Permits Branch Chief, Kevin McIntosh, if you haven't spoken to him. We're always willing to solicit, you know, feedback from people and improve the system, and so a few things there.

You noted the kind of data files being, you know, more difficult to kind of use, and so, on the frontend of the system, kind of what the users are experiencing and seeing, is much improved, and we're actually having much faster turnaround time, and, in fact, our backlog has been reduced almost to zero, for quite some time, and so I recognize that there is unique circumstances, and that permits can, you know -- That one permit, relative to another, can be challenging to renew, or issue, but, overall, the system is actually kind of functioning like we had hoped for, which is speeding up the permit process and reducing errors.

The challenge is on the backend right now, and so, as it was built, we contracted it out, and the system hasn't been talking well with others, so to speak, and so it's not communicating well with some of our internal systems for the Gulf programs, and it's not communicating well with the logbook program in Miami, and so we actually have a team of people that are working to resolve that, and so I want to say, you know, there's probably things that we can be fixing, or improving, now that will help your experience, and then there's some longer-term efforts that we're working on that should improve the entire experience, and so I don't want to chalk it up just to growing pains, and there are certainly some known problems that we're working through, and so thank you for the question.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just to that point, you mentioned issues talking to -- The back side having issues talking to other systems, and I am wondering, and do you anticipate that causing a problem as we move forward with this electronic logbook reporting program that's sort of, you know, hopefully freight-training down the tracks?

MR. STRELCHECK: It could slow it down. The hope is that we get it resolved before then.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy, this is regarding your report, and you said you're doing focus groups for EEJ, and you're going from North Carolina to Jacksonville, and so I was just wondering if you've got details on those meetings in North Carolina, because some of our DEQ folks may be interested, because we have an EEJ group, and so I think it would be good to maybe connect.

MR. STRELCHECK: I think, if it all works out, that we'll be prepared to brief the council in June, with a much more detailed report on those focus groups and the timing of those. Right now, I believe that those would happen sometime in the fall/winter timeframe, or at least late summer, and so, yes, absolutely want to engage with you and with all the states along the eastern seaboard, but we'll have a more detailed report and kind of gameplan, and working closely with Christina on the staff, to let you know about that work.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions or comments for Andy at this point? Okay. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Andy, going back to that file, that CSV file, if we want to look at for all the Southeastern permit holders, are you saying that that's still -- That that is the way it's going to be, and that, if we want to look at that file, it's always going to be in the form that it's in now?

MR. STRELCHECK: No, I wasn't saying that, and I will ask whether or not we could convert it to a different, maybe more user-friendly, file type. This is more of a challenge with kind of the backend of the system and how we're able to generate the reports and information that would automatically update that on our website.

DR. BELCHER: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It got me thinking, and I used to be able to look up permits, limited access permits, online, and now, man, it's difficult, to say the least, and is that what you all are talking about, because you can't -- I mean, before, it was separated, I thought, and now it's like about fifteen or twenty pages of like you better have your glasses on to read it somehow, and I was wondering if that is what you all are talking about, and maybe that hopefully could be put back in its better format, to where it's legible and readable and explainable. I have an issue with that, or a problem, given looking at that, and I just would like to add on to what they were saying, because it's difficult.

MR. STRELCHECK: That's all part of the plan. We're just not at the point where we can automate the system to produce the reports in kind of a similar format that you were previously seeing, and we don't have the confidence in the system actually producing those accurately, and so that's why we've gone to this other file format for the time being, because we do have confidence in the accuracy of those reports, and so, as I said, it's something we're working on. I

think, within the next month, we're bringing in six or seven database management experts, architects from around the NMFS organization, to help us with the backend of our system and trying to resolve some of the problems we've been experiencing, and so hopefully we're on a path to success and repairing the system on the backend, but bear with us. It's going to take a little while longer.

DR. BELCHER: I'm just checking. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: The only thing I was going to say is that you all, and Kevin, who is wonderful, by the way, and I think he's -- So it's not being personal or anything, but that actually is used more than I think people probably thought it was, and fishermen access that FOIA permit information a lot, and maybe they just didn't know how much we use it, but we do.

DR. BELCHER: All right. Thanks for that. Thanks for your report, Andy. The next item is the Southeast Fisheries Science Center report, and so, John Walter, I'm assuming that's you.

DR. WALTER: Yes. Okay. Thanks, Chair. I had at least one get back to a question about whether there's beta testing going on with the electronic logbooks, and, essentially, the GARFO dual reporters are the beta testers, and that is ongoing now.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, it says -- I'm curious about that, because it says, in the document, that GARFO reporters will have to make -- Will possibly have to duplicate report, if they have SERO permits and GARFO permits, and so we might just want to look into that. What you're saying is my understanding, but the document almost is saying something else.

DR. WALTER: Okay. Let me look to see if they have to dual report, and I will get back to you on that. Okay. Thanks. Just on some other ongoing activities, the dolphin MSE is ongoing, and we will have a presentation coming up I believe for the June council meeting on progress there, and I think, from conversations we've had, it would probably be good to sketch out and at least get before this council a roadmap for how that dolphin MSE is eventually going to kind of come before this council, and so I think that will be helpful, and so we'll try to put that together in that information.

As a heads-up, I've been requested to give a presentation to the Gulf Council on MSE and applications, and then I will try to touch on how that might fit into our current advice framework through Magnuson, because I think that will be useful, and it's something that we've been working on, trying to fit those in within our existing framework, and I think there's a way to do it, and so stay tuned on that one.

Then, on our surveys, we're getting our key surveys, SADL, the South Atlantic deepwater longline survey, and our SEFIS trap video survey -- We're getting ready to get them prepped and underway this year. We had some hiccups with our AMAPPS survey, which our marine mammal survey, and it has a winter leg, and that winter leg was supposed to be February 1 through 15, and it was canceled, due to finding a problem with the ship, in the hull, and so the ship had to go into dry dock, and that resulted in a cancellation of that survey.

That survey provides us pretty critical data on wintertime habitat utilization for marine mammals, and so it's unfortunate that we had that canceled in 2020 and 2021 and now again this year, and so

that is an unfortunate gap in our information content. We don't know about what the probability is of getting it back on the water for the next two legs, and this is a cooperative survey funded by both BOEM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the agency.

Then, on a few other topics, particularly related to offshore wind, we're fortunate to be able to engage a lot more formally in offshore wind, and what we would really like to do is focus on the marine spatial planning, prior to wind decisions and siting being made, and the work that was done with NCOS and BOEM in the Gulf of Mexico was really effective way to find the best places for offshore wind, prior to lease sales, and that's resulting in, just recently, the first lease sale being opened up with a proposed sale notice.

We're very interested in partnering with NCOS to do a similar marine spatial planning exercise for the Caribbean, where wind may be on the radar soon, and then we would like to hear from this council about the utility and merits of these marine spatial planning exercises for informing all of the blue economy, and I think we've heard here that we've got some space, to use a pun, conflicts with our marine space, where there are multiple different activities that support the blue economy all in potential conflict, and I think it's informed marine spatial planning that is the way that we can, as a society, find the best places for all the activities that we want to prosecute on in the marine environment, and, by getting all that information and building a model that identifies good areas and avoids problematic areas, I think we can do the best service to society, and that's something that I think the Gulf process showed, with the aquaculture opportunity areas, and I think it's something that we can take on in other regions. That's my report, Chair, and I'm open to any questions. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, John. Questions for John? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I would like to give a thank you for NCOS, the spatial planning tool, that was used for the Gulf, and it was also used for the Central Atlantic Area E and F for pelagic longline, and we used our vessel monitoring system, along with other entities that was involved in that data, and we were able to -- It appears that we're able to coexist, if there is any wind turbines offshore in the central Atlantic, given where we had VMS monitoring and over ten years of data, and so I was appreciative of that, and I worked with them in answering questions and helping in the outcome of that, and so I'm appreciative of that and thankful for their work, and, also, BOEM's work in looking at that and seeing how that should hopefully be the norm, in the future, before any future leases are done, and not that everybody has vessel monitoring systems, but it was able to show where we actively fish in the pelagic longline industry along the east coast.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for John Walter? Okay. Seeing none, at this point, I'm going to go ahead and recommend that we take a ten-minute break, and we'll come back at ten 'til, and we'll go into -- John has something he would like to discuss.

MR. CARMICHAEL: If you recall, during Snapper Grouper, we mentioned the \$1.8 million funding from Congressman Rutherford, and the council providing guidance on that, and so we sent around a strawman on that to all the council members earlier, and, since this is tied to the Science Center, we thought it's kind of part of the Science Center report, if you guys wanted to discuss that, if you guys wanted to discuss that today. We're kind of ahead, a little bit, on time, and there's only a few committee reports that are done, and this could be a pretty good discussion, and so we may want to do that today, with the time we have. Okay, and so take a look at that. It was sent

around to you, and then, when we come back after break, I'll call the document up on the screen, and we can go through it and get the council's guidance hammered out.

DR. BELCHER: So ten minutes. Thanks.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay, folks. We're going to get started again. Okay, John. It's all you.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. Thank you. I mentioned the South Atlantic reef fish funding guidance, and I passed around this draft strawman, just to try and get the council's guidance down. I highlighted here, at the start, the text, and it says NMFS shall the follow prior year direction adopted by the public law regarding South Atlantic reef fish, which for us is our snapper grouper complex, and the agreement provides \$1.8 million. NOAA is directed to follow the guidance of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in identifying research and data collection necessary to better understand discard rates and mortality in the fishery, and the agreement supports full integration of the Great Red Snapper Count in the next assessment.

A few notes, and there's a list here that's coming up next of the items that we talked about in June 2022, and you remember that we discussed this and gave guidance then, and these were pulled from the committee report at that time, and they're highlighted with the little "2022" in parentheses, and, since the language directs NMFS to follow the guidance of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I think the council should consider prioritizing its guidance, to the extent we can, because, you know, in most of these situations, need will exceed funds.

Then, also, I would point out that, because it addresses South Atlantic reef fish, it's not solely focused on red snapper, and so we can look beyond that and really focus on the intent to better understand discard rates and mortality in the fishery, and so there are eight things here listed to go over, and does anyone know where John Walter is, because this is for the Science Center, and so I'm just noticing that he's not even in the room, and so, before we get into the details, he may want to come in.

MR. BELL: Is there a time limitation on this, like how fast is it -- Is there anywhere in there a discussion of timing?

MR. CARMICHAEL: A time on the money?

MR. BELL: (Mr. Bell's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I don't know, and so, John, the first question is, you know, is there a timestamp on this that we're aware of, and like when does this become available, and is it in the current fiscal year funding, and is there a time when you guys have to distribute it? We're thinking that like, if you were to send money out to places, it might be something you have to do during this fiscal year.

DR. WALTER: Most likely, yes, and we would have to motivate the money this fiscal year. It is this fiscal year funds, and so FY23, and the deadlines are ticking on the different processes by which the money can be moved, but, before we moved the money to Sea Grant, for the FY22

funds, and so that's straightforward, and Sea Grant has them, and Sea Grant is administering that process, as Myra alluded to.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right, and so, yes, I think that helps. If you recall, there was a lot of money that went to the count through Sea Grant, and maybe a few other things, and so what we highlighted here, the first one, is recreational fishery catch characterization and estimation, and a few sub-bullets of expanding the for-hire observer coverage, which, you know, there's been a lot of talk about observer coverage over the years, and some of the things that could do would be to provide biological information on released fish, provide catch rate information, validate landings and release estimates, and SEFHIER, which has certainly been an issue.

Then estimating descender device and BFP adoption rates is another important thing, and those are out there, and, you know, how well they're being used is really important to know, in terms of the council being able to apply that to their management actions and the benefits that would come to that from the stock, and that should consider both for-hire and private recreational fisheries, when you look that, because there is discards in both of those components. I think maybe I will just sort of hit the highlights, and then we'll go back and hit it in detail.

The second one is the FWC expansion of the hook-and-line survey, and, if you remember, this was one that was discussed in 2022, and it mentioned increasing effort, dockside, and vessel counts in the core area of Canaveral to Jacksonville, and it also noted the potential for increased geographic range, into Georgia at least, and Georgia was very supportive of that, when we discussed it last year.

Something that wasn't explicitly listed last year was potentially observers, maybe more observers being part of this program, and, again, it gives you a chance to see information on fish that are being thrown back. Assessment uncertainties research, this is a new topic, and I just pulled some things that the SSC has highlighted that we know are having an impact on that assessment, and so it's natural mortality, it's the impact of recruits that are being sourced from the Gulf of Mexico, based on the relatively recent paper from Mandy at the Science Center, and then the size dependence and discard mortality, because, you know, fish at different sizes can have different discard mortality rates.

Support for the South Atlantic Council's best fishing practices expansion and release projects, which are tied into our efforts to reduce overall discards in the fishery, as well as better estimate discards in the fishery, and the release component is trying to get length information on discarded fish. If you don't see them, you don't know how big they are, and it's really hard to plug them into an assessment.

A 2022 topic was the MARMAP otolith and histology backlog, and so trying to get that cleared out, because of the important support that is for many of the reef fish stock assessments. Then support for Sea Grant to expand the outreach component of the red snapper count, which sort of, in a lot of ways, fits in with our best fishing practices expansion as well and getting fishermen to know about those activities. Evaluating the impact of climate on species distribution of snapper grouper species, and so Chester is going to provide us with a soundtrack. I think someone took control of his phone. Chester has been hacked, and so, if you all get a message from Chester, it may not be Chester. That was good.

A new topic, because it is getting a lot of attention, is the impact of climate on species distribution shifts, and certainly there is an indication of some of our species becoming a bit more prevalent in the northern areas, and then evaluating the impacts and costs of changing from otolith-based age estimates to epigenetic ageing techniques, really just because otolith techniques are very expensive and time-consuming and really hard to get timely information into assessments, when you're doing so much work on inputs such as this, and so eight topics listed there, probably \$10 million worth of work, but, you know, I think having you guys now discuss these, if you want to maybe provide some more details on any topics, if there is new topics to add, or if you have some thoughts on maybe relative importance of the different things and how we may rank them.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Spud and then Laurilee.

MR. WOODWARD: All right. Thank you, John. Just refresh my memory about, I guess, Number 2, the FWC hook-and-line survey. Am I correct in remembering that that's designed to sort of be a proxy for how the private recreational sector is fishing, and maybe provide some -- Because, obviously, we're generating a tremendous amount of discards, the way they're being estimated from the private recreational sector, and so how are we addressing improving those, because I -- You know, I keep subjecting myself to the pain of pulling up the MRIP estimates and looking at the B2s and the PSEs, and I don't know why I do that to myself. I guess it's like Dewey, and I just keep doing it to punish myself, but I keep thinking, you know, how do we divert some of this to address that very critical and important issue.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica, to that, and then Laurilee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's also for-hire and adding observers to for-hire trips, and I think it has two components. There's also some video monitoring that's happening, and there's lots of pieces to this, I would say.

MR. WOODWARD: I guess -- I just want to be clear on, within this suite of things, what is being focused on, how to improve the accuracy and precision of those private recreational subsector estimates, because, you know, there is MRIP methodology, and then there's what are we doing and what can we do to really improve those estimates with this, if at all possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't know that I have it to that specific level, and that would be a question for Beverly Sauls, but lots of pieces, and like the observer piece I believe is on for-hire, but there's -- I saw video count information, and we've set up video cameras, and there's multiple aspects of this, and I'm sorry that I don't have more information.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Laurilee and then Tom. Sorry.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Maybe a bit on that, and I'm fairly certain that the information, particularly on the observers, has been important in a lot of stock assessments for, you know, understanding the potential selectivity of discarded fish and getting more information on what's actually being caught, and so there is at least a track record of this hook-and-line survey. It's been going on for a while, and it has been successfully used in assessments, as I recall.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Laurilee, Tom, and then Andy.

MS. THOMPSON: While you have the mic, John, can you please define “epigenetic”, please?

MR. CARMICHAEL: It’s epigenetic, and so it’s taking genetic information from the environment and telling you about the fish that are out there, or something, and I don’t know. I think I have to ask Dr. Collier. Wait. There’s a guy down there raising his hand that can probably give you a better definition.

DR. WALTER: All right, and so this is actually a really cool technology that’s just come online to be able to age fish based on its genetics, and so, because your DNA methylizes over the course of your life, it collects methyl additions to it, and you can identify, based on that, how old you are, and, if you’ve got a reference set of known-age fish, you can then correlate that age to its methylation signature and then do what we call epigenetic ageing, and it looks like it has a lot of promise, for a lot of species, and it’s actually being used by Will Patterson, in his study, to age the fish that they catch, and so it’s a non-lethal way of ageing them, because you just need a tissue sample, and it’s cheaper and easier, and it may work very well. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: I’ve got Tom, Andy, and then Dewey.

MR. ROLLER: I just wanted to see what information we had regarding like expanding observer coverage on for-hire vessels. I mean, what does that encompass? It is part of the fleet, is it headboats, or is it -- I mean, the for-hire fleet is quite a large community, and it’s very diverse.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don’t have this information. I am not going to get it like in an instant, and I think that you could ask Beverly Sauls to give you a presentation about it, at a future meeting, but there’s lots of pieces that they’re working on, and I’m sorry that I don’t have more information about the observer coverage on for-hire trips. We have inlet counts, to get better effort information, and other pieces like that, but I don’t know all the specifics.

MR. ROLLER: Let me rephrase that. It would be really nice to know, at some point, what this observer coverage could look like.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What I just heard was a request for Bev Sauls to come and talk about this.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That could be an ideal seminar topic. We could get the SSC and the AP and the council all together, listening to the same presentation, because, you know, it’s something that they have been doing for quite a while, and it does have a lot of components.

DR. BELCHER: I’ve got, I guess, Chip speaking to that, and then we’ll come to Andy.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you for mentioning that, the seminar series, and we are expecting to have Bev Sauls speak to us in May, and so she’s already on the agenda, but the main focus of that was going to be on the state reef fish survey, and so we can extend the request to include some information on this as well.

DR. BELCHER: Very good. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I’m a little worried that Chip can book people in a matter of seconds, and so I don’t want to suggest anyone else. A question for Mel, and then a suggestion, and so, Mel, I

was talking to John Walter here, and we believe that there was money passed to MARMAP to resolve the sampling backlog, and so is that still an issue for MARMAP, Number 5?

MR. BELL: Yes, and so I think it was specifically red snapper, and, if we want to go beyond red snapper, I think they could -- There's a backlog, and, since then, there's more otoliths and more - - I think there's the potential to utilize some of this, and I can't give you the details, but I know, you know, they're constantly collecting data, and so that was for a previous backlog, and I think it was kind of focused on red snapper, primarily, if we want to go even beyond that for other snapper grouper species, I'm sure there's a use for some of it, and so that certainly could apply, and, in terms of stuff that we might do, that's sort of low-hanging fruit, for us.

MR. STRELCHECK: What John was suggesting, in terms of it's probably a \$10 million research list, and kind of narrowing the scope for prioritizing it, you know, I don't feel comfortable, right, now, with the information that I have before me, to know like where the needs are, what are the funding holes that have been plugged already, and I would recommend, at this point, that maybe we keep it a little bit more broad and then try to prioritize what we think are the, you know, highest priorities for us.

With that said, one thing that is I think a component of a couple of these -- For those that were at the climate scenario planning workshop, we talked a lot about study fleets, and it was kind of right at the top of the list of things that people were very interested in pursuing, and so I see this opportunity, kind of like what we've done with the SADL program, and, you know, could we come up with a commercial, or commercial and recreational, study fleet for snapper grouper, and kind of combine that with some of these other research priorities, and so we could add that as a suggestion.

DR. BELCHER: John, to that?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and, Andy, I appreciate you bringing that up, because I talked to like John Hare, from the Northeast Center, about how they use those, and Mike Pentony some too, and it is something they're using to get some fishermen to provide them basically set-level information, much more detailed, which they are then trying to expand up to say like the catches in a statistical area, and the effort, and so, yes, I think that's something that has a lot of potential in our snapper grouper complex, and just there's so much variety, and there is so little opportunity for us to really get insight into what they're doing, and so like a pilot of that would be really good, to try and sense, you know, how much coverage do we need, and what are fishermen actually willing to do, and what sort of carrots do we need to provide them to put the time and energy into a lot of detailed information, and that could be a really good use for something like this.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I had Dewey, Jessica, and then Kerry.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: This will be for John Walter. On the epigenetics, is the sampling of that getting like a fin sample, or something like that? There is something -- You know, when we talk about study fleets, and the willingness of people to do stuff, there is a large, I believe, and it could be outreach, in the commercial fishing industry, of gathering stuff, fin clips, things that have a valuable -- You know, that we need, which we do need, and I think there's an ability to do that, if the Science Center were to develop the protocol, similar to what I'm working with now with Matt and other ones on getting tuna, bigeye tuna, samples, yellowfin tuna samples, and swordfish

samples, that I am more than capable of getting from a fish house, with a protocol of putting it in vials and writing down the information and sending it in.

There is -- I know folks along the coast that would be really interested in that, if it was of value and could be used. You know, samples is cheap for the commercial industry to gather, with a protocol, and some charter boats and different things, if there was some program of fin clips or portions to gather, and I know that people -- I mean, that's free, and it's that part of doing the whatever testing you do with that, that cost of money, and so I would be really interested in some type of a gathering samples of blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, a few things that fishermen in Hatteras, or in Dare County, interact with, looking at getting samples, if somebody could reach out to me. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Again, Jessica, Kerry, and then Laurilee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think this kind of goes to one of the things that Andy was mentioning. I'm not sure what the gaps are between the Great Red Snapper Count and then, if there are additional data needs, maybe there's a way to make sure that this list is incorporating those gaps, because I'm not sure if there are any.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: John, could recreational fishermen get fin clips too, before they release discards? Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: John and then Spud.

DR. WALTER: On that point, absolutely, and one of the things about the ageing is that we don't have a good handle on what the size, nor the age, of released fish are, but, if you got a fin clip from a released fish, then we would be able to actually age it, which could really improve one of the key uncertainties as to what the sizes of those released fish are. The other thing that it feeds into, and to connect it with what is going to be going on with the additional monies on the Patterson project, is that there's going to be an exploration of either doing a convention tag recapture or a genetic tag recapture, and that's going to -- Will and Dave Chagaris are going to evaluate which is more cost-effective.

It might be that the genetics actually is more cost-effective, particularly when you've also got that age of the fish, and so, if -- That's going to probably then, which they determine which one is more effective, then be funded to do -- To actually implement that on the water, and I could see a really key role for fishermen on the water to be both providing tag samples as well as the recaptures, and, to the extent that more samples always improve your estimates of discard, the total discard rate, then augmenting that, to get a better, and more refined, estimate of what the total number of discards are, or the discard exploitation rate, could be a very valuable use of these funds. I don't know if they will need additional FY23 funds, but I think that the scoping analysis they're doing would indicate how and what those funds -- What kind of bang for the buck they might give. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Laurilee, I did participate in a fin clip project that the Gulf States Commission did on tripletail, and I carried a box of little vials, and they had sarcosyl urea preservative in them, and I took fin clips and put them in there and logged-in where I got them from, and, I mean, it's really not that laborious of a task to be done, and it does provide a wealth of information. My question is so what is the outreach component of the South Atlantic red snapper count that is being tasked to Sea Grant, and what exactly does that mean?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Is Ashley still here, because Spud was asking a question about the outreach component of the count, which is a big part of what she works on. I think Christina will come up, because she works with Ashley on this.

MS. WIEGAND: That's right, and Ashley does work on the outreach component of that, sort of tangentially, and a lot of that is being run by Sea Grant, and so, through her previous position as the Sea Grant fellow, she was a part of some of those conversations. There are sort of two separate things going on. A website on the count was just put out, and we can send that around. That was put together by South Carolina Sea Grant, and then, as part of the fellowship, a seminar series, of sorts, is going to be organized that would go over the count, also the greater amberjack project, and then sort of a broader discussion on the current state of reef fish research.

Some of that is on hold right now, now that Ashley has transitioned over to council staff, because that project is part of the Sea Grant fellowship grant, and so, once we have a new fellow onboard, we'll be working a bit more to do outreach related to the counts, and we can follow-up with you on that, but, right now, we're sort of in this weird waiting position, as we do some staff changeovers.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: So that -- Basically, there was funding in the funding package for the count to cover that, and what you're talking about here is the potential of increasing replicas of that, or something, if desirable, right, and this is what we're talking about? Okay.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I think so, and this is one that was discussed last June, and so, this, like we discussed on the MARMAP resolving the otolith and the histology backlog, there may have been some funding for that last year, and we just don't know. Like I don't know where the \$1.8 million -- How it was dispersed to different groups last year, and so I think, you know, it is true that we don't know where all the need lies, and we don't know what is underway at this time, and, you know, we weren't given a lot of advance notice to prepare for that.

That's why I think, you know, we do the best we can here to say what we think are important needs, and then, you know, there will definitely have to be some follow-up, to find out like, you know, what are the details of something like MARMAP, and what -- You know, does Sea Grant actually still see a need for, you know, additional outreach related to the count, and there would have to definitely be some follow-up.

There is also things underway right now, and like, you know, it's quite possible that, through ongoing funding, that someone is looking at stuff like red snapper natural mortality, and, you know, there's MARFIN grants and things of that nature, and these types of needs are always listed as priorities there, and so, yes, I think some of this stuff the agency could look at and then go, oh,

well, that's being done in this project, and, you know, that kind of feedback would certainly help us, when it comes to seeing the outcome of a list like this.

MS. WIEGAND: I just want to make a note, as you guys are thinking about outreach for the count, we're sort of trying to transition away from that language, and so what you're going to be seeing from now is going to be the South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Project, and so, when you see that language, it's referring to what we've sort of been colloquially calling the red snapper count.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got John Walter and then Chester.

DR. WALTER: I apologize if I wasn't clear, and I should have just, at the outset, said where that money went, because I think we need to know that. \$1.47 million went to Sea Grant, to support the additional work for the Patterson project, \$100,000 went to FWRI, to support I think some of the work that was done, and you confirmed that, Jessica, right, and then \$230,000 to South Carolina DNR to support the backlog, and so just to be clear how it was dispersed, and those were some extensive negotiations from discussions with the sponsor's representatives, to identify what the actual will of the sponsor was. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Chester and then Mel.

MR. BREWER: Thank you. When we were talking about discard mortalities and descending devices and whatnot, we had extensive conversations about how are we going to have this system designed so that we know what the efficacy is of these descending devices, and I'm not sure that we ever came up with anything, because we talked about like -- We talked about having observers, which, on, you know, a twenty-three-foot center console, really is just not -- You don't want to do that.

In looking at two of these items, we've got, potentially, some money to fund taking a look at these descending devices and how they're working and that sort of thing, and I think that that would be a good use of the money, but I feel like you need to couple that with this whole idea of taking DNA and taking just a small sample of the fish and being able to age that fish, because, right now, when you're trying to take a look at what's going on with the descending devices, if you're just going with otoliths, you can't really do it, because, with otoliths, you've got to kill the fish, to be able to pull that otolith out. Here, you don't have to kill the fish. You don't have to have any kind of exempted fishing permit or anything. You're just taking a little bit of that fish and putting it in a vial, like Spud was talking about, and sending it on. Those two items, I think, work hand-in-hand, and they certainly would provide a lot of information that we pretty desperately need. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Mel.

MR. BELL: I think I started out with this, but did you need to respond back to that or something? The timing of all this, and so it's -- It's in this fiscal year, and it's March already, and we get the money, and there is discussion here, obviously, about, you know, kind of perhaps better informing the next assessment. Well, the next assessment, for red snapper anyway, doesn't start until mid-2024, I guess, but can we do things where the money carries across the fiscal year, or has this all got to be completed by September, or do we know?

MR. STRELCHECK: It doesn't have to be completed. It has to be initiated.

MR. BELL: All right. With that then, initiated, then still we've got initiate fairly quickly, and so it seems like you're in a position where we're going to see how we can maybe plus-up, or add to, some existing programs, projects, things that are already there, and we don't have to stand something brand-new up and get it running, and so that kind of direction towards -- Probably that's the list we have of things, and that would be the best way to get quick results out of this, and quick use of the money, and is that -- I was also just trying to think of new things, but you really can't set up something brand-new, and, also, you know, like in terms of our agency, something brand-new involves people. With people, that takes forever, or we don't even have staffing capacity, in some areas, and so things that you have an existing program, in order to do things, what can we plus-up, and that's kind of what we're looking at, I guess. Okay.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I appreciate Mel's comments, because I think that's good to be thinking about, in terms of timing. You know, I'm struggling with this, as we kind of have several kind of areas of thought here, and one is kind of what we need to learn, right, some of the big underlying questions of the unknowns, or things that are unresolved, and we have kind of the outreach kind of communication component, right, as part of this, and then we have the kind of future outward looking of how can we do things more efficiently or better, right, and all of those have value.

I think about the last couple of years, when I've been sitting at this table, and we've been debating about discards, the magnitude of discards, the fact that we have this multispecies fishery, and understanding the complex better and all of those interactions, and, really, what I would hope is we would put a lot of emphasis in trying to understand, as much as possible, on the discards and discard mortality rate, magnitude of those, and those multispecies interactions, to help us better manage the fishery, and that's in here, right, but figuring out kind of how to prioritize this, and lay that out, and then also accomplish that over the next year-and-a-half, right, is when we have to execute it, is the challenge, and so, overall, I think I'm comfortable with kind of the broader list, and the challenge then becomes how do you narrow this down, and how does the Science Center help execute this, with partners.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think, you know, Andy makes a good point, and, you know, it's always - - When you're trying to come up with what the needs are, you know, do you try to put out there what you think will be funded, or do we really try to be more thorough? I think, in this case, at this stage, the goal is to try to be more thorough and identify the various needs.

I agree that understanding the fishery, catch, and the discards is paramount, and that's why it's Number 1. This is, you know, quasi-prioritized, and so, you know, I think, if there are things down below that you think should be moved up, or things up here that could be moved down, I think that would be helpful, and that's a good way to interpret this. I thought that Chester made a really good point about, you know, the descender devices and the importance of understanding their usage. We know that's a really important factor in evaluating the management, which is one reason why that estimating the descender device adoption rates was there under Number 1.

Christina, wasn't part of the best fishing practices expansion discussion a workshop tied to evaluating usage and trying to bring the state-of-the-art -- So, when I put the support here for the councils, you know, not to be too selfish about it, but expansion of the BFP was looking at this evaluation workshop, and I will point out that, you know, what we're doing in best fishing practices the council is funding 100 percent, out of your own pocket, far different than, you know, in the Gulf of Mexico, with that impressive program funded with, you know, the oil spill tragedy money. Christina, maybe a bit about the evaluation workshop, because I think that's important to, you know, the point that Chester made.

MS. WIEGAND: That is something that's just now sort of starting to get underway, but the idea is that there have been a lot of surveys done, be it the survey work that TNC has done, some of the work that's been done by Return 'Em Right, some work that's been done by independent universities, looking at the knowledge of descending devices and then the usage of descending devices, and so the goal of this workshop, and sort of how it will be structured, is all in development, but it's to get those researchers together to talk about how we can use their collective research to sort of set a baseline and then, moving forward, have conversations about how we can structure be it surveys or other research efforts to determine, based on that baseline, how effective our outreach efforts are at improving use and compliance with descending device regulations.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Going back to an earlier comment, I see you captured the pilot study idea under the first bullet. I'm thinking of this still a little bit more broadly than just recreational, and I'm wondering if we could modify Bullet Number 1 to just say fishery catch characterization and estimation, and keep Sub-Bullet a, but the pilot study fleets would include commercial as well, and I think about it from the standpoint of, yes, we focused a lot on red snapper, but we heard some talk about gag, and potentially scamp interactions, something we would be working towards in the future, and we have a big vermilion snapper fleet, and what is their interactions with red snapper. Kind of understanding all these dynamics and all of these fishery interactions would be really helpful on the commercial side just as much as the recreational.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Andy. I was actually going to ask that question before. I think what I'm trying to understand is how that would be different than sort of expanding observer coverage of the commercial fleet, and like what do you get from a study fleet that you don't get from having an observer aboard the vessel?

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, and John Walter can weigh-in, but I think, with a study fleet, you can ask more specific questions and kind of work with the industry, with regard to actually the types of trips that are being taken, you know, the research issues and questions you're trying to answer, and it's not just simply going out on your boat and quantifying whatever you're catching and discarding.

DR. BELCHER: The one thing that I think about too, that's a little bit of a difficulty, and, if there's a way to do it, then I'm all about it, but I think about the fact that we have these different permits that allow for data collection, and there's almost a compelling in that, you know, like we have for the shrimp fleet, that, if you're asked, you have to take that, but how do you compel the recreational

fishery to take an observer? I mean, in the general sense, how do you get that? We have no authority, or control, over that, and anything is voluntary, and, right about now -- I mean, in the case of, you know, for-hire and charter, I guess, to a level, if it's part of your condition of your permit, then you have to do it, but how do you do that for the section that we really don't know a lot about? Judy.

MS. HELMEY: You could offer some sort of payment for it, do what you would have to do, and maybe they would get free gas, or get something for it, and I believe you would be able to -- I believe, if you also asked for volunteers, I think you would be very shocked on how many you would get.

DR. BELCHER: I think it varies. I mean, I know where we got to, when we were dealing with bycatch reduction devices, and, initially, we had where the observers would go out on the shrimp boats, and we didn't really have a huge issue, but, once that started getting contentious, we had observers being left at the dock, and they would say, sure, you can come, and then they weren't getting picked up, and so, I mean, I think that some of that is you've just got to think about what the -- I think about you guys too, those of you that have that written into your permit, and how would you feel if somebody was getting paid to do that, and you're not getting offset for that, but you've got a person who is on your vessel and occupying a spot? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, to me, there's been a lot of inequities that's been done, because my permit says I've got to take an observer, and so it's not -- I'm not up for negotiating, and so you have to take an observer in the snapper grouper fishery, and you also have to your Coast Guard decal and the safety equipment.

The question I had is about the descending devices, and, if you descend a fish, how do you know that thing -- Unless you tag it, how do you know that thing is living and not getting eaten by sharks? I mean, I know you've seen video of somebody doing it, but, I mean, if there's not extensive tagging of that descended fish, how do you really know that it works, I mean, to the level you're trying to say that it works, and something else. You know, when you put out this descending device, there was a shortfall of one single descending device, rigged and ready, with no matter how many people is onboard the vessel.

Maybe, through best practices, even though the law says you've got have one rigged and ready, folks are going to say, you know what, I'm going to spend the extra hundred dollars, and I've got five people that's going to go fishing with me, and so I'm going to have five descending devices, and so I just wonder how you calculate the success of a descending device, which we know works in certain occasions, or regions, but they're not getting eaten by the sharks, and so is all these fish that is having the descending done, and all the papers written, is any of them concentrated on a yellow tag, or some type of tag in the fish, so that, when it's caught later, to know that it was a descending device fish, and is that happening, and to what extent is the sample size?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, I think Christina might want to come up, because I think a lot of the things you're talking about would be part of the workshop. In general terms, the way they figure out these work is much the way they have gone about figuring out what discard mortality rates are in the future, and it includes lots of methods. It can include conventional tagging, and it can include, you know, ultrasonic tagging, to see if the fish are moving, and there's lots of things that they do, and it can include the use of cameras and stuff, and so, yes, it's really that they apply

a whole bunch of different techniques, and, you know, it's a relatively new concept, in the overall world of fisheries, and it's probably been going on for, you know, twenty years, and it started out on the west coast, with their rockfish complex, and so there's a lot of scientific research into it, and this really fits right in, I think, with some of the workshop ideas, and so I will turn to Christina over there to follow-up.

MS. WIEGAND: Well, I think the workshop, in terms of what was included in the best fishing practices appendix with Regulatory Amendment 35, was really geared more towards determining the effectiveness of our outreach efforts and knowledge and compliance of descending devices, but John is exactly right, and there has been a significant amount of tagging research done to look at the efficacy of descending devices.

You called me to the table, but there might be Chip or Judd, who also know quite a bit about tagging research, in terms of descending devices as well, and the Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29, which was the one that put in the descending device requirement, does also contain a lot of sort of sources detailing the research that has been done to-date, and that's certainly something, if this council is interested, we could pull back out and update you on at some point.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I understand the west coast and different things, but I also understand there's, I mean, a lot of sharks, along the coast, and I am just curious of how that adds up, when all you hear is amberjacks getting eaten when they're too small, or not the right size, or above the -- Whatever it is, and you just hear a lot of shark interactions, and you hear of sailfish, in Florida, getting eaten when they're released, and so I was just curious of how much efficacy there is. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: To that point, there were two studies, and they were in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, Drymon 2020 and Runde 2022, and no predation was observed on descended fish, and zero devices were lost. I'm not saying it doesn't happen, and we hear that as well, but just there are two studies on this.

DR. BELCHER: Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: Jessica brought up exactly what I was going to say, but, also, sort of through Ashley and Meg's work, working with, you know, various charter captains and fishermen, they have talked a lot about how they will rig-up their descending devices, or what material they will use to rig-up their descending devices, sort of to ensure that, if a shark is likely to come along, it's not likely to snap that line, and so fishermen are innovative, and we've certainly heard, from fishermen, that they've been able to modify their practices to avoid shark depredation.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I added here a symposium on the state of science regarding descenders and such, and I think that -- You know, we mentioned, early on, like not knowing all the holes, and that's probably still an issue, even within this, as we're learning more about it, and one of the things we're learning, as is often the case, the more studies are done, the more you find out that species have a lot of unique characteristics about themselves. The effectiveness can vary a lot

across species, and it can vary a lot across environments and how they're handled, and so, you, now, perhaps something like this could be a symposium, to figure out where the state of that science stands and where they think the most important future directions are, in terms of researching this.

One of the things that you would think about, with a funding source like this -- You know, it's not going to support long-term monitoring, because it's a one-off deal, and so that's why I sort of think these few things here, under Item 1, are kind of appealing, because they do have the potential to get you some good insight without having to incur, you know, long-term expenses, which you don't know that you're going to get. The study fleets, I think it's really appealing to find out if that could work, because we do suffer so much for information, and I think these topics about estimating descender device -- There's been a lot of discussion on them.

There seems to be some interest, and certainly it's fundamental to the future of this fishery to, you know, be able to have the effort occurring, and, when the fish that can't be kept are caught, the better they survive, the better off we are at sort of preserving access to the fishery, and so these seem to be kind of popping out as maybe top topics that we would want to highlight.

DR. BELCHER: John Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thanks, and I think it's a really good discussion on descender devices, and I wanted to pivot a bit to a couple of other new emergent needs that might be considered here, and I think one, and I just want to put this out there, is whether the MSE is going to need additional support, or whether we're covered, because I think the scope may have seen a little expansion this week, because people brought up a few things, like economics, and I don't want to see that process not get its support, and I think that might -- I just want to put that out there, in case that might be a priority of this group. Then incorporation of the -- Let's see. What is it, Christina, the South Atlantic --

MS. WIEGAND: South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program.

DR. WALTER: Research Program. Okay. Is there a shorter version of that?

MS. WIEGAND: (Ms. Wiegand's comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. WALTER: Perfect. I will be sure that I communicate that properly, but incorporating that, and all of its products, into the stock assessment is one of the specific asks, and so knowing that incorporating some of these new things into the existing framework can require, potentially, a lot of work, because it's not always clear how it fits into the existing framework. I just want to put that out there. If it's determined that we need resources to ensure that, it does seem like that is one of the things that is specifically listed, and so MSE and the next stock assessment. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just thinking some, John, on the SARSRP incorporation into SEDAR, you know, part of the discussions on the timing of that red snapper assessment was to work with this, and realizing that there could be early discussions about what is SARSRP giving us, how is it coming along, what kind of information content might there be, so they could start planning early

in the assessment, and, you know, maybe something like this could lead to some sort of gathering of the folks that are likely to be, you know, key players in the assessment, as well as the SARSRP researchers, kind of ahead of the assessment, to get together, you know, face-to-face and talk about modeling opportunities and the data they're getting and do some pre-planning and discussions of how this may all fit into the stock assessment, which would be -- You know, it would fit in with this one-off sort of money thing.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments or discussion on this? Anything else related to this, John, that you would like to hear? Mel.

MR. BELL: So, process forward, how fast do we need to get this thing going, and I do like your use of SARSRP. It just flows right off the -- I'm thinking I can see a t-shirt and a logo, and, you know, there's great potential, but, process-wise, we've got this kind of list, and what happens next?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, I guess it kind of depends on the timing, you know, and, if we've developed the list enough to give the agency the input it needs, we can fold the list into the committee report, much as we did, or make it a separate document that comes out of this meeting, and, you know, that's the important thing, that we get our thoughts down on paper and provide them to the agency and they go from there.

I would assume there would be, much as there probably was last year, some reaching out to organizations and saying, okay, you know, what would you do if you were offered some funding, and I expect that probably happened with like, you know, MARMAP, and how much would it take for you to start resolving this backlog, and then you tell them, and then they say, okay, we're going to send you some money, and you come up with contracts, and so I think all that would happen, and it's going to have to fast-track, because the money has got to be disseminated out of the agency accounts pretty quick.

So, you know, I guess the question is are we giving enough guidance, and I moved those last two topics up here toward the top, because I know they seem pretty appealing as well, and really maybe to fit in with the nature of this kind of funding, and so we have, you know, sort of four up there, three up there, now at the top, along with things we discussed here, and would the council agree those are the top priorities, and we recognize there is continuing need, which maybe factors into Congress's intents to provide ongoing funding and additional funding, perhaps, in future years, because we can, you know, show there is plenty of need to go around here, in dealing with this fishery.

DR. BELCHER: So we're good to go at that point then?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I think so.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Moving on, I guess we have a couple of options, and I am going to look to staff to see, comfort-wise -- We can either end earlier or pull a couple of items up, and I guess we have like future meetings or whatever that we could discuss, but we do have the committee reports that are left, and so it's either wait and do all of those tomorrow or --

MR. CARMICHAEL: I seemed to sense there was some potential rollover from Snapper Grouper, at least, and so maybe, if you wanted to take care of -- I know we could do Full Council I and the

SEDAR Committee reports today, if you wanted to roll into those. Mackerel Cobia is ready, if we got there.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Do we just need a couple of seconds? Myra, did you need time, or are you good?

MS. BROUWER: Let me point out the three reports that I have ready for you all, and the drafts are posted on the briefing book page, at the very bottom of the page, if you want to follow along.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. This is the summary report for Full Council Session I, which was the closed session, which was on March 6 of 2023. We received the litigation update. Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA GC, briefed the council on two recent lawsuits involving the Gulf Management Council actions. The first was directed to the Gulf Reef Fish FMP Amendment 53 addressing red grouper and challenged allocation changes incorporating the MRIP FES estimates. Concerns were raised regarding BSIA, fairness and equitability, and bycatch minimization. The initial ruling in favor of NMFS is under appeal.

The second suit addressed the SEFHIER program in the Gulf of Mexico and challenged VMS and economic data collection. The case was initially ruled in favor of NMFS by District Court, but then, on appeal, the Circuit Court found in favor of the plaintiffs. The court cited a number of procedural issues with the rule and questioned NMFS' authority under MSA to take the required actions, ultimately setting aside the entire rule and effectively removing the SEFHIER reporting and VMS requirements for Gulf-permitted fishermen. The ruling does not impact the South Atlantic reporting requirements. Charter vessel operators with both South Atlantic and Gulf permits, who were previously reporting under the more stringent Gulf requirements, must now report under the South Atlantic requirements.

Advisory Panel Policy, the council reviewed modifications to the AP policy incorporating discussion from the December 2022 meeting. In addition to several clarifying edits, changes address meeting frequency for APs, require new members to participate in orientation, clarify that AP members follow council policies, and specify an effective date for future appointments.

Administrative Handbook, the council reviewed the draft administrative handbook, which was previously reviewed by the Executive Committee and NOAA GC. Changes were made in employment policies to reflect current council practices and HR laws. Travel policies were updated for consistency with current practices and council guidance. Language addressing conduct was strengthened and clarified, and NMFS policies on preventing harassment included as appendices. Council committee definitions were updated to reflect committee revisions made in 2020. Significant format and document ordering changes were made to improve organization and readability.

Additional modifications based on council review during the meeting included: inserted into Section II, Code of Conduct, a new item (g), for public hearings, stating: Voting council and committee members are discouraged from providing public comment during formal council public comment sessions (which are those noticed in the Federal Register) on actions that will come before the group on which they have voting privileges, in order to allow sufficient time for each member of the interested public the opportunity to verbally comment on council actions.

We deleted text specifying that staff phone allowance is \$50, to allow flexibility in establishing the allowance amount based on budget and need. We clarified that the employment requirement for Family Medical Leave allowance is based on council employment. We approved allowing full per diem reimbursement when travel days exceed twelve hours of meeting and travel time. I need the group to discuss draft motions to address the recommendations that were above.

MR. CARMICHAEL: They need to be made and seconded, since these were recommendations.

DR. BELCHER: Correct. Sorry. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we approve the AP policy, as modified.**

DR. BELCHER: Do I have a second for that? Kerry. Any further discussion? Anybody with discussion on this? **Does anybody object to this motion?** Okay. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** The second recommendation is for a motion to be formed to approve the administrative handbook, as modified. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's my understanding that maybe there's one piece in there that we need to go back and look at, but I think that the remainder of the handbook can be approved today, and is that right?

DR. BELCHER: It's at the pleasure of the group. Mel.

MR. BELL: I think the section that dealt specifically with removing existing language related to Medicaid supplement stuff, and there was some confusion over what the language that was in there, that we didn't really see, actually meant and the timing, and so that was the only piece, which I think is like Section 6 or something in the document.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: If you wanted to -- I guess it depends on the specific questions, and I can give some clarification of what was there, and what was there before, and how it's being used now, and the fate of that. Then, if we were to get into specific details, I would think we would want to go into a closed session with just the council.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Is the group's pleasure to proceed that way? Chester.

MR. BREWER: I think John is right, because there's some sensitive stuff in there that I think probably -- It's what Mel is talking about, and it probably should be dealt with in closed session.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So you would like a closed session in the morning?

DR. BELCHER: Mel.

MR. BELL: Well, that's one option. The other is that my understanding was there was some research, maybe, we could do that involved access to files and things that we don't have here, and so that might be something we couldn't do by tomorrow morning, which is why everything else

was fine, and maybe just hold off on that one section and then come back, even between meetings or something, and resolve it, and so whichever makes the most sense.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I have done some research, based on what is shown in past copies of approved handbooks, you know, and so the short history, which I don't think crosses over any issues, is, in 2015, there was a benefit added that would pay Medicare supplement for retired employees if they retired after sixty-five or retirement eligibility, which is fifty-nine-and-a-half years old, and retired after sixty-five, and it would pay the full amount. In 2018, there were significant changes in that benefit, and it only paid a percentage, 75 or 85, and it was capped at \$5,000 per person, and, to be eligible, it was staff who would be eligible for retirement by 2024, which is the age of fifty-nine-and-a-half.

Then they had to work until sixty-five to receive this, and so there were like two staff that retired initially, under the early provisions, and two more staff that would have retired under the -- Once the change was made to limit it to \$5,000 max per year, and then that left three potential staff who haven't retired that would have been eligible if they retired by 2024, and so what the change would do is it would continue to provide that benefit with the \$5,000 a year cap for the staff who retired already and are receiving that now, and they would continue to receive that into the future, as long as the council can afford to do it and wants to continue to provide that benefit, and so no change to the people who are receiving that benefit currently and today.

Then the change, by removing this language, does affect people who were essentially covered with the 2024 limitation, and they would no longer be eligible to receive this benefit, and so, when I was put in in 2018, there were like eighteen staff, and so there were twelve staff that wouldn't have ever qualified, because they wouldn't be fifty-nine-and-a-half by 2024, and there were like six staff that would be eligible to qualify, that would be retirement age by fifty-nine-and-a-half, and so that's sort of the history of the changes that have been made by the council over the years.

DR. BELCHER: Chester.

MR. BREWER: John, I'm curious. When we say "benefit", are we talking about the premium that's paid, or that you have to pay out of Social Security? You're talking about the copay of 20 percent?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I am no Medicaid expert. What it talks about is the supplement, Parts B, C, and D, or something, and it would pay a percentage of that, up to a maximum of \$5,000, and the individuals who receive that submit an invoice to us, and we provide them a check on -- I think some do monthly, and I think some do quarterly, but it just covers the funding for the supplements, and I don't know how that fits into all the other aspects of that, and the way that works is folks are charged an amount by the Medicaid system, based on, you know, need, and so, the more money you have, the more Medicaid charges you for doing that.

DR. BELCHER: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: If you want to close the meeting, the Magnuson Act allows you to do that, and I would consider this an employment matter, and so the act clearly says you can do that. If you do that, because it's not noticed, it can be like up to two hours, and so, if you wanted to do that first thing in the morning, you could. If you wanted to wait until June, you could. If you

wanted to go into closed session right now, you could. I mean, you've got some flexibility on what you would like to do.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Let's go into closed session right now.

MR. CARMICHAEL: One quick suggestion. Would you like to dispense with the rest of these actions and make the appointments, and then we could go into closed session, and perhaps we could wrap-up Full Council I closed today?

DR. BELCHER: What's the pleasure of the group? Is everybody okay with that? Okay. I'm seeing head nods, and so that's what we'll do. Okay. What we're going to do is we'll finish going through the rest of the report, and we'll talk about the recommendations, as we've currently got them, for appointments, and then we will go into closed session after that.

Appoint blueline and tilefish participants to topical working groups, SEDAR 89 and 92 topical working groups, two subjects, recreational landings and discards, as well as inclusion of a new deepwater longline survey, were identified for topical working groups for SEDAR 92, and one subject, which is life history, for a topical working group for SEDAR 89. Staff recommended combining the topics and using one working group to address both subjects for SEDAR 92. The council recommended participants and observers in Table 1 for SEDAR 89 and Table 2 for SEDAR 92. What we have in front of us is a recommendation, which we would ask for the group to consider making a motion.

MR. CARMICHAEL: A point to make on that is there were no fishery violations for Byron, and so there's no issues with the action to appoint him to the SEDAR pool.

DR. BELCHER: Are we there? I didn't think we were. Sorry.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Right, but he's on this group, and so there would be a concern if he were not eligible to be on the SEDAR pool, and we would have to remove him from this group, but we don't have to do that.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. All right. From the group, I guess do you need me to read the table in, or is the table good to go as-is?

MR. CARMICHAEL: You don't need to read the table, no.

DR. BELCHER: All right, and so what we need is a motion from the group to move forward with the recommendations for these appointments. Somebody has got to make the motion. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Motion to approve Table 1 and Table 2 as topical working group member participants, data providers, and observers for SEDAR 89 and 92.

DR. BELCHER: Do I have a second for that? Mel. Any further discussion? Okay. **Seeing none, is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**

Moving down, Byron -- Was he -- He's at the end. Sorry. SEDAR and SSC appointments, SEDAR Pool, Byron Shults was recommended to the SEDAR Pool, so that he could participate in the topical working group for SEDAR 92. The council recommended Byron Shults to the SEDAR Pool, contingent on the background check finding no fishery violations, which John just indicated he did come back with no violations.

Scientific and Statistical Committee, due to a change in employment at North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, North Carolina Department of Marine Fisheries recommended changing their agency representative on the Scientific and Statistical Committee to Anne Markwith. The council recommended Anne Markwith as a member, and so the draft motion, which we need to put forward to address the recommendations, includes -- I guess we can do this as a complete motion for both.

The recommendation would be to appoint Byron Shults to the SEDAR Pool AP, effective April 1 of 2023, and also appoint Anne Markwith to the North Carolina DMF seat on the SSC, effective April 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Do I have anyone willing to make the motion? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I move to appoint Byron Shults to the SEDAR Pool AP, effective April 1 of 2023, and also appoint Anne Markwith to the NC DMF seat on the SSC, effective April 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

DR. BELCHER: Do I have a second for that? Laurilee. Any further discussion? Any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that joint motion passes. At this point, we will move -- Mel.

MR. BELL: I apologize, and can I ask a question? This is what I was thinking about earlier, and so we approved the AP panel policy, the changes, where we added some new things that they had to do, and that's great, but is there anything in the handbook that helps us with -- So if they don't do something in a particular amount of time, then we unappoint them, or we remove them, and is that described anywhere, or is the assumption is that, if this is the requirement for you to be on the AP, you need to do this, and, if you don't do this in a certain amount of time, you're not on the AP, and is that defined anywhere?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I guess what do you mean by this? What would they be doing? That's the part that I'm confused.

MR. BELL: No, and so we've added a requirement --

MR. CARMICHAEL: Are you referring to the orientation?

MR. BELL: Yes, the orientation or the harassment stuff, and so that's your requirement.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I would think what would happen is, if someone were appointed, and we offered the orientation, and they didn't do that promptly, the process would be we would likely do that let's say in June, and then we do an orientation usually in July or August, and we do it before those AP meetings start, and so, if someone didn't do that, we would probably tell you in -- We may convene a closed session in September and tell you that the people have not done it, and then look for guidance from you. We would, obviously, hopefully, by that point, have reached out to them several times and encouraged them to do it, and then I think you would then have a choice.

You may say, well, will they do it before their AP meets, and then, in December, we could bring it back up again, and so I think, basically, what it would trigger is us communicating to you the status of any new appointees, relative to what you've asked them to do. Then it would be your discretion, because that whole section about, you know, what's expected and termination says a member may be terminated, and none of that dictates that they will be, must be, et cetera.

MR. BELL: Yes, and my point was we just added a new requirement, and we haven't really gone through this yet, and we'll see what happens, I guess.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will say we have had excellent participation at our orientations in the past, and so I'm not too worried that people won't.

DR. BELCHER: Any further discussion at this point, for this part of Council I? Okay. I am going to go ahead and recommend five minutes, and we'll come back and go into closed session for council members to discuss.

(Whereupon, the meeting went into closed session.)
(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on March 9, 2023.)

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MARCH 10, 2023

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Full Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Friday, March 10, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: We are back to going over committee reports, and we'll pick back up where we left off, with the discussions about the employee handbook.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Are you ready for me to get going, Carolyn?

DR. BELCHER: Sure.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We left the Full Council about the potential motion to approve the administrative handbook, as modified, and then, as folks know, we went into closed session to talk about the post-retirement healthcare insurance benefit that was in there, and so, after a considerable amount of discussion, the council decided to stick with the recommendation that had been in there from the Executive Committee that was in the handbook and moving to eliminate the post-retirement health insurance for all SAFMC staff, with the added provision of this applying to past and present retirees.

There are some folks who are currently receiving this benefit, and they will continue to receive this benefit through the end of Calendar Year 2023, and then, at that point, it will end, and so that's

the discussions of last night, during the closed session, and so that brings us back around to this motion, Madam Chair.

DR. BELCHER: Do we have anyone who is willing to make the motion? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we approve the administrative handbook, as modified.**

DR. BELCHER: Do I have a second for that? I've got Trish. Is there continued discussion on this? Okay. **Seeing none, then all those in favor, please raise your hand; opposed; abstain. The motion carries.** Now we have -- Do we have an open session, Myra, a report?

MS. BROUWER: Yes. That's what is displaying on your screen.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you. We had just mentioned SEDAR, and so -- Okay. In the open session, the council approved the agenda for the meeting and the transcripts from December 2022. We received reports from NOAA Law Enforcement, the state agencies, and council liaisons.

We discussed the commercial electronic logbook amendment. Council staff reviewed progress on the amendment since the December 2022 council meeting, reviewed a revised development timeline, and summarized preliminary analyses and input from the Gulf Council's Data Collection Advisory Panel that met in February 2023. The council suggested including, in the draft document, how the data collected via the coastal logbook are used in management, in particular data collected through the socioeconomic survey. Additionally, staff were asked to revise and clarify the data presented on average poundage per trip and average trip value in the snapper grouper fishery. The council approved the following motion. Approve the commercial electronic logbook amendment, as modified, for public hearings. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just to let you know, I'm going to make a little, a small, correction here, and I'm going to remove the "socio" from this descriptive of the survey, because it in fact does not collect information, social information, and so I just wanted to make sure you all were aware that I was making that edit. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Myra. Okay, and so the council had approved that motion. East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Summit, staff summarized the outcome of the summit meeting held February 15 through 16, 2023, in Arlington, Virginia. The goal of the summit was to develop a set of potential governance and management actions resulting from the scenario-based exploration of the future.

The EC Climate Scenario Planning core team is working on a summit report and a draft action/implementation plan that will be presented at the May 9 and 10 NRCC meeting for review and additional guidance on next steps. The summit report, draft implementation plan and outcome of the NRCC discussions will also be presented May 23 through 25, at the CCC meeting, and subsequently available for each Atlantic council and the ASMFC for review and discussion on priorities for next steps. That concludes what was discussed in the open session.

The next committee report is the SEDAR Committee, which was held on March of 2023. The committee approved the minutes from the September 2022 meeting and the agenda for the March 2023 meeting.

SEDAR 92, which is blueline tilefish, and SEDAR 89, tilefish, which is the golden tilefish, terms of reference were discussed. Council staff presented the terms of reference for SEDAR 92 and 89 for the operational assessment in 2024. The committee discussed the assessment type for SEDAR 92 and recommended that the topical working group for catch and landings north of Hatteras also explore whether information could be used to develop higher-level assessment approach. No changes were recommended for SEDAR 89. The committee made the following motion regarding the terms of reference.

Motion 1 was approve SEDAR 92 Atlantic Blueline Tilefish Operational Assessment Terms of Reference, as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.

Motion 2 is approve SEDAR 89 Atlantic Tilefish Operational Assessment Terms of Reference. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any opposition? Any discussion? That should be first. Seeing no discussion, and no opposition, that motion also carries.

SEDAR Steering Committee Updates, the committee was provided an update on the SEDAR Steering Committee meetings from September 2022 and February 2023. The council's requests to start operational assessments in 2024 for blueline tilefish, which is SEDAR 92, and tilefish, SEDAR 89, as well as a research track assessment for red snapper was approved by the SEDAR Steering Committee at their September meeting.

The February SEDAR Steering Committee meeting discussed SEDAR process items. Upcoming research track assessment review workshops, as well as portions of the data workshops, will be able to be streamed, providing additional access to those who cannot attend in-person.

There was an update on SEDAR projects that staff provided the committee on SEDAR projects occurring in the South Atlantic region. Currently, there are four ongoing assessments in the South Atlantic region: benchmark assessment for mutton snapper, operational assessments for black sea bass and red grouper, and a research track assessment for gray triggerfish. 2024 assessments included operational assessments for blueline tilefish and tilefish. Other projects outside of stock assessments included additional analyses for SEDAR 78, which is Spanish Mackerel, and SEDAR 68, which is scamp and yellowmouth grouper), an interim analysis for vermilion snapper, and SEDAR Procedural Workshop 8 on fishery-independent index development.

Project/Species for the 2026 slots, staff provided a list of assessments and projects for consideration for the 2026 SEDAR project slots. The committee was briefed on the need for an operational assessment for snowy grouper, research track assessments for Spanish mackerel and greater amberjack, and management strategy and management procedure for dolphin. The committee recommended removing white grunt from the SEDAR schedule in 2027 and 2028. The committee delayed providing recommendations for assessments and projects for 2026 until after the Mackerel Cobia Committee discussed the Spanish mackerel assessment. I guess, at this point, do we discuss what our plan was for that slot?

DR. COLLIER: I don't think you necessarily need to make a motion, because you are on the SEDAR Steering Committee. You've heard the guidance from the council, and, obviously, you would like to have two research track assessments, one for greater amberjack and one for Spanish

mackerel, starting as soon as possible, and you can think about how you want to do that for the May meeting, unless there is clearer guidance from the council on what they would prefer as well.

DR. BELCHER: So we're good to go. Okay. Thank you for that. Other Business, the committee was briefed on changes to the scopes of work for the 2025 stock assessments. Staff described the information included in the revised version of the scopes of work, which is in Attachment 5c. In addition to the changes included in 5c, the committee recommended considering datasets for estimation for commercial discards based on onboard observers, estimates of for-hire catch through the SEFHIER Program, and size distribution from Release for gag to be included in the assessment updated information, and this references specifically the Florida State Reef Fish Survey for gag. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: When we originally were talking about this, we were talking about red porgy, and so I had overlooked it for gag grouper, but the Florida Reef Fish Survey does collect information on gag grouper, and so I think that could be a potential data source as well.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that clarification. The committee recommended including a SEDAR procedural workshop to better understand the low recruitment for gag, red porgy, and scamp, as well as for considering red grouper in the scopes of work for gag and red porgy. The committee recommended a topical working group on reproductive dynamics for gag, but recognized a workshop may not be needed if no additional information is available.

Motion Number 3 was made to approve scopes of work for red porgy, gag, and king mackerel in 2025, as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any further discussion? Any objection to the motion? Okay. That motion passes, or carries. Timing and Tasks, we had no timing and task motions made during that committee. Okay, and so, moving on, we now have the draft summary report for Snapper Grouper. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee approved the minutes from the December 2022 meeting and the agenda for the March 2023 meeting, and then we got a report on the status of amendments under formal review, and I'm not going to read all of that.

Then we got into the management strategy evaluation for the snapper grouper fishery, and I'm going to read a little bit more of this. The council is conducting a management strategy evaluation to explore long-term management strategies for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. The committee received a presentation on MSEs from Blue Matter Science, and Blue Matter Science described preliminary information being included in the MSE and discussions at the most recent Snapper Grouper AP and SSC meetings.

The committee recommended reviewing the visioning project and a report by Kari Buck on alternative recreational management approaches presented to the council in March of 2019 as potential sources of management approaches. The committee provided guidance on conceptual management options and key uncertainties.

Then we discussed the red snapper 2023 recreational season, and NMFS SERO discussed information surrounding the 2023 recreational season for red snapper. Due to inclement weather during the 2022 season, catch estimates were notably lower. Discussions of weather and how these catch estimates should be used in determining the length of the 2023 recreational season are

ongoing, and the season will be announced at a later date. Due to the expected timing of Regulatory Amendment 35 implementation, the 2023 season is being developed based on current red snapper catch levels, rather than those considered in Regulatory Amendment 35.

Then we moved into the release mortality reduction and red snapper, which is Reg Amendment 35, and Reg Amendment 35 considers revisions to South Atlantic red snapper catch levels, following the most recent stock assessment, which was SEDAR 73, and gear changes intended to reduce dead discards throughout the snapper grouper fishery. Seven public hearings were held in January of 2023.

Staff presented the amendment, including a summary of public comment and draft rationale for each action. NMFS SERO discussed potential recreational opportunities for exempted fishing permits for red snapper. NMFS is developing a request for EFP proposals that will be focused on reducing discards for red snapper and testing of potential management strategies. A separate path for experimental commercial fishing opportunities is being developed through internal funding. The committee made the following motions and gave the following guidance.

Motion Number 1 was to approve the revised language for Preferred Alternative 2. It looks like this is under Action 1. **On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

Then the committee made Motion Number 2, which was to select Alternative 2 as the preferred under Action 2. Is there any discussion? **Is there any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

Then there is a draft Motion Number 3 there on the board, which would be to approve this regulatory amendment, but, before we dive into that, I'm going to ask Mike, and so we worked on some rationale, some additional rationale, and we can either look at that now or we could send it to you, Monica, but this was something that we worked on throughout the week, and I don't know how you want to handle it, since you had talked about this earlier, if you want to see that now, or you just want a chance to review it to go into the document later. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Why don't we have Mike briefly talk about what that rationale is, and then I will respond.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Sure, and so, just kind of in light of some of the discussions that we heard around the table, specifically the portion of Magnuson that goes into beginning work to address overfishing immediately upon being notified of that status, what I worked on was kind of going through that portion of Magnuson and noting the places where the council -- Like when they began taking action, based on your previous discussions, and that's all part of the record here, and I was just kind of synthesizing it and putting it in one place related to that, but, ultimately, with the work on the MSE beginning after you all got the catch projections in September of 2021, and that is, ultimately, the act that is being used to end overfishing, is the MSE and the plan amendment that would follow that, that is --

That work began immediately, and so that rationale language that I developed is kind of going into that and giving a timeline of the work that's been done, in terms of the MSE, in terms of Regulatory Amendment 35, as well as the best fishing practices outreach expansion, and so a lot of that

information is in pieces in the amendment, and it's also in your record already from council meeting discussions, and I'm just putting it in one place, and that's something that Monica and I had a brief conversation about, and I can send that and work with her to get the language where it needs to be and get it into the amendment, following this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mike, and so, before I go to Monica, and so it's also kind of just synthesizing this short-term, mid-term, long-term approach, just in my words. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Sure, and those sound like editorial kinds of changes that you've all discussed, editorial changes to the document, and so that you would allow -- If you approve this, and you have a Draft Motion Number 3 in front of you, and that gives the staff editorial license to add those kinds of things in, and then the council chair has -- You give the council chair the authority to review those revisions and approve them. I think that's a good idea, Mike, and I'm happy to look at it after this meeting, and we can work on that, and then it would go to Carolyn for her review.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, obviously, staff has liberty to make changes to the document, and so I support that. I just want to be very clear that Magnuson does not say address overfishing, in this instance, and it says end overfishing immediately, and the council has not done that through this action, and so the amendment should not state that we're ending overfishing and so, like it has, and continues to say, address overfishing.

The other thing that we discussed during the committee meeting was National Standard 2, and I just wanted to kind of read that again, because I think this is related to this process, and I recognize the council is wanting take kind of a step-wise approach to this, but, under National Standard 2, mandatory management action should not be delayed due to limitations in the scientific information or the promise of future data collection or analysis. In some cases, due to time constraints, results of important studies, or monitoring programs, may be considered for use before they are fully complete. Uncertainties and risk that arise from incomplete studies should be acknowledged, but interim results may be better than no results to help inform a management decision.

The bottom line is that we have the MSE on the horizon, and we have whatever it's called now, the red snapper count, and we have a lot of things in play, and we have the EFPs, but just those being out in the future does not negate your responsibility to address, or end, the overfishing while we're moving toward all of those other activities, and so I just wanted to make that clear.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I am not sure if this is the right time to bring this up, but we -- In public comment, and, you know, we touched a little bit on it in our discussions, and temporary rolling seasonal -- Not seasonal, but area closures, and I wanted to ask Andy, and do you think that would be effective, and measurable, for reduction of red snapper discards, which is the whole -- That's the whole problem, is the dead discards, and so, in your opinion, would rolling area closures, and not permanent MPAs, and we don't want to just punish somebody, but, in your opinion, would that be -- Would that be measurable, as far as discard reduction?

MR. STRELCHECK: I definitely think there's things we have available to us to quantify that, and I feel like we're having a little déjà vu here, because this was the conversation we had last June, about exploring the potential for spatial area management, and, at that time, we were just asking for analytical work to be conducted by the Science Center, and others, and then brought back to us, and then, in September, the decision was made not to move forward with those analyses, and move forward with Reg 35, kind of as it stands now, with some gear modifications and ACLs, and so, yes, at this point, to me, what we haven't done is explored all of our options, and I think that's certainly one of them. There's other options that potentially could be explored that could help with discard reduction, and so there are certainly things on the table, if the council wants to pursue that and you're willing to make a motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: **I make a motion that we direct Andy to do some research -- To direct staff, NOAA Fisheries, to look into the feasibility of rolling area closures that would have set boundaries, so it would make it easier for enforcement, and so lat/long and not bottom contours, and that these areas would be closed for -- You can determine the period of time, whether two years or three years, but some period of time to allow red snapper to have an opportunity to be in an area where they're not getting hooks thrown at them all the time. What else? To make sure that the reduction in dead discards from people not fishing in the closed areas can be quantified, so that we can use it for future -- Probably opening the fishery.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Myra is trying to type that, if you can see that on the board there, and just try to make sure that she has captured that. Do you want me to read what she has up there? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: A clarification, because it's just silent on this, and so I assume this applies to all fishing, commercial and recreational?

MS. THOMPSON: I, of course, would like to be able to allow commercial fishing, but I don't see how you can close an area to one fishery and not to another, but Kerry has her hand up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: But, procedurally, I would like to get a second before we have a discussion on this, and so I'm going to read the motion that's on the board there. **Direct NOAA Fisheries to look into the feasibility of rolling closures with set boundaries, for ease of enforcement, and determine the time that areas would be closed to minimize red snapper discards. Ensure the reduction in dead discards can be quantified.** That's the motion, and then there was some additional discussion about it applying to both commercial and recreational, but is there a second for this motion? It's seconded by Judy.

MS. HELMEY: For discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Kerry, you had your hand up.

MS. MARHEFKA: I am trying to think how to formulate. If the intent of doing this is to reduce dead discards of red snapper, I think the record is pretty clear that the disproportionate amount of dead discards of red snapper are not coming from the commercial fishery, and so I'm unsure of

why you would have to take an action to affect the commercial fishery to achieve this end, and so I am not in support of this, as it stands.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Others? Other hands? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I guess two suggestions. One is, yes, we're focusing on red snapper discards, but it would not be effective if we just focused the areas on red snapper, and it would have to be snapper grouper discards, and so I would suggest that as a friendly amendment. Then the -- To Kerry's comment, once again, it's look into, right, and we used "exploration", or whatever it was, in June, and, you know, people get hung up, because we're going to get down a path, and they think like we're automatically just going to implement whatever analysis comes back to us, and I think what you're pointing to, Kerry, is important discussions that we would need to have, if we pass this motion, which is, you know, the utility of it, and how does it work amongst our sectors, and is it appropriate to apply it to both sectors, and what areas, and maybe there's rolling closures that work for the commercial in different areas than the recreational sector, and so I just -- I hate when we're putting together a motion to start a process and we're already taking things off the table, before we've even gotten an analysis.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: That's fair, and I understand where you're coming from on that, and I think my frustration then lies in the fact that, for better -- We have laid out a plan, our short-term plan, our medium plan, and our long-term plan, and, if we start getting into, right now, injecting this proposal into the middle of something we've laid out, we're going to get away from where my ultimate goal is of looking at the whole fishery and determining how we want to manage this fishery. For me, this is something we will explore, and I agree for both recreational and commercial, whatever we need to do, when we look at the fishery holistically, and, for me, this truncates that process, or gets in the way of that process, and that's my frustration.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mel and then Spud.

MR. BELL: Just so I'm clear, this doesn't imply that we're going to do anything with this. This is just simply directing NOAA to look at the data and look at this, and so it's not going to have anything to do with 35, and 35 is going to sail, because that's the short-term. Whatever you do for the mid-term or the long-term plan, that's still something you might want to consider for the entire fishery, and so you're going to have to look at the data at some point, but there's no obligation to do anything with that, and it's not tied to 35, and it's not tied to any particular amendment for the mid-term approach, and it's just something that eventually, you know, you might want to look at, because it's a tool, which you could use, and that could be --

It wouldn't even come into play until the long-term, perhaps, component of an overall plan, and so am I understanding that correctly? I mean, there's no obligation to do anything with this, and it's just look at the data, and we're not buying anything. We're just, at some point, whether it's mid-term or long-term, that's a potential tool. Now, people may not want to use the tool, think it's not a reasonable tool to use, even, you know, five years from now or something, but that's all this does, is it just tasks you with data, right?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Spud and then Tom.

MR. WOODWARD: I support this, because I see this as a necessary prerequisite to a fully-informed MSE. I mean, we're telling ourselves that we're going to put everything on the table, even those things that we might find not palatable, but, in order for us to make the decisions that I think we expect out of an MSE process, you have to be willing to look at everything that has potential to address this problem, both in the short-term and the long-term, and so that's -- You know, that's the reason I was supportive. As Mel said, this doesn't obligate us to doing anything, other than it gives us hopefully factual-based information on the efficacy of that approach that we can then integrate into the broader discussions of the MSE and long-term management.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I go to Tom, since there is no time component on this, is this just a component being added to the MSE? That's what is a little unclear to me on it, because there's no time component here, and so is this just reiterating what's in the MSE? I am just unsure, but I'm going to go to Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. You know, obviously, we had a lot of discussion about the palatability of time and area closures, but my frustration, with that conversation, is that we never got to see what it actually looked like, and we didn't do any analysis, and so I go back to Spud's comment. I am supporting it because it would be interesting to see what it looks like. That doesn't mean we have to support it, and it doesn't mean that we have to do anything about it, and it's just a -- It's just something that I think that we should see what it looks like.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I want to be very clear that I don't -- I absolutely think this is something we're going to be looking at, 100 percent, and I'm supportive of that. If this motion stands, and goes forward, every single person -- This is what is going to come out of this meeting, and this is what is going to taint the entire MSE process. This is going to be the focus. This is going to frontload the anger, the frustration, and this is what is going -- This is where it's coming from.

The whole point of the MSE process was to, you know, look at all the range of possible things we could do to fix this fishery, and the only one we're taking forward out of today is this one, and I'm telling you -- Listen. I get less phone calls that you all, and, if you all want to get a lot of phone calls, that's fine, but it is going to taint where we really want to go, and that's what concerns me. I think this is going to be one component we are going to have to look at in the MSE, and it may be the thing that we come up with, but why would we just put this one thing out there now, when we're looking at a range of things?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think the reason why this is being put forward is because you have a two-year time limit of Magnuson, whether you like it or not or feel or understand it, and you have a two-year time period, and this is also -- I believe that it sets you up for litigation of not rebuilding, or ending overfishing of red snapper, in the two-year time period, and so, while you have these short-term and long-term and fulltime goals, if something happens to go to litigation, and the judge

was to say you all have to come back and do something, then I think that you've already started something to look at an analysis.

Now, as far as the hype and public comment and telephone calls, that's just part of it, but the fact of the matter is that you have not ended overfishing in July of 2021 to 2023, and it will not be ended overfishing, and that's what you're mandated to do, and that has not been done, and so that's where the cookie crumbles, and that's where it's going to lay, of what people choose to do. This analysis here is just saying -- It should have been done already, and you had it sitting there, what it looked like, but this council, the majority, chose not to do that, and so they're going to have to fall on that sword also, and so that's one thing, looking into the future, that the legal obligation of ending overfishing -- Folks don't like to hear that, and the public doesn't like to hear that, but that's where you're at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I guess I'm a little bit confused, maybe like some others, because, yes, there is a two-year time period, but we are well into it. We've been told by the agency, repeatedly, that that clock is ticking fast, and we need to approve this to meet the two-year time period that we're already in. If this were proposed to go into 35, then we're not approving it now, and we're going to back to do the work, and we don't know how long the work takes, and then it has to be evaluated, and we would have to do new public hearings, and so I just -- There is no way that something like this can be added to the amendment, at this date, and meet the two-year time period that we're under, for one thing.

Then my other concern is I agree that there's a huge need to better understand the spatial and time coverage of discards, the extent of them, you know, and I think that's the first information the council needs, and then the council should be able to look at that and think about where do we think we can get some real benefit for reducing discards, you know, and so it may go a little farther and jump all the way to rolling areas without first saying, you know, maybe asking the agency to give you an evaluation of discards across all sectors, for all snapper grouper species, maybe by statistical area and perhaps quarter, so that you could look at it, you know, throughout the South Atlantic region and see how the discards change and see where there is hotspots of discards across particular species, and then I feel like you could bring your knowledge in, to say, well, where do you think a rolling area has some benefit, and, while doing that, the agency could look into the logistics of implementing things, like rolling areas, as well, but I would be concerned that this came out without that thorough evaluation of when and where the discards are occurring, because, you know, you may still end up kind of at an impasse, because you just don't have the complete information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That was part of what Florida's EFP is going to look at, but we don't have all the specifics yet, but trying to get some of that information, areas, et cetera. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I apologize, and my intent was not to add to this to Amendment 35, at all, and I just want to know this information, and that's all I'm asking for, is for NOAA to look into this and come back to us and tell us, you know, what they find out. I mean, I remember seeing a chart, that I saw sometime, that shows that -- Where the frequency of red snapper occurs, and so we already know where they occur, and where are the most discards taking place, and would there be an advantage, for reducing discards, if you chose, you know, specific hotspots to close down for a

period of time to allow the fish to grow, and that's all I'm asking for. I just want information, and that's it, and, if I've got to make a motion to get information, then I made a motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I will just say -- Andy, go ahead.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, Laurilee, there's no need to apologize, and I clearly understood that you weren't adding this to Reg 35. You know, there is no time horizon on this, and I think that's fine, right, and I think the council can discuss when they would want something brought back from the Science Center, from the Fisheries Service.

You know, one of my thoughts here was, well, if you don't want to kind of do a deep dive, do we want to do just a presentation from the Science Center kind of explaining what data is available, what information is out there, you know, not having to do an in-depth analysis at this point, and some of the caveats and limitations, you know, challenges with rolling closures, whatever you would want it categorized as, but, you know, something that comes back that at least gives you some information, and the, you know, next step in the process would be, based on that information, do you want to take the next step of getting additional information and analyses. There's a couple of approaches here, but, if there's no timeline tied to it, then we would just work with, you know, John and Carolyn and the team to decide when to bring this back to the council and how it can best inform, obviously, the MSE and other approaches.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I totally agree with you, Laurilee. I too want the information, and that's why I was just trying to clarify -- Like I'm not sure that the motion, as worded, gets as much to the information of when and where the discards are occurring, particularly across the snapper grouper fishery, just as information for you, because it's sort of more focused on, you know, like the feasibility of area closures, which could just be, yes, we can do them, but it may not come back to you with all the information, and so I think we could word this better, if we, you know, focused on getting an evaluation of discards, like I said, by sector, and perhaps month, and maybe statistical area, or latitude or something, but I think depth is an important component, and so, you know, I think that spatial component is very important, when you do talk about area closures.

I think, if we can focus on that, and get that information, we may help to head-off the issue that Kerry raised, about people saying, you know, they're going right after area closures, and we would have that information before us before we go down that path, because I think you're exactly right. We just need the information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee, Mel, Spud, John.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, I would certainly be willing to change to my motion, if Captain Judy would be willing to back it up, but I want to hear the other discussion before I start trying to figure out how to change the motion. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: Sort of to that, I think kind of the problematic word is the "feasibility" thing right now, and so, if you're just simply looking at data, analyzing data, related to, you know, the

application of looking at time and area and potential discards, it's that feasibility. If we could kind of retool this to be a clear just ask for, you know, just look at the data and analyze the data, it's not -- Because "feasible" -- You could also argue that feasible has to do with other considerations, other than just the numbers that come out of how many discards you might potentially save here or there or whatever, and so I think, if we want to make it more of a pure request for information, or data, maybe we get rid of that word "feasibility", and it becomes more of a direct ask to just simply, you know, look at these variables and provide the data, or something, and I don't have the specific wording to offer as an alternative, but I think maybe that's what we could do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud and then John.

MR. WOODWARD: Mel said what I was going to say. I think "feasibility" is ultimately the job that we'll have once we have the information we need, and so maybe, you know, how do we restructure this, and I will just make a quick stab at it. **To direct NOAA Fisheries to present data on the temporal and spatial aspects of red snapper, or snapper grouper, catch in the South Atlantic region to inform the council on how rolling bottom fishing closures may reduce discard mortality.** That's just something to start us out there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay.

MR. WOODWARD: Obviously, within temporal and spatial, is depth. I mean, however you can parse it out, to the finest level of detail, that will give us information. I have no pride of ownership, and so you all have at it. **Temporal and spatial, and maybe also by sector, so we can just make sure we're keeping things separate.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We need to look at this by catch overall, and we need to see both discards and landed catch that happens in these areas.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud, can you look at that and see if that captures it?

MR. WOODWARD: I don't know that we necessarily need to say "in the South Atlantic region", and that's sort of implied, obviously, and that's our -- That might be enough to instruct the rest of it, and so let's see if that's -- Andy, certainly, and John, does it need more specificity, to help you all most efficiently use your time and resources?

DR. WALTER: I think that's enough, I think in general, for us to do that. I will just note that we actually did prepare a report on this, and it's in the September briefing book, and so it is kind of like déjà vu all over again, because I think we were asked in June to do this, and there was some actually pretty high specificity on what the request was in June, and we responded to it, but I think we never got that presented to the council, and so some of this information is already out there and available. Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: John is right, and a lot of this information was presented to you all in September of 2022. If you take a look back at that briefing book, there's a link there, and it's a

pretty extensive amount of information. One of the things that -- If you're looking to take it a step further from the analysis that's already been done, on the spatial scale, at least for that one, we looked at lines of North Carolina/South Carolina/Georgia coast and then three areas of Florida. If you're trying to look into more specific areas, then that has not been done yet, but, if you're looking into kind of those -- You know, those larger portions of the region, that has been done, and it's available in the September 2022 briefing book, and so just for that information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Remind me, and was that focused on red snapper catch, or was that the complex? I think that's an extension of this, is going -- Not necessarily everything in the complex, but, obviously, the high-priority species within that complex, the black sea bass, the gag, the so forth and so on, but that would be, I think, a pretty significant extension of that analysis.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, there's no reason to do the same presentation twice, and so is there additional information that the Science Center can provide to us to help us move along in this process? How can we -- How long is it going to do the MSE and then the next stock assessment? We're talking about years, and is there something that you guys can give us that could help us make some kind of -- Make something happen sooner than the years down the road that it's going to take to do the MSE, and I'm just trying to get -- I'm just trying to figure out how do we turn the dead discards into landings, and can we maybe put a limit, a size -- Cut off the size at eighteen or twenty inches, so that people won't keep fishing and fishing, trying to get a bigger fish, and how can we turn the dead discards into fish that people can take home? That's my goal.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I think your motion kind of speaks to one prong of a multi-pronged approach, right, that includes the EFPs that I talked about, the talks about the MSE and, you know, figuring out what may be the best management strategies going forward, and, you know, in answering your question, you know, we -- This could be potentially a substantial data analysis, right, and so there is ways to roll this out to the council, based on your schedule and what we have, in terms of priorities, kind of sequencing it, but my recommendation would be, you know, to give the center probably until September, and we could come back with an extensive analysis, at that point, and present it to the council, at that point, as long as that works within our priorities schedule.

More broadly, you know, I think the issue becomes timing, right, because, just because we bring you the analysis in September, you still have to act upon it, right, and this can be very controversial, and so that's going to take you probably the better part of 2024, before potentially changes will be made in 2025, if you got to final action, and so think about that as well, that this -- I think, when we talk to John and the Science Center, it's how does this inform the MSE, and how does this benefit the MSE, because I think it's going to have to go hand-in-hand with that, but I don't disagree that at least we should be looking at this information and considering it, and then the best question would be how do we act upon that, and what's the best mechanism to act upon that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there more discussion here? Are we ready to vote? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Not discussion, but just addressing Spud's earlier question. The analysis that was presented to you in September of 2022 included assessed species, and so it wasn't only red snapper, but red snapper was included.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Can you tell us quickly what those species were, just for -- So we'll know, before we vote on this?

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're working on that. Mel.

MR. BELL: In the meantime, was depth a factor in that? Did we use depth as a --

DR. COLLIER: So black grouper, black sea bass, blueline tilefish, gag grouper, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, mutton snapper, red grouper, red porgy, red snapper, scamp, snowy grouper, vermilion snapper, white grunt, and yellowtail snapper. I don't know if I had depth done for this, but there was information that was later on provided for red snapper, and I'm looking at that right now. The spatial blocks were North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia and then north Florida, central Florida, and south Florida, and the analysis that I was talking about was looking at recreational data. If we were to look at commercial data, we would likely need to start aggregating the grouper species, and we might have to aggregate some other items in there, in order to eliminate some confidentiality issues.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mel.

MR. BELL: So the by sector, that would be new, if we were just focusing on recreational before, and, if we had depth in there, if we looked at depth or not, but you might be -- What you're trying to look at is maybe a finer degree of resolution than before, and then it is a new exercise, and it's not just the exact same exercise that was perhaps performed previously, and you are adding additional information or different -- You know, some new things and some better resolution, perhaps.

DR. COLLIER: I will say that depth is going to be difficult, and we don't have depth for a lot of the information that's collected, and there is no depth associated with the MRIP fishery. We have been looking into some of the data collected through MyFishCount and what's available there, and potentially other recreational data sources. Some of the information from the commercial observers could be used to gather some of the depth information, as well as some information from headboats, and so we know that these operations all act slightly differently from each other, and so making an assumption about one fishery might have to be continued over into another, in order to get you that depth information, but we can provide it as possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey, did you have your hand up?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I did, but one of my questions was answered, but I think that this is vitally important, even going forward with the short-term and long-term, whether it's MSE or something else, and some of these questions have got to be -- Some of it's been asked in presentations that we've had before, I think a year ago or something like that, but I just think the drilling down, to get to the finest resolution you can get, is going to help understand for in the future, even though I

think it's something that needs to be more done in a quicker time fashion than this, but that will be left up to others to determine that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other discussion on this? Are we ready to vote? All right. **All those in favor, eleven in favor. The motion passes.** All right, and so we're continuing to move through the committee report. We have a draft motion there to approve Reg Amendment 35, and who would like to make this motion? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: **I move that we approve Regulatory Amendment 35 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document and codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Mel. This is a roll call vote, and I'm going to pass it to John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. Thanks, Jessica. I will go down in alphabetical order. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Borland.

MR. BORLAND: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Griner.

MR. GRINER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Helmey.

MS. HELMEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Marhefka.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Roller.

MR. ROLLER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: No.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Woodward.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: **The motion carries with one no vote.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Continuing to move through the committee report, staff also updated the council on the best fishing practices outreach expansion, notably the hire of Ashley Oliver as the Best Fishing Practices Outreach Specialist, and staff also updated the council on the progression of the South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program, and that was formerly known as the count. Additional funding from Public Law 117-328 has been made available for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to better understand discard rates and mortality in the snapper grouper fishery. The council will develop guidance for this spending during Full Council, which we worked on that some yesterday.

Then we moved into the private recreational permitting amendment, which is Amendment 46. Amendment 46 considers establishing a private recreational permit and education component for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. In recent meetings, the committee has received input and technical guidance from the Private Recreational Reporting Working Group, Joint Council Workgroup on Section 102 of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act, and the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel.

After reviewing this input, the committee initiated development of the amendment and approved it for scoping at the December 2022 meeting. Scoping took place in January and February 2023, with webinars on January 30th and February 6th accompanied by a scoping comment period that ended February 10th. Council staff reviewed scoping comments that were received and a decision document for the amendment.

The committee held a discussion on potential permitting, education, and future reporting requirements and provided the following guidance: continue development of actions that would establish a private recreational permit and education component. The committee also edited the

purpose and need, and I'm not going to read the purpose and need statements, and you have it there in the committee report, and then there was direction to staff to restructure permit-related actions to separately cover permit type, species, and fishing location, and there's lots of additional bullets here for guidance, and let me read that.

This included additional options for other species, including State Reef Fish Survey plus assessed species and deepwater species options; restructure education component-related actions to separately cover establishing an education component, mandatory versus voluntary measures, and the timing of implementation; request that the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical AP Chair, or other appropriate AP member, be available during committee discussions of the amendment at future meetings; examine whether the National Saltwater Angler Registry exemption for states or a similar framework could apply to a federal permit requirement, and would this process need to be specified in an amendment? State education and permitting requirements would need to be equivalent to federal requirements. Provide feedback and estimate of administrative cost for developing a private recreational permitting program, including the options to secure funding to support the program. Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical AP topics are review and provide feedback and recommendations on actions and alternatives in the amendment and provide recommendations on species that should be covered by the permit.

Then we moved into scamp and yellowmouth grouper assessment results, which was SEDAR 68, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff presented the results of the SEDAR 68 stock assessment for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and staff provided an overview of management changes that are needed to incorporate the results from SEDAR 68 into management. This was followed by a fishery overview that includes information on the management history, fishery performance report developed by the Snapper Grouper AP, and descriptive graphs of the fishery. Then we have a draft motion here that we saved for Full Council, and so, if someone would like to make Draft Motion 4, relative to scamp and yellowmouth grouper. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I move that we initiate development of an amendment in response to SEDAR 68 to modify management of scamp and yellowmouth grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion, and it's seconded by Mel. It's under discussion. Any additional discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** All right.

Moving into gag and black grouper, and this is Amendment 53, Amendment 53 considers establishing a rebuilding plan and changing catch levels for gag, in response to the most recent stock assessment, which was SEDAR 71, and it proposes management measure modifications for gag and black grouper. Public hearings were held January 10 and 11, and the committee reviewed public hearing comments and a decision document. The committee made the following motions and gave the following guidance.

The committee made Motion Number 5 to approve the purpose and need, as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

I am not going to read the purpose and need statement. The Regional Administrator stated that NMFS' review of the amendment suggested that the probability of rebuilding under the council's preferred for Action 1, which is the rebuilding timeframe, might be below 70 percent and suggested

the council consider including a buffer between the ABC and ACL under Action 2, to account for discards. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: We shared the comments from the Science Center review with council staff, and so they have that to add to the amendment. We also worked up a few slides that I think we can briefly go through regarding this issue.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to turn it to you, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: If you recall, during committee, during the science review, the 70 percent probability of rebuilding is contingent on reducing discards, as estimated in the projections, and the Science Center determined that, if you do not reduce those discards, and we don't really have a lot of management actions that would expect you to reduce those discards, that the council still would end overfishing, but the probability of rebuilding is around 50 percent, or slightly above 50 percent.

We also talked about some other uncertainties, one of which is the assumptions about recruitment, and I think the recruitment being higher than kind of the more recent low recruitment levels in the projections, and so, if that doesn't come to fruition, then, obviously, we have the potential for falling behind of the rebuilding schedule and then, ultimately, having to make up ground, once we get the next assessment, and so I had asked -- Actually, Kerry, and others, had asked for some kind of analyses of, well, what does it mean if we were to reduce the ACL to below the ABC, and we had options for 95 percent and 90 percent in the amendment, and so, on the screen, and did we also share this out with the councilmembers? Do they have this, or is it posted? Okay.

I mean, it's fairly straightforward, and, obviously, you know, in 2023, the ACL and ABC were 175,000 pounds, and so you deduct 5 percent, or 10 percent, for that, and that, obviously, sets your catch limits below the ABC, and so we provided those tables here for Action 2, and you can kind of see a comparison, and so we're reducing, essentially, the catch limit below the ABC by anywhere from, what, 7,000 to, you know, 15,000 fish, and so it's a fairly small amount, but it would give a little bit of a buffer.

I think, more importantly, and what was of interest to some of the council members, was, well, does that mean, if we lower the catch limit, in terms of implications on trip limits and season length, and so this is a table that shows when the fishery would close, based on the 300 and 200-pound trip limits, and so you're talking, between Alternative 2, which is 100 percent of the ABC, and Alternative 4, 90 percent of the ABC, about two weeks difference, in terms of the closure date, under the current preferred 300-pound trip limit.

Then -- Well, I won't go through the details, and there's a lot of information in these tables, but we are talking about fairly small periods of time, but, also, keep in mind that the fishery is not necessarily going to be open a long period of time, because it opens in May, May 1, and it would extend into the early to mid-summer months, right, and so several weeks doesn't sound like a big change, but, in the whole scheme of things, because the season is very short, it's actually a good portion of the fishing season, and so my recommendation to the council is, given that we aren't reducing discards, that we would be a little bit more conservative, in terms of setting the ACL, and lower the ACL to less than 100 percent of the ABC. I will pause there for questions.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Hands are going up. I have Tim and then Laurilee.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Andy, I can appreciate that two weeks is not a long period of time, but, at the same time, the shorter you make this season, the more you're going to increase discards. As far as the uncertainty of the rebuilding, we've already built-in a 47 percent buffer between the OFL and the proposed ABC, and so we have a very large buffer in there right now, and I really can't see that 8,000 fish, or 2,000 pounds of commercial catch, is going to dramatically change the rebuilding timeframe.

My bigger fear is that, even reducing this season by just only two weeks is just going to exacerbate our discard problem, and so I would not be in support of adding an additional buffer above and beyond the buffer that is already built-in from the OFL to the ABC for the uncertainty that we already have in there. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee and then Andy.

MS. THOMPSON: You said that, with our preferred alternative, we would lower the percent of uncertainty to 50 percent, and how much would it raise the percentage of uncertainty for the other two alternatives?

MR. STRELCHECK: We don't have projections at this point. What I had asked for the Center to confirm is we're obligated to maintain at least a 50 percent probability of rebuilding, and so they confirmed that, by not reducing discards, but by reducing landings, under our preferred alternative, that we would maintain that 50 percent probability of rebuilding. Any further reduction in landings, obviously, increases it from 50 percent, but I don't know the actual probability. Since I have the mic, and I guess I was next, and is that right?

In response to Tim's point, I mean, I think it's a fair point, right, and I was actually saying that two weeks is a long period of time relative to the season length, right, and so, when we're talking a couple-of-month season, two weeks is a large portion of that, but the buffer between the overfishing limit and the ABC is large, and so we don't have, necessarily, a huge risk for overfishing, right, if we exceed the ABC, but what we do have is a substantial risk that we won't rebuild in a timely fashion, and so the reason that buffer is large is because the fishing mortality rate is being set at F rebuild, and, in order to rebuild the stock in that ten-year timeframe, it has to be much lower than our fishing mortality rate at MSY for overfishing limit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I guess maybe we need to go back to the committee report, is the best place to work on this, and so we passed the purpose and need statement, and I think the action you're talking about -- Andy, is it Action 1 or Action 2? I was trying to go through the original document, and it's 2, is what staff said, is it's 2. Okay. The next part of the document looks like it's going into a rounding error on Action 3, and so, if there is a desire to change the preferred on Action 2, I think that we need to do that now, before we continue through the committee document. Mel.

MR. BELL: Let's see how this goes. **I would move to change our preferred alternative from Preferred Alternative 2 to Alternative 3.** If I get a second, I'll see what happens. **In Action 2.** Sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion by Mel. Is there a second?

MR. STRELCHECK: Second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's seconded by Andy. It's under discussion. Mel.

MR. BELL: My rationale is, just over my career, I've watched gag, and gag is a very important species for us, both commercially and recreationally. It's extremely popular, and it's one that I've come in a lot of contact with, working with artificial reefs and hardbottom habitats, and I've watched them over the years, and I've always had -- Well, in recent years, I've had some serious concerns about them, and it wasn't necessarily geared towards discards, but there are things about gag that are unique that have always kind of bothered me, and I use it as a poster-child fish for explaining the importance of estuarine habitat, you know, quality estuarine habitat, and water quality, because, while it's a species that we see offshore, and we harvest offshore, they recruit to the estuaries, and they grow up on our oyster habitat, which I have -- You know, we've seen some diminishment of the quality and the quantity, I think, of our oyster reef habitats over the years.

That's nothing that this council has any control over, and it's nothing that factors in here in anything that we can take, but it's a vulnerability for gag that's kind of unique to gag, just in terms of the species that I pay attention to, and so I've always had some concerns about gag, and I know that recruitment can be up and down, and I know, last year, we seem to have had some pretty good egress of small gags, and that was demonstrated by the fact that people were catching them in nearshore waters, and even in estuarine waters, and that's another thing that bothers me a little bit, is the increased amount of fishing pressure, potentially, on these fish while they're very small, and they have to run the gauntlet before they get out to eventually be where they can grow up and mature and we harvest them.

They have -- In my opinion, gag have some unique vulnerabilities that we don't necessarily see in some of our other species, and, also, I can tell you that they're extremely popular amongst recreational divers, in terms of harvest and spearfishing, and these are often recreational divers who do not utilize boat landings, and so they are not necessarily intercepted by MRIP, and so there's just some unique vulnerabilities, I think, for gag, from what I've seen, that just concern me, and I'm willing to provide a little bit of additional buffer, in terms of -- You know, I would like to see better than a 50/50, and we may be better than 50/50, again, because that's based on discard data, but that's just my rationale for it, and I have a particular concern about gag, again, just because of the unique nature of the fishery that I've seen over the years, and that's why I'm okay with this particular motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can you talk about that a little bit?

MS. IBERLE: I just wanted to remind everybody that we got the letter for this species on July 23 of 2021, and so we are on a timeframe, and, while we got the numbers very quickly, this would need to be reanalyzed for biological, social, and economic effects, and so this would delay the process a little bit, and I just wanted to mention that for you guys.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I can appreciate the unique nature of gag grouper, and I don't know, looking at this chart, how many total fish that equates to, on the recreational sector, of a reduction, but I do know that, last year, the recreational sector caught 10 percent of its quota, and so I don't know that, you know, reducing the ACL another 5 percent is really going to actually do anything at all, other than shorten the season, and, from the recreational standpoint, we don't really have much of an accountability measure, or a way to do anything if they run over in the first place, and so, you know, it just seems, to me, to add an additional 5 percent buffer really does not do anything for us, other than increase discards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I didn't raise my hand.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I guess I have a question. Isn't there already a 50 percent buffer between the OFL and the ABC, and so we already have a 50 percent scientific buffer, and then this motion, and this particular action, is kind of the additional management buffer that we're building in, and so I just wanted to make sure that I understood. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: To clarify, the reason the buffer is so large is because we get caught up in the ten-year rebuilding timeframe for gag, and so we have to lower our fishing mortality rate to F rebuild, and so we can't set F above F rebuild, in order to rebuild in a ten-year timeframe, and so, although we don't have necessarily a huge risk of overfishing, if our fishing mortality rises above F rebuild, we have a risk of not achieving the probability of the rebuilding plan.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: That's correct, but I understand that our probability of meeting our rebuilding timeframe still falls within the mandates of Magnuson that we are under, correct?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Is there more discussion on this motion? All right. Are we ready for a vote on this motion? Does everybody understand what we're doing here? This is Action 2, and this would be changing the preferred alternative from Alternative 2 to Alternative 3 in Action 2. All right. **All those in favor, raise your hand; all those opposed. I've got four in favor and seven opposed. The motion fails.** All right, and so just to clarify what happened, our preferred remains the same here. Okay.

Let me go back to the committee report. All right, and so, continuing through the committee report, a rounding error was found in Action 3, and sector ACLs were corrected for the highlighted years, and changes were limited to a single pound, to ensure the sector ACLs combined equal the total ACL, and the codified text will be updated accordingly, and so you can see the table there.

MS. IBERLE: (Ms. Iberle's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for that clarification, and it helps having that table in there. Okay. Then we need somebody to make this motion that's on the board, if we are ready to approve

all actions, as modified, in Snapper Grouper Amendment 53. Is someone willing to make that motion? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: **Madam Chair, I move that we approve all actions, as modified, in Snapper Grouper Amendment 53.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion, and it's seconded by Laurilee. It's under discussion. **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** Then we have another draft motion to approve this amendment. Would someone like to make that motion? Mel.

MR. BELL: Yes, ma'am. **Madam Chair, I move to approve Amendment 53 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document and codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Mel, and it's seconded by Kerry. Any more discussion? All right. I am going to turn it to John for the roll call vote.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. Thank you. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Borland.

MR. BORLAND: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Griner.

MR. GRINER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Helmey.

MS. HELMEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Marhefka.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Roller.

MR. ROLLER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Woodward.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: **Madam Chair, it passes unanimously.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you. All right. Moving into wreckfish, which is Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, a review of the wreckfish ITQ program was completed in 2019 and included recommendations for improvement, particularly with respect to confidentiality issues and related constraints, moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program, cost recovery, wreckfish permit requirement, allocation issues, offloading sites and times, and economic data collection.

At their September 2022 meeting, the council selected preferred alternatives and approved the amendment for public hearings during the March 2023 meeting. Staff presented a decision document and a draft amendment for the committee to discuss, and NMFS staff provided a presentation on cost recovery in ITQ fisheries. The committee made the following motions and gave the following guidance.

Motion Number 8 is to change the preferred alternative under Sub-Action 7-2 to Alternative 4, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** There is also some direction to staff to have the agency present information in September of 2023 about the enforcement of cost recovery fee non-payment.

The committee then made Motion Number 9, which was to change the preferred alternative under Sub-Action 7-3 to Alternative 2. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** All right.

There is direction to staff to bring more information on the administrative burden of actual versus standard ex-vessel price on the agency and more information addressing stakeholder concerns about actual ex-vessel value, as reported by the fishermen, including examples from other ITQ programs. All right.

Then there was another motion made by the committee to remove Action 5 and send it to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objections? All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.**

The committee also made another motion, Motion Number 11, to direct staff to include a hail-in/hail-out provision and bring that back to the June 2023 council meeting. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any more discussion? Any objection? All right. **That motion carries.**

There is more direction to staff here to bring the offloading site and time requirement action, or actions, to the June 2023 meeting for discussion. Include information on why these offloading site and time requirements were originally included in the fishery, and then I think Monica is going to also bring back some more information for us as well, and isn't there something else that you looked at that we wanted to talk about also at the June meeting?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Would you remind me of what that was?

MS. IBERLE: (Ms. Iberle's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, I am happy to bring that to you, about what happened with the last stock assessment for wreckfish. I thought that's what you meant, but I thought that maybe I volunteered something else as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Great. Thank you. All right. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just real quick, back to the direction to staff about the offloading requirements, and it wasn't just what the history of it was, but also has there been an issue, you know, sort of what has the enforcement aspect of it been since it's been implemented, and is there a problem that needs to be solved.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra is getting that typed there on the board. Okay, and so that was added to the direction to staff. All right. Then we moved into the topics for the Snapper Grouper AP meeting, and the Snapper Grouper AP is scheduled to convene on April 25 through 27, and there is a list of the proposed topics to develop the AP's agenda, and I'm not going to read all of those.

Then the committee went into Other Business, and the committee discussed the timing of the yellowtail snapper amendment, which is Amendment 44, and the committee requested future presentations and discussions by the council and SSC about regime shift evaluation and development and interpretation of catch projections, and the committee discussed the challenges with the gag grouper stock and requested a potential future presentation on Gulf gag grouper life history research from FWRI and NMFS. All right. Then we have a lengthy timing and tasks motion there. Would someone like to make the timing and tasks motion here? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Let me get a good, deep breath here. All right. **I move to direct staff to do the following: develop a guidance document or road map for the development of the management strategy evaluation; finalize and submit Regulatory Amendment 35 (release mortality reduction and red snapper) and Amendment 53 (gag and black grouper) for formal secretarial review; continue developing Amendment 46 (private recreational permitting) for review at the June 2023 meeting; convene Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical AP to review and provide recommendations on actions and alternatives in the amendment (either before the June or September 2023 council meetings; begin development of a plan amendment to adjust catch levels for scamp and yellowmouth grouper based on SEDAR 68; continue developing Amendment 48 (wreckfish) for final action at the September 2023 meeting, but review actions pertaining to offloading site and times requirements at the June 2023 meeting; per request from the Gulf Council, try and move yellowtail snapper amendment as fast as possible before the data are too old again; request the SSC initiate discussion or form a workgroup of how regime shifts might affect the snapper grouper fishery and discuss with the council; have council staff brief the council on how regime shifts could affect fisheries management; investigate what is allowed and not allowed in the MSA; schedule presentation from SERO on gag management in the Gulf and Sue Barbieri research on gag life history; request a presentation from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center on the handling of discards and landings in assessment projections be provided to the SSC; review how projections have been prepared in the past and address the recommendation that estimated discards will be tied to management action in future projections; address how this could impact the development of management actions, sector allocations, and ACLs in future amendments; include discussion of how to communicate better between Science Center, SSC, and council to coordinate planned management actions with projection assumptions.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Spud. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Mel. Any discussion here on the timing and tasks? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I have a suggestion and a comment. Bullet Number 3, continue developing Amendment 46 for review at the June meeting, and then we say, below that, that that AP Technical Committee may meet before June or the September meeting, and my recommendation is that we don't bring this action back to us until the technical committee has had a chance to review it and provide input, and so I think we can go through the timing and tasks in more detail next, but this would be, I think, something that we need at least some flexibility, and not necessarily bring it back in June, if they don't meet before June.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good point. Let me look around the table. Do other people agree with that? It looks like heads are nodding, yes, that we're okay with that. Is that good enough direction, Myra? Okay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Then, with the Sue Barbieri request, recall that I mentioned -- I am not definite, but I think that she's going to be presenting to the Gulf SSC in July, this summer, or maybe later, and so I would recommend that we not invite her, or potentially utilize that as a platform initially for her presentation, and invite people to participate in that presentation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So, in other words, do it after that time period? Okay. Myra is capturing that. Anything else here on this timing and tasks motion that folks want to discuss? Is there any more discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** I am going to

turn it back to you, Madam Chair. I guess this is other business for Snapper Grouper. Go ahead, Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, and it's a question for Andy. Where are we at with the golden tilefish amendment? Has it left your desk and gone to the Secretary's desk?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Myra has some more information as well, but go ahead, Rick.

MR. DEVICTOR: This is one that we reported earlier in the week, Amendment 52, and this deals with golden tilefish and blueline tilefish, and so we're waiting to receive that from the council, and we're finishing that up right now, the final review.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay, and so is there any hope that we'll see an increase in the ACL for the next season?

MR. DEVICTOR: We usually project that it takes, what, four to six months to get something implemented, and so later on this year. We have to publish the proposed rule and NOA on that and then do the final rule.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else for Snapper Grouper? All right. Now I'm going to turn it back to the Chairman.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you. All right. I'm going to give everybody ten minutes to go -- Realizing that it's twenty after ten, to go get your checkout done, and then we'll come back and we'll go into Mackerel Cobia.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay. We're going to start with the Mackerel Cobia report, and so Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Good morning, everybody. The South Atlantic Mackerel Cobia Committee convened on March 8 and 9 of 2023, the afternoon of the 8th and the morning of the 9th, split by public comment. The first order of business was the committee approved the minutes from the December 2022 meeting and then approved the agenda.

The first item of business was an update on amendments recently submitted to NMFS. At the March 2022 meeting, the council approved CMP Amendment 34, which is Atlantic king mackerel catch levels and management measures, for formal review. The document was transmitted to NMFS on August 5, 2022. The request for comments was posted on January 30, 2023, with comments due by March 31, 2023.

The second order of business was for Atlantic Spanish mackerel management. At their December 2022 meeting, the council expressed their frustration with the Atlantic Spanish mackerel assessment (SEDAR 78) and the importance of having accurate catch level recommendations to move forward with needed management discussions. To that end, the council passed a motion directing the SSC to provide catch level recommendations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel at their April 2023 meeting, either from the updated assessment or using a data-limited approach. SSC Chair Dr. Jeff Buckel updated the council on the January 2023 SSC meeting, including the terms

of reference developed by the Spanish mackerel workgroup and discussion of alternative methods of setting ABCs.

The committee also discussed a letter from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center stating that the revisions to SEDAR 78 requested by the SSC in January are exploratory in nature and require extensive rework. As such, they cannot be accomplished in a timely fashion. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center recommended the SSC develop its ABC advice based on the assessment and supporting analyses completed to date.

The council again expressed the importance of receiving catch level recommendations at their June 2023 meeting. Additionally, they acknowledged the importance of getting an Atlantic Spanish mackerel research track assessment on the SEDAR schedule. The committee would like the research track assessment to occur during the same time block as the greater amberjack research track assessment, but acknowledges that this may present workload challenges and should be discussed at the next SEDAR Steering Committee meeting.

The committee requested that the SSC discuss the following related to Atlantic Spanish mackerel at their April 2023 meeting, in addition to providing catch level recommendations. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center letter noted the use of data-limited approaches such as DB-SRA or DCAC in place of the current age-structured assessment model would not be consistent with best scientific information available. Based on this feedback, what other approaches should be included in the South Atlantic ABC Control Rule? Should the council prioritize the Atlantic Spanish mackerel research track assessment or the greater amberjack research track assessment?

The next order of business were mackerel port meetings. Based on recommendations from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel in December 2022, the council directed staff to begin work on a plan to conduct port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel to gain a comprehensive understanding of the fisheries to improve management efforts. Council staff presented a planning document for discussion, and the committee provided the following feedback.

The committee would like to discuss the current objectives in the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan to develop key questions to ask stakeholders during port meetings. Following port meetings and development of a final report, the council would discuss modifications needed and formally adopt revised objectives.

Port meetings should focus on the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries (Gulf and Atlantic). Other species, specifically Gulf cobia and little tunny, are likely to come up during discussions, and staff should be prepared with information and a plan to facilitate those discussion in a way that would still provide the council important information on those species, but would not overshadow the needed discussions on king and Spanish mackerel.

Port meetings will be open to all members of the public (commercial, for-hire, recreational, and others) interested in discussing the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. To ensure high attendance, meetings should be held in the evening, when it is easier for stakeholders to attend, and staff should discuss how virtual participation could be accommodated, including holding webinar meetings near the end of in-person port meetings.

As possible, port meetings should be conducted in key communities throughout the Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic, up to the southern end of Massachusetts. As such, working with the Gulf of Mexico, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and state agencies will be integral to the success of port meetings. There was a suggestion to provide brief updates to the Gulf Council and the commission at their upcoming meetings and request time to discuss port meetings in more detail at their August meetings.

It will be important to ensure stakeholders understand the port meeting process and how the information they provide will be used and incorporated into future management discussions. Existing stakeholder-driven projects, like the dolphin MSE, may provide helpful guidance.

The committee feels the following information will be key in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries: how species movement and expansion may affect future management, especially how fishermen are responding to these changes and how the permit structure may influence their behavior; dynamics of the commercial fleet, including the mobility of the fleet, market flexibility, and spatial seasonality. Differences in how commercial fishermen interact with the fishery (travel to different areas versus only participate in one area). Differences in the size of fish being targeted at different times and in different areas. How the commercial and recreational sectors utilize and value the king and Spanish mackerel fishery.

Is there a big catch and release component to the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries, and that was a question that was discussed. What role do king and Spanish mackerel fishing tournaments play in the fishery? How might these tournaments be affecting the fisheries? Is there acceptance or interest within the recreational industry to move towards catch-and-release-only tournaments? How water quality and harmful algal blooms affecting the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. How king and Spanish mackerel fisheries interact with other important fisheries, and what gears are currently being used in the fishery and how has this changed over time?

After port meetings have been conducted, staff should develop a final report that includes notes from all conducted port meetings and a thematic analysis identifying patterns and themes among the different port meetings.

The next order of business was topics for the spring Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meeting. The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel is scheduled to meeting this spring for a half-day webinar. The Committee approved the following topics for discussion: mackerel port meetings; council research recommendations, and space center operation impacts. I will also note that the AP is scheduled to meet in-person this summer, after the June council meeting, once the results from the Spanish mackerel assessment are available.

The last order of business was Other Business. At their December 2022 meeting, the council requested NMFS provide information on king and Spanish mackerel tournament landings over the last ten years and how those landings were accounted for against the annual catch limit. The committee discussed each state's process for permitting king and Spanish mackerel tournaments and tracking tournament fish that may be donated to a state or federal dealer, who then donates the monetary value from the sale to a charitable organization.

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center is currently working on pulling tournaments landings over the last ten years. Additionally, the Science Center noted that conversations related to tracking these tournament fish will occur at upcoming ACCSP technical committee meetings. The committee also requested an update on these discussions at the June 2023 meeting and discussion of king and Spanish mackerel tournaments by the AP during their planned summer 2023 meeting.

We have a timing and tasks motion here, and I ask that everyone look over it, to see that it currently captures our discussion at the committee, and if anybody would like to make that motion. Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move we adopt the following timing and tasks: have the SSC provide catch level recommendations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel, discuss what approaches should be included in the South Atlantic ABC Control Rule, and weigh-in on the prioritization of an Atlantic Spanish mackerel research track assessment; continue developing a plan for conducting port meetings along the Gulf and Atlantic coast, seeking input from the Gulf of Mexico, Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission; convene a meeting of the Mackerel Cobia AP this spring to discuss mackerel port meetings, council research recommendations, and space center operation impacts; work with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and state agencies to provide the council information on tournament landings, the number of tournaments by state, and tournament participation. Additionally, provide information on the historic rationale for allowing donation of tournament-caught fish.

MR. ROLLER: Do we have a second to that motion? Tim, or did you have something that you wanted to say?

MR. GRINER: No, and I just had a clarification.

MR. ROLLER: Okay.

MR. GRINER: I think I'm a little uncomfortable with this language about allowing donation of tournament-caught fish, because these aren't donations. This is a for-profit for the dealers, and it's not a straight-up donation. This is entering the market for-profit.

MR. ROLLER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, that has to be reworded. For allowing the sale of tournament-caught fish to be used for a donation, or something like that, and they're not donating the fish. They are selling the fish, and then they're taking the money from the sale of the fish and donating that to a charity, and so that definitely needs to be reworded.

MR. ROLLER: We've got Christina up here.

MS. THOMPSON: If I'm wrong, correct me, but is that a requirement? Is every state requiring that the tournament fish generate a donation for a charity?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: That language that's in there, and Monica can correct me if I'm wrong, is the language in the regulation. This is what is legally required to happen with tournament-caught fish, and the money that is generated from sale of these fish cannot be used to cover tournament expenses, and that's written into the regulations.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Dewey and then Tim.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think, when you get looking at this further, one of the questions that I'll be asking is, is that check that's written from that dealer that he brought the fish to -- Is it written to a non-profit for a donation, because I believe that it's written to the dealer that sold him the fish, and then that dealer chooses to write it, and I'm just trying to look at the paperwork, because I've just got an idea that there's some gray areas that is being done, because I would like to see the amount that the check is written for to that non-profit. Do you understand?

You take a dealer, and the fish are sold to that dealer, and that dealer cuts a check to somebody, and who does he cut it to? He don't cut it to that non-profit. He cuts it to somebody else that cuts it to somebody else, and I was wondering if there's any wiggle room in there for administrative costs, because I find it interesting that a guy in Morehead City is going to take his fish all the way to Wanchese, by the goodness of his heart, and it could be, and sell them fish and then -- I'm just wondering where the paper trail is, and so I'm hoping that, when we look at this in the big picture, it will flesh this stuff out and know it, and we can see it, and so that's it.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Tim and then Mel.

MR. GRINER: Dewey is exactly right. There's another layer in here that is not be captured here, and so these tournament fish are sold to a dealer, and that dealer, at least for those fish and that money, is then -- It goes to charity, supposedly, but the dealer still has the fish in his possession, and now he's going to turn around and sell them again, and so what happens to that money, and so this is not a straight-up donation to charity, and this is a for-profit transaction.

MR. ROLLER: Mel.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say did Tim actually second the motion? If it doesn't have a second, I will second the motion, but then, also, I think the wording needs to be what it is because the -- We all know what we're talking about, and I don't think we need to try to debate the details here, and so we're just trying to move forward.

MR. ROLLER: So is that a second, Mel?

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. Thank you. Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: Let me try to clarify the process that's in the regulations. How this is happening in practicality, I'm certainly not sure, but it's supposed to -- My understanding, and, Monica, please correct me if I'm wrong is I'm fishing in a tournament, and I've got my king mackerel, and I can then take that king mackerel to a dealer and donate it, and I'm just donating those fish to the dealer. The dealer then turns around and sells those fish, and then the monetary amount of selling those fish is then donated to charity.

MR. ROLLER: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Right. Just what Christina said, and, in fact, the regs say that dealers must donate the monetary value from the sale of tournament-caught fish to a charitable organization, as determined by the state, and the way that Christina described it is certainly what the two councils intended when they passed that exception to allow some state-permitted tournaments to happen and use the proceeds for charity, and so that is supposed to be what is happening currently.

MR. ROLLER: I am looking around and trying to see what the intent of the council is here. Are we trying to reword the motion, or are we just having more debate over this issue? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think we're all clear, right, and you get what we're trying to say, and we all know that we're not going to get into it here, and we're going to get into when we have more information, and so are you comfortable with that, knowing what you know? I think we're fine.

MR. ROLLER: So we've got the timing and tasks motion on the board. Is there any other discussion on this, or can we look for consensus here? **Do I see any opposition? Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion passes.** Thank you. With that, Madam Chair, I conclude my report.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Tom. The next committee report is Habitat. Ms. Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee convened on March 9, and the committee approved the minutes from the September 2021 meeting and the agenda for the March 2023 meeting.

The habitat blueprint update was the first on the agenda, and council staff provided background on the development of the habitat blueprint, an overview of Habitat Blueprint Workgroup progress, and work for 2023, highlighting a meeting schedule, starting with the first workgroup meeting to be held on March 29, 2023. The committee discussed and approved draft process and timing for blueprint development in 2023. It was clarified that other council members will be able to listen in on the habitat workgroup meetings.

Next up was review of essential fish habitat policy statements. Staff, in cooperation with Cindy Cooksey, Habitat and Ecosystem AP Chair, provided background on overall EFH Policy statement history, process, intent, and structure, including the MSA mandate that non-fishing threats are identified and research needs be addressed. She also provided the history behind and development and update of the council's standing policy on Beach Dredging, Filling, and Renourishment and Large-Scale Coastal Engineering. The committee recommended the policy be brought back to the AP for additional review to refine as needed to address individual state needs.

Staff provided an overview of the structure and background history on the development of the standing EFH Policy Statement on Energy Exploration and Development, with a focus on oil and gas development, and the need for an update to more comprehensively address renewable energy and offshore wind development. The committee reviewed a timeline for the AP to develop an update, with the help of an already named workgroup, throughout 2023, with a complete draft for review during their October 2023 meeting.

The committee encouraged reviewing and possibly drawing on other council energy policies. Staff noted that was in the plan to help advance the process. Cindy Cooksey also clarified that she is also the National Marine Fisheries Service Habitat Conservation Division staff dedicated to all three advancing offshore wind leases in the South Atlantic region.

Council members also addressed the developing issue of expanding space exploration and development and the need to develop a more comprehensive standing policy to address impacts on habitat and fisheries operations. Staff noted the council is already gathering input from species advisory panels on how their fisheries are being affected. Staff also noted that there is a proposed joint session of the Coral AP and Habitat Ecosystem AP, which would include a discussion on expanding space operations, potential habitat and ecosystem impacts, and considerations for policy development.

Essential Fish Habitat Five-Year Review, Cindy Cooksey provided the committee background on EFH mandates, including the EFH five-year review, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council EFH designation, and past EFH review and the resulting EFH user guide. Council staff laid out the proposed process utilizing the Habitat and Ecosystem AP and workgroups and timeline to initiate the EFH five-year review during 2023. Cindy Cooksey indicated the AP would flesh out the process further at their May meeting.

CCC Area-Based Management Subcommittee Update, staff provided an overview of the America the Beautiful directive and the CCC Area-Based Management Sub-Committee coordination in developing a report on area-based management for the CCC. Committee members noted concern that some areas, including conservation areas in state waters, will not be counted towards the conservation areas under the America the Beautiful effort. Staff highlighted that, while the ABM subcommittee report was focused primarily on the EEZ, areas outside of the EEZ (nearshore, inshore, land-based, et cetera) could also be included, but it was not clear yet how those areas will be evaluated. State members noted concern that states are not being engaged in the process.

Coral Research and Monitoring, staff noted research and mapping on deepwater coral ecosystems was presented during the council January 2023 seminar series. Council staff highlighted timing for further discussion and review. The SSC will be reviewing the recently-completed deep-sea coral distribution modeling during their April 2023 meeting. This will subsequently be discussed during a future joint Coral and Habitat Ecosystem AP webinar.

Agenda topics for the spring Habitat and Ecosystem AP Meeting, agenda items are noted below to be covered during the May 16 through 18, 2023, Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management AP meeting. These agenda items are the NOAA Fisheries South Atlantic Climate Vulnerability Assessment; NOAA Fisheries HCD EFH consultation update, EFH five-year review, the EFH designation history, EFH user guide, research needs for EFH review and council research

plan update, update on South Atlantic Fishery Management Council habitat blueprint, BOEM update on offshore wind activities in the South Atlantic region, update EFH policy on beach dredging, filling, and renourishment and large-scale coastal engineering, update EFH policy statement on energy exploration and development, east coast climate scenario planning update.

Agenda topics for the Joint Coral AP and Habitat and Ecosystem AP Meeting/Webinar, items here, or listed agenda items, are the SSC review of recently-completed deep-sea coral distribution modeling, initial discussion on avenues to consider for conservation of newly-discovered deepwater coral ecosystems, expanding space operations, potential habitat and ecosystem impacts, and considerations for policy development. Then we have a draft motion here to adopt the following timing and tasks, if someone would like to make that motion. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I make a motion that we adopt the following timing and tasks: beach policy to Habitat Ecosystem AP for additional review; set up a joint Habitat Ecosystem AP and Coral AP webinar to discuss overlapping agenda items; provide a point of contact for ATB to Jessica for the FWC team, so that they can engage further at the Florida state level; request a presentation updating the council on the Carolina Long Bay offshore wind lease.

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Jessica seconds.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and then I had a point, and so one of the items -- I didn't see it when we were going through the beach renourishment policy, and so I said that I would provide a contact for the Department of Environmental Protection to Roger, and I've done that, and I don't know if you wanted to add it, and it wasn't up above, and then it wasn't in the timing and tasks, and so I don't know if it's needed or not, and I will just throw that out there, because we were asking -- I see, up top, it says something about address individual state needs, and so we were talking about Department of Environmental Protection in Florida, and so I passed that over to Roger, because that was addressing some of the comments that we heard during public comment.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Myra is working on adding that. Thank you, Jessica. We did have a second, right? Jessica seconded. Okay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess a question, and a clarification, and so the presentation for Carolina Long Bay -- Are we asking for NMFS, for BOEM, or who is going to be contacted to present on the lease?

MS. MURPHEY: Roger, I assume it's BOEM, Brian. We'll let Roger come up.

MR. PUGLIESE: I think what we've done in the past is we've had -- When you were looking at the Kitty Hawk North, we had the fishery liaison, Rick Robbins, provide an overview, and they do have two fishery liaisons, with the two leases within that area, and so I think the intent is that we bring them in, and maybe Brian too, but usually it's been those representatives that have actually brought some of that to the council. We maybe have a springboard from our upcoming AP meeting that we'll just build on and do that, and so that's kind of where we are.

MR. STRELCHECK: Okay, and so it sounds like you know who you're inviting. The other question, or comment, is Bullet Number 1 about the beach policy, and I was struck by Cindy Cooksey's comment kind of asking for more direction on what are they going to review, and they

have state representation that has provided input on this policy, and I know you're asking maybe for DEP to be more involved, and I did go to my habitat team, and Cindy is, obviously, on that, and they've very comfortable with the policy, at this point, the way it stands, and so I don't know if there's any additional direction that we need to provide at this point.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The people that are on there are from FWC, and FWC is not the entity that works on beach renourishment, and DEP actually has best management practices and other things on this, as well as I think there's a bill in the legislature about this as well, and so I think DEP needs to be consulted relative to some of these items for Florida, because the people on the Habitat AP are not the experts on beach renourishment.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well then, related to that, I think that's probably the case for most states, right, and so it shouldn't be isolated just to Florida DEP, unless we think this is just only a problem for Florida.

MS. MURPHEY: I think, for North Carolina, the person on that AP for DCM is probably not the expert for beach nourishment. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was wondering if you all are going to reach out to the two fishery liaisons for the different areas and if you knew them. I know of one of them, and who would be -- Who would be the best contact for me to send that to the council, unless you already know that?

MS. MURPHEY: I would send it to Roger, and I think Roger probably already knows, but just send it to Roger.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was just trying to respond to what Andy was suggesting, that maybe we need some more direction, and it looks like a bullet was typed up there by Myra that captures that, and I just was trying to close the loop.

MS. MURPHEY: Laurilee, are you okay with that?

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

MS. MURPHEY: And the seconder? All right. Any -- Is everybody in support of this motion? **Do we have any objections? The motion passes.** All right. Thank you, and that ends the committee report.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you, Trish. The next item on the agenda is the council workplan, and so this is John Hadley walking us through the spreadsheet.

MR. HADLEY: All right. In front of you is the revised workplan, based on the feedback from the various committees this week and then the Full Council session. If you want to kind of

download it and look through it on your own, it's in the briefing book. If you just click on the link for Attachment 5, it will bring up the version that we're looking at right now.

I will just kind of run through everything. I will start at the top and go towards the bottom of it and just kind of note some of the changes that were made, and so, generally speaking, for Snapper Grouper 48, a discussion of that was added to the June meeting, as requested and discussed during the Snapper Grouper Committee. Moving down the line for private recreational reporting, Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, we will do our best to get the Technical Permit and Reporting AP together, but we just haven't had a chance to poll them and see their availability, to make sure that they actually can all meet before June, and so we'll do our best to get that done before June, and, if not, it sounds like there may be interest in not discussing that until the AP has had a chance to do so, and so that's a little bit of a to-be-determined item, but we'll do our best to make sure that stays on track and can be discussed in June.

Looking at Snapper Grouper Amendment 44, yellowtail snapper, as discussed, we will do our best to try to speed that up a little bit, pending guidance from the IPT, as well as the two councils that are reviewing that, and so we'll have a little bit more certain information on that for you in June, and maybe update and tighten up that timeline a little bit.

Moving down, Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3, as you may recall, at the December meeting, you wanted to skip discussion of that, and we'll bring it back to you in June. What that will entail is a review of the MSE workshops that were held, a summary of the comments that were received, and then, also, an update on the recent actions of the Caribbean Council regarding dolphin, and so that was another item that was requested, and then after that would be a review, presumably of a discussion document, for Regulatory Amendment 3, to get guidance on how to move forward with that.

As noted, for the commercial e-logbooks, we've moved approval of that to the September meeting, to allow the Gulf Council to review it and then approve it, and then the South Atlantic Council would be able to give their final approval at the September meeting. The Spanish mackerel assessment response, that's a little bit to be determined, based on the assessment results, and so I did want to highlight that as well, and so that really covers the FMP-related, amendment-related, items, generally speaking, and what you'll be seeing in June.

As we move down the list, we have sort of the other catch-all category, and that category has grown a little bit, based on the input. We will have a discussion of the five-year EFH review, sunseting of spawning SMZs in June, and then the wind energy presentation, that was just discussed during the Habitat Committee report, has tentatively been added to the December meeting, and I think that was the timing that was mentioned during discussion of that item, and we'll have a discussion of EEJ national standards, and then potentially a NASA presentation, if that is available at the June meeting, and so that's sort of a new item, and then, also, a further discussion of the plan for the mackerel port meetings in June.

That's all to say that those are the highlights and kind of the changes that were made this week, from the version that was in the original briefing book, and so, generally speaking, it does come out to a very full agenda for June, and I would say it's full, but manageable, but you're probably looking at an early, or a Monday-morning start, 8:30 start, that sort of timeline, to make sure that

all of the items can be fully discussed at the June meeting, and so, with that, that's the basic rundown, and I will turn it over to the council for any input.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica and then Laurilee.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I didn't see, from the Snapper Grouper Committee, from the other discussion, the regime shift, and I didn't see that make it down into the other items, and then there was another discussion, and I think it was about projections, and is that right, John, and I didn't see that one on the list either.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Those will -- We'll try to get those to the SSC, at their upcoming meeting, and then I think, based on that, decide where it fits into your next meeting, and some of that we may have in June, as part of committees and such.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I just didn't see it on the list, at the bottom, on these other items.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I'm sorry, and I'm getting old, and I don't hear good sometimes, but did I hear you say a NASA presentation at the June meeting?

MR. HADLEY: Yes.

MS. THOMPSON: Is that going to be like a compilation of the different comments that are coming out of the AP meetings that are happening between this meeting and the June meeting, or are you going to expect someone from NASA to come and make a presentation?

MS. BROUWER: That's what has been requested, Laurilee, and so I took some of the comments and the discussion that was had at the December meeting, and I found a point of contact if you want to request a presentation, and so I've made the request, and I have not heard back, and the request was specifically to have somebody come and address potential impacts to fisheries in federal waters, as a result of space center operations off of the coast of Florida.

MS. THOMPSON: Did you make that request from NASA or Space Florida, because what happens is, when you ask something of NASA, they just go, oh no, that's Space Florida now, and that's not us anymore, and so I would suggest that, in addition to asking NASA for a presentation, you go after Dale Ketcham, and I can send you his contact information, and he is the Government Affairs Representative for Space Florida, because NASA has basically turned everything over to Space Florida.

DR. BELCHER: Good to know. I've got Kerry and then Andy.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think this seems like a good time to have a discussion about are we really expecting staff to bring us a document on the recreational measures, Reg Amendment 3, for dolphin, while we're still in the process of this dolphin MSE? I think the timing could get confusing, and I'm just curious if that's how we're all feeling, or do we want the MSE process to kind of get further along, because, if not, the way I understand it is they're going to be kind of

happening at the same time, and I still think that's confusing, and so I would love to talk about that a little.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Jessica, to that point, and then back to Andy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I was hoping that we were getting an update, and then we would understand what was happening with the MSE, hear what was left, and make that decision the next time we discuss it, and I don't know that we actually made that decision, and I thought this was just a placeholder.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. HADLEY: I guess just clarification on -- So we will have the MSE summary presentations, but part of that would be, I guess, what would the council and the committee want to see regarding Regulatory Amendment 3, and we could bring back sort of a similar version of what we showed you last time, the outlines, the actions and alternatives, within that amendment, and any updates, or I guess do you want to have a specific discussion of Regulatory Amendment 3, looking at what's in it, or how would you envision that, going forward?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess I wanted to see what was coming out of the MSE first, before making any of those decisions about proceeding with that amendment, and so, to me, it's just a question-mark at this point, and I understand that you might want to hold a place, but I don't know that we've fully made that decision, because we said that we would look at what came out of the MSE and get an update first.

DR. BELCHER: Trish, to that point, and then Andy.

MS. MURPHEY: I think that was my understanding, was we would hear about the MSE, and then that would help inform us on Amendment 3, right?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and I think that helps a lot. That helps clarify what to have together for June, and so thank you. I appreciate that.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I was going to make a similar comment, and so I think there's value in getting an update on the MSE, and I'm not sure we want Reg 3 to come back to us at this stage. The other comment I will make is these are long weeks, and we travel in on a Sunday, and we're here until Friday, and at least a half-day, if not more, is spent kind of just with general reports and information, and we're kind of putting a slot in for the liaison and agency and staff reports, but there's a lot of other presentations that we receive.

I really think we need to give some consideration as to how often we need those, what's the value of them. You know, with the Florida meeting coming up, for example, I could see a cost savings to the council, because a lot of us are within a good proximity of St. Augustine, and we could drive in on Monday morning and start the meeting mid-day, rather than starting it on a Monday morning, right, and so, you know, thoughts like that, in terms of how can we schedule a meeting to be still four full days, but maybe carve out, you know, that Sunday, where a lot of us have to be coming

in, and spending an extra day of hotel costs and everything else, and so I just want to throw that out there, in terms of how we do it, and I'm happy to meet with council staff, and others, to offer suggestions, but I think we could carve out some time on the agenda, to make it a little more efficient.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I agree with Andy, you know, because we have these reports, and we're grownups. We can look at these reports, because, you know, for the Office of Law Enforcement report, it's basically Patrick telling us what's in our meeting packet, and the presentation is there, and I agree, and I don't think that -- I don't think we need to invest in people's time and spend the extra money and staff and everything on reports that we generally never ask any questions about and that are in our meeting packet.

DR. BELCHER: Other folks have comments on that? I mean, the one thing that I will say is that we don't spend a lot of time on that part, and so, when I think of how much time we spent this week relative to that, that wasn't what was going to bust our time, and, again, I'm not advocating one way or the other, but I'm just saying, of all the things that come up, that's not generally one that is forcing us to come in on Sunday. It's the weight of what we're digesting in amendments and plans that really is what takes our time, and so I'm just floating that out there, but, Laurilee, your points are taken.

MS. THOMPSON: Could like the reports from the state agencies, instead of being verbal reports, they could be written reports that could be included, and that would reduce a little bit of time.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica and then Mel.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't know that we even need a written report. I would like to not have another assignment before the council meeting, and I'm just saying.

DR. BELCHER: Mel.

MR. BELL: I think the point was we were trying to -- If we were looking at mid-day Monday, we've got to save half a day, and what Carolyn was getting at is we're not spending half a day on the stuff that we're -- I agree, and maybe we could simplify that, but that's not going to save half a day, and we've got so much else going on, and something larger than that is going to have to move to save half a day on the frontend.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I think we're going to use the time. I, personally, would rather start on Monday than stay late on a Friday, but that's, obviously, a personal feeling thing.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I will make it very clear that I'm intending that we would come in and meet starting on mid-day on Monday and leave by mid-day on Friday, right, and so I personally think that we can carve out a half a day of time with this council and still be just as effective. Now, I

might be in the minority here, and I'm not just pointing out the reports, and there's other things that I feel like we're very inefficient on, and so I just want to make that clear.

I go to Gulf Council meetings that are considerably shorter than South Atlantic Council meetings, right, and you might argue that they're not as effective or whatever, but there's definitely some differences, in terms of how we run meetings, and my point is just, you know, if we want to save on some costs, if we want to be a little bit more efficient, let's be thoughtful and think about the agenda and how we set it, and, where there's an opportunity, where we might be able to save on some time, let's do that.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Spud and John.

MR. WOODWARD: I think the challenge is that we will fill all available time. If we bracket ourselves to less time, we will operate within those boundaries, generally, and so, I mean, I think it's a matter of self-discipline. You know, if you give yourself -- If you start it this day, and you're going to end at this time, then it sort of makes everybody approach how they manage their committees and actions that way, and so, I mean, that's the way we try to run the commission meetings, is that's what you've got, and you need to try to work within those timeframes.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: This is a good discussion, and a lot of you all know that we've had this discussion several times in the past, and we've actually trimmed quite a bit from council agendas. If you think back, five or six or seven years ago, you know, we used to get a report, at every committee, from NOAA Fisheries on the status of the stocks that was much more involved, and we're much shorter on that, and we get far less information there.

We used to do a lot more individual staff coming up and giving you reports on things, like outreach and citizen science and all of the different topics that are underway, and, you know, now we cover most of that in a pretty brief, you know, overall staff report that I provide, and so we've trimmed a lot of stuff there, and I think we've toned-back a lot of the reports in general. The last time we discussed it, people felt like they got a lot out of the law enforcement reports and the state liaisons, which is why -- The last big change along these lines was when we moved those up to Monday, with the idea that it gave people a chance for some discussion, maybe, if something piqued their interest, because we used to kind of fly through those at the end of the week, and we felt like, on Friday, you know, people felt stretched for time, and, you know, we sort of rushed through it, and, if anyone had a question, they didn't get around to it.

That said, you know, it is your meeting, and, if you decide that you no longer think those different reports are of value, then absolutely, yes, we can cut those and maybe save a couple of hours during the week. You know, our goal, in this, is to be at eight units, and that means that we could start at noon on Monday and get done at noon on Friday. As you have noticed, it sort of looks like we can be there in the future, normally, and then, when a meeting comes up, we're pushing eight-and-a-half, or nine, in that bottom line, and we are very tight in June.

You know, June is always a tough one too, because we do the appointments. We have a closed session for AP and SSC selection, which makes June a really hard one to do over that time, and I understand Andy's reference to the Gulf, but they do meet five times a year, and so I don't know

if you spend more days, collectively, at a Gulf Council meeting, versus a South Atlantic Council meeting, with the extra -- You know, with their five states, they meet five times.

Yes, we, as staff, would love to not have to travel on Sunday, absolutely, and so, if you want to say get rid of some of these things, and tell us like do what we can do from noon on Monday until noon on Friday, then we can make some hard choices, and we may say, you know what, we're not going to talk about this at a particular meeting, and we'll take that guidance and make some choices.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee and then Spud.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, it depends on where the meeting is located, but the June meeting -- It is drivable for a lot of us to come up on Monday morning and start at noon, but maybe you could extend the meeting time to 6:00 on Monday, if you had to, but, you know, we can't drive to the Keys, and we can't drive to Wrightsville Beach in half a day, and so it just depends on where the meeting is located.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: That's what I was going to say, and it really depends on the location. I mean, when we have it in Beaufort, I mean, it's going to be a long haul for everybody except -- Well, even Tim, it's a bit of a haul, and so, I mean, there's -- I think, you know, when you look at the totality of the annual schedule, there is, obviously, going to be times when you just need to start on Monday morning, because everybody is going to have to travel on Sunday anyway, and then there is certain locations where you might be able to trim back and save, you know, a night in a hotel, and give people an extra night at home on a weekend or something, but I think -- You know, I will do whatever you want me to do, more or less. More or less.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just a couple of things. Once again, I will do whatever, and we had also pulled some items out and were having separate webinars to cover some of the information, the scientific-type presentations, and some other requests, and then we're also having sometimes Executive Committee meetings on the budget outside of the regularly-scheduled meetings, and so I feel like we've tried to get more efficient, over time.

Maybe we can pass this to the Chair and the Executive Director and let them think about this, talk about this, and then bring back a suggestion, because I think that, in these discussions, when we say we want presentations, like the MSE, or something else that we say that we're interested in, it seems like we make a decision, as a group, that we're willing to give up that Monday morning timeslot to this particular presentation that we want to see, and we make that decision kind of as a group, and so I'll just put that out there, that we had been adding some things that we thought were important into that Monday morning slot.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Jessica. Other comments? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So is there anything that someone wants to suggest for the chopping block? You know, we do go into these -- Normally, when we start it, we -- Just so you all know, Myra

and I meet with the Chair and Vice Chair every Thursday, to go over the agenda for the next meeting, over lunch, and, a lot of times, those meetings start with, well, it looks like we're going to have to start on Monday morning again.

You know, it's kind of based on what's on the list already and the progress that's made at the meeting, and, you know, if we thought maybe something would be a short discussion, and now it's going to be long, or something didn't get done that we hoped to get done, and so we kind of, you know, do our best guess there on Thursday about what the next meeting looks like, and it is -
- The goal is always to get it into that, you know, Monday afternoon to Friday afternoon, but, if you know something that you say I'm not interested in this, and this doesn't help me, you could stop doing that, and we will certainly take that into consideration.

DR. BELCHER: Chester.

MR. BREWER: Doing what Andy suggests would be, you know, a good cost savings, and I think it's a good idea, but what perhaps we're not taking into account is there are times, and I know I've been subjected to them, where you've got travel delays, and I remember fondly spending almost eight hours on a two-lane road trying to get down to Key West.

Now, I wouldn't have made the Monday meeting if I had been trying to get there by Monday lunchtime, and so at least, if we are doing our traveling on Sunday and Friday afternoon, we're doing that and, in some regards, we're -- You know, we may well be traveling on our time, as opposed to the -- Even with the eight hours of the council's time, and we're also building in a buffer that kind of gives us a good hope that everybody will be able to be there first thing on Monday morning, or lunchtime on Monday. While I think it's a good idea, I think it's probably not going to be -- Well, in certain circumstances, it just won't work, because you won't be at the meeting. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just to be clear, I'm not necessarily suggesting this for every meeting, right, and I think we just need to look carefully at our agenda setting and determine, you know, how we're best utilizing our time and then make decisions about, you know, cost savings, about the efficiency of the meeting, and so, you know, a couple of suggestions or ideas that I have, and one is I think a primary difference that I see with the Gulf Council, versus the South Atlantic Council, is that they very much remain on schedule with the agenda throughout the meeting. They will get to the point where they had scheduled to end the committee discussion, and they will stop, or slightly carry over, and then they might come back to it at more length during Full Council, right, and we tend to deviate more, in terms of our schedule, throughout the week.

The other thing is, you know, if we're looking for things to cut, or evaluate whether they should be cut, you know, could we do a simple survey of the council members and say, hey, these are the things that are typically on the agenda, you know, and tell us what value you get out of them, right, and provide input, and we could look at it.

If everyone comes back and says, well, everything we're talking about is valuable and helpful, then we keep it on the agenda, and we're likely to have a four-and-a-half-day meeting week, right, and I think the other thing I've learned, with having gone to so many meetings over the years, is,

if we schedule four-and-a-half days, we're going to take the four-and-a-half days. If we schedule four days, we'll take the four days, right, and so figuring out kind of what's that balance, in terms of how much we need on the agenda, is really key.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Kerry and Jessica.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have had the privilege of being a liaison to the Gulf a couple of times now, and the Mid-Atlantic a couple of times now, and, with all due respect to the Gulf, one of the things I have noticed, in my experience, is they have a higher percentage of council members that do not speak during the meeting, and one of the things that I am incredibly fond of this council, and feel very good about the work we do, is that every single person is here participating at every level at our meetings, and, if that's inefficiency, or thoughtfulness at the cost of inefficiency, I don't want to stifle that. We have -- Everyone here has an opportunity to speak, and I don't want to rush through it and make it feel like some people fade into the background and stop participating.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I also have the privilege of serving on the Gulf Council, and so I can tell you that the way that the Gulf Council meeting is run is different than the way the South Atlantic Council meeting is run, and they don't make a lot of decisions in committee, and they just get the reports, and they listen to the document, and they push all the actions to Full Council, and so, if people need to leave, and they need to make flights, or they need to get out of there, or what have you, then oftentimes a quorum is not still available, in order to make some of these hard decisions, and, also, it pushes some of the really challenging discussions to the Full Council, at the end of the week.

They also don't have everybody on each committee, like we do, and it just operates differently, and I can tell you, from a state agency perspective, it is very challenging, the way that the Gulf Council operates and pushes those decisions to Full Council, later in the week, and it's very challenging for us to try to figure out what to do and provide the commission direction appropriately, and I agree with Kerry, and I like the way that we've been running these meetings and how we really participate and make thoughtful decisions in committee and then come back at Full Council and just resolve the remaining issues that we couldn't resolve earlier in the week.

I agree that it just -- It seems to work well, and it seems to be more collegial and thoughtful, when people have more energy and more thoughtfulness earlier in the week, and so I will leave it there, that I think it's a good system. Could we gain some efficiencies in various places? Yes, I think we could, and I like the idea of maybe a poll to suggest what could be cut, but I think it's going to be all over the map on what could be cut, but I just wanted to add my two-cents there.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Jessica, and I know the other thing, for me, having come into this late, is it's the duties, or activities, here too, and it's like the out-of-sight-out-of-mind, and so, if it's not brought up and discussed, sometimes people forget about it, and it does dribble down, and then, all of a sudden, it's like, hey, we haven't revisited this, and then we're scrambling and trying to figure out how to fit it in, when the schedule is pretty busy, and so I do like the fact that, you know, we're trying to make sure that these things -- If we need to strike things off, we've been striking things off, and so, you know, I'm just throwing that out there too, but we do -- I mean, I'm always amazed at the workload that we do get done and the conversations that we do have, for that reason.

I mean, I think about the fact -- Again, we joke about it, but we are willing to come in early and start things, because people don't want to cut off the conversation, and we don't just terminate and move on and say, well, that was fifteen minutes, and let's go to the next topic, because then we do lose the momentum and the debate that we're having that is helpful. If it was that easy of a thing, we would have voted on it that fast and moved on to the next thing, and so I think it's thoughtful that we do what we do, but other thoughts?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I guess, you know, one big-picture view, the reason that the meetings have been long, is there's a lot of work. If you, you know, scroll up to the amount of FMPs, and the ones that have just been put through, there's like five that are pending to be done that have been put through in the last six months. You know, it's been a lot of work. Four out of five assessments you get are overfished and overfishing, and you're updating rebuilding plans, and you're dealing with controversial, multispecies issues in the fishery, as we've repeatedly heard, and you're trying to chase after statutory deadlines, to get stuff done, and, you know, the schedule is set up to get your job done, particularly on the statutory ones, and they're the priority, within the time that's allotted, and how many meetings it takes to discuss.

Like Kerry said, there's a lot of discussion, and it's great, and it builds the record that Monica has told us how often is completely critical, and so, you know, I think that what we've been facing is something that we've talked about, and certainly with the council leadership, is just the incredible workload created by all these amendments, and a lot of these amendments having to be full amendments, instead of just reg amendments, or something more efficient, because of that MRIP data change, the change to all of our allocations, and it's put us in this boat of having to have a lot more issues resolved within our FMPs, and that is just a consequence of things completely out of our control that have fallen in your lap and made what would have been, in the past, probably a pretty straightforward action which you would have addressed in a couple of meetings.

You know, instead of just changing a catch level, you're dealing with allocations and everything related to it, and so, you know, we're optimistic that maybe we get over this hump into 2024, and we can get back to a little more relaxed meeting schedule. I mean, it's good, and, if you look there in 2023, we're looking at four amendments to be approved over the course of the year, and that's good. That's a much more manageable workload, and we've knocked two of them out here at this meeting.

We're looking at the same in 2024, maybe about four amendments, you know, that are approved, and that hopefully lets us slow down the pace of these meetings right now, but what often happens is -- As I said, I feel like I'm always chasing that, because, by the time June of 2024 comes around here, we're going to have other things that have come up, and stuff that's a priority, and things that didn't get done, and we'll be probably looking at, you know, a nine on the workload, and starting Monday morning, but, you know, overall, I think you guys are good. We can send out a poll, and see if there's any agreement on things that people think is not a good use of their time sitting here, and we can go from there.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Is there further discussion on this item? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: In the spirit of compromise, I can cut my four-minute wreckfish stock assessment discussion to three minutes, or maybe even two.

DR. BELCHER: We appreciate your sacrifice. John, do you need more from us? Are we good? More conversation? Does anybody else have any other discussion that they would like to bring up on this topic? Okay. The last item, before Other Business, is upcoming meetings, which is Mr. Carmichael.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. The quick rundown of upcoming meetings, here we are in March, and April -- Remember that's typically when we have a bunch of APs and the SSC, and so you can see that several of those are scheduled, and there's a few more to be scheduled. We've got some bonus activity there on the Recreational Economic Constituents Workshop, which I think will be a great effort, but, you know, it will take some time out of people, as things always do.

In May, we have a couple of the APs rolling over to be occurring in May, and we have a CCC meeting down in Key West, and then we're looking at hearings for the logbook amendment, and Citizen Science will be getting together. June, we are in St. Augustine, Florida for the council meeting, and June and July tends to be a little bit of a less time, at least looking at a few months, in terms of meetings, but I wouldn't be surprised if a few things pop up that are added to your schedule.

August, we're getting into a few more of the APs that will be meeting, and I will also highlight the FISHstory scan night, and so they're going to be going to APs and some council meetings and asking people to bring their pictures, and they're going to scan them in for them right there, and so I think that's a really cool event that's going to be happening a couple of times over this year.

September, we'll be in Charleston for the council meeting, and they're planning to do a FISHstory scan night there in Charleston. We're hoping that we get started on the mackerel port meetings, and we're hoping to have a System Management Plan Workgroup sometime in September. October is CCC time again, and twice a year, and this is the one hosted by D.C. We have a Habitat AP meeting, and the SSC always meets in October. Then a continuation of port meetings, and we have the Snapper Grouper AP and the Outreach AP, because October is a big AP month, and then more FISHstory scan nights with those APs, and we're looking at Amendment 46 public hearings sometime.

In December, we'll be in Beaufort, again, for the council meeting, and so we're looking forward to that. Another FISHstory scan night, maybe to get people from that area, and we'll be continuing mackerel port meetings, and so a pretty good year. We've got a lot of things going on, and we'll keep plenty busy, and we'll just provide you the dates, for your calendar purposes, of the 2024 council meetings, and we're kind of still working on locations for those things, and dealing with hotels is quite a bit more challenging, post-COVID, than it ever was before, but we do see the times and the places where you know you'll be going. Any questions on the upcoming meetings?

MS. THOMPSON: Can you email that upcoming meeting schedule for me?

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's in the briefing book.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Anyone else? Okay. The last item is Other Business. Do we have any other business that the council needs to consider at this time? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was wondering where the council's thought process is on the fact that MRIP is not going to be publishing PSEs over 50 percent, given that folks distrust in government and -- I don't understand why they're doing it, and I was wondering if anybody else has thought about that, if this council would write a letter asking them to reconsider the publishing, the continuation of publishing, of estimates over 50 percent, based on the transparency that's needed in fishery management.

I know, in April, I will be bringing this to the Mid-Atlantic Council, for the same type of thing, and I was just wondering if anybody had any thoughts or anybody had any strong passion or not, because it affects the public, and, when we look at different things, we're going to be wondering what is them PSEs, because that's how we judge some things, even though it's not a prerequisite for the management part, but it is an estimation of how the variable and the estimate around the fishery, and so I don't know if other folks feel strong about that, but, for me, I just find it unfathomable that they're going to be hiding, from the public, the PSEs. Not from the staff, who will be able to do other things, but I was just wondering if anybody else had any thoughts on that.

DR. BELCHER: Anyone care to comment? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, and, I mean, I share your concerns, and I think it's -- You know, we have had the courage to display these numbers for all these years, and it does -- It is going to look very strange that, all of a sudden, they're going to be absent, but yet those numbers will continue to be used to make management decisions, and so I think it's -- I mean, it's a decision that I guess S&T has made, but I think the optics of it, from a stakeholder standpoint, are pretty poor.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments from folks on this? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, we try to keep up with what's going on there, and, you know, through various technical groups, there are discussions of this, and I can say it has been a staff concern, and we have raised concerns about the transparency, particularly if an accountability measure is applied and the data is not reported.

I think, if you guys are concerned about it, what we probably need to do is perhaps have someone from MRIP come and tell us exactly how it works, so we get the facts, and maybe, from the Regional Office, tell us how transparency will be preserved in dealing with accountability measures, and then, from that, you know, we may have some stronger basis and concerns for doing a letter, as Dewey suggested.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Another suggestion is we -- The Gulf Council is hosting CCC, and they have the May meeting coming up, and there's always a science report, and so that could be an opportunity for you and Carrie and those in the region to ask this question and get some input from S&T and raise these concerns, and then we could bring back some information to the June council meeting.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Andy. Anyone else? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I have voiced my concerns to both Cisco Werner, Mr. Werner, and also to Richard Cody, and I don't believe that I got an answer, and it probably wouldn't have been a satisfactory answer for me, but I did engage them about it, and I just think it's important. You know, why are we going to hide these numbers from the public?

DR. BELCHER: Anyone else weighing-in on that? Okay. Other business? Okay. Seeing none, we will go ahead and consider the March 2023 council meeting adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 10, 2023.)

- - -

Certified By _____ Date _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
April 12, 2023

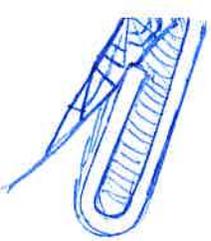
FULL COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE 2022-2023

DATE: 3/10/2023

LOCATION: Jekyll

MOTION: A53 gay approve

NAME	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Bell	✓		
Borland	✓		
Brewer	✓		
Griner	✓		
Helmey	✓		
Marhefka	✓		
McCawley	✓		
Murphey	✓		
Roller	✓		
Strelcheck	✓		
Thompson	✓		
Woodward	✓		
Belcher (Chair)	✓		



FULL COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE 2022-2023

DATE: 3/10/23

LOCATION: Jc Kelly 1516-A

MOTION: R.A.35

NAME	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Bell	✓		
Borland	✓		
Brewer	✓		
Griner	✓		
Helmey	✓		
Marhefka	✓		
McCawley	✓		
Murphey	✓		
Roller	✓		
Strelcheck	✗	✗	
Thompson	✓		
Woodward	✓		
Belcher (Chair)	✓		

SAFMC 2023 Mar Council

Attendee Report: Meeting (3/6/23 - 3/10/23)

Report Generated:
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Webinar ID
199-009-555

Actual Start Date/Time
03/09/2023 07:17 AM EST

Duration
8 hours 54 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Aukeman	Trip
Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Beal	Bob
Yes	Beaty	Julia
Yes	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	Berry	James "chip"
Yes	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Brennan	Ken
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Bruger	Catherine
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	CONKLIN	00The real CHRIS
Yes	Calay	Shannon
Yes	Cathey	Andrew
Yes	Chaya	01Cindy
Yes	Coleman	Heather
Yes	Cooksey	Cindy
Yes	Cox	Jack
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	Dale (NMFS SERO)	David
Yes	DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Dieveney	Beth
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Dover	Miles
Yes	Dukes	Amy
Yes	Dyar	Ben
Yes	Ferguson	Raven
Yes	Fernandes	Glen
Yes	Finch	Margaret
Yes	Fisher	Jeff
Yes	Fitzpatrick	Eric
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franke	Emilie

Yes	Freeman	Matt
Yes	Gentry	Lauren
Yes	Gervasi	Carissa
Yes	Glazier	Edward
Yes	Gore	Karla
Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Yes	Harrison	Alana
Yes	Hart	Hannah
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy
Yes	Heyman	William
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Hudson	Joseph
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Keener	Paula
Yes	Kelly	Bill
Yes	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	Knowlton	Kathy
Yes	Kramer	Rob
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	McManamon	Danielle
Yes	McWhorter	Will
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Merino	Joy
Yes	Merrifield	Jeanna
Yes	Muffley	Brandon
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	O'Shaughnessy	Patrick
Yes	OFarrell	Halie
Yes	Oden	Jeff
Yes	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	Package-Ward	Christina
Yes	Pierce	Brett
Yes	Pitts	Nicole
Yes	Poholek	Ariel
Yes	Rathke	David
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Sedberry	George
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Shim	Kyuwon
Yes	Smart	Tracey
Yes	Snyder	Dave
Yes	Spurgin	Kali

Yes
Yes

Sramek
Stam
Takade-Heumacher
Travis
Udoug
Walter
Wamer
White
Williams
Withers
Wolfe
brewer
collier
griner
howell
merino
sandorf
thomas
thompson
vara

Mark
Geoff
Helen
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Geoff
Erik
Meg
Wes
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chip
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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL II

(3/10/2023)

3/9

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Frank Helges
~~*Thomas Newman*~~
Nik Mehta

Pat O'Shaughnessy
~~*Jamal Ingram*~~
Jamal Ingram present

OVER

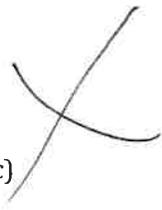
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2023 COUNCIL MEMBERS continued

Non-Voting

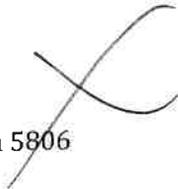
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Representative
TBD

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SAFMC 2023 Mar Council

Attendee Report: Meeting (3/6/23 - 3/10/23)

Report Generated:

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4 hours 3 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Allen	Shanae
Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	Berry	James "chip"
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Bruger	Catherine
Yes	Byrd	01Julia
Yes	Calay	Shannon
Yes	Cathey	Andrew
Yes	Chaya	01Cindy
Yes	Cox	Jack
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Diaz	Dale
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Dover	Miles
Yes	Dukes	Amy
Yes	Fitzpatrick	Eric
Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	GLOECKNER	DAVID
Yes	Gentry	Lauren
Yes	Glazier	Edward
Yes	Gray	Alisha
Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Yes	Harrison	Alana
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy
Yes	Heyman	William
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Hudson	Joseph
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Keener	Paula
Yes	Kelly	Bill

Yes	Keppler	Blaik
Yes	Kimre	Christophe
Yes	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	Knowlton	Kathy
Yes	Knowlton	Kathy
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	McGovern	Jack
Yes	McLemore	Michael
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Muffley	Brandon
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	O'Shaughnessy	Patrick
Yes	OFarrell	Halie
Yes	Oden	Jeff
Yes	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	Records	David
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Sedberry	George
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Snyder	Dave
Yes	Stemle	Adam
Yes	Takade-Heumacher	Helen
Yes	Thompson	Laurilee
Yes	Travis	Michael
Yes	Walter	John
Yes	Wamer	David
Yes	White	Geoff
Yes	Withers	Meg
Yes	brewer	00chester
Yes	collier	chip
Yes	griner	tim
Yes	sandorf	scott
Yes	thomas	01suz
Yes	vara	mary

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Full Council II
~~13/9/2023~~

3/10

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