

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
2  
3 MACKEREL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
4

5  
6 Grand Hotel Marriott Point Clear, Alabama  
7

8 January 28, 2015  
9

10 **VOTING MEMBERS**

11 Pamela Dana.....Florida  
12 Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida  
13 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida  
14 Myron Fischer (designee for Randy Pausina).....Louisiana  
15 Corky Perret.....Mississippi  
16 Robin Riechers.....Texas  
17 John Sanchez.....Florida  
18 David Walker.....Alabama

19  
20 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

21 Kevin Anson.....Alabama  
22 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi  
23 Doug Boyd.....Texas  
24 Jason Brand.....USCG  
25 Glenn Constant.....USFWS  
26 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC  
27 John Greene.....Alabama  
28 Kelly Lucas.....Mississippi  
29 Campo Matens.....Louisiana  
30 Harlon Pearce.....Louisiana  
31 Greg Stunz.....Texas  
32 Roy Williams.....Florida

33  
34 **STAFF**

35 Stephen Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist  
36 Assane Diagne.....Economist  
37 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist  
38 Doug Gregory.....Executive Director  
39 Karen Hoak.....Administrative and Financial Assistant  
40 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist  
41 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel  
42 Charlene Ponce.....Public Information Officer  
43 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison  
44 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
45 Charlotte Schiaffo.....Research & Human Resource Librarian

46  
47 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

48 Pam Anderson.....Panama City, FL

1 Billy Archer.....Seminole Wind, Panama City, FL  
 2 Randy Boggs.....Orange Beach, AL  
 3 Zack Bowen.....SAFMC  
 4 Dick Brame.....  
 5 Steve Branstetter.....NMFS  
 6 John Braswell.....Daphne, AL  
 7 Shane Cantrell.....Galveston, TX  
 8 Jim Clements.....Carrabelle, FL  
 9 Cliff Cox.....Destin, FL  
 10 David Dekle.....Wilmer, AL  
 11 Dewey Destin.....Destin, FL  
 12 Michael Drexler.....St. Petersburg, FL  
 13 Tracy Dunn.....NOAA OLE  
 14 Maurice Fitzsimmons.....Daphne, AL  
 15 Troy Frady.....Orange Beach, AL  
 16 Jack Gaines.....Dauphin Island, AL  
 17 Roger Griffis.....NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
 18 Scott Hickman.....Galveston, TX  
 19 John Hollingshead.....Pensacola, FL  
 20 Peter Hood.....NMFS  
 21 Gary Jarvis.....DCBA, Destin, FL  
 22 Joe Jewell.....MS  
 23 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, Marathon, FL  
 24 Eric Mahoney.....Clearwater, FL  
 25 Bart Niquet.....Panama City, FL  
 26 Chris Niquet.....Panama City, FL  
 27 Mike Nugent.....Aransas Pass, TX  
 28 Will Patterson.....GMFMC SSC  
 29 Todd Phillips.....  
 30 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC  
 31 Tracy Redding.....AL  
 32 Lance Robinson.....TX  
 33 Mike Schirripa.....NMFS SEFSC  
 34 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS  
 35 Steve Tomeny.....Port Fourchon, LA  
 36 Bill Tucker.....Dunedin, FL  
 37 Russell Underwood.....Panama City, FL  
 38 Wayne Werner.....Alachua, FL  
 39 Debra Wilhite.....Orange Beach, AL  
 40 Jack Wilhite.....Orange Beach, AL  
 41 Daniel Willard.....EDF, Austin, TX  
 42 Johnny Williams.....Alvin, TX  
 43 Carolyn Wood.....Dauphin Island, AL  
 44 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL  
 45 - - -

47 The Mackerel Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
 48 Management Council convened at the Grand Hotel Marriott, Point

1 Clear, Alabama, Wednesday morning, January 28, 2015, and was  
2 called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Pamela Dana.

3  
4 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
5

6 **CHAIRMAN PAMELA DANA:** I would like to convene the Mackerel  
7 Management Committee and I guess we have a quorum in here of my  
8 committee. Yes. I want to start with Adoption of the Agenda.  
9 Has everyone had an opportunity to review the agenda and is  
10 there any requests for additions or changes? Hearing none, I  
11 would call for a motion to approve the agenda.

12  
13 **MS. MARTHA BADEMAN:** So moved.

14  
15 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** Second.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** The agenda is approved. Approval of Minutes,  
18 has everyone had an opportunity to review the minutes? If so,  
19 are there any changes or additions?

20  
21 **MR. LANCE ROBINSON:** Just one note. On page 3, line 34, I think  
22 it reads "Southern Zone Quote" and I think it should be "Quota".

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Lance. Good catch. Any other  
25 revisions or additions or changes? Hearing none, do I have a  
26 motion to approve the minutes?

27  
28 **MS. BADEMAN:** I move to approve the minutes as amended.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** All in favor say aye. The minutes are approved.  
31 What we're going to do -- I don't think we're going to use the  
32 entirety of the three hours. I've been wrong before, but we're  
33 going to move through this based on the agenda, the action guide  
34 and next steps.

35  
36 We are going to go over several scoping documents and we're  
37 going to have several of the staff members discuss ACL and just  
38 the overall health of the mackerel in the Gulf and the Atlantic  
39 and then we will round up the meeting with the discussion of a  
40 meeting we had in southern Florida on the gillnet issue and I'm  
41 going to turn it over to Ryan to go over the renumbering of the  
42 amendments.

43  
44 **COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AMENDMENT RENUMBERING**  
45

46 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The IPTs have  
47 discussed the current workload for the Gulf and Atlantic  
48 migratory groups of mackerel and they have recommended splitting

1 the documents up based on where things are in their current  
2 timeline and so what used to be Amendment 24 was going to be  
3 Gulf and Atlantic kingfish allocations and ACLs and all of that  
4 stuff for kingfish and Spanish.

5  
6 Now it's just going to be Spanish and, oddly enough, that has  
7 been tabled by the South Atlantic until 2016 and so Amendment 24  
8 is not something that we will have to see until 2016. Amendment  
9 26 will look at all things kingfish, the ACLs, the reallocation  
10 between the recreational and commercial sector, reallocation  
11 amongst the commercial zones in the Gulf, the stock boundary,  
12 and also bycatch provision for sale for the shark gillnet  
13 fishery, amongst other things.

14  
15 Amendment 28, which the Gulf Council has not formally adopted to  
16 actually participate in yet, looks at permit splits and it would  
17 split the Gulf and Atlantic combined kingfish and Spanish  
18 permits into a separate Gulf kingfish and separate Gulf Spanish  
19 permit and then the same for the Atlantic side and the South  
20 Atlantic is interested in doing this for a couple of reasons  
21 that we'll get into, but I just wanted to go through that with  
22 you guys so you know what the current amendment numbering is and  
23 why we have it that way. Are there any questions?

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** What do we do on the Committee Recommendations  
26 there?

27  
28 **MR. RINDONE:** If there is any.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Hearing no questions of Ryan on the renumbering,  
31 are there any committee recommendations whatsoever on this  
32 renumbering?

33  
34 **MR. CORKY PERRET:** Ryan, one of the things being considered is  
35 changing allocation and so on and what's the proper document for  
36 accountability measures, to make sure if indeed we reallocate or  
37 if a commercial sector has gone over in the past, where do we  
38 put the accountability measures to hold them accountable?

39  
40 **MR. RINDONE:** It could go in that Amendment 26 document along  
41 with everything else.

42  
43 **MR. PERRET:** It just seems to me that's something we need to  
44 discuss, because we're talking about reallocation in snapper and  
45 we've got accountability measures for one group and I want  
46 accountability measures for all user groups and not just any one  
47 segment versus the other and I think that's something we need  
48 some discussion on.

1  
2 **MS. BADEMAN:** I would agree with that. Do we need a motion to  
3 add something like that to this document or can we just give  
4 that as a direction to staff or what do you need, Ryan?  
5

6 **MR. RINDONE:** It can just be a direction to staff. I mean we're  
7 in scoping right now and so the whole document is very malleable  
8 to any changes that the councils wish to put forward. If you  
9 guys want to consider additional accountability measures for  
10 mackerel on top of what already exists, then that's something  
11 that can certainly be put into the document and taken to  
12 scoping.  
13

14 **MR. PERRET:** That's something I definitely would like to see and  
15 if staff has got that direction, Martha and I seem to feel that  
16 that should be included and I don't know if we need a formal  
17 motion or not, but staff is shaking his head yes and so I think  
18 that's something that needs to be included. Thank you.  
19

20 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you and noted. Any other committee  
21 recommendations or issues on this particular item? Okay. Let's  
22 move forward to SEDAR-38, which is the Gulf of Mexico and South  
23 Atlantic King Mackerel Stock Assessment Report. I think Michael  
24 Schirripa or who is going to --  
25

26 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, he will be given the presentation.  
27

28 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Can I call Michael Schirripa to do the  
29 presentation, please? Thank you.  
30

31 **SEDAR-38 GULF OF MEXICO AND SOUTH ATLANTIC KING MACKEREL STOCK**  
32 **ASSESSMENT REPORT**  
33 **SEDAR-38 STOCK ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION**  
34

35 **DR. MICHAEL SCHIRRIPA:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.  
36 It's my privilege to address you this morning and present to you  
37 what I think is one of the success stories in the Gulf of Mexico  
38 management arena and so we're going to talk this morning about  
39 the king mackerel stock assessment that was recently completed.  
40

41 Of course, the assessment process went through the usual  
42 workshops, the data workshop, review workshop, and so on. The  
43 CIE reviews found that the model was favorable for advice and  
44 they had no problems with it.  
45

46 The Gulf stock was deemed not to be overfished and not  
47 undergoing overfishing, based on all the sensitivity runs, and  
48 neither was the Atlantic stock overfished or undergoing

1 overfishing.

2  
3 We kept the Atlantic assessment and the Gulf assessment as  
4 similar as possible with their configurations. We did define a  
5 new winter mixing zone. I would like to stress that it was the  
6 entire data workshop that arrived at this decision and not just  
7 one of the working groups, but it was a product of the Life  
8 History Working Group, the Landings Working Group, and the  
9 Assessment Working Group.

10  
11 Everybody was in the room together and it was -- We had a lot of  
12 brain power in there and we stayed late that night, but we  
13 arrived at what we felt was a better representation of the  
14 winter mixing zone. There was no evidence of a stock  
15 recruitment relationship, but we'll be talking about that in a  
16 little bit more here.

17  
18 Again, the group decided the new winter mixing zone by taking a  
19 careful examination of the landing by county around Florida.  
20 This picture is depicting the old winter mixing zone that you  
21 can see right here and what we did this time around was take a  
22 very careful look at the landings month and we narrowed that  
23 down to the right-hand new winter mixing zone over here to the  
24 left.

25  
26 The new winter mixing zone is much smaller and now only about 7  
27 percent of the landings are unaccounted for in that winter  
28 mixing zone. We still split those fish 50/50 between the  
29 Atlantic and the Gulf, but it's a much smaller percentage now.

30  
31 This can be seen also in the next slide, where we looked at the  
32 old winter mixing zone is that wider red bracket that you see up  
33 at the top here and the winter zone was -- By the end of the  
34 meeting, we had narrowed it down to what made more sense, the  
35 black winter mixing zone here.

36  
37 Let's take a quick look at the landings. I'm sure you're all  
38 familiar with this type of graph. We have landings that were  
39 dominated in the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s by a gillnet fishery  
40 which was eventually -- Those landings went down around 1980 or  
41 1985 and now we have a stock whose landings are dominated mostly  
42 by the recreational fishery, namely the charter and private  
43 boats.

44  
45 As I suggested last time, there was no discernable stock  
46 recruitment relationship. A visual inspection of the data did  
47 not suggest a strong relationship and so rather than go with a  
48 high uncertainty in a stock recruitment relationship, an MSY

1 proxy of SPR 30 percent was recommended to be continued and that  
2 is without a strong stock recruitment relationship, it's  
3 impossible to discern exactly what MSY was and so we recommended  
4 staying with the proxy that is being used right now, 30 percent.

5  
6 Now, one thing that -- I wouldn't call it a red flag and I  
7 wouldn't call it a yellow flag, if you will, but something to be  
8 mindful of is recent recruitments show a possible declining  
9 trend and if you look here at this plot, you will see right when  
10 the stock started to recover, so did the recruitment, starting  
11 around 1990, but around 2005 and such, you will see there is a -  
12 - Despite the fact that the SSB continues to increase, we see a  
13 decline in recruitment.

14  
15 This is the SEAMAP CPUE and so this is giving us an indication  
16 of age-one fish and so the number of age-one fish since around  
17 2005 has slowly been declining and this was viewed as a trend to  
18 remain mindful of, but, ultimately, we didn't feel it was a  
19 function of spawning stock biomass and more of a function of  
20 environmental effects, most likely. We're not going to pretend  
21 that we know exactly what those are, but given the strong trend  
22 in SSB, we are going to attribute that to the environment right  
23 now, but that should be something to be keeping an eye on.

24  
25 In this slide, we are showing the estimated recruitments from  
26 the model. Again, we see a nice increase with SSB, starting in  
27 the 1980s and 1990s, but then around 2000, the early 2000s, we  
28 see that decline. Again, it's nothing to be alarmed about, we  
29 don't think, because we have a lot of buffer out there right now  
30 in SSB, but, again, we want to be very mindful that this trend  
31 that we're seeing right here does not continue to stay down or  
32 go even further down.

33  
34 You will see that manifest itself in the last couple of years of  
35 estimates of SSB as the recruits start to drop a little bit. In  
36 fact, if we go to the next slide, we see on the left the total  
37 biomass, starting at a high in 1940 and the turnaround in around  
38 1990, a nice sharp turnaround, and then generally increasing  
39 since then and the small drop that we see there in the last  
40 couple of years, in both the right and left-hand plots, is the  
41 smaller recruitment levels coming into the adult population  
42 there, but, again, as you can see, it's nothing to be alarmed  
43 about just yet, but it is something to keep an eye on.

44  
45 You can see here then that the stock did reach a minimum in  
46 1992, but it quickly recovered and has generally increased since  
47 and so while there does to be a little bit of a downturn in  
48 those past couple of years, we are not anywhere near the MSST

1 level, but we don't want to get there either and so, again, it's  
2 something to keep in mind.

3  
4 The projected retained catch we ran under three reference  
5 points. The blue line on the left and on the right is SPR 30  
6 percent and the red line is SPR 40 percent and then, finally, we  
7 did a 75 percent of SPR 30 percent.

8  
9 What you will notice here is there's an immediate increase in  
10 the catch if we were to set the catch levels at SPR 30 and that  
11 is because there is a considerable amount of buffer out there  
12 right now in the spawning stock biomass. As you saw in the  
13 previous plot, it's well above 30 percent. If the fishery were  
14 to go out there and fish at the level of F 30 percent  
15 immediately, there would be an immediate increase in the  
16 landings as it worked its way down to equilibrium. That's why  
17 there is that first uptick there and eventually going down.

18  
19 If we look then at the table, we can see the same sort of thing.  
20 The left column is the year and there are two columns, one for  
21 the overfishing limit at a  $P^*$  of 50 percent, that is the  
22 probability of overfishing of 50 percent, and then the ABC. The  
23 SSC chose a probability of 43 percent of overfishing.

24  
25 As you can see in 2015 and 2016, the landings are quite high.  
26 The catch streams are quite high and then working their way down  
27 to an equilibrium and that, again, is because there is a buffer  
28 of spawning stock biomass out there that could potentially go to  
29 the fishery immediately.

30  
31 Finally, the conclusion is that there's no indication that the  
32 stock is currently being overfished or experiencing overfishing.  
33 The current management strategy used by the council seems to be  
34 very effective at achieving its stated goals.

35  
36 The Gulf of Mexico king mackerel has responded very well to  
37 regulations implemented in the 1990s and beyond and nearly every  
38 model configuration suggests that the spawning stock size has  
39 been generally increasing since 1990. However, recent low  
40 recruitments are noted and should be monitored for any longer-  
41 term trends.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Michael. Are there any questions of  
44 the presentation or Michael?

45  
46 **MR. PERRET:** Thank you and it's good to have you here. We  
47 missed you. Michael, thank you very much for that presentation  
48 and especially the way you started out, that this is a success



1 story. We don't hear a lot of that and for those of us like Mr.  
2 Zales and I and a few others in the room that were here on that  
3 downtrend in the 1980s and to see that remarkable shift going  
4 the other way, that really is good, but I just wanted to thank  
5 you for bringing that information to us and good presentation.  
6 It's encouraging.

7

8 **DR. SCHIRRIPA:** Thank you, Corky.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Corky, for those comments. I just  
11 have kind of a layman's question. When you were looking at the  
12 mixing zone and you came to some agreement, what goes into  
13 reestablishing or analyzing that mixing zone and making it  
14 smaller or larger?

15

16 **DR. SCHIRRIPA:** There is by no means a textbook that says how to  
17 split a winter mixing zone and so there is no standard set of  
18 things that we look at. The reason that we did not do it within  
19 any particular working group is because we looked at everything  
20 we could possibly get our hands on and that includes otolith  
21 shape analysis that we looked at, landings by county, growth  
22 rates, anything that we thought could distinguish Atlantic fish  
23 from Gulf fish during that time. It's hard to list it, except  
24 that we tried to incorporate and synthesize all the information  
25 available to us.

26

27 **MR. MYRON FISCHER:** Would it be -- I thank you for also being  
28 back in the area and being back at the meeting, but having you  
29 back in the Southeast. In four years, we may conduct another  
30 stock assessment and when you're looking at the yield streams,  
31 would you think it's possible the 2018 could bump up from where  
32 it is now at the ABC of 8.7 and it start off at upper nine-  
33 million? This declining trend, is it because of the distant  
34 uncertainty or is it the stock will reach equilibrium?

35

36 **DR. SCHIRRIPA:** It's the latter. If we can go back real  
37 quickly, I am going to refer you to what I will call the SPR  
38 plot. Remember this is our goal right here, to go no lower than  
39 this, and what we have is this nice buffer right here and as we  
40 fish at this level here, we're going to bring that down and  
41 equilibrium would be right here on this slide and so we kind of  
42 have this buffer going right here and that's why the landings  
43 would be large to begin with, but eventually the stock size  
44 would reach the equilibrium at this red line here, as would the  
45 landings.

46

47 Now, keep in mind though that when you have a recruitment trend  
48 like we have there, we do not have an equilibrium condition and

1 so that decline to MSST could actually happen faster, depending  
2 on what that recruitment trend is going to do in the next couple  
3 of years.

4  
5 **MR. PERRET:** Mike, on the SEAMAP trawl survey data, I assume all  
6 methodology has stayed the same and there haven't been any  
7 changes in the last few years that might account for that lower  
8 variation in the more recent years.

9  
10 **DR. SCHIRRIPA:** I wouldn't say that it's been rock solid, but I  
11 would say it was solid enough, consistent enough, to where we  
12 didn't have any problems with that trend.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Any other questions of Michael? Michael, I  
15 apologize, because I did not recognize where you are hailing  
16 from, which is the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Bonnie's  
17 shop, and I do appreciate your time and thoughtful presentation.  
18 Thank you. If there is no more questions, I am going to ask  
19 Steve -- Excuse me, David Walker.

20  
21 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** I just had a question and it was in  
22 discussion with king mackerel fishermen in the western Gulf and  
23 there was a little bit of concern and I had Steven look it up  
24 and the closure in the western Gulf was 9/20/2013 and this year,  
25 the past season, it was 10/17 and so it's nearly a month longer  
26 to catch the quota and I was just kind of wondering about your  
27 thoughts on that and what might be the causation for that or  
28 weather or whatever. I was just kind of interested and it was  
29 questioned by the industry on that.

30  
31 **DR. SCHIRRIPA:** Yes and I am going to say I can't right off the  
32 tip of my tongue, right off the top of my head, without thinking  
33 pretty hard about that -- I mean there's probably many  
34 possibilities for that that I couldn't dream up right now.  
35 Maybe it's something at the coffee break we could talk about it.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Secret squirrel stuff. Steve Branstetter.

38  
39 **DR. STEVE BRANSTETTER:** To address David's question, the closure  
40 date varies anywhere from September to November on an annual  
41 basis, pretty much.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Any other questions of Michael? Again, Michael,  
44 thank you very much for your presentation. I am going to ask  
45 Steve Atran to address the ACL Control Rule.

46  
47 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** Before we get to me, Will Patterson has a  
48 summary of the SSC recommendations and he should probably go

1 first.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you very much. Will Patterson, welcome to  
4 the podium, my friend.

5

6

#### SSC RECOMMENDATIONS

7

8 **DR. WILL PATTERSON:** Thank you, Pam, and good morning. We have  
9 just heard from Michael Schirripa about the assessment and I  
10 will reiterate his comments about this being a success story and  
11 we have seen this in recent years in discussions about king  
12 mackerel, but at this time, both the Atlantic and the Gulf  
13 stocks are estimated to be doing quite well and so that sort of  
14 compounds the success of management in both regions.

15

16 Historically, one of the biggest issues for management, as well  
17 as assessment, for king mackerel has been the mixing zone and so  
18 Dr. Dana's question to Michael about the mixing zone -- I have  
19 been involved in a couple of king mackerel benchmark SEDARs on  
20 the data end and this is obviously the -- The stock structure,  
21 population structure, of king mackerel is something that has  
22 gotten a lot of attention through the years.

23

24 I apologize that the labels aren't appearing here, but on the  
25 left, that's the historical mixing zone that Amendment 1 to the  
26 Mackerel FMP, or Coastal Pelagics FMP, in 1985 defined as  
27 Flagler/Volusia in the northeast to Collier/Monroe in the  
28 southwest and that was basically from December to March, those  
29 fish were all attributed to the Gulf stock.

30

31 There has been quite a bit of research done over time to examine  
32 population structure and one of the bits of information is  
33 molecular genetic information, historical tagging data, and  
34 then, more recently, otolith shape and otolith chemistry, but  
35 the reason why -- The otolith chemistry and otolith shape  
36 information has indicated that most of the fish in the southwest  
37 in the winter are estimated to be Gulf origin and most of the  
38 fish in the southeast, off of Peninsular Florida, were estimated  
39 to be Atlantic origin and so we've had those estimates for a  
40 while, but there is some uncertainty in those numbers, given the  
41 lack of 100 percent classification of adult and Atlantic stocks  
42 when stocks are separate.

43

44 Then, south of the Keys, the estimates have been about 50/50.  
45 However, the new piece of information that was added to the mix  
46 was some work that Peter Barile had done and he was a consultant  
47 for some fishermen on the east coast, but Peter looked at the  
48 transition of fish down the coast and so county-by-county down

1 the east coast of Florida and then we looked at this in the Gulf  
2 as well.

3  
4 What we determined is that you could follow the fish moving down  
5 the east coast by this analysis and the same thing in the Gulf  
6 of Mexico. You could follow the fish and so those fish that  
7 were estimated to be mostly Atlantic or mostly Gulf, in fact we  
8 could watch the fish move down the coast by looking month-by-  
9 month through time.

10  
11 That really was the new piece of information that was added to  
12 the story that this new mixing zone configuration is based upon  
13 and so we, again, reviewed this in the SSC and we concurred with  
14 the review panel and the CIE that this in fact was a better  
15 approach and that this represented the best information  
16 available.

17  
18 As Michael indicated, the estimates were that the stock is not  
19 overfished, nor is it undergoing overfishing. The SSC moved to  
20 accept the base king mackerel assessment model, SEDAR-38  
21 assessment model, as the best scientific information available  
22 and that is acceptable for management purposes. The stock is  
23 estimated not to be overfished or undergoing overfishing.

24  
25 I will reiterate Michael's statements about recruitment and the  
26 downturn that you see here in the projected or the estimates of  
27 biomass to BMSY on the right reflect that. The projections  
28 moving forward, as he indicated, also reflect the fact that  
29 since we're well above BMSY that you would be fishing the stock  
30 down toward that level with our current OFL set at F 30 percent  
31 SPR.

32  
33 This recruitment issue does bear watching. It's a concern, but  
34 as Michael also indicated, given the fact that the spawning  
35 stock biomass is estimated to be so much above BMSY, this is a  
36 reason to manage stocks to these levels, so that if there's  
37 natural variation that you're bouncing around in a really good  
38 zone, well above BMSY.

39  
40 Then the SSC applied the council's ABC control rule and we  
41 estimated -- These are the OFL streams that resulted from the  
42 base model and so this is the median of the F 30 percent, yield  
43 at F 30 percent, SPR and so here we have -- We have set OFL for  
44 years 2015 through 2019.

45  
46 Typically the SSC only recommends three years into the future,  
47 but given the stock status of king mackerel and other priorities  
48 for assessment, we felt comfortable in making this

1 recommendation five years into the future. Again, this motion  
2 passed unanimously.

3  
4 Secondly, we applied the council's ABC control rule and came up  
5 with a  $P^*$  of 0.43 and applied to the overfishing limit,  
6 probability density function, PDF, and so then these are the ABC  
7 recommendations or the ABCs set by the SSC as applying the  
8 council's control rule, ABC control rule, to the OFL PDF. That  
9 concludes the SSC report on king mackerel.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Will. Thank you for clarifying the  
12 mixing zone for me. Any questions for Will, the Chairman of the  
13 SSC?

14  
15 **MR. PERRET:** Will, again, thank you for your presentation and  
16 thanks for the success story. I wish I would be around to hear  
17 you or the other appropriate scientists tell this council  
18 sometime in the future about the success story on red snapper.  
19 I am sure it's coming, but I wish it was sooner rather than  
20 later, but thank you.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Any additional questions for Will?

23  
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY:** I've got a question for Dr.  
25 Schirripa, if possible.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thanks again, Will. Michael Schirripa, can you  
28 please join us?

29  
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Will might remember the answer.  
31 He's a lot younger than me, but I was involved in the last SEDAR  
32 stock assessment for king mackerel and I don't remember this,  
33 but, Mike, do you recall in the last king mackerel assessment  
34 that the last few years of biomass showed the same trend that  
35 we're seeing now?

36  
37 It seems to me that with king mackerel that every stock  
38 assessment we had we had that same declining trend and if you  
39 kind of did a pseudo retrospective analysis of it, it might  
40 indicate that, that there's something about the modeling that  
41 just does that, but it doesn't show up in subsequent analyses,  
42 but I haven't had the time to research it to know for sure and I  
43 didn't know, since you did the continuity run, if you recalled  
44 what the projection was for the last stock assessment.

45  
46 **DR. SCHIRRIPA:** Thanks, Doug. Unfortunately, I was not around  
47 for SEDAR-16 and so I don't have the clearest recollection of  
48 that, but I will say that we did do a retrospective analysis on

1 this model that showed there was a dip in that last year, but  
2 that dip got deeper and deeper the more years of recruitment we  
3 would put in there, obviously because of that declining trend.  
4

5 I can only think that that dip is always there, because that --  
6 The start in the declining trend in recruitment started at  
7 around 2000, I think, 1999 or 2000, and so I think it's a real  
8 dip, because that's what the recruitment has been doing. I  
9 can't recall what the last year of SEDAR-16 was, but these same  
10 recruitments may have influenced that. Four years ago it  
11 probably would have, because it's been declining for more than  
12 four years.  
13

14 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Do any members of the scientific team have  
15 anything to add on that? Hearing none, thank you, Michael. Now  
16 I think it's time to move to Steve Atran and thank you for  
17 correcting the agenda for me, Steve.  
18

#### 19 **ACL/ACT CONTROL RULE RECOMMENDATION**

20  
21 **MR. ATRAN:** Thank you. I think we all accidentally forgot about  
22 Will's presentation and I am glad that he remembered it. As I  
23 did yesterday for gag and red snapper, I ran the ACL/ACT buffer  
24 spreadsheet for king mackerel.  
25

26 Again, I am not going to go into a lot of detail describing it.  
27 It's the multicolored spreadsheets in the back of the room.  
28 It's a point-based system and it looks at several items related  
29 to management uncertainty and the more points that are  
30 accumulated, the higher the buffer result. In the case of the  
31 recreational sector, which is Tab C, Number 4(b), it ended up  
32 with a low --  
33

34 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** What was that, Steve, what tab?  
35

36 **MR. ATRAN:** Tab C, Number 4(b). It says "King Mackerel  
37 Recreational 2015" in the upper right. King mackerel has been -  
38 - The recreational sector has been well below its ACL over the  
39 last four years. It hasn't even come close and so there is no  
40 overages to worry about.  
41

42 The only factors really affecting the buffer are the fact that  
43 the primary means of collecting catch data is through MRIP,  
44 which has some imprecision associated with it, and in-season  
45 accountability measures have not been used. They haven't been  
46 needed, since the ACL hasn't been approached, but with those  
47 being the only two factors, the spreadsheet recommends a buffer  
48 of 8 percent for the ACT.

1  
2 On the commercial side, since king mackerel is not under an IFQ  
3 system, there is a buffer for them. In this case, the primary  
4 factor controlling the buffer for the commercial side is that  
5 there were overages in three of the last four years, but they  
6 were very small, on the order of 3 to 4 percent over the ACL,  
7 and that's looking at the total catch for all the various zones  
8 and gear types combined compared to the total ACL. When that  
9 was plugged into the spreadsheet, we came out with a  
10 recommendation of a 9 percent ACT buffer and that's for the king  
11 mackerel fishery as a whole.

12  
13 I also calculated it for each individual zone and gear type,  
14 since they have their own individual quotas, and I can go  
15 through that if you like, but since apparently there is going to  
16 be some reorganization of those zones and gear type quotas, I am  
17 not sure that's relevant and I think probably just the overall  
18 quota and buffer is the most appropriate way to go and so if  
19 anybody has any questions about these spreadsheets, I will be  
20 glad to answer them.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Steven. Any questions of Steven?  
23 Hearing none, are there any committee recommendations or issues  
24 regarding SEDAR-38 at this time? Let's move on then.

25  
26 We're going to go into Item VI, Scoping Document for Coastal  
27 Migratory Pelagics Amendment 26, Gulf of Mexico and South  
28 Atlantic King Mackerel Allocations and Mixing Zone Delineation.  
29 Doug, before we go on, Ryan, being the whip that he is, he has  
30 determined that 2008 would have been terminal year for the  
31 SEDAR-16.

32  
33 **MR. RINDONE:** Any declining trends that would have started in  
34 say 2000, as Dr. Schirripa inferred, would have been seen in the  
35 SEDAR-16 assessment and so that dip that occurred in the  
36 terminal biomass then, which also occurred in the current  
37 assessment, those wouldn't be -- The current dip wouldn't be an  
38 artifact of the previous assessment.

39  
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Yes and that's something I will  
41 look into later. Basically, I think that my memory is that due  
42 to the modeling of when you finish your recruitment, you have to  
43 go to an average and every stock assessment indicates a decline  
44 and I just want to look into that.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Doug, and thank you, Ryan. Ryan, go  
47 ahead.

48

1           **SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AMENDMENT 26**

2  
3 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. CMP Amendment 26, this  
4 scoping document addresses quite a few things, including king  
5 mackerel allocations between the recreational and commercial  
6 sectors and within the commercial zones in the Gulf, the new  
7 stock boundary, and recognition of the new winter mixing zone as  
8 outlined in the stock assessment, annual catch limits for the  
9 Gulf and the South Atlantic, and also it looks at a sale  
10 provision. It's a sale provision for king mackerel bycatch in  
11 the shark gillnet fishery.

12  
13 We will just go ahead and work our way through this and I am  
14 going to go ahead and move you guys straight down to page 5,  
15 which talks about the possible management changes and this is  
16 Tab C, Number 5. We are going to page 5.

17  
18 The first considered management change is for the Atlantic king  
19 mackerel annual catch limit and Table 1 there outlines the  
20 associated buffers and equilibrium yields for the projections  
21 for the Atlantic migratory group of king mackerel. Remember,  
22 this is the group that goes down to the Dade/Monroe line except  
23 from November 1 through March 31, in which it interacts 50/50  
24 with the Gulf migratory group south of U.S. 1 in Monroe County.

25  
26 The Atlantic migratory group is not overfished, nor is it  
27 undergoing overfishing, as Dr. Schirripa stated, and that group  
28 is also looking at an increase in their projected yields and not  
29 quite to the same degree as the Gulf, but still a projected  
30 increase all the same.

31  
32 The landings projections for the Atlantic look a lot larger than  
33 the Gulf, because what used to be the Florida east coast zone,  
34 which used to be considered part of the Gulf stock, is now  
35 considered part of the Atlantic stock for the reasons that Dr.  
36 Schirripa discussed, that the stock assessment group had looked  
37 at. We'll get into what the Gulf looks like and how to make  
38 that relationship.

39  
40 The current Atlantic mackerel ACLs for the Atlantic migratory  
41 group is 10.46 million pounds and pending approval of Amendment  
42 20B, the South Atlantic would be managing two zones for that  
43 Atlantic migratory group, a northern zone and a southern zone,  
44 for the commercial sector.

45  
46 Whatever yield projections the South Atlantic agrees upon and  
47 the Gulf concurs on would be distributed as stated there. Any  
48 questions about the South Atlantic's yield projections?



1  
2 **MS. BADEMAN:** I just have a question, since they did split that  
3 zone up. When they are applying this increased based on the  
4 mixing zone changes, are they considering just adding it to the  
5 southern zone? I forget what they're calling the North Carolina  
6 one and the Florida and everybody else one. Do you know how  
7 that's being set up? I am just curious.  
8

9 **MR. RINDONE:** Their overall ABC that they agree on and whatever  
10 ACL buffer they select, that resulting poundage will be split  
11 between the recreational and commercial first and then within  
12 the commercial between the northern and southern zones. Is that  
13 what you were asking?  
14

15 **MS. BADEMAN:** Yes and I mean I'm thinking strictly just about  
16 the commercial component of that, but it seems like if some of  
17 those fish are coming over because they were from the Gulf zone,  
18 then they would be applied only to the southern part of the  
19 commercial side or they would need to at least rethink about  
20 that allocation that they have between northern and southern and  
21 is that on the table, do you know?  
22

23 **MR. RINDONE:** There are some public comments that were received  
24 that wanted to look at how much of the allocation was headed  
25 north, but it's not that the fish are actually moving into that  
26 area. It's that they were thought to always exist and always be  
27 Atlantic fish off of that Florida east coast zone and so the pie  
28 slices aren't being handed over. They were always thought to be  
29 in the same place and we just understand that better now than we  
30 did before. It will go recreational and commercial first and  
31 then the commercial portion will be split and if the South  
32 Atlantic wants to revisit those northern and southern zone  
33 percentages, then they can certainly chase that down.  
34

35 **MS. MARA LEVY:** I think the council was sent an email recently,  
36 but just so everyone knows, 20B was approved and I think that  
37 the final rule just got published in the last day or so.  
38

39 **MR. RINDONE:** Right and it will be implemented on March 1. Any  
40 other questions before we move on? Okay. The Gulf migratory  
41 group ACL, Dr. Patterson just finished going over what the SSC  
42 recommended coming out of the stock assessment and, again, the  
43 Gulf migratory group is not overfished, nor is it undergoing  
44 overfishing. There is actually a fairly healthy surplus of  
45 biomass in the fishery, which explains the declining trend in  
46 the landings projections from 2015 through 2019.  
47

48 That table that you see there up on the screen, and this is on

1 page 6 of the document, reflects the SSC's recommendations and  
2 so a good way to think about this is our current ACL in the Gulf  
3 for the recreational and commercial I think is 10.8 million  
4 pounds and so this is less than that, but the way to think of it  
5 is instead of having a three-pound cake split between five  
6 people, you have a two-and-a-half-pound cake split between three  
7 people.

8  
9 We don't have quite as much biomass being attributed to the  
10 Gulf, but it's being attributed to a much smaller area than it  
11 was before and so that's why we're still looking at increases  
12 across the board, should the council adopt these projected  
13 landings, for the recreational and the commercial sectors, if  
14 that makes sense. Any questions on that? Everybody likes cake.

15  
16 On page 7 there at the top, we talk a little bit about the  
17 current split and how it's divided and so however the council  
18 decides to pursue any changes in the recreational and commercial  
19 allocations, that could change, but just to give you guys a  
20 point of reference of where we are now from Amendment 18.

21  
22 The next thing was the king mackerel stock boundary and Doctors  
23 Schirripa and Patterson covered this I think pretty well from  
24 the assessment and just to summarize, the assessment report  
25 stated that the best approach is to establish the management  
26 mixing zone south of the Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas and as a  
27 relative line, it's south of U.S. 1 and the southern side of  
28 Monroe County from November 1 to March 31 and with 50 percent of  
29 the landings being attributed to the Gulf and 50 percent to the  
30 South Atlantic and so even mixing is presumed between the two  
31 migratory groups.

32  
33 Recognition of this new mixing zone would be required so that we  
34 can go about redistributing the commercial zone allocations,  
35 which we'll get to in a bit, but does anybody have any other  
36 questions as far as the mixing zone? I think we covered that  
37 one pretty well. We will just keep blazing forward.

38  
39 **MR. PERRET:** Has the South Atlantic acted yet on the new  
40 boundary? We say they are considering and we're considering  
41 changing and have they addressed that yet?

42  
43 **MR. RINDONE:** We're addressing it jointly in this document.  
44 This is a joint amendment between us and them, because we still  
45 manage the mackerels jointly. We're all in it together.  
46 Anything else before we go to the commercial zones?

47  
48 So back to page 9 and Figure 2. You can see the commercial

1 fishing zones for the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups and so  
2 the important thing to remember here, again, is that that  
3 Florida east coast subzone is considered Atlantic fish now and  
4 so the Gulf isn't responsible for that portion of the fishery  
5 anymore and so we would just have the western zone and the  
6 northern zone in the eastern Gulf and the southern zone in the  
7 eastern Gulf and for the sake of keeping the names of all the  
8 subzones down to a minimum, the IPT is recommending for the Gulf  
9 commercial zone allocations just to call it the western zone,  
10 the northern zone, and the southern zone.

11  
12 That brings us into the commercial zone allocations and right  
13 now, the pie is basically split five ways, with one of those  
14 slices being that Florida east coast zone that's going away.  
15 What that does is that leaves us with only 68 percent of the 100  
16 percent of the commercial allocation distributed amongst the  
17 remaining zones and so that 32 percent that was voided by the  
18 Florida east coast zone, we have to fold that in somehow or  
19 another into the existing commercial zones and there are a  
20 couple of ways that that can be done. Actually, there is an  
21 unlimited number of ways, but there is a couple of ways that we  
22 propose in the document, just because they were the simplest to  
23 propose initially.

24  
25 They could be done equally, where you take that approximately 32  
26 percent and you just divide it four ways between the western  
27 zone, the northern zone, and the two southern zone components,  
28 the hand line component and the gillnet component, or it could  
29 be done proportionally based on the proportion of the remaining  
30 68 percent that each individual component of those four that I  
31 just mentioned holds of that 68 percent.

32  
33 For example, for the western zone, whatever 31 percent divided  
34 by 68 percent, that would be the proportion of the amount  
35 yielded by the Florida east coast zone that would be transferred  
36 to the western zone and it's just a couple of ways of doing it  
37 and if the council wants to explore other options, that is  
38 totally you guys' option, but we just put these in there just to  
39 kind of get the ball rolling and see how some of these numbers  
40 might -- So you could see how some of these numbers might  
41 change. Any questions on this, on the commercial zone  
42 allocations?

43  
44 Again, remember this is a scoping document and so things can be  
45 moved around and added and changed and whatever you guys'  
46 pleasure is.

47  
48 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** I am not on your committee, but I was just

1 reading the verbiage there and it said that these numbers would  
2 probably have to change because of 20B and we just heard that  
3 20B was approved and what changes would be made in that? Do we  
4 know?

5  
6 **MR. RINDONE:** That's what I was talking about as far as the  
7 Florida east coast zone no longer being part of the Gulf  
8 migratory group and so that 31.91 percent out of the 100 percent  
9 total for the commercial zone allocations in the Gulf, that  
10 31.91 percent goes away and so now we're not at 100 percent  
11 anymore.

12  
13 We have to get everything back to 100 percent mathematically, so  
14 that the fish are properly allocated, and the equal reallocation  
15 and proportional reallocation options presented in Table 4 are  
16 just a couple of ways to do that. It doesn't mean it has to be  
17 done that way, but the IPT put those in there just for you guys'  
18 consideration and does that answer your question?

19  
20 **MR. BOYD:** That does. Thank you.

21  
22 **MR. RINDONE:** Are there any other questions about the commercial  
23 zone reallocations? I will move forward. The next thing on the  
24 list for Amendment 26 is sector reallocation for Gulf migratory  
25 group kingfish and this is considering modifying the sector  
26 allocations between the commercial and recreational fisheries  
27 and historically the commercial fishery has met or, as Will had  
28 stated, just slightly exceeded, or maybe it was Steven, but just  
29 slightly exceeded its ACL, whereas the recreational fishery,  
30 since 2000, has consistently fished under its ACL.

31  
32 The council, in previous meetings, has considered shifting some  
33 portion of the recreational ACL to the commercial ACL and had  
34 asked that the Science Center do an analysis to examine the  
35 effects of shifting some of that allocation and those analyses  
36 are underway now that the stock assessment is complete and the  
37 recommendations from the SSC have been provided.

38  
39 Table 5 shows you the total ACL in the Gulf and also the percent  
40 of the sector ACL that was landed by the commercial fishery and  
41 the recreational fishery. What this means is of the ACL  
42 allocated to the commercial fishery, how much of it did they  
43 land and of the ACL allocated to the recreational fishery, how  
44 much of it did they land?

45  
46 You can see that the commercial fishery is just under or just  
47 over its ACL in most years, whereas the recreational fishery is  
48 barely catching half of the fish allocated to them most years.

1 Then the total ACL, of course, is not being met, because of the  
2 underages from the recreational side, which accounts for 68  
3 percent of the fishery.

4  
5 Table 6 looks at the total actual pounds of fish landed in the  
6 Gulf and then also splits it up by the commercial and  
7 recreational sectors and then shows you again the percent of  
8 those total landings by sector and so what used to be landings  
9 that were primarily dominated by the recreational fishery are  
10 now more so dominated by the commercial fishery, but not because  
11 the recreational fishery doesn't have the fish to catch. Any  
12 questions so far? Okay. I will keep moving forward.

13  
14 The sale of king mackerel bycatch in the shark gillnet fishery,  
15 and this is on page 12, this is something that was proffered by  
16 the South Atlantic Council and Zack might want to speak to this  
17 a little bit and please feel free to jump in if you want to.

18  
19 Amendment 20A that was implemented last year included an action  
20 that prohibited bag limit sales of kingfish and Spanish mackerel  
21 in the South Atlantic and the South Atlantic Council wants to  
22 consider having a provision to allow the sale of bag-limit-  
23 caught kingfish from the shark gillnet fishery, because this is  
24 something that historically has always gone on and the fishermen  
25 feel that because drift gillnet is not an authorized gear and  
26 they can't be sold under the current kingfish permits, but they  
27 want something to do with these fish when they happen to catch  
28 them. Currently, if they are caught in the shark gillnet  
29 fishery, then they're just discarded and the fishermen feel  
30 that's a waste of the resource.

31  
32 **MR. PERRET:** Give us some guesstimate or estimate of what are  
33 small numbers? What are we talking about? Is that a hundred  
34 pounds or a thousand pounds or 20,000 or 30,000? What's the  
35 range we're talking about?

36  
37 **MR. RINDONE:** Unfortunately, Mr. Perret, I am parroting what I  
38 was told from the South Atlantic Council and I do not have  
39 numbers for you, but Mr. Bowen might.

40  
41 **MR. ZACK BOWEN:** I do not. I don't have any numbers either.

42  
43 **MR. PERRET:** I guess my point is I hate to see anything wasted  
44 if it could be utilized, but then I would hate to see this being  
45 used to develop another part of a fishery that we may not want  
46 to have or we don't have, since this particular type of gear is  
47 not a legal gear. Ryan, if there is some way to get some kind  
48 of quantitative number of what are we talking about.

1  
2 **MR. RINDONE:** I can put out some feelers to try to figure out  
3 what those numbers are.  
4  
5 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Ryan, currently you would need an incidental  
6 shark permit, correct, to sell shark that's a bycatch?  
7  
8 **MR. RINDONE:** This is a directed fishery in the South Atlantic,  
9 but the problem is that the only gillnet endorsements on  
10 commercial king mackerel permits are in the southern zone in the  
11 Gulf. That gear is not permitted for any other federal kingfish  
12 permits in the Gulf or the South Atlantic and so by landing  
13 kingfish with a gillnet, those fish currently can't be sold by  
14 the shark gillnetters, because they don't have the proper permit  
15 endorsement to actually sell those fish. It would be selling  
16 fish landed with an illegal gear that they would end up fined  
17 for.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** I guess my question though was if they had an  
20 incidental shark permit, then they would be allowed up to  
21 whatever the amount is, what is it, a shark a day or something  
22 like that, for sale?  
23  
24 **MR. RINDONE:** If you guys wanted to establish some incidental  
25 permit for them, then that's certainly something that you could  
26 explore.  
27  
28 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** But there is one that already exists is what my  
29 point is.  
30  
31 **MR. ROY WILLIAMS:** The council has prohibited the use of drift  
32 gillnets back in the late 1980s or early 1990s sometime. It was  
33 a big issue at the time off of the Fort Pierce, Florida area and  
34 we prohibited drift gillnets as a legal gear.  
35  
36 What I read in here is they just want -- If I read this  
37 correctly, they just want to be able to sell a bag limit and  
38 that's what it sounds like. It says 20A included an action to  
39 prohibit bag limit sales and so if that is what is impacting  
40 them, I think on the South Atlantic that's three fish, isn't it?  
41 I think that's what their bag limit is. No?  
42  
43 **MS. BADEMAN:** I think it's one.  
44  
45 **MR. BOWEN:** No, it's three and if that's the case, you're  
46 looking at two to six fish per boat, if that's the case.  
47  
48 **MS. BADEMAN:** Ryan, I am assuming that all of these gillnet

1 fishermen that are interested in doing this have the king  
2 mackerel permit, a federal king mackerel permit?

3  
4 **MR. RINDONE:** The ones that are interested in this do, yes. Any  
5 other questions as far as the kingfish bycatch?

6  
7 **MR. WILLIAMS:** To what Martha said though, I am trying to  
8 remember and isn't the federal permit a permit to exceed the bag  
9 limit and it's not a permit to sell it?

10  
11 **MS. BADEMAN:** It used to be, but we changed it now and I think  
12 that's part of the 20B or 20A, one of the 20's that we just did.  
13 That was part of the change.

14  
15 **MR. BOWEN:** I misspoke and I was thinking recreational when we  
16 were talking about kingfish. It's two per person and so it's  
17 two to six per boat. I just wanted to clarify.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Let's continue on, Ryan.

20  
21 **MR. RINDONE:** Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. Another item for  
22 consideration is management of the Florida east coast subzone.  
23 The South Atlantic had wanted public input on ways to address  
24 concerns about the increased effort in that subzone and, again,  
25 that subzone is now becoming part of the South Atlantic's  
26 migratory group.

27  
28 Potential measures might include some subquota of the updated  
29 Atlantic kingfish ACL for that subzone or an endorsement to fish  
30 kingfish in that subzone or other specific accountability  
31 measures to help control effort in that area. Another thing  
32 that they are wanting to consider is permit reduction, but we'll  
33 get to that in Amendment 28.

34  
35 The purpose and need, as the IPT has seen it thus far, and you  
36 guys feel free to modify this, the purpose is to set annual  
37 catch limits and redefine allocations between regions and  
38 fishing sectors for the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups of  
39 king mackerel. The need is to optimize access to the fishery in  
40 the Gulf and South Atlantic waters to provide the greatest  
41 benefit to the nation.

42  
43 Does anybody have any questions thus far on the scoping  
44 document? I know that there was some desire to see a discussion  
45 of accountability measures added to this and is that something  
46 that you guys want to present now? We can certainly refresh on  
47 what the current accountability measures are, but we do have  
48 accountability measures in place for the entire fishery.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** I think that was a comment directed by Corky,  
3 who is no longer in the room, and so perhaps over the course of  
4 the next day -- We can take it up at full council if that's  
5 something that the council wants to include in the scoping  
6 document, unless someone wants to discuss it now. Any other  
7 questions on the scoping document or any ideas or any issues?  
8

9 **MR. RINDONE:** At this point, you guys need to decide if you want  
10 to take this out to scoping now and I know that we were looking  
11 at going to scoping -- Charlene can correct me if I'm wrong, but  
12 I think after the March meeting and is that correct?  
13

14 **MS. CHARLENE PONCE:** It was my understanding we were waiting for  
15 the South Atlantic Council to give their blessing before we went  
16 to scoping.  
17

18 **MR. RINDONE:** The South Atlantic Council scopes every January  
19 and they had provided some comments, which I was going to cover  
20 in Amendment 28. Most of their comments were more pertaining to  
21 Amendment 28. As far as Amendment 26 goes and the ACLs, of  
22 course the fishermen wanted to see the most fish possible  
23 released to the fisheries, but they have already been to scoping  
24 in January and so at this point, it's the council's pleasure as  
25 far as when they actually want to go.  
26

27 It could be before the March meeting or after. I know that  
28 there are a lot of things that are on the docket and I think  
29 some of them are going to be -- They're going to try to go to  
30 scoping after the March meeting, but if I'm wrong, please  
31 correct me.  
32

33 **MS. PONCE:** We do have some scoping scheduled for March, but not  
34 mackerel related.  
35

36 **MR. BOWEN:** We are moving forward on Amendment 26 and we are in  
37 scoping now.  
38

39 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Yes and so I would say we'll go to  
40 scoping as soon as we can work out schedules with staff workload  
41 and so we'll go to scoping as soon as possible and we will  
42 schedule it as we can, rather than wait a particular length of  
43 time.  
44

45 **MR. WALKER:** I agree with Doug. I thought I would like to see  
46 it go out to scoping as soon as possible, myself, to get the  
47 feedback on this as soon as we can.  
48



1 **MS. BADEMAN:** Corky, what's your pleasure on this? I know you  
2 were interested in adding those accountability measure things in  
3 here and do you want to see something written up before we  
4 approve this or are you good giving Ryan latitude to include  
5 something?  
6

7 **MR. PERRET:** I definitely would like to see something relative  
8 to accountability measures. I just think any and all sectors  
9 should be held accountable and I've had another thought. We  
10 talked possible reallocation from one side to the other for  
11 various reasons, fair and equitable and all that stuff, one  
12 group not getting anywhere near what their allowable take is and  
13 so on and so forth.  
14

15 Then I got to thinking about what happens if we reallocate fish  
16 from one group to the other because that group is not  
17 particularly taking their allocation currently, but then we've  
18 got them constrained at a number and then they start going over.  
19 It seems like if we move fish, we ought to have a clause in the  
20 document somewhere that would allow for some of the fish that  
21 have been moved from one group to the other to go back to the  
22 original group, if indeed their fishery is expanding and that  
23 sort of thing. That is my thinking on it and I would like to  
24 see something in the document that would be relative to that  
25 concept.  
26

27 **MS. BADEMAN:** I guess what I'm asking is are you comfortable  
28 with just giving direction for Ryan to include that without us  
29 seeing it again before it goes to scoping?  
30

31 **MR. PERRET:** I have all the confidence in the world in Ryan and  
32 Mr. Gregory and the staff.  
33

34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Good morning and thank you.  
35 Remember the purpose of scoping and so any information we get  
36 from the public we're going to bring back in a new document that  
37 will include new ideas and then it will be up to the council at  
38 that time, when we have a draft, to tell us which options you  
39 want to continue with and which options you don't want to  
40 continue with.  
41

42 I would hope we would have the latitude to include any good  
43 ideas we come across from now until that point and then once the  
44 council starts making motions as to rejected options or options  
45 to keep in, then we quit contributing to that process directly.  
46

47 **MR. PERRET:** But it's me talking and my idea that I'm talking  
48 about may go out to scoping and I may be the only one in the

1 whole Gulf of Mexico that thinks that and if indeed that's the  
2 case, I can be influenced to change my opinion, but I think we  
3 should have things for the public to be able to comment on as  
4 well as we want input from them also and so that's why I'm  
5 suggesting to Ryan that you have something in there relative to  
6 my issues.

7  
8 **MS. BADEMAN:** Let me see if I can bring this conversation in for  
9 a landing. **I would offer a motion to recommend to the council**  
10 **that the Amendment 26 document go out for scoping.**

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Do I have a second? Corky seconds. Any  
13 discussion? **Hearing none, all in favor say aye; opposed. The**  
14 **motion passes.** I think the next step then is to call for  
15 locations for where scoping could take place and I will go to  
16 the state directors to provide their recommended locations. I  
17 will start with Texas first.

18  
19 **MR. ROBINSON:** I am going to say the Galveston area and Port  
20 Aransas.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Alabama.

23  
24 **MR. ANSON:** Mobile.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Mississippi.

27  
28 **DR. KELLY LUCAS:** Biloxi.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Louisiana.

31  
32 **MR. FISCHER:** It's staff's call, Kenner or Grand Isle.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Florida.

35  
36 **MS. BADEMAN:** Key West, somewhere Tampa Bay-ish, and Panama  
37 City.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you. Doug, do we need to establish any  
40 timeframe or do we leave that to the staff to determine?

41  
42 **MR. FISCHER:** Mine was an either or. We have had a couple of  
43 meetings in Grand Isle and actually filled the room and I am  
44 trying to see if we can get some nods from commercial fishermen,  
45 seeing if it's suitable, but we had some good performance there.

46  
47 **MR. RINDONE:** If you prefer Grand Isle, that's what we'll shoot  
48 for.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Okay. I think we are complete with the  
3 Amendment 26 and now let's move on into Amendment 28, which is  
4 the --

5  
6 **MR. RINDONE:** We have a motion.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** My apologies. We have to vote on these -- I  
9 need a motion to move forward on the proposed public hearing  
10 locations of Galveston and Port Aransas, Texas; Mobile, Alabama;  
11 Biloxi, Mississippi; Kenner/Grand Isle; Key West, Tampa Bay, and  
12 Panama City. Do I hear a motion?

13  
14 **MS. BADEMAN:** So moved.

15  
16 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** It's seconded by Myron and is there any  
17 discussion? **Any opposition? The motion carries.** Now let's  
18 move into Amendment 28, Scoping Document for Coastal Migratory  
19 Pelagics: Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic King and Spanish  
20 Mackerel Permit Split, and Ryan.

21  
22 **SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AMENDMENT 28**

23  
24 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On page 1, this says this  
25 is an options paper and it's actually a scoping document and I'm  
26 sorry about that typo. We will go ahead and we will move into  
27 the introduction and just kind of give an overview of what the  
28 current situation is.

29  
30 As of January 6, there were 1,309 valid king mackerel permits  
31 with 146 that were expired but renewable, for a total of 1,455.  
32 In recent years, the number of valid, fishable permits ranges  
33 from 1,300 to 1,600, depending on the number that have been  
34 renewed.

35  
36 However, the total number of federal kingfish permits, again  
37 which currently apply to the Gulf and the Atlantic, cannot  
38 increase. It can only decrease, since there is a moratorium on  
39 new permits.

40  
41 There are lots of options possible for separating the permits  
42 and the number of permits granted per vessel. Right now, we  
43 have traveling fishermen, primarily from the east coast of  
44 Florida, the fish in the Gulf western zone and sometimes also  
45 the northern zone and, as I recently learned, also sometimes the  
46 southern zone and these traveling fishermen have been fishing  
47 these zones for quite some time, but there has been a history of  
48 a little bit of angst from especially the western zone and

1 northern zone Gulf fishermen about these Atlantic fishermen  
2 coming over and also putting effort into the fishery and they  
3 feel that it's causing the quotas to be met more quickly and  
4 limiting access to the fishery by Gulf fishermen.  
5

6 The councils have to determine if a vessel could be granted both  
7 permits or if it would be limited to one permit or if they would  
8 be allowed to buy additional permits to grant access to  
9 additional zones or in the Gulf or the Atlantic, if the permits  
10 were actually split.  
11

12 This is very much in its infancy as far as how this permit split  
13 might occur and, as I had said before, the Gulf Council has not  
14 yet even agreed that they want to consider splitting the permits  
15 and so, first and foremost, you guys would have to determine  
16 that this is something that you're interested in doing.  
17

18 Any qualifying criteria that results in a vessel not receiving a  
19 permit would have economic and social impacts, of course, and a  
20 valid permit has value to the permit holder, as it can result in  
21 dockside revenue.  
22

23 In Amendment 28, we had looked at reducing latent permits, or  
24 permits that didn't have landings or meet a landings threshold  
25 over a certain number of years. Ultimately, both councils  
26 decided that they didn't want to go forward with that and so no  
27 action was selected as preferred for eliminating any permits.  
28

29 The South Atlantic still has a desire to look at eliminating  
30 permits, as I had suggested in the discussion for the Amendment  
31 26 scoping document, especially for the Florida east coast  
32 subzone, or the area that comprises what was formerly known as  
33 the Florida east coast subzone.  
34

35 We put Table 1 in this document on page 6 and this is actually  
36 an excerpt from Amendment 20A and it just shows you, as of April  
37 4, 2013, and, again, this is dated information, but it just  
38 gives you an idea of permits that would qualify or not qualify  
39 based on having to have an average annual landings for a certain  
40 time period. It's page 6 of Tab C, Number 6. I am looking at  
41 Table 1. It's page 5 of the document, but it's showing up as  
42 page 6 on Word.  
43

44 Again, this is information that was just excerpted from 20A and  
45 so this isn't currently what the split would be, but we just  
46 wanted to give you guys an idea of what it looked like back then  
47 and so a substantial amount of permits could be reduced if some  
48 sort of poundage was applied.

1  
2 The Gulf and Atlantic have different seasons and fishing zones  
3 and quotas and trip limits and so setting qualifications based  
4 on landings could be biased by region, because you could be  
5 allowed to take more fish in one area than you can in another  
6 and so depending on where thresholds for qualifying to fish in a  
7 certain area are set, people might be excluded not by a function  
8 of not fishing, but by a function of whatever management they  
9 are constrained to follow and so the council should consider  
10 also how permit modification would affect requirements for  
11 things like the gillnet endorsement.

12  
13 Table 2 on page 6 of the document shows the quotas and trip  
14 limits for the commercial kingfish zones and subzone and so you  
15 see in the Atlantic group they have a 3,500-pound trip limit and  
16 in the Gulf, we have varying trip limits, depending on where you  
17 are.

18  
19 Of course, the Florida east coast zone has -- That area has its  
20 own different set of regulations in comparison to the poundage  
21 trip limits, in that it's a limit of fifty fish as opposed to an  
22 actual poundage.

23  
24 The councils may consider qualification criteria other than  
25 landings, such as a vessel home port or where a fisherman has  
26 historically fished. If your home port is Pensacola, but you  
27 have always fished in the western zone for the last twenty some  
28 odd years, then maybe that's where you want to continue to fish  
29 and so there are lots of ways to skin the cat.

30  
31 Other options include thresholds for number of trips or days  
32 fished and so important issues to consider would be should  
33 separate commercial permits be established for king mackerel in  
34 the Gulf and the Atlantic and should permit holders be allowed  
35 to receive both permits or only one or should there be only one  
36 permit allowed per fishable zone?

37  
38 We have the northern and southern zones in the Atlantic and the  
39 western, northern, and southern zones in the Gulf and so there  
40 are basically five areas that could be fished and should that  
41 require five permits or just a Gulf and an Atlantic or how would  
42 you want to do it?

43  
44 If only one permit is granted per current permit holder, how  
45 will the determination be made if a permit holder qualifies for  
46 both? There might be secondary qualification criteria and what  
47 should that qualifying criteria be? Should it be landings,  
48 trips, days at sea, home port, et cetera?

1  
2 Does either council wish to establish any qualifying criteria  
3 that would reduce the permits? This is something that seems to  
4 be of more interest to the South Atlantic than the Gulf, the  
5 whole permit reduction thing, since the Gulf largely was not in  
6 favor of reducing permits in 20A.

7  
8 The issues are similar, if we move down to page 7, for Spanish  
9 mackerel, in that the South Atlantic wants to see those permits  
10 split between the Gulf and the South Atlantic. For the large  
11 part, Gulf Spanish mackerel fishermen don't go to the South  
12 Atlantic to catch Spanish mackerel.

13  
14 As you guys probably remember from SEDAR-28, which was the  
15 Spanish mackerel stock assessment, the ACL for Spanish mackerel  
16 jumped almost two-and-a-half times and so the Spanish stock in  
17 the Gulf is considerably healthy and so splitting the permits  
18 is, again, mostly a South Atlantic issue for Spanish and  
19 currently, as of January 6, NMFS had issued 1,717 Spanish  
20 mackerel permits.

21  
22 These are open access and so anybody can get one of these right  
23 now. The South Atlantic is interested in no longer having them  
24 be open access and being able to split the permits would allow  
25 them to do that. Should those permits be split and should there  
26 be a limited access system for those Spanish permits and would  
27 you cap the permits at the current level, set qualifying  
28 criteria, establish a temporary moratorium? There are lots of  
29 options on how you could go about splitting the Spanish mackerel  
30 permits and the ensuing fallout from that.

31  
32 Control dates might also be used and the current control dates  
33 for Gulf king mackerel is June 30, 2009 and March 31, 2010 for  
34 Gulf Spanish and South Atlantic king and Spanish, both have a  
35 control date of September 17, 2010.

36  
37 Since we have a new stock assessment that shows that both stocks  
38 are healthy, the council might wish to reconsider those and  
39 other alternatives, outside of permit separation, could include  
40 establishing endorsements for zones or regions considered to  
41 have overcapacity and qualifying criteria would need to be  
42 established for those endorsements.

43  
44 Separate FMPs could also be created for each council.  
45 Currently, we have a joint FMP and with the mixing zone being  
46 seen as being a lot smaller and the South Atlantic's interest in  
47 splitting the permits and Gulf commercial kingfish fishermen's  
48 interest in having a little bit better access to the fishery in

1 the western and northern zone, having separate permits and a  
2 separate FMP might be something that the councils wish to  
3 consider.

4  
5 Just since the Atlantic zone goes all the way to New York, the  
6 Mid-Atlantic Council has delegated management of kingfish and  
7 Spanish to the South Atlantic Council and so whatever happens as  
8 far as these permits being split, the Mid-Atlantic would need to  
9 be included in those discussions also, but because they have  
10 delegated management to the South Atlantic, it just would remain  
11 a joint amendment between the Gulf and the South Atlantic and so  
12 we wouldn't have to wait for three councils to weigh in.

13  
14 As far as the current purpose and need, currently the purpose is  
15 to separate the federal commercial permits for kingfish and  
16 Spanish into permits for each region for the Gulf and the  
17 Atlantic migratory groups and the need is to allow the Gulf and  
18 South Atlantic Councils to more effectively manage commercial  
19 participation in the respective regions and make changes to  
20 participation that will not unnecessarily affect the other  
21 region.

22  
23 If you guys go all the way to the very last page, there is some  
24 comments that were received last January when this idea of  
25 splitting the permits initially came about and depending on  
26 where you are, it kind of dictates whether folks want to see the  
27 permits split or not.

28  
29 Folks that can fish on both sides like in the Keys aren't quite  
30 as in favor, because currently they can catch kingfish in the  
31 Gulf or the Atlantic with a little bit more ease than say  
32 somebody that has to trailer a boat and haul it somewhere.

33  
34 There remains some support, especially in the South Atlantic, of  
35 removing latent permits and so that may be something which the  
36 councils want to consider again, but, again, there are some  
37 areas that are opposed to getting rid of any of the permits,  
38 because, for example, in the northern zone in the Gulf, there  
39 are dually-permitted charter boats that, until recently, haven't  
40 been able to get out and actually go fish. They usually don't  
41 start using their commercial permits until like the beginning of  
42 October, since the charter season usually ends around the end of  
43 September.

44  
45 By that time, as several years in the past have shown, the  
46 northern zone's allocation in the Gulf has already been met and  
47 so they don't even get the chance to get out there and so they  
48 don't want to see their permit taken away, especially since in

1 20B we just passed the changing the start date for the fishing  
2 season for the northern zone in the Gulf to October 1.

3  
4 Hopefully, for those guys, that will mean that the fish show up  
5 before then and then when they are done with their charter  
6 seasons, then they can actually go out and use those permits  
7 again.

8  
9 There is some opposition for the two-for-one requirement on the  
10 king mackerel permits and this is the buy two permits and get  
11 one permit back reduction that the South Atlantic uses for a  
12 couple different fisheries, because of the increased costs of  
13 having to buy the permits and some folks have also said where is  
14 the end in terms of how many permits do you let get eliminated  
15 through the two-for-one reduction before you stop reducing the  
16 permits.

17  
18 If the permits are split, support for qualifying for both  
19 permits -- There is support for qualifying for both permits if  
20 the permit holder has landings in both areas using a very recent  
21 control date and so the council could play with those control  
22 dates and what those landings values should be.

23  
24 Like I said, the first thing is do you guys even want to go  
25 forward with looking at splitting the permits, because right  
26 now, you have not -- As of now, you haven't indicated support  
27 for going forward with this and, if not, then we don't have much  
28 else to talk about with this one, but just to hear what you guys  
29 think.

30  
31 **MR. PERRET:** Thank you, Ryan. Good job. We're in a very  
32 fortunate situation with king. We heard twice this morning by  
33 our very fine scientists that kings are a success story and  
34 Spanish are in excellent shape, at least in the Gulf, and I am  
35 going to reread the purpose and need to separate the federal  
36 commercial permits into permits by region.

37  
38 I am not convinced it's broke and so why are we trying to fix  
39 something? Now, I am sure Dr. Crabtree could tell us that he  
40 and his staff have all these permits they've got to work with  
41 and it would be probably a more -- A simplified process dealing  
42 with fewer permits and so on and so forth, but fishermen are  
43 going to fish where the fish are if they want to be successful.

44  
45 I am not convinced that we need to do this. If the South  
46 Atlantic feels they need to do it, I am sure we could try and  
47 work with them and accommodate their needs, but not impact ours  
48 too greatly.



1  
2 Table 1 of the document is the estimated number of king mackerel  
3 permits qualifying and not qualifying under landings thresholds  
4 from 20A and it shows permits that would be eliminated and it's  
5 quite substantial. Again, I could be convinced of the need for  
6 this, but as of now, I am not convinced we need to go forward  
7 with it, but I am not so hard-headed that I can't be convinced  
8 if somebody can provide enough rationale. Thank you.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Other committee discussion on this scoping  
11 document?

12  
13 **MS. BADEMAN:** I am not necessarily hot on this either. The  
14 South Atlantic has not approved this for scoping yet and is that  
15 right, Ryan? They are just kind of still chatting about it at  
16 this point?

17  
18 **MR. RINDONE:** They scoped it this past January and I did not get  
19 a chance to send that out and let me trace that email down real  
20 quick and I will give you guys a brief characterization of how  
21 that went. I got this yesterday, I think.

22  
23 This was in Cocoa Beach on the 21<sup>st</sup> and I had stated some of this  
24 previously, that they don't want endorsements for the Florida  
25 east coast subzone and they want the ACL set as high as  
26 possible. They also want to reconsider bag limit sales of fish  
27 from for-hire trips, which was something that in 20A the  
28 councils voted not to do for the South Atlantic, but to continue  
29 to allow for the Gulf. The charter boat operators in the South  
30 Atlantic want that back.

31  
32 Then, as Ms. Bademan had asked about, the split between the  
33 northern zone and southern zone in the Atlantic migratory group,  
34 currently 33 percent of the allocation for the commercial ACL is  
35 to go to the northern zone and 66 percent to the southern zone  
36 and there is some concern that too much of the allocation is  
37 going to the northern zone by some of the fishermen and so they  
38 want to explore some reconsideration for that.

39  
40 Largely the fishermen in the South Atlantic don't want to be  
41 restricted as far as where they can fish. They want to be able  
42 to fish where the fish are, like Mr. Perret had said.

43  
44 Commenters had recommended moving part of the recreational ACL  
45 to the commercial ACL to cover the bag limit sales that have  
46 previously been removed by 20A and as far as the zones are  
47 concerned, a lot of the opposition to the 33 percent allocation  
48 to the northern zone in the South Atlantic's jurisdiction is

1 coming from folks that fish what would now be their southern  
2 zone once 20B gets implemented on March 1.

3  
4 A couple of other discussion topics that came out of that were  
5 that several discussion participants didn't support splitting  
6 the permits, because they want the access, but several  
7 commenters supported a two-for-one requirement for a commercial  
8 kingfish permit, the same as the snapper grouper permit, to  
9 reduce the number of king mackerel permits over time. Again, in  
10 the Gulf we've heard the question of how long does that  
11 reduction last and when does it stop?

12  
13 Those are the most recent comments and, again, I apologize for  
14 not being able to get this out, but I can certainly see that we  
15 send it to Karen and she gets it out to you guys if you want to  
16 read them.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** That's okay.

19  
20 **MR. PERRET:** Another thought. Again, I am not keen on this  
21 separation, but if we feel we want to give the public an  
22 opportunity to comment, we have just approved a motion to  
23 recommend to the council several hearing locations for Options  
24 Paper 26, Amendment 26. I am not going to make the motion, but  
25 if the committee -- I want to pose it, if somebody else wants  
26 to.

27  
28 If the committee feels, since we're going out to the public at X  
29 number of locations in the Gulf for 26, we might also -- The  
30 group may consider they want to have the options paper go out  
31 for public hearings and have a hearing on both of them and so  
32 that's just a thought, if the committee wants to suggest that.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Corky. I think that there are two  
35 options that we could look at and one would be to either table  
36 this until such time that there is truly a problem, as agreed by  
37 the council, or to move forward and allow the Gulf to make  
38 comment. The South Atlantic public has made comment now on two  
39 occasions and we have heard in public testimony certainly from  
40 the Gulf some pretty strong sentiments about establishing zones,  
41 and primarily from the western Gulf and over in the northern  
42 Panhandle, largely from the dually-permitted charter boats that  
43 have the king mackerel. What's the pleasure? David, I would  
44 like to hear from you. You fish the fishery.

45  
46 **MR. WALKER:** I would like to hear -- I am sure we will hear some  
47 public testimony today. We may hear some on it and get it out  
48 to scoping and get the feedback from the industry with the

1 fishermen in the Gulf and how they feel about it.  
2  
3 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** It seems to me we are going out with the  
4 other amendment to scoping hearings and we may as well scope  
5 this one at those meetings and see what people think about it.  
6  
7 **MR. RINDONE:** I was going to say if you guys still just want to  
8 rent the car and you don't want to buy it yet, you can certainly  
9 just send it out and not fully commit to move it forward.  
10  
11 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** That being said, what is the pleasure of the  
12 committee? Is there a motion to move forward with scoping or  
13 table or what's the pleasure?  
14  
15 **DR. CRABTREE:** **I move we go forward with scoping.**  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** I've got a second from John Sanchez and any  
18 discussion?  
19  
20 **MR. PERRET:** And that the scoping be held at the same time at  
21 the same meetings that 26 is going to be.  
22  
23 **DR. CRABTREE:** **Exactly.**  
24  
25 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Would I consider that --  
26  
27 **DR. CRABTREE:** **Yes, that's a friendly amendment to my motion**  
28 **that we scope it at the same meetings as 26.**  
29  
30 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Does the seconder agree? He agrees. Any more  
31 discussion? **Any opposition to the motion? The motion passes.**  
32 Now we will move into Item VIII, which is Gulf of Mexico  
33 Mackerel Gillnet Fishery Issues. Before I hand this over, I am  
34 going to ask Ryan to give a little input and then ask Doug  
35 Gregory also to provide some input, but we did go in early  
36 January to Key West and met with probably three-fourths of the  
37 gillnet fishermen in the area and had a very thoughtful meeting  
38 with them.  
39  
40 It was an all-day meeting and I was joined by Martha Bademan and  
41 John Sanchez and Roy Williams and Doug Gregory, Ryan Rindone,  
42 and myself.  
43  
44 At any rate, I appreciated just the overview from them about  
45 what are the issues at hand and the passions there and it kind  
46 of opened my eyes. Anyway, I'm going to turn it over to Ryan  
47 for an overview and then I'm going to ask Doug to make some  
48 comments and we'll go from there.

1  
2 **GULF OF MEXICO KING MACKEREL GILLNET FISHERY ISSUES**  
3

4 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just as kind of a  
5 refresher, at the last meeting we had a request that was sent to  
6 the council from the gillnet stakeholders down in the southern  
7 zone outlining some of their requests for changes in trip limits  
8 and how to deal with the penalties that they're getting and new  
9 accountability measures that they are proposing, amongst some  
10 other things.

11  
12 Just as a quick refresher, they had submitted the letter in  
13 October detailing some of their concerns and they requested a  
14 trip limit increase to 45,000 pounds from the current limit of  
15 25,000 pounds. They proposed some revised accountability  
16 measures which were more strict than the current accountability  
17 measures and they also wanted the ability to purchase and fish  
18 the commercial king mackerel hand line permit.

19  
20 The council discussed the letter and recommended holding the  
21 workshop that we went to earlier this month and the Coastal  
22 Migratory Pelagic AP will also review this summary that you guys  
23 are about to see and that's looking like the first week of March  
24 is the best time for that AP to meet.

25  
26 After the AP gives its recommendations or if you guys want to  
27 make recommendations now, we can possibly move forward with a  
28 document to address some of these concerns and so the fishery is  
29 requesting this 45,000-pound trip limit for a couple of reasons.

30  
31 The main reason, the whole reason, I think, at the center of all  
32 of it for these guys is the fines. The fines that are being  
33 levied on them are what they consider to be substantial and they  
34 want any way possible to try to limit the probability of getting  
35 fined and they proposed 45,000 pounds because they think that  
36 the probability of landing that many fish in a strike is really,  
37 really slim.

38  
39 In looking at the landings per boat and the landings trends for  
40 the recent years, there appears to be some truth in that and so  
41 even there exists a probability that if every boat went out, all  
42 fifteen boats that currently fish, and they all hit 45,000  
43 pounds, yes, that would exceed the current trip limit, but the  
44 way that they police themselves and the way that they were  
45 telling us about this and the way that the boats actually chase  
46 the fish, the odds of that happening and all the boats coming in  
47 at the same time is very slim.

1 Some boats are faster than others and some boats are bigger than  
2 others and some boats use different lengths of net and there are  
3 a lot of variables at play.

4  
5 One of the things that the council had asked us to examine was  
6 whether an IFQ was something that they would be interested in  
7 and that was not met with a lot of support and some of that  
8 disinclination, if you will -- I am not sure that's a word, but  
9 some of their hesitancy to going forward with an IFQ came from  
10 the application of VMS in IFQ systems.

11  
12 They don't feel like they should be tracked, because they don't  
13 feel like they're breaking the law. They are trying to be  
14 honest with their landings, as they state it. Again, the main  
15 thing is about avoiding those fines and so perhaps a buffer  
16 could be applied to the current trip limit or to an increased  
17 trip limit, where the fishermen could call ahead to a NMFS port  
18 agent, say a couple hours out or a few hours out from landing,  
19 and if they're over, but within the buffer, then they don't get  
20 fined.

21  
22 If they are over the buffer, then they would and some fishermen  
23 proposed additional accountability measures, such as if you go  
24 over the first time, then you get fined. If you go over the  
25 second time, then you can't fish your gillnet endorsement for  
26 say a year. If you go over a third time, then you lose your  
27 endorsement. There was one fisherman in particular that had  
28 proposed that, but it was one proposal of several.

29  
30 They can't dump the fish over the side if they feel like they've  
31 caught more than the trip limit, because dumping the fish is  
32 illegal and so is dumping the net at sea. Currently what  
33 happens is they cut the net and the net is left in the water and  
34 then another boat comes by that doesn't have their trip limit  
35 yet and they pick the net up and so they do that not to waste  
36 the net and not to waste the fish and to try to be, as they had  
37 put it, try to be good stewards.

38  
39 They do practice a degree of self-policing, in that the pilots  
40 who direct the fishing vessels -- These pilots spot the schools  
41 of kingfish from the air and direct the boats and they help to  
42 monitor and estimate the landings that the boats are bringing in  
43 and once the quota is thought to be met, the pilots notify the  
44 fishermen and the fishery stops.

45  
46 This has been going on for a couple of years now and they feel  
47 pretty confident in their ability to police themselves and that  
48 is outside of NOAA Law Enforcement, of course, but they are

1 trying to do this in order to make sure that they collectively  
2 reduce the probability of getting fined or being penalized.  
3 They think this practice is critical to the fishery, since it  
4 can take NMFS a few days to close the fishery if the quota is  
5 met or projected to be met.

6  
7 They propose new accountability measures to accompany any  
8 increase in trip limits to eliminate any incentive for exceeding  
9 the trip limit. As such, new accountability measures would  
10 reduce both the current and following year's quota by the amount  
11 of any overage in the current year and so on page 2 of Tab C-  
12 7(a), I put a little box there that demonstrates what they  
13 actually mean by this.

14  
15 This is using a hypothetical situation, but you can see that if  
16 the quota for 2014 and 2015 were 500,000 pounds and the trip  
17 limit were 45,000 pounds and a fisherman landed 52,000 pounds,  
18 then the quota for both 2014 and 2015 would be reduced by the  
19 amount of the overage, that 7,000 pounds, and so they get  
20 penalized twice.

21  
22 Not only does that affect the fisherman who exceeded the quota  
23 and probably got fined, but it, in turn, penalizes all the rest  
24 of the fishermen for the current year and the following year and  
25 so now that one fisherman has to answer to the rest of them and  
26 so it's kind of the herd policing itself, if you will.

27  
28 Fishermen want to be certain that no profit can be gained by  
29 exceeding the quota, in addition to the payback provision  
30 illustrated in the example that I put in there, but they also  
31 want to see any quota underages added to the following year's  
32 quota and so if they don't catch the ACL, they want those fish  
33 back the next year.

34  
35 We noted that the ACL can't be exceeded without triggering  
36 accountability measures and so you can't have underages added to  
37 the next year and then end up exceeding the next year's already  
38 predetermined ACL, but if the fishermen agreed to like an annual  
39 catch target, which establishes a buffer of let's say 10 or 20  
40 percent, then any underages from the previous year could be  
41 added to the following year, so long as it doesn't exceed the  
42 ACL.

43  
44 Staff had suggested adding a buffer to the current trip limit  
45 and it was questioned whether the buffer would help avoid the  
46 fines or would simply raise the trip limit by 10 percent. The  
47 same was said about a 5,000-pound grace allotment over the trip  
48 limit.

1  
2 The landings can be estimated within, give or take, a few  
3 thousand pounds and the fishermen, of course, are going to try  
4 to get as close to that trip limit as possible to make the most  
5 money that they can. They don't want to land 17,000 or 18,000  
6 pounds out of caution and miss out on making \$7,000. They want  
7 to land as close to that 25,000 as possible and they can  
8 typically get pretty close to it, as they claim to be able to  
9 do.

10  
11 They think that if they get the larger increase in the trip  
12 limit that it will prevent the fines, again, because the  
13 probability of catching that many fish is remote, but some  
14 fishermen disagree with increasing the trip limit. They equate  
15 it to raising the speed limit to avoid getting a speeding ticket  
16 and so there is that to consider as well.

17  
18 A 35,000-pound trip limit was proposed as a compromise and so  
19 the fishermen wanted to vote on different scenarios and so  
20 that's in the little table at the top of page 3 and if, given  
21 the option, the majority of the fishermen wanted to see the  
22 45,000 pounds versus 25,000 or 35,000, but it was almost -- It  
23 was shy of one vote from being unanimous if 35,000 pounds was  
24 the only option over 25,000.

25  
26 Mr. Perret, at the October meeting, when all of this was brought  
27 forward, had asked about just shortening the nets or some other  
28 form of gear modification and the fishermen explained that this  
29 wasn't ideal, because the fish aren't always grouped up in a  
30 school and sometimes you have to chase around them to be able to  
31 encircle them and so you need the longer net to be able to get  
32 around them and you're not going to know exactly how many fish  
33 are in the school until you start drawing it in.

34  
35 Some fishermen had talked about having less cork line, so that  
36 when the net gets heavy that it will start to sink, but this  
37 proposes problems with nets fouling on the bottom, lost gear at  
38 sea. The nets are tied to the boats and so there is a safety  
39 issue and, of course, the wasted resource for the nets that are  
40 lost. David, did you --

41  
42 **MR. WALKER:** How many participants are in the gillnet fishery  
43 and what percentage of those attended the meeting?

44  
45 **MR. RINDONE:** There are twenty-two or twenty-three permits, of  
46 which there are fifteen that are actively fished and we had  
47 fourteen at the meeting at one point. When the vote took place,  
48 there were thirteen and so of those that are actively engaged in

1 the fishery, the lion's share of them participated.

2  
3 **MR. WALKER:** You said that there was only one that attended that  
4 mentioned the buffer, requested the buffer? Was that correct?

5  
6 **MR. RINDONE:** No, they talked about that a lot and so some were  
7 concerned that if you have a buffer that you're basically just  
8 increasing the trip limit by the buffer, because, again, they're  
9 going to try to make as much money as they can and it would  
10 really be up to them to make sure that they don't go over, but  
11 that's kind of where the proposed accountability measures come  
12 into play.

13  
14 If you go over, you don't just penalize yourself, but you end up  
15 penalizing the entire fishery and so now you have guys ringing  
16 up your phone and knocking on your door asking why you went over  
17 and shorted them opportunity.

18  
19 Other considerations, and some of these are individual  
20 considerations and so only one or two fishermen wanted to see  
21 these, but they wanted to see those permits with no gillnet  
22 landings to have their gillnet endorsements revoked and this was  
23 an alternative that was included in Amendment 20A, but it was  
24 folded in with the hand line permits and it wasn't considered  
25 separately, ultimately, and so they want to see it considered  
26 separately.

27  
28 Some fishermen supported creating a system whereby fishermen  
29 suspecting themselves of being over could call the port agent,  
30 like I had mentioned, and they wouldn't be fined for any overage  
31 and whatever resulted -- Whatever sale resulted from the amount  
32 of catch over the trip limit would either go to the National  
33 Treasury or a charity, but the end result being it would not go  
34 to the fisherman who landed more than the trip limit. They  
35 would not be rewarded for exceeding the trip limit.

36  
37 I told you guys about the three-strike system and if you exceed  
38 the trip limit if it's increased and also some fishermen want  
39 the opportunity to be able to fish the hand line fishery as well  
40 as the gillnet fishery and initially this was -- They were  
41 denied this opportunity, because the guys that are hand line  
42 fishermen can't go and gillnet and so it was agreed that the  
43 guys that gillnet cannot, in turn, go hand line fishing. Are  
44 there any questions as far as the summary?

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Doug Gregory, do you have anything to add? That  
47 was very thorough and thank you, Ryan. I appreciate it.

48



1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Only one or two small things. The  
2 main issue is the trip limit of 25,000 pounds is small relative  
3 to what is typically caught when they have a good strike. They  
4 do have strikes where they catch nothing and the problem is  
5 you're estimating how many pounds you have and it's hard to  
6 estimate 25,000 pounds exactly.

7  
8 They have to cut their net and share it, which is an  
9 inconvenience in that they've got to go get the net from the  
10 other person at some point and the fleet is divided between  
11 Everglades City and Key West and Marathon and so that has become  
12 an inconvenience in retrieving their net and then having to sew  
13 it back together multiple times.

14  
15 The fines are high for exceeding the trip limit and so the main  
16 thing the fishermen want to do is to try to come up with a way  
17 of running this fishery without having a violation and do it  
18 efficiently. It's a short season and it can go as short as  
19 three or four days.

20  
21 The increase for the trip limit concerns National Marine  
22 Fisheries Service because they -- The data collection mechanism  
23 isn't quick enough or efficient enough to really nail down on a  
24 daily basis what the catches are and publishing the Federal  
25 Register Notice to close the fishery quick enough to prevent the  
26 fishery from going over the overall quota and so National Marine  
27 Fisheries Service, as I'm sure they will say, is nervous about  
28 any increase in the trip limit. They are having a hard time  
29 monitoring it now.

30  
31 The fishermen that are actively fishing have worked out a deal  
32 and it's a gentlemen's agreement with NMFS, because NMFS has no  
33 authority to make the fishermen do this, because NMFS gets their  
34 data from the fish houses, but the two pilots that run the  
35 fishery, one of their wives keeps track of the landings each day  
36 and they actually close the fishery themselves when they think  
37 they're close.

38  
39 If there is a few pounds left, they will select what boat goes  
40 fishing that last day and the entire fleet doesn't go and so  
41 they have this mechanism that they've developed, because they  
42 don't want to get a black eye. They don't want to cause trouble  
43 and they know that overruns is a problem for NMFS.

44  
45 They developed this system and it has worked, I think, for a  
46 couple of years very well and they think that going to a higher  
47 trip limit won't jeopardize that. The one thing that will  
48 jeopardize this gentlemen's agreement is if the latent permits

1 are not removed and boats from other areas or boats that aren't  
2 a part of this fleet enter the fishery. That gentlemen's  
3 agreement could break down and that's a big fear of theirs and  
4 so they would like to see the latent permits that have no  
5 poundage on them really to be removed so they can maintain this  
6 kind of internal control.

7  
8 Now, one of the concerns that was expressed by National Marine  
9 Fisheries Service is that if you take fifteen boats and multiply  
10 it by 45,000 pounds, you get so many pounds and this is too  
11 quickly.

12  
13 I did an analysis at the current 25,000 pounds and you would  
14 think that all the boats that go fishing could bring in at least  
15 the 25,000 pounds on the first day now and they don't.  
16 Approximately 30 percent of the potential landings of the fleet  
17 are landed that first day of the season and so not every boat  
18 catches their limit even at 25,000 pounds and so it's not likely  
19 they would do that at 45,000 pounds either.

20  
21 So that's the crux of the problem and I think at our meeting we  
22 were talking about the best way to deal with this would be with  
23 like a framework procedure and not roll this issue into the  
24 other amendments that we're going to scoping with. That's all I  
25 had to add and I think National Marine Fisheries -- Steve, you  
26 were listening in at the meeting and Sue was there and is there  
27 anything else you want to add to this?

28  
29 **DR. STEVE BRANSTETTER:** No, not at this time. I mean as you and  
30 I have discussed, yes, I do have some concerns over trip limits  
31 above 35,000. Just by the way the fishery operates now versus  
32 opening up the trip limits to 45,000 would change the behavior  
33 of the way the fish are harvested and would probably increase  
34 the opportunity to exceed the quota.

35  
36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I have emailed the NOAA General  
37 Counsel Law Enforcement Lawyer to ask if the main proposal from  
38 the industry of when they suspect they have more than the trip  
39 limit that they call a NMFS officer, similar to the way VMS  
40 call-ins operate now, and that any overage they do have gets  
41 accounted for and then the money associated with that overage  
42 either goes to the National Treasury or it goes to a charity,  
43 much like we were talking about yesterday with the Coast Guard  
44 situation in Texas.

45  
46 We don't know if that can be done and so the NOAA General  
47 Counsel person is going to get back to me on that. If that's  
48 doable, then that might be something to consider in this action.

1  
2 If it's something that just can't be done, then we can't  
3 consider it, but they are not looking to profit by overrunning  
4 their trip limits. It's just the trip limit is artificially  
5 constrained relative to the gear. It's not like if you take a  
6 hook and line gear and you have a fifty-fish trip limit, you  
7 don't catch that many fish on a hook and line at one time and  
8 you can keep within that limit very easily. They are just  
9 looking for a way that they can prosecute this fishery  
10 efficiently and minimize the potential for violations.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Doug. Thank you also, Doug, for  
13 following with NOAA Law Enforcement, because I know that that  
14 was -- Finding that working line with the law enforcement was  
15 important to the fishermen. I am going to ask Bill Kelly if  
16 you're willing to come up and since you represent that fishery,  
17 can you just say a few words and then we'll open it up for  
18 committee discussion.

19  
20 **MR. BILL KELLY:** Thank you, Dr. Dana. Committee members, I'm  
21 Bill Kelly with the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's  
22 Association. I think that Ryan and Doug have done an excellent  
23 job of portraying what was discussed during that workshop and  
24 how this fishery is prosecuted and the issues that we wanted to  
25 talk to you about.

26  
27 As you know, we have always taken a position of trying to  
28 cooperate with the councils and improve fisheries and this one  
29 has shown substantial improvement over the past couple of years,  
30 since we've developed these accountability measures and  
31 increased communication with Dr. Branstetter and the National  
32 Marine Fisheries Service.

33  
34 A couple of things that we're concerned about is if you look at  
35 the history of the fishery, I don't believe in the past ten  
36 years that it has ever exceeded 275,000 pounds on day one and  
37 that's when everybody is at it with their best effort, because  
38 nobody has any landings if they were to exceed their 25,000  
39 pounds in the net. They have the opportunity immediately to  
40 transfer poundage to other boats and so the trend supports what  
41 we have asked for anyway and that's that 45,000-pound increase,  
42 which only occurs on very limited occasions.

43  
44 It does a number of things for us. Most of the boats engaged in  
45 the fishery have that big boat capability and they are looking  
46 to prosecute the fishery as rapidly as they can for a number of  
47 reasons. One, they are all high-liners in the spiny lobster and  
48 stone crab industry and so they want to do this and they want to

1 get back into those programs as well.  
2  
3 The majority of the sale of these fish is institutional sales  
4 and it's going to prison systems and to large cafeterias and to  
5 large food processors and so forth for smoked fish dip and other  
6 things of that nature.  
7  
8 From the feedback that I've gotten from the hook and line  
9 fishermen, they would prefer to see the fishery prosecuted as  
10 rapidly as possible, because then what happens is we see the  
11 price of the product certainly go down as we see 500,000 pounds  
12 placed on the market, but if it's done quickly, the price  
13 rapidly stabilizes and comes back up and remains consistent for  
14 the hook and line fishermen.  
15  
16 If the fishery drags out and we've got 100,000 pounds and 75,000  
17 a week later or something like that, then we see that price  
18 fluctuation impacting the hook and line fishermen as well over a  
19 much longer period of time and that's an additional reason for  
20 wanting to get this done.  
21  
22 The 45,000 pounds increases the efficiency of the fleet and it  
23 reduces the carbon footprint. If we do 45,000 pounds on a  
24 strike, it is virtually absolutely impossible for a boat to do a  
25 twenty-four-hour turnaround and get back out there.  
26  
27 Only so many pounds of fish can go in the front door of the fish  
28 house and get processed and come back out the back door, but at  
29 35,000 pounds, virtually the entire fleet could do a twenty-  
30 four-hour turnaround and so those smaller fishermen, of which  
31 there is only three or four here, they could hurt themselves by  
32 a 35,000-pound limit, because every boat then becomes capable to  
33 get back on the scene the next day, but at 45,000, they cannot.  
34  
35 In terms of recording poundage, whether that daily quota, that  
36 trip limit, is 25,000 or 35,000 or 45,000 or if it were 100,000,  
37 it's up to the National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, and us,  
38 in partnership, working together, to develop the communication  
39 and the methods to report it and report it accurately.  
40  
41 It's not a matter of boats that are on the scene. It's nets in  
42 the water and that's what catches the fish. Every time those  
43 nets go over the side, it's like playing the lottery. You could  
44 have absolutely nothing or you could have yourself 50,000 pounds  
45 of fish and so that's the reason that we resist gear  
46 modification, because you never know what's going to happen.  
47  
48 Those fish could spook and they could run and they could spread

1 out and go deep. There are so many different things that you  
2 deal with when you're addressing these issues and so that's  
3 pretty much it. Again, Mr. Gregory and Mr. Rindone have done an  
4 excellent job of characterizing this thing.

5  
6 One point of order, though. With regard to accountability  
7 measures, I believe it's misstated in this regard. Yes, if a  
8 fisherman were to voluntarily report that he's over, he comes in  
9 and while he saves himself a fine, that amount is reduced from  
10 that year's, that current year's, quota, but the accountability,  
11 that would not be reduced or taken away from the following  
12 year's quota and only if the fishery as a whole exceeded the  
13 quota for that year.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Captain Kelly, and just hang out here  
16 in case there is additional questions.

17  
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That meeting pretty much involved everybody in the  
19 fleet and there are some things here that they were trying to  
20 address, the fact that some of the fines that they're getting --  
21 These fines are for -- They are a couple of years old already  
22 and some of them are upwards of \$18,000 that they're getting and  
23 they're probably going to get one for subsequent years and  
24 bringing it to current and so there's a lot of money involved.

25  
26 Obviously nobody wants to get a \$20,000 fine every calendar year  
27 for something that they are trying to do and this is a very  
28 high-yield fishery and you can make your best good-faith  
29 estimate as to how many fish you are catching when you strike  
30 the net, but that's what it is. It's a good-faith estimate and  
31 you are going to be over and some of these fines are just  
32 excessive and this is what they came up with after a day of  
33 trying to work.

34  
35 I also witnessed the fishermen at that meeting doing what they  
36 do in terms of trying to coordinate and police each other in  
37 organizing that, okay, the fishery is going to start and the  
38 weather is going to be optimal on these dates and let's all try  
39 to go out on these dates and that gives us X number of days to  
40 kind of reconfigure the boat from a lobster boat to prepare for  
41 the runaround gillnet fishery.

42  
43 They work closely with each other and one point that I've got to  
44 make is that there is this fear of this tremendous overage and  
45 that we're going to overrun the quota, yet every year since  
46 they've been doing this, and it's a long time, they try -- I  
47 mean that day one, when they all go out, they all want a strike  
48 and, God willing, strike as big as they can get and they have

1 never caught the whole quota on day one with this.

2  
3 I mean the numbers bear it out. There is just too many  
4 variables. You will strike and not get anything and this one  
5 might not get the fish and the fleet is kind of spread out and  
6 one good thing or a positive thing that 45,000 does is even the  
7 boats with the higher capacity to be able to do these more  
8 voluminous catches, by virtue of the size of their vessel, at  
9 45,000, they are probably not going to be able to unload, turn  
10 around, and go right back out there. At 35,000, they could. If  
11 they are humping it, they could do it.

12  
13 In my mind, 45,000 addresses what they've asked, the fines. I  
14 don't see any likelihood of a legitimate concern for overrun and  
15 couple that with the fact that we've heard several times today  
16 that this fishery is a success story and we're supposed to  
17 maximize yields and benefits and optimize things and this is  
18 what this fleet, this gear user group, wants and I think the  
19 fishery is more than healthy enough to accommodate them.

20  
21 Even if there is a slight overage and we address it with  
22 accountability measures, we are still well under the TAC. I  
23 mean there is no reason not to do this and so that said, I will  
24 get off my -- I think I got off my soapbox and it timed out, but  
25 I guess I will hear a little more and then maybe try to make a  
26 motion to that effect.

27  
28 **DR. CRABTREE:** This is kind of a unique fishery. These guys  
29 have been pretty good with working with us and realistically, to  
30 stay within the quota, we need them to work with us and we've  
31 spent a lot of time with Bill and Captain Daniels and others on  
32 that.

33  
34 I don't think I have a problem with raising the trip limit. I  
35 haven't made up my mind how far up it ought to go, but it does  
36 seem to me to put a framework action together to look at  
37 alternatives on increasing the trip limit, but I think part of  
38 this has to be alternatives to relook at the accountability  
39 measures that involves some kind of payback, which they seem  
40 willing to do.

41  
42 That seems reasonable to me to put that together and maybe have  
43 the AP look at it and then bring it back to us and go from there  
44 and so if you want to make the motion, John, that would be  
45 great, after we hear what Mr. Perret says.

46  
47 **MR. PERRET:** Several things. In Table 1, ten years of  
48 information, the quota was exceeded five of the ten years. Now,

1 the good news is in the last two years the quota was increased  
2 from what it was the previous eight years and in the coming  
3 year, it's going to be increased again, but at the same level it  
4 was for the past season.

5  
6 In the past two years, there was underruns of the quota and in  
7 the 2013 season, there was no closure and last year's season was  
8 eight days. My experience with a net fishery is no matter what  
9 you put that limit, they're always going to want to raise it  
10 higher and higher, but it's a small fishery. Fifteen boats are  
11 involved in the fishery, from what Mr. Kelly and the Florida  
12 Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association have provided.

13  
14 I was thinking a compromise of 35,000 pounds, but I understand  
15 what Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Kelly said. 35,000 would allow for  
16 that twenty-four-hour turnaround and I think that probably would  
17 not be a good thing, whereas 45,000, it would take more time to  
18 get out.

19  
20 Mr. Gregory told us about the self-policing, if you will, on  
21 some pilot's wife working with the fishermen, fishery, and with  
22 NMFS on shutting the season down and so on. Obviously it was  
23 closed in the last two years when there was a substantial amount  
24 of fish, especially in the year 2013, that was not taken and I  
25 don't know if the fish moved out of that subzone or whatever it  
26 was, but the quota was not taken in the last two years and let's  
27 hope it will be that way for the coming year.

28  
29 I will support the increase for the rationale we heard. I do  
30 have some concern that, and I think Mr. Gregory talked about it,  
31 some of these latent permit holders may come in, if indeed that  
32 happens, and I think that's something we need to kind of take a  
33 look at also. Thank you.

34  
35 **MR. WALKER:** Corky hit on it. In the fishing year 2012 and  
36 2013, there was no closure and I was just wondering, Bill, was  
37 there -- I guess were they focusing on some other species? I  
38 know they're multispecies and participate in other fisheries or  
39 was it a market decision for the reason there was no closure?

40  
41 **MR. KELLY:** The process that takes place out there, as I  
42 mentioned, is one where these guys want to get out and they want  
43 to prosecute this fishery as rapidly as they can and it's a very  
44 valuable fishery and a very robust fishery, but the bottom line  
45 is when they believe that they're there and they've achieved  
46 their quota, they're anxious to get back to the spiny lobster  
47 and stone crab fisheries, because we're at the height of the  
48 season and the height of the dollar value for those and that

1 would probably account for that. Does that adequately answer  
2 that?

3  
4 **MR. WALKER:** That's what I assumed and I just wanted to check  
5 with you.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Other questions from the committee or those in  
8 the --

9  
10 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I move to create a framework action plan to  
11 evaluate alternative gillnet trip limits and catch reporting  
12 mechanisms to minimize the potential for enforcement action due  
13 to accidental trip limit overages.

14  
15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Please repeat that slowly.

16  
17 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I move to create a framework action plan to  
18 evaluate alternative gillnet trip limits and catch reporting  
19 mechanisms to minimize the potential for enforcement action due  
20 to accidental trip limit overages.

21  
22 **MS. LEVY:** Catch reporting mechanisms, are you referring to  
23 accountability measures or some other type of reporting?

24  
25 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would say both and I am not opposed to some  
26 friendly input into how to properly word that, but yes, I want  
27 to explore both of those and basically have a large suite of  
28 options, trip limits and accountability measures and perhaps  
29 meeting port agents at these three ports where they land these  
30 products, working something out to show the true spirit and  
31 intent of working with law enforcement and National Marine  
32 Fisheries Service to try to avoid overruns.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** The main issues, again, were raising the trip  
35 limit and somehow working with the law enforcement, through a  
36 call-in mechanism if they felt that they perhaps were over and  
37 then being able to donate whatever that overage was, rather than  
38 getting penalized or fined, the latent permits, the buffer  
39 issue, and accountability were probably the five issues that  
40 were prominent and so however you capture that in a framework.

41  
42 **MS. BADEMAN:** I am definitely in favor of looking at options for  
43 the fishery, but I just want to make sure that John's motion  
44 includes all the things that we've been talking about around the  
45 table. I think instead of saying, and if you're okay with this,  
46 changing --

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Did we even get a second on this yet?



1  
2 **MS. BADEMAN:** I will second it and then I'm going to modify it.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Second and now open for discussion.

5  
6 **MS. BADEMAN:** We are going to do some wordsmithing here. Change  
7 "catch reporting mechanisms" to "accountability measures" and,  
8 also, we need to look at latent permits and that's not really  
9 captured here. **Delete "catch reporting mechanisms" and replace**  
10 **that with "accountability measures" and elimination of latent**  
11 **permits needs to be -- You can add that after "accountability**  
12 **measures" and so it would be "and elimination of latent**  
13 **permits".** We've got a lot of and's in this sentence, but I  
14 think we get the point.

15  
16 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I agree.

17  
18 **MS. LEVY:** The only thing I wanted to say was that there was  
19 some discussion of either having a schedule of different  
20 penalties or waving fines or things like that. We sort of had  
21 this discussion when we were talking about the dealer permit and  
22 what the council can do versus what's under the authority of  
23 NMFS Enforcement.

24  
25 Anything that's going to talk about when people are fined and  
26 what happens to their permits, that's going to be an enforcement  
27 decision and there is a procedure that goes with it under both  
28 the Magnuson Act and the Administrative Procedure Act.

29  
30 As a council, you are not going to be able to specify if there's  
31 this X violation, this happens to the permit or if this happens,  
32 there won't be a fine. We can specify the trip limits and we  
33 can talk about what the requirements are, but whether there is  
34 some sort of violation and whether that's prosecuted is  
35 completely within NOAA Enforcement's discretion.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Understood and thank you, Mara.

38  
39 **MR. TRACY DUNN:** I just wanted to point out the concept of  
40 having our people available for call out -- Right now, I don't  
41 know the numbers and I can't guarantee we will have the  
42 resources to be able to handle whatever this ultimately becomes.  
43 I just wanted to put that on the record real quick.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you for putting that on the record. We  
46 will keep that in mind as we develop the framework. Can you  
47 remain at the microphone, please?

1 **MR. WILLIAMS:** How many officers will you have down there? They  
2 land in Key West, Marathon, and Everglades.

3  
4 **MR. DUNN:** I have no officers now and I have two agents. In the  
5 future, we hope to have officers, but I have no idea when that  
6 may come about and so right now, there will be two federal  
7 agents who are heavily involved in investigations and so most  
8 likely we would have to hopefully turn to our JEA Enforcement  
9 partners and I am not quite sure on the availability.

10  
11 **MR. SANCHEZ:** We kind of anticipated this, that there might not  
12 be the ability to do that. If we were to evolve into that at  
13 some point, when there is the personnel or manpower, being that  
14 it is a fishery that transpires very quickly and there are only  
15 three ports and X number of boats involved and that would be  
16 fantastic.

17  
18 In the meantime, having anticipated this, we spoke to the  
19 respective participants and said, look, this may not work and  
20 all of these other things that are kind of like your wish list  
21 and pie-in-the-sky evolution of this, but in the meantime, what  
22 would make this work that's very cut and dried and streamlined  
23 and they said, listen, at 45,000 pounds, that would eliminate  
24 probably 90 or 95 percent of the overage likelihood and we will  
25 do our best to police ourselves and cut a piece of net if need  
26 be or whatever happens and beyond that, if you exceed it and you  
27 get fined, you get fined until we work out these other things.  
28 We are trying to work within the vagaries of what can and can't  
29 be done in the real world.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you, Officer Dunn. We appreciate it.  
32 Unless there are other questions, we do have a motion on the  
33 board and we have a second and that's to create a framework  
34 action plan to evaluate alternative gillnet trip limits and  
35 accountability measures and elimination of latent permits to  
36 minimize the potential for enforcement action due to accidental  
37 trip limit overages. I am going to call for a vote in a moment,  
38 but, Ryan, does this motion accomplish what you need to develop  
39 a framework action, based on what you heard from the people in  
40 the gillnet industry?

41  
42 **MR. RINDONE:** I think it does, because you've got the trip limit  
43 increase and you have the accountability measures they proposed  
44 and that gives us a lot of latitude to explore different things  
45 like buffers and whatnot and they did want a separate  
46 consideration of eliminating latent permits and so we can  
47 include that in there and, conveniently, those data are quick to  
48 acquire, since they're a low universe of boats. I think we're

1 good.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Just the second question is what is the  
4 timeframe for a framework action?

5  
6 **MR. RINDONE:** We could have something that you guys could weigh  
7 in on as a draft and clean up at the March meeting, I think, and  
8 maybe take final action in June and that would be ideal, because  
9 that's right down where the fishery takes place. I guess the  
10 goal would be to have final action in June.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** It would be important for me that the AP was  
13 able to review, even at the least a draft framework, but they  
14 will be coming together in March, hopefully, and so that's what  
15 I would like to push for.

16  
17 **MS. LEVY:** The only thing I wanted to just add to that is just  
18 keep in mind that after you take final action on something that  
19 it takes a few months to implement, because you have to do the  
20 rulemaking. If final action is in June, nothing is going to be  
21 implemented in June, just so you're aware.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** Thank you for that, Mara.

24  
25 **MS. BADEMAN:** I was just going to say that's fine, because this  
26 fishery doesn't really get geared up until after MLK Day and so  
27 we would have a good buffer for you guys to do the rulemaking  
28 stuff.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN DANA:** We have got the motion and a second and any  
31 other discussion before I call for a vote? **All those in favor**  
32 **say aye; opposed. The motion passes.** We have come to the end  
33 of the agenda and is there any other business for the committee?  
34 Seeing none, do I hear a call to adjourn? A second? We are  
35 adjourned. Thank you.

36  
37 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m., January 28,  
38 2015.)

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PAGE 26: Motion to send Amendment 26 to scoping hearings. The motion carried on page 26.

PAGE 27: Motion to hold scoping hearings in the following locations: Galveston and Port Aransas, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; Biloxi, Mississippi; Kenner/Grand Isle, Louisiana; Key West, Tampa Bay, and Panama City, Florida. The motion carried on page 27.

PAGE 35: Motion to hold scoping hearings for Amendment 28 at the same time and locations as Amendment 26. The motion carried on page 35.

PAGE 48: Motion to create a framework action plan to evaluate alternative gillnet trip limits and accountability measures and elimination of latent permits to minimize the potential for enforcement action due to accidental trip limit overages. The motion carried on page 51.

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