

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

4
5 Naples Grand Beach Resort Naples, Florida

6
7 JUNE 7, 2017

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

10 Greg Stunz.....Texas
11 Kevin Anson (designee for Chris Blankenship).....Alabama
12 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
13 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
14 John Greene.....Alabama
15 Paul Mickle (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
16 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
17 John Sanchez.....Florida
18 David Walker.....Alabama

19
20 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

21 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
22 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
23 Doug Boyd.....Texas
24 Glenn Constant.....USFWS
25 Pamela Dana.....Florida
26 LCDR Leo Danaher.....USCG
27 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
28 Tom Frazer.....Florida
29 Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
30 Campo Matens.....Louisiana
31 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana

32
33 **STAFF**

34 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
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36 Matt Freeman.....Economist
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47
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21 Joe Shepard.....LA
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25

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1 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Naples Grand Beach Resort,
3 Naples, Florida, Wednesday morning, June 7, 2017, and was called
4 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 go ahead and call to order the Data
11 Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
12 Council. Our first order of business is to look at our
13 committee members present, and it seems that we have everyone
14 here. Those committee members are me as Chair, Captain Greene,
15 Mr. Banks, Mr. Anson, Dr. Crabtree, Dr. Dana, Mr. Donaldson, Dr.
16 Mickle, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Sanchez, and Mr. Walker.

17
18 Our first order of business is Adoption of the Agenda, if the
19 committee would look at the agenda and see if there is anything
20 to modify. Seeing none, is there a motion to approve the
21 agenda?

22
23 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** Motion.

24
25 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Second.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** If there is no discussion, any opposition to
28 adoption of the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.
29 Next, the same thing with the minutes. Has everyone had a
30 chance to look at the minutes and is there any suggestions on
31 the minutes? If we could get a motion to approve the minutes,
32 please.

33
34 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** So moved.

35
36 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** Second.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** It's been moved and seconded. Any objections
39 to approval of the minutes? So moved. Our next order of
40 business is to talk through the Action Guide and Next Steps.
41 Dr. Froeschke is going to do that for us.

42
43 As he's getting ready for that, essentially what we've got to
44 talk about today are some reports from each state regarding
45 their recreational landings and procedures to do that as well as
46 some discussion on some letters and things related to MRIP and
47 their recreational estimates. That is further down in the
48 agenda, and, so, John, do you want to talk us through that in a

1 little more detail, please?

2
3 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** On Tab F-3, the action guide, really two
4 items on here that we have for you today, and the first is a
5 series of short presentations from each of the Gulf states that
6 are providing an update to the committee on some of their
7 ongoing efforts to improve data collection in their states,
8 primarily focusing on the recreational, and perhaps red-snapper-
9 specific programs, and so this is just an informational thing,
10 following up on a motion made at the January meeting.

11
12 Secondly, MRIP has developed a draft strategic plan, and this is
13 Item V. It's in the briefing book, if you've had a chance to
14 look at this, and they've requested comments from the council,
15 and they are due by June 30. We have drafted a letter with some
16 draft comments, to kind of start the discussion, and so we have
17 that to review, and I can kind of walk you through the
18 highlights of that, and I would be happy to take any feedback
19 and address any comments and then get this submitted to the
20 council, or on behalf of the council, by June 30. That's what
21 we have.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Froeschke. Is there is no
24 questions, we will go ahead and proceed into the presentations,
25 and up first is the presentation from Florida from Dr. Barbieri.
26 This is Tab F, Number 4(a). Luiz, whenever you're ready, go
27 ahead.

28
29 **PRESENTATIONS ON PROCEDURES TO ESTIMATE RECREATIONAL LANDINGS**
30 **FLORIDA**

31
32 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee
33 members and council members. Good morning. I am going to walk
34 you through very briefly, at a high level, a presentation to
35 describe our survey, the recreational fishing survey, that we've
36 been working on for several years now on the Gulf side for
37 estimation of reef fish catch and effort.

38
39 As a quick matter of background, several years later, and I
40 think it was sometime in 2013, the Gulf states all came together
41 to discuss how to develop methodologies, sampling methodologies,
42 primarily focused on the recreational fishing sector, to do
43 closer quota monitoring.

44
45 Remember, this is the time when we were considering the regional
46 management options, and so states were interested in developing
47 methodologies to do better quota monitoring for the regional
48 management of red snapper, while, at the same time, trying to

1 address some of the perceived limitations from MRIP in
2 addressing that offshore reef fish oriented component of the
3 fishery.

4
5 The Gulf States Commission was actually very kind in sponsoring
6 a number of meetings organized between representatives from the
7 Gulf states, each one of the Gulf states, MRIP, and some other
8 interested parties to develop a number of methodologies. The
9 idea was to test some of those and then eventually discuss the
10 possibility, after several years of piloting those, of
11 converging towards something that would be better to be
12 applicable over the fishery, regional fishery, as a whole.

13
14 In Florida, we developed something called the Florida Gulf Reef
15 Fish Survey, which is a registry that was developed, and it's
16 free of charge, but that identifies the universe of Florida
17 anglers and visitors fishing from Florida, from a boat, that go
18 offshore and target red snapper. This creates what
19 statistically we call a stratum. It's a dedicated little part
20 of the sampling universe that allows us to focus on that sector
21 more completely.

22
23 As I mentioned in the introduction, the idea was that the
24 general, the broad, MRIP survey wasn't really addressing that
25 offshore reef fish component very well. You may not realize
26 this, but it so happens that, when you look at the total
27 universe of recreational fishing trips in the Gulf of Mexico,
28 only about 5 percent of the total number of recreational
29 saltwater fishing trips are focused on that offshore reef fish
30 component.

31
32 Those 5 percent of trips become really difficult to track,
33 because they get sort of swamped by the 95 percent of trips that
34 are focused on the inshore component. People go fishing for
35 spotted seatrout or red drum or all the other inshore species.

36
37 Creating a stratum, creating a sector, of your sampling universe
38 that's focused on that 5 percent of trips really increases your
39 efficiency in sampling that sector by orders of magnitude, and
40 so there is different ways to address this, and we discussed
41 that it's not always really cost-effective to increase the
42 overall number of samples that are collected by MRIP itself,
43 because, still, unless we are focused on those 5 percent of the
44 samples, we're still not creating the efficiency needed to come
45 up with estimates that are more precise for that 5 percent
46 component of offshore reef fish trips.

47
48 Supplemental surveys, we felt, sometimes work better, and the

1 idea here then was to develop something that would be put in
2 place to be added to the MRIP, and so the MRIP survey would
3 continue running in the background, focused on both the inshore
4 and the offshore component, but now we would have an added
5 survey, a module, so to speak, that would be added on top of the
6 regular MRIP and that would be focused specifically on the
7 offshore component.

8
9 As we're going to be hearing later today, it's pretty much the
10 same strategy that the State of Louisiana adopted, and we tried
11 to work together with them in exchanging information and trying
12 to coordinate, so that we could have this approach, the approach
13 of creating this stratified focus on the offshore component in
14 the northern Gulf and the eastern Gulf, so we could compare
15 results later on.

16
17 Some examples in Florida where supplemental surveys actually
18 have been very, very helpful in collecting information that, in
19 general, the general survey cannot really do a good job of
20 collecting, because it's general. It's not meant to be focused
21 on those smaller portions of the total sampling universe.

22
23 This Gulf reef fish survey is really a registry, as I mentioned
24 before, a designation that is added to a saltwater fishing
25 license, free of charge, and it was implemented in 2015. We
26 started, I believe, in 2014, in a pilot way, and then eventually
27 full implementation came in 2015.

28
29 It's free of charge, which creates a little bit of a problem, in
30 terms of what is called oversubscription, where people end up
31 getting this registry, because it's free of charge, but they are
32 not necessarily really part of that universe of anglers that we
33 are trying to target that are really purchasing something or
34 registering for something because they will be conducting reef
35 fish fishing out there.

36
37 Anyway, we are trying to deal with this, and I'm going to go
38 into more detail on this a little later. It's free for seniors.
39 They are exempted from the saltwater fishing license, but it's
40 still required for them to have this registry, and so this
41 creates for us an address book, of sorts, and I was going to say
42 phone book, but, since our effort survey is really a mail
43 survey, it's really an address book for us to target those folks
44 more directly in conducting our effort survey.

45
46 In 2014, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission actually
47 approved the implementation of this endorsement, so to speak, to
48 the saltwater fishing license and made it mandatory, and it

1 covers the species that are there on the board. It's not just a
2 red snapper focus, but it's trying to address a number of those
3 other species for which we really have interest in getting
4 better samples for that offshore reef fish component. As I
5 mentioned before, it provides that directory of private boat
6 anglers that fish for reef fishes.

7
8 I covered a lot of this already in my introduction. The idea is
9 to handle this as an integrated approach. One thing is to use
10 this as a boost to the regular MRIP survey to develop for the
11 angler access point intercept survey, and that's the dockside
12 survey, where anglers are interviewed at the dock for catch per
13 unit effort measures.

14
15 It was to serve as a boost for that, but now, because we have
16 that directory, we can actually develop more efficient sampling
17 of that component, drawing on that directory, because we know
18 those folks are dedicated to be fishing offshore or fishing for
19 those reef fish species.

20
21 It allows us to distribute our sampling over smaller regions,
22 and so we now have regionalized estimates for the Gulf coast of
23 Florida that give us more resolution in obtaining estimates of
24 catch and effort. It designates this offshore site group,
25 where, if we go back and we look at the history of trips, we can
26 develop a list of the sites, and, along the Gulf coast of
27 Florida, there is 186 of those sites that have a higher
28 probability, higher likelihood, of generating offshore trips.
29 Those are our target sites to boost the APAIS survey when we
30 want to focus on this offshore reef fish component.

31
32 Then this allows us to have a more dedicated and more
33 specialized focus on that red snapper season in federal waters,
34 usually in the month of June.

35
36 On top of that, our private boat intercept survey generates some
37 additional samples, and so we use this as an integrated approach
38 to help guide the regular APAIS survey, to increase the
39 efficiency on sampling of those reef fish species, but also we
40 supplement those with additional samples that are focused
41 specifically on this sampling universe, and it gives us direct
42 estimates of private boat angler trips for those reef fishes,
43 and those are obtained on a monthly basis.

44
45 Then the other component, the one component that we just talked
46 about, was the dockside intercept component that estimates catch
47 per unit effort. If you remember how this recreational fishing
48 survey works, you really use two components to come up with your

1 total estimate of the recreational fishing effort and catch.
2
3 You actually come up with an estimate, or you have a mini-survey
4 that's focused on the dockside interviews. It's the APAIS, and
5 that comes up with the catch per unit effort, and then we have
6 an effort survey that goes out, and we multiple the two to get
7 the total estimate of the recreational fishing catch and effort.
8
9 Our survey uses this same methodology, and so we boost the MRIP
10 by focusing more on those offshore trips. We supplement with
11 our own sampling at the dockside level to focus on those reef
12 fish trips, but we also conduct our own monthly effort survey.
13 It's a mail survey distributed to about 6,500 people monthly by
14 mail.
15
16 We have a registry that fluctuates between 350,000 and about
17 450,000 people. Those are the people who registered, and so
18 created that directory for us. We go into that directory, and
19 we draw the samples monthly, those 6,700 monthly, that get
20 mailed out, and we get the surveys back that way.
21
22 The monthly sample is stratified by several criteria, and I
23 don't need to read that to you from the screen, but all of those
24 stratifications that are conducted there allow us to get more
25 precise estimates after we account for those factors that are
26 listed there.
27
28 An example here of the type of data that is collected by this
29 monthly effort survey for each trip, the responders report their
30 region fished, area fished, whether they were in state or
31 federal waters, and the types of species caught or targeted.
32
33 We can see the little inset there is the check box that folks go
34 in and help us identify which trips they were actually -- Which
35 species they were going for on their trips, and we use this to
36 generate much more precise effort estimates than when we use the
37 entire sample from MRIP that will be inclusive of all the
38 inshore and offshore trips.
39
40 An example of our preliminary results, in terms of estimated
41 number of trips in state and federal waters, those estimates are
42 developed monthly, and you can see there, on the Y-axis, it says
43 "unadjusted angler trips", and there are a few issues that we're
44 still struggling to deal with that have to do with the
45 statistical nature of dealing with data like this.
46
47 One is potential non-response bias, anglers that do not respond
48 to the survey. We have, right now, our May survey, about a 20

1 percent response rate, which we consider to be fairly good, but
2 it still needs to be corrected for.

3

4 Two is that issue of the oversubscription. Since the idea is to
5 develop a directory of reef fish anglers that is as tight as
6 possible, to give us those address books, whenever we have
7 people register that are not really reef fish fishermen, that
8 creates a problem that needs to be adjusted for, and so we're
9 still working with the MRIP program. They have been working
10 with us since the inception of this, in helping us adjust some
11 of our estimation techniques.

12

13 They have that group of statisticians, survey statisticians,
14 professional survey statisticians, that have been working with
15 them, under retainer, and we have been working with them to
16 develop better estimates and adjust our overall estimate of
17 trips.

18

19 Supplemental intercepts that I mentioned before that we do at
20 the dockside, we try to then collect a number of additional data
21 that, overall, during the regular MRIP survey, we may not be
22 able, may not have the time, the ability, to collect, and so,
23 because we have identified the sites that have a higher
24 likelihood of originating offshore trips, we can then develop a
25 dockside sampling program that is focused on those sites and can
26 give us more information on those reef fish species that come
27 back to those sites, and so it's targeted of the reef fish
28 trips.

29

30 As I said about that hybrid approach, we combine the APAIS with
31 our estimates to get better overall metrics of catch per unit
32 effort at the site, and we have much better biological
33 information on the lengths, weights, and ages of the fish
34 measured.

35

36 One of the things that we try to do is use the dockside
37 intercept data, those information that we collect there at the
38 site, to help us create an adjustment factor for our mail
39 survey, since we have oversubscription there, and so we don't
40 know really what the percentage of non-respondents there may be
41 true non-respondents or may be people who are just not really
42 focused on the reef fisheries, and so we create an adjustment
43 factor based on the observations that we have at the dock.

44

45 Challenges that we face are, as I mentioned, oversubscription,
46 implications of potential non-response bias, and those are just
47 technical statistical issues that we are still dealing with,
48 enforcement and off-frame correction. We work closely with our

1 law enforcement folks to help us identify what the populations
2 are there of either folks who have not registered and are out
3 there fishing for reef fish versus folks that have the license,
4 but are not really reef fish fishermen.
5

6 We are struggling with long-term funding. Our funding for this
7 program actually sunsets in June of 2020, and we are working
8 with a number of other groups, including the Gulf States
9 Commission, in trying to identify how to continue funding for
10 this program, and we have started a process of MRIP
11 certification for this.
12

13 We have had already a couple of meetings, where we submit to
14 them our materials, and the MRIP staff and statisticians
15 actually review all of that and provide us feedback on potential
16 improvements to the survey, and hopefully we're going to get
17 this survey certified sometime next year. Mr. Chairman, that
18 completes my presentation, if there are any questions.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Barbieri. Are there any
21 questions? Doug.
22

23 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** Thank you, Luiz. Just a quick question on the
24 mail survey. Is a 20 percent response considered to be good or
25 bad or medium?
26

27 **DR. BARBIERI:** No, it's considered to be good. In the world of
28 mail surveys, 20 percent response is considered to be good.
29 That doesn't mean that there aren't still some potential biases
30 there that need to be corrected for. We don't know if those
31 exist at this point, and so this is why we want to look at the
32 80 percent that are not responding and see, are there any trends
33 there? Is there, for example, a higher likelihood of seniors
34 not responding or of people who fish less not responding, and so
35 those that would create biases that we would have to adjust and
36 correct for.
37

38 If it's just random error, what we call random error, that
39 basically that 80 percent is really like any of the other people
40 on the 20 percent, then that would just create random
41 variability, and that is fine. That's a precision thing that
42 we're going to have to deal with, but our concern is whether
43 there is a bias in those non-respondents, and that's what we are
44 looking at now.
45

46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I have Mr. Walker and then Dr. Mickle
47 next.
48

1 **MR. WALKER:** I have one question for you, and then a comment,
2 but I will give you the question first. If the regulatory size
3 limit of red snapper was reduced from sixteen inches to thirteen
4 inches, and that lowered the average weight of the two-fish bag
5 limit, and also lowered the discards, could that manifest in
6 more recreational access?

7
8 **DR. BARBIERI:** I'm sorry, but what was the last part of your
9 question?

10
11 **MR. WALKER:** Could that amount to more recreational access by
12 lowering the size limit from sixteen inches to thirteen inches,
13 the regulatory size limit of red snapper? Right now, I think
14 the two-fish bag limit, two seven-and-a-half-pound fish, and so
15 you're looking at maybe fifteen or sixteen pounds for a two-fish
16 bag limit, but, if it was lowered and if some of the folks were
17 able to keep some of the fish that weighed just a pound-and-a-
18 half or a pound, and so you've got a pound-fish and then you've
19 got one eight-pound fish, then you have nine pounds. I think
20 this was kind of found out in the headboat pilot program.

21
22 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right. I understand now. This is not something
23 that we have looked at yet. I mean, I think we will have to
24 accumulate more data. This was implemented in 2015, and so
25 we've had two full years of data now, and we need a little more
26 time to look into those trends and try playing around with those
27 types of questions that you're talking about, but, as of now,
28 this survey is not focused on addressing those types of things.
29 We will have to do some additional analysis that looks at those
30 differences in size limits and considers how the outcomes of the
31 surveys would differ if you had those different size limits.

32
33 **MR. WALKER:** Then just one comment. I have heard from some
34 folks in the Destin charter fleet, and what they're seeing with
35 some of the surveys is they're always done at their docks, and
36 they didn't know if it was because it was convenient or
37 whatever, but some other docks have smaller-sized fish, and they
38 would like to see that incorporated into some of the surveys.

39
40 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right, and all of those adjustments can be done.
41 Now, think about the fact, and I don't mean to get too much into
42 the weeds, but the survey is actually -- Implementation of the
43 survey, both dockside and the mail survey, is done in what's
44 called a probability proportional sampling type of approach.

45
46 That means that we know, because we have a whole universe, we
47 have an identified universe of anglers, and we have all of this
48 historic data about the visitation to those sites, and we can

1 develop actually probabilities. Those are weights that are used
2 to expand whatever estimates we get at different sites into the
3 universe as a whole.

4
5 This is an efficiency that you have to put in there, because we
6 don't have money. It would be cost-prohibitive to visit all the
7 sites, the ones that are hot and the ones that are cold, and so,
8 basically, if you think about time and space, and you can
9 develop what is called probability densities, if you can develop
10 likelihoods of sites in time and space that have a higher
11 likelihood of generating reef fish samples, and we know those
12 are hot, if we know those probabilities, we can adjust weights.

13
14 If we go to site that is hot, that has a very high visitation
15 rate, we adjust that down by applying the weights when we expand
16 to the whole universe, but that allows us to have less samplers,
17 less trips, and less cost when we have a universe that is huge.
18 It would be cost-prohibitive to do otherwise.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We will probably need to move on here pretty
21 quick, but I know Dr. Mickle had his hand up. We've got quite a
22 few presentations to get through, and I know, Luiz, we've got a
23 lot of questions, and maybe we can ask you after, but we've got
24 a busy committee, but it's very informative information, but,
25 Dr. Mickle, go ahead.

26
27 **DR. MICKLE:** I will be short. It's good to see you, Dr.
28 Barbieri. I miss working with you.

29
30 **DR. BARBIERI:** Good to see you, Paul.

31
32 **DR. MICKLE:** Real quick, the estimators that you mentioned that
33 you're still kind of messing with working on, there is lots of
34 different types of estimators, and Dr. Barbieri is bringing up
35 the weighting factor that works its way into these estimators
36 and how to take these sub-samples and then push it through an
37 estimator, the equation itself, and you get your landings.

38
39 Because there is sort of so many different types of estimators,
40 and there needs to be different types of estimators, and so we
41 make them unique for each universe and each area that the survey
42 is being done, each state is what I'm getting at, but, at some
43 point, we need to have a conversation, and I'm not even sure who
44 has the conversation, but, because we're having different
45 estimators, each different estimator can estimate different
46 landings, and so, when we start getting down that road of larger
47 areas, Gulf-wide conversations with five different estimators,
48 or maybe more, that's a problem, and Mississippi is part of that

1 problem. Our estimator is very unique, and no one is going to
2 have an estimator like ours, most likely.

3

4 **DR. BARBIERI:** Mr. Chairman, just real briefly.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sure. Go ahead.

7

8 **DR. BARBIERI:** Paul, I think you hit the nail right on the head
9 there, and this is something that I think is a conversation that
10 we need to have, and it's something that, in terms of this
11 meeting, either we have it later this year or earlier in 2018,
12 where we bring the states all back together.

13

14 You remember, back in 2013, when we started all of this, we
15 started looking at all of these methodologies, and the idea was
16 to pilot test all these methods, but eventually get together
17 again and converge towards something that could give us this
18 broad -- It's exactly what you're saying, but the broad
19 perspective of the Gulf that we're going to need to have for
20 assessment and management. Stay tuned. We're going to go back
21 and try and get the states to reengage again for that purpose.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. That's a very good point, Dr.
24 Barbieri. Madam Chair, did you have a question?

25

26 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I just wanted to chime in that if there's
27 anything that the council can do to facilitate those discussions
28 or put some pressure on the right people to be at that meeting
29 for you, whatever we can do, please let us know. We would love
30 to help.

31

32 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you for that.

33

34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, and, obviously, Luiz, there are a lot more
35 questions here than we have time for, and so hopefully we can
36 spur on those discussions independently.

37

38 **DR. BARBIERI:** Yes, thank you.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Up next, we have Mr. Anson and Alabama. Before
41 you start, Kevin, I have a point maybe from Madam Chair, if you
42 would provide us with a little bit of clarification. You know
43 we started about forty-five minutes late, and I'm looking at the
44 agenda here with a lot more presentations, and so could you
45 please provide us some guidance on how you would like to proceed
46 with that?

47

48 **MS. BOSARGE:** I want you to keep going. We're going to

1 definitely work through whatever break we had scheduled, and,
2 when I saw Luiz come to the podium for the Florida presentation,
3 I figured we would be at the McDonalds drive-thru for lunch
4 anyway. We love you, Luiz. You had good information.

5
6 We will probably be cutting our lunch break short at some point,
7 but that's fine. You keep going. This is very important. I
8 mean, it's something that affects a lot of our discussions
9 around this table, and so I want to give it ample time.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. I think the committee feels the
12 same, that there's some important discussions, but I will ask
13 the speakers too to move as rapidly as possible, but hit the
14 necessary points, and so go ahead, Kevin.

15
16 **ALABAMA**

17
18 **MR. ANSON:** I will attempt to do that. Alabama's program that
19 was developed is not as sophisticated as Florida's, and so
20 hopefully I won't need as much time, but I just want to give a
21 brief background as to how we came to be to implement the
22 program that we selected to monitor red snapper landings in
23 Alabama.

24
25 As you recall, from 2009 to 2013, the federal private
26 recreational red snapper landings, at least for Alabama,
27 particularly, estimated through the MRIP program, increased
28 dramatically, yet the number of days decreased dramatically, due
29 to a variety of factors, but I provided a little table in here
30 to kind of show that graphically for Alabama, the landings
31 estimates as well as the days of the season and the changes from
32 year to year during that time season.

33
34 You can see our landings increased in Alabama 290 percent,
35 almost, in that time period, in 2013 compared to 2009, and our
36 access, our reduction in season length, reduced by 30 percent,
37 and, as you all know, that federal season length is determined
38 by the previous year, prior year, landings. In 2014, we were
39 projected to be less than twenty days.

40
41 Luiz mentioned that we had the meeting in New Orleans, and so
42 the states, certainly, in regards to regional management and
43 through the council process, were talking about ways that states
44 could maybe do an independent data collection program, but
45 trying to work as much as possible within the federal process,
46 to make sure that potentially those individual programs could be
47 incorporated into federal estimates.

1 In Alabama, in addition to the frustration that our local
2 anglers had with the process, that led us to development of a
3 program we call Snapper Check.

4
5 That was begun for the 2014 fishing year, and this was a
6 mandatory reporting system for a captain or an owner of a vessel
7 that's landing red snapper that were recreationally caught into
8 Alabama, and so regardless of whether it was a federal or state
9 or other state-water catch, a vessel with red snapper, an
10 operator, had to report those landings.

11
12 We developed a smartphone application, and also through online,
13 through our website, and paper reports. At the time, there was
14 a toll-free telephone number. We just asked for the basic
15 information that we needed to gather timely information about
16 red snapper harvest.

17
18 Our intent with the Snapper Check program was to just get timely
19 landings estimates from our anglers, and so the information that
20 we included is listed there. It's the date and the time of the
21 report, and those are obviously automatically collected if you
22 use the electronic means of reporting.

23
24 Then we have the number of anglers, the vessel registration
25 number, number of red snapper landed, number of dead discards,
26 which isn't used necessarily for monitoring in-season harvest,
27 but discards are important for management and in the assessment
28 process, and so we wanted to gather that information, and we can
29 potentially use that as a check against the federal survey, the
30 APAIS survey. That's when probably the highest discards are
31 occurring, is the directed fishery, red snapper fishery.

32
33 Also, it was put in there as a reminder to fishermen to not try
34 to fish in a way that creates more dead discards, but we also
35 asked access type, whether it was a private or public landing
36 site, the county of landing, and then the trip length for
37 charter vessels, one or two days, and that was just in there to
38 help us confirm that, if a charter boat trip had forty fish and
39 they only had ten anglers onboard, then we can confirm that
40 forty fish was an accurate number, because charter trips are
41 allowed two-day trip limits.

42
43 Our survey is based on a capture-recapture survey methodology,
44 and, as Paul had mentioned, we have some estimators. We have
45 estimators to adjust for non-reporting, and so our capture point
46 is at dockside surveys, and so we have our samplers go out and
47 interview anglers, both at marinas, public marinas, and public
48 access points, boat launches and such, and we'll ask very

1 similar questions to what is required on the mandatory report
2 that snapper anglers are supposed to provide to us.

3
4 Then we also collect the length and weight information from the
5 fish, so that we can get an average weight of the fish, and the
6 dockside information is then matched, or attempted to be
7 matched, to any of the reports that are submitted, and we match
8 based on vessel registration number, the date and time, within a
9 time window, and we also match by the number of anglers, the
10 number of fish harvested, and released dead.

11
12 If we get 100 percent match among those variables, that counts
13 as a valid record, if you will, and those that are unmatched,
14 those go into a different bin, and, basically, you come up with
15 a ratio of the number of trips that you observed out in the
16 field versus those that are reported, and that is how we develop
17 a ratio estimator to adjust for non-reporting.

18
19 We have had non-reporting rates among private recreational
20 anglers that have been around 20 to 25 percent from 2014 through
21 this past year. In the charter boat mode, it's been anywhere
22 from -- For the federally-permitted vessels, it's around 60 to
23 65 percent, the reporting rate, based on the matching that we
24 do, and so an example there is, if 10,000 fish were reported by
25 anglers -- We can apply this ratio to number of trips, number of
26 fish harvested, a variety of different metrics that we want to.
27 In this particular example, it's for number of fish, and it just
28 provides you the math, the simple math, of how we at least come
29 up with the estimate.

30
31 We have submitted documentation to the MRIP staff to have our
32 Snapper Check program certified. We had a formal review with
33 their consultants, their statisticians, in December of 2015, and
34 we took their recommendations and attempted to apply them in
35 2016. We had a miscommunication into the methodology of how we
36 assigned sample weights, as Dr. Barbieri was describing, and so
37 we're incorporating those into our 2017 estimates.

38
39 The final certification review is anticipated to occur later
40 this summer or early fall, and changes for this season that we
41 had made -- Again, I mentioned the sample weight weighting
42 procedures were updated, as recommended by the MRIP consultants,
43 and we're using the draw program our sites, for our dockside
44 sampling sites, based on a draw program that's very similar to
45 the MRIP APAIS survey draw, and that was done for a couple of
46 reasons, but one, primarily, was to potentially be more easily
47 converted or merged with the federal data, because we're trying
48 to look at ways to have the two surveys communicate or talk to

1 each other and make one -- Adjust it for each other,
2 potentially.

3
4 Another change that we're implementing this year is that we are
5 requiring headboats that are participating in the Beaufort Lab,
6 the Southeast Headboat Survey, to report their trips. In prior
7 years, we had not made that a requirement, because they were
8 reporting to the survey, and they were reporting through
9 electronic means, but that was one of the recommendations from
10 the MRIP consultants so that we could have a complete picture of
11 all the recreational landings within the state.

12
13 I mentioned earlier that the toll-free number was removed for
14 this year. We had about 8 percent of the reports last year that
15 were submitted were submitted by phone number, and so there were
16 some issues, some technical issues, with the software that we
17 had with the telephone system and, in addition to the low
18 reporting number, we decided to forego the use of the toll-free
19 telephone number for reporting.

20
21 I have provided -- There is a caveat with this, as noted down at
22 the bottom of the graph, but I did provide some estimates and
23 comparisons of Snapper Check landings to MRIP landings. Again,
24 these landings for Snapper Check are without the sample
25 weighting procedures, and so there will be an adjustment of some
26 level going forward, for 2017 landings, but these are landings,
27 in this slide, that represent estimates from charter vessels,
28 charter vessels from Snapper Check and MRIP.

29
30 You can see here that, in 2014 -- Percentage-wise, there
31 probably was a much larger difference in the difference in
32 landings in 2014. As you will recall, in 2014, both the federal
33 and private boats were at a nine-day season.

34
35 Then, in 2015 and 2016, that's when sector separation had
36 occurred, and so they went to longer seasons, and so there is
37 some discussion that I've had with some of the MRIP staff
38 relative to a derby-style fishery and the impacts that has on
39 APAIS, their survey, to generate the estimates, and that there
40 may be some differences or some changes in estimates in
41 landings, due to a shorter season, in APAIS.

42
43 These are for state season landings and charter boats. The
44 previous slide was federal season, but these are state season
45 landings. We had an increasing season length, at least from
46 2015 compared to 2014, and so that could explain the dramatic
47 increase, or the larger increase, in that year, 2015 to 2014,
48 but they are much larger than MRIP, and this is one of the

1 things with MRIP, is that these more rare-event-type interviews
2 or trips don't get picked up in the survey as often, and so they
3 can be either very high, maybe, or very low, depending upon how
4 they're sampled, but it is interesting to note, at least in both
5 surveys, that there is an increasing trend, and they're all on
6 about the same level within the survey.

7
8 These are the landings for the federal season for private
9 vessels. Again, Snapper Check is in blue, and MRIP is in
10 orange, and you can see there is quite a difference in the
11 landings here. The MRIP federal survey is showing that
12 increasing trend through time, and the Snapper Check landings
13 have been more or less the same. I think there was a weather
14 issue in 2014, for the nine-day season, and that might explain
15 its low landings relative to the other two years.

16
17 Here is the same for the state landings, the state season
18 landings for private recreational. The difference in 2016 -- As
19 you will recall, that was the first year that Congress had
20 approved the nine-mile jurisdiction for Alabama, including
21 Louisiana and Mississippi, and people took advantage of that,
22 and they made a lot of trips there and caused a dramatic
23 increase in the landings.

24
25 I have provided here the estimate for private recreational trips
26 from Snapper Check, and, Leann, you have talked about it here at
27 this meeting this week, and we've had sidebar conversations
28 about it, but this idea of compression of effort, and so there
29 might be something going on to that effect here, is that anglers
30 would much rather go on the day that they would like to go, and,
31 in 2016, again, we had nine miles.

32
33 There is a lot more habitat for red snapper in those nine miles
34 compared to three miles, which was the jurisdiction recognized
35 by the federal government in 2015 and 2014, and so, in both of
36 those years, the state trips made up a small component of the
37 overall trips that were made, but, in 2016, as they had more
38 opportunity I guess, with more habitat and more chances for
39 success in harvesting red snapper, they may have deferred their
40 federal season trips and just went fishing in state waters
41 during that time, because it compared favorably.

42
43 The number of trips were about the same, and we had about the
44 same season length, to the federal season length and state
45 season length, in both 2015 and 2016. Again, the difference was
46 the change in jurisdiction from three to nine miles. That ends
47 my presentation.

48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY:** Wait a minute. You have to
2 explain this slide also.

3
4 **MR. ANSON:** I thought it would promote questions. This
5 gentleman, I guess, I presume, he was going cobia fishing, and
6 that was his modification to his vessel to get him higher up to
7 better be able to see cobia.

8
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Now I've seen an Alabama flying
10 bridge.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** On that note, Mr. Anson, thank you for the
13 presentation. Are there questions? Go ahead.

14
15 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Kevin, I am not on your committee, but, a couple
16 of slides back, you've got this Alabama federal season for red
17 snapper landings, and I don't remember the numbers off the top
18 of my head, but I did get on the back of a napkin one day, and I
19 tried to figure out, if there was about six people on the boat
20 and they caught their limit, and you know MRIP is showing that
21 you all caught two-million pounds during that federal season.

22
23 I was trying to figure out how many boats a day would have to
24 go, and, having been a marine law enforcement officer with the
25 opening of shrimp season, where a thousand or so boats a day was
26 out in the Mississippi Sound, that's a lot of boats. Anyway,
27 when I came up with the number of how many boats a day would
28 have to go to get to this number, it's hard for me to swallow
29 that MRIP number there, and so do you have any comments about
30 that or anything to add?

31
32 **MR. ANSON:** Dale, I was curious to know what that translated to
33 as well, as far as number of vessel trips, and so I took the
34 number, the estimated number, of red snapper that were
35 harvested, that were federally harvested, and so it's not a very
36 accurate number when you're trying to translate that to days,
37 because the APAIS survey asks primarily where you went fishing,
38 and so somebody may have gone and spent most of their fishing
39 effort out in federal waters, not catching any red snapper, but
40 then they may have come back in and caught their red snapper,
41 just for a little bit of time, and then that showed up in the
42 landings on the survey, but I took that number, regardless, and
43 I divided it by the catch rate during the federal season from
44 Snapper Check and the average number of anglers that submitted
45 reports through Snapper Check, and it came out to about 2,450
46 vessels per day during the federal season. If you divide that
47 by twelve hours and eleven days, you end up with a vessel
48 landing red snapper for twelve hours, 20.3 seconds during a

1 federal season, and so it seems a little high.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Donaldson.
4
5 **MR. DONALDSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Kevin, what is the
6 total number of participants, number of anglers, or the universe
7 that you guys are sampling from, about?
8
9 **MR. ANSON:** Well, we've got trips. We can't determine the
10 individual anglers, but, as I recall, it's around 50,000 to
11 60,000, including state trips of private recreational anglers.
12 I could get that here for you in a second.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Frazer.
15
16 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Along those lines,
17 Kevin, on the second slide you had, you don't have any effort
18 data, and I was just curious if you know what that effort data
19 looks like from like -- You have 2009 to 2013, on the very
20 second slide of this presentation. My question is, later, at
21 the end, at the very end, you showed like 50,000 angler trips
22 recently, but, in that timeframe, from 2009 to 2013, how did
23 that effort shift? Do you have any idea?
24
25 **MR. ANSON:** I think it has increased, because the fish size
26 really hasn't increased much, but I think the effort has
27 increased as well, generally, from 2009. It may not have
28 increased from 2013, but, from 2009, it had increased.
29
30 **DR. FRAZER:** Right, and I guess what I'm trying to get at -- Is
31 it like from 10,000 angler trips to 50,000, or is it -- What is
32 the order of the shift?
33
34 **MR. ANSON:** I think the last number I saw for directed trips
35 estimated through MRIP was 115,000 angler trips in Alabama
36 during the federal season. There was a slide here, Dave, that
37 had the private recreational trips, and so it was 60,000 for
38 state and federal.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kevin, I am not seeing any more questions, but
41 I do have a question for you, and maybe you can further
42 elaborate on your response rate, and the reason I'm asking this
43 is some states, like yours, have mandatory reporting, and some
44 states don't. Of course, we're trying to deal with what that
45 means and always how -- Even though your mandatory may not
46 necessarily mean you get as much reporting as you would like,
47 and so I'm wondering if you've seen that increase or decrease,
48 or what's your take on that?

1
2 **MR. ANSON:** Unfortunately, it's been static, the reporting rate,
3 although it was mandatory, and it's been mandatory for the
4 duration. The first two or three years, our enforcement was
5 more in the educational mode than it was in the ticket-writing
6 mode, but, this year, we are going to be taking a little bit
7 more aggressive approach on enforcing.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That will be interesting to see how that pans
10 out, because that's a sticky point among different programs and
11 groups, and so please keep us posted on that. If there's no
12 other questions for Mr. Anson, we will move on to Dr. Mickle.
13 Are you giving the presentation for Mississippi?

14
15 **MISSISSIPPI**

16
17 **DR. MICKLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I will be giving the
18 presentation. I see we have eleven minutes for three states to
19 provide their presentations, and so I will be an auctioneer at
20 this point.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I am leaving that to the Chairwoman to --

23
24 **DR. MICKLE:** All right. I just want to share a little bit about
25 Mississippi's reporting program. I will be as efficient and
26 brief as I can. I just want to lead in that this was a program
27 that the Bureau Director, Matt Hill, kind of created right when
28 I started with DMR.

29
30 He just came up with this idea of, hey, make everybody get a
31 trip number before they go, and I said, wow, that's going to be
32 really hard, and we're going to get a lot of pushback from it,
33 and I'm about to get into all the nuts-and-bolts of it, but it's
34 worked out well, and I am learning that, in management, the hard
35 way is usually the right way, and I just want to say how unique
36 Mississippi is and how we kind of pulled this off, as far as
37 this reporting system and how it's done.

38
39 Red snapper in Mississippi, it's an important species in our
40 coastal economy, as everyone knows in their own states.
41 Mississippi is a very unique fishery. I just want to emphasize
42 how small we are compared to everyone else. We have seventeen,
43 really, for-hire federal reef permittees that actually use their
44 permit on a full-time basis, and so it's very easy to get their
45 data. I know them by name, and I can call them at any time, to
46 just have a chat at any point. That is pretty rare that you can
47 contact your entire universe within an afternoon.

1 We have a small, fairly small, private recreational fleet. A
2 couple of years ago, we had 1,400 trips total in the season, and
3 so it's a small recreational fleet. We have these amazing
4 barrier islands that provide our estuary productivity levels as
5 well as enforcement chokepoints. I went snapper fishing quite a
6 bit last year and the year before, and I never got past them. I
7 got stopped every single time, which is a good thing, from a
8 management perspective.

9
10 Habitats are changing on multiple levels. We're implementing
11 reefs in our state waters, and a little bit further out as well.
12 Fishing efforts can change on an annual basis, with the policy
13 and the management behind the seasons, and we all know that they
14 swing around a lot, and so it's important to have a reporting
15 system that can account for that.

16
17 Red snapper management will continue to push the envelope.
18 Although I'm talking about red snapper today, we have built our
19 reporting system, electronically and software-wise, to handle
20 multiple species. We have built in those empty portals
21 alongside red snapper, and so, at any point, we can implement
22 other reef fish species or anything that we see that we need.
23 We do consider red snapper the ambassador for the other
24 federally-managed reef species, because we have put out our own
25 state dime on this and paid for this entire program on our own
26 state funds.

27
28 The program purpose is for CMR, and that's our policy
29 legislative branch in Mississippi. The CMR adopted a regulatory
30 modification in our Title 22, Part 9, which is statistical
31 reporting and confidentiality of statistical data for marine
32 fisheries. That requires red snapper landed to be reported.

33
34 What this legal language means is you have to have a trip
35 authorization number when on the water fishing for red snapper.
36 If you don't create a trip through our Tails and Scales system
37 and have that number on you, our marine patrol will cite you for
38 not being compliant, and this gives teeth to our program, of
39 course.

40
41 Within 2014, it was not mandatory. In 2015 and 2016 and 2017,
42 it's been mandatory, and our compliance is now over 90 percent
43 because of this, and this is for a variety of reasons. We have
44 a small universe. Word travels very fast, and our marine patrol
45 really stepped in very quickly, and I want to honor and really
46 just thank them for stepping up and laying down exactly -- If
47 you don't have the trip number, you get a violation, and so
48 obviously compliance shot up very fast, and we got a lot of

1 pushback in the beginning of this, but now the anglers are
2 really enjoying the program, and they really can make a trip
3 just in a few seconds once they get into the system and make
4 their accounts, and they can do it very, very easily, and so
5 kind of the pushback has faded away, and it's been hard.

6
7 The first year, especially, was very hard, because we have this
8 system where we have this website, and we have the apps on the
9 Android and iPhone, and then we have a 1-844-MIS-SNAP call-in
10 number, and so, twenty-four hours a day -- We're taking away
11 their excuses. If they don't have a computer or they don't have
12 a phone -- They have to have a phone, but, if they don't have a
13 smartphone, they can call in and literally talk to an operator
14 twenty-four hours a day and create a trip, because they have to
15 get that trip number.

16
17 We never wanted to implement a policy where you have to have a
18 trip number, and yet it's still hard to get that trip number.
19 We never wanted to have that happen, and so we created all these
20 portals and invested a lot of our capital into allowing the
21 avenues of getting that trip number to be very easy for our
22 public, and then, once that trip number is created, they go out
23 fishing and they come back, and they have their data, and this
24 flowchart here emphasizes what's going on.

25
26 The data is coming into this database, and we have administrator
27 access to the database, and our marine patrol has access to our
28 database at real time, because they need to know what trip
29 numbers are created at any given time on the water, and so, as
30 people are making trips throughout the morning and getting these
31 trip numbers, the marine patrol is being updated immediately
32 with those trip numbers of who is having them.

33
34 Once the data is in the database, then our validation gets in,
35 which I'm about to get into, and the results come and get spit
36 out through the estimator there, and so it's this flow-through
37 system of creating that trip number, having it on the water,
38 harvesting fish or not harvesting fish, and then reporting that
39 to close out the trip number.

40
41 If you do not close out your trip, the system will not grant you
42 another trip number, and so, again, it's leading them down the
43 path to report and making sure they get their data into the
44 database.

45
46 This is just a little recap within our state and the federal
47 season. I'm going to talk about 2016 data, just for time and
48 brevity. The federal season last year was June 1 through 10,

1 and the for-hire was forty-seven days, June 1 through July 17.
2 Our Mississippi state season ran from May 27, which is Memorial
3 Day, through Labor Day, which is 102 days.

4
5 The angler data that is collected, we would like to know the
6 landing site and time, because we need to build up our
7 validation site selector, and we need to know the hours fished,
8 the lines in the water, for effort estimates, and we need to
9 know the number of anglers, number of fish, structure type, and
10 we want to know if it's oil or gas platform or natural reef or
11 artificial reef, and then, in 2016, addition of the email
12 verification.

13
14 We wanted to make sure that our email database was highly
15 accurate, and so, if you make an account through our Tails and
16 Scales system, you have to go through an email verification,
17 just like when you open up your cellphone account or when you
18 use any sort of account. You need to have email verification.
19 That strengthens our ability to community with our anglers.
20 Then we added the discard data in 2016 as well.

21
22 Pretty much the validation process, and I don't want to get into
23 it too much. It's one of the things that I like to do, and so I
24 will try to hold back, but we do, through validation, once the
25 reporting comes in, we need to have that capture-recapture
26 estimator that Kevin talked about. We use a very similar
27 estimator.

28
29 You have to have this validation process, where you're
30 intercepting to validate the data. When you have the capture-
31 recapture method, it gives the estimator a lot of power
32 statistically, and it helps calculate accurate landings to
33 estimate compliance, and it gives you your ability to populate
34 PSE, or percent standard error, which MRIP does as well.

35
36 We use dockside interviews, which I want to point out is the
37 most powerful interview estimator for validation within the
38 estimator, and it's one of the things that NOAA and the
39 consultants that we've gone through the validation process and
40 the certification process have heavily influenced us, to go with
41 dockside interviews, and we agree that it is the best way to do
42 it, and we've put a lot of our resources into those dockside
43 interviews, but it's expensive, because you have to have staff
44 out there to do this, and so it's the most expensive one, but
45 it's the best one, and so it's worth investing in.

46
47 We have a vessel on the water and aircraft that fly around, and
48 we actually count boats, for compliance estimates, and we do

1 enforcement reports. We have our enforcement do stops on the
2 water, and we don't have time to get into it, but, as far as I
3 know, everyone in the Gulf is having a very hard time with
4 private landings, and so boats that are going to private boat
5 houses and not going to public ramps, that cannot be
6 intercepted, our law enforcement has the ability to do that on
7 the on-the-water stops, but I don't have time to go into it
8 right now, but it's a very powerful thing that I think all the
9 states should look at, because it's the best way to get at
10 private landings.

11
12 Email messaging for phone interviews and for expired reports, so
13 we can close out the trips and get the data closed out that way,
14 and all reports are accounted for for 2016.

15
16 I think, for time, I am not going to get into this too much, but
17 I just wanted to say that, in the Tails and Scales system, we
18 don't allow any staff member or anyone in the system to make a
19 choice of any kind. We allow the math to do every single
20 choice, to let the numbers choose where you go interview and
21 when you go interview.

22
23 Even MRIP sends out surveys to the employees in the states
24 asking what the pressures are at the ramps, and that's a
25 subjective -- You are creating a subjective number. We allow
26 past landings data to dictate every decision in the intercept
27 process, and it's cumbersome, but, again, it's the sound,
28 statistical way to do it, and, if you have the data to pull that
29 off, you should definitely do so.

30
31 These are the big bang theory estimators that confuse and
32 intimidate everyone, but, real quickly, with the process of
33 certification that all the states have talked today about, up to
34 this point, what it consists of is the state being certified,
35 NOAA, their consultants, and then outside consultants, and so
36 consultants mostly from the academic realm, and they come in and
37 everyone critiques everyone.

38
39 Really, it's three teams within a room, and, actually, in the
40 beginning, and we're at the end of this process, there is some
41 arguing, and then there's some differences of opinion, but, at
42 the end of it, it really came out to this consensus, and we even
43 had an Alabama visit, and we visited theirs, and we all worked
44 together, and, actually, every group worked very well, to my own
45 surprise. I truly was a pessimist, and I thought the wheels
46 were going to fall off, but they actually never did, and we got
47 down to an estimator that we all agree on.

48

1 One of the outside consultants, Gwen Stokes, actually has a
2 paper that is currently in press, I think, and I will have to
3 check on that, but I'm pretty sure it's in press, that this
4 estimator was used, and it fits our program very well, and so
5 that's the estimator that we have gone forward for certification
6 with.

7
8 I don't think we're going to get into it, for brevity's sake,
9 but, again, it's a capture-recapture strategy of capturing the
10 data, through the Tails and Scales system, and then recapturing
11 it through the interview process of intercept at the boat ramps.
12 Here is a little bit of data coming out of the estimator. Here
13 is MRIP, and this is just 2016, the whole season, the whole
14 year, wrapped up, with state and federal seasons in Mississippi.

15
16 You can see the MRIP is in the unstriped bar, and they're
17 showing much higher landings and uncertainty within their
18 landings, but I would like to point out the for-hire fleet, like
19 I said, it's extremely small, and MRIP actually handles our for-
20 hire fleet quite well. The data is comparable to ours, and the
21 error bars are overlapping there, and we all know that's
22 comparative.

23
24 Our private numbers are quite a bit less than what the federal
25 MRIP numbers are coming in at, and, again, I would like to say
26 that our compliance rate recently is over 90 percent, and so,
27 when we calculate our uncertainty, it's quite small, because we
28 know that we have very few -- We even have law enforcement.
29 They all go out there, and they're stopping a lot of boats in
30 those island passes, and I go down there, and I ask him, excuse
31 me, Officer, how's it going, and how many people didn't have a
32 trip number today, and he'll say, I don't know, around one.
33 Then I'm like, well, how many did you interview? Fifteen, or
34 two out of twenty.

35
36 I mean, those are real numbers coming in off the water, and our
37 estimator is pretty much showing that our officers are telling
38 us exactly what's going on, and that's a separate survey. That
39 is not incorporated in the math.

40
41 When people challenge that, your compliance, there's no way it
42 can be 90 percent, it really is. It truly is, and the math
43 really does show that.

44
45 This is some hard numbers coming out of the 2016 season. Our
46 total harvest was 82,000 pounds, just over, and the number of
47 fish harvested was 13,560. The average weight was around 6.07
48 pounds. The average length was over twenty-one inches, almost

1 twenty-two inches, and the effort was pretty much about 3.84
2 anglers per vessel per trip with a harvest level of 1.40 fish
3 per angler per trip, and the variance in the harvest per angler
4 per trip was very great, because it shows that we have a lot of
5 anglers entering our fishery, and so we have a lot of zeroes,
6 not many catches, with new people coming into the fishery, and
7 so we have a lot of people limiting out and a of people with
8 zeroes, and very few numbers with partial bag limits, and so I
9 would like to point that out as well.

10
11 What's the value of the system? We can see seasonal trends, and
12 we can actually calculate effort analysis. We can do stock
13 assessment inputs. We can actually use this within our stock
14 assessments. We're going to use this in some of our NFWF
15 projects that we do for stock assessment purposes for reef fish
16 that we're currently involved with.

17
18 It's real-time management, and it can be used as a float plan.
19 When we have a boat that doesn't come in on time, we do have a
20 record of that, because we know when they went out, and we know
21 when they were supposed to come back, and so we use this as a
22 float plan, and marine patrol can utilize that as well.

23
24 It protects Mississippi's red snapper resource by providing
25 accurate landings, and understanding our universe and user
26 groups of anglers can better -- It gets better each year, and we
27 keep refining the system down and pushing it through these
28 estimators and getting truly hyper-accurate data, and so we know
29 pretty much, hyper-accurately, what's being landed, and, again,
30 it's a benefit of being in a small state and having a small
31 universe.

32
33 I don't think the other states, the larger states, could do
34 this. I don't want to say this could be a Gulf-wide program by
35 any means at all. The ability of us to do these accurate
36 landings, we have a small fleet, and we have that trip number be
37 mandatory and some teeth behind it, and so, when they're on the
38 water, they have to have that trip number.

39
40 The certification process, I've pretty much already gone through
41 that. We're pretty much at the last stage, and hopefully we'll
42 be certified very soon. I would like to thank, of course, the
43 funding sources, and Alabama has been wonderful in helping us
44 with this. We've gone down the road together, and that's a
45 great example of two states working together on the same problem
46 and comparing notes and working towards the process and the
47 problem. Our web developer, our call center, and our captains,
48 and, of course, our anglers, that have adapted to this program

1 very well. Thank you. That concludes my presentation, and I
2 will take any questions.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Any questions for Dr. Mickle?
5 Seeing none, Paul, I just want to say that you're right. I wish
6 all the states were able to have data as fine as yours, in terms
7 of able to capture all that fishery. It's still a challenge for
8 a lot of the bigger states, but that's a very nice presentation.
9 If there's no other questions, up next is Louisiana. Patrick,
10 is someone here from your staff?

11
12 **MR. BANKS:** Mr. Shepard should be on the line.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. On the line. Mr. Shepard, are you
15 there? Can you hear us?

16
17 **MR. JOE SHEPARD:** Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We can hear you just fine. They're loading
20 your presentation right now, and so if you will give us a
21 second, I will let you know when we're ready. Okay, Mr.
22 Shepard. It looks good. Go ahead.

23
24 **LOUISIANA**

25
26 **MR. SHEPARD:** Okay. First thing, good morning, everyone.
27 Listening to Luiz, I thought he was going to give Louisiana's
28 presentation, because we are quite on a parallel course here
29 with these surveys and issues with the MRIP survey and wanting
30 to improve things.

31
32 First, let me go through, very briefly, how did we get to where
33 we are today with LA Creel. Louisiana has been involved with
34 MRFSS and MRIP since the early 1980s. We also began collecting
35 the MRFSS, and later MRIP, data in the 1990s, where we actually
36 did the dockside survey, and so we've been on the dock for quite
37 some time.

38
39 Throughout this time, we found several issues with the survey,
40 in particular for state-managed species, things like inability
41 to obtain reliable landings at a basin or sub-state level,
42 insufficient biological sampling, angler participation estimates
43 we were getting MRIP far exceeded our recreational licenses, the
44 precision of the landing estimates, in particular, for many
45 species were poor, and remained poor, and the landing estimates
46 weren't timely enough to monitor in-season types of quotas if we
47 got into regional management.

48

1 In 2012, Louisiana proposed regional management approaches for
2 managing red snapper in the recreational fishery, and it
3 prompted us then to develop an intensive red snapper landings
4 survey in 2013. Once we completed the 2013 and we were out
5 there on the dock and we learned from that survey, we decided
6 that we could probably do a better job, and, at that point, we
7 dropped participation with the MRIP survey and began LA Creel on
8 January 1 of 2014.

9
10 We also requested, on January 7, 2015, to have LA Creel MRIP
11 certified, and we're still waiting for that. We actually have a
12 provisional certification for the dockside portion of the
13 survey, but not for the effort collection, at this point in
14 time.

15
16 We went through a LA Creel peer review, where we, as many of the
17 other states mentioned, we had MRIP contractors come in and
18 review the program, and there were a couple of issues they came
19 up with, primarily dealing with estimation, or developing the
20 estimates, and not with the methodology that we were proposing
21 in LA Creel or that we were conducting in LA Creel.

22
23 We felt very good about the review, and we've made those changes
24 that they recommended. In 2015, we then did a side-by-side
25 survey, where we conducted MRIP and LA Creel at the same time,
26 for the purposes of benchmarking. We are continuing to look at
27 those two surveys in 2015, to continue our benchmarking of those
28 two surveys.

29
30 The purpose, we sat down and we decided that the first thing we
31 needed to do was come up with what is the purpose of LA Creel,
32 and it's to provide statistically significant recreational
33 fisheries information to aid in management of Louisiana's
34 valuable fisheries resources.

35
36 The two very important parts right there is "statistically
37 significant", which we feel that we want to be able to provide
38 confidence in the numbers that we give you. We want managers
39 and also our angling public to feel comfortable that the
40 information that we're giving them, that they're confident with
41 those numbers.

42
43 Also, Louisiana's valuable fisheries resources, to us, if it's
44 landed by a recreational angler in Louisiana, then it's
45 obviously a valuable fisheries resource, and we're going to try
46 to give you the best information that we can for that fish.

47
48 Some of the design criteria we went through is to increase the

1 speed with which harvest data was compiled into landings
2 summaries. We wanted to create a flexible design able to
3 quickly respond to changing needs. We want to provide
4 information on area-specific harvest for all species landed by
5 anglers, and that's primarily -- A big part of that is for
6 Louisiana state-managed species, and we also want to maximize
7 the survey efficiency and minimize burden on anglers.

8
9 The general methodology is very similar to MRIP, in that we
10 provide separate landings for private recreational and for-hire.
11 There is an access point survey to collect harvest rate, and
12 there is a phone -- We conduct a phone or email survey to
13 estimate our effort estimates.

14
15 One of the big changes is that we separate any biological
16 sampling from our LA Creel recreational landings survey.
17 Typically, when you have a creel survey, it's all based on
18 angler participation, or angler pressure in those areas, and
19 it's not based on species, and so we separate it out so that we
20 can actually then have a biological sampling program that's
21 separate that actually concentrates on getting random
22 representative samples by species, and we feel that that's
23 worked out a lot better. Plus, it gives our biologists time on
24 the dock, rather than measuring fish, to actually get more
25 interviews.

26
27 Some of the real key features of LA Creel are the inshore and
28 offshore site stratification that we do, and that's absolutely
29 critical. The recreational offshore landings permit, as Luiz
30 mentioned, and I think all the other states have it, is
31 absolutely critical to our offshore species. It really
32 increases the efficiency of your survey. We have the separate
33 biological sampling program, and we have weekly landing
34 estimates, and that also, to us, is critical.

35
36 Why separate offshore and inshore fishing activity? Well, there
37 is two main reasons. One is the species composition. If you
38 look at the species composition from offshore, it's pretty
39 different from the inshore species, and so that's one good
40 reason to separate those. Another reason, as Luiz said, and we
41 have the same issue in Louisiana, is private anglers -- Roughly
42 5 percent of the fishing effort from private anglers is
43 conducted in offshore areas and 15 percent for charter.

44
45 You can see, as Luiz mentioned also, if you go out there and try
46 to survey, you could dump a whole lot of money and not get very
47 much return for what you're doing, and so it's very important
48 that you actually have an offshore stratum, offshore/inshore

1 strata, to be able to improve the estimates.
2
3 On the effort survey in Louisiana, we have five separate
4 regions, what we call regions. The ROLP, we draw 400 from our
5 sampling frame, which, in 2016, was about 19,220 people,
6 anglers. We have an out-of-state frame, where we draw 300, and,
7 from Louisiana residents, we also draw 300 from the north,
8 southeast, and southwest, and so, for every week, we draw 1,600
9 names to call, to send an email out to. The sampling frame for
10 the non-ROLP is about 443,966.
11
12 We talked about the flexibility a little bit, and this is
13 flexibility in the effort survey. During the red snapper
14 season, we always double the ROLP. Rather than normally taking
15 400, we take 800. We draw 800 people, and we get much better
16 precision in the estimates from getting more contacts with
17 people that did go fishing.
18
19 On the charter/for-hire side, on the ROLP, we draw 30 percent
20 from a frame of 155, and, for non-ROLP, we draw 10 percent from
21 741. Again, because of the flexibility we have, and we're
22 looking at it each week, we can draw 100 percent of the ROLP
23 charter during the red snapper season, and so we can attempt to
24 anyway call every single one of them, or contact every one of
25 them.
26
27 To give you a little bit of the results, if you look down on the
28 bottom, the dockside trips surveyed, for private shore, we
29 actually touched 9,000 trips. These are not anglers, but these
30 are actually trips in 2015, and 8,600 in 2016, for a total of
31 over 10,000 trips in each year from charter and private.
32
33 On the effort side, we roughly contact, and this is -- I mean,
34 we talk to these people on the phone, but 43,000 individuals in
35 2015 and 46,000 in 2016, and so we've got pretty good coverage,
36 we feel.
37
38 What does all of this mean? What do you get for the biggest
39 bang for your buck? This is part of the benchmarking process
40 that we were looking at. This is relative standard error, or,
41 as National Marine Fisheries Service or MRIP would put it,
42 proportional standard error for the 2015 data, and this is a
43 comparison of LA Creel in blue and MRIP in red of those error
44 rates, and you can see that it's not bad for species,
45 particularly state species or species that are common to many of
46 the sites that we have in Louisiana.
47
48 It's when you get to those more offshore species, red snapper,

1 blackfin tuna, dolphin, yellowfin, that you really find a big
2 difference between LA Creel and MRIP, and that's strictly
3 because we have an offshore strata that we can adjust to collect
4 more effort at those sites that have offshore fishing activity,
5 and we have the ROLP that we can call people that we're pretty
6 sure would have taken -- There's a high probability they would
7 have taken an offshore trip, and so we can really work those
8 error estimates down.

9
10 Biological sampling, again, we separate that from our survey,
11 and, for the most part, we have collected at least as much as
12 Florida, and, in many cases, as much as the state of
13 Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida all together for some of these
14 measures, and so we feel we're doing pretty good there.

15
16 Here is the big picture. In 2016, red snapper landings, we were
17 able to track it on a weekly basis and, when it was projected to
18 reach our self-imposed limit, then we closed the season, state
19 season, and we were off by 1,094 pounds, which is roughly one-
20 tenth of 1 percent of going over, and so feel it's a pretty good
21 way of looking at the data.

22
23 Some things we got is that you can see, when you look at weekly
24 data, you can see things like weather, and you can see things
25 like fishing tournaments having an impact on the landings, and
26 so we've got a lot of benefits that we didn't even think about
27 until we started looking at it.

28
29 Just to go over the benefits real quick, offshore and inshore
30 strata provide more representative and precise landings
31 estimates. Saltwater licensed anglers and ROLP permittees
32 surveyed for effort result in greater precision and provide
33 efficiency in the collection of the estimates.

34
35 Near real-time estimates, weekly data that we collect, provides
36 timely management information. Increased precision provides
37 confidence in the estimates.

38
39 Basin-level estimates provide regional management options that
40 we can have, in particular for state-managed species, and we
41 have flexibility and efficiency in the survey design, where we
42 don't necessarily have to increase our number of intercepts, but
43 we can adjust them to sites that might have more offshore
44 fishing activity, so that we can improve those estimates,
45 because, typically, as you saw before, the inshore estimates are
46 always good. Then, of course, representative biological samples
47 by separating the biological samples from the creel survey.
48 With that, that's what I have.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Is there any questions for Mr.
3 Shepard? Mr. Shepard, we have one question from Councilman
4 Boyd.
5
6 **MR. BOYD:** Thank you for your presentation. Are fishermen that
7 are on for-hire trips required to have a fishing license and an
8 offshore fishing permit, your ROLP?
9
10 **MR. SHEPARD:** No, sir. The charter captain has an ROLP. Now,
11 they do have to have a fishing license, but they do have a
12 charter walk-on license, if I'm not mistaken, that they can get,
13 but they need a Louisiana license, but they don't need an ROLP.
14
15 **MR. BOYD:** All right. A follow-up question then. So, when you
16 survey the offshore for-hire trips, you're surveying a crew
17 member and not the actual fisherman?
18
19 **MR. SHEPARD:** ROLP charter, we are surveying the charter
20 captains. ROLP private angler, we survey the actual private
21 anglers.
22
23 **MR. BOYD:** Thank you.
24
25 **MR. SHEPARD:** We have two separate.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Diaz has a question.
28
29 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not on your committee.
30 Joey, it's good to hear from you.
31
32 **MR. SHEPARD:** Hi, Dale.
33
34 **MR. DIAZ:** Real quick, and you might have said this and I might
35 have missed it, but, the folks that went before you, I believe
36 they mentioned where they were at in the process of getting
37 their program -- I am going to use the word "certified".
38 Anyway, if you don't mind, let us know where you all are at in
39 that process. Thank you, sir.
40
41 **MR. SHEPARD:** Absolutely. We have, right now, a provisional
42 certification for the dockside portion of our survey and also
43 for the charter survey that we're conducting. We do not have
44 any sort of certification at this point in time on the effort
45 portion.
46
47 We're finding, and it's interesting to look at the results from
48 other states, but we're finding the same types of issues, that

1 the MRIP estimates appear to be much higher for effort than we
2 have, and that's what we're working out right now with the
3 benchmarking process, is to be able to put everything in a
4 common currency, and so it's taking some time. For two years
5 now, we've been working on benchmarking.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Shepard. I am not seeing
8 any more questions around the table, and so I appreciate your
9 presentation, and, up next, Dr. Fisher is going to be joining us
10 online as well to present Texas's work.

11
12 **TEXAS**
13

14 **DR. MARK FISHER:** We started our recreational survey in 1974,
15 and, if you look at the map of Texas, you will see, along the
16 coastline, that we're composed of these nice little discreet bay
17 systems, which automatically lends itself to stratification, and
18 that's exactly what we do.

19
20 We treat each bay system as a strata, and we can make estimates
21 for each bay system. We use proportional random sampling in our
22 survey, whereas ramps and marinas that have much higher activity
23 get sampled more often than those ramps and marinas that have
24 less activity.

25
26 Our intercept survey is similar to everybody else's. We get
27 species sought, the composition number and size, the trip
28 length, where they went fishing, if we can get minor bay or
29 they're offshore out in the Gulf, bait and gear used, and the
30 county of residence also, if they're from Texas, and we'll get
31 their state if they're from out of state. We get trip
32 satisfaction, and we interview all trips, and not just fishing
33 trips, and so we also get duck hunters and pleasure boaters and
34 other folks like that.

35
36 We have been doing our sport boat survey since 1974. Then,
37 periodically, we will survey the wade/bank and lighted pier
38 areas as well. Our survey is composed of two components. We
39 have the on-site survey, which is similar to the APAIS. You get
40 trip-specific information, where you have species numbers and
41 length, et cetera, and, to couple that, to get expansions, we do
42 a roving survey with our staff.

43
44 We go to all of the boat ramps and marinas and count the empty
45 trailers and empty wet-slips. From that, that's where we get
46 our expansion. We get the results from the intercept survey to
47 get number of species caught and number of people, and that's
48 expanded by the relative pressure that we get from that roving

1 survey.

2
3 Our survey is stratified not only by bay, by each bay system,
4 but also by seasons, the high-use, which is May 15 through
5 November 20, and then low-use, which is the rest of the year.
6 That one serves to reduce quite a bit of variance, because,
7 during the high-use season, about two-thirds of fishing effort
8 occurs during that time, but we also stratify by day type.

9
10 You get weekdays and weekends and holidays, and that's another
11 good way to reduce the overall variance of the survey, because
12 roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of landings occur on
13 weekends and holidays versus weekdays. There is a lot more
14 effort on weekends, which should be no surprise to anyone.

15
16 We have approximately 260 boat access sites state-wide, and
17 that's boat ramps and marinas, public marinas, and we survey
18 them in proportion to the amount of fishing pressure, where
19 those that experience a lot get surveyed more often than those
20 with less pressure.

21
22 We do our on-site survey conducted from ten o'clock in the
23 morning until 6:00 p.m., and we have done some round-the-clock
24 surveys, and that eight-hour period intercepts approximately 92
25 to 93 percent of all the fishing trips, and so, for that eight-
26 hour period, it gets you your most bang for the buck for our
27 efforts.

28
29 Sample size, we sampled ninety-seven survey days per bay system,
30 and we've got eight different bay systems, during the high-use
31 season, and thirty-six survey days during the low-use season per
32 bay. Two-thirds of them are on weekdays, and one-third on
33 weekend days, and that results in a coast-wide sample of 1,014
34 survey days of intercepts, and we see approximately 12,000
35 fishing trips every year.

36
37 The problem that we have, which is common to other Gulf states,
38 is that, out of 260 boat ramps and marinas, really only about
39 twenty-five of them see Gulf species landed. Despite our large
40 coastline, we really don't have a whole lot of Gulf access
41 sites. We are landlocked, somewhat, by the barrier islands, and
42 so there is not much access that is available to anglers. Of
43 those 260, roughly 10 percent of them you can expect to see Gulf
44 species. The rest of them are bay species.

45
46 To handle this, we do additional survey days. We call them
47 Gulf-only surveys, and we allotted that extra effort to those
48 twenty-five boat ramps that see Gulf fishing activity, and

1 that's to bolster our number of observations that we get for
2 Gulf landings.

3
4 On top of that, we started the iSnapper project two years ago,
5 in conjunction with Greg Stunz and Texas A&M Corpus Christi.
6 Just to get more red snapper intercepts, we tripled the number
7 of Gulf-only survey days. We started that in 2015, and did it
8 again in 2016, and we're doing it again this year.

9
10 Survey precision for our angler effort, we measure that in
11 angler hours, and it's pretty good. We get a proportional
12 standard error for each bay system of about 8 to 11 percent, and
13 then coast-wide, or state-wide, it's about 4 percent, and then
14 on down the line. Red drum landings, specific to a bay, it's 12
15 to 17 percent. The coast-wide, or state-wide, it's 5 percent.

16
17 Then, finally, red snapper, and, of course, they're not landed
18 in the bays. They're Gulf, but, coast-wide, we get about a 17
19 percent proportional standard error.

20
21 We have iSnapper estimates for 2015 and 2016, and we can compare
22 them, the same time period, to our creel survey estimates, and
23 iSnapper has consistently estimated higher red snapper landings
24 than our creel survey does. However, the proportional standard
25 error is much higher for iSnapper than it is for ours.

26
27 Now, you would expect iSnapper to have higher landings than us,
28 because they can capture snapper that are landed at people's
29 canals and private docks in their backyards that we don't have
30 access to and also snapper that are landed outside of our survey
31 time period of 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and so you would expect
32 iSnapper to have higher, but, statistically speaking, since the
33 proportional standard error is so high, there is really no
34 difference between these two numbers.

35
36 Of course, the common question is how come -- Why does Texas do
37 their own survey and do not participate in the old MRFSS and the
38 MRIP? Well, first of all, and most importantly, we started our
39 survey five years before MRFSS did. We started in 1974, and,
40 when MRFSS came online, of course, we were -- NOAA wanted us to
41 participate in MRFSS, along with everybody else, but we were
42 simply unwilling to discard five years' worth of data in a
43 survey that was working well for us for a new design that we
44 really didn't know much about.

45
46 Also, as far as survey design, we much prefer the roving counts
47 of empty trailers in marinas to get estimates of effort over
48 telephone or mail surveys for the expansion factor. We don't

1 have to deal with non-response, and we don't have to maintain
2 lists of telephone numbers or names and addresses, and we don't
3 have to deal with recall bias, those problems that are just
4 inherent in any mail or telephone survey.

5
6 Finally, of course, the MRFSS design would only give you one
7 state-wide estimate of landings, and we wanted to have bay-
8 specific estimates of landings, and that's yet another reason
9 why we stuck with our creel survey design instead of going to
10 MRFSS, because we didn't want to give up bay-specific landings
11 estimates. That's all I have, and there is time for questions,
12 if there are any.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Fisher. Do we have any
15 questions for Dr. Fisher? Mr. Swindell, go ahead.

16
17 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Dr. Fisher, we have all the other states, I
18 think, that have reported some correlation with the MRIP data
19 versus the data that you're getting from your state. Do you by
20 any chance have that kind of comparison?

21
22 **DR. FISHER:** MRFSS was run in parallel with our survey back in
23 it was either 1985 or 1986, and they didn't really agree very
24 well. I'm afraid that I don't have those numbers handy, and so
25 I can't give you a direct comparison, but there was quite a bit
26 of disagreement, and it was not continued.

27
28 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I am not seeing other questions. Ms. Bosarge,
31 did you have a question? Go ahead.

32
33 **MS. BOSARGE:** This may be a silly question, but I was making a
34 list of when everybody was going to be certified, and Texas is
35 different, because you all didn't participate in MRIP, but so
36 does that mean that your system is already certified?

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** No, our system is not certified. We are
39 discussing with MRIP now, related to iSnapper, but, since we're
40 an academic unit doing this, that's not really in our realm of
41 decision-making. We are happy to go down that process, but I
42 would leave that to Lance or Robin or someone in his group about
43 where they are with MRIP certification, because, if we certify
44 it, that doesn't mean much if they need to have that -- That's a
45 decision they'll need to make. Mr. Anson.

46
47 **MR. ANSON:** I'm just curious, and a question for Dr. Fisher.
48 You mentioned that there was a side-by-side back in the 1980s,

1 but there was a difference in MRFSS to the Texas numbers. Do
2 you recall if the MRFSS numbers were high or were they low
3 relative to the Texas estimates?
4

5 **DR. FISHER:** The MRFSS numbers were higher than ours.
6

7 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.
8

9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any other questions? I just have one brief
10 comment, since this is on some of the work we've been doing, and
11 that's back on Slide 8, Mark. I just wanted to comment about
12 that high error associated with the iSnapper estimates, and, for
13 us in Texas, it's all about a validation game.
14

15 The way our estimators work relies on recapture and validation
16 of those catches from anglers, and we discovered that during the
17 first pilot of this, and, this year, we made some substantial
18 adjustments, working with our statisticians on ways to reduce
19 that variability, and so we're confident that that will happen,
20 but, also, we're dealing with this three-day season, and that
21 presented a lot of challenges as well.
22

23 Just to let everyone know where we were on some of this, and we
24 were hearing a lot of feedback at the ramp, and this is probably
25 relevant to every state, from recreational anglers. That is
26 that we've been providing this data, in our case voluntarily,
27 for some time, and our seasons keep going down, and it's more
28 than just frustration.
29

30 Some of our creel guys took a little bit of heat on that, but
31 that's just some of the challenges that we're facing with some
32 of this, but, anyway, that's where we are with the iSnapper
33 component.
34

35 Not seeing other questions, thank you for the presentation, Dr.
36 Fisher, and we will move on with the items in the agenda, but I
37 just wanted to make a final comment. I appreciate all the
38 presenters today. I mean, certainly there is still a lot of
39 ground to cover. There is a lot of questions, and I think this
40 committee is very interested in what's happening here, and so I
41 encourage that.
42

43 I think, Dave Donaldson, there is probably a lot of opportunity
44 here for your group, working with the states, to improve this.
45 I really feel like -- I mean, there are certainly challenges, no
46 doubt, but we are going a long way, and I'm feeling really good
47 about what I'm seeing here, and hopefully all of this can come
48 together and maybe consolidate some of these estimators to

1 broaden this, but, anyway, certainly we need more work, but
2 there is a lot to do, and so, unless there is any other comments
3 -- Go ahead, Dave.

4
5 **MR. DONALDSON:** To that point, Mr. Chairman, we mentioned, or it
6 was mentioned, that MRIP is going to hold another red snapper
7 workshop later this year or the beginning of next year, in
8 conjunction with the commission and the states, and it's to
9 address those issues. It's trying to get the comparability and
10 compatibility, and so we are working on that, and we'll continue
11 to do that.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That's good news, Dave, and if you would
14 obviously keep us informed on what's going on there. Ms.
15 Bosarge.

16
17 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you for letting me speak real quick before
18 you move on to your next item. For those people in the
19 audience, or even in webinar-land, a few observations I made
20 during these presentations that probably, if you're not sitting
21 right here next to us, you might not have noticed, but I saw a
22 lot of raising of eyebrows around the table, like, ooh, okay, I
23 like that.

24
25 Sometimes I saw some furrowing of brows, like I don't know about
26 that, but I thought it was -- There was a lot of communication
27 that went on here for other states, and even people like me,
28 that's not in state government, that was very interesting.

29
30 I heard some comments that sounded like things along the line of
31 the same types of issues from state to state, certain things
32 that seemed to overlap as issues as you're going through these
33 processes, and some common currency type of comments, things
34 that maybe there is some common ground that could be found, but
35 I think, more than anything, it was just the communication that
36 was good around the table, and I think that these same
37 presentations and that same communication may hold some value if
38 it was on the next SSC agenda too, because, in that room, it is
39 more of a PhD environment, the people that are your
40 statisticians and things, and your biologists and things, and we
41 have a few of you all around this table, and we appreciate you,
42 but there is people like me that aren't, right, but I think that
43 -- In that room, there is different state people in that room,
44 representatives, that might benefit from hearing these different
45 presentations.

46
47 There is different federal people in that room that may benefit
48 from hearing, okay, you know, well, we're on track. Hopefully

1 Florida is certified in 2018, hopefully, and Alabama in summer
2 of 2017, they're hopeful, and Mississippi is hopeful for
3 possibly at the end of this year, and Louisiana already has a
4 provisional certification for part of theirs, and they're
5 working on the rest, and then Texas has got a few different
6 logistical issues, but you're working towards some things, and
7 so I think that that might be something that we can aim towards
8 too, and just spur that initial discussion between states and
9 federal scientists before we get to that next meeting that Dave
10 was talking about that's going to probably be at the end of the
11 year that will be a conjunction between the council and Gulf
12 States and all sorts of different people, the states themselves,
13 and so hopefully can do that and we'll make some more progress,
14 because I really love what I'm hearing.

15
16 I think we're making strides, and I think that's a really,
17 really big piece of our private recreational angler management,
18 because they don't have any buy-in in that data system right
19 now, and that's important. If you're going to believe that
20 you're part of a system that's going to work for you, you have
21 to believe that that data collection is accurate, and so that's
22 my two-cents.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I would echo some of
25 those same comments about user buy-in, especially when you look
26 at like the State of Mississippi, that's really far along with
27 this, and I think their folks are feeling a lot better, and I
28 think ours will too.

29
30 We certainly, and Bonnie will probably definitely will, realize
31 the impact and issues with user-entered data, but I think, if
32 you look at where we are today versus where we were just a few
33 years ago, we have made a lot of progress, and so I am feeling
34 pretty good about that, but, if there's no other comments, I
35 think we'll move through the agenda.

36
37 At the recommendation of our Chairwoman, and, John, you can jump
38 in as well, but it might be best to move this discussion of the
39 MRIP Strategic Plan -- It plays directly into our discussions
40 here that we were just having with shortened seasons, but move
41 that to the Full Council, since we're so far behind. I assume
42 that won't take too long in the Full Council, John.

43
44 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes, and I'm hoping this won't take more than
45 five minutes. I can do it now or we can do it later.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** If it's five minutes, change of plans then,
48 John. Go ahead. We will move into the discussion of the MRIP

1 plan and the letter.

2
3 **DISCUSSION OF MRIP STRATEGIC PLAN**
4

5 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay. This is Tab 5(a), and what this is
6 addressing is the MRIP program put out a draft strategic plan,
7 and it's on their website. It's also in our briefing book as
8 Tab 5(b). They have requested feedback from the council by June
9 30.

10
11 We drafted a letter on behalf of the council, in hopes that we
12 could use this as the basis to stem some discussion, and so I
13 won't read it to you, but the points that I sort of tried to
14 highlight in this, just kind of going through the letter, is
15 that the council is supportive of efforts to improve the data.
16 We all know important that is. However, the most pressing
17 recreational data issues that we face, the MRIP is really not
18 structured to support red snapper derby seasons and things like
19 that.

20
21 As a result, the states have created their own programs to
22 better address these needs. While that is in the process of
23 improving the data, it creates trouble with the calibrations,
24 and it just further complicates how these data are used and how
25 the products are communicated to stakeholders, and so the one
26 thing that I will point out to you that I found, just having
27 recently attended the Red Snapper AP meeting that we had, on Tab
28 F-5(b), on their plan, on page 4, there is an MRIP vision
29 paragraph, and the last sentence of that paragraph says: We want
30 to ensure that profound debates that take place about U.S. ocean
31 policies center on substance of the management and not the
32 quality of the data.

33
34 Having attended that, we're not there yet. That was my view,
35 and they are extraordinarily skeptical about that, and so I did
36 communicate that in the draft letter. If that's their vision, I
37 feel like, in the Gulf, we're not there yet, and so that's the
38 short of what I prepared, and I am happy to address this however
39 you want.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Well, assuming the committee has had
42 time to look at that letter and there's any comments or
43 suggestions, Madam Chair, for a letter like this, do you need a
44 motion coming from this committee that we approve or not? How
45 do you suggest we proceed for that?

46
47 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, we don't need a motion, because, a lot of
48 times, we don't even get these letters before the council,

1 because of when they're requested, and so sometimes you don't
2 see them, but any feedback that you have would be helpful, if
3 you like it the way it is. Ms. Levy.

4
5 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Just that there's one sentence in the last
6 paragraph, on page 1, that says that the 2006 reauthorization of
7 the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires in-season monitoring for
8 species that have exceeded their annual catch limit in the most
9 recent fishing year. That is not a requirement of the Magnuson-
10 Stevens Act, and so the Act requires accountability measures,
11 but a lot of the accountability measures the council has adopted
12 requires this, and so I would just maybe note that it's a lot of
13 the regulations, if you want to say something, but not the Act
14 itself requires it.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dr. Froeschke, if we could make those
17 appropriate modifications.

18
19 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Noted.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** So if there is no other comments or questions
22 on the letter -- Feel free to -- We can revisit this in Full
23 Council, if need be. Otherwise, I think that the letter is
24 fine. Is there anything else, John, related to that agenda
25 item?

26
27 **DR. FROESCHKE:** No.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. So, moving on through the rest of the
30 agenda, that brings us to Other Business. Captain Greene.

31
32 **OTHER BUSINESS**

33
34 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** At some point I would like to, maybe at the
35 next meeting, kind of get an update from National Marine
36 Fisheries Service on where they're at on the data collection
37 amendment that we passed for the for-hire industry.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. You're talking about bringing that
40 update to the next meeting? Bonnie, are you okay with that, or
41 any just briefly where we are with that last amendment?

42
43 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Can you say that one more time?

44
45 **MR. GREENE:** I was just hoping, at the next meeting, I could get
46 an update on where we were at with the data collection for-hire
47 amendment that we passed at a previous council meeting.

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Heads are nodding, and so we'll get an
2 update at the next meeting. Thank you, Captain Greene. Any
3 other matters for Other Business? Seeing none, that concludes
4 the business of this committee.

5

6 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 7, 2017.)

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