

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
 DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

Grand Hotel Marriott Point Clear, Alabama

January 26, 2015

VOTING MEMBERS

Harlon Pearce.....Louisiana
 Doug Boyd.....Texas
 Steve Branstetter (designee for Roy Crabtree).....NMFS
 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
 Myron Fischer (designee for Randy Pausina).....Louisiana
 John Greene.....Alabama
 Greg Stunz.....Texas
 David Walker.....Alabama

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Anson.....Alabama
 Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
 Jason Brand.....USCG
 Campo Matens.....Louisiana
 Corky Perret.....Mississippi
 Robin Riechers.....Texas
 John Sanchez.....Florida
 Roy Williams.....Florida

STAFF

Stephen Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist
 Doug Gregory.....Executive Director
 Karen Hoak.....Administrative and Financial Assistant
 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
 Charlene Ponce.....Public Information Officer
 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
 Charlotte Schiaffo.....Research & Human Resource Librarian

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Tom Ard.....Orange Beach, AL
 Jeff Barger.....Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX
 Randy Boggs.....Orange Beach, AL
 Zack Bowen.....SAFMC
 Gregg Bray.....GSMFC
 Eric Brazer.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance

1 JP Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
2 James Bruce.....Cutoff, LA
3 Gary Bryant.....Fort Morgan, AL
4 Shane Cantrell.....Galveston, TX
5 Shannon Calay.....SEFSC
6 Kiley Dancy.....MAFMC
7 Michael Drexler.....St. Petersburg, FL
8 F.J. Eicher.....Ocean Springs, MS
9 Blakely Ellis.....Gulf Shores, AL
10 Cynthia Fenyk.....NOAA
11 Troy Frady.....Orange Beach, AL
12 Chad Hanson.....Pew Environmental Group
13 Scott Hickman.....Galveston, TX
14 Peter Hood.....NMFS
15 Larry Huntley.....Pensacola, FL
16 Joe Jewell.....MS
17 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, Marathon, FL
18 Kristen McConnell.....EDF, Austin, TX
19 Paul Mickle.....MDMR
20 Mike Nugent.....Aransas Pass, TX
21 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
22 Tracy Redding.....AL
23 Lance Robinson.....TX
24 Matt Seymour.....Foley, AL
25 Katie Simon.....
26 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
27 Bill Tucker.....Dunedin, FL
28 Robert Turpin.....
29 Ted Venker.....CCA
30 Will Ward.....Palmetto, FL
31 Tom Wheatley.....Pew Environmental Group
32 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL

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34
35 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
36 Management Council convened at the Grand Hotel Marriott, Point
37 Clear, Alabama, Monday morning, January 26, 2015, and was called
38 to order at 10:35 a.m. by Chairman Harlon Pearce.

39
40 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
41 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
42 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
43

44 **CHAIRMAN HARLON PEARCE:** Data Collection is called to order and
45 any additions or changes to the agenda? If not, I would
46 entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as written.

47
48 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** So moved.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Do I have a second?

3
4 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** Second.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Any opposition to the motion to keep the
7 agenda as written? Hearing none, the motion carries. The
8 minutes, has everyone had a chance to read the minutes? Are
9 there any changes to the minutes? If not, I would entertain a
10 motion to adopt the minutes.

11
12 **MR. GREENE:** So moved.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Do we have a second?

15
16 **MR. BOYD:** I will second.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you. Any opposition to the motion to
19 adopt the minutes as written? Hearing no opposition, it's
20 approved. The Action Guide on Tab E, Number 3 is fairly self-
21 explanatory and does anyone have any comments on the action
22 guide? Hearing none, we will move right on along. Tab E,
23 Number 4 is Discussion of Technical Subcommittee for Electronic
24 Charter Boat Reporting Recommendations. John Froeschke, are you
25 ready?

26
27 **DISCUSSION OF TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE FOR ELECTRONIC CHARTER BOAT**
28 **REPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS**

29
30 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Yes, I'm ready. What I wanted to do is
31 just bring you up to speed on this, for those of you who are new
32 or don't remember. We started this report early last year and
33 the idea was the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils formed a
34 subcommittee to provide recommendations to implement electronic
35 reporting in the charter boat sector.

36
37 We held initial meetings in May of last year, a two-day meeting,
38 and developed a draft report and then we had a subsequent
39 meeting in the summer. The initial report was provided to you
40 all for review in June, with a skeleton of recommendations. We
41 took your feedback and the South Atlantic's feedback and had an
42 additional webinar and produced a final report and provided it
43 to the South Atlantic Council in December and to you all now.

44
45 The idea was to take this and use this to develop a skeleton of
46 options on how to implement electronic reporting for the charter
47 boats and so that's essentially what we've done. The South
48 Atlantic reviewed it at their December meeting and they didn't

1 provide any specific recommendations other than they were
2 supportive of beginning the amendment process. That would be
3 one thing to think about.

4
5 I won't go over the entire document again though. What we
6 talked about last time was the recommendation of a mandatory
7 census-style reporting system, building on previous things that
8 we've done.

9
10 One, in the headboats, we now have mandatory weekly reporting
11 that's electronic and that would be one thing and another thing
12 in the dealer reporting that we also recently did is we had some
13 better -- The reporting frequency was faster, in that the
14 reports are due the Tuesday following the weekend, which would
15 be Sunday. It allows very rapid integration of the catch data
16 into the management process.

17
18 This is some of the things that we talked about. Some of the
19 longer-term challenges initially would be incorporation of the
20 state vessels. For some species, the states do catch a fair --
21 The state-permitted vessels catch a fair amount of federally-
22 managed species and so that would be something to think about in
23 the long term.

24
25 In the near term, that would require all kinds of state
26 legislative changes and things and probably would prevent
27 implementation of something like this in the near term and so I
28 guess I can take any specific questions you have about this or
29 we can talk about the general process if we want to form an IPT
30 and develop some options based on this report and bring it back
31 to the April council meeting for your review. That would be one
32 possibility.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** John, fill us in on the discussion on census
35 versus survey and also daily trip reporting with possibly
36 reporting not going out, no catch, versus weekly. What about
37 the census versus survey?

38
39 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay and so we talked about that and it's in the
40 report, in Section 4, 4.2, the survey and the census. Based on
41 the parameters that were given to the committee, we recommended
42 a census approach.

43
44 The thing that's nice about a census is you know your population
45 of vessels and there theoretically is no expansion factor and
46 you have the full number of vessels reporting and you take their
47 catch and effort and you sum it up and you have the estimate.
48 In practice, there generally are some missing reports and some

1 expansions and things, but it can be faster, because you don't
2 have to wait for the entire time or space block to be filled
3 before you can make an estimate.

4
5 Based on the headboat and how that program works, it's a census
6 and that was the recommendation of the group. As far as the
7 reporting frequency, our advice, and I was a member of this
8 committee, is that weekly is probably adequate for the
9 management, although it should be flexible enough that more
10 frequent reporting could be implemented without rebuilding the
11 whole system if it was necessary.

12
13 I think as far as the technical ability of the vessels -- The
14 boat operator may submit their reports every day if they choose
15 to, but it will only be tabulated weekly, because the management
16 isn't up to speed to be able to process a daily thing at this
17 point, but there is no reason that would prevent the vessel
18 operator from submitting it daily.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you. There's a lot in this document and
21 any questions from the committee?

22
23 **MR. MYRON FISCHER:** It's just I mean I know this is just a
24 committee report and there were some items I wanted to just
25 highlight and mention.

26
27 In Section 2, it discusses vessel-specific histories, catch
28 histories, for management, which would probably be a very useful
29 tool, with the exception of the fact that we are now under very
30 constrained fisheries, which doesn't illustrate what's happened
31 over the past one or two decades. We would only be starting
32 catch histories at some point in the future forward, under an
33 entirely different fishery than what has taken place
34 historically.

35
36 This could give a false input on what your catch history looked
37 like, especially using electronic tools to be the only and sole
38 provider of catch histories starting at some futuristic date. I
39 had one or two other items.

40
41 **DR. FROESCHKE:** A couple of comments. One, he is correct and I
42 guess that would -- It would always be your option if catch
43 history alone was a sole determinant in allocation or however
44 else that might be used and the other thing is the way we
45 envision this would be a joint amendment with the South Atlantic
46 and their charter boats are not -- There is no permit moratorium
47 for them.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you, John. Myron, go ahead.

2
3 **MR. FISCHER:** I was going to discuss VMS, but we could do that
4 later. I just wanted to bring up one other -- It's not a
5 deficiency in the report. It highlights it and it's actually
6 pretty good and it's that on the -- Probably on the validation,
7 where it discusses going to check vessels -- It's one of the
8 issues that we see in the state and looking for vessels that are
9 fishing or are not fishing.

10
11 The Louisiana-permitted fleet is probably 90 percent outboard
12 and highly mobile and they will be at one marina one day and
13 another marina the next day or not even and fishing in their
14 backyard and it's very difficult to do a validation going to
15 look to see what boats are in marinas.

16
17 Fortunately, most of the boats don't dock between six pylons and
18 either they're there or not there and so it's different strokes
19 for different areas of the Gulf and some things work and some
20 things don't.

21
22 **MR. ROBIN RIECHERS:** John, did the technical committee have any
23 discussion regarding the notion of if we go to a census-based
24 approach and given the amount or as we've looked at and
25 calibrated these voluntary systems where we're getting
26 percentages that are about one-third of the reports when you try
27 to validate those, is there a level of percentage where people
28 start to get a comfort?

29
30 Do you have any comments on that in regards to what have might
31 have been discussed or what some of the MRIP folks may be saying
32 in regards to that? Obviously at a third, I don't think we're
33 at that comfort level and we have no way to expand the estimate
34 and so I am just curious about that.

35
36 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Robin, are you referring to what percentage of
37 the trips are validated?

38
39 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes.

40
41 **DR. FROESCHKE:** That's probably something better for -- Maybe
42 Gregg could jump up and speak on behalf of MRIP. One of the
43 things we did talk about though is given that even that it is a
44 census, just as with the headboat, there would need to be
45 methods developed for expansion in the case of incomplete
46 reports, even a few percentage points, which always happens in
47 practice and so those tools would need to be part of this
48 process.

1
2 **MR. RIECHERS:** I guess my viewpoint is I understand if it's just
3 a few percentage points. I have more difficulty if it's
4 somewhere less than 50 percent and so I'm trying to figure out
5 how, as we continue to go down the road of a self-reported
6 computer-based system and all the states have put those kind of
7 systems in place, but I am just trying to figure out -- Are we
8 going to get some guidance at some point from MRIP in regards to
9 percentage levels and validation and percentages, et cetera,
10 that we need to be targeting?

11
12 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** That's a really important question and if I
13 were to just off the top of my head, based on this question, put
14 things in a hierarchy, an absolutely perfect and fully in-force
15 census would be the top of the hierarchy in terms of its
16 quality. The challenge with that is a perfect census is very
17 difficult to accomplish and rare that you end up with that
18 perfect census.

19
20 Second in the hierarchy is a well-designed, stratified random
21 sample and sort of the bottom of the heap would be voluntary
22 data and all of those require validation. All three of those
23 require validation.

24
25 If you are going with a volunteer self-reported system, the
26 sample size on that -- My expectations would be that both the
27 number of samples you would get voluntarily would have to be
28 quite high and the validation of those would have to be quite
29 high.

30
31 I can't give you absolute numbers of what percentage, but just
32 by virtue of the fact that you may have a situation where your
33 high-liners and responsible fishers that are out there and care
34 about the resource and care about the industry may report like
35 crazy and the people who only go out very rarely may not report
36 and that would give you a biased view of what the sampling or of
37 what both the effort and the catch is and those are the kinds of
38 things that you get when you have voluntary systems that you
39 need to be able to correct for.

40
41 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Just to follow up on that, Robin, that's kind
42 of the \$64,000 question that was posed at the red snapper
43 workshop that was held in December in New Orleans and I attended
44 that and we started to explore, the states did at least, started
45 to ask those questions and try to get to some answers.

46
47 I didn't get a sense that there would be necessarily a number, a
48 magic number if you will, but that there would be some protocols

1 established or some mechanism by which each program would be
2 looked at independently and the merits of the process by which
3 the data was collected and the surveys and the validation and
4 all that stuff would then be looked at and then that would be
5 approved, if you will.

6
7 I don't think it was necessarily that you had to get a minimum
8 percentage and that if the science and the protocols were
9 established correctly and operated that that would be
10 sufficient.

11
12 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Kevin essentially reiterated what I was
13 going to say. There is not a number, but it's something that
14 we're going to keep putting pressure on MRIP to -- Because it's
15 an important question and so it's something that we're going to
16 keep their feet to the fire.

17
18 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just as a reminder, in the document, Section 4,
19 the way that we structured the recommendations was sort of a
20 decision tree hierarchical and the very first one, 4.1, is
21 mandatory or voluntary participation.

22
23 The I would say unanimous recommendation of the group was a
24 mandatory participation if selected and I guess the other detail
25 on this is if trips are validated and what percentage of those
26 trips would need to be validated so you would be confident in
27 the entire sample, but in terms of just voluntary reporting,
28 that was not a recommendation of the group.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Any other questions for John? Hearing none,
31 John, I think the report is well done and I think you guys did a
32 good job, all of you guys that were involved in it, and it
33 pushes us right down the road where I think we need to be. We
34 will move on if there's no other questions of John and we will
35 go to EM/ER Implementation Plan, Tab E, Number 5.

36
37 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Harlon, sorry to interrupt, but did you want to
38 give us some guidance about whether we're to form an IPT and
39 begin developing some options for this to bring back to the
40 April meeting?

41
42 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I think that's going to come. David, do you
43 want to address that?

44
45 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** I have a motion. Can you put that on the
46 board for me? **That's my motion.**

47
48 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** We have a motion on the board and let me read

1 it. Do we have a second for this motion? Can everyone read it?
2 We have a second. Johnny seconded it. The motion on the board
3 is that the Data Committee directs staff to begin developing a
4 plan amendment that would require electronic logbooks for the
5 charter for-hire vessels in the Gulf and South Atlantic that
6 considers the use of VMS and other recommendations from the
7 Joint Council Technical Subcommittee Report. Is everyone clear
8 on the motion? Any questions or discussion?

9
10 **DR. FROESCHKE:** So I'm clear, the things that I sort of envision
11 for your consideration as we move forward would be things like
12 reporting frequency, like we talked about, and the dealer --
13 There would probably be a range of those and participation
14 perhaps and whether to use VMS and what FMPs would be affected.
15 Those would be sort of, I guess, the four actions that I'm
16 thinking about and are there other things that I'm missing?

17
18 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Any other discussion?

19
20 **MR. BOYD:** I can't recall exactly, but this seems very similar
21 to a motion that was made several years ago in your committee,
22 and I think you made it, to do the same thing and I think that
23 passed.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Doug, you're correct. Sometimes I believe the
26 motions we did yesterday we never see today, but I think we need
27 to make it very clear that if we're going to do this, let's do
28 it, because this may be different because this is Gulf and South
29 Atlantic as well. I don't know if that was part of the process
30 at the time. This is for both groups.

31
32 **MR. BOYD:** I don't know and could we get that motion back up?

33
34 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Will the staff find that for us, please?

35
36 **MR. GREENE:** They have a few questions behind me about what
37 motion it was that you were looking for, but I will go ahead and
38 respond a little bit to Doug's question.

39
40 I think the biggest difference between what passed previously in
41 committee compared to this is that the difference here is that
42 we have recommendations from the Joint Council Technical
43 Subcommittee and it has been looked at and everything else and
44 so that's the biggest difference between the two that I recall,
45 but if you want to get them to pull up that previous motion,
46 that's fine, but there has been a lot of thought and effort put
47 into that technical subcommittee report.

48

1 **MR. BOYD:** Harlon, just a comment. I am not speaking against
2 this motion. I would just like to understand if we're changing
3 what we had done before or if we're adding to it. I would just
4 like to understand what the committee is doing.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I understand and I'm sure we're adding to it,
7 because we didn't have the technical subcommittee and I don't
8 think the Gulf and the South Atlantic was involved before.

9
10 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Two things. One, given your dedication to this,
11 it might take us a while to pull up the history of those,
12 because it spans a number of council meetings and years. The
13 second point is one other thing I didn't mention was the
14 accountability measures that we've built into, for example, the
15 dealer reporting. We may want to think about similar things for
16 the charter boats.

17
18 The way that works, generally, if you don't recall, is that for
19 a dealer to have a valid federal permit, your reports have to be
20 submitted on time and received by NMFS and that seemed to be a
21 reasonable thing to do.

22
23 When we talked about this initially, things or levying fines or
24 things like that for late permits was not -- That's not our
25 purview and so that would probably -- Something along those
26 lines we would also have at least in the first draft of the
27 document.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** All right and did we find any other motions?

30
31 **MR. FISCHER:** I would like to amend this motion to state -- To
32 put the language in that the subcommittee created and I will
33 read the language and then we'll figure where to insert it. It
34 would be logbook data collected via authorized platforms, such
35 as web, tablet, phone, or VMS or other. It would be around the
36 VMS and considers the use of VMS and it would just be "via
37 authorized platforms, such as web, tablet, phone, or VMS or
38 other".

39
40 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Myron, it pretty much says that in "and other
41 recommendations from the Joint Council Technical Subcommittee.

42
43 **MR. FISCHER:** Yes, I know, but we're specifying strictly VMS and
44 other and I would like to list everything the subcommittee
45 requested and not eliminate those from the motion.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I don't think we've eliminated them, but I
48 mean I don't have a problem with what you're doing.

1
2 **MR. FISCHER:** We didn't eliminate them, but we didn't list them.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** The subcommittee has and that's part of this
5 motion. I mean I don't have a problem and whatever you want to
6 do is fine or whatever this committee wants to do, but I think
7 this motion covers that, because it says basically that whatever
8 the subcommittee recommended in other recommendations from the
9 joint subcommittee and so it's there in this motion and they're
10 going to look at all that. We're going to look at all that. I
11 mean that's what Froeschke's job is going to be.

12
13 **MR. ANSON:** I am not on your committee, but I am just am
14 wondering -- Zack, you might be able to answer this. I am
15 curious with pairing both the Gulf and South Atlantic in term of
16 the mackerel and trying to deal with joint amendments in
17 mackerel and although this isn't as contentious I would probably
18 agree, but, Zack, is there a desire to move as quickly and
19 develop a plan amendment that underscores a lot of these issues
20 and work it through both councils? Would there be a lot of
21 consensus and agreement to work on a fairly fast timeline, do
22 you think?

23
24 **MR. ZACK BOWEN:** I do think. At our last meeting in December in
25 North Carolina, we actually -- The council, in our Data
26 Collection Committee, and I am not on that committee, but we did
27 make a motion and it passed for us to instruct our staff to --
28 Let me read it here. It's to begin working on a joint charter
29 boat logbook amendment and so we are in agreement, yes.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Kevin, I think in all of our discussions it's
32 been that direction, headed in that direction, and I think we've
33 worked pretty well together on this particular project.

34
35 We have a motion on the floor with a second and is there any
36 discussion? Any opposition to the motion? Myron. **All right.**
37 **All in favor of the motion raise your hand, please, five it**
38 **looks like; all opposed, one. The motion carries.** Anything
39 else on John Froeschke's report on the technical subcommittee?

40
41 **MR. BOYD:** When we go to full council, I would just like to see
42 the other motion that was made, simply because I don't want us
43 working on two parallel tracks if the other motion has us doing
44 that. There is no sense in continuing on if we've already done
45 this once.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I agree and hopefully the staff will find it
48 by that time, but I just think this one has got more in it,

1 because of the technical subcommittee, because of the joint
2 councils.

3
4 **DR. FROESCHKE:** We're still working on that, but I agree and I
5 think what the process was is those motions sort of led to the
6 development of this technical subcommittee and things and the
7 result was that we got our facts together, so to speak, and so
8 now you have actually something to work with and so I think this
9 is a supplement rather than duplicative or anything like that.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** All right, but let's try and find the motion
12 for Doug, so we can make sure we're straight. With that, we are
13 going to move on and, Andy, you're up.

14 **EM/ER IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

15
16
17 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Thanks and I don't have a presentation for
18 you and I just wanted to give you and overview of the electronic
19 monitoring and reporting plan. It's been a while, I think,
20 since we've briefed the council directly on the plan.

21
22 Back in June, we met with you in Key West and discussed the plan
23 itself and what we were beginning to prepare and seeking some
24 input directly from you at that time. We also briefed the South
25 Atlantic and Caribbean Councils around that same time and each
26 of the councils wrote us a letter providing some initial input
27 on the contents of the plan, given the discussions we had at
28 those council meetings.

29
30 Since then, we have formed kind of an internal technical working
31 group of NMFS staff and council staff and council members to
32 continue to flesh out this electronic monitoring plan for the
33 region and we're now at the point where we are close to
34 completing the plan, but we wanted to give you one final
35 opportunity to review it and provide input to us.

36
37 Just as a way of background, we developed a national policy back
38 in 2013 and that policy essentially gave us direction to develop
39 regional plans throughout the country and so our plan is one of
40 five or six regional plans that has been developed. They are
41 not standardized by any stretch and they are purposely being
42 developed with the regions in mind and the flexibility that
43 needs to be considered for each region.

44
45 Our plan itself is focusing heavily on electronic reporting and
46 obviously some of the things you just discussed during your
47 technical subcommittee discussion.

1 The overall goal of the plan is essentially to come up with an
2 operational strategy moving forward over the next three to five
3 years of what are our priorities going to be as an agency
4 working with you as a council as well as our constituents in
5 enhancing and improving reporting and data collection and
6 obviously the need for this is the increased demand on the
7 agency to monitor annual catch limits, but also the increase in
8 the use of technology and just the desire to have higher
9 quality, faster data delivered to the agency.

10
11 The plan itself, at this point, we have a public comment period
12 open through February 9 and right now we're receiving input on
13 the plan and you can submit comments or the public can submit
14 comments via email or send them directly to our office.

15
16 Our intent is to complete the plan by about the middle of
17 February and so you have a short time period in which to provide
18 any final input. What we're most interested in from the
19 council's perspective are really three or four items.

20
21 One if the plan itself outlines the specific process that we
22 recommend taking moving forward with any sort of electronic
23 monitoring or reporting and it's a six-step process from initial
24 survey design and consideration all the way through
25 implementation and review. It heavily involves constituents and
26 the council, but we want to make sure that we've captured
27 involvement and engagement with you, the council, and your
28 constituents, our constituents, in that process.

29
30 The other two major items that are going to be of interest to
31 you are the species or fisheries suitable for electronic
32 reporting and monitoring. As I said, our focus in the short
33 term, over the next three years, is really on electronic
34 reporting and so we've come up with fisheries that would be
35 suitable for that based on input that we received from you.

36
37 The priorities are largely electronic reporting through logbook
38 systems in both the commercial and recreational fisheries for
39 reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics. We view the use of
40 video monitoring as something that's maybe a longer-term
41 strategy that we would focus on out into the future, but not
42 necessarily something that would be of immediate interest and
43 use.

44
45 Then we also, in taking that list of fisheries suitable for
46 electronic reporting and monitoring, we started to put together
47 some generic timelines for implementation of those activities.
48 The key to that is obviously how are those programs going to be

1 funded.

2
3 There is obviously limitations on what can or can't be done
4 depending on the funding and depending on the complexity of
5 those programs. We don't specifically outline all the detailed
6 costs associated with implementing those programs, but we do
7 make it clear obviously that in order to implement some of these
8 programs, or many of these programs, that it can't be unfunded
9 mandates. We have to figure out ways that we can fund these
10 programs, including consideration of cost sharing with the
11 industry.

12
13 Overall, it's a very overarching plan that hopefully gives us
14 kind of a path forward for looking at how we can improve data
15 collection in the Southeast Region, across all three of our
16 council jurisdictions, and each year we intend to bring this
17 plan back to you to revisit it and to take a look at what's been
18 accomplished and what's a work in progress and then also to make
19 adjustments, obviously, to the plan in the middle of the process
20 as necessary.

21
22 With that, I will take any questions and if you have any
23 specific comments on the plan, I would certainly be interested
24 in receiving those or if you want to follow up with specific
25 comments after the meeting, as I indicated, we're going to try
26 to wrap these comments up and address the final revisions to the
27 plan by the middle of February.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you, Andy. Any questions? Hearing no
30 questions, thank you, Andy. Stay where you are. You are next
31 with MRIP Calibration Update, Tab E-6(a) and (b).

32
33 **MRIP CALIBRATION UPDATE**

34
35 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I will keep this brief. At the last council
36 meeting, we had just completed the MRIP calibration workshop and
37 at that point, there had not been final decisions made about a
38 preferred methodology to calibrate the landings based on the
39 2013 revisions to the dockside intercept survey.

40
41 Since then, a draft report has been completed and that was
42 provided in your briefing book. There has also been specific
43 recommendations made in terms of the interim approach for
44 calibrating the landings based on those new methodologies.

45
46 Just to refresh everyone's memory, the reason we're doing this
47 is the changes to the dockside intercept survey resulted in a
48 lot of trips that were previously not being sampled in prior

1 years and now we're sampling a much larger portion of afternoon
2 and evening trips, as you can see from this histogram, and so we
3 have to account for that change and address it in terms of
4 calibrating landings estimates back in time.

5
6 The workshop was held in September of 2014 and there were state
7 and federal partners as well as MRIP staff and consultants at
8 this workshop. The conclusion was the calibration was required
9 and there was a determination that a change had occurred that
10 resulted in differences in catch estimates.

11
12 Based on the workshop report that's in your briefing book, there
13 was three approaches that were proposed and I won't get into
14 detail about these approaches other than the interim
15 recommendation, but the first two, the simple ratio method and
16 complex ratio adjustment, those approaches were able to be
17 conducted and completed for consideration by MRIP consultants
18 and the rest of the calibration workshop participants, to make a
19 decision about how to proceed.

20
21 The third approach, which is a model-based approach, is going to
22 take a much longer time period to complete and it requires more
23 data and so that's something that hasn't been done and something
24 that MRIP and others will pursue in the future and we'll
25 obviously have to look at all three approaches to determine what
26 might be the most appropriate over the long term.

27
28 At this point, based on the recommendations of that workgroup,
29 the simple approach was the approach that was preferred and that
30 approach has since been used for the red snapper update
31 assessment, the red grouper assessment, and is now being used
32 for gray triggerfish and they are also working on automating
33 procedures so that it can be used for all of the managed species
34 by the councils. It's a work in progress, but it's something
35 that is being prioritized based on ongoing assessments.

36
37 I won't bore you with the gory details of the calibration
38 itself, but essentially it's very straightforward and what it
39 essentially assumes is that catch made outside the peak periods
40 that were being sampled is relatively stable from year to year
41 and so what we're doing is we're calculating the proportion of
42 the catch that occurs in that -- Occurred in the total period
43 for 2013 relative to the peak period in 2013 and then that ratio
44 is then used to scale previous years of catches, based on the
45 distribution between the peak and the total catch estimate.

46
47 This was done for both the landed catch estimates as well as
48 those that were unobserved but landed as well as discards. It

1 was done a state and mode and year level, so that calibrations
2 could be made throughout the region.

3
4 Shannon will probably get into more detail than I will here, but
5 here is just the results on the red snapper stock assessment
6 inputs and this is not just MRIP landing and discard estimates,
7 but actually estimates across all the data collection programs.

8
9 You can see, for the most part, the estimates have been scaled
10 up some in both the east and west, in terms of landings. Where
11 it has a little bit bigger influence is on the discard estimates
12 and you can see, in particular in the western Gulf, the discard
13 estimates were estimated to be considerably higher.

14
15 In the eastern Gulf, there is more of a similar trend, although
16 there is also some major difference there and I won't get into
17 detail, but part of the issue with the western Gulf is that when
18 we expand up Louisiana's landings, because Texas also does not
19 report discards, we also have to then use Louisiana as a proxy
20 and expand up the discard estimates for Texas and so if
21 Louisiana's discard estimates go up, then the expansion also
22 applies to Texas.

23
24 In terms of why there is this big increase in 2004 forward
25 versus prior to 2004 in the western Gulf, a lot of that is
26 driven by recommendations on how to develop the calibration
27 factors and that relates to developing calibration factors for
28 2004 prior that are based on Gulf-wide estimates rather than
29 specific to the western Gulf or specific to the eastern Gulf.
30 If you have further questions, I can certainly answer those.

31
32 Of most interest to you as the council is related to some of the
33 recent actions you've taken and so with sector separation,
34 recall at the last meeting the non-calibrated estimates
35 indicated 44 percent would go to the for-hire sector and 56 to
36 the private sector.

37
38 We had advised during the meeting that it would be somewhere
39 between 41 and 44 percent, depending on which calibration was
40 used. As you can see, the calibrated estimates came out
41 approximately in the middle of that range, with 42.3 percent
42 going to the for-hire and the remainder going to the private
43 sector.

44
45 The other not necessarily intended consequence, but something
46 that was discovered as we were calculating the quota for the
47 Headboat Collaborative this year was that the formula for
48 calculating their quota is based on 2011 recreational landings

1 and so it's the headboat vessel landings relative to the 2011
2 recreational landings and that calculates out their fraction of
3 the quota and then it's multiplied by the 2015 quota.

4
5 As you can see in the third line of this table, the calibrated
6 estimate for 2011 went from 4.3 million pounds up to 6.7 million
7 pounds and so when you -- Even though we've added two new
8 vessels to the Headboat Collaborative Program this year, they
9 are actually receiving about 1.3 percent less in terms of the
10 quota, based on the formula specified in the exempted fishing
11 permit. Their quota ultimately has gone down by about 13,000
12 total fish this relative to last year, because of changes in the
13 MRIP calibration.

14
15 I just wanted to bring that to your attention as well as sector
16 separation and obviously this has impacts on the red snapper
17 update assessment, which Shannon will be talking about further.
18 I will take any questions.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Questions? This is too easy. No questions
21 and who is up next? We will move on to Review and Discussion of
22 MRIP Red Snapper Workshop and John.

23 24 **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF MRIP RED SNAPPER WORKSHOP**

25
26 **DR. FROESCHKE:** This builds off of what Andy was talking about
27 and there was a meeting, MRIP Red Snapper Workshop Meeting, Part
28 3. It was held in New Orleans in December and it was a longer-
29 term process and the idea was that each of the states are
30 building additional recreational survey programs to enhance
31 their estimates of red snapper.

32
33 This workshop enabled two of the MRIP consultants that have been
34 heavily involved with the new survey to provide feedback to each
35 of the states, given that no two states are identical and so the
36 questions were are these estimates resulting from these
37 different states comparable with each other and could they be
38 calibrated back to historical surveys and so that was sort of
39 the idea and what was happening -- There is really two types of
40 surveys.

41
42 Alabama and Mississippi are doing what the consultants called a
43 capture/recapture survey and this is more of a self-reported
44 system, whereas Florida, Louisiana, and Texas are doing what
45 they would call a direct survey and it really just is similar to
46 what's done in MRIP. It's more of the traditional survey.

47
48 The idea is that with the traditional survey, the problem isn't

1 that the survey method is necessarily flawed, but it's that the
2 intensity is too low in the period to get a precision level
3 that's necessary and so it's really a species-specific targeted
4 survey to improve the precision to achieve the management goals.

5
6 The consultants were generally supportive of both of these
7 methods, given that they are widely supported in the literature.
8 These are known and accepted ways to do surveys. During the
9 meeting, each of the states met with them and they gave an
10 overview of the nuts and bolts and then there was opportunity
11 for the states to give individual feedback.

12
13 The idea wasn't that these are finished 100 percent and ready to
14 go production-level surveys, but it's a work in progress and so
15 I think the consultants were likely helpful and, again, that
16 would probably come better from the state representatives, but
17 they seemed very willing and the consultants seemed confident
18 that the methods could not only be calibrated among states, but
19 also back in time and so that was useful.

20
21 As a participant, the effort going into surveying red snapper is
22 quite impressive. I don't think it would be capable of doing
23 this for all species, but it does seem like it's a targeted
24 approach to improve the data for the management needs for red
25 snapper.

26
27 One of the things that the consultants were asked about was
28 actually not completely clear, but what is the intent of the
29 surveys and that's something that needs to be brought forth
30 early on. Is this something to enhance the MRIP survey and
31 build on or is this something to replace the survey?

32
33 Depending on what the objective of it is, it might depend on how
34 you ultimately structure this and the idea is that at some point
35 we can develop or MRIP can develop a clear set of guidelines on
36 how to certify these data for collection programs and calibrate
37 them and integrate them into the management process so everyone
38 is comfortable in how to use these landings and what their
39 purpose are and we can make use of the better data.

40
41 Again, just sort of a final is they agreed at this point that
42 these data really should be pilot-level status, because things
43 are changing rapidly and we're trying to get a handle on the
44 best way to do this and at some point, they will become the
45 standard, if you will, but at this point, it's probably not
46 quite ready for that.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Are there questions? You guys must be doing a

1 great job explaining yourselves. It's an awful quiet committee
2 today and if there's no questions, we will keep moving. There
3 is no other business to come before this committee and so I
4 think we're done.

5

6 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m., January 26,
7 2015.)

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9

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10