

## GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

281<sup>ST</sup> MEETING

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

Via Webinar

October 26-28, 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  
 Robin Riechers.....Texas  
 John Sanchez.....Florida  
 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana  
 Bob Shipp.....Alabama  
 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi  
 Greg Stunz.....Texas  
 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana  
 Troy Williamson.....Texas

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

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

**STAFF**

Matt Freeman.....Economist  
 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director  
 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer  
 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist  
 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist  
 Mara 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

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**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

Patrick Banks.....LA  
Tim Griner.....SAFMC  
Peter Hood.....NMFS  
Paul Mickle.....MS  
Clay Porch.....SEFSC

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1 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
2 Council convened via webinar on Monday morning, October 26,  
3 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

4  
5 **REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE OCTOBER 2020 THROUGH AUGUST 2021**  
6 **COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROSTER**  
7

8 **CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER:** All right. It looks like we've almost got  
9 everybody up. I think we're all good to go, and so we're good.  
10 We'll start off this meeting by going over the committee  
11 assignments, and so what I tried to do, as everybody recognized,  
12 is there was an opportunity to weigh-in if you wanted to change  
13 your committee assignments, and so we had everybody weigh-in,  
14 and they were relatively minor adjustments to the committee  
15 roster, and, if you want to look at that, it would be Tab A,  
16 Number 2(b).

17  
18 I am assuming that most people, or everybody, is good with those  
19 assignments, but, if you're not, now would be a good time, or,  
20 if you want to make some changes, or suggest changes, now would  
21 be a good time to talk about that.

22  
23 All right, and I'm not seeing any appetite for that, and so,  
24 just to make sure that we're carrying on with good procedure  
25 here, can I get a motion from one of the council members to  
26 accept the committee roster, the revised committee roster.

27  
28 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** I so move.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We have a motion from Greg Stunz. Do we have  
31 a second?

32  
33 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** I second.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Dr. Shipp. Okay. Let's get  
36 that up on the board, real quick. Thank you, Bernie. Is there  
37 any further discussion on the motion? **Hearing none and seeing**  
38 **none, is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the**  
39 **motion passes.** We will move directly into our committee  
40 sessions, and the first session this morning would be the Data  
41 Collection Committee.

42  
43 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 26, 2020.)

44  
45 - - -

46  
47 October 27, 2020

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

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The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council reconvened via webinar on Tuesday afternoon, October 27, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

**CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We will go ahead and call to order the Full Council, and I will start with the Chair's statement. Welcome to the 281<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Gulf Council. My name is Tom Frazer, Chair of the council. The Gulf Council is one of eight regional councils established in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, known today as the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The council's purpose is to serve as a deliberative body to advise the Secretary of Commerce on fishery management measures in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. These measures help ensure that fishery resources in the Gulf are sustained, while providing the best overall benefit to the nation.

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

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

We have modified our meeting agenda in anticipation of landfall of Tropical Storm Zeta. Since we're not taking final action on any agenda items, we will not be hosting public testimony during this meeting. Since public comment is such an important part of our deliberative process, however, we encourage you to submit any comment to [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org).

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

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

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

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

1 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. Paul Mickle.  
2  
3 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** Paul Mickle.  
4  
5 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. Greg Stunz.  
6  
7 **DR. STUNZ:** Greg Stunz.  
8  
9 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. Ed Swindell.  
10  
11 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Ed Swindell.  
12  
13 **MS. ROY:** Thank you, Ed. Troy Williamson.  
14  
15 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** Troy Williamson.  
16  
17 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. Dave Donaldson.  
18  
19 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Dave Donaldson.  
20  
21 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. Lieutenant Nicholas Giancola.  
22  
23 **LT. NICHOLAS GIANCOLA:** Nicholas Giancola.  
24  
25 **MS. ROY:** Thank you. That's it.

26  
27 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
28

29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you very much, Bernie. We  
30 have, of course, to adopt our agenda, which has been highly  
31 modified, but I think the modifications to the agenda have been  
32 indicated throughout the last two days, and so, if I can get a  
33 motion to adopt the agenda as it's been modified, that would be  
34 great.  
35  
36 **MR. DIAZ:** So moved.  
37  
38 **MS. GUYAS:** Second.  
39  
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have a motion to approve the  
41 modified agenda and a second. Thank you both. Is there any  
42 opposition to that motion? Hearing none, we will consider the  
43 agenda, as modified, approved.  
44  
45 The second order of business would be the Approval of the  
46 Minutes, and let me make sure I have them, and so if I can get a  
47 motion to approve the September 30 meeting minutes, and that  
48 would be Tab A, Number 4 in your briefing materials. Is there a

1 motion?

2

3 **DR. SHIPP:** So moved.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We have a motion by Dr. Shipp. Is there a  
6 second?

7

8 **MS. GUYAS:** Second.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We have a second. Is there any opposition to  
11 that motion? Hearing none, the minutes of the September 30,  
12 2020 meeting have been approved. We are going to jump right  
13 into our Committee Reports, and we will do them in the order  
14 that they started, and so the first one would be the Data  
15 Collection Committee. Mr. Anson, if you're ready to go, I will  
16 turn it over to you.

17

18

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

19

#### DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

20

21 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Data Committee report, the  
22 committee adopted the agenda, Tab F, Number 1, as written and  
23 approved the minutes, Tab F, Number 2, of the June 2020 meeting  
24 as written.

25

26 Review of Potential Regulatory Changes from Commercial  
27 Electronic Logbook Program Implementation, Tab F, Numbers 4 and  
28 4(a), Dr. Julie Brown from the Southeast Fisheries Science  
29 Center (SEFSC) provided a presentation to address questions  
30 posed by the committee at its June 2020 meeting and outlined  
31 some suggested guidelines for potential changes to the  
32 commercial electronic logbook program.

33

34 Specific objectives would consider set-level reporting of catch  
35 and effort, in addition to more precise location reporting to  
36 improve estimates of catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) indices used  
37 in stock assessments.

38

39 Electronic reporting vendors are developing hardware and  
40 software that could be approved for use in this program.  
41 Vendors were encouraged to make interfaces user friendly,  
42 include ways to reduce errors related to data entry, provide  
43 technical support, and be adaptable to future reporting  
44 modifications. Additionally, the economic survey portion could  
45 be included in future reporting modifications. I'm sorry. It  
46 could be included in the program for all fishermen.

47

48 Dr. Brown indicated that results from a completed pilot program

1 suggests fishermen were able to navigate reporting software  
2 programs on a variety of electronic mobile devices. From the  
3 pilot program, fishermen were fairly accurate, within 10  
4 percent, in estimating weight of catch prior to offload. The  
5 Southeast Fisheries Science Center proposed a year of voluntary  
6 electronic reporting while developing appropriate regulations to  
7 implement a mandatory reporting requirement.

8  
9 Ms. Martha Guyas inquired about how sets would be defined for  
10 commercial lobstermen. Dr. Brown indicated that a set would be  
11 defined as the soak time from when traps were deployed and when  
12 they were collected. Lobsters harvested per string of traps  
13 would be standardized across sets to calculate CPUE.

14  
15 Dr. Tom Frazer asked what sample size of fishermen were used to  
16 result in a weight of catch estimate within 10 percent before  
17 offload. Dr. Brown stated she would need to investigate that  
18 further and report later.

19  
20 Ms. Mara Levy reminded the committee that the program changes  
21 suggested by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center could be  
22 considered along with other alternatives when developing a  
23 regulatory document. Other options for reporting frequency and  
24 required data elements could be explored during the development  
25 of the document to achieve program goals.

26  
27 Dr. Carrie Simmons asked if multiple policy documents or a joint  
28 amendment with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
29 would be required to implement the program changes. Ms. Levy  
30 indicated that a number of approaches are available, depending  
31 on how the council wanted to proceed. Staff from the Southeast  
32 Regional Office indicated that the South Atlantic Fishery  
33 Management Council had begun work on an amendment, but had  
34 placed the document on hold.

35  
36 Dr. Simmons commented that continued work with Southeast  
37 Fisheries Science Center staff and reviewing the results of the  
38 pilot program, when made available, would be helpful to begin  
39 drafting a document. Ms. Levy indicated that identifying the  
40 specific program changes would be beneficial in focusing the  
41 development of a document.

42  
43 The committee suggested that, before developing a document, that  
44 the appropriate advisory panels be convened to comment on the  
45 potential program changes and provide direction to the council.  
46 The committee acknowledged that the timeline of voluntary  
47 participation in 2021, with mandatory implementation in 2022, is  
48 ambitious and may not be possible, given other council

1 priorities and the time needed to develop similar programs in  
2 the past.

3  
4 Update on Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting  
5 Program, Tab F, Number 5, Mr. Peter Hood from the Southeast  
6 Regional Office (SERO) discussed the latest development to the  
7 Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER)  
8 program.

9  
10 The update included a review of program progress since June 2020  
11 and outlined future work still ongoing. Phase I of the program,  
12 which includes trip level reporting, is scheduled to begin  
13 January 5, 2021 in the Gulf of Mexico. For Phase II, which  
14 requires the use of a vessel monitoring system, a VMS, it will  
15 be begin on a later date. Mr. Hood indicated that nine models  
16 of commercial VMS units are now approved for use in the SEFHIER  
17 program.

18  
19 Mr. Dave Donaldson informed the committee that the Gulf States  
20 Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf states, and NOAA had met  
21 earlier to discuss the validation portion of the program and  
22 that coordination would continue as the program is developed.  
23 Ms. Levy indicated that the addition of approved landing  
24 locations is less stringent for SEFHIER than what is required  
25 for the individual fishing quota program, and, as such, landing  
26 locations that are not approved for the IFQ program could be  
27 suitable for SEFHIER.

28  
29 Ms. Guyas asked why the effective date for Phase I of SEFHIER  
30 differed between the Gulf and South Atlantic, and Mr. Hood  
31 indicated the difference was due to a procedural requirement.  
32 Ms. Susan Boggs asked whether the commercial VMS units listed on  
33 the NOAA webpage represented those approved for SEFHIER and  
34 inquired about the status of the program's outreach. Mr. Hood  
35 stated that the listed VMS units were approved and that  
36 approximately ten other units were being considered by NOAA Law  
37 Enforcement.

38  
39 Ms. Emily Muehlstein indicated that paper outreach materials  
40 were scheduled to be mailed in early November. Additionally,  
41 educational webinars directed at NOAA port samplers, state  
42 agency employees, and law enforcement would be conducted in  
43 December, as these groups are likely to be asked questions about  
44 the program. Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.

45  
46 **GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE REPORT**

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Anson. Is there any other

1 business to come before the Data Collection Committee at this  
2 time? Hearing none, we will move on to the Gulf SEDAR Committee  
3 Report, and I will give that one.

4  
5 The Committee adopted the agenda as written and approved the  
6 minutes of the June 2020 meeting, also as written. The  
7 committee received an update on operational assessment process  
8 and SSC recommendations.

9  
10 Dr. Joe Powers, Chair of the council's Scientific and  
11 Statistical Committee, provided a summary of updates to the  
12 operational assessment process, as presented to the SSC by SEDAR  
13 staff. The objective of the changes to the operational  
14 assessment process is to increase efficiency and throughput with  
15 minimal loss of transparency.

16  
17 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center has recommended  
18 eliminating assessment panels for all future operational  
19 assessments and replacing them with topical working groups.  
20 These topical working groups will increase efficiency by  
21 focusing on specific topics and avoiding the review of  
22 previously accepted components of an assessment. They will be  
23 comprised of SSC members, academia and stakeholders, operating  
24 based on statements of work.

25  
26 SSC members would offer guidance on issues requiring topical  
27 working groups, developing statements of work, and reviewing  
28 topical working group findings. The number of topical working  
29 groups per assessment will vary, and statements of work will  
30 need to be developed at least two years in advance of an  
31 operational assessment.

32  
33 Dr. Clay Porch clarified the purposes and outcomes of research  
34 track assessments, operational assessments, and interim  
35 analyses, and he also addressed the issue of possibly needing  
36 topical working groups after an operational assessment has been  
37 started.

38  
39 Dr. Frazer asked for examples of specific unanticipated issues  
40 that should require minimal time to review and be incorporated  
41 into an operational assessment. Studies of discard mortality  
42 rates would be fairly quick to incorporate after a review by a  
43 topical working group. Examples that would potentially delay  
44 the process include incorporation of new information on life  
45 history or the reproductive history of a stock.

46  
47 The council asked for an estimate of time savings or number of  
48 assessments based on comparing the current operational

1 assessment process to the proposed modifications. Dr. Porch  
2 estimated a 20 percent increase in throughput and noted that the  
3 Southeast Fisheries Science Center is continually working on  
4 other changes to increase efficiency, such as automating data  
5 processes. Dr. Powers added that interim analyses increase  
6 efficiency and may be another mechanism to focus on increasing  
7 throughput.

8  
9 Ms. Bosarge asked if the proposed operational assessment process  
10 would still include avenues for stakeholders to participate.  
11 Dr. Porch replied that topical working group meetings will be  
12 available to the public to view and provide feedback, with the  
13 intent to hold some sessions that provide information in less  
14 technical language to reach stakeholder audiences more  
15 effectively.

16  
17 The committee then heard about interim analyses, and,  
18 specifically, the discussion on timing and use for management.  
19 That was Tab I, Number 5. Dr. Carrie Simmons gave an overview  
20 of the interim analyses, including timing from analysis request  
21 to management implementation, methods to improve or automate the  
22 process, current requests, and future considerations when using  
23 this tool. Interim analyses are a quantitative approach for  
24 catch advice, using a fishery-independent index, that is  
25 completed separately from the SEDAR process. She provided red  
26 grouper as one example.

27  
28 Some methods the council may use to improve timeliness for  
29 management purposes include modifying framework procedures,  
30 automating the acceptable biological catch control rule, and  
31 streamlining the framework action approach, where possible.

32  
33 Ms. Bosarge suggested that council staff work with the Southeast  
34 Fisheries Science Center to develop a three-year proposed  
35 schedule of interim analyses for the top species and bring that  
36 back to the council to consider at a future meeting. Mr. Diaz  
37 suggested adding a standard agenda item to review eligible IA  
38 species to every October council meeting may benefit the purpose  
39 of achieving improved timeliness. He also suggested listing the  
40 council's outstanding requests for interim analyses on the Gulf  
41 schedule.

42  
43 SEDAR Steering Committee Report from October 16, 2020 Webinar  
44 Meeting, Tab I, Number 6, Dr. Simmons gave a short overview of  
45 outcomes from the most recent SEDAR Steering Committee webinar,  
46 including 2021 to 2022 assessment schedule changes. Due to the  
47 current workload for data providers and a backlog of ageing  
48 fish, some delays will occur.

1  
2 Gag will be prioritized for the Gulf. The gray snapper,  
3 yellowedge grouper, and gray triggerfish assessments will be  
4 delayed. The committee approved a motion to hold a SEDAR  
5 methods and procedures workshop to discuss improving the quality  
6 of fishery-independent data inputs and streamlining future stock  
7 assessments. Finally, information was provided for a SEDAR  
8 research recommendations search tool created by SEDAR staff.

9  
10 Review of Gulf Stock Assessment Schedule, Tab I, Number 6(b),  
11 Mr. Rindone reviewed the Gulf SEDAR schedule for 2020 through  
12 2024. The Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs will be reviewing  
13 yellowtail snapper projections on October 30. Changes to the  
14 schedule include moving the gray snapper operational assessment  
15 back one year from 2021 to 2022 and the yellowedge grouper  
16 operational assessment back one year from 2022 to 2023, with an  
17 anticipated completion in 2023. The gray triggerfish research  
18 track start date will also be delayed at least one year. That  
19 concludes my report. Okay, and so is there any other business  
20 to come, I guess, related to the SEDAR Committee? All right.  
21 Hearing none, we will move forward, and we will then move to the  
22 Law Enforcement Committee. Mr. Diaz, if you want to provide  
23 that report.

24  
25 **LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

26  
27 **MR. DIAZ:** The Law Enforcement Committee Report, the committee  
28 adopted the agenda, and the minutes from the October 2019  
29 meeting were approved as written.

30  
31 Law Enforcement Technical Committee (LETC) March 2020 Meeting  
32 Summary, Tab L, Number 4, Dr. Lasseter reviewed the remaining  
33 sections of the most recent LETC meeting summary that had yet to  
34 be presented to the council.

35  
36 Concerning the issue of illegal charters, LETC members had  
37 discussed the difficulties in executing covert investigations of  
38 charter vessels that are taking paying passengers fishing in  
39 federal waters without a federal permit. These investigations  
40 are time-consuming and expensive, and the LETC requested that  
41 the council recommend to NOAA that the JEA priorities be  
42 expanded to allow federal funding to be used to enforce charter/  
43 for-hire permit violations. Committee members discussed the  
44 issue, but did not provide a recommendation.

45  
46 Although not on the committee, Dr. Crabtree noted that the issue  
47 regarding illegal charters came about after the states opened  
48 inconsistent state water seasons for red snapper fishing, which,

1 along with an increasing abundance of red snapper in state  
2 waters, created the demand for state-water red snapper fishing  
3 trips. Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. I think that Ms. Guyas  
6 wanted to make a comment.

7  
8 **MS. GUYAS:** I did. Thanks for recognizing me. I wasn't on this  
9 committee, but I did want to go back to the motion that the LETC  
10 made, and I sent that motion to staff, and, of course, it's  
11 modified that the council would make it.

12  
13 **That motion was that the council recommend to NOAA that the JEA**  
14 **priorities be expanded to include patrol and investigative**  
15 **efforts for federal charter/for-hire permit violations. Along**  
16 **with expanding the JEA priorities, NOAA should establish an**  
17 **intelligence-gathering program that will work with their federal**  
18 **for-hire permit holders to identify suspect vessels and to**  
19 **report this information to state law enforcement partners. If I**  
20 **can get a second for moving this forward, I can explain my**  
21 **rationale and provide a little more information.**

22  
23 **MR. DIAZ:** I will second it.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We've got a second from Mr. Diaz. Let's get  
26 it up on the board real quick, Martha, if that's all right.

27  
28 **MS. GUYAS:** Sure.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so it looks like we are all  
31 there, and so go ahead, Martha, and you can elaborate.

32  
33 **MS. GUYAS:** Thanks. I don't know what the best, I guess, vessel  
34 for this request would be, if it's a letter or whatever, and I'm  
35 open to ideas there, and so I guess, first of all, one of the  
36 things that Roy said in the committee meeting is that this is  
37 all about inconsistent red snapper regulations, and, at least in  
38 Florida, I can assure you that it is not, and this is a  
39 situation for everything, and it's not just a matter of state  
40 guideboats trying to run trips in federal waters, and there are  
41 a -- This is a multidimensional issue.

42  
43 I think what law enforcement is looking for here is a couple of  
44 things, and so adding it to the JEA priorities helps them be  
45 able to investigate these cases, and they are expensive to run,  
46 to do the work that they need to do, and, also, I guess, in  
47 talking to our law enforcement folks about this, really, one of  
48 the key things here is this intelligence gathering program and

1 information sharing, and that would go a long way towards  
2 investigative efforts and enforcement, and so this just gives a  
3 platform for the states and NOAA to work together a little bit  
4 more efficiently and effectively.

5  
6 I guess the situation right now is that, if someone calls NOAA  
7 with a complaint, they may call FWC, or a state agency, about  
8 it, but there is -- It sounds like there is better ways to do  
9 this, and so that's what I think what was the LETC's intent  
10 here. At council meetings, just about at every meeting, in  
11 public testimony, we hear about this, and this is a huge issue  
12 that's becoming a bigger issue with some of these different  
13 online platforms that have been established about for-hire trips  
14 and that kind of thing, and so that's why I am introducing this  
15 motion here.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Martha. Dr. Crabtree.

18  
19 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think I wasn't clear, I guess, because the  
20 inconsistent regulation that I was referring to is not the  
21 inconsistent seasons. It's the inconsistent permitting  
22 requirements, and the problem arises because the states allow  
23 the state guideboats to harvest federally-managed reef fish at  
24 all.

25  
26 The way you can really stop this, I believe, is if the states  
27 require that you have to have a federal reef fish charter permit  
28 to possess reef fish while under charter. That way, you  
29 wouldn't have to do these expensive investigations and all this  
30 at-sea enforcement, and you could enforce it right at the dock,  
31 and so that's the inconsistency that I am referring to, and I  
32 think that's what would be necessary in order to really stop  
33 this, because I think anything that requires policing a line  
34 nine miles out is going to be very difficult to do and very  
35 difficult to maintain, but it's the permit requirement  
36 inconsistency that I was referring to.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** So, just to follow-up on that, Roy, I just  
39 wanted to make sure -- So the motion here doesn't quite capture  
40 that, in your mind?

41  
42 **DR. CRABTREE:** No, because all the motion is doing is putting  
43 more patrols out at-sea, I think, to investigate state  
44 guideboats, if they're cheating and crossing the line, and  
45 that's fine, and I am not opposed to the motion, but a change to  
46 essentially require that, in state waters, only federally-  
47 permitted charter boats can possess these federally-managed  
48 species, and that's a change that the states would have to make

1 and not us.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Right.

4

5 **DR. CRABTREE:** We have similar requirements, in many cases, with  
6 commercial fisheries, where you have to have a snapper grouper  
7 permit or a reef fish permit, but we don't in this case. Now, I  
8 recognize it would probably be a political fight, and there  
9 would be a lot of opposition to it, but, realistically, this  
10 will continue to be a problem, and we don't have enough joint  
11 enforcement budget to actually patrol this, I don't think, but  
12 I'm not opposed to the motion, and I'm certainly not opposed to  
13 having conversation with NOAA Law Enforcement about the JEAs.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Roy. Ms. Bosarge.

16

17 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I like what Roy is  
18 saying, and I think it probably would fix some issues, if that  
19 could ever happen, and I think, in the short term though, the  
20 motion on the board is an excellent one to get the ball rolling  
21 and maybe address some of the problems facing that industry  
22 right now.

23

24 Martha, I was just going to -- I don't want you to amend your  
25 motion or anything like that, but I'm looking at this motion and  
26 thinking, all right, at some point, this is going to go all the  
27 way up the chain, to somebody really high up in NOAA OLE, plus  
28 God knows where else, and, if I read this, not having any  
29 background on our conversation, I would probably send patrol  
30 boats out to go board every federally-permitted charter boat and  
31 see if they are in violation of anything, if they're over the  
32 bag limit or what's going on.

33

34 That's not your intention, I know, and so I would just suggest  
35 that, when staff -- In this particular case, when staff, I  
36 assume, is going to craft a letter that would go up to NOAA  
37 somewhere, and maybe that letter could come before the council,  
38 in a Law Enforcement or Reef Fish Committee, and let us put our  
39 eyes on it, because I think there's probably some issues that  
40 Martha may have not completely even elaborated yet to the  
41 council, and we want to make sure it touches all the different  
42 areas and is clear as a bell when it goes up the chain and we're  
43 not there to explain it.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I got that, Leann, and, again, I don't have  
46 any problem with drafting a letter and sharing it with the  
47 appropriate committees or the Full Council, and I would like to  
48 make sure that we capture the intent moving forward, so it's as

1 effective as it possibly can be. Ms. Guyas.

2  
3 **MS. GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. I appreciate that, and so, yes, this  
4 is about whether someone is running a for-hire charter and they  
5 have that federal permit, and it's not necessarily trying to add  
6 enforcement to permit holders that are just going about their  
7 normal activities, but I would like to go back to what Roy was  
8 saying.

9  
10 Having states require a federal for-hire permit to catch reef  
11 fish is not going to solve this problem. This is bigger than  
12 that, and it is very clear, from our law enforcement, and it's  
13 very clear, I think, to a lot of the folks that are dealing with  
14 this in their local communities, and so I guess I appreciate  
15 that idea, but that does not solve the problem, and certainly  
16 dockside enforcement of that does not solve the problem, because  
17 there is too many easy ways to get around that, and so, anyway,  
18 thanks.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Martha. Dr. Lasseter.

21  
22 **DR. AVA LASSETER:** Thank you. Just to tag onto something that  
23 Martha just said, yes, one of the law enforcement officers'  
24 concerns -- They noted that a lot of these are not even state  
25 licensed, and that, when they have encountered them on the  
26 water, they have been able to determine that the passengers have  
27 been led to suggest that they actually know the captain, and so  
28 these are not even official state-licensed charters, at least in  
29 part.

30  
31 Then, second, to speak to Leann's comments, this motion was  
32 crafted by the LETC themselves. It looks almost -- Actually, it  
33 looks verbatim to what they crafted, and so I do have some  
34 additional notes from the meeting that I can use to inform the  
35 report, but this should adhere pretty closely to what the law  
36 enforcement officers' actual concerns are about the issue.  
37 Thank you.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ava. Dr. Mickle.

40  
41 **DR. MICKLE:** I appreciate it, and I wasn't on the committee,  
42 but, at Full Council, I will comment to that I think the motion  
43 encapsulates exactly what the Law Enforcement Committee,  
44 Technical Committee, had discussed at their meeting.

45  
46 There was one thing I think they did talk about, which I don't  
47 think there needs to be any change in the motion, but I feel we  
48 need to bring it up, but there's also the issue that these state

1 for-hire boats, when encountered, or even seen by the federal  
2 captains, and this motion would lead them to tell this new  
3 intelligence-gathering program about these for-hire boats that  
4 cross the line, but the response from the state charter boats is  
5 that that's a private trip, and it's not a charter trip, and  
6 these are their friends.

7  
8 It's difficult to enforce, and I just hope that we can maybe  
9 recommend, in a letter, or just some sort of way to let this  
10 intelligence-gathering program -- This is a very difficult  
11 issue, and I don't even think that Roy's concerns about this can  
12 be addressed, because, again, once they're out there, it changes  
13 from a charter to a bunch of friends on a boat. They go from  
14 clients to friends when a law enforcement boat comes up, and I'm  
15 not quite sure how you enforce that. Thank you.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Paul, for those comments. I'm  
18 going to wait just a few seconds to see if anybody else wants to  
19 weigh-in. Okay. I'm not seeing -- I see Kevin Anson.

20  
21 **MR. ANSON:** To Paul's point that he brought up just now, I  
22 thought it was my understanding that the federal law enforcement  
23 considered those state vessels that were registered in the state  
24 as a charter vessel to essentially be a charter vessel, and  
25 they're no longer a private vessel, I thought, and maybe I'm  
26 just making that up, but I thought, at some point in the past,  
27 that was discussed, and that was how federal law enforcement  
28 were treating those vessels, and I don't know if Mara or Dr.  
29 Crabtree has a comment to that.

30  
31 **DR. CRABTREE:** I don't know about that, Kevin, and I don't know  
32 if we have anyone from NOAA Law Enforcement on the call right  
33 now, and my point in all of this, and I think every law  
34 enforcement agent I've talked to will tell you, that, if it  
35 requires at-sea enforcement, then it's much, much more difficult  
36 to enforce than if it can be enforced at the dock, and that's my  
37 point with it. If you can make this something that can be  
38 enforced at the dock, it can be done much more efficiently and  
39 much less costly.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Okay, and so we've  
42 had a fair amount of really productive comments there that can  
43 help inform the way that this letter is crafted, and so, again,  
44 we do have a motion on the board here. **Seeing no more hands, is**  
45 **there any opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion**  
46 **passes.**

47  
48 Is there any other business to come before or on the topic of

1 law enforcement? Hearing none, we will move on, and we'll go to  
2 the Sustainable Fisheries Committee. Mr. Diaz, if you're okay,  
3 you can take it away.

4  
5 **SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE REPORT**  
6

7 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes, sir, Mr. Chair. The Sustainable Fisheries  
8 Committee report, the committee adopted the agenda, Tab E,  
9 Number 1, and approved the minutes, Tab E, Number 2, of the  
10 September 2020 meeting as written.

11  
12 Finalize Recommendations on Executive Order 13921 from Public  
13 Comments and from the Council, Tab E, Number 4, Dr. Simmons  
14 provided a draft list of items the council will recommend to  
15 reduce burdens on domestic fishing. She noted that the  
16 committee should discuss the items and comment on the ranking  
17 provided for the recommended actions.

18  
19 Following the September council meeting, council staff had  
20 followed up with the National Marine Fisheries Service  
21 Headquarters regarding the inclusion of recommendations  
22 affecting the recreational fishing sector. She informed the  
23 committee that recommendations affecting both sectors could be  
24 included in the council's list of recommended actions.

25  
26 Dr. Simmons reviewed the draft list of items, noting the ranking  
27 of each. Concerning the suggestion to remove the annual catch  
28 limit for spiny lobster, she noted that this action may be  
29 inconsistent with the Executive Order, as it would violate the  
30 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

31  
32 Committee members discussed the rationale for removing the catch  
33 limit for a stock that has limited local recruitment and the  
34 history of considerations for removing it. Ms. Mara Levy noted  
35 that, if the action is retained, it should be reframed as a  
36 request to modify the Magnuson-Stevens Act to allow this stock  
37 to be exempt from the ACL requirement. It was noted that the  
38 Scientific and Statistical Committee has expressed concern with  
39 setting an ACL for spiny lobster, which has a unique life  
40 history.

41  
42 The committee provided feedback on the ranked priorities for  
43 some actions, which are reflected in the revised draft list.  
44 The committee also provided suggested ranking for three items on  
45 the list that were unranked. The committee recommended a  
46 Priority A for the development of a commercial electronic  
47 logbook program, B for a proposal to reduce burdens on the  
48 transfer of limited-access permits that are renewable but

1 expired, and C for a request to modify the Magnuson-Stevens Act  
2 to exempt spiny lobster from annual catch limits.

3  
4 Staff will finalize and transmit the recommendations on behalf  
5 of the council. Dr. Simmons informed the committee that  
6 additional public comments on the Executive Order collected  
7 through the Something's Fishy tool are now available on the  
8 council website under this agenda item.

9  
10 Summary Report from the Joint Section 102 Workgroup, Tab E,  
11 Number 5, council staff summarized discussions held by the Joint  
12 Council Workgroup on Section 102 of the Modern Fish Act of 2018.  
13 The workgroup established a charge and a directive after  
14 reviewing alternative management strategies identified for  
15 further investigation at their first webinar meeting. The  
16 workgroup will reconvene in the first half of 2021 and report  
17 back to the councils at that time. Allocation Review  
18 Procedures, council staff --

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Diaz, excuse me. I see that Martha had  
21 her hand up. Martha, do you have a quick question?

22  
23 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes, and sorry. I think my hand-raising is kind of  
24 delayed, but I was going to go back to the EO list. I have had  
25 a bunch of people reach out to me over the past few days, and I  
26 think there's been a bunch of public comment submitted about the  
27 powerheads in the stressed zone, and I believe that was on -- We  
28 talked about it at the last meeting, in September, and I think  
29 where we left that was the council asked for more information on  
30 that topic, and then I think, once we get that information, if  
31 the council wanted to, they could proceed with rulemaking to  
32 deal with that, but I just wanted to bring it up, since I've  
33 been hearing a lot about it, especially since we're not going to  
34 be able to do public testimony this week. Is that where we left  
35 that item, and that's why it's not on this list? That was my  
36 recollection, but I just wanted to confirm that.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am going to defer to Dr. Simmons, actually.

39  
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We actually  
41 provided the additional information in the committee report in  
42 September, and the council took no action, and so that's why it  
43 is not currently included in the list. I also wanted to just  
44 mention that I think, just so everyone knows, it's not just the  
45 public comment from the Something's Fishy tool, but it's the  
46 public comment that we also received from the September to the  
47 October council meeting, but they're now under this agenda item  
48 on the website. Thank you.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We can certainly amend the committee  
3 report to reflect that, Dr. Simmons. I guess, with regard to  
4 the powerheads in the stressed zone, we can perhaps revisit that  
5 issue after Dale completes the report. Mr. Diaz.

6  
7 **MR. DIAZ:** Allocation Review Procedures, Tab E, Number 6, the  
8 council staff reviewed definitions for a fisheries allocation  
9 review and for an evaluation of fisheries allocations for an  
10 amendment and then discussed allocation review procedures.

11  
12 The procedures presented were suggested by the Allocation Review  
13 Working Group and were discussed by the Standing and  
14 Socioeconomic SSCs. Procedures presented included the  
15 composition of the review panel, the content of the review  
16 notice, and the number of review tiers to establish.

17  
18 Council staff also presented the steps or stages to consider  
19 during the review and highlighted sections to include in the  
20 allocation review report. Alternatives to reset review  
21 timelines to determine the start of the subsequent reviews were  
22 also provided.

23  
24 Committee members asked whether there would be an overlap  
25 between the allocation review guidelines considered by the South  
26 Atlantic and Gulf Councils. Staff noted that, currently, each  
27 council is developing guidelines most suitable to review their  
28 allocations.

29  
30 Dr. Joe Powers, the SSC Chair, indicated that the SSC expressed  
31 support for setting predictable timelines for reviews and for  
32 documenting the review process. He noted that several SSC  
33 members indicated their willingness to participate in the review  
34 process. Dr. Powers also noted the consensus position of the  
35 SSC is that the involvement of outside expertise in the review  
36 process would be useful.

37  
38 Ms. Levy asked about what guidance the committee may offer,  
39 following the presentation. Staff indicated that the committee  
40 could offer guidance, revise the procedures presented, and  
41 suggest additional procedures to include in the guidelines.  
42 Staff also noted that the committee and the council will have  
43 additional opportunities to offer recommendations on review  
44 procedures.

45  
46 Committee members recommended the inclusion of terms of  
47 reference for the allocation reviews and asked who would draft  
48 the TORs. Staff replied that the guidelines will specify that

1 TORs will be drafted for each allocation review by the  
2 Allocation Review Working Group and that the TORs would be  
3 submitted to the council for approval. Mr. Chair, this  
4 concludes my report.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thank you, Mr. Diaz. I just wanted to  
7 circle back on Martha's comment and just to make sure that  
8 everybody was on the same page. In the committee report at the  
9 last council meeting, the issue with regard to powerheads in the  
10 stressed zone was elaborated on, or commented on, there, and so,  
11 if you were expecting or would like to see something in addition  
12 to that, now is probably the time. Are you still there, Martha?

13  
14 **MS. GUYAS:** I am, and I can I guess speak to it, but I see that  
15 Troy Williamson has his hand up. I mean, this is something that  
16 the council can do, and so, in my mind, it seemed like that the  
17 council was uncomfortable putting it on the EO list, and it  
18 seems like we could come back and do this on our own, and it's  
19 not something that we need to ask another agency to do, but I  
20 will stop there.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you. Troy.

23  
24 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comment is  
25 regarding the bullet point of the Modernizing Recreational  
26 Fisheries Act. The staff has given it a ranking of B, and I  
27 would like to change that from a B to an A, because Section 102  
28 of the Modernizing Act amends the MSA, and I think that  
29 certainly justifies an enhanced ranking.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so do we need a motion for that, do  
32 you think, or is there any -- I am looking at staff, and staff  
33 is willing to make that change, but I just wanted to see if  
34 there's any additional comment from council members on that.  
35 Seeing none, we can make that change. Ms. Bosarge.

36  
37 **MS. BOSARGE:** Troy, I'm looking at the committee report, and, if  
38 you look, the very next section of this committee report is on  
39 the joint council workgroup, where that group is specifically to  
40 address the Modern Fish Act, and do you not think that maybe  
41 that bullet that you have there, that you want Headquarters to  
42 look at this, would be much better suited coming out of that  
43 workgroup that is working on the Modern Fish Act, rather than  
44 putting it under an Executive Order that we got feedback from  
45 Headquarters that it should really be tailored primarily to  
46 commercial fishing, that that was the gist of the Executive  
47 Order?

48

1 If you want to leave it in there, and I didn't say anything  
2 during committee, and I said, you know, it will be all right,  
3 and they can leave it in there, but I have some consternation  
4 about making it an A priority over and above a lot of other  
5 priorities that are commercially oriented.

6

7 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** May I address that, Mr. Chair?

8

9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Troy.

10

11 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** I don't think it's overkill, Leann. I think  
12 both the workgroup and this council carry a lot of weight with  
13 NMFS, who the recommendations to this Executive Order are going  
14 to go to, and, additionally, I think we've already determined  
15 that the Executive Order is broad in scope and doesn't just  
16 apply to commercial fishing interests, and, as a matter of a  
17 fact, the order speaks in terms of domestic fisheries, rather  
18 than commercial or recreational, and so I would recommend that  
19 we upgrade from B to A on this bullet.

20

21 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just a quick follow-up, Mr. Chairman.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Ms. Bosarge.

24

25 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. It speaks to a seafood industry, and  
26 it uses the word "recreational" one time in there, and that is  
27 in regard to siting of aquaculture facilities, to make sure that  
28 they don't conflict with commercial and recreational fisheries,  
29 and that's where it uses the word "recreational". The seafood  
30 industry is just that. It's the commercial fishing industry.

31

32 Now, I'm not going to fight you on this. If you want to make it  
33 an A, I'm not going to lose any sleep over it, but just know  
34 that, when I gave -- Because I gave most of those ideas that you  
35 see in that bulleted list, and, believe me, there were a lot of  
36 things that would have caused conflict between commercial and  
37 recreational fishermen, that would have been detrimental to  
38 recreational fishermen, and I left them off my list, because I  
39 wanted to be better than that.

40

41 I wanted this list of mine to be only about commercial fishing  
42 and making it better, and I could have said that I want red drum  
43 opened up in the EEZ to commercial fishing, and, boy, that would  
44 have had some recreational fishermen fired up, and I didn't want  
45 to do that. I wanted this to be just about things that could  
46 make commercial fishing better without causing conflict between  
47 commercial and recreational fishermen.

48

1 I could have said that you need to reallocate king mackerel,  
2 because the recreational isn't catching it, and we can in the  
3 commercial fishery, and that would be great for commercial  
4 fishing, and I left those things out. I tried to take the high  
5 road on this, and so that's where my frustration lies a little  
6 bit, knowing that you have a whole workgroup dedicated just to  
7 that Modern Fish Act, and I'm not trying to throw commercial  
8 things into that workgroup and find a way to make commercial  
9 fishing better. I am letting you do your thing, and I just kind  
10 of hoped for the same thing when the shoe is on the other foot  
11 and we had a commercial Executive Order, but, if you want it an  
12 A, go for it.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay.

15  
16 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Thank you. I appreciate your concession.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Again, I understand that back-and-  
19 forth and that there is strong feelings about the intent of the  
20 list here, and certainly we'll consider that as we put it  
21 together moving forward, and so, unless there is other issues to  
22 discuss with regard to the Sustainable Fisheries Committee, I  
23 think we're going to go ahead and move forward. I am not seeing  
24 anything else here, and so we will go ahead and move to the  
25 Administrative and Budget Committee. Mr. Dyskow, I see you are  
26 ready.

27  
28 **ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT**

29  
30 **MR. DYSKOW:** I am, Mr. Chair. I am ready. My report is  
31 creatively short, but we do have two motions that we have to  
32 vote on. The Administrative/Budget Committee report, the  
33 Committee adopted the agenda, which is Tab G, Number 1, as  
34 written and approved the minutes, Tab G, Number 2, of the  
35 September 2020 meeting as written. A council member requested  
36 to add an agenda item to provide an update on the contractual  
37 projects funded with 2015 to 2019 no-cost extension funds.

38  
39 Review Expenditures for No-Cost Extension Request, Fiscal Year  
40 2015 to 2019, and the 2020 Budget and Expenditures, Tab G, and  
41 these are Number 4 and Number 5. In Tab G, Number 4, staff  
42 presented the expenditures for the 2015 to 2019 administrative  
43 award. The total funding received was \$18,953,575, and we will  
44 have approximately 39 percent of the funds unspent at the end of  
45 2020. Staff have recommended that we request a second no-cost  
46 extension to complete the work associated with the remaining  
47 \$565,140.

1 In Tab G, Number 5, the funded 2020 budget was presented  
2 alongside the expenditures for the 2020 administrative award  
3 through September 30. Most of the costs have remained on level  
4 with expectations, with the largest variances in the categories  
5 of equipment, contractual, travel, and meeting room costs.

6  
7 The savings in equipment spending was due to cost saving  
8 measures, while the variances in other categories are  
9 attributable to the pandemic and holding virtual meetings since  
10 mid-March. Overall, staff expects the year will end with just  
11 over a million dollars unspent in funding to carry forward for  
12 the next four years of this award cycle.

13  
14 Review and Discuss Scope of Work Fiscal Year 2015 to 2019  
15 Activities, and this would be Tab G, Number 6, staff reviewed  
16 the proposed modified scope of work for 2015 through 2019  
17 activities provided in Tab G, Number 6.

18  
19 The activities outlined would potentially provide the council  
20 with the same deliverables and information that would be  
21 obtained by holding in-person meetings for developing a fishery  
22 ecosystem plan and accomplishing research and background legwork  
23 necessary to initiate the development of Coral Amendment 10.  
24 However, these deliverables would be conducted by an outside  
25 contractor, through a competitive bidding process. These two  
26 subjects would require a change of scope to be approved by NOAA  
27 Grants Management Division. Additionally, staff would continue  
28 with the existing workplan of holding meetings, where possible,  
29 to complete all other items related to the 2015 to 2019  
30 administrative award.

31  
32 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to approve the no-cost**  
33 **extension request based on Fiscal Year 2015 to 2019 activities**  
34 **as written. Mr. Chair.**

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Dyskow, and so we have a  
37 committee motion on the board. Is there any further discussion  
38 of that motion? **Hearing none, is there any opposition to the**  
39 **motion? Hearing none, the motion carries. Mr. Dyskow.**

40  
41 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to a committee  
42 member's request, staff reported that the existing contractual  
43 work for the 2015 to 2019 no-cost extension was currently in  
44 progress. A report of these activities is planned to be  
45 submitted to NOAA in the next progress report. Staff will bring  
46 these results to the council in the form of presentations  
47 beginning in March 2021, as time on the agenda permits.

1 Several committee members suggested specific subjects for  
2 exploration that were outside of the scope of work that were  
3 included in the 2015 to 2019 administrative award. It was  
4 determined that these activities could more easily be included  
5 in the 2020 to 2024 administrative award costs and activities.

6  
7 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to request staff**  
8 **provide guidance on using 2020 budget funds for the intention of**  
9 **red drum independent offshore purse seine data and an**  
10 **independent stock assessment on gray triggerfish. Mr. Chair.**

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Dyskow, and so we have another  
13 committee motion on the board. Is there any further discussion  
14 of that motion? Let's put it up.

15  
16 **MR. DYSKOW:** Mr. Chair, before we move on, I would be remiss if  
17 I didn't say that, during the committee session, there was some  
18 question raised by members that weren't on the committee, and so  
19 they couldn't vote, whether these two items should be split into  
20 two parts. In other words, a separate vote on the red drum  
21 offshore purse seine data and a separate vote on the gray  
22 triggerfish assessment. I haven't heard that in Full Council,  
23 but I would be remiss if I didn't point that out.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Dyskow, and you're right that  
26 that was brought up, and so it's an opportunity now, for those  
27 who weren't on the committee, if they want to talk about that.  
28 Otherwise, we will move forward, and so I'll give it just a  
29 second. Mr. Dugas.

30  
31 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, sir, Mr. Chair. Just following up with Mr.  
32 Dyskow's statement, I still don't maybe understand why we are  
33 bringing these two together, and I think they should be  
34 separated. I probably don't have the knowledge of most of you,  
35 but, to me, it would just seem way easier to separate them,  
36 because I feel like gray triggerfish will be thrown down,  
37 because there's probably some council members that aren't going  
38 to be in favor of the redfish going through, and so I just  
39 wanted to throw that out there.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Sure, J.D., and I will just weigh-in here a  
42 bit. I think, if you look closely at this motion, the intent  
43 really is to request from the staff that they require  
44 information that would allow us to make a more informed decision  
45 on whether or not we want to invest in any one of these  
46 particular activities, whether it's the red drum offshore purse  
47 seine data collection effort or a stock assessment on gray  
48 triggerfish, and so I don't think the motion is intended to take

1 any particular action here, and it's more of an exploratory  
2 analysis to figure out if either one of these might be viable,  
3 or perhaps both of them are viable, and whether or not we might  
4 have the monies to do it. Then, once we have that information  
5 in hand, I think that we would revisit both of these issues, and  
6 so that's my thoughts on the matter. Mr. Riechers.

7  
8 **MR. RIECHERS:** Tom, you just pointed out what I thought the  
9 flavor of the committee discussion was, and so I lowered my  
10 hand, but they just didn't catch it in time.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Robin. Okay. Is there  
13 any further discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**  
14 **opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Mr.  
15 Dyskow. Excuse me. I spoke too soon, Mr. Dyskow. I believe  
16 that Kevin Anson had his hand up. There's a little time delay  
17 here. I apologize.

18  
19 **MR. DYSKOW:** Let's let Kevin talk.

20  
21 **MR. ANSON:** Thanks to both of you, but I do have just one  
22 clarification that I have in the report, and so I will wait, if  
23 Mr. Dyskow wants to finish it, or I can address it now.

24  
25 **MR. DYSKOW:** You may address it, gladly.

26  
27 **MR. ANSON:** At the top, with the review expenditures for no-cost  
28 extension request, the first paragraph there, I am not on the  
29 committee, and I wasn't 100 percent focused during the  
30 discussion, but, in reading this second sentence in that  
31 paragraph, and combined with the third sentence, it doesn't  
32 quite match up with the way my math works, and it says we had 39  
33 percent of the funds, and so I take that to be of the nearly \$19  
34 million, left over at the end of 2020, and staff is recommending  
35 to request a second no-cost extension to complete the work  
36 associated with the remaining \$565,000, and so I lost some money  
37 in there somewhere, according to my math. I don't know if  
38 that's 39 percent of the 2019 funds that were left that has been  
39 already asked in the original no-cost extension, and there's  
40 \$565,000 of those funds remaining, and so I --

41  
42 **MR. DYSKOW:** If I could answer that, this is complicated, and  
43 I'm not used to these types of carryover extensions any more  
44 than probably you are, but, as I understand what both Beth and  
45 Carrie articulated, of that \$18,953,575, a lot of that has  
46 already been committed to projects, and there is \$565,140  
47 remaining that is not committed to other projects, and they  
48 would like to carry that forward with some specific items that

1 they want to accomplish.

2

3 The item we just talked about, which was the red drum  
4 independent purse seine data and the independent stock  
5 assessment on gray triggerfish, would not qualify very easily  
6 for that second carryover request of \$565,000, and it was deemed  
7 that those two items would be better used in the 2020 to 2024  
8 carryover funds, and so we're going to get everything done, but  
9 they are somewhat restricted on what they can spend that second  
10 carryover request for the 2015 through 2019 funds and can  
11 accomplish. Dr. Simmons or Beth, if you have anything you would  
12 like to add, please chime in.

13

14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the  
15 39 percent of the funds is from the original no-cost extension  
16 request, but Mr. Dyskow is correct that the little over half-a-  
17 million is what we're anticipating will be remaining from the  
18 previous 2015 to 2019 award, and so I'm sorry that's not on  
19 there, and we should add that.

20

21 **MR. DYSKOW:** I certainly understand your question, because the  
22 staff explained this to me several times, and I am still  
23 learning some of these unique financial transactions within the  
24 federal system. We have another hand up, which is Dr. Mickle.

25

26 **DR. MICKLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I can solve this  
27 with a very simple amendment to the committee report. Right  
28 before the \$565,000, you add "and uncommitted", and so it would  
29 read: "To complete the work associated with the remaining and  
30 uncommitted \$565,140". Does that make sense to the committee,  
31 or I guess the Full Council?

32

33 **MR. DYSKOW:** Just a point of review that it makes sense to me,  
34 as the chair of the committee.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Carrie is actually talking to Beth right now  
37 on the phone, and let's just sit tight for a second. I will  
38 walk away and see if I can get a confirmation on that.

39

40 **MR. DYSKOW:** Carrie just came back to her station.

41

42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Do you think that's the actual number?

43

44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I guess we just committed it to us  
45 requesting this further extension to the no-cost that we had  
46 previously requested with those three items for ecosystem,  
47 coral, and for the money toward those other meetings, but I  
48 guess I'm a little confused.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** If I could weigh-in real quick, Phil, I think  
3 that the reality is that we have \$565,140 that is remaining,  
4 and, in fact, at this point, it is unavailable and uncommitted,  
5 and so the proposal --  
6  
7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** No, and you just committed it to  
8 what we just requested in the second extension of the no-cost,  
9 and that's what we're going to do. We're going to put that  
10 request into NOAA Grants online, right?  
11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's what I'm saying.  
13  
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** So it is committed then.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** That's right.  
17  
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** It's just remaining, and so it is  
19 committed funds.  
20  
21 **MR. DYSKOW:** Mr. Chairman, how would you like to proceed with  
22 this, because it sounds like it's a moot point.  
23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think it is, and so, Paul, I think I  
25 understand where you were trying to go with the amended  
26 language, but I think it is not necessary, and so I think we're  
27 actually on firm footing here simply saying that staff had  
28 recommended that we request a second no-cost extension to  
29 complete the work associated with the remaining \$565,140.  
30  
31 **DR. MICKLE:** Dr. Simmons' clarification makes perfect sense.  
32 Thank you. It is committed.  
33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right.  
35  
36 **MR. DYSKOW:** We have one more hand up, which would be Kevin  
37 Anson.  
38  
39 **MR. ANSON:** I no longer have an issue. Thank you.  
40  
41 **MR. DYSKOW:** Great. Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.  
42  
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Dyskow, for that  
44 fine work. Is there any other business to be discussed as it  
45 relates to the Administrative and Budget Committee at this time?  
46 Okay. Hearing none, I think what we will do is adjourn for the  
47 day, and we will pick back up at nine o'clock, and we have two  
48 committee reports, and we'll have an opportunity for the

1 committee chairs to review those this evening, and hopefully we  
2 can work through them efficiently tomorrow morning, so that  
3 people that need to get on with other facets of their life in  
4 preparation for a tropical storm, and what might be a hurricane,  
5 can do that.

6  
7 Again, I thank everybody for taking the time to spend a little  
8 bit longer today, to make sure that we can get through the  
9 critical elements, and hopefully we'll make efficient work  
10 tomorrow, in the morning, and so I'll see everybody at 9:00.  
11 Thank you.

12  
13 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on October 27, 2020.)

14  
15 - - -

16  
17 October 28, 2020

18  
19 WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

20  
21 - - -

22  
23 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
24 Council reconvened via webinar on Wednesday morning, October 28,  
25 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Good morning, everybody. We're going to move  
28 forward, and we do have a hurricane that's expected to make  
29 landfall in early evening and late afternoon, and so we want to  
30 move efficiently through this, and so we've got the Reef Fish  
31 Committee as well as the Mackerel Committee, and we'll go ahead  
32 and start off with the Reef Fish Committee Report. Martha, if  
33 you're ready, go ahead.

34  
35 **REEF FISH COMMITTEE REPORT**

36  
37 **MS. GUYAS:** I will go ahead and get started then. The committee  
38 adopted the agenda, after adding a discussion item under Other  
39 Business, and the minutes from the September 2020 meeting were  
40 approved as written.

41  
42 Review of Reef Fish Landings, Mr. Peter Hood from the National  
43 Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office reviewed  
44 the status of reef fish landings in the Gulf of Mexico, focusing  
45 on commercial landings. Although some data remain outstanding,  
46 all species remain below their respective commercial ACLs thus  
47 far into 2020. In 2019, only lane snapper and gray triggerfish  
48 (recreational sector) exceeded the ACL. Gaps in the collection

1 of catch data from the Marine Recreational Information Program  
2 exist due to the effects of COVID-19 beginning in Wave 2, which  
3 is March and April 2020.

4  
5 Approaches for Estimating Recreational Landings in 2020, Dr.  
6 Richard Cody from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
7 Administration's Office of Science and Technology reviewed the  
8 effects of COVID-19 on the collection of recreational fisheries  
9 data through MRIP and NOAA OST's plan for producing catch  
10 estimates for 2020.

11  
12 Dockside surveying has been affected by social distancing  
13 requirements, beginning in March 2020. Decisions to suspend or  
14 modify sampling procedures are made at the state level and vary  
15 by state. The MRIP Fishing Effort Survey is a mail-based effort  
16 survey, which has been largely uninterrupted by COVID-19.  
17 However, difficulty sampling out-of-state fishermen via dockside  
18 sampling exists.

19  
20 Preliminary estimates of fishing effort for Waves 2 through 4  
21 have been published to the MRIP website. However, off-frame  
22 non-resident effort is unaccounted. These data are likely to be  
23 continually updated as more information becomes available.  
24 Preliminary estimates of catch are absent and will not be  
25 published by wave for 2020, due to significant data gaps. NOAA  
26 OST will continue to explore methods for estimating catch in  
27 2020 using valid alternative methods.

28  
29 The committee asked about the degree to which NOAA OST was  
30 coordinating with the states about their intentions for  
31 published catch estimates for 2020, since the states use those  
32 data for monitoring and assessment of inshore species. Dr. Cody  
33 replied that NOAA OST has communicated some with the states  
34 about their respective data collection issues, but not directly  
35 about its intentions regarding reporting 2020 catch data. The  
36 committee asked that use of any supplementary forms of data  
37 available to MRIP and the states to resolve data gaps for 2020  
38 be explored and detailed to the council.

39  
40 Review of IFQ Program Landings and Fishing Industry Impacts Due  
41 to COVID-19 Pandemic, Dr. Jessica Stephen reviewed landings for  
42 Gulf species managed under individual fishing quota programs.  
43 IFQ landings are within the range typically observed for each  
44 species at this point in the year, when accounting for quota  
45 changes.

46  
47 Ex-vessel prices in 2020 are somewhat below the prices observed  
48 in previous years. However, 2020 prices are within the

1 confidence intervals observed for 2017 through 2019. The price  
2 per pound for red snapper allocation has been consistent, if not  
3 just slightly higher, in 2020 compared to 2019. Price per pound  
4 observations are slightly lower for red grouper, gag, shallow-  
5 and deepwater groupers, and tilefish.

6  
7 If the council decides to move forward with carrying over any  
8 unused allocation in the IFQ program, it would need to be  
9 calculated on December 31, 2020 and potentially reviewed by the  
10 Scientific and Statistical Committee. Allocation will continue  
11 to be dispersed to shareholder accounts based on shareholdings  
12 on January 1, 2021. Committee members discussed the disparity  
13 in the effect of applying a carryover to those who own their  
14 shares versus those who lease the allocation associated with  
15 their shares.

16  
17 Draft Framework Action to Adjust State Recreational Red Snapper  
18 Catch Limits, council staff presented the draft framework action  
19 to adjust the Gulf state recreational red snapper catch limits  
20 for the private angling component of the recreational sector.  
21 The review included the proposed management alternatives to  
22 adjust the catch limits.

23  
24 The committee asked about the progress of the Great Red Snapper  
25 Count. SERO offered that the GRSC may have cascading effects on  
26 many facets of red snapper management, as it estimates  
27 approximately three times as much biomass as has been previously  
28 estimated by the current surveys. The GRSC will be used as  
29 appropriate in the council's requested interim analysis for red  
30 snapper, which the Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
31 anticipated being able to deliver for review, along with the  
32 GRSC, by the SSC in March 2021.

33  
34 However, this delivery date is not solidified and is dependent  
35 upon receipt of the data by age class from the GRSC. These data  
36 are anticipated to be available with the full report by the end  
37 of November. SERO and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
38 both anticipate that red snapper catch limits will increase as a  
39 result of using the GRSC as the representative index of  
40 abundance for the red snapper IA.

41  
42 NOAA OST noted that the MRIP Transition Team Subgroup is  
43 planning to convene in late November of 2020 to review the  
44 calibration differences between the states, with input from  
45 representatives from the states. Mississippi requested  
46 additional consideration of their survey as more of a census  
47 than a survey, given the unique nature of the data collection  
48 process in Mississippi's coastal waters.

1  
2 Although the anticipated red snapper IA, using the GRSC, is  
3 expected to increase catch limits, committee members noted that  
4 adding more fish to the catch limits doesn't address the problem  
5 of the data currency differences. Although the GRSC is  
6 estimating a three-fold higher amount of red snapper abundance  
7 in the Gulf, committee members should not anticipate a three-  
8 fold increase in catch limits.

9  
10 The majority of this increase is attributable to low densities  
11 of fish being found over muddy and low-relief bottom habitat,  
12 which, while expansive in area, is not subjected to concentrated  
13 fishing effort. The NMFS Bottom Longline Survey has been  
14 operating over these muddy bottom and near low-relief habitats  
15 for twenty-five years. However, the technology and methods used  
16 in the GRSC have now allowed the abundance over these areas to  
17 be estimated.

18  
19 The committee discussed the documented increase in abundance as  
20 a possible explanation for why the red snapper stock recovered  
21 more quickly than anticipated by the rebuilding plan and how  
22 these lesser-fished habitats possibly function as a de facto  
23 marine protected area.

24  
25 SERO stressed the urgency to work on the framework action,  
26 noting that the issue of resolving the data currency differences  
27 was necessary to address before the catch limits could be  
28 increased following the red snapper IA. The council currently  
29 has the option of considering either the NOAA OST calibration  
30 ratios (Alternative 2) or the 23 percent buffer proposed by NMFS  
31 (Alternative 3), which would be equally applied to all states,  
32 with the resulting percent reduction in the total private  
33 angling ACL (23 percent).

34  
35 The committee reiterated its interest in reviewing the results  
36 of the GRSC before proceeding further. SERO informed the  
37 committee to not expect changes to the calibration ratios  
38 provided in the framework action, since ratios would likely be  
39 revisited following the SEDAR 74 research track assessment of  
40 Gulf red snapper.

41  
42 The red snapper interim analysis will use MRIP-Coastal Household  
43 Telephone Survey data currency for recreational catch and  
44 effort, as this is how the stock is currently monitored. The  
45 SEDAR 74 research track will explore the recreational catch and  
46 effort in MRIP-FES and will need to explore how to address  
47 disparities in how discard data are collected by the  
48 recreational state surveys.

1  
2 Dr. Stunz plans to present the GRSC to the committee at the next  
3 webinar meeting. In the event the council determines a buffer  
4 to be the favored approach to resolve the issue of differences  
5 in data currencies, and that buffer is later determined to be  
6 too conservative, the council can revisit that buffer using the  
7 best scientific information available at that time.

8  
9 Public Hearing Draft Amendment 53: Red Grouper Catch Limits and  
10 Sector Allocations, committee staff reviewed the actions and  
11 alternatives in Reef Fish Amendment 53 --

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Excuse me, Martha. There's a little bit of a  
14 delay. Dr. Stunz.

15  
16 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Chairman and Martha. Just to clarify  
17 that last section regarding the Great Red Snapper Count, there  
18 is two places in there where it refers to increases in biomass.  
19 If we get that report to reflect increases in abundance, and I  
20 know that's a little bit of a nuanced thing, but we were changed  
21 with estimating the abundance, and we certainly can calculate a  
22 biomass off of that, but it's the increase in abundance and not  
23 biomass.

24  
25 **MS. GUYAS:** Good catch. Thanks, Greg.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Greg. Go ahead, Martha.

28  
29 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. The council staff reviewed the actions and  
30 alternatives in Reef Fish Amendment 53 and discussed potential  
31 next steps. The Reef Fish AP was unable to recommend any of the  
32 alternatives in Action 1, due to a lack of confidence in the  
33 recreational data.

34  
35 Captain Ed Walker, Chair of the Reef Fish AP, noted that there  
36 was skepticism from AP members on the MRIP-FES data and that the  
37 AP had voted down three of the five alternatives in Action 1  
38 before the resolution was made.

39  
40 The Committee asked if Action 1, Alternative 3 has the same  
41 parameters as Alternative 1. Committee staff stated that the  
42 same timeframe of average landings, 1986 through 2005, is used  
43 for both alternatives, or the same alternative -- That actually  
44 should be -- Instead of "same", it should be "both", and that's  
45 just a note to Ryan, or whoever can fix this report.

46  
47 Let me read that sentence again corrected. Council staff stated  
48 that the same timeframe of average landings, 1986 through 2005,

1 is used for both alternatives, but Alternative 1 uses MRFSS,  
2 while Alternative 3 uses MRIP-FES.

3  
4 The committee noted the difference in private mode landings  
5 between the Gulf Reef Fish Survey and MRIP-FES. Dr. Porch  
6 stated that the council should be consistent in which landings  
7 data source is used across species and that the SSC has only  
8 reviewed the MRIP-FES landings.

9  
10 A committee member commented that a cautious approach was being  
11 taken with red snapper and that a similar approach should be  
12 taken with red grouper. Another committee member noted that  
13 several other species would also need to be reexamined under  
14 MRIP-FES landings data. Dr. Crabtree reminded the committee  
15 that the SSC has recognized MRIP-FES as the best available  
16 science.

17  
18 A committee member noted that there were differences between the  
19 landings from the stock assessment model and the Southeast  
20 Fisheries Science Center ACL monitoring landings. Dr. Porch  
21 stated that there is more uncertainty with the recreational  
22 landings, as opposed to commercial landings, when the stock  
23 assessment model fits that data.

24  
25 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to refer the SEDAR 61**  
26 **red grouper stock assessment back to the SSC so that the SSC can**  
27 **provide further discussion and explanation on the differences**  
28 **between historical recreational landings time series and what**  
29 **the stock assessment model has estimated as recreational**  
30 **landings.**

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have a committee motion on the  
33 board, and we'll make sure that we cut-and-paste that and put it  
34 over in the motions. While we're doing that, Dr. Porch, I see  
35 you have your hand up.

36  
37 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Yes, and thank you, Chair. I just wanted to  
38 make the point, where I was commenting on consistency of  
39 landings series, that I actually was referring to using a  
40 consistent series through time in stock assessments, and, of  
41 course -- I can't really remember the context, and it was either  
42 that, which that is one thing I said, and the other was, of  
43 course, for, if the ACL is set in one currency, we, of course,  
44 should monitor in the same currency, and so it depends on what  
45 idea the Chair was intending to capture there, but it's not  
46 necessarily the case anyway that it's for all species, because  
47 you could have a survey that is very good for one species and  
48 not necessarily for the others.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Right, and so I guess is there -- To make  
3 sure, Clay, that we capture the intent here, is there a  
4 suggestion that you have for that particular language in the  
5 committee report?  
6  
7 **DR. PORCH:** Well, I mean, perhaps Ms. Guyas can weigh-in on what  
8 the intent was there in that part of the discussion. Like I  
9 said, there are two points I made, and one, of course, I think  
10 everybody understands, and that is, if you're going to set the  
11 ACL in some currency, then you need to monitor in the same  
12 currency, but the other is that the currency should be  
13 consistent in the stock assessment.  
14  
15 You can't use one currency and then change horses in the middle  
16 of the stream and use another currency in later years, if those  
17 currencies aren't really calibrated to one another, because it  
18 just looks like, for instance, if you go from high catches  
19 historically, and then suddenly change to a new system that  
20 estimates lower values, it makes it look like you have a change  
21 in fishing mortality when, really, you just changed currencies,  
22 and so that was the concept that I was trying to get across.  
23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have Robin, and then, Ryan, do you  
25 want to go first, actually, to that point?  
26  
27 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Sure. Sorry to step in front, Robin, but,  
28 Dr. Porch, how about the following: Dr. Porch stated that the  
29 council should be consistent in which landings data source is  
30 used for both assessment and quota monitoring for a species.  
31  
32 **DR. PORCH:** If that was the intent, then, yes, I'm fine with  
33 that. That makes sense.  
34  
35 **MR. RINDONE:** From my perspective, and I would like to hear what  
36 Robin and Martha have to say on this also, but, for this  
37 particular amendment, we're changing from data source to  
38 another, from CHTS to FES, and so we would be changing our quota  
39 monitoring also from CHTS to FES, and we should be consistent  
40 with -- Based on the advice of the Science Center and the advice  
41 of the SSC, to make sure that we are in fact monitoring the  
42 stock using the same data currency as was used to most recently  
43 assess the stock, and, previously, and I don't think it was at  
44 the last meeting, but, the meeting before that, the SSC made  
45 that very recommendation to the council. Mr. Chair.  
46  
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone. Mr. Riechers.  
48

1 **MR. RIECHERS:** Clay just kind of hit at the point when you were  
2 actually trying to make your correction, and I don't have any  
3 issue with the kind of corrective statements or making sure the  
4 intent is appropriate, but you did talk about the possibility of  
5 certain collection methods being better for some species versus  
6 others, and that just, I don't know, but triggered a notion for  
7 me, because we heard all this discussion yesterday, and whether  
8 it's gray triggerfish or king mackerel or red grouper, and you  
9 name it, is the transition -- Maybe this is really to Richard  
10 Cody, but is the transition group going to look at those  
11 uncertainties and try to make judgments by species, or how would  
12 one even think about that?

13  
14 Again, this may not be appropriate for discussion for this  
15 motion, but I had that thought when you said that, and so I  
16 wanted to bring it up here. I will let the Chair decide whether  
17 or not he wants to defer that, or Martha, you defer it for  
18 another time, as we maybe go through this report.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Guyas, what's your druthers here, as the  
21 Chair of the Reef Fish Committee?

22  
23 **MS. GUYAS:** I mean, I think I'm okay with the change that Ryan  
24 suggested, and I'm certainly okay with exploring Robin's  
25 thoughts. I mean, really, this is why, at least in Florida, we  
26 came up with the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, and now the State Reef  
27 Fish Survey, was because MRIP was not capturing offshore trips  
28 very well, and so, yes, I think that's something we need to  
29 explore more. I don't know if it's cleaner just to dispense  
30 with the motion, and then we can talk about that, or we can talk  
31 about it and then deal with this motion, and it doesn't matter  
32 to me.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think what we'll do is -- I mean, it sounds  
35 to me like folks are okay with the changes that Mr. Rindone  
36 suggested to accurately reflect the comments that Clay made, and  
37 so I would go ahead and entertain additional discussion on the  
38 motion, and then we'll dispense of it and then come back,  
39 briefly, to Robin's comments.

40  
41 Is there any further discussion on the motion? I am not seeing  
42 any. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the**  
43 **motion carries.** Martha, do you want to carry on, or would you  
44 like to -- I guess I will extend an opportunity to Robin to  
45 follow-up a little bit to where we want to go with this.

46  
47 **MR. RIECHERS:** I saw Richard Cody's hand was up, and maybe he  
48 was going to try to answer that. If not, it's the question

1 we've been struggling with, but, I mean, I guess my thought was,  
2 once we select the method, it will apply to all species, unless  
3 there is some reasonable approach or criteria that we use to  
4 say, for this species, for this survey effort, we're selecting  
5 this one, with some rationale that is based on data and science  
6 somehow, and so, like I said, I'm just -- I think that's really  
7 begging the question of all the conversations of yesterday, and  
8 I was just wondering whether the transition group may be working  
9 on that, and Rich may be able to answer that.

10  
11 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** I can at least address some of that. The  
12 transition group would be really tasked with just adding some  
13 level of, I would say, structure to discussions on the surveys,  
14 and your question, Robin, related to which would be used for  
15 what could be part of that discussion.

16  
17 I think I would like to temper some expectations for what this  
18 group would do, and it's really an advisory group that will look  
19 at things like the potential to review the calibrations at a  
20 later date, research related questions related to drivers for  
21 differences between the surveys, and, I mean, we know that MRIP  
22 doesn't do a good job with short-season fisheries and monitoring  
23 at that level of precision.

24  
25 The state surveys were set up to be more precise and more  
26 timely, and that was the focus of them, but each of the surveys  
27 did it in a different manner, and so they would -- What  
28 necessarily works for a number of species with one survey isn't  
29 necessarily the case for the other surveys.

30  
31 Specifically, Mississippi and Alabama were certified to look at  
32 red snapper, and red snapper alone, and it may be that the group  
33 can look at extending the scope of the surveys so that they  
34 cover other species, but that would need to be revisited, in  
35 terms of the need for a possible review, to see that the survey  
36 designs were still valid, and so there are a lot of questions  
37 there, and I would just temper expectations for something that  
38 would -- In terms of what the group can do, but I would say that  
39 their initial responsibilities will be to look at drivers for  
40 differences between the surveys and look at the potential for  
41 revisiting calibrations at some point, and then also to address  
42 questions of accessibility of data, availability of data, and  
43 transparency.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Cody. I see Kevin Anson and  
46 then Ms. Bosarge.

47  
48 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for those comments,

1 Dr. Cody. This issue is still bubbling underneath the surface,  
2 so to speak, and it relates to we have all this extra data, so  
3 to speak, or this state data on top of the federal data, and, as  
4 far as the process, I am not sure, and this might need to come  
5 through the council as a direct request, as a term of reference  
6 either associated with an assessment, or maybe that can be done  
7 as a separate task before assessments are completed, and the SSC  
8 can review and kind of look at both data sources, if state data  
9 exists, and try to make that determination, but this was -- This  
10 topic came up during the state calibration workshop, and, in  
11 fact, a motion was offered during the SSC meeting that asked  
12 that very question, at least as it relates to red snapper.

13  
14 The motion failed, but it was a tie vote with two abstentions as  
15 to whether or not if other data existed, or state data existed,  
16 that was deemed to be more -- If it captured and characterized  
17 the fishery better than the federal survey, that the state data  
18 could be used, and so it's certainly something that needs to be  
19 addressed, and there is -- It's undecided, I guess, or  
20 indeterminate as to how this could go forward, but I think  
21 that's something that probably ought to come from the council,  
22 to some degree, and then give time for the SSC to really make  
23 that evaluation as to what is best available science.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Anson. Ms. Bosarge.

26  
27 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad we're talking  
28 about this, because I really think that, like Kevin said, you  
29 almost have to have a working group before each assessment. I  
30 don't know that this transition team that Dr. Cody has is  
31 necessarily going to be able to address what we're talking  
32 about, and I think you're really going to have to have some  
33 stock assessment expertise personnel in that group, the ones  
34 that would actually plug this data in, because they're going to  
35 be the ones that can tell you where the hiccup is going to be  
36 and where the stumbling blocks are, and they understand what  
37 they need from the data and what the model needs from the data.

38  
39 The states understand what they have, and Dr. Cody understands  
40 what MRIP has, and so I think it's got to be a conglomeration of  
41 all those and whoever else you want on it, and, honestly, I'm a  
42 little concerned about what kind of conundrum we might end up in  
43 amberjack, and I really wish we could have had one of these  
44 meetings for amberjack before we started that assessment,  
45 because that is a species where we've been trying to sort of  
46 divide the eastern Gulf and western Gulf, as far as management  
47 and projecting seasons.

48

1 We never saw the new FES numbers before they went into the stock  
2 assessment, but, when you start trying to divide that up,  
3 eastern Gulf and western Gulf, if those FES numbers are  
4 astronomically high in the eastern Gulf, you're going to have  
5 very short seasons, probably, when you start to divide that up.

6  
7 I really wish we could have looked at some of the state data,  
8 and we have Louisiana data on that, and we have Florida data on  
9 that, and we have Texas data on that, and I think Alabama has  
10 some preliminary data, and I think you added that to your  
11 species list, maybe, and, anyway, I'm a little concerned about  
12 that, and I think we're behind the ball, and we need to start  
13 pushing to get these working groups together before each stock  
14 assessment, and, if somebody has an idea on what we can do with  
15 amberjack, if anything, I'm all ears.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Ms. Guyas.

18  
19 **MS. GUYAS:** I just want to, I guess, agree with what Leann and  
20 Kevin are, I guess, talking about here, and I'm thinking about  
21 this at least in terms of the Florida State Reef Fish Survey,  
22 because our survey covers a number of species.

23  
24 On some level, maybe it is appropriate do it species-by-species,  
25 but, you know, the survey is the survey, and so it may, at least  
26 in our case, where there is multiple species involved, and it  
27 may be more straightforward to have a group just dig into those,  
28 again, the survey, in general, and kind of I guess create  
29 something that these topical working groups can then consider,  
30 rather than have to like reinvent the wheel and get into the  
31 weeds of the survey and how it's conducted with every single  
32 stock assessment, but I am trying to think how this also fits in  
33 the new process with the research tracks and topical working  
34 groups and operational assessments and all of that, too.

35  
36 It seems, to me, that we need to figure out some way to do this,  
37 and I think that the SSC, ultimately, is probably the right  
38 group to approve it, whatever way we go, sort of as they were  
39 suggesting, and that's what Kevin talked about, but I think  
40 we're getting stuck in the process here, clearly, but I'm glad  
41 we're having this conversation, so that we can move this  
42 forward.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am looking for hands. I am not  
45 seeing any, and I do think that this is a fruitful conversation  
46 to have, and the reality is, at the end of the day, we have to  
47 be able to -- Before I get going -- I didn't want to close out  
48 yet, and so it looks like Ms. Bosarge has a question, and I will

1 come back.

2

3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer, do you think it would be worthwhile,  
4 in our jam-packed agenda, to try and, at some meeting, and not  
5 November, and I doubt that we can put anything else into  
6 November, but, at some point early next year, to try and have an  
7 agenda item that will get us a little further along in this  
8 discussion, just to get some more nuts-and-bolts ironed out of  
9 this and maybe put a date on the calendar and a species, or all  
10 species, whatever the case may be, but to get something moving,  
11 and I always worry, if we don't have it on the agenda, that  
12 nothing ever happens.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Leann. I do think it's a worthwhile  
15 conversation to have, and we'll make an effort to put it on the  
16 agenda at an upcoming meeting, and you're right that it's not  
17 likely to happen in November, but we need to pay attention to  
18 that process, moving forward, and consider who the appropriate  
19 players are in that process as we move along, and so I imagine  
20 that it's going to be a compilation of folks, right, and so  
21 we'll put it on the agenda, and I will kind of circle back with  
22 individuals, to think about how we want to frame that  
23 discussion, but thank you for that input. All right. I am not  
24 seeing any other hands, and so we can go ahead and move forward  
25 with the committee report, Martha.

26

27 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks. Dr. Crabtree noted that, if  
28 preferred alternatives were not selected, and if further  
29 progress was not made on the document, then it would not be  
30 possible to withhold distributing allocation to the commercial  
31 sector for 2021. I don't know if we want to pause there, and  
32 that's the end of red grouper, and see if there's some more  
33 discussion.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We'll just wait just a second. I don't  
36 see any hands at the moment, Martha, but there is a delay on my  
37 end, and so I'll just wait thirty seconds or so. Okay. I think  
38 we're good to go.

39

40 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. Draft Framework Action: Modification of the  
41 Gulf of Mexico Lane Snapper Annual Catch Limit, this agenda item  
42 was waived, due to approaching Hurricane Zeta, and will be  
43 reviewed by the committee at a later date.

44

45 Gray Triggerfish Interim Analysis, Dr. Joe Powers reviewed the  
46 principles of an IA and how the IA uses data to generate catch  
47 advice. Dr. Powers also reviewed the progression of stock  
48 assessments of gray triggerfish and the changes in both stock

1 status determination criteria and stock status of the species  
2 over time.

3  
4 The IA for gray triggerfish used the Southeast Area Monitoring  
5 and Assessment Program Combined Video Index, which combines the  
6 NMFS Panama City Laboratory, NMFS Pascagoula Laboratory, and  
7 Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute's Trap Camera  
8 Surveys, as its representative index of abundance.

9  
10 Spawning stock biomass for gray triggerfish was observed to be  
11 lowest in the early 2000s and has increased since, especially in  
12 the eastern Gulf. The current acceptable biological catch dates  
13 back to the SEDAR 9 update assessment from 2011, using data  
14 through 2009 (305,300 pounds whole weight). The overfishing  
15 limit is based on the more recent SEDAR 43 stock assessment.  
16 The IA showed that the ABC could be increased by a factor of  
17 approximately 1.5, when compared to the increasing trend  
18 observed in the SEAMAP Combined Video Index, or 456,900 pounds.

19  
20 This catch limit remains in the MRIP-CHTS data currency, and the  
21 SSC recommended the ABC be increased to 456,900 pounds, without  
22 adjusting the current OFL established using SEDAR 43. Further,  
23 the SSC recommended using this revised ABC only for 2021 through  
24 2023, with another IA being conducted for 2024 and subsequent  
25 years. Previous recruitment uncertainties from SEDAR 43 were  
26 not reviewed for the IA, since these data were not updated for  
27 the IA.

28  
29 The committee discussed the appropriate path forward to use the  
30 new information from the IA and the ABC recommendation from the  
31 SSC. The committee also reviewed the recommendation of the Reef  
32 Fish AP, which was to set the ACL equal to the ABC and to  
33 continue using the sector-specific annual catch targets as they  
34 are currently used.

35  
36 The committee discussed how to move forward with changes in  
37 catch level recommendations from IAs. Staff recommended  
38 exploring changes to the framework procedures for the Reef Fish  
39 and Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plans to  
40 better automate that process for the greatest gains in  
41 timeliness.

42  
43 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to**  
44 **combine gray triggerfish with the vermillion snapper framework**  
45 **action for the purpose of adjusting catch levels to utilize the**  
46 **information from the interim analysis.**

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so we have a committee motion on the

1 board. Is there any further discussion of the motion? Let's  
2 get it up, real quick. Okay, and so is there any further  
3 discussion? Ms. Bosarge.

4  
5 **MS. BOSARGE:** I thought we had a big discussion and we decided  
6 to give staff leeway to just put it into the right -- Whatever  
7 document they saw fit to make it the most timely, as far as that  
8 gray triggerfish interim. Am I missing something? I thought  
9 that's what we discussed in committee, and maybe we never  
10 changed the motion over or voted on it.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think, Leann, my recollection of the  
13 discussion was that the vermilion snapper framework was well  
14 underway and that the staff thought that it would be most  
15 efficient for them to go ahead and fold in the triggerfish along  
16 with the vermilion snapper, and so, I mean, if that's  
17 problematic, we can certainly circle back on that in November,  
18 but I think that's going to be the way to go, and that was the  
19 staff's preference, and I will ask perhaps Ryan if he wants to  
20 weigh-in on that.

21  
22 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is definitely  
23 the most efficient path forward for getting gray triggerfish off  
24 the ground. Where vermilion snapper is at in its development is  
25 very agreeable to folding gray triggerfish in, especially since  
26 the scope of the actions for the two species are very similar,  
27 being increases in the ACL in response to updated catch advice  
28 from the SSC, and so, from a staff perspective, this is the  
29 smoothest integration.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone. We'll move on to Ms.  
32 Guyas and then Ms. Boggs.

33  
34 **MS. GUYAS:** I'm good. I was just going to say the same thing  
35 you did, Tom, that this is where we ended up.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Great. Susan.

38  
39 **MS. BOGGS:** I guess this question may be for Ryan, and thank  
40 you, Mr. Chair, for recognizing me, but is it okay, the fact  
41 that you have one species in FES and one species still in the  
42 CHTS, to be in the same document? Does that not confuse things?

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.

45  
46 **MR. RINDONE:** Ms. Boggs, we'll just be diligent to make sure  
47 that, in the document, we make that clear to the reader and so  
48 that it's very clearly understood, and so I think most, if not

1 all, the IPT members are listening right now, and so we'll take  
2 care to make sure we address that.  
3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Rindone. Is there any  
5 further discussion of this motion? Okay. I am not seeing any  
6 hands. **Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing or**  
7 **hearing none, the motion carries.** Ms. Guyas. Excuse me.  
8 Before you get started, Martha, Ms. Boggs has her hand up.  
9 Susan.  
10  
11 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. **I would like to make a**  
12 **motion, and I've already emailed it to staff.**  
13  
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Let's put it up on the board, and we'll  
15 give it just a second to clean up this particular motion.  
16  
17 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, sir. Thank you.  
18  
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** You betcha. We have a motion by Ms. Boggs.  
20 **That motion is to add an action to modify the recreational fixed**  
21 **closed season for gray triggerfish by removing the January and**  
22 **the February closure.** Is that your motion, Ms. Boggs?  
23  
24 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, and I'm not asking to change size limits or bag  
25 limits or any of that. I was looking to remove the January and  
26 February closure to provide access to those that we've been  
27 hearing from for the last couple of years that would like to be  
28 able to catch the gray triggerfish in those months, and, with  
29 the increase in ACL, I believe that's something we should look  
30 at, and I would like to look at. Thank you, if I get a second.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Before we move on to any other  
33 discussion, is there a second for this motion?  
34  
35 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I'll second it.  
36  
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** John Sanchez seconded it, and so we'll open up  
38 the floor for further discussion. Kevin Anson.  
39  
40 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Susan, I just want to make  
41 sure that I understand this, and so you want to add it to the  
42 framework action, the motion we just passed, which is the ACL  
43 increase in with vermilion snapper, and is that correct? Then I  
44 have a second question.  
45  
46 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, and I would think that would be the most  
47 efficient way to do it, yes, sir.  
48

1 **MR. ANSON:** I have another question, Mr. Chair.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Mr. Anson.  
4  
5 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. I am just wondering how -- If staff  
6 could comment as to if that would add time, and, again, I'm just  
7 trying to see if -- It may not even be possible, if no further  
8 actions were added to it, but I'm just curious to know the  
9 timing of when the framework action could be approved with the  
10 ACL increase and the timing of that relative to the current  
11 opening for next year, which is slated for March 1 for  
12 triggerfish, and I'm just curious to know if, as it stands right  
13 now with the two species in the framework action, if that could  
14 be released while the spring season, if you will, or that first  
15 opening, is still occurring or if it will occur after it closes.  
16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so, I mean, I understand the  
18 question, and let me see who the appropriate staff member might  
19 be to weigh-in on this. We'll start with Dr. Simmons.  
20  
21 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It could  
22 slow it down, but I think, if we try to keep it simple, and I  
23 think we have a clear understanding of Ms. Boggs' intent, and  
24 it's not to change the spawning fixed season closure of June and  
25 July, but it's just to look at the new catch level increases,  
26 and, if the January/February fixed closed season was removed for  
27 the recreational sector, where would that end up in the  
28 projections, as far as would there be an ability to reopen after  
29 that fixed closed season or would it close earlier, potentially,  
30 in May, before that -- I think we can do that, and I'm not sure  
31 how much of that we can have ready for November, but we can try  
32 to do our best on that. I don't think there's any way that we  
33 can get this implemented, and I will ask the Regional Office  
34 staff to weigh-in, perhaps Peter or Mara, before the end of 2021  
35 or early 2022.  
36  
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am looking for the Regional Office  
38 representative. Go ahead, Peter.  
39  
40 **MR. PETER HOOD:** I think we could probably get the ACL increases  
41 in for the 2021 fishing year, and they would probably come in,  
42 depending on when you take final action, sometime -- We might  
43 get a rulemaking in, a final rulemaking in, maybe sometime  
44 during the summer, late summer, or early fall, and so that could  
45 allow seasons to be reopened or whatever in the fall, if there's  
46 enough fish. Then, in terms of the January/February, certainly  
47 that would be 2022, and does that answer your question?  
48

1 **MR. ANSON:** It does. Thank you.  
2  
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We're going to go to Chris Schieble.  
4  
5 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I just want to make a general comment in support  
6 of this motion. It makes sense, with an increase of over  
7 150,000 pounds to the ABC, and I think the season closure was  
8 put in to constrain the harvest back in 2017, I guess is when it  
9 happened, and it's outside the spawning season, and we're  
10 looking at a June/July spawning season, and it's not going to  
11 impact that recruitment, and so, if you have that extra  
12 poundage, why not make it available at the time of year when  
13 they're asking for it, and so I would just say that we're in  
14 support of this motion.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Schieble. General Spraggins.  
17  
18 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Can I hold for just a second and you can  
19 come back to me in just a second?  
20  
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Absolutely. Ms. Boggs.  
22  
23 **MS. BOGGS:** Back to the discussion with Carrie and Peter, I  
24 understand that this isn't going to be effective for 2021, and,  
25 I mean, I'm not being unrealistic here, but I would like to  
26 certainly see it for 2022. Thank you.  
27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you. Ms. Bosarge.  
29  
30 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that this will  
31 be okay, and I think it sounds pretty streamlined, the way Susan  
32 has laid it out, and I know we want to get that new interim  
33 quota implemented pretty quickly with gray trigger, and so I  
34 think put this in that document with it. When we get the  
35 document back, if, for some reason, things get complicated on  
36 this, we can always take this particular action and separate it  
37 out into its own standalone amendment, if we have to, but I  
38 don't think we'll even have to do that. I think -- I'm in  
39 support of it.  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Ms. Guyas.  
42  
43 **MS. GUYAS:** I mean, I think I'm okay with looking at this, if  
44 it's not going to slow things down, as you talked about, but I'm  
45 also -- I would certainly want to get a bunch more public  
46 comment on this, and I seem to recall that the reason why we put  
47 this January/February closure in place was because we were  
48 trying to keep triggerfish open as late in the year as possible.

1  
2 This year, at least before COVID issues, we closed in early May,  
3 which really -- the season, and so I think, since that time, of  
4 course, we've reopened for the fall, and I think people have  
5 appreciated that, and the fall seems to be nice for them, and so  
6 I guess I would just want to see what we really think this is  
7 going to mean, and I certainly would like to have triggerfish be  
8 open past May 1, but, of course, we have more quota on the  
9 table, and so I'm okay with looking at it, but I maybe would be  
10 hesitant to go all the way with it at this point, until I see  
11 more information.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Ms. Guyas. I am going to circle back  
14 with General Spraggins and see if he's available, and, if he's  
15 not, I will move to Kevin Anson.

16  
17 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I'm available. Thank you so much for giving  
18 me that extra time. I think Martha just automatically said  
19 about what I was trying to do, what I was looking, and, you  
20 know, Mississippi, and a lot of the western Gulf, we do -- We  
21 would like to have the triggerfish opening in March, and it  
22 allows us some time to have a little bit in the summertime and  
23 being able to do it, and opening it in January and February in  
24 the past has kind of made it to the point to where we were not  
25 able to have a triggerfish season.

26  
27 I understand Alabama's point, and I understand what they're  
28 looking at, but I'm like Martha, and I think that, if we could  
29 probably just give it a little bit more time and let's look at  
30 this, and I realize there's more allocation, and I'm not trying  
31 to say that, but that doesn't mean that they won't catch the  
32 allocation before it gets there either, and so our biggest point  
33 is not even having a season if they open it too early. Thank  
34 you so much for your time.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, General Spraggins. We'll go to  
37 Susan Boggs and then Kevin Anson.

38  
39 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, and I understand what Martha is saying,  
40 and I know that a lot of the testimony in the past -- I think  
41 about relating to amberjack, and everybody is wanting something  
42 to catch every month of the year, and, to me, this is just a way  
43 to open up that January and February to those winter guests that  
44 are here that have been asking for this for several years.

45  
46 Yes, I think we can make it through May, and then, in August,  
47 September, and October, they have the amberjack, and I thought  
48 that was kind of the intent, when we were looking at the

1 seasons, to try to spread the wealth, if you will, and so I'm  
2 very mindful of that, and I just wanted to put that out there.  
3 Thank you.

4

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

6

7 **MR. ANSON:** I appreciate the comments from both sides of this,  
8 this motion, and we too are concerned about trying to get  
9 triggerfish to extend into the spring, late spring, as much as  
10 possible. It's always a bonus, if there's pounds left over, to  
11 have it in the fall, but, as Susan said, there's certainly a  
12 desire of folks, and we've heard it here at the council several  
13 times, from our winter visitors that visit the Alabama coast,  
14 that they certainly would like to have access to the resource  
15 too, and so, to the extent that maybe these extra pounds can  
16 help to provide that, it will be interesting to see, and so I  
17 would be in support of the motion.

18

19 With the tool, and I think there was a tool that was created for  
20 triggerfish, and we can kind of play around with the dates and  
21 such, and maybe it's not open on January 1, and maybe it's  
22 February 1, or something like that, but, anyway, I just  
23 appreciate the opportunity to talk. Thank you.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Anson. We'll go to Dr. Shipp  
26 and then J.D. Dugas.

27

28 **DR. SHIPP:** I speak in support of the motion, and I recall  
29 testimony that was given by some of the snowbirds at a previous  
30 meeting, when asked what they caught in January and February,  
31 and they talked about catching catfish and I don't know what  
32 else, and whiting, I guess, is all they had, and I agree with  
33 Susan and Kevin. Just having one extra species would really  
34 help on the January and February, and so I support the motion.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Shipp. Mr. Dugas.

37

38 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** Thank you, Chair. I'm okay with supporting the  
39 motion as far as options, but my fear is that we end up in the  
40 same boat as we did with amberjack and the Panhandle of Florida  
41 and Alabama catching all the quota before the summertime and the  
42 western Gulf loses out, and so I'm okay, and I will support it,  
43 but that's my fear, going down the road. Thanks.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so we've had a good deal of  
46 discussion on this, and I think that, in general, the flavor  
47 here is to go ahead and explore this, and then we'll get some  
48 public comment, and we can proceed with discussion in subsequent

1 meetings. With that said, is there any opposition to the  
2 motion? I am not seeing any opposition, and the motion carries.  
3 Ms. Guyas.

4  
5 **MS. GUYAS:** I think we are now at Public Hearing Draft Amendment  
6 36B: Modifications to Commercial IFQ Programs. This agenda item  
7 was waived, due to approaching Hurricane Zeta, and will be  
8 reviewed by the committee at a later date.

9  
10 Remaining Reef Fish AP Recommendations, this agenda item was  
11 waived, due to approaching Hurricane Zeta, and will be reviewed  
12 by the committee at a later date.

13  
14 Other Business, Discussion of the Treatment of Dead Discards by  
15 the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Stock Assessments, the  
16 committee requested additional information from the Southeast  
17 Fisheries Science Center on the process by which discards are  
18 recorded and incorporated into harvest and how those data are  
19 used in the assessment. These data were requested to be  
20 described by sector. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
21 will prepare a response for the November 30 through December 1  
22 council meeting. Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Would anybody like to  
25 bring up any other information as it relates to the Reef Fish  
26 Committee? All right. I don't see any interest in that, and so  
27 we will go ahead and move to our last committee report, and that  
28 will be the Mackerel Committee and Mr. Riechers.

29  
30 **MACKEREL COMMITTEE REPORT**

31  
32 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to let staff  
33 get that up on the board, but I will go ahead and get started.  
34 The Mackerel Committee was convened on October 27, 2020. The  
35 committee adopted the agenda, Tab C, Number 1, and approved the  
36 minutes, Tab C, Number 2, of the September 2020 meeting as  
37 written.

38  
39 Next we went into Tab C, Number 4, Coastal Migratory Pelagic  
40 Landings Update. Mr. Peter Hood reviewed the recent commercial  
41 and recreational king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia  
42 landings. The committee requested king mackerel recreational  
43 quota in Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing  
44 Effort Survey currency. This comparison was requested during  
45 the September 2020 council meeting.

46  
47 Council staff provided tables comparing recreational landings  
48 between MRIP-Coastal Household Telephone Survey and MRIP-Fishing

1 Effort Survey as well as in relation to the recreational annual  
2 catch limit and stock ACL, and that was included in Tab C,  
3 Number 5(f).

4  
5 Committee members discussed that the request could not be  
6 achieved by a simple conversion from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES, as  
7 it would involve more steps to account for the calculations used  
8 to determine sector allocations. Council staff will coordinate  
9 with Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff to address this  
10 data request and present at a future meeting.

11  
12 Next, we went into the Review of SEDAR 38 Update: Gulf of Mexico  
13 Migratory King Mackerel Stock Assessment, and that was Tab C,  
14 Number 5. Dr. Joe Powers of the council's Scientific and  
15 statistical Committee reviewed the SEDAR 38 update stock  
16 assessment on the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel, which  
17 was updated with data through the 2017 fishing year.

18  
19 Key changes from SEDAR 38, which was in 2014, include the  
20 incorporation of recreational catch and effort data from the  
21 MRIP-FES and in the methods for estimating shrimp bycatch.  
22 Overall, the SEDAR 38 update assessment found Gulf king mackerel  
23 to be not overfished, and the spawning stock biomass was 112  
24 percent of the minimum stock size threshold and not experiencing  
25 overfishing, where the fishing mortality from the previous three  
26 fishing years was 84 percent of the maximum fishing mortality  
27 threshold. The spawning stock biomass is, however, slightly  
28 below the SSB at maximum sustainable yield.

29  
30 Upon reviewing the SEDAR 38 update assessment, the SSC found the  
31 assessment to be the best scientific information available and  
32 to be suitable for providing management advice. Projections for  
33 Gulf king mackerel considered several scenarios, including the  
34 fishing mortality rate at MFMT and the fishing mortality rate at  
35 optimum yield, and, in this case, it was FOY 85 percent of FMSY  
36 at F 30 percent SPR.

37  
38 The SSC then recommended overfishing limit values of 10.89  
39 million pounds whole weight, 11.05 million pounds whole weight,  
40 and 11.18 million pounds whole weight for the years 2021, 2022,  
41 and 2023, respectively.

42  
43 The SSC decided to forego the use of the council's acceptable  
44 biological catch control rule in determining the ABC for the  
45 Gulf king mackerel, as the projections did not appear to  
46 adequately capture the uncertainty inherent in the projections.  
47 Instead, the SSC made ABC recommendations using FOY, resulting  
48 in ABCs of 9.37 million pounds whole weight, 9.72 million pounds

1 whole weight, and 9.99 million pounds whole weight for the  
2 fishing years 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively.

3  
4 The committee asked why the OFL and corresponding ABC  
5 projections are increasing in the short term. Dr. Powers noted  
6 that the stock is above the MSST, but below SSB MSY. The catch  
7 recommendations are designed to increase the SSB to SSB MSY.  
8 Therefore, the catch recommendations increase as the stock  
9 builds towards SSB MSY.

10  
11 Historically, the recreational sector has left a portion of  
12 their king mackerel ACL uncaught. The committee asked whether  
13 it was likely that the recreational sector could be landing a  
14 much larger portion of its ACL under MRIP-FES. Dr. Powers added  
15 that it was likely that recreational landings should increase  
16 relative to the new ACL under FES. However, the degree to which  
17 they may increase is uncertain.

18  
19 Council staff reviewed the results of the use of the council's  
20 Something's Fishy tool for Gulf king mackerel, which collected  
21 data on the stock in the fall of 2019. In this iteration,  
22 Something's Fishy collected responses from forty-seven  
23 fishermen, most of whom were private anglers indicating a  
24 negative trend in stock abundance, especially in the northern  
25 Gulf. The committee provided feedback on the tool for  
26 increasing its utility in the future.

27  
28 The committee asked about timing for recommending management  
29 changes, given the nature of the fishing years for Gulf king  
30 mackerel. While some committee members discussed reallocating  
31 between the fishing sectors, others expressed opposition, given  
32 that the recreational sector has not been catching its ACL.

33  
34 Committee members advocating for reallocation wished for  
35 consideration of more of the stock ACL being allocated to the  
36 commercial sector, which has routinely landed or marginally  
37 exceeded its ACL in the past. Changing the allocations would  
38 ultimately result in adjustments to the projections and to the  
39 recommended catch limits already reviewed. In addition, SERO  
40 staff noted that, since the data used for the current sector  
41 allocation is an older time series, there is opportunity to  
42 explore modifications.

43  
44 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to**  
45 **start a plan amendment to look at sector allocations as well as**  
46 **adjust catch limits for Gulf king mackerel. Mr. Chairman.**

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Riechers. We have a committee

1 motion on the board. We'll put it up, and we'll let staff put  
2 it in the motions page. We have a committee motion, and we'll  
3 entertain any discussion of that motion right now. We'll see if  
4 there's any hands. I am not seeing any. Dr. Shipp.

5  
6 **DR. SHIPP:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just would comment that  
7 I would request a roll call vote on this.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Dr. Shipp has requested a roll call  
10 vote, and we're happy to do that. Is there any further  
11 discussion? Mr. Riechers.

12  
13 **MR. RIECHERS:** The only thing I will point out here, and I think  
14 the motion is going to pass, and certainly king mackerel --  
15 We've had this discussion a lot about this particular species  
16 and the catch limits on it in the past, and the only thing that  
17 I would caution, and I will probably not vote for the motion,  
18 simply because, with all the uncertainty regarding FES, and not  
19 that I don't think that we should explore this option, but I  
20 think we need to understand what we're doing with recreational  
21 fisheries data and how that impacts these time series before we  
22 start really having these kind of allocation discussions.

23  
24 The other part is that, in Sustainable Fisheries, I think we saw  
25 the report yesterday that discussed where we are in our  
26 discussions regarding how we go about looking at allocations,  
27 and the GAO report, of course, kind of suggested that, while  
28 we've determined how we're going to decide when to look at  
29 allocations, we haven't done a very good job, at this point,  
30 and, when I say that, that's not a discontented statement, but  
31 it's just I don't think we've gotten to the point of determining  
32 a criteria and how we're going to approach these different  
33 species.

34  
35 For mackerel, whether it's mackerel or red grouper or you name  
36 the species, how are we going to go about that, and what are we  
37 going to look at, and what are going to be the criteria we use,  
38 and, while it doesn't have to be the same for every species, we  
39 do have to have a set of parameters identified and be able to  
40 look at those things, and so that's my only question that I have  
41 regarding the motion, is just whether or not it's going to  
42 basically make us be flying the plane while we're trying to  
43 build the plane still.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Riechers. Next, we have Mr.  
46 Williamson, followed by Ms. Guyas.

47  
48 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Thank you. I would like to point out that the

1 recreational sector, including private anglers and the  
2 charter/for-hire group, they take a lot of folks out who come  
3 down to the coast from various parts of the country and are  
4 large economic drivers.

5  
6 I think the statistics show that that sector generates more  
7 money than taking these fish out of the water on a commercial  
8 basis, and the time where recreational fishermen bring these  
9 fish back in and hang them up on the dock in a nail and let them  
10 gray out is long past.

11  
12 There is a big catch-and-release effort out there, and people  
13 are enjoying their time out on the water, and to penalize the  
14 recreational sector because they are conserving the resource and  
15 putting it back in the water, and the commercial sector is  
16 actually benefiting from more breeding stock out there, and so,  
17 to penalize the recreational sector by reallocating more fish to  
18 the commercial sector, because they're just not pulling them out  
19 of the water and killing them, I think it's short-sighted, and I  
20 would speak against any reallocation here. Thank you, sir.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Williamson. Ms. Guyas and then  
23 Dr. Crabtree.

24  
25 **MS. GUYAS:** I was just going to, I guess, echo my thoughts from  
26 committee, and I would support this motion. I mean, no matter  
27 what you think about, I guess, reallocation here, but, I mean,  
28 we have the same issue here that we have with red snapper and  
29 that we have with red grouper now, where we have quota in one  
30 currency for recreational and monitoring occurring in another,  
31 which presents some issues for us.

32  
33 Because we're now working in FES now for this fishery,  
34 essentially not changing the percentages is a reallocation, and  
35 it's a big one, similar to red grouper. We would essentially be  
36 -- Inaction is a big shift toward I think commercial at this  
37 point, similar to red grouper, and that may be what the council  
38 wants to do, but it seems appropriate that we need to talk about  
39 this, and it was also brought up in committee that the existing  
40 allocations are based on data from the 1970s, which just -- I am  
41 supportive of the motion, and I think we need to have this  
42 conversation.

43  
44 It's not going to be easy, especially given that we can't just  
45 convert from, I guess, one -- Use the same set of years and just  
46 change the currency from CHTS to FES, and it's not going to be  
47 that simple, but I think we're going to have to do this, and so  
48 I'm going to support the motion.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Dr. Crabtree.

3  
4 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just following up to that, to what Martha said  
5 and Mr. Williamson's comments, if you don't look at the  
6 allocation, then you are in fact reallocating fish to the  
7 commercial sector, and you are doing exactly what Mr. Williamson  
8 just said he opposes doing, and so that's what is confusing to  
9 me with this, and, if you vote this -- If you decide not to look  
10 at the allocations, then you're going to have to provide some  
11 rationale in the document as to why shifting fish to the  
12 commercial sector, through inaction on your part, is the right  
13 thing to do and justifiable.

14  
15 Troy, if you don't look at the allocation, then you are in fact  
16 reallocating fish to the commercial sector, by virtue of just  
17 switching the recreational to the FES survey, and I'm getting  
18 confused by things that folks are saying.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Mr. Anson.

21  
22 **MR. ANSON:** I supported the motion in committee, and I will  
23 support it here as well. I mean, I hear Robin's comments, and,  
24 yes, I am apprehensive about how we would proceed with this,  
25 with FES data, and how at least I may be hesitant on other  
26 species, but, I mean, this has been an issue that we've talked  
27 about for some time under CHTS, that there was a disparity in  
28 the landings and that the recs were not harvesting their share,  
29 and so I just think this is a good opportunity.

30  
31 It's not as contentious of a species as others are, and I  
32 certainly appreciate Mr. Williamson's comment about there just  
33 being fish in the water, and that has value, and it certainly  
34 does, but maybe there might be some information that comes out  
35 as we go through this process, Robin, but we're in new waters,  
36 so to speak, and this might be a good one to take up and try to  
37 tackle some of the issues that then carry over in other species,  
38 and it might make those conversations for other species a little  
39 easier, or a little more palatable, but, anyway, that's all.  
40 Thank you.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Kevin. Mr. Swindell.

43  
44 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with Mr. Anson,  
45 and I think that all we're doing here is asking the staff to put  
46 some things together, and let's look at this reallocation stuff.  
47 I mean, we need to at least be willing to address it and not  
48 just sit by and say, okay, we're going to leave everything as it

1 is and never take another look at it. That's absurd.  
2  
3 Let's go ahead and ask the committee. I mean, here you've got a  
4 fishery that is not being overfished, and I think things are a  
5 little bit out of line, and that doesn't mean that we're going  
6 to change it, when it comes time to take another look at it, but  
7 let staff look at it and let's see just where are we with all of  
8 this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
9  
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Swindell. I have lost my  
11 screen for the time being, but I will ask staff if we have any  
12 other hands up. We don't have any other hands --  
13  
14 **MR. DIAZ:** Tom, can you hear me?  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Mr. Diaz.  
17  
18 **MR. DIAZ:** I was just checking. I have been unable to get in,  
19 and my hand-up function is not working, and my chat function is  
20 not working, and I just wanted to make sure that I could speak.  
21 I do support this motion, and I have struggled with it a little  
22 bit, but I do think, as old as the data is that we're relying on  
23 for this allocation, and for all of the reasons that have been  
24 mentioned, it's worth looking at. Thank you.  
25  
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. I'm sorry that you're  
27 having a tough go of it with regard to dialing in today. I am  
28 not seeing any other hands. Dr. Shipp has requested a roll call  
29 vote, and so I will hand it over to Dr. Simmons to move through  
30 that vote.  
31  
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr.  
33 Crabtree.  
34  
35 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.  
36  
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Anson.  
38  
39 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.  
40  
41 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs.  
42  
43 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.  
44  
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.  
46  
47 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.  
48

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Ms. Bosarge.  
2  
3 MS. BOSARGE: Yes.  
4  
5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Riechers.  
6  
7 MR. RIECHERS: No.  
8  
9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Schieble.  
10  
11 MR. SCHIEBLE: Yes.  
12  
13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Diaz.  
14  
15 MR. DIAZ: Yes.  
16  
17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Dr. Stunz.  
18  
19 DR. STUNZ: No.  
20  
21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Swindell.  
22  
23 MR. SWINDELL: Yes.  
24  
25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: General Spraggins.  
26  
27 GENERAL SPRAGGINS: Yes.  
28  
29 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Ms. Guyas.  
30  
31 MS. GUYAS: Yes.  
32  
33 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Dr. Shipp.  
34  
35 DR. SHIPP: No.  
36  
37 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Williamson.  
38  
39 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.  
40  
41 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Dyskow.  
42  
43 MR. DYSKOW: No.  
44  
45 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Mr. Dugas.  
46  
47 MR. DUGAS: No.  
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** The motion carries ten to six with  
2 one abstention.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** The motion carries ten to six with one  
5 abstention. All right, Mr. Riechers.

6  
7 **MR. RIECHERS:** That then took the committee to the Gulf of  
8 Mexico Migratory Group Cobia Draft Options Presentation, and  
9 that was presented with Tab C, Number 6. Council staff reviewed  
10 recent management actions and stock assessment history for the  
11 Gulf migratory group of cobia and the draft actions to be  
12 considered in CMP Amendment 32.

13  
14 The stock is undergoing overfishing, as of 2018, per the 2020  
15 SEDAR 28 update stock assessment. The stock is not overfished,  
16 but the SSB is below SSB MSY. The stock is jointly managed  
17 between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, with Gulf cobia  
18 occurring from Texas east and north to the Florida/Georgia state  
19 line.

20  
21 Action 1 would modify the Gulf cobia catch limits. Action 2  
22 would modify the apportionment between the Gulf zone and the  
23 Florida east coast zone. Action 3 would modify the daily  
24 possession limit. Action 4 would modify the minimum size limit,  
25 and Action 5 would modify the framework procedures for the CMP  
26 fishery management plan.

27  
28 Alternative 2 of Action 1 would modify these catch limits based  
29 on the projections from the assessment and would update the  
30 catch limits based on catch and effort data from the MRIP-FES,  
31 which has resulted in an increase in the catch limits,  
32 irrespective of the change in SSB between the last two  
33 assessments.

34  
35 The other alternatives presented in Action 2 explore different  
36 ways for reconsidering the apportionment in Alternative 1,  
37 accounting for the inclusion of MRIP-FES data in the most recent  
38 stock assessment. The current apportionment was established in  
39 CMP Amendment 20B. Reducing the per-person daily possession  
40 limit in Action 3 results in limited benefits with respect to  
41 reductions in harvest, as does a vessel limit, largely because  
42 most anglers targeting cobia only intermittently interact with  
43 the species.

44  
45 Some committee members expressed support for exploring this  
46 action further, perhaps with consideration of having separate  
47 vessel limits for different vessel types, such as private  
48 vessels versus federal for-hire vessels.

1  
2 Other alternatives in Action 4 explore increasing the minimum  
3 size limit to thirty-six inches fork length in the Florida east  
4 coast zone and also increasing it to thirty-nine inches, or  
5 forty-two inches, in either zone. Increasing the minimum size  
6 limit achieves a higher percent reduction than changes to the  
7 possession limits.

8  
9 It is important to note that the committee chose to increase the  
10 minimum size limit to thirty-six inches fork length, and not  
11 higher, because larger individuals tend to be more likely to be  
12 female. Thus, increasing the minimum size limit higher than  
13 thirty-six inches fork length may disproportionately target the  
14 female portion of the SSB. Ms. Guyas noted that, as the  
15 amendment develops, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
16 Commission may reevaluate its regulations for state waters on  
17 both coasts.

18  
19 Lastly, under Action 5, the South Atlantic Council is presently  
20 permitted to make changes to vessel limits, closed areas, and  
21 gear restrictions. Alternative 2 would afford more autonomy to  
22 the South Atlantic Council for the management of its  
23 apportionment of Gulf cobia in the Florida east coast zone.

24  
25 Committee members expressed some reservation about the allowance  
26 of the South Atlantic Council to manage more autonomously, given  
27 the depressed condition of the stock and the need to end  
28 overfishing. This document will undergo continued development  
29 and will be brought back before the committee at the council's  
30 January 2021 meeting. Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Riechers. At this time, I  
33 would ask if anybody has any other information that they would  
34 like to discuss that relates to the Mackerel Committee. Okay.  
35 I am not seeing any, and so I want to again, extend my  
36 appreciation to everybody on the council for their continued  
37 flexibility in this process.

38  
39 We are three-for-three with regard to holding council meetings  
40 and facing tropical storms and hurricanes, and so that puts a  
41 tremendous amount of strain not only on the council, but the  
42 council staff and the fishing community, and so hopefully that  
43 will allow enough time for folks in the northern Gulf that are  
44 likely to be affected by this particular hurricane to go ahead  
45 and get themselves settled, and so, with that said -- One more  
46 quick thing.

47  
48 We had to forego the public comment period, and, again, I want

1 to make a note that I always hate to do that, and we value that  
2 public participation in this process, and I think it's  
3 absolutely key to the way we do our business here, and so we  
4 will continue to entertain any written comments, and we'll make  
5 sure that those comments are disseminated appropriately to the  
6 council members, and so, again, I thank everybody for your time,  
7 and be safe, and we'll see you in November. Thank you very  
8 much. Hold on. We have two comments, and I'm sorry. Dr.  
9 Simmons and then Ms. Bosarge.

10  
11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just  
12 wanted to let everyone know that we're just going to make a few  
13 changes to that November 30 and December 1 council meeting  
14 agendas, and we'll be sending those out to the council members  
15 shortly and then posting them on the website, and so thank you.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Ms. Bosarge.

18  
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just a quick question about our next meeting.  
20 now, that is all-virtual meeting, right? I remember Carrie  
21 saying something about trying to do a hybrid meeting at some  
22 point, but I'm assuming that it's not November?

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes, it's going to continue to be a virtual  
25 meeting, and so we're exploring the opportunity, ultimately, to  
26 have a hybrid meeting, but, again, as the situation continues to  
27 evolve, we're just in a planning mode, and we're not ready for  
28 primetime on that yet. J.D. Dugas.

29  
30 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, sir. Just a thought. Maybe we should  
31 entertain having a smaller meeting in March. With all these  
32 storms and COVID, and everything keeps getting backed up, it  
33 seems, and so I just wanted to throw the idea out there, maybe  
34 to staff, and it's just something to look at. Thank you.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, J.D. We'll discuss that, in an  
37 effort to kind of move things forward more efficiently moving  
38 forward, and so Mr. Swindell.

39  
40 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the SSC going to  
41 have the Red Snapper Count to review before our next meeting?

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** No. If you recall, the process there, Mr.  
44 Swindell, is for the information from the Great Red Snapper  
45 Count to be provided to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
46 in mid to late November, and so it will take a while for the  
47 Southeast Fisheries Science center to process that information  
48 and work with the folks that were engaged in the Great Red

1 Snapper Count before they have a product that's available for  
2 the SSC.

3

4 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am not seeing any other hands at this  
7 point. Again, I'm trying to make sure that people have time to  
8 get settled, and, again, everybody be safe, and we'll catch up  
9 with you in late November. All right. Have a good one. The  
10 meeting is adjourned.

11

12 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 28, 2020.)

13

14

- - -