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3 Richard Cody.....MRIP  
4 Michael Drexler.....St. Petersburg, FL  
5 Traci Floyd.....MDMR, MS  
6 Troy Frady.....AL  
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9 Johnny Greene.....Daphne, AL  
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11 Chad Hanson.....Pew Charitable Trusts  
12 David Krebs.....Destin, FL  
13 Rich Malinowski.....NMFS  
14 Bart Niquet.....Lynn Haven, FL  
15 Clay Porch.....SEFSC  
16 David Rainer.....ADCNR  
17 Christopher Rhodes.....Biloxi, MS  
18 Chris Schieble.....LA  
19 Nick Spiliotis.....Houston, TX  
20 Tom Steber.....Elberta, AL  
21 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS

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1 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened at the Renaissance Battle House,  
3 Mobile Alabama, Wednesday morning, October 24, 2018, and was  
4 called to order by Chairman Greg Stunz.

5  
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**  
9

10 **CHAIRMAN GREG STUNZ:** I will call to order the Data Collection  
11 Committee. For the new committee members, I will announce  
12 those. Obviously, it's me as the Chair, Mr. Anson is Vice  
13 Chair, Mr. Schieble, Ms. Boggs, Dr. Crabtree, Mr. Donaldson, Ms.  
14 Guyas, Mr. Sanchez, Dr. Mickle, and Mr. Swindell. We have all  
15 of those members present.

16  
17 The first item of business will be Adoption of the Agenda. Does  
18 this committee have any changes or additions to the agenda?  
19 Seeing none, I do have one just minor change. Under Item IV  
20 there is all the MRIP discussions, and we might move up Item VI,  
21 which is also just a brief update on an MRIP workshop that had  
22 recently occurred, to kind of go along with that, before we get  
23 into the for-hire section of the agenda, and so, if there is no  
24 oppositions to that minor move, I think Mr. Donaldson moves the  
25 accepted agenda. Is there a second?

26  
27 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Second.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Second by Mr. Anson. Any opposition?  
30 Seeing no opposition, the agenda is approved. Our next item of  
31 business is Approval of the Minutes from the August 2018  
32 meeting. Is there any comments, edits, or suggestions to the  
33 minutes? Seeing none, would someone please offer a motion to  
34 approve those?

35  
36 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** I will make that motion.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Moved by Ms. Guyas.

39  
40 **MR. ANSON:** Second.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We have a second from Mr. Anson. Any  
43 opposition? Seeing no opposition, the minutes are approved.  
44 Our next item of business is Dr. Froeschke, if you want to talk  
45 us through the Action Guide, and I guess, keeping in spirit with  
46 what we've been doing and talking about that component of the  
47 Action Guide as we get to it, it seems like it keeps everything  
48 fresh on everyone's mind, and so, if you want to go through the

1 first section regarding the action plan, and we'll come back to  
2 it as we move through the agenda.

3  
4 **REVISIONS TO MRIP RECREATIONAL DATA COLLECTION**  
5

6 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Thanks. The first item for Data Collection  
7 is the presentation from Dr. Cody at MRIP, and this is regarding  
8 the revisions to the MRIP data collection that incorporates --  
9 As you all know, the MRIP survey has recently transitioned to a  
10 mail-based effort survey, and they have made this change and  
11 recalibrated the data historically to be in a common currency.

12  
13 They're going to give a presentation about that and highlighting  
14 the changes in their estimates of historical effort and harvest  
15 for several species, and the committee will need to look at that  
16 and think about how these calibrations could affect our ongoing  
17 management, and so we'll start there.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Froeschke, and so, Dr.  
20 Cody. If you're following along, this is going to be Tab F, and  
21 Number 4(a) is his presentation. Whenever you're ready, go  
22 ahead.

23  
24 While they are pulling this up, we had some discussion in the  
25 SEDAR Committee that is related to the MRIP, and so it was kind  
26 of hard to discuss one without discussing what is occurring  
27 here, and so there will be a lot of synergy, and maybe overlap,  
28 to that discussion, and so, anyway, Dr. Cody, it looks like your  
29 presentation is up, whenever you're ready.

30  
31 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** Thank you. What I had planned to present  
32 today really is just an update of our transition to our FES, in  
33 particular, but also the APAIS, or the Access Point Angler  
34 Intercept Survey, improved survey designs.

35  
36 As you probably are all pretty well aware, MRIP really consists  
37 of two different components that go together to generate catch  
38 estimates. We have an effort component, and that's covered  
39 generally through telephone and mail surveys, and then we have  
40 an access point direct angler intercept survey, which is used to  
41 get the catch information, and that's done dockside at public  
42 access and also private access, publicly accessible private  
43 access, sites.

44  
45 One thing that I want to kind of stress from the very beginning  
46 is that recreational data is just one of many different  
47 components that are used in stock assessments, and it, along  
48 with the commercial data, basically comprised the fishery-

1 dependent component for stock assessments, and you also have  
2 fishery-independent data, and that includes specialized surveys  
3 and biological information to also be included in stock  
4 assessments.

5  
6 MRIP itself really is a collection of surveys. It's really a  
7 collaborative effort. The surveys that you hear the most about  
8 are the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey and then the  
9 Coastal Household Telephone Survey, or Effort Survey, which was  
10 changed in 2018 to the Fishing Effort Survey, but, really, there  
11 are a number of regional surveys that are part of a larger  
12 collaborative effort, and I won't get into the details of the  
13 different surveys, but it spans both coasts, and it includes the  
14 Pacific Islands and the Caribbean as well.

15  
16 For fishing effort, in 2018, we transitioned to a new survey  
17 called the Fishing Effort Survey from what was previously known  
18 as the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, which was a random  
19 digit dialing survey of coastal households, and, as everybody  
20 knows, in recent years, the survey, because of its dependence on  
21 landlines, had become less and less effective as a way to reach  
22 anglers, because, basically, you had a lot of coastal areas  
23 anyway, in particular, where you had people dropping landlines  
24 in favor of cellphone use.

25  
26 That was a major impetus for changing the survey over. I will  
27 mention also that the Fishing Effort Survey, and I will talk  
28 mostly about the changes to that, but it really affects the  
29 shore and private boat modes only.

30  
31 It doesn't impact the charter mode. That is covered by the for-  
32 hire telephone survey, and that's a telephone survey, but it's a  
33 list-based survey, and it operates based upon information  
34 provided by the charter operators, and so the contact, the phone  
35 number, that they use has been given to us by the charter  
36 captains. Then there is also the Large Pelagic Survey, which is  
37 something that doesn't really impact the Gulf so much, but it is  
38 another telephone survey that is used in the Northeast.

39  
40 For estimating catch rates, we use the Access Point Angler  
41 Intercept Survey. It's a dockside intercept, and there is also  
42 the headboat sampling that we use as well, and that is used to  
43 inform biological sampling information for headboat surveys.  
44 Again, I mentioned the Large Pelagic Survey.

45  
46 As far as the improvements made to the survey designs, the  
47 Fishing Effort Survey, as I said, is a mail-based survey of  
48 shore and private boat trips, and it replaces the legacy

1 telephone survey. It uses the U.S. postal address system  
2 database, or sequences, and also it uses angler registries to  
3 augment that information, and so you've got the most complete  
4 set of contact information, address information, from the U.S.  
5 postal address system, but you also have state-based angler  
6 registries that are used to supplement that sampling. It  
7 produces higher estimates of trips, or effort, but also we feel  
8 more accurate estimates of fishing effort.

9  
10 The Access Point Angler Intercept Survey has gone through some  
11 changes too, but not to the same extent that we had for the  
12 Fishing Effort Survey, where there was a complete change in the  
13 mode of how this survey was administered. With the Access Point  
14 Angler Intercept Survey, the improvements were more subtle, and  
15 they tended to better align the survey design with the  
16 estimation process, so that you had the two reflecting the --  
17 You had the estimates reflecting the survey design.

18  
19 We have better time-of-day coverage, which is something we  
20 didn't have with the previous access point survey, and that has  
21 some PR consequences that I might get into a little bit later,  
22 but, overall, it gives us better coverage on a twenty-four-hour  
23 basis, and then these estimates, as I said, because we aligned  
24 the survey design with the estimation process, the way it's  
25 supposed to be, these are more statistically sound estimates.

26  
27 With the fishing effort survey, one of the big advantages of it  
28 is that it is a major improvement over the phone survey, in our  
29 ability to reach anglers, and so we reach far more anglers on  
30 these surveys. The surveys get into the right hands, and that's  
31 another thing that -- With a phone survey, it tends to be the  
32 person who answers the phone that gives the information on the  
33 fishing trips, and they may not be the person that actually  
34 makes the fishing trips.

35  
36 On top of that, it's a cold call, and so you don't have time to  
37 prepare for the questions, and so we get about a three-times  
38 higher response rate from the Fishing Effort Survey relative to  
39 the old Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

40  
41 We also have an improved questionnaire. One of the things about  
42 the telephone system is that it used the CATI system, and it was  
43 a pretty complex type of a system. You needed pretty well-  
44 trained interviewers to administer the survey, and, because of  
45 its complexity, it tended to have a tendency for respondents to  
46 hang up before the survey was finished, and so we got a lot of  
47 incomplete answers to surveys.

48

1 With the Fishing Effort Survey, the questionnaire itself is a  
2 little bit more general, and it leads into the discussion. It  
3 doesn't hit the angler straight out of the box with we are NOAA  
4 and we want to know what you're doing for fishing. It asks  
5 about outdoor activity, and it asks some questions related to  
6 weather, and then it gets into the fishing questions.

7  
8 The two surveys, the two redesigns, have been extensively  
9 reviewed by -- Actually, in the 2017 National Academy of Science  
10 review, both were given high marks as improvements over the old  
11 methodology.

12  
13 With the improvement made to these two surveys, and in  
14 particular with the FES, since it was a complete change in the  
15 methods that were used, we decided, with the help of our  
16 partners, the councils and states and the commissions, that we  
17 needed a well-developed transition plan with a benchmarking  
18 period. There would have to be a calibration to maintain the  
19 historical time series and a way to convert the old estimates to  
20 the new currency, so that they could be used in stock  
21 assessments and in management decisions.

22  
23 What we came up with was a three-year benchmarking period from  
24 2015 to 2017, where both surveys were conducted side-by-side,  
25 and this was the basis for the calibration model that was used  
26 to adjust the old methodology into the new currency, and vice  
27 versa.

28  
29 One thing I mentioned is that, with the calibration, you can go  
30 from the old methodology, the Coastal Household Telephone  
31 Survey, to the FES, or the Fishing Effort Survey, or vice versa.  
32 The calibration itself doesn't care which method that is used.  
33 It will produce a calibration for either, and so we realized  
34 that, for the 2018, the first year that the FES is being done  
35 and the CHTS wasn't, that there would be a need for calibrated  
36 estimates to be -- The FES newer estimates to be calibrated back  
37 to the old Coastal Household Telephone Survey numbers, so that  
38 the 2017 ACLs could be evaluated correctly, and there is the  
39 ability to extend that beyond 2018.

40  
41 Just some ideas of the magnitude of the differences between the  
42 two surveys, and what I have here are sets of graphs for both  
43 private boat and shore, but the first one is for private boat,  
44 and you have two graphs. The blue, the top bar, is the new  
45 methodology, and the bottom bar is the old methodology, and,  
46 right away, you can see there is a substantial difference in the  
47 estimated effort for private boat for the Gulf of Mexico.

48

1 For the purposes of just visualization, we broke these graphs up  
2 into two main periods. You have telephone versus mail in the  
3 first period, and then you have telephone versus mail plus a  
4 wireless effect in the second period, and what that is showing,  
5 really, is the adjustment made to the calibration model after  
6 the year 2000, when we introduced a wireless effect into the  
7 model. After 2000, we tried to account for the changes in the  
8 use of landlines by an increasing cell use in that period, and  
9 so that's what that reflects.

10  
11 In general, what you see is a change of about 2.2 overall times  
12 difference between the new and the old, but you will see that,  
13 in the more recent years, from 2000 onwards, that these numbers  
14 tend to be a little higher than they had been for the first few  
15 years, 1981 through 1999, and that reflects the incorporation of  
16 the wireless effect into the calibration model.

17  
18 For shore, the change is more substantial. It's more than  
19 three-times the effort that we experienced with the old  
20 methodology, and, again, you will see that, in more recent  
21 years, because of the wireless effect, or associated with the  
22 wireless effect, there is an even higher rate of change.

23  
24 Just some numbers here, and I have a few graphs that show the  
25 differences in estimates for harvest and for total catch. In  
26 this case here, we have gag harvest for the Gulf, and this  
27 doesn't include Texas, and, after 2013, it doesn't include  
28 Louisiana, and so it's completely made up from -- It's made up  
29 of MRIP estimates, and it doesn't include the state surveys for  
30 either Texas or Louisiana, just to make that point.

31  
32 What you will see is that, for gag, and with other species too,  
33 the trends seem to be fairly similar. You do get more  
34 pronounced peaks and troughs in the new estimates, and, again,  
35 some of that -- A lot of is due to the effect from the FES  
36 calibration, but there are some effects associated with the  
37 calibration used for the access point surveys as well, depending  
38 on the species that you look at.

39  
40 For total catch, which includes discards, there is a similar  
41 type of trend. Overall, it's about more than two-times higher.  
42 Then you have, in more recent years, particularly 2015 through  
43 2017, the benchmarking period, it seems to be the highest  
44 differences.

45  
46 For triggerfish, we see a similar trend overall, less than twice  
47 the amount for harvest, but 2015 through 2017, and, actually the  
48 wireless effect period onwards, is a little higher than previous

1 years, and there is a similar effect for total catch. Where  
2 we've had increases in the CHTS-based estimates in 2017 and  
3 2016, we have noticed, for some species, and I don't know if  
4 it's a general trend or not, but that the landings and the catch  
5 rates are higher for those species during the benchmarking  
6 period, when the trend is up.

7  
8 Spanish mackerel is a species that has a shore component, and  
9 you will notice that, overall, it's about 2.4-times higher for  
10 the harvest, and, in recent years, it's about three-times  
11 higher, and so there is a general increase in the difference  
12 between the surveys as you get into the more recent years. It's  
13 the same with total catch. We see the same type of thing.

14  
15 What we have seen for many species is that, if there's a high  
16 shore component, because the FES has a larger effect on the  
17 shore estimates, it tends to translate into higher estimates for  
18 those species, with higher differences between the two  
19 estimates.

20  
21 Red snapper, we see trends are very similar, about a two-times  
22 higher rate overall, but slightly higher in the benchmarking  
23 period. For total catch, we see a similar trend, a little bit  
24 higher, and, in general, it tends to be that, for total catch,  
25 if there is a high discard component, there tends to be, it  
26 seems, a higher -- A greater difference between the estimates  
27 than there is for the harvest.

28  
29 Just to throw in some inshore species, this is red drum, and you  
30 will see, again, the trends are fairly similar, with most of the  
31 peaks and troughs mirroring what has happened in the previous  
32 methodology, but, overall, it's about a two-times difference, or  
33 twice as much, with higher rates in more recent years. This is  
34 similar also for total catch that contains the discard  
35 component.

36  
37 As far as impacts on recreational fishing, obviously I pointed  
38 out that there are major differences between the catch estimates  
39 for both methods, and so we expect this will translate into  
40 impacts to stock status, catch limits, and allocation decisions.  
41 Generalizations are very hard to make at this point, because, as  
42 I said, the recreational catch component is only one of many  
43 inputs into stock assessments.

44  
45 As far as the stock assessment schedule, this was a schedule  
46 produced by the transition team with input from the councils,  
47 commissions, and states. It's not set in stone, and it may  
48 differ from what is available on the SEDAR website and

1 elsewhere, and I know there is some discussion about  
2 incorporation of the new information into updates, rather than  
3 benchmarks, and so this is not an exhaustive list, and it may  
4 not be entirely accurate. It's based on the transition team's  
5 input.

6  
7 The key takeaways really are that there is a substantial  
8 increase in effort, especially with the shore mode, and the  
9 stocks that tend to have a high proportion of catch from shore  
10 in general are more heavily impacted, but, again, there is an  
11 impact from the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey calibration  
12 as well, and that can affect the magnitude of the difference.  
13 They are not independent, so to speak.

14  
15 The changes in effort are generally larger in more recent years,  
16 and this is mostly driven by the wireless effect in the FES  
17 calibrations, and then, for 2018, catch will be back-calibrated  
18 to ensure that ACLs set in 2017, using the old methodology,  
19 match the currency that is being used to evaluate those ACLs,  
20 and that can be continued for a number of years, while the stock  
21 assessments are being done.

22  
23 As far as stock assessments and incorporating the new data, that  
24 is starting, and has started, and we expect that those will be  
25 used to determine stock status and ACLs going forward, and so,  
26 as far as what's next, as I said, the revised total catch  
27 estimates are available right now. They have been available  
28 since July, and they are being incorporated into some  
29 assessments and updates, or planned assessments.

30  
31 The 2018 ACLs and catch estimates will be in the same currency,  
32 and it won't be evaluated using the different currency, because  
33 of the differences in the catch rates, or in the catch  
34 estimates, I should say.

35  
36 In 2019, we probably can expect preliminary management changes  
37 that may be made for reassessed stocks. Again, that's up to the  
38 councils, and I don't want to make that set in stone here, but  
39 this is just what we anticipate. Then calibrated statistics  
40 incorporating the additional new information will be  
41 incorporated in 2019 and 2020, going forward, into the new  
42 assessments.

43  
44 Based on the new stock assessments, management decisions could  
45 happen in 2020, probably, at the earliest, but that's -- As I  
46 said, I'm just here to present on the MRIP data, and this is  
47 some of the information that came out of the dealings of the  
48 transition team. That is it for the FES transition update. I

1 do have an additional slide here on state surveys, and I will  
2 leave it up to Greg if you want to ask questions on that.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Sure. Thank you, Dr. Cody, for the  
5 informed presentation, and I am sure there will be some  
6 questions from the committee as well as on some of the state  
7 programs that you just referred to. In fact, I think we'll talk  
8 about that some even a little bit later in the agenda as well,  
9 and so are there any questions from the committee? Ms. Bosarge.

10  
11 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I am not on your committee, but I was  
12 wondering -- You talk about it having a higher impact on the  
13 shore-based fishing, and so you are switching from the telephone  
14 to a piece of paper, right, and so why do you all think that --  
15 That piece of paper reaches all anglers equally, I would assume,  
16 whether you're fishing from a boat offshore or from a pier or  
17 whatever, but what do you think is driving the shore-based  
18 change to be more dramatic than the others?

19  
20 **DR. CODY:** There are a couple of theories that have been  
21 proposed by the consultants that have been involved with the  
22 project, and one of those is that shore fishing events, or  
23 fishing trips, tend to be less memorable, and, when you're put  
24 on the spot in a phone call, those trips tend not to be reported  
25 as accurately as something like a boat-based trip.

26  
27 It also could be that the boat-based anglers that report on  
28 these trips actually are remembering some of those shore-based  
29 trips as well and reporting them, and so those are the two  
30 theories out there, and we are looking at that information, to  
31 evaluate it and see what we can do in 2018, going forward, to  
32 get a better idea of what is going on.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Mickle.

35  
36 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** Thank you, Dr. Cody. That was an informative  
37 presentation, and I do have a question about the mail survey,  
38 following up on Leann's question. With a mail survey, I know  
39 it's been through extensive testing and peer review, which was  
40 the title of your slide, but was it ever discussed that maybe a  
41 mail survey, because it probably takes more time, and there  
42 would be prep, that you just said, involved with filling it out  
43 and submitting it, but would you think that would be a bias as  
44 targeting anglers who are more engaged in the fishery, and  
45 probably better and more efficient at catching in the fishery,  
46 increasing landings, which seems to be the trend on every single  
47 slide you showed with data? Thank you.

48

1 **DR. CODY:** There are a few exceptions to the increasing trend,  
2 just a couple of species here and there, but not -- In general,  
3 that is the case. What we've been doing is that, as I said, we  
4 have been using the state-based license information to augment  
5 the sample.

6  
7 In doing so, it gives us an opportunity to compare what is  
8 reported by anglers, identified as anglers, versus the outreach  
9 household in the survey, and so, as far as we can tell so far,  
10 there is no indication of a bias from that study, but that's a  
11 limited study that was done a couple of years ago as part of the  
12 pilot testing, and so another thing that they looked at as well  
13 was response, non-response, bias, and they did a follow-up  
14 survey on the non-respondents, and there was no indication from  
15 that that there was a bias from that as well, but that is  
16 something that we continue to look at.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Dr. Mickle.

19  
20 **DR. MICKLE:** Just an example of how this change is probably  
21 going to affect the way that management exists in the State of  
22 Mississippi, and so just some numbers to throw out there of what  
23 has actually occurred, as far as landings, with spotted  
24 seatrout.

25  
26 I think this is relevant, because, although it's a state  
27 species, more than 90 percent of the total data going into our  
28 stock assessments is recreational harvest, and so you can  
29 imagine the effect that this calibration can have. In 2015, it  
30 went from 1.7 million pounds landed in the State of Mississippi  
31 for spotted seatrout to 3.5. In 2016, 2.9 to 7.1 million. In  
32 2017, 1.2 million to 5.5 million. These are orders of magnitude  
33 different planets here.

34  
35 Then, in talking to my stock assessment specialists, we harvest  
36 a lot of seatrout, a total of maybe even up to 62 percent,  
37 average, total biomass harvest. If we look at these landings,  
38 we would be harvesting more than is swimming out there on the  
39 prior year, and so reality seems to be leaving the conversation,  
40 and at what point -- Who identifies this as best available  
41 science, and who is tasked with identifying this, and at what  
42 point do the scientists within each state, or on the federal  
43 level, acknowledge that maybe this isn't informative to the  
44 model anymore? That's just something that we're struggling with  
45 in the State of Mississippi, and I had a voice here, and thank  
46 you.

47  
48 **DR. CODY:** I would defer to Roy and others to address that

1 question. I mean, obviously, for best available science, the  
2 FES is what we have right now, and we had to get away from the  
3 Coastal Household Telephone Survey. There really wasn't a  
4 choice there at all. We knew it was bad, and so to stick with  
5 that would have been -- We probably would have been challenged  
6 even more.

7  
8  
9

**CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Crabtree.

10 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** I think we're all looking at this and trying  
11 to understand what's going on. We have a number of state  
12 surveys going on in the Gulf now that are all giving lower catch  
13 estimates than the FES survey is, and I don't think there's a --  
14 I don't think we understand yet exactly what is happening with  
15 it, and so I think that's part of the reason that we backed off  
16 on the MRIP revision assessments and that we're slowing down a  
17 little bit and taking a look at some of these things, and so  
18 I've heard comments like that, Paul, from a number of other  
19 states, and I don't know what the answer to that is, but there  
20 are discussions going on, and I know Clay has been on some email  
21 discussions with some of our scientists, nationwide, posing  
22 exactly that question of what catch estimates are the best  
23 available and what are we going to use in stock assessments.

24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30

I don't know where that is going to come down at this point, but  
I understand the concerns you raise, and I think there are a lot  
of things that we need to understand better than we do right  
now, and hopefully we'll make progress on this over the next  
year.

31 **DR. CODY:** Can I add to that just one other thing as well? We  
32 started a pilot study in 2018 to do a side-by-side with the FES,  
33 and it will be a push-to-web design, and so that will allow us  
34 to introduce other questions to the survey that can be completed  
35 online that might give us a better picture of what's going on  
36 with the survey, but there does appear to be some consistency  
37 between the behavior of the Fishing Effort Survey and other  
38 mail-based surveys, in terms of showing overall increases in  
39 estimates. We saw that with a pilot study for the Fish Hunt  
40 Survey also.

41  
42  
43

**CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I have Mr. Swindell and then Ms. Bosarge.

44 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Looking at the chart here for red drum, of all  
45 fisheries, we keep pushing off the stock assessment on that  
46 particular fishery, but I am looking here at your last three  
47 years, I think I'm looking at, and the total catch and harvest  
48 of red drum has drastically dropped. Any particular reason that

1 you are aware of, from your surveys?

2  
3 **DR. CODY:** No, I don't have a particular reason why that might  
4 have happened. I thought it was a consistency with both surveys  
5 though. I will just pull it back up, if you don't mind. There  
6 was a drop around, I think, 2012 through 2014 or so, or 2015. I  
7 don't really have an explanation for that, except that it's  
8 consistent for both surveys.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Froeschke, did you have a comment?

11  
12 **DR. FROESCHKE:** We talked about this on Slide 12 at the MRIP red  
13 snapper workshop, and the explanation we discussed there was  
14 that's because LA Creel was removed from the survey, from there,  
15 and so the landings drop is likely attributed to the landings  
16 that are now being reported through LA Creel.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** This is some good conversation, and I know Ms.  
19 Bosarge is next here, and we're probably going to have to move  
20 on in a minute, and so, if there's any last-minute questions, we  
21 will go through them, but, Ms. Bosarge, go ahead.

22  
23 **MS. BOSARGE:** I was just thinking about the differences between  
24 a telephone and a mail, and there are strengths and weaknesses  
25 to both, obviously. If you have good phone numbers, the phone  
26 works great, right, but, if you don't, then it's not so  
27 wonderful, and it's the reason we're still doing it on the  
28 charter boat side, because you have good numbers for them,  
29 telephone numbers, but I am thinking about the response that you  
30 get that says, no, I did not fish.

31  
32 If you call somebody on the phone, and you've got them on the  
33 phone, they will tell you, real quick, that, no, I didn't fish.  
34 They may hang up on you after that, but you found out if they  
35 fished or not. Now, when you go to a paper survey, and you're  
36 asking them about all their activities and such, for that  
37 individual that didn't fish, and you are wanting to know if he  
38 fished, think about somebody that is not in this management  
39 realm and they're just a normal person.

40  
41 They're like, oh, they want to know if I fished, and, well, I  
42 didn't fish, and so, okay. Then they deep-six it. To tell you  
43 they didn't fish, they have got to fill it out and put a stamp  
44 on it and take it to the post office, and they probably think,  
45 well, I didn't fish, and so they don't need me to mail this  
46 back, right, and so I'm wondering -- Have you looked at the no-  
47 fishing responses on the paper side, versus what it used to be  
48 on the telephone side, and see if there are any big differences

1 there? If there are, then I would guess that the no response,  
2 the people that don't respond on the paper side, that would need  
3 to be kind of factored in.

4  
5 **DR. CODY:** Yes, it is a fact that more people are reporting  
6 fishing trips with the mail survey, and so the paper survey, the  
7 way it's administered, it gets more people to report fishing  
8 trips. With the telephone survey, the question of whether you  
9 fished or not can get you off the phone quicker if you say no,  
10 and so there is also the possibility that people, because they  
11 just don't want to be on the phone, they will say no, just to  
12 get out of the call, and so there is that possibility as well,  
13 as part of the telephone survey.

14  
15 The thing about the mail survey is that you have a time to look  
16 at it, and there is language in the actual survey that says no  
17 fishing trips are important, that information is important too,  
18 but, also, there is other information that people can report on,  
19 such as the weather and outdoor activities, participation,  
20 things like that, and so those are also in there to get people  
21 to respond to the survey.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** One more question from Mr. Schieble, and then I  
24 think we're going to have to move on. I know there's a lot of  
25 good discussion, and we'll have to continue this into the  
26 future, certainly, but we have a lot of other agenda to cover as  
27 well. Mr. Schieble go ahead.

28  
29 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** I will make it quick. This goes back to  
30 what Dr. Froeschke said over there, and so there are no  
31 Louisiana landings data at all in this? LA Creel is entirely  
32 removed from all of this?

33  
34 **DR. CODY:** Louisiana is included when they were a part of MRIP,  
35 going back in time, and so, in 2013, they are in there. After  
36 2013, they are not in there, and so the LA Creel data is not  
37 included in this. These are just purely MRIP estimates.

38  
39 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** So this includes all states except Louisiana?

40  
41 **DR. CODY:** Except Louisiana 2013 forward and Texas.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Cody, thank you for the presentation. I am  
44 sure that it probably won't be the last, because there is  
45 obviously, I think, a lot more discussion that we need to have  
46 around this table, but we do need to move on. We are not  
47 leaving this topic in the agenda, but we have here Dr. Barbieri,  
48 and there are some SSC comments related to this.

1  
2 I know you discussed this also in the SEDAR Committee that we  
3 had, but I didn't know if there was anything, other comments,  
4 from the SSC, because, in my mind, this committee, obviously, is  
5 going to hopefully inform this group on how we interpreted all  
6 of these incongruencies that we're seeing with these data  
7 streams.

8  
9 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** Right, and not much beyond what was already  
10 discussed, Mr. Chairman. We expressed the same concerns over  
11 the effort dropping dramatically after 2013, or after 2012, due  
12 to the LA Creel, and the fact that, when you look at assessing  
13 stocks that this council manages over the entire Gulf of Mexico,  
14 now we have different metrics between the western Gulf and the  
15 eastern, in terms of distribution of the MRIP survey, and so  
16 this brings an extra level of concern regarding the use of  
17 recreational fisheries data into stock assessments that we're  
18 going to have to be very careful about, and so that's number  
19 one.

20  
21 Number 2 is it highlights the need for us to continue  
22 investigating this issue of how to calibrate the existing state  
23 surveys with the MRIP survey, that there are a few things there  
24 that we still need to understand and we don't completely  
25 understand what is going on.

26  
27 For example, the GRFS, the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, that Florida  
28 administers, also has a licensed-based mail survey, but our  
29 estimates are very different than what they turn out to be with  
30 the FES, and so the meeting that we had in New Orleans was the  
31 first step in engaging the states, the MRIP program, and the  
32 statistical consultants -- Now they have all that data in-hand,  
33 and we are going to start exploring what may be the causes, and  
34 several of the issues were brought up here.

35  
36 To Dr. Mickle's question before about peer review and best  
37 available science, as you know, I was a member of the National  
38 Academy of Science review committee that looked at the MRIP  
39 review that we undertook in 2016. That committee really dug  
40 into the methodologies used in assembling survey theory in-  
41 depth, and we can assure you that the methodologies that were  
42 proposed by MRIP are actually sound, and they represent a  
43 significant improvement from the way that they conducted their  
44 effort and their intercept catch survey.

45  
46 However, there might be issues still going on that we do not  
47 understand, and so you can have a methodology that is perfectly  
48 fine, but, as you start putting data through that process, you

1 may end up in a situation where there are unknown biases that  
2 are causing things to come out different, and so just  
3 reinforcing that we are looking into this. There is a report  
4 that is being put together by that committee that met in New  
5 Orleans, and we want to come back and report to you on the  
6 outcome of that investigation. Mr. Chairman, that completes my  
7 report.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Barbieri. Is there any  
10 questions for Dr. Barbieri? If there is none, I have a question  
11 for you real quick, Luiz, and it's something, I guess, for the  
12 committee here to think about.

13  
14 We're obviously going to have to pay close attention to this, as  
15 a committee and as the council, and my question really, and you  
16 kind of answered it, was really going to be, well, what are we  
17 going to do, because I'm hearing from the SSC and the Science  
18 Center that we don't really know what to do, and we're kind of  
19 thinking about this.

20  
21 In my mind, I'm seeing that, okay, no one was really happy with  
22 the first MRIP 1.0, or whatever we're calling it, and we changed  
23 the methodology, and it got accolades from the National Academy  
24 and everyone that it was a significant improvement, and then we  
25 get it back, and it's a lot higher.

26  
27 Then, all of a sudden, we have these state things coming up, and  
28 hopefully John, in a second, is going to update us on what  
29 happened at the workshop, but I think the short story there is  
30 not a lot of resolution, as you pointed out, but then these  
31 state plans are kind of looking more like the original MRIP, and  
32 so I guess I feel like we don't really know what to do here.

33  
34 My question to you is, as our science committee, you've got, I  
35 guess, the statistical teams working on it, or, really, what's  
36 the next step, so we can move this along and build these into  
37 the process?

38  
39 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right, and I didn't mean to say that there is  
40 really nothing being done. Basically, what we do is, as  
41 scientists, we are looking at a problem, and we are looking at  
42 the application of scientific methodologies to data, and we are  
43 finding inconsistencies.

44  
45 The process to look at this is to investigate further and to  
46 explore and try and find causes or reasons to identify some of  
47 the issues that we have been discussing that could be causing  
48 these differences.

1  
2 At that meeting in New Orleans, actually, several probable  
3 scenarios were already discussed, but you cannot do this in a  
4 one meeting type of deal. It's a very complex issue, and so we  
5 will come back and report to you our SSC discussion on this  
6 matter. It's that we are looking at six-months to, at the most,  
7 a year to try and find some resolution, but we are going to have  
8 to look into this in more detail before I can come and give you  
9 a better-informed answer.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Luiz, and I certainly didn't mean to  
12 imply that you weren't doing anything. I guess the question,  
13 from my point of this Data Collection Committee and the council,  
14 is do we need to charge the SSC with looking at that, or I know  
15 that Dave Donaldson's team is working on this as well, and Roy  
16 too, and so I guess I don't know if it's happening, or, in other  
17 words, you don't need anything from us to say that we obviously  
18 want to move this forward, but, at this point, it's in the  
19 works, so to speak.

20  
21 **DR. BARBIERI:** Yes, but, Greg, it's not that you said anything  
22 to that effect. I mean, the other day, when I said, at that  
23 meeting, we really didn't come to any conclusion, and we didn't,  
24 but I am actually the chair of a group that is being coordinated  
25 by the Gulf States Commission that includes all the states and  
26 is working with the MRIP program and the NMFS Office of Science  
27 & Technology, which has control over the engagement of the  
28 statistical consultants, and, of course, we are talking to our  
29 Science Center as well and integrating all of these groups  
30 together, and so that process -- Remember that we started this  
31 five years ago.

32  
33 That process is continuing, and we actually discussed  
34 potentially having an additional meeting by next summer, or next  
35 fall, that will be organized by the Gulf States Commission if we  
36 need to have a meeting to have those discussions more actively.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Luiz. I appreciate that.  
39 Shannon, go ahead.

40  
41 **DR. SHANNON CALAY:** I wanted to reiterate a comment that Roy  
42 already made, which is that, in order to proceed to put new  
43 recreational statistics into a stock assessment, we're going to  
44 need very firm guidance on what the best available science is,  
45 and it's not going to be sufficient to present a list of  
46 options, necessarily, because it isn't appropriate to run  
47 optional stock assessments and then choose which one you think  
48 you like the best.

1  
2 We need to have firm decisions on what is the best available  
3 science and why were those conclusions drawn, and we need this  
4 really quickly. Honestly, it's rather urgent, because we do  
5 have a very busy 2019 stock assessment calendar planned, and we  
6 have no clarity right now on best available science for  
7 recreational statistics.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Mickle.

10  
11 **DR. MICKLE:** Very quickly to that point, and so who is the body  
12 that identifies the best available science? That's a simple  
13 question.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mara.

16  
17 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Well, ultimately, it's the Secretary of  
18 Commerce. I mean, what happens when you -- The FMPs, the  
19 amendments, all of that, it has to be based on the best  
20 available science, right, and so, when that determination is  
21 made to approve some sort of FMP or amendment or rule, there is  
22 a determination that it's the best available science. I mean,  
23 that doesn't mean it's not informed by everything else that's  
24 happening, but, ultimately, it's through that process.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, and I do know the SSC sends us motions  
27 that it's accepted as the best available science, and so, at  
28 some level, the SSC is making a call on that as well. Robin,  
29 did you have a --

30  
31 **MR. ROBIN RIECHERS:** I am not on your committee, but, given that  
32 response, and I don't -- What you're saying is you need the  
33 information so that the stock assessments can go forward, and  
34 what Mara is saying is that we've got to go forward with one of  
35 them so that it goes through secretarial approval, and then a  
36 decision is made about whether or not that then is, quote,  
37 unquote, best available science, kind of at the end of day, and  
38 so there has to be either an interim step that informs the first  
39 decision of whether or not to put it in or not put it in, and so  
40 help us with that, because I think that's what Paul was trying  
41 to get at, is who is going to make that decision before that  
42 last step of the Secretary of Commerce actually approving an  
43 amendment with new estimates in it or without new estimates in  
44 it.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We will have to move on here, because the  
47 Chairman is looking at me, because we still have one more  
48 presentation, but, Dr. Barbieri, go ahead.

1  
2 **DR. BARBIERI:** I just want to say that the SSC report that I  
3 presented the other day at the SEDAR Committee -- I mean, the  
4 committee made some recommendations, and they are explicit in  
5 our report, regarding the way forward. For now, really until we  
6 find some final resolution on this, that continuing using the  
7 state surveys is the best option at this point, because the  
8 advice that we are receiving from the statistical consultants is  
9 that neither one nor the other may be the final answer. It's  
10 not a matter of picking, but definitely defining an integrated  
11 estimate with weights for the amount of data that is coming from  
12 each survey. That might be the most suitable way to follow  
13 this.

14  
15 What we would like to do is, for assessments coming up, if they  
16 have to be benchmark assessments, then all these issues can be  
17 explored on a species-by-species basis, but, in terms of these  
18 MRIP-lites, or any other updates that do not allow a full  
19 investigation of how this new data is impacting the reference  
20 point estimates and the other assessment outputs, we don't feel  
21 that would be the way to go.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** One quick follow-up, Robin.

24  
25 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Real quick, I think this is a very important  
26 discussion, and I think we'll have a couple more comments, and  
27 we'll make up the time.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Robin.

30  
31 **MR. RIECHERS:** The only thing, and I really appreciate the real  
32 thoughtful discussion by the SSC, and you as well, Luiz, on  
33 this, but obviously this is a much bigger question than the Gulf  
34 Council and just the Gulf and our SSC.

35  
36 This is really a larger question dealing with the FES survey as  
37 a whole across the nation, and so, like I said, I appreciate the  
38 thoughtful discussion. I just think there's got to be -- I  
39 think that's what people are grasping at, is where is that  
40 bigger question going to go to and how, ultimately, does it get  
41 resolved, and in what timing, and I realize if you all can't  
42 answer that at this point, but that's, I think, the questions  
43 that are out there.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Luiz, and, seeing no  
46 other hands up, Dr. Froeschke, I know you were going to comment  
47 on the workshop that was talking about integrating these state  
48 plans, in light of the discussion we've been having, and I know

1 we've had some discussion of what happened there, but is there  
2 anything else, or maybe you, Dave, would like to comment on that  
3 last workshop?

4  
5 **UPDATE ON RED SNAPPER DESIGN WORKSHOP**  
6

7 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just real briefly, we have essentially reenacted  
8 part of the meeting, and so you have a good feeling for the  
9 kinds of questions that happened there. In leaving the  
10 analysis, or leaving, each of the states did provide their  
11 landings estimates from their state-specific programs to the  
12 consultants.

13  
14 The consultants are taking these data and going back to their  
15 offices, if you will, and are going to chew on this, and we  
16 expect to have some additional, perhaps, results in mid-2019 for  
17 us to think about, and so that's the short answer.

18  
19 If you will, the meeting was interesting, in that everybody kind  
20 of brought their bag of issues, and we piled it all together,  
21 and it was a pretty big set of challenges to deal with, and so I  
22 think the consultants probably got a better understanding of how  
23 complex this issue is and that it extends well beyond just the  
24 private recreational data, but stay-tuned, is kind of the  
25 message from that.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. Would you like to add  
28 anything, Dave?

29  
30 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** The only thing I would add is that, and I  
31 think Luiz alluded to it, that we would -- If necessary, we are  
32 willing to convene another workshop to further explore this in  
33 mid-2019.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, and so, obviously, there is a lot  
36 more to discuss and deal with on that matter, certainly, and so,  
37 moving on in the agenda, up next is a presentation by Dr.  
38 Stephen regarding the new for-hire reporting and the workshop  
39 that occurred. While they are pulling up that presentation,  
40 John, did you want to talk us through that component of the  
41 action list of what we want to accomplish today regarding that  
42 agenda matter?

43  
44 **PRESENTATION: SUMMARY REPORT ON THE FOR-HIRE ELECTRONIC**  
45 **REPORTING WORKSHOP HOSTED BY THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL**  
46 **SPECIALTY GROUP**  
47

48 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Thank you. Dr. Stephen is going to summarize

1 the meeting results from QMPSPG, and it's a very long acronym for  
2 the Quality Management something. Anyway, this group was  
3 convened as a working exercise to review the for-hire  
4 implementation plan, and so she is going to summarize the  
5 results of that and give us an update on how the progress of the  
6 for-hire plan is going as well, and so it's two-part.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John, and this is Tab F, Number 5,  
9 if you're following along, and, Dr. Stephen, whenever you're  
10 ready, go ahead.

11  
12 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** As John said, we had a meeting back in  
13 July, and I'm going to kind of summarize the points from that.  
14 A little background first. The Quality Management Professional  
15 Specialty Group, which is that long name to say, came to us back  
16 in May, and they are part of a group under the Fishery  
17 Information System, run through NOAA Fisheries, and they were  
18 looking for a training exercise, in order to participate with  
19 their annual meeting, and they had heard about our project and  
20 thought we would be a really good idea to use as their training  
21 exercise.

22  
23 The group, in general, likes to promote quality management, and  
24 it seeks ways to help NOAA Fisheries, in general, improve their  
25 data collection, through either engagement with different  
26 people, strategic planning, or using actual tools, so that when  
27 you implement a project, or have a project already implemented,  
28 you're doing it in the best way possible.

29  
30 We had a three-day meeting held in July, and the timing was due  
31 to QMPSPG's timing schedule, and so we didn't have as much of a  
32 say, and so it was a little short timeline to get it together,  
33 but we were able to get really successful results out of this  
34 meeting.

35  
36 For the training exercise, the QMPSPG asked us to keep the group  
37 of people attending to a very small group. This is because the  
38 approach of how they use a training exercise is a very hands-on  
39 approach, and you need a small number of people there that are  
40 able to have open dialog among each other.

41  
42 Based on their suggestion, we looked for a spokesperson from  
43 each of the different stakeholder groups that would be affected  
44 by the for-hire implementation, and so we looked to get some  
45 data providers, and this was -- When I explain, it was a joint  
46 meeting for the Gulf and the South Atlantic, since the bulk of  
47 the information we're collecting is similar between the two  
48 councils.

1  
2 We did have a charter and headboat captain. From the Gulf, we  
3 had Susan Boggs, representing the headboat captains, and Dylan  
4 Hubbard was representing our charter fleet. We also wanted to  
5 make sure we had the people that are providing the data that  
6 goes into this, such as our Permits, our VMS folks, and Law  
7 Enforcement, and the group is hosting all of our data, which is  
8 ACCSP.

9  
10 The other idea was to get the people who are going to be using  
11 this result as the end process, and so we had representatives  
12 from the Regional Office, the Science Center, S&T, as well as  
13 the councils, and we had John Sanchez as a council member and  
14 John Froeschke as council staff that participated.

15  
16 The gist of the three-day meeting is that we first did an  
17 overall of what QM is. Most people are not aware of it, and so  
18 we spent a little time going over the different types of tools  
19 and some background about the for-hire project, so that the QM  
20 members understood what we were talking about, and then we  
21 started applying these tools to our project, and this generated  
22 a lot of ad hoc discussions and then a mini-session on how to  
23 best do outreach for the project.

24  
25 Overall, we were looking at some broad, general workshop goals.  
26 We wanted to make sure that we understood the data flow, what  
27 data goes in, what comes out, what is required, making sure that  
28 we're getting correct feedback loops in our process, and we have  
29 good measures and metrics.

30  
31 This all kind of leads to the overall what are the business  
32 rules for the fishermen, what are the business rules for NOAA  
33 Fisheries, to make sure that we're going to implement this in  
34 the best manner possible, and that led into discussion of what  
35 are the expectations of the results of this project.

36  
37 I am not going to go over all of these, but I wanted to  
38 highlight a bunch of the different types of concerns that came  
39 up at the first day of the meeting. We wanted to make sure that  
40 we are able to reduce burden and that we had benefits to what  
41 reporting was and that we had some standards, like the minimum  
42 standards, and overall what are the expectations and how do we  
43 make sure that we're communicating that understanding clearly to  
44 the participants who are in the program.

45  
46 In general, the QM tools that we were using is just a way to  
47 kind of visualize what the process is of how the data flows, and  
48 so we actually broke into small groups and drew things out. One

1 of the benefits to this type of tool is that you get to have  
2 insight and identify areas where you don't know what is  
3 happening or you need an area of improvement. It also starts  
4 discussion among the different groups to figure out what have  
5 you missed or what do you need to enhance better.

6  
7 Overall, we decided to break into four sub-groups within the  
8 committee. We had groups that were -- To talk about the first  
9 one, it was what happens when a trip occurs? What do I need  
10 before a trip occurs, during a trip, and directly afterwards?  
11 Then we were breaking into the kind of more what happens with  
12 the data that is collected and how is it compiled and how is it  
13 audited, and how is that information then integrated and  
14 analyzed for us, and then how do we disseminate that  
15 information?

16  
17 Each of these groups went through their own process map flows,  
18 and what I am going to just do here is highlight the discoveries  
19 of each of these different groups, and so, when we were looking  
20 into what happens when the trip occurs, questions arose of what  
21 information do you need to have in a system prior to that trip  
22 occurring, such as a permit data or vessel data, what do the  
23 fishermen themselves need to enter, and what ancillary  
24 information might be needed to mesh with that trip information,  
25 which we're commonly calling trip-related information? When you  
26 think of at-sea observers or dockside sampling, that's all  
27 information that relates to a trip, but isn't directly entered  
28 by the fishermen.

29  
30 When we looked at data compilation and auditing, one of our  
31 primary concerns is that we had one central location for all the  
32 data to go to, and it has been chosen as ACCSP. This is another  
33 very technical term, and it's called an API, an application  
34 program interface, but the gist of what that means is, when you  
35 enter information into a form, it's got to get transmitted  
36 somewhere, and the API is what does that transmission and  
37 talking, to make sure that everyone is reporting in a similar  
38 format that it can be accepted by the system.

39  
40 The API itself has a lot of QA/QC, and so we talked about what  
41 methods could be used to kind of QA/QC that data upfront  
42 automatically and what QA/QC would need to occur after the fact.  
43 Looking at data integration and analysis, one of our primary  
44 goals was to avoid duplicative entry, and so we don't want to  
45 have someone enter data in the Mid-Atlantic and the South  
46 Atlantic and the Gulf if they happen to co-occur in all those  
47 regions, and we also want to figure out how do we integrate any  
48 reporting information we get now with existing surveys or other

1 datasets that are out there.  
2  
3 Some of the data you would also want to integrate with are  
4 things like biological samples or, in South Carolina, they have  
5 an existing charter reporting program, and we wanted to make  
6 sure that they would merge well together.  
7  
8 When it comes to access and dissemination of the data, we knew  
9 that there are a variety of different people that needed access  
10 to data at a variety of different levels, and so we started to  
11 map out what some of those were, and some of the outputs would  
12 be reports that councils would see, but some of them would be  
13 data streams that are going to be fed into other scientific  
14 analysis, and we also wanted to consider that fishermen are  
15 putting a lot of time and effort into entering this information,  
16 and we want to have something that they can use for their own  
17 business practices as an output.  
18  
19 As we went through it, we had a couple of needs that we realized  
20 were occurring, and so, when you think about when a trip occurs,  
21 one of the important things that we want to make sure we are  
22 incorporating are feedback loops, that we're getting the right  
23 information the right way, so we don't have to look at the  
24 information months from when it was submitted to correct it.  
25  
26 Twenty-four-hour customer support was highly recommended, in  
27 order to allow a fisherman -- If there is a problem going on  
28 with whatever system they are using, that they find a way that  
29 they can report legally. Trip identifiers has been a key topic  
30 on a lot of our discussions, one way to match a trip throughout  
31 all the different elements that interact with it, and, of  
32 course, a very clear pathway for submission of the data.  
33  
34 When we were looking at compilation and auditing, these key  
35 components related more to making sure that we had notification  
36 of when trips were occurring, and so that allows the dockside  
37 sampling and enforcement, and that we had a clear pathway for  
38 how we allow either the VMS or the archival GPS, the location  
39 and position portion of the amendment, a clear pathway for that  
40 to get to the data sources.  
41  
42 Finally, with integration and analysis, a lot of discussion  
43 arose about how we validate the data and how we ensure  
44 compliance and how that leads to calibration, and I will touch  
45 on those a little bit more later.  
46  
47 As I mentioned, a lot of ad hoc discussions came up during the  
48 meeting, and, while the data flows are really helpful, I think

1 what was even more helpful, in a way, was having these different  
2 types of discussions with the group, and that helped us realize  
3 some of the lack of clear communication that might have been  
4 going on beforehand.

5  
6 One of the first questions that came up was scalability. We  
7 know the existing headboat survey program is out there, and  
8 there was a lot of confusion of why we couldn't just immediately  
9 upgrade that to include all the charter vessels, and so we had a  
10 little discussion about the headboat survey roughly has thirteen  
11 agents for 136 vessels across the Gulf and South Atlantic.  
12 That's about one agent to every ten vessels.

13  
14 Across both the Gulf and South Atlantic, we have about 3,400  
15 vessels, and it's not possible to have 340 agents to do that  
16 type of validation and compliance reporting that the headboat  
17 survey does, and so what that showed is that we need an  
18 alternative method to validate and look at compliance with it.

19  
20 That, of course, led us into the next discussion that really was  
21 about compliance and validation. One thing we wanted to do was  
22 make sure that we were using the minimum number of compliance  
23 and validation agents. Boots on the ground are expensive, and  
24 so we want to make sure that we're using them in the most  
25 appropriate way to get the best data, but there is also a lot of  
26 technology aids that we can use in order to help with validation  
27 and compliance, and the Gulf Council kind of instituted a lot of  
28 these in the amendment, such as using the hail-out and the VMS  
29 or archival GPS. These both help significantly with reducing  
30 boots on the ground at the dock, but you do still need staff to  
31 monitor this information.

32  
33 Calibration was another little tricky one, and, of course, you  
34 just listened to MRIP, and so the idea is calibration is a  
35 method to make sure that you can create a conversion factor  
36 between the two datasets. You want to make sure, if you see a  
37 difference in datasets, that you know whether it's coming from  
38 the change in survey method or an actual change in the fishery.

39  
40 Typically, your best calibration occurs when programs are run  
41 side-by-side over multiple years, and the biggest thing is you  
42 can't really begin the calibration process until you know you  
43 have validation and compliance in place. Once you have all  
44 three of these, you are allowed to integrate the data that  
45 you're collecting now with past data collection, which kind of  
46 leads into overall how are we going to be using the data and  
47 making sure we're setting a correct expectation with that.

48

1 In the short term, the data is going to be used to validate the  
2 minimum estimates of fishing effort, but the long-term goal,  
3 once we have this validation and compliance and calibration,  
4 what we're hoping is that we'll have surveys to validate the  
5 accuracy and help estimate any in-compliant reports, the multiple  
6 years of side-by-side comparison, and then we can use  
7 calibration surveys to integrate that data.

8  
9 Of course, one of the questions that came up was the cost of the  
10 program, and so we have worked on getting some funding towards  
11 the program. We have gotten quite a few temporary grant  
12 fundings to put us forth as far as we are in the implementation  
13 process already.

14  
15 We have done some estimates of what the staffing and  
16 infrastructure is to monitor these programs across the South  
17 Atlantic and Gulf, and, currently, that exceeds \$5 million.  
18 Staffing that is needed is staffing to look at the data that  
19 were obtained, make sure it's staying in a database  
20 structurally, and that we're distributing the data and QA/QC'ing  
21 the data.

22  
23 We also need monitoring and enforcement for it, which improves  
24 the compliance and validation of the program, and, finally, you  
25 need the staffing able to statistically estimate catch and  
26 effort.

27  
28 The last section that we talked about at the meeting was  
29 outreach, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time on here, and  
30 we spent half-a-day on it, and the lessons we learned from that  
31 were incorporated in our current efforts to create outreach  
32 materials. The three main kind of aspects that the group felt  
33 were important was outreach materials and how to report, so  
34 fishermen have a clear understanding of what they need to do and  
35 when, what the expectation is of the program and how we use the  
36 data, and then funding and program costs.

37  
38 If there are any questions about the QMPSG, I will take them  
39 now, and then I'm going to pass it over to Rich Malinowski, and  
40 he'll give you an update on the timeline for implementation.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Ms. Bosarge.

43  
44 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. I'm not on your committee, but I  
45 was wondering, since you're building this system from the ground  
46 up, and I'm thinking about the system that's already in place  
47 that is sort of similar to this on the commercial side, and a  
48 request that I heard, both from our anglers, our commercial

1 fishermen here, and around the CCC table from other councils,  
2 and that was for the unique trip identifier.

3  
4 As you're building this -- There seems to be some hurdles trying  
5 to do that on the commercial side, because the system is already  
6 in place, and so it's going to be a little more difficult, but,  
7 as you're building this program, are you thinking about that  
8 now, and do you think you'll be able to implement that?

9  
10 **DR. STEPHEN:** A lot of our discussions with ACCSP is how to get  
11 that unique trip identifier throughout the entire system. In  
12 general, for-hire has less components, because you don't have a  
13 dealer component as well as the fishermen component that you  
14 have to match, and so ACCSP is doing research towards that end.

15  
16 We think it might still probably be a little bit of time before  
17 we've worked out all the bugs on how to create it effectively,  
18 but our key point there is also to match data that's being used  
19 maybe by states as well as the federal government on the same  
20 trip, and so we were looking towards that.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Mr. Malinowski, go ahead  
23 when you're ready.

24  
25 **UPDATE ON SOUTHEAST FOR-HIRE INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC REPORTING**

26  
27 **MR. RICH MALINOWSKI:** Good morning, council. My name is Rich  
28 Malinowski, and I work at the Southeast Regional Office for NOAA  
29 Fisheries. I am going to hopefully update you with the SEFHIER  
30 program.

31  
32 As we know, the amendment was approved on September 19<sup>th</sup>, and we  
33 found out yesterday that the proposed rule is going to publish  
34 this Friday, and so be on the lookout in the Federal Register  
35 for that. The comment period on that will end on November 26,  
36 and then we will push forward to publish a final rule, and these  
37 are tentative timelines from here on out, by January 31. We  
38 will have some training sessions, once that publishes, to begin  
39 getting set up for the first phase.

40  
41 That first phase is going to be effective on April 15<sup>th</sup>,  
42 tentatively, and then Phase 2 of the program, which will be the  
43 GPS portion of it, will be October 1. These are tentative  
44 dates, and so just keep that in mind as we're moving forward.

45  
46 ACCSP, as you're aware, has been selected to be our data housing  
47 unit, and we have a data sharing agreement already in place.  
48 Right now, they're currently going through a federal audit, to

1 make sure the security and privacy measures are safe and we can  
2 trust them, and there is also modifying their systems, since we  
3 have given them now the finalized data elements to adopt their  
4 systems to accept those data elements, or either add them or  
5 change them a little bit, and those data elements took about a  
6 year to coordinate with GARFO and the South Atlantic and the  
7 Gulf and MRIP and a lot of entities, in terms of what these data  
8 elements really are going to be.

9  
10 There are some slight differences between the charter boats and  
11 the headboats, and there is probably five less elements that the  
12 headboats have to report, because they have a system already set  
13 up that they figure these things out already, and, in addition,  
14 there are some new economic questions on there, which we know  
15 fishermen are hesitant to provide us, and so we want to make  
16 sure that you guys are aware of that.

17  
18 Here are the data elements that we're going to go forth with.  
19 I'm not going to run over all of these right now, but you can  
20 take a look at them. The one that did change is we're going to  
21 end port and start port in there, since the South Atlantic  
22 wanted start port with us, and we're going to have a GPS unit,  
23 and so we'll know where that start port will be, and so that's  
24 the only change on this one here.

25  
26 You can see the economic questions down there, sort of the five  
27 on the bottom there, the number of anglers, the number of crew,  
28 trip fee, fuel used, and price of fuel, and so they're standard  
29 questions, and they should be simple to answer, and so we  
30 figured we would include them, based upon the economists'  
31 requests, so that, when we do have disasters, we can figure out  
32 how much you guys are spending and then play those numbers into  
33 more of the economic assistance, when needed.

34  
35 For the GPS units and the Gulf vessels here, we're going to have  
36 a hail-out, which will be done using your app or the logbook, or  
37 potentially a VMS system, and these elements here will be  
38 included, the vessel ID, trip type, detailed landing location,  
39 so our agents can meet you at the dock if they want to do some  
40 validation. A lot of charter vessels land at private docks, and  
41 there is no access. Well, it's something we need to really look  
42 at and see how we can provide validation for those vessels. You  
43 can see the rest of them there.

44  
45 The GPS and VMS update is, right now, we've got the data  
46 elements finalized, and the next big step is to figure out how  
47 we're going to do the GPS and VMS transition and how we're going  
48 to send those tracks over to the ACCSP system, and so we're

1 making a big push right now, and this is our next step. We're  
2 doing some pilot testing of five different GPS units, through  
3 the Beaufort Lab, on the headboat system, but also -- Like Dylan  
4 Hubbard is one of the folks testing this pilot equipment.

5  
6 The test is going to run from November of this year to June of  
7 next year, which we'll figure out -- We're looking at five or  
8 six different elements, the economics of it, the accessibility  
9 of it, how the fishermen like it, and so there's some elements  
10 that they are really reviewing in close detail.

11  
12 At the same time, we're going to be developing -- VMS has a type  
13 approval system for their different fleets that they have  
14 throughout the country, and that's a huge thing that they do,  
15 and we have to figure out how we're going to develop these. The  
16 GPS units are a little different than the VMS units, and so  
17 we're going to have to figure out an approval system for that,  
18 to make sure that they can meet the ACCSP requirements, meet  
19 security requirements and such, and so that's a process that  
20 we're going to be working through right now.

21  
22 In addition, we have been working with the VMS reimbursement  
23 program to get some additional funds added to that program for  
24 vessels in the Southeast, but it won't be able to be applied to  
25 GPS units. It's going to be VMS units, because that's the way  
26 their system is set up, and so that's where we're at with that.  
27 Any questions?

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Rich. Any questions for  
30 Mr. Malinowski? Mr. Anson.

31  
32 **MR. ANSON:** Hi, Rich. It's nice to see you. Reporting burden,  
33 Jessica brought it up a little bit, touched upon it, and,  
34 currently in Alabama, for the last couple of years, we've worked  
35 with the CLS America folks.

36  
37 We were in on that NFWF project, and we were able to receive the  
38 red snapper information that we needed for our Snapper Check  
39 program electronically, once a captain reported through the CLS  
40 equipment, and so I'm just wondering if that is something that  
41 you all have been talking about, is access of that data for the  
42 states to comply with reporting requirements with each of the  
43 states on those federally-permitted vessels, to make sure that  
44 they don't need to also report a state report if that  
45 information is actually being captured through the VMS system.

46  
47 **MR. MALINOWSKI:** So we're trying to eliminate duplicate  
48 reporting. That's a big push. We don't want that. It's a

1 burden to the fishermen as well as to us to manage two data  
2 streams, and so the VMS systems are going to be incorporated  
3 into the system. For instance, the dually-permitted commercial  
4 and charter vessels with -- Commercial vessels already have a  
5 VMS, and so we're going to say to VMS, can you adopt your system  
6 for these data elements, to be included or create a form, so we  
7 can use that one system for that.

8  
9 In terms of where the data goes, it's going to flow through  
10 ACCSP back down to the Science Center, and then over to us, and  
11 the Science Center has the ability to distribute it to who they  
12 choose or whoever asks for it. Does that answer your question?  
13

14 **MR. ANSON:** It does. It sounds like it's able, I guess. We're  
15 willing, on the state side, to receive that information and to  
16 work with you all to make sure that it happens, and so I just  
17 want to make it a point that we would be very interested. I  
18 know our captains would be very interested, when that time comes  
19 that you will be using those units, to send us the information  
20 in real-time. Thank you.  
21

22 **DR. STEPHEN:** I just want to add to that. With ACCSP, we can  
23 authorize different people to have access to data for people  
24 from their state, and so that's a conversation we can start with  
25 them at the beginning, as we're designing it, and we can have a  
26 conversation with you about which people in particular will have  
27 access to that level of data.  
28

29 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.  
30

31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Seeing no other questions, I  
32 just have a quick question, and this will maybe be for Roy or  
33 Shannon. In the one slide, I think, Dr. Stephen, there was a \$5  
34 million price tag on that. Part of it said that it was  
35 infrastructure, but part of it is staff, and I just -- I guess  
36 that's routine yearly charges, and so is that, I guess,  
37 accounted for, Roy or Shannon? There is funds to pay to  
38 continue this?  
39

40 **DR. CRABTREE:** There still is a funding need to fully implement  
41 the program, and we don't have a budget at the moment, and so  
42 nothing has changed there, and so the tab still is in the \$6  
43 million neighborhood for both the Gulf and the South Atlantic  
44 programs. There is some language in some versions of budgets  
45 that make reference to it, but I don't know what Congress will  
46 ultimately do.  
47

48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you. Mr. Swindell.

1  
2 **MR. SWINDELL:** Just a quick question to the staff of the council  
3 and to you. Are we going to be able to -- This is a very  
4 important step in our data collection system. Are we going to  
5 be able to get even a brief report, as the council meetings  
6 progress, each time here in the next year? I would love to have  
7 one.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Ed, are you referring to a brief report -- Do  
10 you mean like on the landings or a report on the updates of  
11 where they're at with the program?  
12  
13 **MR. SWINDELL:** A report on the general -- How the system is  
14 working. Are people really using it right? Is it working or  
15 not working? I would like to really know that, and not  
16 necessarily on a resource basis, but on just the system itself,  
17 to make sure that we are getting somewhere with this system.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Right, and I think we would certainly, as a  
20 committee, clearly follow up on the progress and status of  
21 what's going on, not only from its implementing, right, but  
22 landings as well, as Mr. Gerhart presents those, as she does  
23 every meeting or whatever, but I have Ms. Boggs. Tom, did you  
24 have a comment to that point? Ms. Boggs, go ahead.  
25  
26 **MS. BOGGS:** I just wanted to clarify -- So we are going to --  
27 The plan is to start the electronic logbooks on April 15 of  
28 2019, and has that platform been designed and ready to go?  
29  
30 **MR. MALINOWSKI:** In terms of the platform, it's basically going  
31 to be a web-based platform. Currently, eTRIPS Mobile is  
32 available for use. We just need to approve it through our  
33 process that we're going to have.  
34  
35 The other GPS units and tablets or applications, we're going to  
36 send out to the vendors and say, okay, here is the elements, and  
37 now create your forms. I am saying, yes, it's going to be ready  
38 by then.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any follow-up to that?  
41  
42 **MS. BOGGS:** A follow-up to that would be a comment about the  
43 funding, and we begin data collection in April of 2019, and will  
44 that data be useful at all?  
45  
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Roy.  
47  
48 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, so 2019 is going to be the year to stand up

1 the program and work the bugs out and the things that didn't  
2 work, and it will take most of that year to get all of the  
3 equipment onboard and training and things, and so I suspect that  
4 it won't be until 2020 that we actually start seeing landings  
5 that we can look at.

6  
7 In terms of when we can get to actually using the landings that  
8 are reported, that is contingent on how well the system works  
9 and the compliance rates and our ability to do the validation  
10 and the other parts of the program that we right now don't have  
11 funding for and get through the whole certification problem.

12  
13 This is a process that's going to require several years to work  
14 through, and I don't think anyone should expect that we're going  
15 to come in a year from now and be using the data from this  
16 program to track landings. It's going to take quite a bit  
17 longer than that.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Anson.

20  
21 **MR. ANSON:** This might be a question for Dr. Stephen, or even  
22 Dave, but has there been any discussions on utilizing the states  
23 to help with the validation portion of the program or any  
24 portion of the program utilizing the state staff?

25  
26 **MR. MALINOWSKI:** You mean in terms of being out in the field and  
27 utilizing the agents and such? Yes, we have to develop that,  
28 and we're going to be reaching out to them in these training  
29 sessions and having sort of a state session, or a regulator  
30 session more, and a public training session, to say, okay, port  
31 agents, law enforcement agents, if you want to learn about the  
32 program and begin using your ability to meet the boats, to help  
33 us validate, and we can talk about it then, but that's a plan we  
34 need to really walk through yet.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Ms. Guyas.

37  
38 **MS. GUYAS:** I had a question about the cost. I think, when we  
39 were talking about this just for the Gulf, that alone was \$5  
40 million, at least when we were doing the amendment and the flow  
41 chart. The South Atlantic's program is a little bit different,  
42 and so I'm just kind of wondering if it's \$5 million now for  
43 both Gulf and South Atlantic.

44  
45 **DR. CRABTREE:** No, the price tag of approximately between \$6 and  
46 \$7 million is for both programs. The cost of fully implementing  
47 the South Atlantic is actually higher than it is in the Gulf,  
48 for a variety of reasons. They have more vessels in the South

1 Atlantic, and the validation is more of a challenge, because of  
2 the nature of the way they set the program up, but that is a  
3 cost for both programs.

4  
5 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. I just was trying to understand if something  
6 got cut, and, if that's still the case, then okay.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Donaldson.

9  
10 **MR. DONALDSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To Kevin's point about  
11 utilizing the states, potentially utilizing the states, for  
12 validation and compliance reporting, I would suggest that you  
13 work through the commission to help coordinate that activity.  
14 We're willing to help. We do that with a variety of different  
15 programs, and we're willing to do that, and so just a point of  
16 clarification.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Seeing no other questions, thank  
19 you, Rich. Thank you, Dr. Stephen, and that will bring us to  
20 our next item in the agenda, which is Other Business. Is there  
21 any other business to bring before this committee? Seeing none,  
22 thank you.

23  
24 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 24, 2018.)

25  
26 - - -