

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

282<sup>ND</sup> MEETING

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

Via Webinar

December 1, 2020

**VOTING MEMBERS**

Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama  
 Susan Boggs.....Alabama  
 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi  
 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS  
 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi  
 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana  
 Phil Dyskow.....Florida  
 Tom Frazer.....Florida  
 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida  
 Paul Mickle (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi  
 Robin Riechers.....Texas  
 John Sanchez.....Florida  
 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana  
 Bob Shipp.....Alabama  
 Greg Stunz.....Texas  
 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana  
 Troy Williamson.....Texas

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC  
 Lt. Nicholas Giancola.....USCG

**STAFF**

Matt Freeman.....Economist  
 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer  
 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist  
 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel  
 Jessica Matos.....Document Editor & Administrative Assistant  
 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist  
 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer  
 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison  
 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
 Camilla Shireman.....Administrative & Communications Assistant  
 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director  
 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

1 Steven Atran.....FL  
2 Randy Boggs.....Orange Beach, AL  
3 Erik Brazer.....Shareholders Alliance  
4 Catherine Bruger.....Ocean Conservancy  
5 Shannon Calay.....SEFSC  
6 Richard Fisher.....LA  
7 Tim Griner.....SAFMC  
8 Ken Haddad.....ASA  
9 Dylan Hubbard.....FL  
10 Peter Hood.....NMFS  
11 Gary Jarvis.....Destin, FL  
12 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, FL  
13 Lawrence Marino.....LA  
14 Clay Porch.....SEFSC  
15 Lance Robinson.....TX  
16 Mark Tryon.....FL  
17 John Walter.....NMFS  
18 Wayne Werner.....Alachua, FL  
19 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL  
20 Jim Zurbrick.....Steinhatchee, FL

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4 agency personnel highlighting the value in creating a fishery  
5 stakeholder advisory panel to inform the process of identifying  
6 aquaculture opportunity areas (AOAs). [The motion carried on](#)  
7 [page 47](#).

8  
9 [PAGE 54](#): Motion that the council will send a letter to the  
10 SEFSC supporting the development, implementation and funding of  
11 the P-Sea WindPlot program. [The motion carried on page 54](#).

12  
13 [PAGE 55](#): Motion to request staff initiate a white paper that  
14 explores the associated costs with an expanded number of shrimp  
15 vessels participating in the pilot effort collection program  
16 using P-Sea WindPlot. [The motion carried on page 57](#).

17  
18 [PAGE 66](#): Motion to add an action to modify the recreational bag  
19 limit for vermilion snapper, including alternatives for a  
20 fifteen-fish bag limit and to eliminate the bag limit, but  
21 retain the twenty-fish aggregate bag limit for those reef fish  
22 species without a species-specific bag limit. [The motion](#)  
23 [carried on page 67](#).

24  
25 [PAGE 67](#): Motion to remove Action 2 from the Framework Action:  
26 Modifications to Vermilion Snapper and Gray Triggerfish Catch  
27 Levels and Gray Triggerfish Recreational Fixed Closed Season and  
28 place it in a stand-alone document. [The motion carried on page](#)  
29 [73](#).

30  
31 [PAGE 74](#): Motion in Action 3 to add an Alternative 5.  
32 Alternative 5 is modify the recreational fixed closed season for  
33 gray triggerfish to be January 1 through the end of February and  
34 June 1 through the end of June. [The motion carried on page 77](#).

35  
36 [PAGE 78](#): Motion that the council requests that NMFS capture IFQ  
37 data on 12/31/2020 which details individual accounts and the  
38 pounds remaining in those individual accounts at the close of  
39 business on 12/31/2020. [The motion carried on page 78](#).

40  
41 [PAGE 84](#): Motion to remove Action 1 from the Framework Action:  
42 Modifications to Vermilion Snapper and Gray Triggerfish Catch  
43 Levels and Gray Triggerfish Recreational Fixed Closed Season and  
44 place it in a stand-alone document. [The motion carried on page](#)  
45 [85](#).

46  
47 [PAGE 89](#): Motion to add an [alternative](#) that would incorporate an  
48 interim assessment increase in ACLs into the Draft Framework

1 Action: Adjust State Recreational Red Snapper Catch Limits  
2 document. [The motion was withdrawn on page 92.](#)  
3  
4 [PAGE 93](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the preferred  
5 alternative. [The motion carried on page 95.](#)  
6  
7 [PAGE 95](#): Motion in Action 2 to make Alternative 3, Option a the  
8 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 97.](#)  
9  
10 [PAGE 97](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 3 the preferred  
11 alternative. [The motion failed on page on page 100.](#)  
12  
13 [PAGE 100](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the  
14 preferred alternative. [The motion failed on page 105.](#)  
15  
16 - - -  
17

1 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
2 Council convened via webinar on Tuesday morning, December 1,  
3 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

4  
5 **CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTIONS**  
6

7 **CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER:** I would like to call to order the Full  
8 Council. Welcome to the 282<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Gulf Council. My  
9 name is Tom Frazer, Chair of the council. The Gulf Council is  
10 one of eight regional councils established in 1976 by the  
11 Fishery Conservation and Management Act, known today as the  
12 Magnuson-Stevens Act. The council's purpose is to serve as a  
13 deliberative body to advise the Secretary of Commerce on fishery  
14 management measures in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.  
15 These measures help ensure that fishery resources in the Gulf  
16 are sustained, while providing the best overall benefit to the  
17 nation.

18  
19 The council has seventeen voting members, eleven of whom are  
20 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and include individuals  
21 from a range of geographical areas in the Gulf of Mexico with  
22 experience in various aspects of fisheries.

23  
24 The membership also includes the five state fishery managers  
25 from each Gulf state and the Regional Administrator from NOAA's  
26 Southeast Fisheries Service, as well as several non-voting  
27 members.

28  
29 Public input is a vital part of the council's deliberative  
30 process, and comments, both oral and written, are accepted and  
31 considered by the council throughout the process. Anyone  
32 wishing to speak during public comment should call the toll-free  
33 phone number provided on our website and screen during the  
34 public comment period of the meeting.

35  
36 A digital recording is used for the public record, and,  
37 therefore, for the purpose of voice identification, please  
38 unmute your line when your name is called and state your first  
39 and last name.

40  
41 **MS. BERNADINE ROY:** Kevin Anson.

42  
43 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Kevin Anson.

44  
45 **MS. ROY:** Chris Schieble.

46  
47 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** Chris Schieble.  
48

1 MS. ROY: Susan Boggs.  
2  
3 MS. SUSAN BOGGS: Susan Boggs.  
4  
5 MS. ROY: Leann Bosarge.  
6  
7 MS. LEANN BOSARGE: Leann Bosarge.  
8  
9 MS. ROY: Roy Crabtree.  
10  
11 DR. ROY CRABTREE: Roy Crabtree.  
12  
13 MS. ROY: Dale Diaz.  
14  
15 MR. DALE DIAZ: Dale Diaz.  
16  
17 MS. ROY: Thank you. J.D. Dugas.  
18  
19 MR. J.D. DUGAS: J.D. Dugas.  
20  
21 MS. ROY: Thank you. Phil Dyskow.  
22  
23 MR. PHIL DYSKOW: Phil Dyskow.  
24  
25 MS. ROY: Tom Frazer.  
26  
27 CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Tom Frazer.  
28  
29 MS. ROY: Martha Guyas.  
30  
31 MS. MARTHA GUYAS: Martha Guyas.  
32  
33 MS. ROY: Thank you, Martha. Robin Riechers.  
34  
35 MR. ROBIN RIECHERS: Robin Riechers.  
36  
37 MS. ROY: Thank you. John Sanchez.  
38  
39 MR. JOHN SANCHEZ: John Sanchez.  
40  
41 MS. ROY: Bob Shipp.  
42  
43 DR. BOB SHIPP: Bob Shipp.  
44  
45 MS. ROY: Joe Spraggins. Paul Mickle.  
46  
47 DR. PAUL MICKLE: Paul Mickle.  
48

1 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. Greg Stunz.  
2  
3 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Greg Stunz.  
4  
5 **MS. ROY:** Ed Swindell.  
6  
7 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Ed Swindell.  
8  
9 **MS. ROY:** Troy Williamson.  
10  
11 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** Troy Williamson.  
12  
13 **MS. ROY:** Dave Donaldson.  
14  
15 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Dave Donaldson.  
16  
17 **MS. ROY:** Lieutenant Giancola.  
18  
19 **LT. NICHOLAS GIANCOLA:** Lieutenant Giancola.  
20  
21 **MS. ROY:** Okay. Thank you.  
22  
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Bernie. Before we get into the  
24 Adoption of the Agenda and Approval of the Minutes, we have a  
25 couple of announcements. The first announcement has to do with  
26 the timing and location of our next council meetings. I think,  
27 as everybody is aware, we continue to struggle with this  
28 pandemic, and we are going to have our January council meeting -  
29 - It will continue to be held in a virtual format, and so it  
30 will not be in New Orleans.  
31  
32 Our next meeting is scheduled for April, and, again, we're  
33 hopeful, at that point, that we will be able to transition into  
34 at least a hybrid format for our meeting, and so, in order to  
35 ease the logistics associated, I guess, with supporting a hybrid  
36 meeting, we will have that -- Our plan is to host that meeting  
37 in Tampa, rather than Mississippi.  
38  
39 Several factors went into that decision. One had to do  
40 primarily with the hotel in Mississippi that we had arranged was  
41 no longer available, and, again, as I said before, because of  
42 many of the logistics that we are anticipate that are unusual,  
43 we thought that it would be easier for staff to work here in  
44 Tampa, to kind of work through that, because it's possible that  
45 we will continue to have hybrid meetings well into 2021.  
46  
47 That is the first announcement, and I guess I want to make sure  
48 that -- I will give people an opportunity to weigh-in on that or

1 voice any concerns that they might have. Okay. I am not seeing  
2 any, but, again, feel free, at any point, to contact either  
3 myself or Carrie with any questions or concerns you might have,  
4 but, as the time gets closer, particularly for that hybrid  
5 meeting, we will share with you details as they relate to the  
6 logistics.

7  
8 The next announcement has to do with Dr. Crabtree, and I think  
9 many people here realize that Roy is attending his last Gulf  
10 Council meeting as the NMFS representative, and so we wanted to  
11 say a few words, and I will read a statement here, and then  
12 we'll get into some more pleasantries.

13  
14 For those of you who don't know Roy's background, Dr. Crabtree  
15 earned his Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Furman University  
16 in South Carolina. He went on to complete his Master's Degree  
17 in Marine Science from the University of South Carolina, and,  
18 finally, he earned his PhD in Marine Science from the College of  
19 William and Mary in Virginia.

20  
21 Roy began his professional career as a fishing guide in the  
22 Florida Keys and Everglades National Park, and he subsequently  
23 accepted a research position with the Florida Fish and Wildlife  
24 Conservation Commission. He soon worked his way to be Senior  
25 Research Scientist at the Commission of Florida Marine Research  
26 Institution, and he ultimately assumed the position of Director  
27 of the Division of Marine Fisheries. He has served as the  
28 Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast  
29 Regional Office since January of 2003.

30  
31 Throughout his academic and professional career, Dr. Crabtree  
32 has authored or co-authored dozens of scientific publications,  
33 and his contributions as a fisheries management professional are  
34 simply too many to list. His influence in the fisheries  
35 management space extends well beyond the Gulf of Mexico, and his  
36 service to the successful management of fisheries in the South  
37 Atlantic and Caribbean regions is well recognized and  
38 appreciated.

39  
40 In his years as the NMFS representative on the Gulf Council, Roy  
41 has proven to be a fair, considerate, and thoughtful leader.  
42 His ability to weigh all sides of an argument have benefitted  
43 fisheries management in the Gulf for years. Each of us will  
44 miss his composure and level-headed determination, and we will  
45 also miss the after-hours cocktails, for those of us who were  
46 lucky enough to know him personally enjoyed his wry humor and  
47 gigantic heart.

48

1 With that said, the council staff and council members have  
2 pitched in to get Roy a little bit of a gift, and he's a Back  
3 Bay tarpon fishing rod with a Shimano Spheros 6000 reel, and we  
4 are going to let Emily come in and display that merchandise.  
5 Roy, we're going to get that rod-and-reel to you, after we try  
6 it out, and I think I will deliver it to you, and we'll have a  
7 beer, and hopefully you'll get an opportunity to use that in  
8 fairly short order. Again, I want to thank everybody for  
9 contributing in that regard. I wanted to quickly, also, give  
10 Dr. Simmons a few minutes, just to share a few words as well.

11  
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We  
13 also have, for Dr. Roy Crabtree, in honor of your dedicated  
14 service to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, from  
15 2001 to 2020, and we included the three years that you were the  
16 Director at the Florida Marine Research Institute in, for this  
17 clock, and so this is from the council and staff, in honor of  
18 your dedicated service, and we also have a Tervis tumbler for  
19 you, with our most highly-targeted species here, so you can keep  
20 your beverages cold, for your enjoyment, and think about us.  
21 Thank you very much. It's been an honor working with you.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Roy, I know that it's not an ideal time to  
24 spend your last meeting with the Gulf Council virtually, and I  
25 am hopeful that, after this pandemic goes away, that you will be  
26 able to spend some time with all of us and sit down and enjoy a  
27 martini and talk about all of the cool things that have happened  
28 in a very long and illustrious career. I'm going to give you a  
29 few seconds, if you would like to say a few words.

30  
31 I know probably everybody on this call would have something to  
32 say, and, unfortunately, we're not going to have a lot of time  
33 to capture those comments right now, but what I'm hopeful for is  
34 we're going to save some time at the end of the council meeting  
35 today and let people say a few words, but I'm going to give you  
36 the floor right now, if you would like.

37  
38 **DR. CRABTREE:** Thanks, Tom, and thank you, Carrie and the staff  
39 and everyone, who kicked in on the gifts. I really appreciate  
40 that, and I look forward to getting out tarpon fishing one day.  
41 It's been a long time. It's really hard for me to believe that  
42 I've been on the council now for I guess over twenty years, and  
43 I've often joked to folks that I believe I have attended more  
44 council meetings as a voting member than any other person, and I  
45 stand by that record, and no one has ever challenged me on it.

46  
47 Anyway, I've been very fortunate, and it's been a long and  
48 really great career, and I have met a lot of wonderful people,

1 and I have made many good friends on the councils over the  
2 years, and we have tackled a lot of tough issues and been  
3 through a lot together, but I think we are in a much better  
4 place now than we were in the past, and I am very optimistic  
5 about the future, and I will be watching you from afar next  
6 year, but, at any rate, I thank all of you, and, Tom, I would  
7 very much like to come back to a council meeting, when life gets  
8 back to normal.

9  
10 This virtual year I have had certainly wasn't how you ever think  
11 about your last council meeting going, but that's the way we  
12 find things today, and so I would very much like to come back,  
13 at some point, and have that martini with all of you and see you  
14 all again, and I look forward to doing that, but, again, thank  
15 you all very much for the recognition and for the friendship  
16 we've all shared over the past years. Thanks, Tom.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Roy. I mean, I'm happy for you, and  
19 it's probably a sad day, actually, for a lot of people here.  
20 The time spent with you has been exceptionally rewarding, at  
21 least for me, and I think I can speak on behalf of everybody on  
22 the council and the council staff. We'll find a council meeting  
23 that suits your schedule, and we will -- I'm sure it will be the  
24 highlight of the council to have you back. We have prepared as  
25 well a brief little tour, photographic tour, and I'm going to  
26 let Emily and Bernie put that on the screen, and we'll just  
27 enjoy that for a few minutes.

28  
29 **DR. CRABTREE:** Now you've got me a little worried.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We didn't go to the dark web.

32  
33 (Whereupon, a video was played honoring Dr. Crabtree.)

34  
35 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** There you go. All right. Well, that's 2020  
38 for you, right? You struggle to get feedback when you want it,  
39 and it pops up when you don't need it. Anyway, Roy, hopefully  
40 we'll get a few minutes at the end of the meeting this afternoon  
41 to share a few thoughts, but, until then, we're going to go  
42 ahead and jump right into a couple of things. I want to prepare  
43 ourselves for public comment, and so we'll take care of some of  
44 the formalities at this point.

45  
46 The first order of business would be the Adoption of the Agenda,  
47 and that would be Tab A, Number 3 in the briefing materials, and  
48 so does anybody have any additions or modifications to the

1 agenda? I am not seeing any. Is there any objection to  
2 approving the agenda as provided? Seeing no objections, we will  
3 consider the agenda adopted as written.

4  
5 The second order of business would be the Approval of the  
6 Minutes, and that would be Tab A, Number 4. Is there any  
7 corrections or modifications to those minutes? Seeing none, is  
8 there any objection to approving the minutes as written? I am  
9 not seeing any objections to approving the minutes, and so we  
10 will consider them approved, and we will move forward.

11  
12 We are very, very close to our lunchbreak, and we're going to go  
13 ahead and take that, but I would like to come back, and we will  
14 jump immediately into the public comment period, and so I'm  
15 going to ask that people actually pop on this line at 1:15, so  
16 that we can start promptly with the public comment period at  
17 1:30, before we actually roll into the committee reports. I  
18 will let everybody break for lunch, and I'll see back on the  
19 line here at 1:15 for a prompt 1:30 start. Enjoy your lunch,  
20 guys.

21  
22 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on December 1, 2020.)

23  
24 - - -

25  
26 December 1, 2020

27  
28 TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

29  
30 - - -

31  
32 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
33 Council reconvened via webinar on Tuesday afternoon, December 1,  
34 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Welcome back, everybody, from lunch, and we'll  
37 go ahead and move into our public testimony session. Good  
38 afternoon, everyone. Public input is a vital part of the  
39 council's deliberative process, and comments, both oral and  
40 written, are accepted and considered by the council throughout  
41 the process.

42  
43 The Sustainable Fisheries Act requires that all statements  
44 include a brief description of the background and interest of  
45 the persons in the subject of the statement. All written  
46 information shall include a statement of the source and date of  
47 such information.

1 Oral or written communications provided to the council, its  
2 members, or its staff that relate to matters within the  
3 council's purview are public in nature. Please email any  
4 written comments to the staff at [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org), as  
5 all written comments will also be posted on the council's  
6 website for viewing by council members and the public, and it  
7 will be maintained by the council as part of the permanent  
8 record.

9  
10 Knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the  
11 council is a violation of federal law. If you would like to  
12 provide testimony, please dial the toll-free-operator-assisted  
13 number at 1-(833)970-2435, as shown on the screen.

14  
15 Please press \*1 on your telephone now to be placed in the  
16 speaker queue. The operator will come on the line and let you  
17 know when it's your turn to speak. When your line is unmuted,  
18 please introduce yourself by stating your first and last name  
19 for the record and begin your testimony. Stay tuned after  
20 speaking for any questions the council may have for you. You  
21 will lose your place in the queue if you are not present when  
22 called. To re-enter the queue, you must press \*1. If you get  
23 disconnected from the phone call, you will have to call back in  
24 and press \*1 to re-enter to queue.

25  
26 You will have three minutes to comment. There will be a  
27 countdown timer visible on the screen. We accept only one  
28 registration per person, and I will now go to the operator for  
29 our first speaker.

30  
31 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

32  
33 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Mr. Lawrence Marino, your line is now open.

34  
35 **MR. LAWRENCE MARINO:** Good morning. My name is Larry Marino,  
36 and I'm here today on behalf of Louisiana Attorney General Jeff  
37 Landry. Regarding the framework action for red snapper  
38 calibrations and catch limits, the SSC approved the calibrations  
39 of the state landings systems to the federal system. For the  
40 council's purposes, these are accurate, in the sense that they  
41 line up the state catches to the quotas, apples-to-apples, since  
42 the quotas were set using the federal system.

43  
44 It really doesn't matter whether a state's system or a federal  
45 system is better or more correct in some absolute sense, but  
46 what matters is that, when a state says it caught one pound of  
47 its quota, that that pound is apples-to-apples with the quota,  
48 using the same measurement on both sides of the formula. If a

1 state's system says it only caught one pound, but the  
2 calibration shows it's really two pounds towards the quota, then  
3 it needs to be counted as two pounds. Counting it as only one  
4 means the state catch is double the fish without anybody  
5 accounting for it.

6  
7 Alternative 2 implements these calibrations, which the council's  
8 SSC has agreed are correct. Alternative 1 is not permissible,  
9 and it just ignores the problem. Alternative 3 is worse,  
10 because it reduces all state quotas to address this problem that  
11 only some states have. That's not to say that these state  
12 systems are inferior or bad, but only that they're different  
13 from the federal system, the system in which the quotas were  
14 set, and in a way that means they're catching more than was  
15 intended or agreed.

16  
17 This would allow states whose systems don't line up with the  
18 federal system to catch more than was agreed, while penalizing  
19 states whose systems do line up, by restricting them to less  
20 than was agreed. Alternative 3 fails to deal with this, and it  
21 has to be dealt with, so that the state systems are apples-to-  
22 apples with the federal system and also with each other.  
23 Alternative 2 is the proper alternative.

24  
25 Certainly it would be desirable if the interim stock assessment  
26 were done before those calibrations were implemented, especially  
27 since it seems likely that the Great Red Snapper Count and the  
28 calibrations themselves may justify a higher quota than before,  
29 and so this would dull the sting of the changes due to the  
30 calibrations, and so it seems reasonable to add an action to  
31 implement whatever changes come from the interim assessment, and  
32 it also seems reasonable to get that started now and slot in the  
33 numbers when you have them, to save time later, since time is  
34 clearly going to be tight.

35  
36 Ultimately, it may be that you can't do it in time, and, if so,  
37 you can strike the action, but, regardless, the calibrations are  
38 real differences, and they have to be dealt with. If you don't,  
39 then this is not only a problem now, but it will continue to be  
40 in the future, because the states would never be apples-to-  
41 apples with each other and with any allocation that you may set.  
42 Alternative 2 does deal with this problem, and it deals with it  
43 correctly, according to the SSC. Thank you.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Marino. I am not seeing any  
46 questions, and so will move on to our next speaker.

47  
48 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Catherine Bruger. Your line

1 is open, ma'am.

2

3 **MS. CATHERINE BRUGER:** Good afternoon. This is Catherine  
4 Bruger. Thank you, Chairman Frazer and members of the council,  
5 for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here today on behalf of  
6 Ocean Conservancy, where my role is Policy Analyst for the Gulf  
7 Team.

8

9 Ocean Conservancy has now advocated for three years in support  
10 of state management, with the caveat that the rule must address  
11 the deficiencies which currently allow overfishing.  
12 Unfortunately, even with an SSC-approved solution within arm's  
13 reach, the council has continued to delay action.

14

15 I can't say that I am excited to see a special meeting in May to  
16 address these deficiencies. The council has had ample time to  
17 fix the problem, and they can still take action without  
18 additional meetings. Overfishing occurred in 2019, and state  
19 management is failing, and it continues to lack the  
20 accountability needed to keep the private recreational component  
21 under its ACL, due to a lack of calibration.

22

23 We are excited to hear the preliminary results of the Great Red  
24 Snapper Count suggest a greater biomass of red snapper.  
25 However, there are a lot of questions left to answer, including  
26 does greater biomass change our understanding of the  
27 productivity of the stock. Regardless of the results of the  
28 Great Red Snapper Count, without a common currency, Amendment 50  
29 continues to violate federal law.

30

31 The council and NMFS have sanctioned three years of  
32 unaccountable catch by the private recreational sector. While  
33 overfishing and ACL overages have immediate ramifications for  
34 the private recreational sector, the yet unspoken impacts to  
35 other sectors should be considered.

36

37 First, fairness with reporting. The for-hire sector is being  
38 told that newly reported landings to the electronic logbook  
39 program will need to be calibrated and validated for up to four  
40 years before the data can be used for in-season management, but  
41 the council and NMFS have ignored the scientifically and  
42 legally-required calibration for the private angler component.

43

44 Second, reputational damage and overfishing designation, when  
45 driven by the private recreational landings, could have negative  
46 impacts to the commercial and for-hire sector, due to potential  
47 marketing and branding damage. Third, future allocation  
48 decisions, with sanctioned overages from the private

1 recreational component for 2018 through present, should not be  
2 used to penalize the for-hire and commercial sectors, who have  
3 fished within their limits.

4  
5 In summary, we continue to urge the council to adopt the SSC's  
6 recommended simple ratio calibrations and use the resulting  
7 common currency to end overfishing and set legally-compliant  
8 ACLs for the 2021 season. This is the only solution which  
9 integrates state surveys to fix the critical flaws in Amendment  
10 50, and this action should be taken now.

11  
12 Finally, I would like to congratulate Dr. Crabtree on your  
13 upcoming retirement. I have really enjoyed working with you,  
14 and I hope to see you soon at a future pig roast or your next  
15 jam-band show. That's all. Thank you for your time.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bruger. I am looking to see if  
18 we have any questions from the council members. Seeing none,  
19 again, thank you, Ms. Bruger. We will move on to our next  
20 speaker.

21  
22 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Eric Brazer.

23  
24 **MR. ERIC BRAZER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My name is  
25 Eric Brazer, and I'm the Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico  
26 Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity  
27 to speak, as always.

28  
29 I have a few issues that I want to bring up today, the first  
30 being aquaculture. I do want to lead with giving NOAA credit  
31 where credit is due, and I think their approach has been very  
32 deliberative, and the datasets that they're using are very  
33 comprehensive, very impressive, and they are not rushing into  
34 this. They've got a really good team, and we've already had a  
35 number of really good conversations with them, and we're  
36 continuing to look forward to working with them over the next  
37 few years.

38  
39 That being said, we have a couple of recommendations to improve  
40 this process, the first one being we recommend a formal industry  
41 advisory panel to advise NOAA on the AOA process, very similar  
42 to how your advisory panel advises you. At the very least, or  
43 in addition, each of the council's advisory panels should get a  
44 chance to review the appropriate dataset and the scoring  
45 methodology that NOAA is using and be able to offer formal  
46 feedback to that.

47  
48 Number two, we also hope that you recommend that NOAA provides

1 transparency on the decision-making process. At this point,  
2 it's still not totally clear who makes the decisions on what  
3 data are being used and how they're getting scored or who makes  
4 the final decisions on site suitability.

5  
6 Third, this is clearly important to the industry, and this is  
7 important to the nation, and we believe it's important enough  
8 for a standing slot on the council agenda at each meeting. I  
9 know you guys have a lot on your plate, but we really just have  
10 one chance to get this right.

11  
12 Moving on to b-liners, we're pretty wary of what we see coming  
13 out of the information, and doubling quota, potentially doubling  
14 the quota, has us very concerned. The fishermen just aren't  
15 seeing that much biomass out there, and I think, if you look to  
16 the commercial landings data, you will see that such a doubling  
17 quota isn't necessarily warranted.

18  
19 The third thing I want to touch on is the Great Red Snapper  
20 Count. Dr. Stunz, I want to give you and the rest of the team  
21 credit. This was a huge scientific undertaking, and you guys  
22 have done a really impressive job, and so thank you for your  
23 work on that.

24  
25 I would like the council to consider something that Dr. Porch  
26 said about reinventing the survey process. The Great Red  
27 Snapper Count shows the power of fishermen as data collectors,  
28 and, if there was ever a time to bring the fisheries survey  
29 process into the twenty-first century, it's now, and this goes  
30 beyond electronic logbooks, and it goes beyond electronic video  
31 monitoring, which we really hope to make some headway on, and so  
32 I'm hoping that the council can put together some sort of  
33 guidance document or a list of priorities, or perhaps a  
34 proposal, for system improvements, taking the lessons learned  
35 from the Great Red Snapper Count and then helping the Science  
36 Center map out what a new, improved survey process would look  
37 like.

38  
39 Finally, Dr. Crabtree, it's been a pleasure working with you.  
40 The amount of respect that the industry has for you is  
41 incredible, and we appreciate all you've done for the Gulf, and  
42 I personally want to thank you for your service. With that,  
43 thank you, Mr. Chair. That concludes my testimony.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Brazer. We have a hand up from  
46 Ms. Bosarge.

47  
48 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Erik, I was just

1 wondering. The advisory panel that you are envisioning for  
2 aquaculture, is that something that you were thinking the  
3 council would form and populate, or is this something that  
4 you're hoping the NMFS Aquaculture Division would form and  
5 populate?  
6

7 **MR. BRAZER:** Thank you for the question, Leann. My vision was  
8 that the agency would populate this, with advice from the  
9 council. It may look and act very similar to a council advisory  
10 panel, and perhaps, if the council were providing written  
11 comments by the December deadline, that they could recommend the  
12 development of an advisory panel, but, regardless of whether it  
13 would be council-developed or agency-developed, I think it's  
14 critical to have the council play a keystone role in that  
15 conversation.  
16

17 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.  
18

19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am not seeing any more hands, and so,  
20 again, thank you, Erik, for your comments. We will move on to  
21 our next speaker.  
22

23 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Ken Haddad.  
24

25 **MR. KEN HADDAD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and council members.  
26 I'm Ken Haddad with the American Sportfishing Association. On  
27 Amendment 48, we would like to see this amendment passed. It's  
28 very complex, and we assume that there will be some unintended  
29 consequences that will need to be fixed as this amendment is  
30 implemented. It seems that we have heard from NOAA that they're  
31 not concerned that there are any violations of National Standard  
32 1 or 2, and so vote this out and give the council more time to  
33 work on things like release mortality or allocation processes.  
34

35 I too want to thank Dr. Stunz for his long-awaited presentation  
36 on the Great Snapper Count. We certainly don't understand the  
37 complexity in ramping up and conducting such a massive study  
38 with innovative technologies and analyses that they've applied,  
39 and so you have accomplished this in a very short period of  
40 time, and the entire team is to be complimented.  
41

42 Now that brings me to the framework action that is seemingly  
43 mired in the mud, and we now have solid scientific information  
44 that clearly will significantly change the baseline population  
45 of snapper that has been calculated in the past.  
46

47 The cynic in me says that more seems to translate to less  
48 allowable catch in the red snapper world, but I think that will

1 be hard to imagine this time. With that said, it seems that  
2 you're about to have a tremendous amount of flexibility in  
3 dealing with calibration, or at least ensuring this next season  
4 precludes overfishing, thus giving some time to pull the  
5 framework out of the mud.

6  
7 We ask that you take further action when you have the interim  
8 stock assessment, or just figure out a way to make the state  
9 data the best available data for next season. It just seems  
10 crazy to work this framework action with blinders on. It also  
11 seems that some new and exciting management alternatives can be  
12 the result of this new information from the Great Snapper Count.  
13 Things like release mortality, local fishing depletion, and  
14 protection of the motherload should come to the forefront and  
15 not necessarily overfishing at this point.

16  
17 Finally, Roy Crabtree, we've been colleagues, and our careers  
18 have been intertwined for -- I calculate somewhere around thirty  
19 years, and I just want to congratulate you and wish you a  
20 wonderful new life after retirement. You've had a rather  
21 unthankful and unforgiving, but fun, job for many years, and you  
22 should find that a big weight is lifted off your shoulders, and  
23 you may actually grow younger instead of older. Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chairman and council members.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Haddad. Let's see. We have a  
27 hand up from Ms. Bosarge.

28  
29 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Haddad. I was wondering -- You  
30 said that Amendment 48 has some unintended consequences, but you  
31 wanted us to go ahead and take final action and pass it. That's  
32 the first time I've heard the unintended consequences. What are  
33 they? Can you talk about that for just a little bit?

34  
35 **MR. HADDAD:** No, and I don't know what they are. What I said  
36 was you can assume that there will be some unintended  
37 consequences, due to the complexity, and I don't think you're  
38 going to work yourself out of them until they are applied and  
39 you see the results. I just don't think you can anticipate  
40 every nuance of such a complex amendment, and that's what I  
41 meant, if I didn't say it that way.

42  
43 **MS. BOSARGE:** I understand now. Thank you, sir.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I'm looking for any other hands, and I  
46 am seeing none. Thanks, Ken, for your comments, and we'll move  
47 on to our next speaker.

48

1 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Gary Jarvis.

2  
3 **MR. GARY JARVIS:** Thank you. Council, this Captain Gary Jarvis,  
4 Executive Director of the Charter Fishermen's Association and  
5 the Gulf Fisheries Research Foundation and the mayor of the  
6 luckiest fishing village in the world, and thank you for this  
7 opportunity to speak.

8  
9 First of all, I want to thank you, Roy, especially for your  
10 fairness and support of our industry. I hope your next venture  
11 in life is far less stressful and satisfying. Your steady hand  
12 and knowledge of the law and the process, and the political  
13 savvy that you have shown, has taught me a lot about how to be  
14 an advocate and not an activist, and I want to personally thank  
15 you for that. I'm honored to have known you and worked with you  
16 and spend a few relaxing moments just hanging out after many  
17 meetings. I wish you and your family many blessings and good  
18 fortune from here on out.

19  
20 First of all, I want to encourage the council to create a common  
21 currency to establish catch and effort in the private angler  
22 sector to prevent overfishing of the recreational red snapper  
23 ACL. Using a buffer of 23 percent is not fair to private  
24 anglers, when the states can do a better job of managing the  
25 private angler red snapper fishery. Buffers for scientific  
26 uncertainty rob anglers of their true access. Without the  
27 common currency, state managers lose motivation to improve their  
28 programs, relying on the buffer to restrain catch.

29  
30 Allocation alone will never solve the issue of overfishing in  
31 Amendment 50 unless everyone is counting the same beans. The  
32 comments by the Assistant Secretary of Louisiana, or the  
33 Attorney's Office, I just want to say ditto to everything that  
34 he pointed out.

35  
36 We want to leave the gray triggerfish opening as Alternative 1,  
37 no action, and we want the status quo opening of March 1 and  
38 closing on May 31. If the ACL is not met, a carryover into the  
39 fall, after the red snapper is closed in August, would be  
40 suitable to our industry. There is a motion on the table to  
41 open it on January 1, which we worked hard to change a few years  
42 ago, so we would have triggerfish to catch during spring break  
43 and have it open until red snapper opened on June 1.

44  
45 We're asking for sector allocations, basically sector  
46 separation, for the four major reef species of amberjack,  
47 trigger, red and gag grouper. A white paper is in development  
48 and will be on the agenda soon.

1  
2 We encourage more work and focus on marine mammal and shark  
3 depredation, to come up with a sustainable way to reduce this  
4 ever-growing issue for fishermen trying to hook and land fish in  
5 recreational fisheries.

6  
7 We, lastly, encourage the council to keep an eye on the further  
8 development of the SEFHIER program, to make sure the agency  
9 delivers on its promise for true less-expensive GPS cell-based  
10 data-loggers and reporting apps as an alternative to VMS-based  
11 vessel monitoring and reporting systems.

12  
13 Again, Roy, you've been on a heck of a ride, and you've taught  
14 me a lot, and I'm going to miss you, but we're going to come  
15 down and take in a little live music at some point here, post-  
16 COVID, and thank you very much, everyone. That's the end of my  
17 testimony.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Captain Jarvis. We've got at least  
20 one hand up. Dr. Shipp.

21  
22 **DR. SHIPP:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gary, I just wanted to ask  
23 you your thoughts on this mammal problem. We've been hearing  
24 about it for a long time, and I don't really see a solution on  
25 the horizon. If you were king, what would you do about it?

26  
27 **MR. JARVIS:** First of all, they're very smart animals, and it  
28 only took about two years for -- Most spotted porpoise and gray  
29 porpoise, in our area, stay there year-round. I mean, we're in  
30 the generations now of fish that were trained to feed around  
31 boats, back in the early 1990s, or the mid-1990s, when the  
32 dolphin cruises were actually dolphin feeding cruises, and so  
33 now we're suffering, as a consequence.

34  
35 I think, if they would allow some non-lethal forms of sending  
36 the message that they're not welcome, it wouldn't take very  
37 long, a season, or perhaps two, before they would have the  
38 normal fear of vessels that they used to have, and so it would  
39 take a generation or two before we worked into that, and that's  
40 -- Non-lethal means that they use for riot control would be a  
41 place to start and more science on acceptable sound devices.

42  
43 I have been through the presentations, and you can tell, by the  
44 working groups, that they're trying to apply issues with very  
45 endangered species, like the right whale, as their standard for  
46 treating marine mammals that are more than plentiful, and I know  
47 they've done that with the seals, but they're not always in the  
48 water, and it's worked, to some extent.

1  
2 Then, with shark predation, that's a pretty simple fix. There's  
3 more sharks now -- I am sixty-four, Dr. Shipp, and I started  
4 fishing when I was eighteen, and there is more sharks, biomass-  
5 wise, in the Gulf of Mexico now than there was when I was  
6 eighteen years old, and the biggest difference is, through  
7 regulations, and maybe overregulation, there is no directed  
8 shark fishery of coastal sharks in the Gulf of Mexico.

9  
10 We have seen a drastic increase, especially over the last  
11 fifteen or twenty years, with the issues of sharks. There is  
12 some reefs off of Destin and Pensacola to where they are loaded  
13 with fish, but you cannot harvest one, because of the big bull  
14 sharks and hammerheads and sharpnose sharks, and they just --  
15 They eat every fish, and so we have an overpopulation, and we're  
16 starting to see -- Between the marine mammals and the sharks,  
17 you're beginning to see a change in the -- You know, we talk  
18 about eco-based management. Well, eco-based management is  
19 trying to come up with management measures that will provide a  
20 balance, so all the species, including the human species, can  
21 coexist in the Gulf of Mexico to the best benefit of the nation.

22  
23 The predation issue is preventing that from happening, and so  
24 there's a variety of issues that need to be dealt with, and  
25 maybe some hard, cold decisions that might seem a little bit  
26 mean in the outset, but, overall, it's better for the animals,  
27 as well as the humans.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. It looks like we have another question  
30 from Ms. Bosarge.

31  
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** More just a comment, and I normally don't speak as  
33 much during public testimony, but we've been having very short  
34 sessions for this on these webinars, and I just wanted to thank  
35 Mr. Jarvis and the other fishermen that keep coming back and  
36 pounding that drum about marine mammals and sharks and things  
37 like that, and I know that a lot of what we're hearing is from  
38 the recreational sector and the for-hire sector, and know that  
39 these issues are not just yours, and we have issues from the  
40 commercial fleets as well, but you probably won't hear much  
41 about it from us, because, when we speak about it,  
42 unfortunately, we are punished for it.

43  
44 The message never makes it through that there's a problem that  
45 there is too many of these fish, or creatures, but it's, wait a  
46 minute, you had an interaction with them, and we've got to shut  
47 you down, because that's what has happened to us in the past,  
48 and I'm glad that you have not been treated that way and that

1 nobody is trying to stop you from fishing because you're  
2 interacting, and hopefully they're going to listen to you, and  
3 you'll be able to solve this problem for all of us, and I'm  
4 beating the drum for you too, and I'm trying to keep it going  
5 and do what I can do, but don't stop on your end. Thank you.

6  
7 **MS. JARVIS:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. As a dual permit holder  
8 and a long-time commercial fisherman, it affects the bandit  
9 fishery and the longline fishery, and it's getting worse and  
10 worse and worse, and so you'll even get some commercial guys  
11 stepping up to the plate to admit that it's getting intolerable  
12 and that something needs to be done.

13  
14 The sad part about it, especially with a directed shark fishery,  
15 is there is net benefit to the nation to harvest these animals,  
16 these fish. Not only is the cartilage critical for cancer  
17 research and pain management, but the meat is edible, and the  
18 fins are a very marketable aspect of it, and so we've put a  
19 crimp in the directed commercial shark fishery over finning,  
20 which takes place in other parts of the world, where our  
21 directed shark fishery is one of the most regulated in the  
22 world. It's a shame that this message hasn't been shared about  
23 the realities of the overpopulation of sharks, and it's not good  
24 for the ecology.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Gary, for all of those  
27 comments and the exchange with Leann and Bob. I am not seeing  
28 any other hands, and so we will go ahead and move on to our next  
29 speaker.

30  
31 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Dylan Hubbard. Your line is  
32 open.

33  
34 **MR. DYLAN HUBBARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Captain Dylan  
35 Hubbard from Hubbard's Marina. We operate federally-permitted  
36 multi-passenger charter boats and partyboats out of central west  
37 Florida, and I want to thank you all for the time to speak  
38 today, and, again, I want to echo everybody else's comments.  
39 Dr. Crabtree, you will be missed. I have enjoyed the short  
40 amount of time that I've had hanging out with you and  
41 interacting and learning from you, but I appreciate all your  
42 help in our fisheries in this region.

43  
44 I do want to say today that I would beg, implore, the council to  
45 adjust the catch levels for lane snapper, vermilion, and  
46 triggerfish as soon as possible, especially lane snapper. We  
47 have already seen in-season closures in this healthy fishery,  
48 and we cannot afford to continue to have in-season quota

1 closures, due to catch levels not being adjusted in this healthy  
2 fishery.

3  
4 For each of these three species, the latest assessments and the  
5 SSC are both saying catch levels can go up, and so please do so  
6 for the 2021 fishing year at Full Council this afternoon. Lane  
7 snapper, specifically, are hugely important in my area. It's a  
8 directed fishery, and we need these catch levels to be adjusted  
9 as quickly as possible.

10  
11 There were some comments today about adjusting the size limit,  
12 and that isn't something that would worry me, as long as we do  
13 so in a separate document, as to not slow the original document  
14 down. We are seeing a much larger average size of the lane  
15 snapper, and I would suggest Alternative 2 in Action 1 and  
16 Alternative 3a in Action 2. Also, please keep the triggerfish  
17 season the same. We appreciate seasons that are as static as  
18 possible, and so, that way, we can plan out our businesses  
19 effectively and our guests can plan their trips accordingly.

20  
21 Also, the FES and state data calibration, or the common currency  
22 issue, is a big one for many aspects of fisheries and fishery  
23 management and all stakeholder groups. We may have more fish  
24 coming soon from the Great Red Snapper Count, but it won't solve  
25 the calibration issues we're facing. I encourage the council to  
26 move forward on Alternative 2 in Action 1 of the framework  
27 action. The calibrated quotas will help end the overrun of sub-  
28 sector allocation in the private recreational sector.

29  
30 At the last meeting, you guys took a great first step to try and  
31 curb the massive illegal charter issue we have in the Gulf of  
32 Mexico. However, I want to encourage the council today to keep  
33 this at the forefront as a goal moving forward. We had an idea  
34 among our area, and our fleet, about creating, with the help of  
35 the states and the JEA, a state charter permit sticker, like the  
36 federal permit sticker, to make it easy for enforcement to  
37 identify state charters in federal waters when they're coming up  
38 to board vessels. There is some more information in the email  
39 that I sent out to you guys.

40  
41 I also want to take the last bit of time I have to talk about  
42 the SEFHIER program. I look forward to the rollout, but, as  
43 Captain Jarvis said, I really encourage the council to stay  
44 focused on the intricacies of the rollout plan that will cost --  
45 The GPS archival units, I'm hearing there is issues getting  
46 those approved, and then, also, the issue of hardware  
47 malfunction and still being able to fish has not really been  
48 made clear, and we can't roll out into Phase 2 without that

1 being more fully vetted, and I'm out of time for the rest of it,  
2 but I appreciate your time today, guys.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Captain Hubbard. It looks like Ms.  
5 Bosarge has her hand up.

6  
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, sir. That was from last time. Sorry about  
8 that.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** No worries. Susan Boggs.

11  
12 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Dylan, for calling  
13 in today. Not to slow down the current documents that we have  
14 out there, but what would be a size limit on the lane snapper  
15 that you think the recreational charter fishery would be okay  
16 with?

17  
18 **MR. HUBBARD:** In my opinion, on our boats -- Again, let me first  
19 start out by saying please, please, I encourage the council to  
20 adjust that, or look at that, in a separate additional document,  
21 but I would say ten inches would be sufficient and very easily  
22 done in our area. The average size is definitely getting  
23 larger, and so I think ten inches is an easy goal to move up, to  
24 in my opinion, and I definitely wouldn't have any heartburn, and  
25 that's already what we enforce on our boat. An eight-inch fish  
26 you don't get much meat off of.

27  
28 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you. No, I wouldn't look to add anything to  
29 the current document, and I would look to do it in a separate  
30 document. Thank you for your time today.

31  
32 **MR. HUBBARD:** Thank you.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dylan, I have a quick question. When you are  
35 landing most of the lane snapper, what's the depth that you are  
36 typically catching those fish in? What do you think the discard  
37 mortality might look like?

38  
39 **MR. HUBBARD:** The discard mortality, in my opinion, would be  
40 very small. They are primarily a nearshore species, anywhere  
41 from around fifty to sixty foot of water, out to about 110, and  
42 we see them most often this time of year, when it's a little  
43 cooler, and, obviously, barotrauma is much less of an issue.

44  
45 Not only are we seeing a larger average size, but we're also  
46 seeing that population move inshore. I forget who I was talking  
47 to recently, but they were catching lane snapper from a bridge  
48 around Tampa Bay, and so these fish are moving in shallower and

1 shallower, and we're seeing them on our shorter trips, fishing  
2 in thirty or forty foot of water, and so it's definitely  
3 changing over time, as the population grows.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. I appreciate that insight. I don't  
6 think I am seeing any other hands. Dylan, again, thank you for  
7 your comments. We're going to move on to our next speaker.

8  
9 **MR. HUBBARD:** Thank you.

10  
11 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Bill Kelly.

12  
13 **MR. BILL KELLY:** Mr. Chair and members of the council, I'm Bill  
14 Kelly, representing the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's  
15 Association, and I just wanted to comment on a couple of things  
16 here.

17  
18 One, it's not so surprising to hear about the issues you're  
19 having with the sharks in the Gulf of Mexico. Yesterday, I  
20 received a call from a charter boat captain in Miami complaining  
21 about the shark problems on our side of the ocean here. Twenty-  
22 two sailfish that he had engaged in various tournaments here so  
23 far in the winter months were attacked and killed by sharks, and  
24 so they're having a serious problem there as well, and perhaps  
25 the Gulf Council can collaborate with the South Atlantic Council  
26 to address this issue.

27  
28 I also want to thank the council and Mr. Sanchez for pressing  
29 forward in an effort to find a common currency on kingfish, so  
30 we can address allocation issues there, and I have been working  
31 on that for the past eleven years for the Gulf Council and  
32 asking them to address that issue, and hopefully it won't be too  
33 many before you move forward.

34  
35 Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Crabtree for his service.  
36 It's both been fun and challenging over the years, and mostly  
37 fun, and I want to thank you for your professional work, and  
38 your friendship as well. If you want to come back to your roots  
39 here in the Florida Keys, and you think you would like to push a  
40 boat around with a stick, we've got plenty of job opportunities  
41 down here in Monroe County, and so you can come on back down  
42 here and chase the tarpon and bonefish for a living. That's it,  
43 and my best to everyone, and best wishes for your holiday season  
44 here. Thank you.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Bill, for those comments. I am  
47 looking to see if we have any hands up. I am not seeing any at  
48 this time, but I would like to remind folks that, if you want to

1 speak, make sure that you press \*1 to get into the queue, and so  
2 we will wait a few minutes here, to make sure that everybody on  
3 the line that wants to speak has an opportunity.

4  
5 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** Mr. Chairman, can you hear me?

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes.

8  
9 **MR. ATRAN:** This is Steven Atran. I called in, and I thought it  
10 was in the queue, but I haven't been called on.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Let me -- Go ahead, and we'll put you in right  
13 now, Steven.

14  
15 **MR. ATRAN:** Thank you very much. I am calling to talk about  
16 Reef Fish 48/Red Drum 5. I gave public testimony a couple of  
17 weeks ago at the public testimony webinar, and you have  
18 discussed my testimony, and it was summarized by Emily, and she  
19 did a pretty good job, and so I'm not going to go through  
20 everything that I went over in that testimony, and I think you  
21 know what's in there, but I do want to mention a couple of  
22 items.

23  
24 During the discussion yesterday, I heard a couple of folks  
25 talking about these status determination criteria for unassessed  
26 stocks that can't be measured as placeholders, or as  
27 aspirational criteria, and there is no such thing as a  
28 placeholder criteria or an aspirational criteria in either the  
29 National Standard Guidelines or the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

30  
31 You are either managing the stock or you're not managing it,  
32 and, if you're managing it, you need to have measurable  
33 criteria, and, with unassessed stocks, or a certain number of  
34 assessed stocks that were done using non-traditional  
35 assessments, you don't have SPR, and you don't have fishing  
36 mortality rate estimates, and so you have no way to measure the  
37 status of the stock relative to those criteria.

38  
39 You need to use something else, and the best approach, at this  
40 point, is to remove those stocks, those unassessed stocks, the  
41 ones without SPR estimates, and proceed with those in a separate  
42 amendment that is specifically designed to address data-limited  
43 stocks. With the remaining stocks that are in 48, they're  
44 assessed, and the preferred alternatives are great, and I  
45 support those entirely.

46  
47 On the red drum portion, the preferred alternatives would set  
48 the criteria on the basis of a statement, which is a good idea,

1 and it makes the criteria match the objective of the FMP, which  
2 is also based on escapement. I would suggest though, with red  
3 drum, that, if and when you get a Gulf-wide stock assessment,  
4 you readdress whether or not that is the best way to manage the  
5 stock. I say that only because it's the only stock that's  
6 managed with escapement and not because I have a particular  
7 opinion for or against.

8

9 For now, my recommendation on this amendment is to remove the  
10 stocks for which you cannot calculate an SPR or a fishing  
11 mortality rate and address those separately in a separate  
12 document specifically to look at the data-limited stocks, and I  
13 think you'll have a lot more flexibility if you do that. Thank  
14 you.

15

16 One other thing is congratulations to Roy Crabtree on his  
17 retirement. He was I think maybe about the fourth or fifth  
18 Regional Administrator in the time that I've been with the  
19 council, and I went back to when Andy Kemmerer was the Regional  
20 Administrator, and I think Roy has done the best job of any of  
21 the ones who I dealt with, and he has set a very high bar for  
22 whoever is going to follow him, and so congratulations, Roy, and  
23 enjoy your retirement. Thank you.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Steven, for taking the time to make  
26 those comments. I am looking for hands, and I am not seeing  
27 any, and so we will move on to our next speaker.

28

29 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Jim Zurbrick. Your line is  
30 open.

31

32 **MR. JIM ZURBRICK:** First of all, thank you very much for  
33 allowing me to speak today, and I just want to start off by  
34 thanking you, Roy, for your dedication. At the time you came  
35 on, it was about the time that I became able to even spell  
36 "fish", and I thank you for that, and I always will remember  
37 what you told us, that red snapper -- As we increased the stock  
38 size, that we might not like the results, and it was so true,  
39 because we went to fewer days, because they got so easy to  
40 catch, and we were catching that quota so quickly. I will  
41 always remember that, and thank you very much.

42

43 I have a stack of things here, but one thing I want to get to  
44 immediately is the vermilion snapper. Up here in the  
45 northeastern armpit of the state, here in Florida, I don't see  
46 the kind of snapper increase that possibly people in the western  
47 Gulf, or even down in south Florida, might be seeing, and it  
48 just -- It just seems a little scary to me to double the quota,

1 and I don't know that I've ever seen a quota double, and the  
2 fact that the Reef Fish Advisory Panel voted on it seven to six  
3 -- I would like the SSC to maybe take a better look at it.  
4 Maybe something got missed, and not that an increase very well  
5 isn't warranted, but doubling it is huge.

6  
7 Also, the state management, state management is not going to  
8 work unless you have mandatory reporting. It can't. That's why  
9 the IFQ system works so great, is because of the mandatory  
10 reporting, and now, with the charter sector coming on with  
11 mandatory reporting, and then ground-truthing on top of that, we  
12 could really tighten this fishery up, once we get all the states  
13 involved with mandatory reporting, so we can accurately count  
14 fish for fish.

15  
16 Also, Erik Brazer brought up the fact about the aquaculture.  
17 You know, I was with that group, and I know it rubbed some  
18 people wrong when Fish for America signed onto the lawsuit, and  
19 I have said many times that we didn't get any jollies from  
20 winning. All we wanted to do was get a good analysis of how  
21 fisheries are going to be impacted, wild-caught fishers are  
22 going to be impacted, by an aquaculture project, but we never  
23 thought that that was properly done, and still today, as far as  
24 I'm concerned, it's not properly done.

25  
26 Also, Will Ward always was on the issue of who was going to be  
27 responsible if people sneak in genetically-altered fish or  
28 there's a disaster. How do wild-caught fishers -- Are they  
29 protected? There is some issues like that, and we want the  
30 council to keep monitoring, and I thought that Erik made a good  
31 request there to have it on every meeting, at least have a  
32 segment set aside for an update.

33  
34 Also, on the carryover, I don't know where we're going to be  
35 exactly, but, if we're 14 percent down now, and it's the first  
36 of December, it seems very unlikely, with the shutdowns going on  
37 up north, that demand is going to warrant the normal catch for  
38 red snapper, and so I would want to keep an eye on it, and small  
39 operators need this. 2,000 pounds of allocation that somebody  
40 paid \$8,000 for, it really hurts, and it would definitely help  
41 on maybe some lease prices in 2021, and that's something we  
42 might think about.

43  
44 Also, and I'm wrapping up here, but fifty-cents a pound that the  
45 ex-vessel price is down, if you have 10,000 pounds of snapper,  
46 and you lost fifty-cents a pound on it, that's \$5,000. In the  
47 scheme of the small operator in the Gulf of Mexico, \$5,000 is  
48 the difference between that new bottom machine or an engine

1 repair that's overdue, and so, with that, I thank you very much.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Jim. Let's see if we have any  
4 hands up. Ms. Bosarge.

5  
6 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just wanted to thank Jim for his comments, and I  
7 know it's not easy to get on these webinars and make time for  
8 this and deal with the technology, but I think your comments  
9 always carry a lot of weight with me, and I feel like they do  
10 with the rest of the council too, and you're very fair-minded,  
11 and I appreciate you weighing-in on all these different topics.

12  
13 **MR. ZURBRICK:** Thank you.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I don't see any other hands, and so,  
16 Jim, again, thank you for your comments. We'll move on to our  
17 next speaker.

18  
19 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Randy Boggs. Your line is  
20 open.

21  
22 **MR. RANDY BOGGS:** Hi, guys. Randy Boggs. Dr. Crabtree, thank  
23 you for everything you've done for us. I remember a  
24 conversation on October 1, 2012, and that resulted in a weekly  
25 call for you when Susan got sick, and it will never be  
26 forgotten, and I can't tell you how much I thank you for what  
27 you've done.

28  
29 With the triggerfish, we need to open the season in January and  
30 February, and I know a lot of the guys don't fish in January and  
31 February, but, if you go back to the original scoping documents  
32 on this, we had a definitive user group that showed that they  
33 used this fishery in January and February, and we have a lot of  
34 snowbirds and people here that can use the fishery.

35  
36 This is one of the times that the council process -- If you  
37 listen to the public comment, yes, you've got a few people that  
38 fish here in the wintertime that need and depend on those fish,  
39 and the guys who fish in the spring and summer are going to want  
40 to dominate that conversation and say that there's not a user  
41 group, but we have historical data that shows that there's  
42 people that need and depend on these fish on that time of the  
43 year.

44  
45 As far as the aquaculture goes, aquaculture in the Gulf of  
46 Mexico is a very touchy subject. When you put fish in an  
47 enclosure and you give them -- No matter how large the enclosure  
48 is, whichever way the prevailing current is, down-current of

1 that, you change the naturally-occurring nitrogen cycle in the  
2 Gulf, and you get a dead area usually down-current of these  
3 things, and, if it swaps around, it's never without a cry from  
4 the down-current side of the aquaculture.

5  
6 With the vermilion snapper, that's a fish that I make my living  
7 off of, and doubling the amount of fish that we can catch seems  
8 to be excessive. I mean, the charter/for-hire took a cut a few  
9 years ago, and we went from twenty fish to ten fish, and we've  
10 been held to a ten-fish bag limit forever, and we haven't  
11 reached the ACT, or the ACL, and I haven't read the documents as  
12 much, but I think only one year did the recreational sector even  
13 get close, and doubling that sure seems like a lot to do, and  
14 maybe we should revisit that. Anyway, that's my thoughts for  
15 the day. Thank you, guys. Dr. Crabtree, thank you for  
16 everything you've done for us.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Randy. I'm looking around to see  
19 if we have any hands. I am not seeing any, and so, again, thank  
20 you for those comments, and we'll move on to our next speaker.

21  
22 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Wayne Werner.

23  
24 **MR. WAYNE WERNER:** Wayne Werner, owner/operator of the Fishing  
25 Vessel Sea Quest. First of all, congratulations, Roy. I hope  
26 you have a good time in your retirement. Maybe now you can kill  
27 a fish instead of protecting them. Go get some fish.

28  
29 I would like to make a comment on this Great Snapper Count, or  
30 actually a couple of comments. You've got a very large effort  
31 in front of you. Dr. Stunz says there is just as many of these  
32 fish out in the mud in sixty fathoms as there is in nineteen  
33 fathoms, and I don't know about any shallower, and I think I had  
34 equipment that would not read those kind of plots in there, but  
35 I know, personally, that I have probably hit close to 100,000 of  
36 those little spots where they pair off to spawn, and so you have  
37 a huge, huge, huge effort, and I think you're going to find out  
38 that there is well over a million of these spots, from what I've  
39 seen.

40  
41 I don't know -- I think there is more all the time, because  
42 we're increasing those spots, where they wash out the bottom, as  
43 we protect more and more fish, and more and more of them get to  
44 maturity, which I think is one of the most important things in  
45 running any fishery, is to have mature fish.

46  
47 As far as it goes, I wish you luck in trying to find a bunch of  
48 these areas, and there are vast amounts of them, and it doesn't

1 matter what type of mud, and it could be shaley mud or soft mud,  
2 and there is all different kinds of mud, and so good luck with  
3 that, and that's really I have to say today. Thank you very  
4 much.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Wayne. I always appreciate the  
7 natural history observations and the insights. We've got a  
8 couple of comments, and we'll start with Leann, and then we'll  
9 go to Dr. Stunz.  
10  
11 **MS. BOSARGE:** Wayne, it's good to hear your voice again.  
12  
13 **MR. WERNER:** I'm still alive.  
14  
15 **MS. BOSARGE:** Good. You're still hanging in there and upright.  
16 On the carryover for any uncaught IFQ quota, due to all this  
17 COVID stuff, do you have any opinions on that, what the council  
18 should do or shouldn't do?  
19  
20 **MR. WERNER:** All I know is, as of yesterday, I looked at it and  
21 there was 850,000 pounds to go, and I don't think there's that  
22 much of a demand, and our total effort in the western zone for  
23 everything, deepwater grouper and everything, is way down, and  
24 so I don't know what next year is going to carry -- If it's  
25 going to help to carry them, and I know some people that would  
26 probably like to have that availability and that money, and the  
27 people that leased them are stuck with some of them, and I  
28 believe it would really help them.  
29  
30 **MS. BOSARGE:** Wayne, when you say the people that leased them  
31 and are stuck with them, you're talking about the smaller guys  
32 that don't own snapper that have to lease their snapper to go  
33 out and fish them, and that's what you're talking about, right?  
34  
35 **MR. WERNER:** Correct. Some of them leased them for a lot of  
36 money at the beginning of the year, or towards the beginning of  
37 the year, and they didn't get an opportunity to catch them, and  
38 now they're kind of stuck with them at that high price, and,  
39 like Jim said, the market has been fluctuating a lot more, and  
40 so it has created a lot worse situation.  
41  
42 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.  
43  
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Leann. Greg.  
45  
46 **DR. STUNZ:** Captain Werner, I just wanted to briefly comment.  
47 It was some information from you and your fellow captains that  
48 led our team, as well as the steering committee, to direct

1 sampling efforts out over that open mud bottom and led to some  
2 of the discovery of the fish that folks have been talking about.  
3  
4 Of course, all studies lead to more questions and that sort of  
5 thing, and we didn't have time, at this point, to go back and  
6 characterize the bottom that those snapper were holding on, but  
7 we do have that data, and that's in the plans, and so that's  
8 really the next plan, is to begin to further characterize  
9 exactly what it is they're holding on, and that may lead to some  
10 new insights about snapper ecology and that sort of thing, and  
11 so we appreciate -- It's another good example of what we were  
12 talking about earlier, fishermen contributing back to the  
13 scientific process.  
14  
15 **MR. WERNER:** I would like to make a comment.  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Wayne.  
18  
19 **MR. WERNER:** We have seen a lot, where they do this, even at  
20 fifty fathoms, and it was muddier bottom than the bottom we were  
21 fishing in twenty fathoms, and sometimes you get a mix of  
22 yellowedge and red snapper, when you started getting outside of  
23 fifty fathoms, and it's just, at the different depths, it seemed  
24 to be a little bit different mud, a different type of mud,  
25 shaley in some places, and, as you got deeper, it seemed that  
26 the more softer mud we saw those type of fish in, and I just  
27 wanted to make that comment to you.  
28  
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you very much. I am not seeing any  
30 other hands, and so, again, Wayne, thanks for those comments.  
31 We're going to go ahead and move on to our next speaker.  
32  
33 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Mark Tryon. Your line is  
34 open.  
35  
36 **MR. MARK TRYON:** Thank you. First of all, I would like to thank  
37 Dr. Crabtree for his service. Whenever we finally get around to  
38 having these in-person meetings, it will be kind of strange to  
39 see somebody else up there in that capacity, because he's the  
40 only one that -- I've been coming to these meetings for quite a  
41 few years, but he's the only one who has ever been in that  
42 capacity when I've been there.  
43  
44 The first thing I would like to talk about is the uniformity of  
45 accounting, which should be required throughout all the states.  
46 I think we have -- You have to have some sort of agreed-upon  
47 method that is used across-the-board in all the states if we're  
48 going to have any integrity and accountability in this system on

1 the recreational side.

2  
3 In the interim, I would say there needs to be some sort of  
4 audit, or oversight, by National Marine Fisheries Service to --  
5 I don't know if "police" would be the right word, but to monitor  
6 and then step in if they feel there is overfishing in any given  
7 state and to shut down the fishery, if necessary, or, at the  
8 very least, question what's going on, and there needs to be --

9  
10 If a state decides, like my home state of Florida decides,  
11 they're going to give five extra days, and then basically spring  
12 it upon people with a week or two weeks' notice that there's  
13 going to be five extra days of fishing, to me, there needs -- If  
14 there's going to be any such extra fishing time implemented, or  
15 wanting to be implemented, that National Marine Fisheries needs  
16 to be notified within a reasonable period of time, in a week or  
17 two, so they could review the data, and a week or two is not a  
18 reasonable amount of time.

19  
20 Regarding the sharks and the porpoises, I agree with what some  
21 of the other captains have said, and a lot of these porpoises --  
22 Most of them are -- I call them like wild porpoises, and they're  
23 curious, and they don't bother you, but there are a lot of  
24 porpoises out there that have been taught this behavior and hang  
25 out at the same spots, day after day after day, which are  
26 usually public spots, and they can make fishing literally  
27 impossible, and the same with the sharks as well.

28  
29 As far as the b-liners and doubling the quota, that seems to be  
30 very -- Way too much. That's not conservative at all, and it  
31 really doesn't make any sense to me. You have already liberal  
32 limits on the recreational side, where you're allowed ten fish  
33 per person. I mean, what are you going to do, make it twenty  
34 fish per person? I think ten fish is plenty of fish per person  
35 right now, if you're a recreational fisherman.

36  
37 The last point I would make is on the carry-forward. I mean,  
38 this is something that could be done, and it doesn't cost  
39 National Marine Fisheries any money at all, and it would help  
40 out some of these guys that have leased the quota out at a high  
41 price at the beginning of the year and then, for whatever  
42 reason, have not been able to catch the fish, partly due to the  
43 virus and partly due to the fishing, in certain places, hasn't  
44 been up-to-snuff this year, and I think that would be something  
45 that should be considered. It's kind of late in the game, but  
46 it would certainly be something that would help some of these  
47 folks, and that's all I have to say. Thank you.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thanks, Mark, for those comments. I  
2 am looking to see if we have any hands up, and I'm not seeing  
3 any. I just would like to remind folks on the line, one more  
4 time, that, if you plan to speak, you need to press \*1 to enter  
5 the queue. Then the operator will assist you at that point. I  
6 want to, again, make sure that everybody who is on the line has  
7 an opportunity to participate, and so we'll wait just a couple  
8 of minutes. I see Captain Zales.

9  
10 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Mr. Bob Zales. Your line is  
11 open.

12  
13 **MR. BOB ZALES, III:** I sent all of you all an email last night,  
14 because I'm traveling, and I wasn't aware that I was going to be  
15 in an area where I could listen, and I thought this was earlier  
16 in the agenda, and so, fortunately, I have got in here.

17  
18 Number one, I want to say that I echo everything that Mayor  
19 Jarvis said in his speech, which pretty much echoes what I have  
20 sent you all. To Leann, when it comes to the commercial guys  
21 that haven't said anything about sharks, I think you heard  
22 several of the SOFA members talk about the shark predation  
23 problem, and I know you've heard it from me representing them,  
24 for over a year now, that this is a tremendous problem. I mean,  
25 they talk about residential dolphins, and we've got residential  
26 sharks, and so there is a significant problem there.

27  
28 My primary reason for calling in is because I wasn't aware this  
29 was going to be Roy's meeting, and I want to congratulate Roy  
30 for all this time and service that he has spent, everywhere from  
31 tarpon fishing to working with FWRI to the FWC to where he is  
32 now, and I have known Roy since, I guess, the middle or the  
33 early 1990s, and we've had, I think, a good relationship.

34  
35 At times it's been controversial, and most of the time it's been  
36 great. Roy has been very informative, and he's been a good  
37 teacher, and he is a wealth of information, and he's going to be  
38 greatly missed on this council. Roy, I just want to say that  
39 I've enjoyed the time knowing you, and, whenever we get to see  
40 each other again, we'll go have a drink, and it's like I said in  
41 one other webinar thing, but, if you get information on your  
42 band, when you all are going to play, if it's going to be easy  
43 for us to try to attend, I can get some guys together and we can  
44 come down there and listen to you. Thank you all very much.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Bob, for those comments. Ms. Bosarge  
47 has a question.

48

1 **MS. BOSARGE:** Bob, you might have covered it, and maybe I missed  
2 it, but did you all have any thoughts on that carryover for IFQ  
3 species? I know you all are more grouper, I think, and so it  
4 may not -- I don't know, and it may not really affect you all  
5 quite as much, but did you all have any thoughts, just the same?  
6

7 **MR. ZALES:** Leann, I sent you -- I hope you got it, but I sent  
8 you -- I forwarded you an email from one of our members who had  
9 leased some snapper. The problem with that is the guys that own  
10 these quotas -- I mean, clearly, they're going to keep their  
11 quota for next year. The problem comes in with the guys that  
12 have leased it, to where, when they paid money to lease the  
13 quota, and they're not able to catch it, that it's going to run  
14 out on them, and so they may not be able to accomplish what they  
15 paid for.  
16

17 That is the key issue, and I know, in our area, the Panhandle,  
18 and I suspect pretty much most of the western coast of Florida,  
19 the eastern Gulf, the weather since Hurricane Sally came through  
20 there -- The weather that we have had, pretty much all the way,  
21 has been real difficult for guys, especially the smaller boats,  
22 to get out, because we've had a lot of rough weather over the  
23 past month or month-and-a-half.  
24

25 Those guys that had quota that were hoping to catch it weren't  
26 able to get out to do it, and so, in that respect, and I guess  
27 you can differentiate between the lease holders and the guys  
28 that actually own it, to see how you can play with that  
29 carryover, but some of those lease guys really could use the  
30 help.  
31

32 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.  
33

34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am not seeing any more hands. Bob,  
35 thank you for your comments. We will provide one more  
36 opportunity for folks on the line to hit \*1 to get into the  
37 queue.  
38

39 **MR. RICHARD FISHER:** Can you all hear me?  
40

41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Richard, we can hear you, but let's see. Have  
42 you pressed \*1? We've got another individual in the queue right  
43 ahead of you.  
44

45 **MR. FISHER:** I have several times, but please go to someone  
46 else, if they're ahead of me, but I have several times.  
47

48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Let me defer real quick to the operator.

1 Would you prefer that we move forward with Richard Fisher or  
2 John Walter?  
3  
4 **UNIDENTIFIED:** We have John Walter in the queue at this time,  
5 sir.  
6  
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We will move forward with John Walter,  
8 and then we'll come back to you, Richard. Go ahead, John.  
9  
10 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** I want to say good afternoon to everybody, and  
11 I'm filling in for Clay right now, and I just wanted to weigh-in  
12 on the carryover provision, which I assume was to carry Roy over  
13 for another year, but maybe I am mistaken.  
14  
15 Anyway, on behalf of the Science Center, we really would like to  
16 wish Roy a great retirement, and we have greatly enjoyed working  
17 with Roy and with SERO, and we think that the relationship  
18 between the Center and the Regional Office is improving, and in  
19 large part to Roy's collaborative efforts, and we think we're  
20 moving in a very good directions, and, in large part, that is  
21 Roy, and so I wanted to just thank him, on behalf of the Center,  
22 for his leadership and stewardship of the resources.  
23  
24 On a matter of substantive business related to the difference in  
25 the ABCs that we're seeing for a couple of the stocks, in large  
26 part, those differences, when we're saying there's a doubling or  
27 tripling of the ABC, it's because of the change in units, and  
28 it's not going to necessarily translate simply to a doubling or  
29 tripling on the water. It's a unit change, and I think that  
30 needs to be just made clear, and that's all I have to say right  
31 now. Thanks for the time, and congrats to Roy.  
32  
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, John, for those comments and pointing  
34 out the effect of the unit change on the ABC. I am not seeing  
35 any hands up, and so we'll go ahead and move to our next  
36 speaker.  
37  
38 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Our next speaker is Richard Fisher. Sir, your  
39 line is open.  
40  
41 **MR. FISHER:** Thank you all very much, and thank you all for  
42 having me speak here this afternoon. First of all, Dr.  
43 Crabtree, I wanted to thank you for your many years of service,  
44 and I hope you enjoy retirement. Moving on, I will speak about  
45 some of the -- Some of the situation that's going on right now,  
46 as we're getting closer and closer to this electronic reporting  
47 getting started, which, as we all look at our calendars, it's  
48 five weeks from today, to the day, and so it's coming up on us

1 pretty quick.

2  
3 There was an email that was sent out last week with several  
4 links in it that, unfortunately, many of the links were not  
5 going to a place where you could actually view what it said that  
6 you would be able to view from this toolkit that was sent out.  
7 Those links include the power-down exemption form, the landing  
8 location form, vendor information, as well as reimbursement  
9 information.

10  
11 I am also going to kind of echo a lot of the comments from  
12 Captain Hubbard and Captain Jarvis earlier, and so, man, the  
13 world really must be coming to an end in 2020, if we're agreeing  
14 on something, but it's just super important that we get these  
15 cellular units approved before we reach a point where these  
16 captains actually have to go ahead and purchase a unit.

17  
18 We've got a situation right now where only three units are being  
19 shown as being approved, and they are kind of cumbersome, giant,  
20 VMS-type units, and that's not really going to be something  
21 that's very popular, we would imagine in most of the Gulf, but  
22 definitely not in Louisiana as well, and so it's very important  
23 that we get these cellular units approved in a timely manner,  
24 because a lot of captains feel like they're kind of in limbo,  
25 where they know they're going to have to get something, but they  
26 don't know what they're going to have to get, and they don't  
27 know who is going to be able to install it, and there's just a  
28 lot of unanswered questions that I just really want to stress  
29 that we really, really hope we can get a lot of those questions  
30 answered during this December 15 webinar that is coming up here  
31 in a couple of weeks.

32  
33 The last thing, before I sign-off, is I want to, again,  
34 reiterate how important the landings locations and getting new  
35 landing locations approved is going to be in Louisiana, because  
36 we have a completely different fishery here, where we're not  
37 looking at big marinas with dozens and dozens of large vessels  
38 leaving.

39  
40 We've got a lot of smaller marinas, and we've got a lot of  
41 captains who leave from private docks, and so it's going to be  
42 very, very -- It might change from day to day, and it might be a  
43 marina one day, and it might be a boat launch the next day, and,  
44 yes, a boat launch, even for some offshore fishing, because we  
45 do have that capability here in Louisiana, and we're an oddball.  
46 We're different.

47  
48 There's a lot of things that are very important that we just

1 really want to get straightened out in the logbook program, as  
2 we inch closer and closer and closer to the start of the  
3 program, and I want to thank you all for everything that you all  
4 do, and, again, Dr. Crabtree, thank you, and enjoy retirement.  
5

6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Richard. I am not seeing  
7 any hands up, and so, again, another opportunity for folks that  
8 might be on the line to enter the queue. As a reminder, you  
9 need to press \*1 to enter the queue, and the operator will let  
10 you in. We will wait just a few minutes.  
11

12 **MS. ROY:** If you're listening on through your computer and not  
13 dialed in, and you wish to provide public testimony, please dial  
14 in to (833)970-2435 and provide the conference ID, which is  
15 7779704. Then give your first and last name to the operator and  
16 press \*1 to enter the speaker queue, and you will be able to  
17 provide that public testimony. If you are logged into Adobe  
18 Connect, to the webinar, you will see this information on the  
19 screen. Thank you.  
20

21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It doesn't look like we have any more folks  
22 calling in. Again, I appreciate the participation by all of the  
23 participants that have been hanging on the line, and those  
24 comments are valuable and well-received and taken into  
25 consideration by the council, and so thank you for that. We are  
26 going to take just a ten-minute break, and then we're going to  
27 jump into our committee reports, and so that will be at 2:55,  
28 and I understand that Dr. Stunz has to be on the road, and so  
29 we're going to try to make sure that he has ample opportunity to  
30 provide his committee report without experiencing any technical  
31 difficulties, and so we'll start out with the Migratory Species  
32 Report at 2:55. I will see everybody then.  
33

34 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)  
35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It looks like we've got everybody, and we're  
37 going to go ahead and jump right into our committee reports, and  
38 we'll start out with the Migratory Species Committee Report and  
39 Dr. Stunz.  
40

41 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**  
42 **MIGRATORY SPECIES COMMITTEE REPORT**  
43

44 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is the Migratory  
45 Species Committee Report from November 30, 2020. The committee  
46 adopted the agenda, Tab M, Number 1, as written and approved the  
47 minutes, Tab M, Number 2, of the January 2020 meeting as  
48 written.

1  
2 Presentation on Draft Amendment 14 to the 2006 HMS Species FMP,  
3 Tab M, Number 4 and 4(a), Mr. Guy DuBeck from the NOAA Office of  
4 Highly Migratory Species (HMS) provided an overview presentation  
5 of Draft Amendment 14, which will create a new framework action  
6 for the establishment of acceptable biological catch (ABC) and  
7 annual catch limits (ACL) for Atlantic shark fisheries.

8  
9 Management measures included in the draft amendment include the  
10 creation of an ABC control rule along with options of a phase-in  
11 ABC control rule for any modification in ABC, ACL development,  
12 options for carryover provisions, and exploration of multiyear  
13 overfishing status determination criteria. Mr. DuBeck included  
14 a preliminary implementation timeline and indicated that public  
15 comment would be open until December 31, 2020.

16  
17 The council is similarly considering modifications to its ABC  
18 control rule, and the committee indicated it would be useful for  
19 HMS and council staff to communicate about potential approaches  
20 for an ABC Control Rule.

21  
22 Ms. Leann Bosarge stressed the importance of continued  
23 collaboration between HMS and the council on future stock  
24 assessments especially regarding public comment on management  
25 options. Mr. Kevin Anson asked for clarification about the  
26 carryover option for overfished stocks, which is Option D6, and  
27 Dr. Tom Frazer inquired what proportion of HMS stocks were  
28 considered data-poor or unknown.

29  
30 Mr. DuBeck indicated that stocks considered undergoing  
31 overfishing were eligible for a carryover, but that an option of  
32 multiyear overfishing status determination criteria, which is  
33 Option E3, would help inform carryover decisions. Mr. DuBeck  
34 stated that individual stock assessments have been completed for  
35 a few shark stocks, but that most species are included in  
36 broader coastal aggregated stocks, and therefore are considered  
37 unknown. The committee agreed to postpone further discussion on  
38 draft Amendment 14 until after public testimony, to help inform  
39 any potential comment letter to HMS. I will stop there, Mr.  
40 Chairman.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Stunz. I am just  
43 looking to see if there's any other comments or business to come  
44 before this committee. Okay. I am not seeing any more comments  
45 or input from the committee, Dr. Stunz.

46  
47 **DR. STUNZ:** Okay. With that, Mr. Chairman, this concludes my  
48 report.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Greg. I appreciate that,  
3 and so we will move on, and we'll circle back to the top of the  
4 list. If it's okay with Mr. Diaz, we'll get on with the  
5 Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report.

6  
7 **SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE REPORT**  
8

9 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman. This is the Sustainable  
10 Fisheries Committee Report. The committee chairman proposed a  
11 reordering of agenda items to ensure that Amendment Reef Fish  
12 48/Red Drum 5 will be discussed. The chair also noted that,  
13 following the aquaculture presentation, staff will discuss a  
14 motion made by the Shrimp AP. With modifications, the committee  
15 adopted the agenda and approved the minutes of the October 2020  
16 meeting as written.

17  
18 NOAA Update on Aquaculture Opportunity Areas, Dr. Jess Beck-  
19 Stimpert and Dr. Ken Riley of NOAA Fisheries gave a presentation  
20 on aquaculture opportunity areas (AOAs). Dr. Beck-Stimpert  
21 indicated that federal waters off southern California and in the  
22 Gulf of Mexico were selected for the evaluation and development  
23 of the first AOAs.

24  
25 She discussed the steps planned during the first year and  
26 discussed the public process for AOAs. She reiterated that AOAs  
27 do not exempt aquaculture operations from applicable regulations  
28 and permitting requirements.

29  
30 Dr. Ken Riley discussed spatial planning for AOAs and the  
31 preliminary data, tools and, technology used in planning and  
32 siting analyses of AOAs. He provided a suitability model  
33 example and discussed the scoring of various site attributes.

34  
35 He discussed the overall suitability of the four study areas  
36 within the Gulf of Mexico. He indicated that the final step  
37 would include the publication of an atlas of potential AOAs.  
38 Dr. Beck-Stimpert discussed an ongoing request for information  
39 and noted that a listening session is scheduled December 3rd at  
40 noon eastern time. She also indicated that the public comment  
41 period ends December 22, 2020.

42  
43 Committee members noted that more information on how reef fish  
44 VMS and shrimp effort data are used and how scores are developed  
45 would be helpful. Dr. Riley indicated they are working closely  
46 with the Galveston Lab and that shrimp effort data from 2004 to  
47 present are included in the suitability analyses.

1 In response to a committee question, Dr. Beck- Stimpert noted  
2 that AOAs do not prevent other activities. Staff noted that the  
3 Shrimp AP unanimously approved a motion requesting to be engaged  
4 in the AOA process. The committee recommended that the Shrimp  
5 AP receive a presentation on AOAs.

6  
7 Final Action Amendment Reef Fish 48/Red Drum 5: Status  
8 Determination Criteria and Optimum Yield for Reef Fish and Red  
9 Drum, council staff reviewed the public comments received for  
10 the Reef Fish 48/Red Drum 5 amendment. Some comments indicated  
11 that additional approaches to estimate maximum sustainable yield  
12 or serve as an MSY proxy should be investigated, other than  
13 spawning potential ratio for unassessed stocks.

14  
15 Other comments indicated a preference for biologically-  
16 conservative reference points. Council staff reviewed the  
17 preferred alternatives for each action and reviewed the  
18 Scientific and Statistical Committee's recommendations and the  
19 council's rationale for the preferred alternatives, including  
20 previous deliberations about earlier versions of the document.

21  
22 For Action 1, setting the MSY proxy at F 30 percent SPR for all  
23 stock complexes, Preferred Alternative 2, and F 40 percent SPR  
24 for goliath grouper, Preferred Alternative 3, was consistent for  
25 assessed species. Defining an escapement-based MSY for red drum  
26 in Preferred Option 4a would remain consistent with current red  
27 drum management practices.

28  
29 The council reviewed Preferred Alternative 5, which would allow  
30 the council to modify the MSY or MSY proxy for a stock in the  
31 future, based on a Scientific and Statistical Committee  
32 recommendation, by noting the change in a plan amendment. The  
33 committee reviewed Action 2, including preferred Alternative 2,  
34 that would set the maximum fishing mortality threshold equal to  
35 the fishing mortality at the MSY proxy for each stock or stock  
36 complex, as determined in Action 1.

37  
38 Next, the committee reviewed Action 3, including preferred  
39 Alternative 3 which defines minimum stock size threshold (MSST)  
40 as 0.75 times BMSY (or proxy). The committee reviewed preferred  
41 Alternative 5 that would establish the MSST in the Gulf for four  
42 jointly-managed stocks across the South Atlantic and Gulf  
43 Councils' jurisdictions.

44  
45 Action 4.1 defines optimum yield for reef fish stocks included  
46 in Action 1 and hogfish, while Action 4.2 would retain the OY  
47 definition for red drum. The committee reviewed the preferred  
48 alternatives, but made no changes to the document.

1  
2 Council staff explained that implementation of this document  
3 will not require rulemaking, and, thus, codified text is not  
4 necessary. Ms. Mara Levy pointed out that, if the document was  
5 approved at this meeting, it would define status determination  
6 criteria, which could serve as a placeholder until an assessment  
7 could be completed for unassessed stocks.  
8  
9 Several committee members indicated that the document was  
10 complicated, affected most managed species, and advocated for  
11 continued discussion at the January council meeting. The  
12 committee decided to postpone further discussion of the document  
13 until Full Council.  
14  
15 Treatment of Dead Discards by the SEFSC in Stock Assessments,  
16 the committee deferred discussion of this agenda item until Full  
17 Council. Mr. Chairman.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz, and I apologize. There  
20 were two hands that went up during the reading of the report,  
21 and I would like to go back and make sure that I captured those  
22 hands. The first one was Ms. Bosarge and then Ms. Levy, and so,  
23 Leann, I apologize for not catching it on the first time.  
24  
25 **MS. BOSARGE:** That's okay, Mr. Chairman. Mine was during the  
26 aquaculture section of that report, and there were two comments.  
27 We had spoken, in the Shrimp Committee, I believe, or maybe this  
28 committee, about the Shrimp AP getting this presentation from  
29 Mr. Ken Riley. They usually have a standing meeting every year  
30 in March, the Shrimp AP does, and so I just wanted to make sure  
31 -- Does staff need a motion from me, in order to put that on the  
32 AP agenda, where Ken Riley will present to them and actually  
33 show them the data that he is inputting and how they're scoring  
34 our data and using it?  
35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Simmons.  
37  
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I think  
39 we understand that, Ms. Bosarge, and we'll work on that. I'm  
40 looking at Dr. Freeman, to make sure he's okay with that. Yes,  
41 we've got it. Thank you.  
42  
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We'll go ahead and just make that  
44 request, without the need for a motion.  
45  
46 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you.  
47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Was there an additional question in there,

1 Leann?

2

3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, there was one other item. I liked the idea  
4 that Erik Brazer had about the agency forming an industry  
5 advisory panel, or a stakeholder advisory panel, and I wondered  
6 if -- Would the council consider writing a letter to the agency  
7 that pitches that idea to them and says that we see some value  
8 in there? If so, I will make a motion to do so.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think, Leann, if that's your pleasure, and  
11 it's something you would like to see happen, then I would go  
12 ahead and make that motion, and we'll have some discussion here  
13 about that.

14

15 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. I will make a motion to request that staff  
16 send a letter to relevant agency personnel, NMFS agency  
17 personnel, highlighting the value in forming an industry  
18 advisory panel in support of the aquaculture area of opportunity  
19 process. In support of identifying -- To assist in identifying  
20 aquaculture areas of opportunity. How about that?

21

22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. It's not quite there.

23

24 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. To request that staff send a letter to  
25 relevant NMFS agency personnel, highlighting the value in  
26 forming an industry advisory panel to inform the process of  
27 identifying aquaculture areas of opportunity.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Mr. Diaz.

30

31 **MR. DIAZ:** I would be willing to second Ms. Bosarge's motion if  
32 she would change one word, and change "industry" to  
33 "stakeholder".

34

35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge, would you be willing to entertain  
36 that change?

37

38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir. That's fine.

39

40 **DR. CRABTREE:** Tom, can I make one comment on the motion?

41

42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Sure. Let's just get it up on the board real  
43 quick, Roy, to make sure that we've got it exactly where we want  
44 it to be. I will read this real quick, to make sure, Leanne and  
45 Dale, it's what we want, to make sure we get it right. To  
46 request that staff send a letter to relevant NMFS agency  
47 personnel, highlighting the value in forming a stakeholder  
48 advisory panel informing the process of identifying aquaculture

1 opportunity areas.

2

3 **MS. BOSARGE:** If we want to change "forming" to "creating", that  
4 might make it read a little better.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Value in creating. I think --

7

8 **MS. BOSARGE:** The value in creating a stakeholder advisory panel  
9 to inform.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Leann and Dale, I think that we get your point  
12 here, and we might wordsmith this just a little bit, but, in the  
13 interim, Dr. Crabtree.

14

15 **DR. CRABTREE:** I mean, I don't have any problem with the motion.  
16 I just wanted to point out that it's no small task for NMFS to  
17 create an advisory panel, because of the FACA rules, and so,  
18 normally, NMFS would use MAFAC for that kind of a role, but it  
19 is a big production to create an advisory panel for a federal  
20 agency, because of FACA.

21

22 Unlike the councils, where you are FACA exempt, and you can set  
23 up a lot of APs, and so I don't have any problem with sending  
24 such a letter, but just understand that that's not something  
25 that's easily done.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I appreciate those comments, and, again, we  
28 can send a letter and reflect our understanding that it's not a  
29 simple task. I am curious, a little bit, about whether or not  
30 you might task the agency with consulting with MAFAC, and, if  
31 they did that, Leann and Dale, would that perhaps -- Would that  
32 adequately capture the broad stakeholder group, or no? Ms.  
33 Bosarge.

34

35 **MS. BOSARGE:** I am not all that familiar with the makeup of  
36 MAFAC and who is on it right now. I'm guessing there's not  
37 anybody from the shrimp industry on it, and Harlon used to be on  
38 it, and he has some affiliation with the shrimp industry, in a  
39 secondary kind of way, but I think any input they could get  
40 would be get, and so I wouldn't turn down the input from MAFAC,  
41 for sure.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Again, I believe we that we can write the  
44 letter in such a way that we would encourage, perhaps, that the  
45 agency consider the value that might be added by having a  
46 stakeholder AP, and then, in the absence of creating that AP,  
47 perhaps consulting with MAFAC, but, again, making the important  
48 point that the industry, broadly represented, is deserving of

1 some input into that process, and is that correct? Okay. I am  
2 going to take that as a yes. I see Mara's hand is up and then  
3 Martha's.

4  
5 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Mine isn't related to this motion, and it's the  
6 status determination criteria amendment, and so if you want to  
7 come back to me.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We'll circle back. Martha.

10  
11 **MS. GUYAS:** I guess maybe a thought I had on this is just -- I  
12 like "stakeholder" better than "industry", but maybe that could  
13 be a little bit broad too, and maybe it's really fisheries  
14 stakeholders on the advisory panel, just so that we're clear. I  
15 was also trying to think through at what stage would this be  
16 most helpful, and is it now, when they're trying to figure out  
17 where to even start, or is it -- Would it be more beneficial to  
18 have panels working on the specific, I guess more narrowed-down,  
19 areas, aquaculture opportunity areas?

20  
21 For example, if they start zeroing in on an area off of Florida,  
22 would you want to have certainly a mix of people from the  
23 industry and from fisheries, probably Gulf-wide, but also some  
24 local knowledge about what's happening specifically in that  
25 area, and I don't know that we need to get into that here, but I  
26 was thinking about that too here, at the stage at which to do  
27 this.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I mean, point well taken there. Again, I  
30 think -- Are you talking, Martha? Have at it.

31  
32 **MS. GUYAS:** I'm done. Go ahead.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I was just saying that I think you made  
35 a good point there. Again, I think we might be able to capture  
36 that thought in the letter as well. Are there any other  
37 comments with regard to the motion on the board?

38  
39 **MR. DIAZ:** Tom, I just want to clarify that my thinking on the  
40 motion -- When I was thinking of stakeholders, or thinking of  
41 fisheries stakeholders, I was thinking an advisory panel like  
42 this would also have some aquaculture representatives on it. I  
43 think that's consistent with how we set up our panels. I mean,  
44 our panels -- We try to make them diverse and include different  
45 user groups, and so that would be my thought. Thank you.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. I guess what I'm hearing  
48 is that we want to add a word in that motion that is creating a

1 fisheries stakeholder advisory panel. I just want to make sure  
2 that I'm capturing accurately the sentiments of both Martha and  
3 Mr. Diaz and that Ms. Bosarge would be okay with inserting that  
4 word in the motion.

5  
6 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, I would like to put that word in the motion,  
7 "fisheries stakeholder advisory panel". I am getting some text  
8 messages from people, as we're talking through this, and I think  
9 MAFAC actually has a sub-group for aquaculture already, looking  
10 at some of this, and I think there's some aquaculture  
11 stakeholders on there, and so it may actually be valuable to put  
12 that word "fisheries stakeholders" in this motion.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Dale, do you have an additional  
15 comment?

16  
17 **MR. DIAZ:** No, sir. I'm good with how it is.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Ms. Bosarge.

20  
21 **MS. BOSARGE:** I'm good. Thank you.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. I'm not seeing any more hands up  
24 related to this motion, and so I think I will just ask if there  
25 is any more opposition to this motion. Seeing none, the motion  
26 carries. Ms. Levy.

27  
28 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Hold on. Kevin Anson, I didn't see your hand.  
31 I apologize.

32  
33 **MR. ANSON:** That's all right. I pushed the button kind of late.  
34 While we're on this topic, before Mara, I think, jumps onto the  
35 next one, based on some of the comments provided at the public  
36 testimony today, it appears there may be some confusion as to  
37 what this process entails, or what the limits are of the  
38 process.

39  
40 What I mean by that is, as it was stated in the presentation,  
41 it's not really regulatory, and it's just kind of setting up the  
42 bounds as to which area would be identified as being suitable,  
43 generally, for aquaculture, is my understanding, and so  
44 specifics, as to genetic requirements and loading and feed and  
45 attachments and other things, I don't think necessarily would be  
46 addressed in this.

47  
48 I mean, they're going to look at bottom type and such, and, as

1 far as something that might be attached to the bottom, they will  
2 probably look to see, but I'm just wondering if -- Unless  
3 there's something already on their website, that maybe we can  
4 put on our website to either link to or help maybe summarize  
5 what it will and what it won't do, but, again, some of that was  
6 provided in the presentation, and so I just think that having  
7 more information, or having it more readily accessible to our  
8 group of folks who normally sit in -- Because there were some  
9 comments made to having this up more frequently on our committee  
10 agendas, which are rather full right now, and if we can maybe  
11 provide some avenue for patching that information on, and I  
12 think that would be helpful.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Simmons, do you care to weigh-in here?  
15

16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree, Mr.  
17 Anson, and we can try to work on that. I think the problem we  
18 have right now is that NMFS is still in their infancy in working  
19 on this, and I don't think they know yet what all it's going to  
20 entail, as far as recommendations for species to be cultured.

21  
22 I've asked whether they're going to be only species in the  
23 councils' FMPs, and I haven't gotten answers on that, and so we  
24 can work on that, but I think there probably would be some  
25 confusion until the draft EIS comes out on this and we continue  
26 to get more presentations, and so we can certainly work towards  
27 providing information, as clear as possible.

28  
29 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.  
30

31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Kevin. Now we'll circle back to  
32 Ms. Levy.  
33

34 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. Just a couple of things that were in the  
35 report. Where it was talking about Action 3, Alternative 3, I  
36 think there's just a typo. "Minimum standing stock threshold"  
37 should be "minimum stock size threshold". That's what the MSST  
38 is.

39  
40 Then, related to the part that referred to me pointing out that,  
41 if the council approved at this meeting, that it could serve as  
42 a placeholder for these unassessed stocks, I still think that's  
43 true. I think it's important to have on the record, in the FMP,  
44 what the council thinks appropriate MSYs and overfished criteria  
45 would be for these stocks, even though they don't have  
46 assessments, but I also don't think it precludes the council  
47 from then further looking at these stocks, either individually  
48 or in groups, to determine whether there is some other criteria

1 or proxy we could use in the meantime.

2  
3 I didn't want to make it seem like you put this in place and  
4 then you don't ever look at it again, or you're not allowed to  
5 look at it again until there's an assessment, and clearly that's  
6 not true. You could always look at these stocks, and I'm sort  
7 of going to the point that Steve Atran made about taking them  
8 out.

9  
10 I mean, taking them out just means that there's nothing.  
11 There's no council input with regard to what things like the  
12 overfished criteria should be, and it doesn't do anything for  
13 them. If you leave them in, and at least have on the books the  
14 status determination criteria that you think are appropriate if  
15 an assessment becomes available, then that's the starting place,  
16 and then you can look ahead of whether you want to have  
17 something else in the meantime, whether that's appropriate.  
18 Thank you.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Ms. Levy. All right. I  
21 still see Kevin's hand up. I'm not sure if that's a holdover.

22  
23 **MR. ANSON:** No. It's a new item.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Go ahead, Kevin.

26  
27 **MR. ANSON:** Just I will ask, and are we going to have time to  
28 have the presentation on the treatment of dead discards?

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I don't think we're going to be able to do  
31 that during this meeting, and we'll try to schedule it for the  
32 next meeting, Kevin.

33  
34 **MR. ANSON:** It's very informative, and there's lots of  
35 information in there, but it did not capture my full request, I  
36 guess, as it relates to how the recreational quota is monitored  
37 with the addition of the Bls, which are the ones that are not  
38 available for the sampler to visually inspect at the dock.

39  
40 My sense is -- The information did confirm what I thought, and  
41 that is that dead discards in the recreational fishery, at least  
42 as it relates to MRIP, the states that are conducting the APAIS  
43 MRIP survey, those are being accounted for towards the in-season  
44 monitoring of the quota, and so I believe that does not quite  
45 match up with the commercial side, whereby the dead discards in  
46 the commercial fishery are not accounted for, and it's no -- I  
47 am not pointing fingers or anything, but that's just the system  
48 that we have set up for the commercial fishery and monitoring

1 their catch, is they do not have a more timely method to monitor  
2 dead discards in-season.  
3  
4 If a slide or two or three could be added to the presentation,  
5 to just explicitly go through that process, and confirm -- At  
6 least, in my mind, I believe that there is this discrepancy that  
7 is there, whereby we are, in a sense, counting the dead  
8 discarded fish in the recreational fishery and counting that  
9 against the in-season quota, but not doing it in the commercial  
10 fishery, and so, again, I just believe that there is some  
11 inequities there. If that is in fact the case, maybe we might  
12 not have an issue with an overfishing situation for last year,  
13 and so thank you.  
14  
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Kevin, I appreciate those comments, and I had  
16 a discussion with staff about the request that you made at the  
17 last council meeting, and recognizing that this discard  
18 presentation was actually going to be a two-part kind of  
19 endeavor, but, since we're going to just move it to the next  
20 council meeting, we will make every effort to have all of those  
21 component parts of your original request in the presentation,  
22 okay? We need just a bit more time on a few of them.  
23  
24 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, sir.  
25  
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Dr. Crabtree.  
27  
28 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just to be clear, lest there be confusion, we're  
29 talking about the Type B1, which some of that is dead discards,  
30 but it's other things as well. It's unobserved catch. The vast  
31 majority of the dead discards in the recreational fishery are  
32 the B2s that are released alive, but a fraction of them die, and  
33 so that is by far the largest source of dead discards.  
34  
35 Those are not counted against the recreational quotas, and it's  
36 only the Type B1, which is just a small fraction of it, and so I  
37 just don't want people to have the impression that we're  
38 counting dead discards against the recreational quota, because,  
39 as a rule, most of the dead discards are not counted against the  
40 recreational quota, and it's only the Type B1, and that's true  
41 for all of our recreational fisheries, and it's not just a red  
42 snapper issue.  
43  
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you for that clarification, Roy. All  
45 right. I am not seeing any other hands. John Walter.  
46  
47 **DR. WALTER:** Roy actually addressed the issue of the B1 really  
48 not, for the most part, being dead discards, but they are

1 actually most unobserved and just not available to the samplers.  
2 I think, just to confirm the request from Mr. Anson, that's to  
3 add a slide on how the commercial discards are dealt with, in  
4 particular how dead discards are dealt with in the assessments,  
5 to the slide deck for the discard presentation, and we can do  
6 that.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, John. All right. Dr.  
9 Simmons.

10  
11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just  
12 wanted to circle back on the Amendment 48/Red Drum 5 and try to  
13 get a better understanding of what the council would like staff  
14 to bring in January, to try to better inform any decisions or  
15 questions that the council may continue to have on this  
16 document.

17  
18 We can certainly try to get the SSC Chair, or another SSC  
19 member, there during the meeting to help us answer questions, if  
20 there's still a lot of things that we feel aren't answered, but  
21 I just want to make sure that we have our ducks in a row, so  
22 that we can get this document finished up in January.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Ms. Bosarge  
25 has her hand up.

26  
27 **MS. BOSARGE:** Carrie, I'm going to try and answer your question,  
28 but I will be honest that I don't really understand it all. I  
29 guess what I would want to see is a presentation, honestly from  
30 Clay, or somebody in Clay's shop, that addresses those -- What  
31 is it, like fifteen species or whatever, and the pros and cons  
32 of going forward in the document the way that we have it and  
33 using proxies for proxies, or pulling it out and what might our  
34 options be if we pull it out, the pros and cons of each.

35  
36 Let's answer those questions, kind of in detail, that Steven  
37 Atran brought up, and educate us a little bit on it, just on  
38 that section. I think we're pretty solid on the rest of the  
39 document.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Leann, for those comments.  
42 I think -- Dr. Simmons, was that helpful enough for the next  
43 meeting in January?

44  
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think so. Dr. Froeschke, are we  
46 good? Okay.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We're getting approval here on this end

1 that staff can find a way to get that information to the  
2 council. So, given an anticipated presentation in January, it's  
3 possible, and highly likely, that we will be in a position to  
4 take final action on that document. Okay. Are there any other  
5 questions or comments from the council? John Walter, do you  
6 have your hand up?

7  
8 **DR. WALTER:** My hand should be down. I think that was from the  
9 previous one.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Got you. Thank you. I am not seeing  
12 any additional hands. Are there any other comments with regard  
13 to the Sustainable Fisheries Committee? Seeing none, we will  
14 move forward. Ms. Bosarge, if you're willing, we'll go ahead  
15 and go through the Shrimp Committee Report.

16  
17 **SHRIMP COMMITTEE REPORT**

18  
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. The Shrimp Committee met on  
20 November 30, 2020. The committee adopted the agenda, Tab D,  
21 Number 1, and approved the minutes, Tab D, Number 2, of the  
22 September 2020 meeting as written.

23  
24 Pilot Program to Evaluate Use of Vessel Navigation System to  
25 Measure Shrimping Effort, Tab D, Number 4, Dr. Gallaway provided  
26 the committee with an overview of a pilot program that uses P-  
27 Sea WindPlot to collect shrimping effort data. The pilot  
28 program is being conducted as a result of the 3G network being  
29 phased out, which the current cellular electronic logbooks  
30 (cELBs) use.

31  
32 Of actively-fishing permitted vessels that were members of the  
33 Southern Shrimp Alliance, 100 percent use P-Sea WindPlot, and  
34 this supports the idea that this software is dominant throughout  
35 the Gulf shrimping fleet.

36  
37 P-Sea WindPlot has been contracted to modify their program to  
38 capture latitude and longitude data with a time stamp every ten  
39 minutes during the entire length of each trip. This upgrade has  
40 been paid for by LGL, via funds from industry, and would be  
41 considered a free update for shrimpers.

42  
43 To match shrimping effort with landings, trips tickets will be  
44 paired with the data collected by P-Sea WindPlot using the same  
45 procedures as are currently in use with the cELB program. The  
46 pool of 577 actively-fishing permitted vessels with a cELB will  
47 provide the universe for a random sample, and also will be  
48 stratified by port into geographic regions, and that's for the

1 pilot.

2  
3 The modified P-Sea WindPlot program will provide the same  
4 information that both of the historical electronic logbooks  
5 (ELBs) and cELBs systems provided. At the end of the pilot  
6 program, the data and, hopefully the paired landings data, will  
7 be provided directly to a secure National Marine Fisheries  
8 Service server. The effort data will be provided directly to  
9 the Science Center.

10  
11 Dr. Porch noted that, initially, during the pilot program, data  
12 from P-Sea WindPlot would be collected manually, while  
13 electronic reporting is developed in Phase Two. Dr. Gallaway  
14 confirmed this and stated that they would also be training  
15 shrimpers on the new program.

16  
17 Dr. Crabtree commented that funding would be needed for this  
18 program and that an amendment may be needed, which addresses  
19 that a vessel would be required to have the software if a vessel  
20 is selected to participate in the effort collection program.

21  
22 Mr. Diaz noted that the shrimping industry has already provided  
23 over \$300,000 towards the pilot program and asked if there is  
24 any funding from NMFS to support this program in the next few  
25 years. Dr. Porch responded that, currently, they do not have  
26 the level of funding needed to support the program.

27  
28 He added that it would be unlikely that they could justify a  
29 sole-source contract for the proposed contract, as there are  
30 other entities in the region who could arguably perform the  
31 work, and they would be obligated to obtain bids. Dr. Porch  
32 noted that the 3G units still collect information, even though  
33 they can't be transmitted via the 3G network, and so the data  
34 could be manually collected.

35  
36 Mr. Diaz encouraged Dr. Porch's staff to work closely with Dr.  
37 Gallaway to ensure that potential problems with the pilot  
38 program are resolved sooner rather than later. Ms. Bosarge  
39 commented that effort collection programs have been funded in  
40 the past and at comparable levels to what is included in Dr.  
41 Gallaway's presented budget. Dr. Porch responded that the past  
42 funding levels referred to by Ms. Bosarge were likely for the  
43 entire shrimp program and not just for the shrimp effort  
44 collection programs. He noted that there had been some  
45 reimbursements for some of the 3G units in the past.

46  
47 Dr. Freeman provided a summary report and motions from the  
48 November Shrimp AP meeting. The first Shrimp AP motion

1 requested that NMFS to fully implement a new shrimp effort data  
2 collection system based on Dr. Gallaway's pilot program. The  
3 second motion asked that the current reporting requirements not  
4 be changed.

5  
6 Ms. Bosarge inquired if funds, such as those initially budgeted  
7 for travel that had not been used due to COVID-19, could be used  
8 to support the pilot program. Dr. Porch responded that there  
9 was no carryover available for that. Ms. Bosarge asked if  
10 thumb drives could be used to send the data from the 3G units to  
11 the Science Center. Dr. Porch stated that it would require  
12 additional work, but it could be done.

13  
14 Council staff asked if permit holders had been informed that the  
15 3G units should be kept on vessels. Dr. Porch replied that a  
16 letter would be sent soon to permit holders letting them know  
17 that the equipment needed to be kept on vessels.

18  
19 **With no opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, for**  
20 **the GMFMC to send a letter to the SEFSC supporting the**  
21 **development, implementation and funding of the P-Sea WindPlot**  
22 **program.**

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. We have a committee  
25 motion on the board. Again, for clarity, the motion on the  
26 board reads: For the GMFMC to send a letter to the SEFSC  
27 supporting the development, implementation, and funding of the  
28 P-Sea WindPlot program. All right. Is there any further  
29 discussion of this motion? **Seeing no hands, is there any**  
30 **objection to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Ms.  
31 Bosarge.

32  
33 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. I hoping that, when we send that  
34 letter, it will be copied to other relevant Science Center  
35 personnel, which I'm thinking -- I don't know who Clay's boss  
36 is, but, you know, somebody up there, so that Clay doesn't have  
37 to beat the drum for us all the time about the importance of  
38 that program and that council would let his boss know directly,  
39 too.

40  
41 Mr. Anson asked if there were unused funds from the council that  
42 could support the pilot program. Dr. Simmons responded that it  
43 was up to the council's discretion on how unused 2020 funds were  
44 used, but that those funds could not go to a federal agency.

45  
46 Ms. Bosarge noted that, at a future Shrimp Committee meeting,  
47 the council would need to see the current regulations for the  
48 cellular electronic logbook program, to facilitate additional

1 discussions on what type of document is needed. The shrimp  
2 reporting regulations are attached at the end of this report.

3  
4 Ms. Bosarge also requested information on the shrimp program  
5 budget from Dr. Porch, additional budget information from Dr.  
6 Gallaway, and potential costs to industry. Ms. Levy stated that  
7 the details of the most recent framework that put the cellular  
8 electronic logbook in place need to be reviewed at a future  
9 meeting. Mr. Anson asked for information on how the Science  
10 Center's selection process for cellular electronic logbooks was  
11 established.

12  
13 **With no opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to**  
14 **request staff to initiate a white paper that explores the**  
15 **associated costs with an expanded number of shrimp vessels**  
16 **participating in the pilot effort collection program using P-Sea**  
17 **WindPlot.**

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so we've got a committee motion on  
20 the board. Is there any further discussion of this motion? Ms.  
21 Levy has her hand up. Ms. Levy.

22  
23 **MS. LEVY:** I just wanted to ask the question. When the motion  
24 says explore the associated costs with an expanded number of  
25 shrimp vessels participating in the pilot effort, I guess I'm  
26 wondering what does "expanded number of shrimp vessels" mean?  
27 Are we looking at exploring the costs of actually implementing  
28 this program, the way that the Science Center would need to  
29 implement it, how many vessels and that sort of thing, or are  
30 you looking for something else?

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge.

33  
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Ms. Levy, the way I interpreted that was so what  
35 industry has paid for right now to get this thing kicked off is  
36 just for Dr. Gallaway to get it on a handful of boats and to in  
37 fact do a proof of concept that it does generate the same data  
38 as was generated under the cellular logbook program, but that's  
39 just going to -- And that they're apples-to-apples, essentially,  
40 and that it works, right?

41  
42 The expanded number means actually scaling this up to an  
43 electronic logbook system that's comparable to the one we have  
44 now, where -- I forget, but it's on like a third of the fleet,  
45 or something like that, right now, the cellular electronic  
46 logbook, and so it's to get it to the point where we're at now,  
47 so we could continue on at at least that level. Is that clear?

1 **MS. LEVY:** That's helpful.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am looking for any other hands. I am  
4 not seeing any. Last call for any discussion.  
5  
6 **MR. RIECHERS:** Tom, I've got my hand up. Sorry, and it came in  
7 late.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Robin.  
10  
11 **MR. RIECHERS:** As I am recalling, much as Leann and others  
12 helped me remember, and I guess it's on 570, if I'm recalling  
13 the presentation yesterday right now, boats now, but, Clay, you  
14 may want to address this, because I did think, based on what you  
15 suggested, was you were going to tell those boats to keep  
16 running that current system, and we can still remove it, much  
17 like we had to do with the old ELBs, and get that information.  
18  
19 I understand the request for trying to figure out funding, and I  
20 fully support that, Leann, but I'm also just thinking how much  
21 difference, when we think about scaling up, are we really going  
22 to have to scale up, or is the equipment that, Clay, you  
23 referenced will still work, but it just won't transmit  
24 electronically, and we're going to basically, like I said,  
25 almost have to use it like the old ELB system.  
26  
27 I guess that would be the only question about the white paper,  
28 and maybe we can even flesh that out more about what those  
29 options are there, but Clay may also have that response at his  
30 fingertips, and I don't know.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Robin, I don't think that Clay is on the line  
33 anymore. Perhaps John Walter might take a stab at that.  
34  
35 **MR. RIECHERS:** Sorry, John. I missed Clay having to get off.  
36  
37 **DR. WALTER:** No problem. I can chime in, and I'm actually  
38 working on the letter where we are going to request them to  
39 leave the units on, and the short-term solution is ask them to  
40 leave the 3G units on, but we're just without a way to get the  
41 chips off, and we can either have people mail them or physically  
42 get on the boats, but the units will still work, and they will  
43 still collect the data, but we just need everyone to leave them  
44 on, and then we will work out, I think in some of these  
45 collaborations with industry, how to sort it out for the future.  
46  
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge, did you want to add to that?  
48

1 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes. Robin, I think what you're getting at is a  
2 great idea. I think the piece that hasn't been brought to light  
3 yet is that those units that are on the boat, just like your  
4 cellphone or anything else, they have a memory limit to them,  
5 right, and that's why they are transmitting cellularly, and they  
6 send that data in, and they can keep processing and collecting  
7 more.

8  
9 Now that they're not going to send the data in any more, at some  
10 point, the memory chip is going to get full, and it won't be  
11 collecting data anymore, but what we want to do is at least get  
12 whatever data does continue to collect before they fill up their  
13 memory and get that back to NMFS. Does that make sense, Robin?

14  
15 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Leann. That does make  
16 sense.

17  
18 **DR. WALTER:** I will just chime in on the memory. We should be  
19 good for the whole year, from what I see. The memory chips, I  
20 think, should be able to cover almost all of next year. The  
21 only issue is if one of the units breaks down, due to corrosion,  
22 in which case we have got a whole lot of the 3G units, and what  
23 we'll do, in this letter that we're going to send out, is people  
24 can say that my unit is broken, and we can mail them a new one,  
25 and so the 3G units will continue to be collecting the data, and  
26 that will at least be the short-term solution.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Leann, and thank you, John  
29 and Robin. I think we're good to go, and I don't see any other  
30 hands up wanting discussion on this motion. **Is there any**  
31 **opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**  
32 Ms. Bosarge.

33  
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir. Dr. Simmons noted that information on  
35 carryover funds from the council would likely need to come back  
36 through a future Administrative/Budget Committee and that some  
37 information on the Science Center's shrimp budget may be able to  
38 be included in a white paper.

39  
40 Ms. Bosarge asked that the remaining agenda items, Tab D, Number  
41 5a and Number 5b, be discussed in Full Council. Dr. Crabtree  
42 asked that Ms. Levy discuss a recent court case on sea turtle  
43 takes during Full Council as well. Mr. Chair, this concludes my  
44 report. I will note, at the bottom of that report, that Dr.  
45 Simmons and staff have found the regulations for electronic  
46 logbooks, and it's actually the second paragraph there, but I  
47 assume we'll go through those in our next Shrimp Committee  
48 meeting.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I am looking  
3 back now at the remaining agenda items, and I'm going back to  
4 Tab D-5(a) and (b), and let's see what those are. Matt, do you  
5 have time to do the summary? We will honor that request. Dr.  
6 Freeman.

7  
8 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Certainly. Thank you. There are two items  
9 from the March 24 webinar meeting of the Shrimp AP that I would  
10 like to briefly mention. The first was that Dr. Masi provided  
11 the annual biological review of the Texas closure. This meeting  
12 had been switched to a webinar, and this was the onset of some  
13 of the travel interruptions due to the pandemic.

14  
15 Given that, historically, the closure has been from mid-May to  
16 mid-July, and that the following council meeting was going to be  
17 cancelled, the Shrimp Committee was invited to participate in  
18 the Shrimp AP's webinar meeting and was able to ask  
19 questions and voice any concerns regarding that presentation.

20  
21 The Shrimp AP made a motion, and, normally, this would have come  
22 to the council at their March/April council meeting, and, again,  
23 since that had been cancelled, and that the Shrimp Committee was  
24 able to participate in the Shrimp AP's webinar, the council went  
25 ahead and transmitted a letter to this effect, back on March 25.

26  
27 The second item from this webinar was that Dr. Barnette from  
28 SERO presented on new turtle excluder device requirements for  
29 skimmer trawl vessels forty feet and greater in length in the  
30 southeastern U.S., and just to note the final rule effective  
31 date for that is April 1, 2021.

32  
33 If we can go to the next item, which is Tab D, Number 5(b), here  
34 the first item is that Dr. Masi presented an update on five NMFS  
35 shrimp working groups, which are tasked with evaluating various  
36 shrimp data processing and estimation methods. Those include a  
37 SEAMAP working group, a shrimp fishery effort estimation working  
38 group, a shrimp life history and environmental data working  
39 group, and shrimp catch technical working group, and, lastly, a  
40 shrimp bycatch estimation working group.

41  
42 We have three members from the SSC that are participating in  
43 that, and that's Benny Gallaway, Doug Gregory, and Jim Nance,  
44 and we also have a council staff member participating on each of  
45 those as well. We anticipate another update from Dr. Masi to  
46 the Shrimp AP on this next year.

47  
48 The next item was that Dr. Gloeckner provided information on

1 shrimp reporting systems. In particular, he discussed the LGL  
2 algorithm that attempts to match a cELB trip to a dealer-  
3 reported trip ticket using a trip's start and end date. He  
4 noted that trip matching ranges from 50 to 80 percent across  
5 years, and Dr. Gloeckner discussed various reasons to the AP of  
6 why trips may not match, and then he reviewed some possible  
7 solutions to improve current matching.

8  
9 Lastly, we had two presentations from NMFS. The first was on a  
10 funded project to reduce juvenile sea turtle bycatch through  
11 development of reduced bar spacing in TEDs. Again, this was  
12 simply informative on a research project, and then the next one  
13 was a presentation on a funded project with the goal to restore  
14 fish biomass through actions that are expected to reduce finfish  
15 bycatch in the commercial shrimp trawl fishery, and that is  
16 through new bycatch reduction devices.

17  
18 Of note, that project will involve an industry stakeholder  
19 working group from both the brown shrimp industry and from the  
20 white shrimp industry, and AP members were invited to  
21 participate in that. That's what I had for the two AP  
22 summaries, if there is any questions. If not, I believe we can  
23 go ahead and see if Ms. Levy is prepared to present on the court  
24 case involving sea turtle takes that Dr. Crabtree had requested.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN FREEMAN:** Thank you, Dr. Freeman. I know that Robin  
27 Riechers had his hand up, and so let's first go to Robin.

28  
29 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I apologize, but this  
30 is right at the beginning of where you started talking about the  
31 Texas and Gulf cooperative closure, and I understand, and I want  
32 to make sure I'm understanding, because we normally make the  
33 motion about this time of year, or the first meeting in the  
34 spring, and I can't remember exactly when we do that, but what  
35 you were referencing was really the 2020 request, and is that  
36 correct?

37  
38 **DR. FREEMAN:** That would have come in front of the council at  
39 its March/April council meeting, but, in anticipation that that  
40 was going to be cancelled, the Shrimp Committee was invited to  
41 participate at the March Shrimp AP webinar. That way, in lieu  
42 of it coming forward to the council, the Shrimp Committee could  
43 still be involved in that process. That was for 2020.

44  
45 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay, and so the anticipation is that we'll get  
46 another review, and, by January or March, or sometime in that  
47 timeframe, we'll have that option for that discussion for 2021?

48

1 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, and so we, annually, typically have a  
2 Shrimp AP meeting every March, and then that material will be  
3 presented to the committee at its April 2021 meeting for the  
4 2021 Texas closure.  
5  
6 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you.  
7  
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Anson.  
9  
10 **MR. ANSON:** Dr. Freeman, what meeting was it that there was a  
11 discussion of the matching of the trips?  
12  
13 **DR. FREEMAN:** That was at the November 16 Shrimp AP webinar  
14 meeting, and Dr. Gloeckner did that presentation.  
15  
16 **MR. ANSON:** Right, and do we not -- There is no audio recordings  
17 of that saved in the archive right, and it's just the meeting  
18 summary?  
19  
20 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, we do have a recording of that. It's  
21 not publicly available on our website, I don't believe, and I'm  
22 looking at Dr. Simmons, but it's something that, if it's  
23 requested, we could provide that, I believe.  
24  
25 **MR. ANSON:** All right. Thank you.  
26  
27 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly.  
28  
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge.  
30  
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering --  
32 Whenever we do have another Shrimp Committee, it might be  
33 valuable to have some input from Dave Donaldson, as far as when  
34 we get into these costs and funding, to see if there -- If he  
35 knows of any avenues that we may pursue.  
36  
37 You know, the council requested that these RESTORE Act funds be  
38 used for the old shrimp ELB program, and that request still  
39 stands for the new one too, and sometimes it gets a little  
40 frustrating that what the shrimp industry sees out of the  
41 RESTORE Act money is coming at us in the form of additional  
42 regulations regarding turtles and things of that nature, and  
43 don't get me wrong, and we want to save the turtles, and we  
44 don't want to damage them, but it only becomes frustrating when  
45 the oil industry damages the turtle population and the money  
46 that the oil industry contributes is used to put it on the backs  
47 of the shrimp industry to restore the population that the oil  
48 industry killed, and so, anyway, that's my soapbox for the day,

1 and so I'm hoping that Dave can bring me some positive news that  
2 some of that RESTORE Act money could be used to fund something  
3 that is very important to the industry, and to other stakeholder  
4 as well.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Leann, and so we'll try to connect  
7 with Dave next time we have a discussion on this topic. All  
8 right. I am not seeing any other hands. Is there any other  
9 business to come before the Shrimp Committee today?

10  
11 **DR. FREEMAN:** Mr. Chair, there's an item from Ms. Levy still.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I apologize. Ms. Levy.

14  
15 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. I'm just going to give you a brief update  
16 on a current decision on litigation related to the most recent  
17 biological opinion on the southeast shrimp fisheries. Shepherd  
18 Grimes is the lead on this, and he was kind enough to provide me  
19 with a brief summary, and so I'll give him credit for this  
20 information.

21  
22 This is a little bit of background, and there was a new bi-op on  
23 the southeast shrimp fisheries issued in April of 2014, and that  
24 was challenged by Oceana in April of 2015, and the complaint  
25 alleged a number of violations of the Administrative Procedure  
26 Act and the Endangered Species Act. The parties engaged in some  
27 prolonged settlement discussions and eventually agreed to a stay  
28 and eventual dismissal of the case if certain conditions in the  
29 stay were satisfied.

30  
31 This went on for a number of years, until November of 2017, when  
32 the court granted the plaintiff's motion to lift the stay based  
33 on NMFS failing to satisfy some of the conditions in that  
34 agreement. On October 9 of this year, the court issued a  
35 decision finding that the biological opinion and its incidental  
36 take statement were arbitrary and capricious, and the court  
37 remanded the biological opinion to NMFS for a revision,  
38 consistent with the court's opinion, and ordered the parties to  
39 create a schedule for completing the remanded biological opinion  
40 and incidental take statement.

41  
42 The 2014 opinion concluded that the agency could not reliably  
43 estimate the number of sea turtles taken by shrimp trawls, for a  
44 number of different reasons, and so it used a surrogate for a  
45 numerical take estimate, and the surrogate was a specific level  
46 of trawling effort while maintaining an acceptable level of TED  
47 compliance, as documented by agency monitoring and enforcement.

48

1 The court agreed that the agency had provided a sufficient  
2 explanation to support the need for the surrogate, but it found  
3 several faults with the selected surrogate, which the court then  
4 used to find that the incidental take statement was arbitrary  
5 and capricious.

6  
7 The court also found a number of other shortcomings related to  
8 the jeopardy analysis in the opinion. These shortcomings  
9 related to consideration of impacts of climate change, the  
10 consideration of the effects of other fisheries in the Atlantic  
11 on the same listed species, the consideration of cumulative  
12 effects, and the consideration of incidental take authorized by  
13 shrimp fisheries in the context of other incidental take that's  
14 also authorized by the agency.

15  
16 While the loss is disappointing, it shouldn't be very unsettling  
17 for ongoing management efforts. NMFS has already reinitiated  
18 consultation on the shrimp fishery, based on the proposed  
19 changes to the TED regulations and the Southeast Fisheries  
20 Science Center having developed a new method for estimating sea  
21 turtle take by shrimp trawls, which the Center has concluded  
22 represents the best scientific information available.

23  
24 In December of last year, NMFS informed the court of this new  
25 information and the need to reinitiate consultation, and so  
26 efforts to draft the next iteration of the shrimp biological  
27 opinion were well underway when the court issued its decision in  
28 October of this year, and so hopefully we're looking to set a  
29 reasonable schedule and promptly complete the reinitiated  
30 consultation without having to argue about whether there should  
31 be injunctions and such. That was the end of my report.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Levy. Are there any questions  
34 about the report? I am not seeing any. Is there any other  
35 discussion having to do with the Shrimp Committee Report?  
36 Seeing none, Ms. Bosarge, thank you for your effort there, and  
37 we will move on, and we will attack next the Reef Fish Committee  
38 Report. Ms. Guyas.

39  
40 **REEF FISH COMMITTEE REPORT**

41  
42 **MS. GUYAS:** All right. Thank you. The committee adopted the  
43 agenda, Tab B, Number 1, after moving Tab B, Number 4 to the end  
44 of the agenda. The minutes, Tab B, Number 2, from the October  
45 2020 meeting were approved as written.

46  
47 Presentation on The Great Red Snapper Count, Dr. Greg Stunz  
48 presented the findings of The Great Red Snapper Count. This

1 collaboration involved twenty-one scientists from twelve  
2 institutions across the Gulf of Mexico and the southeastern  
3 United States and represented a novel approach to estimating  
4 absolute abundance.

5  
6 Red snapper abundance sampling was stratified by habitat type,  
7 estimated using direct visual counts, acoustic surveys,  
8 depletion surveys, and a Gulf-wide tagging program. Abundance  
9 estimates from the four regions were presented as follows,  
10 approximately: Texas, 23,000,000 fish; Louisiana, 29,000,000  
11 fish; Mississippi and Alabama, 10,000,000; and Florida,  
12 48,000,000 fish.

13  
14 Approximately 52 percent of age-two and older red snapper are  
15 thought to occur in the eastern Gulf, and 48 percent in the  
16 western Gulf. Larger fish are still proportionately more  
17 abundant in the western Gulf. The Great Red Snapper Count  
18 project leaders will continue working with state and federal  
19 partners to review and integrate their findings for stock  
20 assessment and management applications.

21  
22 The tagging portion of the Great Red Snapper Count will make it  
23 possible to examine effort by region, which will be reviewed by  
24 the council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and presented  
25 to the council at a later date.

26  
27 Tagging was done primarily over artificial and natural bottom.  
28 However, future tagging studies should include uncharacterized  
29 bottom, based on visual survey results. Any areas without  
30 reliable habitat characterization were lumped into  
31 uncharacterized bottom. However, this does not mean that red  
32 snapper is homogenous, and discrete structures appear to attract  
33 fish aggregations.

34  
35 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center noted that National  
36 Marine Fisheries Service Bottom Longline Survey occasionally  
37 catch red snapper in areas classified as uncharacterized bottom,  
38 albeit infrequently. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
39 plans to develop a strategy for interim acceptable biological  
40 catch advice for the January 2021 SSC and council meetings,  
41 which will incorporate data from the Great Red Snapper Count.

42  
43 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center will incorporate any  
44 feedback provided by the SSC and will then provide a completed  
45 interim analysis to the SSC at its March 2021 meeting. The SSC  
46 is expected to provide a revised overfishing limit and ABC that  
47 will be incorporated into this document for consideration by the  
48 council at its April 2021 meeting.

1  
2 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center noted that the Great Red  
3 Snapper Count was quite costly compared to Southeast Fisheries  
4 Science Center surveys, which collect data on many species, but  
5 focused analyses only on red snapper. Dr. Stunz added that  
6 many upfront costs to develop and build sampling gear were  
7 incurred. However, recurring costs may be lower to continue  
8 smaller, directed studies on other species or complexes.

9  
10 Length composition data were collected and compared between  
11 habitat and depth strata. The Great Red Snapper Count focused on  
12 age-two and larger fish, or those fish that were at least 254  
13 millimeters total length.

14  
15 This determination may result in an overestimate of length in  
16 some regions, e.g., the eastern Gulf, and an underestimate in  
17 others, e.g., the western Gulf. Larger fish make up a greater  
18 proportion of fish found over uncharacterized bottom habitat.  
19 However, fish from all observed lengths were found over each of  
20 the three habitat types.

21  
22 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center indicated that it may be  
23 able to match some of the length composition data collected by  
24 the Great Red Snapper Count with age composition data over the  
25 same areas from the NMFS Bottom Longline Survey, thereby aiding  
26 in the creation of the age-length key used in stock assessments.

27  
28 Prior to the Great Red Snapper Count, the Southeast Fisheries  
29 Science Center hypothesized that red snapper was able to rebound  
30 quickly, despite a smaller predicted spawning stock biomass.  
31 Informed with the results of the Great Red Snapper Count, it now  
32 seems likely that the rebound observed in the red snapper  
33 population was due to undocumented cryptic biomass present  
34 largely over uncharacterized bottom, meaning the proxy for  
35 maximum sustainable yield may need to be revisited. The  
36 committee requested that the SSC be afforded an entire day to  
37 review the Great Red Snapper Count when it comes to them for  
38 deliberation.

39  
40 Draft Framework Action: Adjust State Recreational Red Snapper  
41 Catch Limits, council staff presented an overview of red snapper  
42 catch limits, the various allocations between several fishing  
43 sectors and Gulf states. This information has been added to the  
44 draft document, as well as a description of applicable buffers  
45 between the management reference points.

46  
47 Dr. Crabtree stated that it will be difficult to implement any  
48 changes in the catch limits prior to the start of the 2021

1 recreational fishing season. He emphasized that addressing the  
2 calibrations must be resolved prior to modifying the catch  
3 limits. Any guidance to staff as to the intended path forward  
4 with regard to state-by-state calibration, i.e., Alternative 2,  
5 or an across-the-board buffer, i.e., Alternative 3, may help  
6 reduce the time necessary to implement any changes to catch  
7 advice.

8  
9 The committee discussed the changes related to calibration,  
10 noting that those changes would be more accurately described as  
11 a conversion and requested that the language in the document be  
12 updated throughout. Staff will develop the document to include  
13 an additional action to address changes to the catch limits,  
14 based on the interim analysis, for the committee review at a  
15 future council meeting.

16  
17 A motion to make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative failed  
18 by a vote of two to thirteen with one abstention. Some  
19 committee members expressed a preference for a calibration-based  
20 approach, such as Alternative 2, but noted that this discussion  
21 would be better informed once more information from the interim  
22 analysis is available.

23  
24 Staff noted that simulations by SERO showed that a 23 percent  
25 buffer across all states, i.e., Alternative 3, is likely to  
26 prevent an overage of the total private angling component ACL.  
27 Further, state-specific buffers based on the uncertainty in each  
28 state's data collection and catch monitoring would be tantamount  
29 to the calibration ratios presented in Alternative 2.

30  
31 Draft Framework Action: Modifications to Vermilion Snapper and  
32 Gray Triggerfish Catch Levels and Gray Triggerfish Recreational  
33 Fixed Closed Season, council staff reviewed the actions and  
34 alternatives for modifying catch levels for vermilion snapper  
35 and gray triggerfish and modifying the recreational fixed closed  
36 season for gray triggerfish.

37  
38 The modification of the vermilion snapper ACL is in response to  
39 the results of the SEDAR 67 stock assessment and uses  
40 recreational catch and effort data from the Marine Recreational  
41 Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

42  
43 Based on the SSC's review, a recommendation was made to increase  
44 the catch limits for 2021 through 2025. There was some concern  
45 regarding the increase in yield streams, but a majority of the  
46 increase can be attributed to a change in data currencies from  
47 the MRIP Coastal Household Telephone Survey to MRIP-FES, with  
48 the rest of the increase attributed to record recruitment in

1 2015 and 2016.

2  
3 A committee member requested that a table showing the  
4 recreational landings data for vermilion snapper from Florida's  
5 State Reef Fish Survey be included in the draft framework  
6 action. The committee also discussed modifying the recreational  
7 bag limit for vermilion snapper to increase angler access to the  
8 fishery.

9  
10 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to add an action to**  
11 **modify the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper,**  
12 **including alternatives for a fifteen-fish bag limit and to**  
13 **eliminate the bag limit, but retain the twenty-fish aggregate**  
14 **bag limit for those reef fish species without a species-specific**  
15 **bag limit. Mr. Chair.**

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. We have a committee  
18 motion on the board. We will put it up and make sure that  
19 everybody can see it. The motion is to add an action to modify  
20 the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper, including  
21 alternatives for a fifteen-fish bag limit and to eliminate the  
22 bag limit, but retain the twenty-fish aggregate bag limit for  
23 those reef fish species without a species-specific bag limit.  
24 Okay. Is there any further discussion of this motion? I am not  
25 seeing any hands. Mr. Anson.

26  
27 **MR. ANSON:** I just want to circle back on -- There were some  
28 comments made during public testimony by a few folks, and they  
29 just worried that adding this action item could potentially slow  
30 the document down, as much as the other actions in the document  
31 would do to help with the fishery, and so I just wanted to  
32 discuss that and make sure that it is a possibility, or it isn't  
33 a possibility, if this were to be kept in the document.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Kevin. I think I have Ms.  
36 Bosarge's hand up.

37  
38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, and it's to Kevin's point. Kevin, the  
39 same thing has kind of occurred to me, and I will just go ahead  
40 and tell you that I intend to vote for this motion, and then I'm  
41 going to propose a motion, after this, that we actually remove  
42 the action item that deals with the new catch levels for gray  
43 triggerfish from this document and put it in a stand-alone  
44 document, because that seems to be the piece that people really  
45 want to implement quickly, and so just to alleviate any issue  
46 you may have there.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Ms. Boggs.

1  
2 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Kevin, to your point, I  
3 understood that they didn't want to slow down the lane snapper  
4 document. Of course, I know they don't want to slow down  
5 vermilion, but especially the lane snapper is what I understood,  
6 and then I understood moving -- Maybe I've got it reversed, but  
7 moving the triggerfish actions into the lane snapper document,  
8 which I think Leann is going to address, but I kind of had a  
9 different understanding, and I just wanted to put that out  
10 there. Thank you.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am not seeing any other hands, and we  
13 will go ahead and vote on this motion and then come back to  
14 Leann's next one, and so is there any opposition to the motion  
15 on the board? Seeing none, the motion passes. I will go back  
16 to you, Ms. Bosarge.

17  
18 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. Thank you, MR. Chairman. I would like  
19 to make a motion to remove Action 2, which is modify the gray  
20 trigger ABC, ACL, and ACT, from the framework action on  
21 vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish, and place it in a stand-  
22 alone document.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have the motion on the board, and  
25 it's to remove Action 2 from the framework action on vermilion  
26 snapper and gray triggerfish and place it in a stand-alone  
27 document. Is there a second for that motion?

28  
29 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will second it for discussion.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Okay. Ms.  
32 Guyas.

33  
34 **MS. GUYAS:** I think I agree with the sentiment, but I would, I  
35 guess, want to check with Carrie or John or staff to see if they  
36 felt like this is the best course of action or if it would be  
37 better to move this action into the lane snapper document, so  
38 they would be on parallel timelines.

39  
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think it just depends on how  
41 quickly the council wants to move. It's clear with gray  
42 triggerfish -- It seems to me that the council wants a fast  
43 final action document for the increase in ACL in January, and so  
44 maybe that's why this is being removed and put in a stand-alone  
45 document, and I'm not sure that council has expressed that same  
46 priority with lane snapper. I know you did receive some public  
47 comments and some recommendations from the Reef Fish AP on that,  
48 but we're not 100 percent clear on the council's intent with

1 priority on that.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Again, I think the  
4 intent here would be to expedite the OFL and ABC and ACL for  
5 gray triggerfish, and it's a fairly simple action, and so it  
6 would be a single-action framework, and that will then not  
7 preclude the continued development of the current document or  
8 the document for lane snapper. I see Peter Hood and then Susan  
9 Boggs. Peter.

10  
11 **MR. PETER HOOD:** Thank you. I've got so many screens up on my  
12 computer that I can't find the amendment, but isn't there a  
13 third action in this amendment that has to do with gray  
14 triggerfish, and I think something with a season closure or  
15 something like that?

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** There is, Peter, and, again, I think part of  
18 the rationale for pulling out the action as it related just to  
19 the OFL, ABC, and ACL was that that was a fairly focused action  
20 item, and there was probably still a fair amount of discussion,  
21 perhaps, on that third action item, and so it might take a  
22 little more time.

23  
24 **MR. HOOD:** Okay. Thank you.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

27  
28 **MS. BOGGS:** Just a question. If we move this action into a  
29 stand-alone document, and we take final action on it in January,  
30 will that impact the 2021 fishing season for triggerfish, or  
31 have we already missed that mark, or can it pick up later in the  
32 year?

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I don't -- I am going to go ahead and ask Mr.  
35 Rindone if he wants to weigh-in on this. I will give him the  
36 hot potato for once.

37  
38 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** I am going to be the Debbie Downer on this  
39 one and say that I would bet more so that it would not be able  
40 to be implemented in time to affect the 2021 fishing season. In  
41 the event that we were able to go final at the end of January,  
42 that puts the IPT having to prepare the document for transmittal  
43 at some point, ideally before the end of February, understanding  
44 that the council is treating this as a very high priority, and  
45 so we will probably get that to NMFS before the end of February.

46  
47 Even if NMFS then picked it up immediately and began their  
48 rulemaking process, which, again, we have to remember takes a

1 minimum of six months, that puts us at the end of August, and  
2 that's at like a full sprint, before this would, theoretically,  
3 be able to be implemented, and so we know that it's been taking  
4 a little bit longer than that, and so I would not try to bet on  
5 anything going final in January to be implemented before the end  
6 of the year, unless SERO has other advice that they would like  
7 to pass on.

8

9 **MS. BOGGS:** Mr. Chairman, may I comment to that?

10

11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes.

12

13 **MS. BOGGS:** I guess my point with this, and to try to help  
14 alleviate some work for staff in creating a new document, if  
15 it's not worthwhile, then could it just not be left, and I  
16 understand the time sensitivity, and I understand that, yes, it  
17 could extend into a fall season, if we get it done in time, but  
18 I am trying to help the council staff and not increase their  
19 workload, if this isn't something that's feasible to be done in  
20 time to affect the 2021 fishing season. Thank you.

21

22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Mr. Diaz.

23

24 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make sure that  
25 I fully understand what I'm voting on here. I guess Action 3  
26 would be the action that deals with the fixed closed season. If  
27 I vote to support this motion, only this issue would be in the  
28 new document, and we would deal with the fixed closed season in  
29 another document, and is that correct?

30

31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's correct. We would retain the fixed  
32 closed season in the current working document.

33

34 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Dyskow.

37

38 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make sure  
39 that -- First of all, we heard loud and clear, both in public  
40 testimony and testimony leading up to the council meeting, that  
41 all three of these species are important. Certainly gray  
42 triggerfish is important, and that's the one we heard the most  
43 about, but vermilion and lane snapper are also really important  
44 to the charter and for-hire fisheries.

45

46 I want to make sure that none of the actions that we're  
47 proposing here are going to have unintended consequences and  
48 would slow any one of these three down. Our intent, I believe,

1 is to accelerate this process, and I would like staff to comment  
2 on whether that's what they feel is actually going to happen as  
3 a result of this or are we mistaken, and so I would like some  
4 clarification.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Simmons.

7

8 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think this  
9 will speed up the process, because we do not have the analysis,  
10 from my understanding from our discussions yesterday, for the  
11 fixed closed completed for gray triggerfish, and it's unlikely  
12 to be done in time for the January council meeting.

13

14 We've also added an action into this other framework for  
15 vermilion snapper to look at changing the bag limit, which it  
16 could also take some time, and so I don't know if the council is  
17 interested in just doing one framework and modifying the catch  
18 limits and looking at some of these other things in another  
19 framework, but I do think those items are going to take more  
20 time. Maybe Mr. Hood wants to weigh-in.

21

22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Peter.

23

24 **MR. HOOD:** I agree with Carrie. I think, if these frameworks  
25 were to just focus on the ACLs, and then work on the other  
26 actions in a follow-up document, I certainly think that would  
27 make things more straightforward, and staff could get things  
28 done a lot more quickly, and I'm certainly getting that from  
29 some of my staff. They are communicating to me, and that's what  
30 they're saying.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Peter, and so we have Kevin Anson  
33 and then Leann.

34

35 **MR. ANSON:** When Ryan described the timeline, I thought I heard  
36 him say there's a chance, there's a chance that it could at  
37 least impact the gray triggerfish season, if there were pounds  
38 available in the fall, and so we don't know what's going to  
39 happen next spring. Inasmuch as public health concerns, it  
40 appears to be getting better, improving, and that may impact the  
41 fishing and such, and so I wouldn't want to slow down the  
42 opportunity to have these pounds available, just in case, for  
43 whatever transpires in the spring relative to the triggerfish.

44

45 I am going to be in support of this motion, but I'm wondering  
46 if, Leann, you wouldn't mind adding vermilion snapper, Action 1,  
47 to this motion, and so you would have Action 1 and Action 2, and  
48 you would have both of those species, relative to increasing

1 ACLs, and would you mind doing that?

2

3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Kevin, I love your optimism about that timeline,  
4 but -- I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. Can I speak?

5

6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes, you may.

7

8 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you. So I love your optimism, Kevin, about  
9 that. I am going to circle back, and I think my comments will  
10 kind of address what Kevin was getting at. I pulled this out,  
11 yes, because the fishermen said, hey, we don't want to slow that  
12 triggerfish thing down, and we've had some issues with this in  
13 the past, but more so for a fundamental reason, right? Where  
14 are these catch limits, these OFLs and ABCs and ACLs, coming  
15 from?

16

17 It's coming from an interim assessment, and the Science Center  
18 went through this whole restructuring of the way they operate  
19 the assessment process so that they could get us more timely  
20 throughput, where we could get updated catch levels yearly, and  
21 that's what this is.

22

23 For us to now do our part, we're going to have to get used to  
24 the idea that, when we get these updated interim assessments, we  
25 pretty much need to put that in a stand-alone document and move  
26 that sucker down the line, stamp it, seal it, and delivered. If  
27 we get in the habit of putting these interim assessments in with  
28 other action items that talk about seasons and bag limits, or  
29 even other species, it's really -- The Science Center, in my  
30 mind, is spinning their wheels trying to get us stuff more  
31 quickly.

32

33 I guess that was my rationale for putting this in a stand-alone  
34 document, and I think that that's the trend, and that's the way  
35 we need to handle these, going forward, to make sure that we do  
36 our part to quickly implement the work that the Science Center  
37 did and worked so hard on to get us yearly updates on certain  
38 species, and so, for that reason, Kevin, I really just want it  
39 to stay a gray triggerfish OFL and ACL and ABC document. Get  
40 that sucker through, and hopefully we can start building that  
41 template for how we're using interim assessments in the future.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I'm going to go to  
44 Ms. Guyas and then Ms. Boggs, and then we're going to try to  
45 round this one in. Ms. Guyas.

46

47 **MS. GUYAS:** I agree with Leann, and I think -- Certainly I think  
48 gray triggerfish catch limits need to be -- It will definitely

1 be my number-one priority, and it's a little bit disappointing  
2 to hear that, even if we took final action on this on in  
3 January, that it may not be implemented in time for the 2021,  
4 considering it's a framework, but I also would say that -- I  
5 would also support, I guess, if people wanted to add the catch  
6 level actions for vermilion and lane and just cover all of those  
7 in one amendment, and I'm good with that too, assuming, again,  
8 that these are going to move quickly.

9

10 That's why we have the framework process, and it shouldn't be a  
11 huge detail, and let's just get it done. I understand that  
12 extra work is required for some of these other actions, and so  
13 it makes sense to move these things faster. Thanks.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Ms. Boggs.

16

17 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Kind of to Kevin and Martha's  
18 points, and I don't know what the easiest way to do this is, but  
19 I'm going to say it the easiest way, and would the easiest thing  
20 be to remove Action 3 in this current document and put it in a  
21 stand-alone document, and then, since vermilion, lane, and  
22 triggerfish are all dealing with OFL, ABC, ACL, and ACT, put all  
23 those into one document, because, as Leann did point out, those  
24 should move fairly quickly.

25

26 Then we can come back and address the triggerfish, and, if we  
27 decide to address the size limit on lane snapper, we can do  
28 those in stand-alone documents, and I'm looking to staff for  
29 direction, and, I mean, I know we need to vote on this motion,  
30 but, again, I am trying to speed things along and not hold  
31 things up.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Simmons.

34

35 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, I think, if you just  
36 tell us what species you want included for the catch levels, we  
37 can figure out the best way to do that. I think it's a little  
38 confusing right now, because we have a motion for gray  
39 triggerfish, but there's a lot of other species that have been  
40 discussed. Thank you.

41

42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge.

43

44 **MS. BOSARGE:** I will just -- Full disclosure. Those other two  
45 species, I don't know that it's going to be as clear-cut and  
46 quick as what you think. I heard some testimony from fishermen  
47 today, seasoned fishermen, that said, hey, you know, we're not  
48 seeing what you're seeing, and I heard several fishermen talk

1 about doubling that quota, and that they've never seen that  
2 before in their life, and they had some reservations and some  
3 hesitations about it, and, honestly, I do, too. I guess, if you  
4 want to make sure that gray triggerfish gets on the books, then  
5 I would put it in a stand-alone document.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I think we'll  
8 go ahead, and we've had a fair amount of discussion on this.  
9 The motion is to remove Action 2 from the Framework Action:  
10 Modifications to Vermilion Snapper and Gray Triggerfish Catch  
11 Levels and Gray Triggerfish Recreational Fixed Closed Season and  
12 place it in a stand-alone document. **Is there any opposition to**  
13 **this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Ms. Guyas.

14  
15 **MS. GUYAS:** Council staff then reviewed modifications to gray  
16 triggerfish catch levels, in response to the Southeast Fisheries  
17 Science Center's 2020 interim analysis of the stock and using  
18 data from MRIP-CHTS. The SSC's review of the interim analysis  
19 resulted in a recommendation to increase the ABC from 305,300  
20 pounds to 456,900 pounds for 2021 and subsequent fishing years.

21  
22 Committee members discussed a timeline for the document and  
23 noted that having both species in one framework action may  
24 increase the time it takes to complete the amendment development  
25 process.

26  
27 Council staff reviewed Action 3, which would modify the  
28 recreational fixed closed season for gray triggerfish. The  
29 committee asked whether the incorporation of additional actions  
30 into the document would delay the document's development. Staff  
31 replied in the affirmative, to afford time to complete the  
32 requisite analyses. Staff affirmed that the fixed season  
33 decision tool used for gray triggerfish during Reef Fish  
34 Amendment 46 would be updated and made available to the  
35 committee for review at a future council meeting.

36  
37 Council staff reviewed the recommendations from the Reef Fish  
38 Advisory Panel, which recommended setting the ACL equal to the  
39 ABC for both vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish. A  
40 committee member noted that the Reef Fish AP's vote on vermilion  
41 snapper was divided. Staff clarified that some members of the  
42 Reef Fish AP were reticent to pass the motion, as they lacked  
43 confidence in the MRIP-FES data.

44  
45 Council staff noted that the one-page hot sheets were available  
46 in the briefing book for both species. Mr. Anson noted that the  
47 information in the gray triggerfish hot sheet was not consistent  
48 with staff's presentation on gray triggerfish regarding the

1 overfished status. Slide 9 of the presentation was correct, in  
2 that it provided background information on the SEDAR 43 stock  
3 assessment and SSC recommendations on stock status.

4  
5 Subsequently, the council elected to modify the minimum stock  
6 size threshold in Reef Fish Amendment 44, which no longer  
7 designated the gray triggerfish stock as overfished, but in a  
8 rebuilding plan. Thus, the information provided in the one-page  
9 hot sheet for gray triggerfish is correct.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Guyas, before you go on, Mr. Diaz has his  
12 hand up. Dale.

13  
14 **MR. DIAZ:** Mr. Chairman, I had sent a motion to meetings, and,  
15 before we leave triggerfish, I wanted to add an alternative, and  
16 I believe it's to Action 3 in this document.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Let's see if we can get that motion on  
19 the board.

20  
21 **MR. DIAZ:** I apologize, and I should have looked at the  
22 document, and I believe it's Action 3, but my motion is to add  
23 an alternative to modify the recreational fishing closed season  
24 for gray triggerfish to be January 1 through the end of February  
25 and June 1 through the end of June.

26  
27 I would just like to take a look at that. In our area, there is  
28 some interest in trying to catch some triggerfish at some  
29 different times of the year, and I think we might have the  
30 decision tool, where we could evaluate that pretty easily, if I  
31 get a second.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. Do we have a second to  
34 that motion?

35  
36 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** I will second it.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Seconded by General Spraggins. Okay. Is  
39 there any further discussion on this motion to add an action  
40 item, or, excuse me, an alternative in Action 3? Ms. Levy.

41  
42 **MS. LEVY:** I didn't raise my hand. Thanks.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Gremlins. Okay. Ms. Boggs, is your hand up?

45  
46 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, sir, it was. I will support the motion, just  
47 to see where it -- I mean, I don't know what I'm going to do.  
48 It's hard for me to support it, and let me rephrase my comments,

1 and I apologize, but to open a season in July.

2  
3 One of the intents, and I understand, and I am probably being  
4 hypocritical when I say this, but I'm going to apologize in  
5 advance, but one of the goals, I think, of the council in the  
6 past has been to try to have a species open and available to  
7 catch in a time of the year when another species isn't open, and  
8 to open triggerfish during red snapper season, one of your  
9 heavier times of the year to fish, et cetera, and here I am  
10 asking for a January/February opening, because there is nothing  
11 to catch in January and February, and you do have a user group  
12 in January and February, and, I mean, it's -- I don't know if I  
13 will support this motion or not, but I just wanted to put it out  
14 there, that it would be hard for me to support something to open  
15 another species during a time of year when we have a species  
16 available to catch. Thank you.

17

18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Ms. Guyas.

19

20 **MS. GUYAS:** I guess my question maybe is for Dr. Simmons, since  
21 she's the triggerfish expert, but I seem to remember that we  
22 have these months closed, or, actually, we have June and July  
23 closed because that's when triggerfish are spawning, and I know  
24 they have that specialized spawning behavior, where they are  
25 building bubble nests, and they form harems and all this kind of  
26 interesting activity that may be disrupted if they are targeted,  
27 and so I was hoping that you could chime in a little bit and  
28 help us put, I guess, the summer closure into context.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Simmons.

31

32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that  
33 was the reason the council originally closed -- Had the closure  
34 in June and July, and I guess there were other reasons as well,  
35 but that is the peak spawning period for gray triggerfish, and,  
36 as Ms. Guyas just mentioned, they have a unique reproductive  
37 behavior, where they're off the reefs, and then they build the  
38 nest, and then the females come in, and they form harem groups,  
39 and it does make them more susceptible, I think, to predation  
40 when they are in this reproductive behavior and the rest of the  
41 season in between spawning times and frequency. Thank you.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Okay. I am not  
44 seeing any other hands up at the moment, and so we'll go ahead  
45 and vote on this motion, and I will read it again for everybody.  
46 In Action 3, to add an Alternative 5. That alternative would be  
47 to modify the recreational fixed closed season for gray  
48 triggerfish to be January 1 to the end of February and June 1

1 through the end of June. Is there any opposition to this  
2 motion?  
3  
4 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Is there one in opposition?  
7  
8 **MS. GUYAS:** You've got at least one.  
9  
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Let's go ahead and do this in a more formal  
11 manner. All of those opposed, say nay. I hear five nays. All  
12 of those in favor, say aye. There is five and five with some  
13 silence. Dr. Simmons, we're going to need to go ahead and go  
14 through a roll call, because it's too difficult.  
15  
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.  
17 Williamson.  
18  
19 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Aye.  
20  
21 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Anson.  
22  
23 **MR. ANSON:** Nay.  
24  
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Stunz.  
26  
27 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.  
28  
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs.  
30  
31 **MS. BOGGS:** Nay.  
32  
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Bosarge.  
34  
35 **MS. BOSARGE:** Aye.  
36  
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Swindell.  
38  
39 **MR. SWINDELL:** No.  
40  
41 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Riechers.  
42  
43 **MR. RIECHERS:** Aye.  
44  
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas.  
46  
47 **MR. DUGAS:** No.  
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Shipp.  
2  
3 **DR. SHIPP:** No.  
4  
5 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dyskow.  
6  
7 **MR. DYSKOW:** No.  
8  
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.  
10  
11 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.  
12  
13 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas.  
14  
15 **MS. GUYAS:** No.  
16  
17 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Schieble.  
18  
19 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** No.  
20  
21 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Crabtree.  
22  
23 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.  
24  
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Diaz.  
26  
27 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.  
28  
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** General Spraggins.  
30  
31 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes.  
32  
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** It's eight to eight. Dr. Frazer.  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's an alternative. I will bite. I will  
36 vote yes, to keep it in the document.  
37  
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** The motion carries.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** The motion carries. Ms. Guyas.  
41  
42 **MS. GUYAS:** I think we are now on to Review of IFQ Program  
43 Landings. Dr. Stephen with SERO reviewed the landings from the  
44 respective individual fishing quota programs with the committee,  
45 noting that the trends continue to be similar to those presented  
46 at previous council meetings.  
47  
48 Pounds landed remain commensurate with past years, with ex-

1 vessel values below, but not substantially so, compared to 2019.  
2 Allocation values and pounds transferred for 2020 are generally  
3 below the same for 2019.

4  
5 Through the end of October 2020, red snapper, gag, deepwater  
6 grouper, and shallow-water grouper landings are not dissimilar  
7 from the previous three years. Red grouper and tilefish  
8 landings are generally below that observed for those species  
9 over the previous three years. The percentage of the quota  
10 landed annually is still below that observed in previous years,  
11 with the exception of red grouper, for which the quota was  
12 reduced in 2019 in response to the 2018 red tide event.

13  
14 **The committee recommends, and I so move, that the council**  
15 **request that NMFS capture IFQ data on 12/31/2020 which details**  
16 **individual accounts and the pounds remaining in those individual**  
17 **accounts at the close of business on 12/31/2020.**

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We have a committee motion on the board. Is  
20 there any further discussion of this motion? **Seeing none, is**  
21 **there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion**  
22 **carries.** Ms. Guyas.

23  
24 **MS. GUYAS:** Draft Framework Action: Modification of the Gulf of  
25 Mexico Lane Snapper Annual Catch Limit, council staff reviewed  
26 the draft framework action to modify the lane snapper OFL, ABC,  
27 ACL, and accountability measures. Lane snapper recreational  
28 landings are currently monitored in the Marine Recreational  
29 Fisheries Statistics Survey data currency, but collected using  
30 MRIP-FES.

31  
32 Current lane snapper catch limits and AMs were defined in the  
33 2011 Generic ACL/AM Amendment. An assessment update was  
34 conducted and reviewed by the SSC in 2020. The updated model  
35 used landings data through 2018, and recreational data were  
36 converted to MRIP-FES.

37  
38 The SSC recommended setting the OFL and ABC using the Tier 2  
39 approach of the council's ABC Control Rule. The SSC recommended  
40 establishing an ABC with a 30 percent probability of overfishing  
41 and the OFL with a 50 percent probability of overfishing. A  
42 value for ACT was calculated using the council's ACL/ACT Control  
43 Rule and resulted in a 16 percent buffer between the ACL and the  
44 ACT. Modifications to catch limits and the ACT are considered  
45 in Action 1.

46  
47 Action 2 would modify the seasonal closure AM for lane snapper,  
48 which presently limits harvest of lane snapper to the ACL in the

1 subsequent fishing year if the stock ACL is exceeded in the  
2 previous fishing year.

3  
4 Alternative 2 would modify the AM to limit harvest of lane  
5 snapper to the ACT in the subsequent fishing year if the stock  
6 ACL is exceeded in the previous fishing year. Alternative 3  
7 would limit the harvest of lane snapper once a prescribed  
8 trigger is met or projected to be met, with those triggers being  
9 either the ACT or ACL.

10  
11 The October 2020 Reef Fish AP meeting summary was reviewed, with  
12 the AP having selected Alternative 2 in Action 1 and Alternative  
13 3, Option 3a in Action 2 as the preferred.

14  
15 The committee discussed whether the bag limit for lane snapper  
16 should be revisited, as was done for vermilion snapper in a  
17 separate document. Council staff clarified that the current  
18 minimum size limit, eight inches total length, is slightly less  
19 than with the length at which 50 percent of female lane snapper  
20 are sexually mature, which is nine inches total length.

21  
22 Review of Reef Fish and CMP Landings, Mr. Peter Hood reviewed  
23 the status of reef fish and coastal migratory pelagic landings  
24 in the Gulf. No additional seasonal closures are expected prior  
25 to the end of the calendar year.

26  
27 Due to previously-discussed data collection issues related to  
28 COVID-19, recreational sector-specific landings were not  
29 presented. Mr. Hood also presented the data graphically, as an  
30 alternative to its current table presentation, to garner  
31 committee feedback on a preference for how the data are  
32 presented.

33  
34 The committee lauded the graphs as an informative method to  
35 present the data, so long as the tables continue to be regularly  
36 updated by SERO. The committee also asked that SERO include  
37 southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper landings in future landings  
38 reviews. Other Business, there was no other business was  
39 discussed by the committee. Mr. Chair, this concludes my  
40 report.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Ms. Bosarge.

43  
44 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The red  
45 snapper research track stock assessment, before we leave reef  
46 fish here, that is scheduled to start Q1 of next year, I  
47 believe, and so here in just a couple of months.

1 Would it be possible, at some point early, or at least before  
2 the middle of next year, for the SSC to receive a presentation  
3 from the Science Center on the possibility or the progress on  
4 using -- Looking at different landings streams, recreational  
5 landings streams, that will go into that stock assessment?  
6

7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** So, Ms. Bosarge, I guess I would be looking  
8 for a representative from the Science Center to answer that  
9 question, and I think Clay is not on the call, and John Walter,  
10 I think, is standing in for Clay at the moment. Leann, I don't  
11 see either one of those folks, but I will make it a point to  
12 call the Science Center, or have staff contact the Science  
13 Center, and pose that question. Excuse me. John Walter. John,  
14 if you're speaking, you're muted. It looks like we're having a  
15 hard time getting John on here, and so I'll go ahead, and we've  
16 got a couple other hands. We'll wait just a second. John, if  
17 you're available, we'll give you one more shot.  
18

19 **DR. WALTER:** Thank you, Leann, for the question. Pertaining to  
20 whether -- Let me just confirm that it's whether the Center  
21 could evaluate different recreational landings streams for use  
22 in the interim assessments or in the research track?  
23

24 **MS. BOSARGE:** The research track.  
25

26 **DR. WALTER:** Okay. In the research track, we -- At least some  
27 of the other assessments, we have been requested to evaluate  
28 different data streams, and I know gag grouper being one of them  
29 where we're supposed to do a model run with the Florida  
30 recreational ones, and, if that's a request by the council, then  
31 it's something the Center can entertain. The question is what  
32 is the purpose of doing that, and what are we likely to gain by  
33 it? That's where I would just try to ask the question of you.  
34

35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge.  
36

37 **MS. BOSARGE:** I was the one that requested it for gag, and then  
38 I think for amberjack I asked, and it was late in the process  
39 with amberjack, and I just asked that you at least maybe do like  
40 a sensitivity run or something with the GRFS or with whatever  
41 state numbers you had, but I'm just trying to head something off  
42 at the pass here.  
43

44 I think that the states have put a lot of money into their data  
45 collection programs, and we're having a lot of feedback from  
46 stakeholders that there's not a lot of buy-in with the FES, and  
47 I just want to make sure that, at whatever level, that the other  
48 data streams, the state data collection streams, can at least be

1 utilized in some form and that that is being done and that we  
2 let our stakeholders and our council members know exactly what  
3 you're looking at with those and how you're taking them into  
4 consideration, so that we don't have a snafu at the end, and so  
5 I want to bring it up now, before we even get started, and I  
6 think that's got to be presented in an open meeting, so that the  
7 public and council members and others can see that, all right,  
8 what is our game plan here, because I know there are headwinds,  
9 and don't get me wrong.

10  
11 I am not naïve, and I realize that the state data collection  
12 programs don't have everything that you need year-round to put  
13 it into the stock assessment, but I think there is some level of  
14 anticipation that they are going to be utilized in some fashion  
15 or another.

16  
17 **DR. WALTER:** Okay. We could certainly entertain that request  
18 from the council, and the terms of reference for the research  
19 track are, in some cases, still being drafted, and I think  
20 that's something that we could entertain, if the council so  
21 requests, the challenge being that it's one thing to put some  
22 data in, but we need time series to go back the full time, and  
23 so the challenge is that not all of the surveys are easy to  
24 create a time series.

25  
26 It becomes -- In the case for gag, it's relatively  
27 straightforward, because that's where most of the landings are  
28 coming from, but, for others, where the surveys provide some  
29 different information, it's not always straightforward how we're  
30 going to incorporate that into the assessment.

31  
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir, and I completely understand, and I think  
33 that's why I want to get these discussions started now, so that  
34 we all have an understanding of what we can expect, that, no,  
35 that's not going to be used, and you don't have what we need,  
36 or, yes, we can use this, some pieces of this, and this is how  
37 we're going to do it, and I think those are the discussions that  
38 have to take place.

39  
40 The only body that I have any representation and control over is  
41 the council, and so that's why I have suggested that the Science  
42 Center present that type of information to the SSC, because I  
43 certainly can't sit there and ask you intelligent questions  
44 about it, and then, from the SSC, it would get reported out to  
45 the council.

46  
47 **DR. WALTER:** Okay.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Leann, do you want to make a motion here, so  
2 that we can make sure that we understand what we're asking for?  
3

4 **MS. BOSARGE:** I do, but I'm just not sure how to word it,  
5 Chairman, and can somebody help me with that? I don't want to  
6 mess it up.  
7

8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I mean, I guess what I will just ask you,  
9 before we start to put words in the motion table here --  
10 Essentially, what you're asking is, in the research track  
11 assessment, is for the Science Center to consider the state  
12 survey data streams, right? That is what I am understanding.  
13

14 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and then I want them to present, sooner  
15 rather than later, to the SSC exactly how they are considering  
16 them and how, if it all, they may utilize them. In other words,  
17 I don't just want them to consider them and I find out, two  
18 years from now, how they considered them, and I want that --  
19 We've got to manage some expectations here, and I think that  
20 that needs to come before the SSC sooner rather than later.  
21

22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have a couple of hands. We'll first  
23 go to Dr. Simmons and then Dr. Crabtree.  
24

25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe,  
26 in our terms of reference for the red snapper research track, we  
27 have included the request for the Science Center analysts to  
28 look at all the different data collection state surveys, as well  
29 as the MRIP-FES values, and so, on the research track assessment  
30 process, we have, I think, three or four SSC members that are  
31 participating in that review process, if not more independent  
32 academic folks that are also going to be involved, and so I  
33 assume, Dr. Walter, that, after some of that is deliberated,  
34 there will be some working papers, or maybe several working  
35 papers, that would explain how you might move forward with those  
36 indices for the recreational landings. Is that correct, and  
37 that could be reported to the SSC, as a full body?  
38

39 **DR. WALTER:** In terms of all the data that gets brought to the  
40 table that is vetted through the process -- In this case, the  
41 data streams from the states would be part of what is  
42 considered, and I am -- Dr. Simmons, perhaps -- I am not 100  
43 percent sure whether the terms of reference have been finalized  
44 for all parts of the research track, and, in that case, are  
45 there pieces that need to be added to that to get to the  
46 request?  
47

48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** To that point, Mr. Rindone?

1  
2 **MR. RINDONE:** John, I have the finalized SEDAR 74 terms of  
3 reference for the entire research track in front of me, and they  
4 are finalized at this point, and Term of Reference Number 5 in  
5 the data workshop portion of it talks about the recreational  
6 catch statistics, and there are several bullets under there,  
7 but, just for the record, I will go ahead and characterize this  
8 for everybody.

9  
10 Number 5 says to provide recreational catch statistics for each  
11 stock being assessed, including both landings and discards, in  
12 both pounds and numbers, and to evaluate and discuss the  
13 adequacy of the available data for accurately characterizing  
14 landings and discards by fishery sector or gear.

15  
16 Specifically, to explore the transition between CHTS and FES,  
17 and, specifically, to explore the Gulf state-specific data  
18 collection programs for red snapper for evaluating catch and  
19 effort data, i.e., LA Creel, Tails 'n Scales, Snapper Check, and  
20 the State Reef Fish Survey, and so the four new state -- Well,  
21 new to the red snapper state surveys since the last assessment.

22  
23 Just to recap for everyone, the last assessment used MRIP-CHTS  
24 and Texas data, and then, also, explore whether the recreational  
25 fleet structure can be realigned into individual fleets, like  
26 private, charter, and headboat, or into a private fleet and a  
27 for-hire fleet, with the for-hire fleet being charter and  
28 headboat combined. Also, to provide length and age  
29 distributions for both landings and discards, if feasible, and  
30 to provide estimates of uncertainty around each set of landings  
31 and discard estimates.

32  
33 That's all that is being asked of the recreational catch  
34 statistics portion of it for the data workshop, and it's on the  
35 screen right now, so you guys can see that, and so we have teams  
36 of SSC members that are involved in this particular assessment.  
37 We have a few that are part of what's called the assessment  
38 development team, and they essentially babysit and oversee the  
39 progress of the assessment, along with a couple of other  
40 appointees from the assessment, from the inception, during the  
41 stock ID portion, all the way through the end of the review  
42 workshop. Then we have other panelists that are specific to the  
43 data workshop, the assessment workshop, and the review workshop.  
44 To Ms. Bosarge's point, I think that we have this double  
45 smothered and covered.

46  
47 **MS. BOSARGE:** I agree. I agree. Thank you.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone, and thank you, Ms.  
2 Bosarge. We have a number of hands up, and I'm going to try to  
3 work through quickly, and we're getting at the end of our time,  
4 and so Dr. Crabtree.  
5  
6 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I just would encourage you to let the  
7 process work. You have put together a SEDAR process, and let  
8 the scientists do their job and let them work through it.  
9  
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Mr. Anson.  
11  
12 **MR. ANSON:** It goes back to the conversation that we had  
13 relative to the vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish  
14 framework. I am wondering if staff -- I did not send in a  
15 motion, and I was a bad member this afternoon, but if we can go  
16 back to the motions summary, or the page of motions. If I read  
17 the tea leaves right, there might be a chance of this passing,  
18 but if you can go back to the triggerfish one that removed the  
19 action item from the framework.  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's on the board.  
22  
23 **MR. ANSON:** Just copy that one, and we're going to say --  
24 **Instead of Action 2, we will say Action 1, and then, of course,**  
25 **you have to copy the appropriate verbiage, text, at the bottom.**  
26 If you want, I can start talking some rationale. Well, we need  
27 a second, I guess. Mr. Chair.  
28  
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We'll get it on the board, Kevin. Okay.  
30 Let's make sure we get all the parts. It looks like, Mr. Anson,  
31 we have this on the board, if you want to elaborate a bit.  
32  
33 **MR. ANSON:** I wanted to maybe get a second.  
34  
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Is there a second for this motion?  
36  
37 **MS. BOGGS:** I will second it.  
38  
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Susan Boggs. Go ahead,  
40 Kevin.  
41  
42 **MR. ANSON:** I will be brief. Albeit there may not have been as  
43 many voices asking for this, but there were at least a couple of  
44 voices, and using the rationale that we ought to try to  
45 implement recommendations as they come from our science, and  
46 this has been vetted through the SSC, and so it's something that  
47 they have approved, and so, again, in lieu of trying to  
48 expedite, or not slow down, this action item, that's why I

1 wanted to include this, so that it wouldn't be slowed down with  
2 the other action item that's currently in the document. Thank  
3 you.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Kevin. Ms. Boggs.

6

7 **MS. BOGGS:** I had my hand raised for a whole different issue  
8 altogether, and so I was just going to second that motion, but  
9 my hand was for something else that is not relevant to this.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We will hold your thoughts then for a  
12 minute. I am not seeing any other hands up related to this  
13 motion, and so I will go ahead, and we'll take a vote on this.

14 **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion**  
15 **passes.** Ms. Boggs.

16

17 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just need some  
18 clarification, timeline clarification, if you would. We're  
19 working through the state calibration issue, and allocation, if  
20 you will, and the SSC is going to meet, and it looks like we're  
21 going to get a bump in fish. At what point do we need to direct  
22 staff, I guess, to start looking at a plan amendment for the  
23 ABCs, or does it have to be a plan amendment, and maybe it's a  
24 framework, to adjust all of that in a timely fashion, so that --  
25 I'm being optimistic here, but we have some good information, to  
26 where it can be in effect, if possible, and maybe not for the  
27 June fishing season next year for red snapper.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Just to be brief here, I mean, if we're going  
30 to embark upon a plan amendment, the process will be too long,  
31 and it won't be implemented for June, certainly, of 2021, but a  
32 framework action -- What's in the current document would allow -  
33 - Again, it's going to be quite tricky to get anything by June,  
34 but there are still options in a framework action that can be  
35 pursued, but, if there are changes in the allocations along the  
36 way, then that will involve a plan amendment, and it will be a  
37 much more lengthy process.

38

39 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you.

40

41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge.

42

43 **MS. BOSARGE:** I am thinking about the comments that Ryan made  
44 earlier about the timing, when we were talking about triggerfish  
45 and taking final action and when that could be implemented, and  
46 he was saying something about six months after they transmit it,  
47 until it's actually implemented, and so I'm thinking about this  
48 conversion calibration document that we have. When do we have

1 to take final action on that, so that the states will know what  
2 their quota is going to be on June 1?

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.

5  
6 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In all seriousness, we  
7 probably should have already, if that was going to be the goal.  
8 Again, that six-month timeline is in the most ideal of  
9 circumstances, with everything else essentially dropped, and the  
10 Southeast Regional Office picking up the transmitted document as  
11 soon as they receive it from the IPT and council staff, and so I  
12 know you guys are talking about these things with the idea that,  
13 if we go final in January, and then if we get it to SERO before  
14 the end of February, that maybe by the end of August, but this  
15 is in an absolute perfect environment and the most ideal of  
16 circumstances, and, in the last couple of years, we have  
17 witnessed essentially anything but that, with the amount of  
18 things that all of our organizations, respectively, have been  
19 trying to juggle. I think that -- Not to just completely snuff  
20 out the optimism, but just to put it into perspective, and so --

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone. Robin.

23  
24 **MR. RIECHERS:** This is getting a little bit at Susan's point, I  
25 guess, or question, which is, as I understood the question, it  
26 was how do we sync up the interim assessment and possibly some  
27 of the increase that we're going to see with the calibration  
28 document, in some respects, and, yesterday, Ryan, you indicated  
29 that you didn't -- I mean, I think I someone asked the question,  
30 and it wasn't me, but someone asked about starting to add it  
31 into the current document, and, of course, I think your  
32 response, and I'm not being ugly here about the response, but I  
33 think your response was the one that suggested that you all  
34 normally don't do that until you actually get the interim  
35 assessment numbers and so forth.

36  
37 I will pose it a different way to staff, and I understand what  
38 the normal course of action would be, but we heard it in public  
39 testimony today, and certainly probably yesterday some of us  
40 were thinking it, but is there any value in fleshing out some of  
41 the discussion in the current document, so that it's ready to  
42 have those values placed in there?

43  
44 Again, it's basically generic discussion about what we would  
45 consider an increase in the ACLs, and is there any value in  
46 fleshing that out and having a motion to go ahead and put that  
47 in the document, as opposed to someone doing it over on the side  
48 and us being able to sweep it in with one big motion later on,

1 but I think that's been the intent of the council, since  
2 certainly the last meeting, is trying to get those two things  
3 synced up, and we realize it's going to be a real time  
4 difficulty, and time crunch, but how do we do that? How can  
5 staff help us do that in the best way possible?  
6

7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.  
8

9 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you. I mean, we could put together like a  
10 skeleton action with the kind of language that we would  
11 typically include for changing an ACL. Again, without knowing  
12 what the actual OFL and ABC recommendation would be from the SSC  
13 until sometime in April, we won't be able to populate that, but  
14 we can at least build the framework and build some of the other  
15 accompanying alternatives and options that we would typically  
16 have, and you guys can talk about understanding that it would be  
17 a hypothetical and that you're assuming that you're going to get  
18 some unknown amount of additional fish as a result of the  
19 preliminary result of the Great Red Snapper Count.  
20

21 I mean, a lot of those decisions though are, obviously, going to  
22 hinge on what those quantities actually shake out to be, but,  
23 again, like I said, we could build a skeleton, and you guys  
24 could start to work off of that, if you think that that will  
25 help try and claw back a little bit of time.  
26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Riechers.  
28

29 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you. I will just ask the Chair and Carrie  
30 and Ryan, and do we need a motion to do that? I mean, I think  
31 we're going to be looking to claw back every bit of time we can  
32 get. I think we all understand that, and so I guess I will just  
33 ask if we need a motion to ask that that be done or included, or  
34 are you all already anticipating that and are going to have that  
35 coming forward, possibly in January, because, in January, the  
36 Center is going to share with us, or Clay indicated that SERO  
37 would be sharing with us kind of the plan of the steps to get to  
38 the interim assessment approach.  
39

40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Robin, I think we would need a motion to go  
41 ahead and proactively add an action, an alternative, in the  
42 document, but, with a very simple motion, I think we can  
43 accomplish that and bring it back to folks in a January  
44 timeframe.  
45

46 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay. I can either do that now, Mr. Chairman, or  
47 you can move down the list to Leann, and I saw that she was on  
48 the list.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I will move to Leann, and you can formulate  
3 that motion in your mind, and I will come back to you. Ms.  
4 Bosarge.

5  
6 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I am looking at  
7 this a little differently. We were going to come up with a game  
8 plan on a process for trying to put the Great Red Snapper Count  
9 into our interim assessment process in January, but we're not  
10 going to get numbers though to the SSC until their March  
11 meeting, hopefully, and then we would get that in April, but, if  
12 you're telling me that right now, in December, if we want to  
13 make sure that we don't overfish again next year, more than  
14 likely, that we should probably be taking final action now,  
15 then, to me, this idea of taking final action in April is not  
16 realistic, and that's not really even an option.

17  
18 I mean, I guess I would hope that Robin's motion would -- It  
19 sounds like what we're going to have to do is we're going to  
20 have to take final action on the amendment that's in front of  
21 us, if not right now, at this meeting, start picking preferreds  
22 and take final action in January, then I don't know, and that  
23 would be my preference.

24  
25 Then we're going to have to follow it with Robin's motion to  
26 start the other -- A new document that is just a framework, like  
27 Ryan was talking about, of a document to implement these new  
28 catch recommendations from the collaboration of the Great Red  
29 Snapper Count and interim assessment process, but we have to  
30 have those conversions in place and on the books so that, no  
31 matter what, we do not overfish, come June of 2021.

32  
33 I realize that's easy for me to say, because I'm commercial and  
34 it's not going to impact me, except for when I fish  
35 recreationally, but, believe me, there's been a lot of heartache  
36 on the commercial side with cutting quotas in red snapper too,  
37 and so I sympathize and empathize with the recreational sector,  
38 but it has to be done. We cannot overfish. We can't go into  
39 this knowing that's what we're going to do, and so we need to  
40 start picking some preferreds and take final action on the  
41 document and finalize this in January.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I agree with that, Ms. Bosarge, and so, Kevin  
44 Anson, I'm going to take a quick question or comment from you,  
45 and then we'll get Mr. Riechers' motion on the board.

46  
47 **MR. ANSON:** My comment is that things change, and things have  
48 changed even since the October meeting, relative to the

1 timeline, and I thought there was discussion made that there  
2 could be some numbers available for the January meeting, but we  
3 come to this meeting and now it's the April meeting, and maybe I  
4 misheard, but that obviously changes some things, when you  
5 juxtapose that with Ryan's discussion about the timeline for  
6 framework actions, and so, even if we were to come back with a  
7 document in April, and I'm just kind of looking ahead here, and  
8 we pass something in April, which, if we don't have a document  
9 in January, then we're not going to be able to do it in April,  
10 and I think that's where the May meeting came in, was we won't -  
11 - Probably, if we don't have it by May, for sure, you won't have  
12 anything hit the books until 2022, and so what I think some of  
13 the people were trying to look at is maybe not have it  
14 concurrently, but maybe have some semblance or idea that the  
15 document could go through and get approved and be final and then  
16 have it available by the end of the calendar year, so that, at  
17 the end of the calendar year, you would have those pounds then  
18 to go against whatever harvest occurred during the season. Now  
19 that, during this meeting, is not shaping up to necessarily be  
20 the case, as it was more of the case, in my mind at least, back  
21 in October.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you for those comments, Kevin.  
24 Robin, let's go ahead and put your motion up on the board. I  
25 think the sentiment, moving forward, is that we need to have  
26 something in place, certainly in January, to act upon, and so if  
27 you're ready, Robin.

28  
29 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes, and I will go ahead and try to make a motion  
30 here. **Add an alternative to Tab B, Number 6 that would**  
31 **incorporate an interim assessment increase into the current ACL**  
32 **framework, or into the current ACLs, which it's, obviously, more**  
33 **than just ACLs, but --** Sorry, because I didn't try to type it  
34 out for you.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's okay. Robin, can you repeat that,  
37 slowly?

38  
39 **MR. RIECHERS:** To add an alternative into Tab B, Number 6, and I  
40 am referencing the document number, as opposed to the actual  
41 title.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's fine.

44  
45 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay. **That would incorporate an interim**  
46 **assessment increase in ACLs into the document.** If I can get a  
47 second, I can even suggest maybe even a wording change, or I can  
48 suggest it now.

1  
2 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I will second for discussion.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Joe Spraggins. Go ahead,  
5 Robin.  
6  
7 **MR. RIECHERS:** I will discuss it, and, if you want to put it in  
8 the motion, we can even do that, and we understand this is a  
9 generic framework at this point, and it's not going to have the  
10 numbers, or a generic alternative, and it wouldn't have the  
11 numbers, but I think it's moving towards that notion of we still  
12 are trying to keep these linked, and, in some respects, it's  
13 still opening the door, and I am hearing the different timetable  
14 as well that Kevin has heard, and Leann has spoken to, and I am  
15 concerned about those timetables, but I am also trying to go  
16 back to the spirit of kind of the discussion we had in October,  
17 and trying to keep these two things linked, in some respects, as  
18 we try to work through the difficult calibration issues as well  
19 as getting as much information included into the current  
20 assessment as we can, given what we have been presented on the  
21 Great Red Snapper Count at this point.  
22  
23 Again, I think everyone has heard all of that discussion before,  
24 but, if this will help us have a better framework to have that  
25 discussion in January, even if it's generic, I am supportive of  
26 going ahead and trying to get it into the document now.  
27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Robin. I agree that I think it  
29 would be helpful, and I think -- Mr. Rindone, to that point.  
30  
31 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Looking at what we have in  
32 the document right now, the action that we have is to modify the  
33 Gulf state-specific red snapper private angling component ACLs,  
34 and that is Section 2.1 on page 13.  
35  
36 Looking back at Mr. Riechers' motion, the way that I am reading  
37 this is that this is going to adjust all of the ACLs, and so  
38 that's recreational, meaning for-hire and private angling, and  
39 commercial, and so the scope of that is beyond what we currently  
40 have presented in Action 1, and so my question then would be --  
41 Well, a question and I guess guidance, but should this be in its  
42 own action, and then perhaps this will be the first action in  
43 the document, and then how we handle the private angling  
44 component ACLs, to address the current issue with the data  
45 currencies, could be what follows.  
46  
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Riechers.  
48

1 **MR. RIECHERS:** Well, obviously, Ryan, if we start getting into  
2 larger elements of discussion and increases, it's going to get  
3 more difficult, and we all know that, and we're trying to deal  
4 with the time crunch here. I mean, the other alternative, for  
5 us as council members, and while we've been told we can't do it,  
6 is to go back to Alternative 1, where we try to keep everything  
7 basically where we are now, until we have a chance to bring in  
8 and have that discussion, and I know there's going to be some  
9 council members that suggest that's not appropriate, and maybe  
10 NMFS as well, but that's where my struggle lies, Ryan.

11  
12 I'm trying to keep it narrow enough to be able to accomplish  
13 this in the timeframe that we're being told we have to work  
14 within, and we realize it's a tight one, and no one is  
15 suggesting that it's not, but, also, the wider we make it, the  
16 more difficult it becomes to get the work done, and so I don't  
17 know, Mr. Chairman. **With that, I think I'm going to withdraw**  
18 **the motion, and I will let my seconder decide whether they want**  
19 **to try to make a new motion or what they may want to do.**

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Before you do that, Mr. Riechers, Mr. Rindone,  
22 to that point.

23  
24 **MR. RINDONE:** Mr. Riechers, you're absolutely right in that  
25 assessment or appraisal of the situation. As much as it tastes  
26 like drinking vinegar, I will also pitch back out there that the  
27 states do have the option of employing the use of state-specific  
28 annual catch targets and managing to those, as opposed to  
29 managing to their annual catch limits, which would be an as yet  
30 not thoroughly discussed option that, at least under my  
31 understanding, would allow what we're currently using under  
32 Alternative 1 to stick, but, because you guys -- If you employed  
33 those annual catch targets, and managed to those, instead of  
34 managing to the annual catch limits, that would provide the  
35 cushion that the Southeast Regional Office has discussed as  
36 being necessary to prevent an overage of the ACL. I am not  
37 encouraging one idea or the other, but I'm just saying it is  
38 something else that is available for the states to use.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am going to -- There is a couple of  
41 hands, and I'm going to just take two quick questions from Leann  
42 and Susan, and it's late in the process to be going down this  
43 road, and so Ms. Bosarge.

44  
45 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just wanted to make sure that, for the January  
46 meeting, we are going to notice, for final action, that  
47 calibration amendment, and I forget the number on it, for red  
48 snapper.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am not sure, Leann, that we can do that yet.  
3 We'll have some discussion with staff, and Chapters 3 and 4  
4 aren't written for that framework yet, and so -- Ms. Boggs.  
5  
6 **MS. BOGGS:** Mr. Chair, based on what you just said, I don't  
7 think I need to do what I was going to do, and I was trying to  
8 help move this along, but, if those motion passes, and based on  
9 what you just said, I will refrain from my comments at this  
10 time. Thank you.  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am going to take one more. Dr. Crabtree.  
13  
14 **DR. CRABTREE:** I guess I'm going to pass now. I mean, we're  
15 kind of in a bind, and we need to -- If there was a way for you  
16 to come in in January and vote up the calibration amendment, and  
17 get that done first, then we could come in and have a simple  
18 amendment that just raises the quotas, and that was originally  
19 how we had sort of talked about this, but it became clear that  
20 the council's intent was they weren't going to do the  
21 calibrations until they had the Great Red Snapper Count, and so  
22 I think we're stuck with all of that now, but it presents a  
23 timing challenge, because it's going to be a more complicated  
24 and more controversial rule, and I'm just not sure, at this late  
25 date, what more we can do about it.  
26  
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I think, Robin, I'm going to come back  
28 to you. Do you want to keep the motion, or do you want to  
29 withdraw the motion?  
30  
31 **MR. RIECHERS:** I will withdraw the motion.  
32  
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. So we will move on then from this  
34 particular topic, and we will bring that document back as-is in  
35 January, and I think it will be as fully developed as we  
36 possibly can, and I think we are going to -- We're going to have  
37 to be prepared to be a little more assertive as a council on  
38 what we're going to do, and so I am actually going to turn this  
39 over, briefly, to Dale Diaz. Dale, if you wouldn't mind  
40 carrying on with this committee, and I have to take a very  
41 important phone call.  
42  
43 **MR. DIAZ:** No problem. So Robin has currently withdrawn his  
44 motion. I have a question for Dr. Simmons, just to make sure  
45 that I'm on the right page. So we've currently taken care of  
46 vermilion snapper and triggerfish, but we have not done anything  
47 with lane snapper at this point, and is that correct?  
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think the council has separated  
2 vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish into two separate stand-  
3 alone framework actions, and then the remaining actions for the  
4 bag limit and the fixed season change for vermilion and  
5 triggerfish stay in another framework action, and I don't think,  
6 Dr. Hollensead, that the council has many any preferred  
7 alternatives for the lane snapper framework action, and that is  
8 correct, I believe.

9  
10 **MR. DIAZ:** Right, and I know Tom just asked me to run the  
11 meeting, and go ahead, Ms. Guyas.

12  
13 **MS. GUYAS:** Thanks, Mr. Diaz, and so you were reading my mind.  
14 I was going to try to circle back to that, because I think we  
15 are in a place, with lane snapper, that we could choose  
16 preferreds. Given that -- I know staff has a ton of stuff on  
17 their plate, and I think one thing we could do, maybe to kind of  
18 move this one along, is to choose preferreds right now.

19  
20 I emailed some motions to staff regarding lane just a few  
21 minutes ago. If you don't mind, I will present the first  
22 motion. **The motion is, for the lane snapper document, in Action**  
23 **1, to select Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative.** I can  
24 give rationale if I get a second.

25  
26 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will second that.

27  
28 **MR. DIAZ:** It's seconded by John Sanchez, and so the motion is,  
29 in Action 1, to select Alternative 2 as the preferred  
30 alternative. Would you mind giving some rationale, Ms. Guyas?

31  
32 **MS. GUYAS:** Sure. The first thing is this is the SSC's  
33 recommendation, and I believe the Reef Fish AP also supported  
34 this, and so just a reminder of where we are with lane, and this  
35 assessment update was -- The information we have is positive,  
36 and you might recall some public testimony that this is an  
37 important fishery, and it's one where we're seeing a bump, and  
38 the fishery is doing really well, and we're seeing large lane  
39 snapper, where we haven't before, and I think Dylan Hubbard  
40 talked about how they may be even expanding inshore, and so  
41 that's really my rationale here to choose this option.

42  
43 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Are there any other comments  
44 relative to the motion? Go ahead, Ms. Boggs.

45  
46 **MS. BOGGS:** The only thing that concerns me about this -- I  
47 mean, I would be more in favor, I think, of Alternative 3, and  
48 I'm throwing this out there to enhance the discussion, because

1 the FES numbers are five times, if I'm doing my math right, what  
2 they were, and I just almost feel like we need an ACT in there  
3 to keep us from overfishing, but I would just like to get some  
4 more feedback, if you don't mind, as to why that doesn't matter.  
5

6 **MR. DIAZ:** I don't know if anybody really can respond to that,  
7 Ms. Boggs. I think it's more or less a decision of the council  
8 and whether folks think that's needed or not. Are there any  
9 comments to Ms. Boggs' request?  
10

11 **MS. GUYAS:** Dale, I can jump in again and at least give you kind  
12 of my reasons for not going with the ACT. At least the way that  
13 we've had this managed before, and we talked about this this  
14 morning at length, is we have the catch limits based on past --  
15 Average past landings, which is not the way we're going to move  
16 forward anymore, and so I think that was probably driving,  
17 partly driving, some of the issue with going over the ACL in the  
18 past, where we have for this fishery.  
19

20 The other thing is I think we were probably over the ACL for  
21 this fishery because this fishery was -- Unfortunately, that's  
22 kind of how that goes. When we have these recruitment years  
23 kind of down the line sometimes, the situation that we put  
24 ourselves in is that we end up going over the ACL because people  
25 are catching the fish, and so that's really my rationale for not  
26 going with the ACT on this, if we have an ACT that doesn't have  
27 any teeth to it, or any accountability associated with it, and  
28 so that's my thoughts.  
29

30 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Any other comments? Mr.  
31 Anson.  
32

33 **MR. ANSON:** I certainly understand the comments that Ms. Boggs  
34 had made, and I guess I have a little bit of concern too, only  
35 as much as the difference between exceeding your ACL/ABC, in  
36 this instance, since they're both the same, and the difference  
37 between that and your OFL, and there is a 16 percent difference  
38 between OFL and ABC in Alternative 1, but yet there's just over  
39 a 2 percent difference in OFL and ABC, and so I'm just  
40 wondering, Ryan, if you happen to know why or what the process  
41 was between the two, since there's differences in the magnitude  
42 or scale between OFL and ABC?  
43

44 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure. The OFL was set at a 50 percent probability  
45 of overfishing and the ABC at a 30 percent probability, and  
46 that's based on the MRIP-FES data, and so one way that you might  
47 look at this is thinking about the proportion of the increase  
48 that's attributable to the change in currency from MRFSS through

1 CHTS to FES and the proportion of the increase that is due to  
2 any growth in the stock and what kind of confidence you guys  
3 have in the ability of NMFS to be able to project and constrain  
4 the landings to the ACL, if you set the ACL equal to the ABC and  
5 you don't use an ACT.

6  
7 Another advantage to using an ACT is it opens up some options  
8 for how you address your accountability measures, if that's a  
9 route that you guys wanted to go, and it's just a tool that's  
10 available to you. Essentially though, when you're looking at  
11 the ABC, that ABC represents a 30 percent probability that, if  
12 landed, overfishing would have occurred, which is lower,  
13 typically, than is generated through the P\* process.

14  
15 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone. Mr. Sanchez.

16  
17 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you. I think somebody needs to feed their  
18 dog, but anyway. This was unanimously supported by the Reef  
19 Fish AP, and so I'm in support of this, and I believe we're  
20 going to gain some biological credits in a future document, when  
21 we increase the size limit, possibly, to ten inches, and so I  
22 stand in support of this.

23  
24 **MR. DIAZ:** All right. I'm not seeing any other names on the  
25 board, and so, being as there is no other names for comments,  
26 we're going to go ahead and vote this motion up or down. We're  
27 going to try it like this. **Is there any opposition to the**  
28 **motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.** Tom, I see you're  
29 back, and I think Martha may have another motion, if you want to  
30 take it over.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I will do that. Thank you, Dale. I apologize  
33 for the interruption. Ms. Guyas.

34  
35 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes, I do. Let me find it again. **My second motion**  
36 **is, in Action 2, to select Alternative 3, Option a as the**  
37 **preferred alternative.**

38  
39 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Once again, I will second it.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We'll get this up on the board, and so we have  
42 a second by John Sanchez. Once we get it up, we'll have a  
43 little discussion. The motion on the board is, in Action 2, to  
44 select Alternative 3, Option a as the preferred alternative. Is  
45 there any further discussion of this motion? Martha, do you  
46 want to talk about it a little bit?

47  
48 **MS. GUYAS:** Sure. I mean, if we're not -- I guess this is

1 really the only action in -- The alternative and option that  
2 makes sense, given the decision that we just made on Action 1,  
3 and the other alternative and sub-options all deal with an ACT,  
4 and so there's that, but this just basically ties the AMs to  
5 exceeding or meeting the ACL.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. It looks like we might have Mara's hand  
8 up.

9  
10 **MS. LEVY:** Just to note that the no action also ties the AMs to  
11 the ACLs, and so, currently, you have an ACL, and you don't do  
12 anything unless it's exceeded in a given fishing year, and then,  
13 the next year, you're monitoring and prohibiting harvest if  
14 landings meet or are projected to meet the ACL.

15  
16 What this Alternative 3, Option a would do would mean that  
17 you're doing that every year, and so you don't need that initial  
18 year where you exceed it and then you monitor, but you're going  
19 to ask the agency to do in-season monitoring every year and do a  
20 projection.

21  
22 Obviously, they can do that, but there is a lot of uncertainty  
23 in these projections, and so you may end up getting a closure  
24 when you don't really need one, or you may end up having a year  
25 where you go over anyway, because the projection isn't exactly  
26 right, and so I think just consider that when you're looking at  
27 these different alternatives.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Levy. We have Ms. Bosarge  
30 next.

31  
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** I was trying to -- When I read that Alternative 3,  
33 Option a, I said, well, that just says we're going to manage to  
34 a quota, which isn't that what Magnuson says we have to do, and  
35 stop fishing when we hit our quota, but Mara sort of explained  
36 it, that, I guess, in the past -- What she said makes sense.

37  
38 In the past, when we simply had an average of ten years' worth  
39 of landings, and that's all you had for setting a quota, I could  
40 see where you might want to let some fluctuations occur there  
41 and go over that quota sometimes and sometimes under it, to let  
42 the fishery operate, I guess, more naturally, let's say. We  
43 don't have a system now where we're doing a ten-year average,  
44 and we have an assessment, but it is a data-poor assessment, and  
45 so I guess I'm kind of torn on this. I guess Alternative 3a  
46 probably is the best route.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am not seeing any other hands. I am

1 assuming that there's no more discussion. **Is there anybody**  
2 **opposed to this motion? With no opposition, the motion carries.**  
3

4 Is there any other business that needs to come related to the  
5 Reef Fish Committee? I have Susan Boggs and then General  
6 Spraggins.  
7

8 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was trying to do this  
9 before we got into lane snapper, but I wasn't recognized, which  
10 is fine, and we've got a lot going on. I am going to go back to  
11 the red snapper recreational data calibration and catch limits  
12 document and just throw this out there.  
13

14 **If we need to do something, I would like to make a motion to**  
15 **make Alternative 3 the preferred, and that's a compromise, and**  
16 **it doesn't really probably get us to where some people would**  
17 **like us to get, but it's a compromise until we get all the data**  
18 **that we need, and I'm just going to throw it back out there at**  
19 **Full Council and see if it sticks. Thank you.**  
20

21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Ms. Boggs, we'll go ahead and get that  
22 motion up on the board. While we're getting it up on the board,  
23 is there a second to that motion?  
24

25 **MS. BOSARGE:** I will second it.  
26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Ms. Bosarge. Okay. The  
28 motion on the board is to make Alternative 3 the preferred. Is  
29 there any further discussion? Ms. Bosarge, did you want to  
30 follow-up on that, or is that a holdover?  
31

32 **MS. BOSARGE:** I would like to follow-up, please, sir.  
33

34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead.  
35

36 **MS. BOSARGE:** In committee, I put this motion out there for that  
37 Alternative 3 as a preferred, and, although this is the same  
38 motion, I think we might have a little different outlook on the  
39 document and the schedule at this point, and so I think, when we  
40 had our discussions before, we were thinking, well, we're going  
41 to have this bump in quota, and this will all come to a head  
42 together, but, based on the discussions we just had, we probably  
43 need to go final with this in January, to make sure that we  
44 don't overfish, and then immediately follow-up with a document  
45 that we can hope and pray will be implemented before the end of  
46 the year, hopefully in the fall, that would give the states, and  
47 everybody else, that bump in quota, to allow some additional  
48 fishing for their anglers at the end of the year. Anyway, I'm

1 going to speak in support of this motion, knowing that we have  
2 to get this ball rolling without the interim assessment.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. General Spraggins.  
5  
6 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I guess the question, I would say, on this  
7 one is, if it is that Alternative 3, that would be a situation  
8 that we would use that number and without anything, as far as a  
9 payback or anything else, until after we decided what had  
10 happened with the assessment, as far as the Great Red Snapper,  
11 and is that correct?  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** General Spraggins, I believe that that's the  
14 case. What this alternative allows you to do is to go ahead and  
15 fish without violating -- To be in compliance with Magnuson.  
16  
17 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Right, and that's what my question is, and  
18 so we would have that -- I am showing that in Mississippi of  
19 116,000 pounds, but then, once we did the Great Red Snapper and  
20 there is an adjustment made, then that would be -- Anything that  
21 would happen from that point on would be an adjustment, and is  
22 that correct?  
23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's correct.  
25  
26 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Thank you.  
27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Levy.  
29  
30 **MS. LEVY:** That's okay. I will defer my comments. Thanks.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. All right. I am not seeing any other  
33 hands, and this is going to require a roll call vote, I am quite  
34 confident, and so Dr. Simmons.  
35  
36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms. Bosarge.  
37  
38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.  
39  
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** General Spraggins.  
41  
42 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes.  
43  
44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.  
45  
46 **MR. SANCHEZ:** No.  
47  
48 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Stunz.

1  
2 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I think he had to leave.  
3  
4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. Mr. Swindell.  
5  
6 **MR. SWINDELL:** No.  
7  
8 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Diaz.  
9  
10 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.  
11  
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas.  
13  
14 **MS. GUYAS:** No.  
15  
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Schieble.  
17  
18 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** No.  
19  
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Williamson.  
21  
22 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** No.  
23  
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Shipp.  
25  
26 **DR. SHIPP:** No.  
27  
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas. Mr. Dugas, are you  
29 still there? We'll come back. Mr. Riechers.  
30  
31 **MR. RIECHERS:** No.  
32  
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs.  
34  
35 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.  
36  
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Crabtree.  
38  
39 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.  
40  
41 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dyskow.  
42  
43 **MR. DYSKOW:** No.  
44  
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Anson.  
46  
47 **MR. ANSON:** Abstain.  
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas. Not there. Dr. Stunz  
2 is no longer there. The motion fails five to eight. The motion  
3 fails.  
4  
5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** The motion fails five to eight with one  
6 abstention and two absentees. Okay. I am looking for hands.  
7 Ms. Bosarge.  
8  
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir. I would like to make another motion  
10 that we make Alternative 2 the preferred, please, sir.  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We'll get that motion on the board. we  
13 have a motion on the board that is in, Action 1, to make  
14 Alternative 2 the preferred. Alternative 2 is to modify the  
15 state-specific red snapper private angling component ACLs using  
16 the ratio corrections developed by the National Oceanic and  
17 Atmospheric Administration's Office of Science and Technology in  
18 the respective Gulf states. These ratios and the resulting ACLs  
19 in each state's currency are as follows, and you can all see the  
20 table. The motion is made by Ms. Bosarge. Is there a second to  
21 this motion?  
22  
23 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Second.  
24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Is there any  
26 further discussion of this motion? I am not seeing any. Chris  
27 Schieble.  
28  
29 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to say that  
30 we're in support of this motion. We have to move forward with  
31 this at some point, and this seems the most amicable, at least  
32 for now, and I understand that there's going to be some, I  
33 guess, winners and losers in any one of these options that we  
34 select in this document.  
35  
36 However, speaking for Louisiana, the anglers of Louisiana have  
37 paid to have the reporting system that's in place now, and it  
38 seems that that reporting system has calibrated well with the  
39 MRIP-CHTS survey, and, speaking along just those lines strictly,  
40 it would lead me to support this motion for now. Thank you.  
41  
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Chris. Next, we have Dale Diaz and  
43 then General Spraggins.  
44  
45 **MR. DIAZ:** Mr. Chairman, I speak against the motion. We have  
46 kind of been over some of these points already, but there are  
47 issues in small states that I do not think have been addressed,  
48 and I think most of the people around this table believe that.

1  
2 My second point would be is, in Amendment 50, whenever we did  
3 the allocation, we all had a perception of reality at that time,  
4 and, had this been the perception of reality, we would have  
5 never passed Amendment 50, and I don't believe the votes would  
6 have ever been there, and we can argue whether that's a good or  
7 bad thing, but I do think that is the main point. What  
8 everybody thought was reality back then has completely flipped  
9 around, and I think the small states of Mississippi and Alabama  
10 aren't satisfied with it, and we would like to have it an option  
11 to look at the issues of small states before this is  
12 implemented.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. General Spraggins.

15  
16 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I definitely echo what Dale said, and I  
17 would just ask each and every one of you to think about this,  
18 and think about it before you make this vote that you're looking  
19 at. If it was your state, and you were being treated like  
20 Mississippi and Alabama is being treated, because they did  
21 nothing wrong, how would you feel about this? Would you feel  
22 that you're getting what it right done to you?

23  
24 You know that Mississippi, and you know Alabama, because the  
25 MRIP does not work for us, and it does not match up, and I think  
26 Dr. Crabtree has told us over and over and over that he feels  
27 like that we are being -- We definitely should never be graded  
28 against it, but we are.

29  
30 The point is, for us to make this kind of statement, you are  
31 pretty much just saying that you care nothing about what really  
32 means anything in the states, and I will be very disappointed if  
33 this passes.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, General Spraggins. Ms. Bosarge.

36  
37 **MS. BOSARGE:** I will echo General Spraggins' sentiments, and I  
38 don't like this alternative, and that's why I voted for  
39 Alternative 3. This alternative is not going to be good for my  
40 state. However, I took an oath, and I held my hand up and took  
41 an oath to manage the fisheries sustainably.

42  
43 Therefore, I cannot, in good conscience, sit by and do nothing,  
44 knowing that we will overfish again, and we have already  
45 overfished once, and so, unfortunately, the oath I took has to  
46 outweigh what it's going to do to the anglers in my state, and I  
47 just hope and pray that it will play out the way I mentioned a  
48 minute ago, where we follow-up immediately with a framework

1 document to implement the new interim catch levels and this  
2 58,000 pounds of fish for anglers in Mississippi -- That will  
3 just be for the first portion of our season for 2021, and we'll  
4 get that big bump in fish to finish out our season in 2021, but  
5 I would not be holding up my end of the bargain and the oath I  
6 took if I allowed, knowingly allowed, overfishing to keep going.  
7 Because of that, I have to vote in favor of this, because we  
8 couldn't pass the one I wanted, which was Alternative 3.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you. Mr. Swindell.

11  
12 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also -- I am along  
13 with Leann on a lot of this. However, I looked at the SSC, who  
14 has thoroughly reviewed this recalibration issue, and they  
15 support it the way it stands, and I can't go against our  
16 scientific community that we're using for all of the work that  
17 we do on all of the resources and go against their wishes, and  
18 they believe that it is right on the money where it is, and so  
19 I'm going to have to vote for it. Thank you.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Swindell. Dr. Shipp.

22  
23 **DR. SHIPP:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to vote against  
24 this motion, first of all because it is unfair, and it's unfair  
25 to Alabama and Mississippi, and I don't have a great concern  
26 about overfishing at this point, with what we have coming down  
27 the line.

28  
29 The second thing I would like to say is it's no one's fault, but  
30 this got stuck here at the tail-end, and some of the members of  
31 the council have already left, and I don't know how they would  
32 vote, but tagging this on the end -- I think the best thing to  
33 do is certainly not choose a preferred option, but at least go  
34 on with nothing preferred at this point, and so I will speak  
35 against the motion.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Shipp. Dr. Crabtree.

38  
39 **DR. CRABTREE:** I will vote in favor of this one, because I think  
40 we need to do something, and I don't think this is a small  
41 state/big state issue. I suspect it's more to do with the  
42 fundamental difference between Alabama and Mississippi's survey  
43 and LA Creel and GRFS and the MRIP survey, and I think they're  
44 fundamentally different surveys, and we're getting some  
45 unexpected differences because of that.

46  
47 What this underscores to me, these comments about fairness and  
48 things, is you need to revisit the state-by-state allocations.

1 You need to revise the state-by-state allocations, and I know  
2 that's difficult, and I know it's painful, but that's what you  
3 guys are going to have to do, and, the longer you put it off,  
4 the more difficult it's going to be. My suggestion to you would  
5 be to start looking at that now.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. I am going to take  
8 two quick comments from Mr. Anson and Ms. Boggs.

9  
10 **MR. ANSON:** We've tried to thread the needle for as long as  
11 possible, and we've tried to come up with ways to have this new  
12 Great Red Snapper Count information be made available for us,  
13 and I guess it's not going to turn out that way, but you've  
14 heard it from me before, and I will say it again, and we feel  
15 like we're managing the fishery sustainably, and we utilize,  
16 essentially, the same components that are used in the Great Red  
17 Snapper Count to estimate the fish throughout the Gulf, and they  
18 were used, and have been used, in Alabama since 2012.

19  
20 This is an issue that's been long before this last year that  
21 needed to be corrected, and so, as far as the assessment and the  
22 output, the catch advice from the assessment, and so, hopefully,  
23 the assessment will catch up with what we've been saying all  
24 along, that there's a bunch of fish out there.

25  
26 Yes, we can allocate, and we can talk about that and such, and  
27 that might be the discussion that comes up, but, you know, as  
28 far as this situation and where we're at, this is where we're  
29 at, and so, this coming year -- If I'm looking into the future,  
30 this coming year, I guess three states will be okay, and their  
31 fishermen will be okay, and in two states their fishermen are  
32 not going to be okay, as far as access to the resource, and so I  
33 guess we'll just have to swallow it and take our lumps and get  
34 by this year, but I'm not going to be in support of this motion,  
35 and I've been abstaining up to this point, but the rubber meets  
36 the road now, and so I'm not going to be in support of the  
37 motion. Thank you.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Anson. Ms. Boggs.

40  
41 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will make this quick. I  
42 will support this motion, reluctantly, and I know we need to do  
43 something to correct the overfishing, and part of me thinks this  
44 is a little extreme, and I think the answer is somewhere in the  
45 middle, which is why I threw Alternative 3 out there.

46  
47 I understand that we need to look hard at the SSC  
48 recommendations, and I listened to this SSC meeting, and I

1 remember, as if it were yesterday, that their comment was, well,  
2 we need to do something, and so let's put this out there, and so  
3 I would -- If there is SSC members listening, I encourage them,  
4 at their next meeting, to take another hard look at this, and I  
5 also heard what Roy said, and maybe that's something else we  
6 need to do.  
7  
8 I agree that we need to stop the overfishing, and I hate it that  
9 it's going to hurt the State of Alabama, but we've got to do  
10 something, and not doing anything is not an answer. Thank you.  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Okay. We will go ahead  
13 and take a roll call vote on this one. Dr. Simmons.  
14  
15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Dyskow.  
16  
17 **MR. DYSKOW:** No.  
18  
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Williamson.  
20  
21 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** No.  
22  
23 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs.  
24  
25 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.  
26  
27 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Diaz.  
28  
29 **MR. DIAZ:** No.  
30  
31 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Shipp.  
32  
33 **DR. SHIPP:** No.  
34  
35 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Swindell.  
36  
37 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.  
38  
39 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Stunz is absent. Mr. Riechers.  
40  
41 **MR. RIECHERS:** No.  
42  
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Schieble.  
44  
45 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Yes.  
46  
47 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** General Spraggins.  
48

1 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** No.  
2  
3 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Anson.  
4  
5 **MR. ANSON:** No.  
6  
7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Bosarge.  
8  
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.  
10  
11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas.  
12  
13 **MS. GUYAS:** Abstain.  
14  
15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.  
16  
17 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.  
18  
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I believe Mr. Dugas is absent. Dr.  
20 Crabtree.  
21  
22 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.  
23  
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** It's six to seven, and the motion  
25 failed with one abstention and two absent.  
26  
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Six to seven, the motion fails with one  
28 abstention and two absent. Okay. Is there any further business  
29 to come before the Reef Fish Committee? Seeing none, we will  
30 move on to our final committee, which is the Ecosystem  
31 Committee, and Dr. Shipp.  
32  
33 **ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT**  
34  
35 **DR. SHIPP:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I need help from the  
36 operators to put up my report. I don't have a hard copy, and  
37 suddenly I just see faces up here, and so, Bernie, is there some  
38 way that you can put the Ecosystem Committee Report up on the  
39 screen?  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Shipp, can you see that?  
42  
43 **DR. SHIPP:** No, I can't see anything, and all I have is faces,  
44 council members and others faces, up there, and so I have  
45 nothing.  
46  
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Wait just a second. I think there's a lag in  
48 your computer, and so if you don't --

1  
2 **DR. SHIPP:** It was fine until five seconds before you called on  
3 me. I had it sitting in the background. Unfortunately, my vice  
4 chair is gone, or he could read it.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's okay. If it's okay with the council, I  
7 will go ahead and read the Ecosystem Committee Report, if that's  
8 okay with everybody. Is there any opposition to that? Okay.  
9 Seeing none, Bob, are you good with that?  
10  
11 **DR. SHIPP:** Yes, I'm very good with that.  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I will carry on then. This is the  
14 Ecosystem Committee Report from December 1, 2020, and the chair  
15 of that committee is Dr. Bob Shipp. The committee adopted the  
16 agenda, Tab Q, Number 1, as written and approved the minutes,  
17 Tab Q, Number 2, of the October 2018 meeting as written.  
18  
19 Update on Gulf of Mexico Fishery Ecosystem Plan, Tab Q, Number  
20 4, council staff summarized the recommendations from the  
21 Ecosystem Technical Committee to develop a Fishery Ecosystem  
22 Plan for the Gulf of Mexico.  
23  
24 The committee acknowledges that the science of ecosystem-based  
25 management is evolving and that the FEP should be designed as a  
26 living document that will change as data become available.  
27 Council staff will modify the presented goals and objectives and  
28 include this information in the Request for Proposals, pending  
29 the approval of funds.  
30  
31 Southeast Regional Efforts to Build a Foundation for the Fishery  
32 Ecosystem Plan, Tab Q, Number 5, Dr. Mandy Karnauskas presented  
33 an update on an ecosystem-based fisheries management effort that  
34 can inform the development of a Gulf FEP. An FEP lays out the  
35 socioeconomic and biological goals for the region and provides  
36 the framework for reaching those goals through management  
37 decisions.  
38  
39 Dr. Karnauskas presented the results from participatory  
40 workshops in parts of Florida. The results from these workshops  
41 identified the major concerns of stakeholders and what they  
42 value from the ecosystem. For example, water quality was  
43 identified as a major concern. Dr. Karnauskas used the effects  
44 of red tide on red and gag grouper populations and the studies  
45 and management actions that took place as a case study.  
46  
47 Ms. Bosarge recommended that, before moving forward with  
48 developing an FEP for the Gulf of Mexico, it would be beneficial

1 to revisit the results from the latest Ecosystem Status Report  
2 at a future council meeting. That concludes the report. Is  
3 there any other business to come before the council with regard  
4 to the Ecosystem Committee Report? I am not seeing any new  
5 hands. Okay.

6  
7 That will bring us to the end of our agenda. Is there any other  
8 business? General Spraggins.

9  
10 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I don't know if Roy is going to be here for  
11 the next one or not, but I could not leave without telling you  
12 thank you, thank you, thank you, and you've been a great help to  
13 us.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think we're going to stay on the line for a  
16 bit, and we will adjourn this meeting, if there is no other  
17 business, and I will give it one more pass. Ed Swindell.

18  
19 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to have some  
20 time, perhaps at the next meeting, a little something about the  
21 effort of the lionfish elimination, a status, and it's been  
22 there for a while, and we haven't heard anything about it, and I  
23 would think at some time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you. We'll make a note of that,  
26 and we will put it on the agenda at our earliest convenience.  
27 Any other business? Okay. Seeing none, I will go ahead and  
28 adjourn this meeting. Thank you all for your time today.

29  
30 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 1, 2020.)

31  
32 - - -

33