

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

REEF FISH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Webinar

SEPTEMBER 29-30, 2020

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1
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12 - - -
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TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 31: Motion to have the council review IFQ data at each upcoming council meeting through January 2021 to assess the need for a possible emergency action due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The motion carried on page 33.

PAGE 62: Motion that council staff draft a letter to the NOAA OST recommending an examination (pilot program, other method) be used to examine whether those publicly-available sampling location catch rates are appropriate for application to the full shore effort, or whether an alternative method is (more appropriate/preferable/possible) for private access locations. Further, NOAA OST should prioritize development a protocol and automated check programs to detect and flag extreme or unusual values in MRIP/FES catch estimates and determine the source of those extreme values, such as input data or calibration procedures. The motion carried on page 63.

PAGE 105: Motion that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council instructs that management advice for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper be derived using the unadjusted harvest estimates from the state surveys (TPWD, LA Creel, MS Tails n' Scales, AL Snapper Check and FL Gulf Reef Fish Survey) until such time as the causal factors and relationships explaining the disagreement between MRIP FES survey and the state surveys are established. The motion was withdrawn on page 110.

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1 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened via webinar on Tuesday morning,
3 September 29, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Martha
4 Guyas.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN MARTHA GUYAS:** Good morning, everyone. Let's get right
11 to it. Our first order of business is Adoption of the Agenda.
12 Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? John Sanchez.

13
14 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** I would like to add an item to Other
15 Business, so that we could take it up at the appropriate time,
16 and I know this meeting is rather congested, full, and so, being
17 that it's a committee of the whole, we can either do it,
18 depending on how much ground we cover, at the tail-end of this
19 meeting, if you would like, or we could take it up at the Other
20 Business at the end of the meeting, being that it is also a
21 committee of the whole, Full Council. What I would like to do
22 is for us to take up a discussion on the CFA proposal, which I
23 believe we are all in receipt of, and see how we wish to proceed
24 with that. Thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. I've got that on the list, and,
27 yes, if we have time today, certainly we can add that to the
28 list. I also see Kevin's hand up. Kevin, do you have
29 something?

30
31 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** No. Operator error. Sorry.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** No worries. All right. Leann.

34
35 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Martha, if we could, I would like to just
36 get a quick update, during Other Business, on the plan for the
37 SEAMAP trawl surveys for the fall, just to see what they're
38 thinking, if it might happen or if it might not, and, if it's
39 not, maybe what Plan B could be, moving forward. Thanks.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Sounds good. Anything else? Okay.
42 Is there any opposition to adopting the agenda as amended, with
43 these two additional items? Seeing none, the agenda is
44 approved.

45
46 Next, we have the minutes. Are there any modifications to the
47 minutes? I don't see any hands. Is there any opposition to --
48 Kevin, now do you have your hand up?

1
2 **MR. ANSON:** I do. Thank you. Just so that it's clear, there
3 was a big gap that was missing during the Reef Fish Committee,
4 and, just so it's clear to the audience, in case there's any
5 question about that gap, we have things in place now that --
6 Evidently there was a technical issue related to the recording
7 of the minutes that the person who types out the minutes wasn't
8 able to either understand or hear or just a gap, an actual gap
9 there, and so I just want to -- That is being addressed, and I
10 just wanted to get that on the record, that there are two or
11 three things and some backups, if you will, to record the
12 committee meetings and Full Council meetings now. Thank you.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks for bringing that up, Kevin. Okay.
15 Noting that, is there any opposition to adopting the minutes, or
16 approving the minutes, I guess as written, but it sounds like
17 there were some issues with them? Seeing none, we will move on
18 from the minutes.

19
20 Of course, next on our agenda is the Action Guide, but I think I
21 would like to hit that as we go through each item, and we have a
22 bit of a marathon day in front of us, and so I think, as we go
23 into each agenda item, it probably would be nice to have a brief
24 introduction as to what's in front of us and what the council
25 needs to consider, and so let's move into Tab B, Number 4,
26 Review of Reef Fish Landings, and, Peter, I assume you're going
27 to go through these for us?

28
29 **MR. PETER HOOD:** Yes, I am.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Take it away.

32
33 **REVIEW OF REEF FISH LANDINGS**

34
35 **MR. HOOD:** Okay. Thanks. Today we have the report, and so what
36 I'm going to do is I'm going to first go over the commercial
37 landings, followed by the recreational landings, and then
38 landings for species with stock ACLs.

39
40 For the commercial landings, gray triggerfish is currently at
41 62.5 percent of the ACL, as of this week, or for last week, and,
42 for greater amberjack, it's at about 52 percent of the ACL, and,
43 if you look at that table below that says "2019 Final Landings",
44 you will see that neither species last year exceeded its ACL.

45
46 If you scroll down, assuming then -- I'm not sure what happened,
47 and my screen is totally frozen up, but the next set of tables
48 should be for gag, red grouper, and red snapper. These are IFQ

1 species, and Dr. Stephen will be providing a presentation that
2 goes into this a little bit in more detail.

3
4 Briefly, for the 2020, gag is about at 42 percent of the quota,
5 and that compares to, over the course of the year, landing 57
6 percent in 2019. The red grouper, about 52 percent of the quota
7 has been caught so far, and that compares to 68 percent landed
8 in 2019, and then, finally, for red snapper, about 70 percent of
9 the quota has been harvested, with about three months left to go
10 in the year, and, last year, if you look at that lower table,
11 you can see that almost all of the quota was landed, at 99.4
12 percent of the quota.

13
14 For the recreational data, we don't have the Wave 2 data,
15 because of sampling issues due to COVID, and we don't have Wave
16 3, and so what I'm going to say is going to be somewhat limited.
17 For greater amberjack, which we have here, remember the season
18 starts on August 1, and so we don't have anything yet, in terms
19 of landings for the 2020/2021 fishing year, and so the fishing
20 year that has just started. Also, remember that there's a
21 closure from November 1 through April 30 and then another
22 closure from June 1 to July 31.

23
24 Really, all we have for landings is the summer and fall of last
25 year and then May, and then May is incomplete, because we don't
26 have the Wave 3 data yet.

27
28 What this table shows is that 35 percent of the ACL has been
29 landed, or at least reported landings, but that number is likely
30 to increase after we get to the Wave 3 data, and, also, you can
31 see that, in the 2018/2019 season, that 87 percent of the ACL
32 was landed.

33
34 This table shows reported landings for gag, gray triggerfish,
35 red grouper, and the red snapper for-hire component. Again,
36 without the Wave 2 and Wave 3 data, there's really not much to
37 show. Remember here that gag is closed from January 1 and opens
38 on June 1, and so there's not really a whole lot of opportunity
39 to get at any landings.

40
41 Gray triggerfish was closed in January and February, and it was
42 open from March 1 to May 1, and then it was closed on May 2, and
43 that was based on projections done earlier in the year. We
44 reviewed gray triggerfish landings and tried to come up with an
45 estimate of what had been caught, and we found that there were
46 fish, and so we were able to reopen gray triggerfish for a fall
47 season from September 1 through October 25. This just shows
48 2019 data, and, with the exception of gray triggerfish, you can

1 see that none of these species exceeded their ACL last year.
2
3 If you scroll down a little more, this is for stock ACLs, and,
4 again, because we don't have Wave 2 and Wave 3 data, again,
5 there's not much to say, particularly since most of these
6 species are predominantly caught by the recreational sector.
7 For all these species, the seasons are still open, and, if you
8 scroll down to the 2019 table, you will see that basically all
9 these species stayed under their ACL, except for lane snapper,
10 and lane snapper is something that you started a framework
11 action on, and I think probably we'll be looking at that at the
12 next meeting.

13
14 I am going to go through a couple of figures here, and,
15 basically, what we did -- This was supposed to be for the August
16 meeting, but we did what we said, okay, what has been landed in
17 August and reported to the council from 2017 to 2020, just to
18 try to get a little bit of a feel for what's been going on due
19 to COVID, if there's anything that we could kind of tease out
20 there.

21
22 Basically, if you look at the greater amberjack figure, the top
23 figure there, you will see that, while landings are a little bit
24 less than what had been recorded in previous years for the
25 commercial sector, it's still pretty much in the ballpark, and
26 then the same thing goes for the figure below for gray
27 triggerfish. It's a little bit lower, but, again, it's still in
28 the same ballpark as the other years.

29
30 If you scroll down, the upper figure is for greater amberjack,
31 and, as you can see, 2019/2020 isn't complete yet, and we still
32 have some landings out. The 2018/2019 year, the reported
33 landings were higher, and this is in part -- It's something that
34 Patrick Banks brought up at the last council meeting, that these
35 landings were a little higher than what we were seeing in 2019
36 and 2020, that fishing year, particularly in the fall, and we
37 went back to look at it, and what we found was that, in 2018,
38 there were more trips captured in -- That were intercepted that
39 had gray triggerfish than in 2019.

40
41 Whether this is just a -- That there were, just by luck of the
42 draw, fewer trips intercepted in 2019 and 2018, or if there were
43 in fact more greater amberjack out there, and that's something
44 that we really don't know.

45
46 Then the figure below -- Again, that is what was reported to the
47 council as being caught in August for gag, gray triggerfish, red
48 grouper, and the red snapper for-hire, and you can see, at least

1 for gag, gray triggerfish, and red grouper, we're quite a bit
2 lower, but, again, I think that's, in part, because we don't
3 have the Wave 2 or Wave 3 data to be able to present.

4
5 This is the last figure, and this is just for the species where
6 we have stock ACLs, and, again, because these species are
7 primarily species that are landed by the recreational sector,
8 and we don't have that recreational information, the landings
9 for these species are generally lower, because of that fact,
10 than in other years when we've presented this information in
11 August, and that concludes my report.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Peter. I see a couple of hands up.
14 Let me first go to John Sanchez.

15
16 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I think my hand is up incorrectly, maybe from
17 earlier. Sorry.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All good. Leann.

20
21 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Peter, I just wanted to
22 commend you, first. I really like your graphs that you put in
23 here. It's real visual, and it helps me a lot. I appreciate
24 that, and thanks for adding a few of those IFQ species. I had
25 specifically asked for gag and red grouper, just so that we can
26 see -- You know, we think we have some issues with those
27 species, and it would be nice to have both the recreational and
28 commercial landings in this packet that you all present to us,
29 and you all did that, and I appreciate it.

30
31 I have one question, and so you were talking about Wave 2 and
32 Wave 3 data, and my brain functions in months, and I think -- I
33 guess you were referring to COVID and some issues we had with
34 sending people out to the docks to sample, and can you go into
35 that just a little bit?

36
37 **MR. HOOD:** I can go into it a little bit. Clay might be able to
38 speak better to it, but, for the most part, yes, in March, they
39 were able to get some samplers out on the docks, but, at some
40 point in March, with the pandemic, the thought was that it was
41 safer not to be sending people out, and so, for Wave 2, which is
42 March and April, then we don't have a complete set of landings
43 for that time period.

44
45 Then, with Wave 3 data, which is May and June, we just don't
46 have -- We just haven't got those landings yet, and I think
47 they're like imminent, and probably they will show up at the
48 office tomorrow, but we should be getting those fairly soon,

1 and, as that point -- As we get that information -- These pages
2 that I am showing are also shown on our ACL monitoring page, and
3 those get updated as we receive that information, and so, if you
4 get impatient and can't wait until October, you can go in and
5 look at our ACL page, and that might help you out.

6
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** A follow-up, Madam Chair?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead.

10
11 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right, and so, in March, we got a few people
12 to the docks. Then, in April, we probably didn't, but May and
13 June, that you're waiting on some info from, did we get samplers
14 out to the docks then, or were we still kind of shut down for
15 COVID for May and June, and how are we going about filling in
16 those holes?

17
18 **MR. HOOD:** That is something that -- I am not exactly sure what
19 happened, in terms of having samplers on the docks in May, and I
20 am going to defer to Clay, and he may have more information, and
21 then I have no doubt that our Science and Technology crew at
22 Headquarters is trying to look at ways to focus on how can we
23 estimate landings for that Wave 2.

24
25 Certainly we were able to get information on effort, because the
26 phone survey -- Sorry. The mail survey was being conducted, and
27 so there certainly is -- It's not like we don't have any
28 information, and there is some information there.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Clay, or maybe I think Richard Cody is on the
31 line, if one of you two can speak to what's going on with MRIP,
32 and I think that would be helpful to this conversation.

33
34 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** I can, but, if Richard is on the line, I would
35 just be parroting what they've told us, and so I will wait and
36 see if he's available.

37
38 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** There are a couple of things. The effort
39 surveys that are done remotely, the mail and the for-hire
40 telephone surveys, those continued more or less uninterrupted
41 during 2020, so far, and so we were able to conduct those fairly
42 well and get effort estimates.

43
44 With the APAIS component, the dockside survey, as Peter pointed
45 out, we have significant gaps for Wave 2, which is -- We're
46 talking about March and April, and then also for May and June,
47 and the states were ramping up, I would say, to conduct surveys
48 in Wave 3, and we're evaluating that right now, to determine if

1 it's feasible to produce wave-level estimates at this point.
2
3 We do have a number of people that are looking into the gaps
4 that we have, and, as I said, there are significant gaps for
5 Waves 2 and 3, and also a little bit of Wave 4 as well, and so
6 we haven't published catch estimates at this point, because we
7 really believe that we need to look into it a bit more, to see
8 if it's even feasible, and then the other thing is to give us an
9 idea of what we're dealing with, in terms of the gaps for
10 producing an annual estimate.

11
12 John Foster and his team have been working with the consultants,
13 at this point, to try and characterize the data gaps as best we
14 can, and we have worked with the 2019 data, using it basically
15 as a test set, pulling out data from various waves in that one,
16 to test the programs that would work with the data, and that
17 seems to be working fairly well at this point. We haven't done
18 what we would call the next phase, which is to do some
19 imputation, and so, in other words, to try and fill in those
20 gaps, and that's where we are right now right now.

21
22 Cisco Werner gave a talk to the Council Coordinating Committee
23 just recently, and, in that, he laid out that we would probably
24 not be producing wave-level estimates, and we would go with an
25 annual estimate as soon as we could, and probably on the same
26 schedule as we would normally have for the annual estimates.

27
28 I don't know if that answers your question, Leann, but there are
29 significant gaps, and one of our concerns with the dockside
30 survey is that the states have protocols that vary from state-
31 to-state, in terms of social distancing measures and what have
32 you, but, also, they have to take into consideration how busy a
33 site is.

34
35 Some states have a large preponderance of very busy recreational
36 sites. In those states, it is difficult to maintain a safe
37 distance, and so we're looking at things to see if there have
38 been impacts to the numbers of fish measurements, the ability of
39 a sampler to see and verify the catch, as landed, and just to
40 conduct general interview information, and I'm sure the states
41 can elaborate on their work. I am reporting basically second-
42 hand what I'm hearing from the states.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I see Leann's hand, but, real quick, Richard,
45 just to be clear, I think what I have heard that Cisco said at
46 the CCC meeting was basically don't expect any more wave
47 estimates for the rest of the year for MRIP, and is that
48 accurate?

1
2 **DR. CODY:** Yes, that's correct. That's correct. I mean, there
3 are significant gaps, and I think that we expect that, if we
4 were to produce something, it's likely to have some caveats
5 associated with it, and it's likely to change, also, and I would
6 say, going down the road a bit as well, once we have 2021 under
7 our belts, I would anticipate that we would revisit the 2020
8 estimates, in light of that information, because it would be
9 more in line with, I think, a normal year, and so there's the
10 possibility that, even when we produce estimates in 2021 for
11 2020, that those may change later on as well.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. Leann.

14
15 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, Martha. I just wanted to be clear, and I
16 don't fault anybody for not going down to the dock and doing
17 interviews, and I don't blame the states or the feds or anybody
18 one bit for not sending their people out there, but I was just
19 trying to get a handle on when we haven't been out there and
20 when we think we're going to get back out there and what the
21 game plan was to fill in the holes, and so I appreciate the
22 conversation. Thanks.

23
24 **DR. CODY:** If I could just add to that, Leann, I think we will
25 have a pretty good graphic that explains the gaps in the data
26 available by the October meeting, if the council desires to have
27 a presentation on the gaps.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think that would be informative, if we can
30 fit it, but I don't know if we can work that into the schedule.
31 I guess I would look to Carrie on that one.

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Yes, I think we can try to
34 work that into the schedule, Madam Chair.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Great. Okay. Any other questions
37 stemming from our landings report? I had one for Peter, if
38 you're still on the line, Peter. I was wondering if you could
39 expand upon how -- I guess the gray triggerfish reopening, and I
40 think a lot of people were glad to see that, but I was just
41 curious if you could provide us more information about
42 determining that reopening and how that was done.

43
44 **MR. HOOD:** Sure. Mike Larkin, who is our LAPP Branch, he got
45 actual estimates of the fish caught through July and August
46 through the Headboat Survey, LA Creel, Texas Parks and Wildlife,
47 and then MRIP, although we have Wave 1 data, and you remember
48 that gray triggerfish is closed, and, for Leann, that's January

1 and February.

2
3 To estimate the Wave 2, or March and April landings, basically,
4 Mike was able to get effort data from the mail survey, and then
5 he focused on effort from Alabama and west Florida, which is
6 where most of the gray triggerfish are caught. He then took an
7 average of 2018 and 2019 landings from Wave 2 and adjusted those
8 down to account for an approximately 25 percent reduction in
9 private effort and 75 percent reduction in charter effort to
10 come up with Wave 2 landings estimates.

11
12 Then remember that gray triggerfish closed on May 2, and so,
13 basically, Mike assumed that, from then on, and so that would be
14 Wave 3 and Wave 4, that landings were zero, and so, all told,
15 the actual and predicted landings estimates that he had totaled
16 less than the ACT, and that then allowed us to consider a fall
17 season.

18
19 Then, to project how long the seasons could be open, Mike looked
20 at landings in past years, when there was a fall season, and he
21 adjusted those landings to account for different size and bag
22 limits to project how long the season could be, and that's how
23 we came up with that September 1 through October 25 season.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Peter. That's helpful. Anything else
26 on this item? I am not seeing any hands, and let's go to our
27 next agenda item, which is Item V. Ryan, can you give us a
28 quick action guide overview of what we need to do here on this
29 discussion of fishing impacts due to COVID and potential
30 emergency rule requests?

31
32 **DISCUSSION OF FISHING IMPACTS DUE TO COVID AND POTENTIAL**
33 **EMERGENCY RULE REQUESTS**
34

35 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Sure. For Item 5, you guys are going to
36 receive a presentation from SERO, and it's going to look at the
37 data collected so far on impacts in the Gulf from COVID 19, and
38 you guys should discuss these and note impacts that you're aware
39 of on recreational and commercial and other industries and talk
40 about possible solutions to help mitigate these impacts. SERO
41 can assist with any requests for emergency rulemaking, as
42 appropriate, as it relates to these COVID impacts and clarify
43 that process.

44
45 Dr. Powers will also review the SSC's recommendations on
46 applying a carryover provision for the commercial red snapper
47 IFQ program, and you guys can review those SSC recommendations
48 and make any additional ones to the council, as appropriate,

1 and, for this item, because of the proximity of the SSC meeting
2 to this meeting, Dr. Powers is just going to verbally review
3 that stuff with you guys. Madam Chair.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. All right. I think we're ready
6 for Dr. Stephen, and so we'll get her presentation up, and
7 whenever you're ready, Dr. Stephen.

8
9 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** While the presentation is loading, this is
10 very similar to the presentation I showed you guys at the last
11 meeting, and we have just updated some of the information, and
12 this is on the IFQ species.

13
14 For a reminder, we looked at three of the key IFQ species in
15 this presentation, red snapper, gag, and red grouper, and we
16 took a look at the 2020 landings and compared it to 2019 and
17 compared it to the average of 2017 to 2019. We are looking for
18 landings as the number of pounds landed, and we're using kind of
19 a trip proxy for the number of trips, which is based on the
20 landings transactions that are put through.

21
22 We also look for landings at the ex-vessel total value, as well
23 as the average ex-vessel price, and we have just adjusted -- The
24 data from 2019 and 2020 is still in its current year, as we're
25 waiting to see what the inflation adjustor would be.

26
27 For allocation, we're only looking at 2020 versus 2019, and this
28 is new compared to the last presentation, and I didn't have this
29 in at the time. For allocation transfers, we're going to look
30 at the total value of the allocation transfers as well as the
31 average price per pound, and we're looking at the number of
32 pounds transferred and the number of transactions, and then I
33 will conclude with some carryover considerations that we
34 discussed before.

35
36 These are the red snapper landings, just to orient you guys
37 again. We have the trip proxy in the upper-left-hand corner.
38 The upper-right is pounds landed, and then the lower-left is
39 total ex-vessel value, and the lower right is the weekly price
40 per pound. The blue-dashed line is our 2020 value, and the
41 black-dashed line is 2019, and the solid gray line is the
42 average of 2017 to 2019. Then we put some upper and lower
43 bounds around those values, based on the averages in 2017
44 through 2019.

45
46 If you look at red snapper with the trip count proxy, we're
47 still having less trips than we had before, overall, but, if you
48 notice, kind of the slope of the line is looking kind of similar

1 to past years, but we're just at a lower level, and so we think
2 the rate of trips is approximately the same, but we just had
3 less of them, in general.

4
5 When we look at the pounds landed, I want to point out that now,
6 with more current data added to it, we're looking at 2020 pounds
7 landed are very similar to past years, and it's overlapping the
8 average value and coming very close to the 2019, and so, in this
9 case, I think we're landing about the same amount at this point
10 in time, even though how it was spread out might have differed
11 throughout the year.

12
13 For the total ex-vessel value, we're lower than 2019 with red
14 snapper, but we are approaching the average value of 2017 to
15 2019, and it does seem to keep picking upward as we get into
16 more recent data, and so we'll continue to keep an eye on this
17 and see what's occurring as time progresses.

18
19 In the weekly average ex-vessel price, you can see it's fairly
20 different each week, and that's typically due to who is landing,
21 where it's coming from, and what different dealers are charging
22 for ex-vessel price, and so it bounces around quite a bit, and
23 you can see that, in Week 15 and 16, we were really low for our
24 average ex-vessel price, but now, as we're coming back, around
25 Week 34 or so, you see that we're tipping up even greater than
26 we had in 2019, and kind of the average of that is coming really
27 close to our average 2017 to 2019. In this case too, I think
28 we're starting to approach a little bit closer to what we would
29 have seen without COVID.

30
31 This is the same four graphs for gag, and it's typically the
32 same pattern overall, but I just want to point out a couple of
33 things. When we're looking at the pounds landed, gag, in 2020,
34 was fairly comparatively lower than 2019 and 2020, in general,
35 around Weeks 15, 16, and 17, but, after that, around Week 19, we
36 see a strong increase in the pounds landed, and now we're
37 currently very close to the average of 2017 to 2019, but below
38 the 2019 value. Again, this is a bigger difference than we saw
39 during the last presentation.

40
41 The same thing with ex-vessel value, and we see the ex-vessel
42 value climbing in the more recent weeks, below 2019, but above
43 the average, and, if you look at the -- I was referring to the
44 average ex-vessel value, and I think there is a mistake in this
45 graph here, but it's a similar case, that the 2020 is going up
46 slightly above the 2019.

47
48 Red grouper is similar to gag and red snapper, and I do want to

1 remind you that red grouper quota dropped in 2019 and 2020, and
2 so some of what you see is the differences in the landings value
3 due to that dropping quota, because this is overall landings and
4 not a percentage of the quota landed.

5
6 If we look at comparing 2020 to 2019, in pounds landed, we're
7 now above the 2019 value for 2020, and so it looks like we've
8 recovered at this point. If you look at total ex-vessel value,
9 2020 values are, again, greater than 2019, and they're coming
10 close to the average of 2017 to 2019.

11
12 Looking at the weekly price per pound, you will see that,
13 originally, red grouper was at a significantly higher average
14 price per pound than past years, in the beginning of the year,
15 and that that dropped fairly dramatically after Week 9, which is
16 where we're estimating social distancing and COVID impacts might
17 have started.

18
19 As we're looking at more recent years, it's still fairly
20 variable, jumping up and down, but it's well within those
21 bounds. It's lower than 2019, and there's a little concern over
22 the dip here at the end of Week 38, where it's dipping down, but
23 it might also be due to -- The weekly average ex-vessel prices
24 have to do with who is landing in that week, and that's
25 extremely variable.

26
27 These are new graphs from what I showed last time, and there was
28 a question about what allocation transfers are doing and how
29 allocation was working, as well as the landings, and so we dug
30 into this data a little bit.

31
32 For red snapper, I am going to orient you to the graph.
33 Everything shaded in blue was what we considered a pre-COVID
34 situation. In the top upper-left is the cumulative allocation
35 total value, and the upper-right is the weekly allocation pounds
36 cumulatively, added throughout time, and then, in the lower-
37 left, we see the weekly allocation transactions, and that's how
38 many different transactions. I do separate that from the pounds
39 transferred, because not every transaction is equal to pounds.
40 Someone might transfer one pound, and another might transfer a
41 thousand pounds. Then it's looking at the weekly allocation
42 price per pound over time.

43
44 To look at things with red snapper, we're noticing that the
45 allocation total value for 2020 is very similar to 2019, and,
46 right now, it's slightly higher than that, and that might be an
47 influence of more people are out fishing, and allocation is
48 going for a slightly higher price, as more fleets go out

1 fishing.

2
3 Looking at the cumulative allocation pounds transferred overall,
4 we've definitely seen more pounds transferred in 2020,
5 regardless of whether we have a COVID situation or not. Keep in
6 mind that, because this is cumulative, some of those higher
7 impacts that started earlier in the year, before COVID, are
8 influencing overall the height of this line compared to 2019.

9
10 Then, looking at weekly allocation transactions, and that's how
11 many different transactions we see, it's slightly less than
12 2019, but it's still fairly typical of what we should be
13 expecting to see.

14
15 Allocation per pound, similar to ex-vessel price per pound, is
16 very variable, depending on who is transferring what, and what
17 we see here is that there's not a great difference between 2019
18 and 2020. If we smooth this out to months instead of weeks, we
19 might see a more similar pattern between the two.

20
21 The same four graphs for gag, we do notice a little bit of a
22 different pattern here. The total gag allocation, total value,
23 is significantly less than 2019, as we're looking at it here,
24 and this is due to two factors. When we look at the total
25 value, it's how many pounds are being transferred, as well as
26 what that price per pound was, and we know that that allocation
27 price per pound, in general for 2020, dropped about twenty-cents
28 a pound, and we had, overall, less transactions, or pounds being
29 transferred, throughout, and so those are both going, together,
30 to influence what you're seeing in that upper-left-hand graph.

31
32 That can be seen if we look at the pounds transferred in the
33 upper-right, we see that allocation for 2020 is less than 2019
34 influencing it, and, if you look down at the weekly allocation
35 price per pound, typically we're a little bit lower, which is
36 also influencing that.

37
38 I do want to point out that, in 2020, we were lower, even before
39 COVID, and so that might also have influence going into this,
40 and we can't necessarily attribute all of this difference due to
41 COVID situations.

42
43 This is the same graph for red grouper, and, actually, they're a
44 similar story to what we saw for gag. We have, overall, a
45 difference in allocation total value that's being driven both by
46 a decrease in the average allocation price per pound and the
47 number of pounds transferred.

48

1 Here, we saw there is also close to a twenty-cent drop in the
2 average price per pound for allocation, and we also saw a fairly
3 significant lower amount of pounds being transferred, in
4 general. Again, in this situation, we see that that average
5 allocation price was lower even before COVID and that,
6 currently, we're coming up a little bit lower, but it's somewhat
7 variable, and so we'll be keeping an eye on this one as well in
8 the future.

9
10 Just to give you an idea of all of the share categories and IFQ,
11 what we did is we took a comparison of past years on the same
12 date as the current year, and this was up through August, and so
13 all of these ended on the end of August, and, if we look at it -
14 - Let's take a look at red snapper first. In 2020, we had 54
15 percent of the quota landed. In past years, we have ranged
16 between 66 to 71, and so below what we would typically expect,
17 but not below by that much, in general.

18
19 If we're looking at red grouper, I want to caution you really to
20 only compare it to 2019, because of the quota drop, and this is
21 a percentage of the quota landed, and so it's not necessarily
22 apples to apples overall, but you see that we're fairly much on
23 target, and slightly above what we were in 2019 at this date.

24
25 Looking at gag grouper, we're at 40 percent at the end of
26 August, compared to past years, which range between 34 to 47
27 percent, and so I would say, in general, we're doing fairly well
28 throughout the year in how much we expect to harvest from here
29 on out, compared to what's been harvested so far.

30
31 Deepwater grouper was 55 percent, and that's a little bit lower
32 than we've seen in past years, which ranged from 61 to 67
33 percent, and this might have more to do with how market
34 influences or different fleets that are fishing for deepwater
35 grouper.

36
37 With shallow-water grouper, we're at 25 percent, currently, and
38 past values were anywhere from 28 to 34 percent, and I kind of
39 want to caution you. With shallow-water grouper, we don't
40 typically see a high number of landings overall throughout the
41 year, and I would assume that COVID would be impacting this a
42 little bit more, in that sense, and so that lower number is not
43 surprising to look at.

44
45 Then, for tilefish, we're at 38 percent, and, again, it's lower
46 than past years, where, at this point in time, we were at 44 to
47 56 percent.

48

1 I just wanted to remind everyone of what we typically see landed
2 within each share category over time in general, and so you can
3 look at where we are now, versus where we typically expect to be
4 at the end of the year, and so 2017 to 2019 are end-of-year
5 values, and 2020 is our year-to-date, and we did update this
6 through September 23, and so it's a little bit different than
7 the past graphs, where we ended it at August.

8
9 With red snapper, we're at 70 percent, and, typically, we land
10 about 99 percent, and I think we're well on target, at this
11 point, to make that 99 percent by the end of the year for red
12 snapper.

13
14 With red grouper, again, I'm going to caution you to really only
15 compare 2020 to 2019. In 2019, we landed about 67 or 68 percent
16 of the quota, and we're at 52 percent, and we've got the
17 remainder of the year left to make up that difference.

18
19 For gag grouper, we're currently at 41 percent. In past years,
20 we ended at 52 percent, and so we're definitely on track, I
21 think, for hitting close to those same values by the end of the
22 year.

23
24 Deepwater grouper, we are at 59 percent currently, and, in the
25 past, we've landed between 84 to 97 percent, and this would be
26 the one that we're going to actually switch and start paying
27 some more attention to, to see if deepwater grouper is going to
28 end up landing less than they typically do of the quota by the
29 end of the year.

30
31 Shallow-water grouper, currently, we are higher than we were for
32 the total shallow-water grouper last year, and so I would say
33 that we're doing okay with this. Again, shallow-water grouper
34 does not land a majority of their quota throughout the year, and
35 then, finally, with tilefish, we're at 41 percent right now,
36 and, in past years, we ended a 66 to 83 percent, and so we would
37 need to make up that difference to be on track by the end of the
38 year, and that will be another one that we're going to start
39 paying a little more attention to.

40
41 That was the end on those, and I want to pause here and see if
42 anyone has questions from kind of the landings, before we get
43 into the potential for the carryover.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Jessica. Leann, is your hand up?

46
47 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, ma'am.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Any questions for Dr. Stephen? I am not
2 seeing any.
3
4 **DR. STEPHEN:** I am not either, and so let's just continue on,
5 and we'll go to the next one.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds good.
8
9 **DR. STEPHEN:** Now I see a hand up, I guess.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Ed.
12
13 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Thank you for the presentation. Is this total
14 landings, or is this recreational and commercial, or is it total
15 landings for the two groups?
16
17 **DR. STEPHEN:** This is just commercial IFQ landings. No
18 recreational is included within this.
19
20 **MR. SWINDELL:** It's just commercial.
21
22 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes.
23
24 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you.
25
26 **DR. STEPHEN:** All right. If we can move to the next slide -- I
27 see another question.
28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** J.D.
30
31 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** You did say that we are on track to land 100
32 percent of the allocation, and it's at 70 now, but we are on
33 track to land it all?
34
35 **DR. STEPHEN:** For red snapper, we look like we're on track,
36 because we were at roughly 64 percent at the end of August, and,
37 in past Augusts, we were between 66 to 71 percent, and so, with
38 red snapper, I feel fairly comfortable that we're probably going
39 to be landing the entire quota, like we do. The other share
40 categories, we don't typically land 100 percent, and it's varied
41 over time, and so, with the exception of deepwater grouper and
42 tilefish, I think we probably are on track to do similar to what
43 we've done in past years, and, again, red grouper we only really
44 kind of compared to 2019, because of the quota drop.
45
46 **MR. DUGAS:** Okay. Thank you. I wasn't clear, and I was only
47 talking about red snapper, but thank you.
48

1 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Dr. Shipp, is your hand up?
4
5 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** It is, yes. I wanted to ask about the tilefish
6 category. Is this primarily golden tilefish, or does this
7 include all the tilefish species?
8
9 **DR. STEPHEN:** The tilefish share category is made up of three
10 different tilefish species. We typically see that golden
11 tilefish is the predominant landings within that one, but we
12 also have a couple other tilefish within it.
13
14 **DR. SHIPP:** Thank you.
15
16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann.
17
18 **MS. BOSARGE:** Dr. Stephen, will you go back to that page on red
19 snapper landings, where you have the four charts, or the four
20 graphs? I have the printed version, and it's page 3 on the
21 printed version.
22
23 I am looking at that top-right fixture right there, and the
24 blue-dotted line is 2020, and so, when our market kind of froze
25 up, so to speak, when we shut down the economy and the
26 restaurants closed and things started to freeze up, I am seeing
27 where that blue line diverges, or goes away from, the dotted-
28 black line from Week 14 through 27 or so, and then it kind of
29 starts coming back to the black line.
30
31 That's when the number of cases were rapidly increasing, and the
32 restaurants were closed completely and things like that, and the
33 price bottomed out, where the guys couldn't go fish, and so
34 we're starting to see that uptick in cases again, and have you
35 all done any projections on what that might look like for the
36 end of the year on these quotas, if everything shuts down? Not
37 everything, but the things that are important to the fishermen
38 shut down again, i.e., restaurants start closing across the
39 country again.
40
41 **DR. STEPHEN:** We haven't done any projections at this point. To
42 dive into it, we probably need to kind of look at how much it
43 impacted -- Which states are shutting down, and so one of the
44 difficulties with this is that every state has some different
45 social distance measures, and that makes it a little bit hard to
46 model where we're going.
47
48 My assumption would be that, if things do shut down, we're going

1 to see that dip again, and probably not as strong as the dip
2 that you see around Weeks 16 and 17, where most of the country
3 was completely shut down, but that would be my assumption, and
4 so most of my kind of predictions and moving forward is assuming
5 that the country does not shut down again and we don't see an
6 increase.

7
8 The other thing to keep in mind is that the dealers have really
9 worked to kind of change, or modify, how they're working,
10 because primarily they were selling to restaurants, and they
11 kind of opened up and used unique avenues, and I think what you
12 see also on the uptick is them figuring out how to move the fish
13 as well in different ways than they have done in the past.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Patrick.

16
17 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:** Good morning. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm
18 not sure that this is the right time to discuss this, but the
19 slide that showed -- If Jessica could bring it back up, but it
20 showed the percentage of the quota that had been landed to-date,
21 compared to the other years, and could she show that, please,
22 one more time?

23
24 **DR. STEPHEN:** That should be Slide 10, I believe.

25
26 **MR. BANKS:** There you go. It's pretty clear that our IFQ guys
27 are very good at making full use of the red snapper quota, but
28 it doesn't look like that that's -- Well, maybe for deepwater
29 groupers as well, but it's not necessarily the case for the
30 other categories, and do you have any feel for why these groups,
31 the IFQ shareholders, are not landing all of the quota for those
32 other categories, and then, again, and this is more to Madam
33 Chair and about when we can discuss this, and maybe this is not
34 the right time, but how do we promote that segment of users to
35 make full use of that quota? I guess, to start with, do you
36 have any feel for why they don't land all of their quota in
37 those other groups? Thank you.

38
39 **DR. STEPHEN:** The one that I probably have the strongest feel
40 for is shallow-water grouper, and so it's typically the species
41 within that are not a targeted species, and they're more of an
42 incidental catch, when they're looking to target either red
43 grouper or gag or some of the deepwater grouper species. I
44 think that's typically why we see lower landings, in general,
45 with the shallow-water grouper.

46
47 Red grouper, because of the quota fluctuations, is a little bit
48 hard to make too many assumptions on, and, similarly, with gag,

1 and sometimes it's the matter of whether the gag are biting or
2 not, in order to land those moving forward.

3
4 Tilefish, I don't have much to add, except for it is the
5 smallest portion of our IFQ fleet, in general, and that may have
6 a lot to do with the landings overall.

7
8 **MR. BANKS:** Then that second question of -- It's more for Madam
9 Chair on when we can get a discussion going on this, but I know
10 we've got fishermen in Louisiana that don't have their own
11 allocation, and they are always clamoring for -- I'm sorry.
12 Their own shares.

13
14 They are not shareholders, and they always have to lease quota
15 from folks, and they're always clamoring to get their hands on
16 more fish, and, if we have these shareholders that are not
17 making full use of the fishery, I would just like to have a
18 discussion at some point on how we can get some of those fish
19 that aren't being used into the hands of folks in the industry
20 who are actually out there fishing and want to fish, if they
21 just have the quota. Thanks.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** That's an interesting question, and I guess the
24 one observation that I maybe would add to what Dr. Stephen said
25 is, at least in terms of the groupers, with red grouper, we know
26 we have some resource issues. Neither recreational nor
27 commercial have been catching their quota in recent years.

28
29 Gag is the same way, and, just a few years ago, we were bumping
30 up against that quota, and really no one is catching it now, and
31 so it may be more complex than just people not being able to
32 access shares, or allocation, for those two, but I see some more
33 hands, and so I'm going to go to J.D.

34
35 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, ma'am. I can understand why we can discuss
36 carryover for these other species, but I do not understand red
37 snapper, because, as I stated before, it looks like we're on
38 target to land all of the quota, and I'm talking about
39 commercial only, and so I'm just a little bit confused, maybe,
40 because I see, in the next three months, all the quota being
41 landed for red snapper.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann.

44
45 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to point
46 out something that maybe doesn't come through in the graphs, and
47 so the fishermen that I worry about -- I thought that Jessica
48 made a good point, that I think our fishermen and our dealers

1 have done a good job of trying to find alternate routes to get
2 the fish to the consumer.

3
4 Now, I think, if their markets had stayed frozen, and you saw
5 that difference between the blue line and the black line, all
6 their efforts in the world probably wouldn't have gotten them
7 back to the black line, but, when things started to unfreeze a
8 little bit, and our economy started coming back online, they
9 were able to make it work and get back on track.

10
11 What doesn't show up in there though are the fishermen that may
12 possibly lease all their quota and what they're feeling right
13 now, and so there are some fishermen that don't own red snapper
14 shares, and, at the beginning of the year, they lease what they
15 are going to need to catch for the year.

16
17 Now, I would venture to guess that those guys are sweating
18 bullets right now, because, if things start to lock back up, if
19 the cases start to increase, and their markets start to freeze
20 up again, they have probably hundreds of thousands of dollars of
21 cash outlay at the beginning of the year to lease that quota
22 that they are going, will I be able to finish catching this
23 quota and pay off that loan that I have for the quota that I
24 leased this year, or am I not going to be able to catch it, and,
25 on December 31, it disappears, and I have a big, fat loan for
26 something that I can no longer even go catch, and my asset is
27 gone.

28
29 Those are the people that I really have been kind of concerned
30 about, and that is probably why I will push for having a
31 carryover for red snapper. That is why I am going to push for
32 it, and I think that there's a real possibility that our markets
33 may start to lock up again, as these cases continue to increase
34 in the fall and the winter, and I think we better go ahead and
35 give these guys a little insurance policy, letting them know
36 that, whatever you've got in your account at that end of the
37 year, for that guy that leased his quota and it's in his
38 account, he will still have it, come the beginning of next year,
39 to finish fishing on, if the markets lock up and he can't fish
40 it at the end of this year, before the end of this year. Thank
41 you.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Roy.

44
45 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** Well, I think that, if the economy locks up
46 and COVID cases spike and we have shutdowns, there are going to
47 be businesses suffering and losing money all across the country.

48

1 Coming back to J.D.'s comments though, I tend to agree with J.D.
2 As I look at this, it seems that most of these fisheries are on
3 track to catch close to what they caught in previous years, and
4 so some of these fisheries don't typically catch their quota.
5 Red snapper does, and they are likely to do that this year, if
6 things continue as they currently are.

7
8 Bear in mind that doing a carryover is a very difficult thing,
9 and it will require significant reprogramming. There are a lot
10 of decisions that have to be made, in terms of how to do it, and
11 it will distort the markets for next year, and I think you ought
12 to think really carefully about that.

13
14 From what I am seeing, at the moment, I don't see a
15 justification for doing it, and I think the complications that
16 it will create and the distortions that it will put into the
17 markets for next year, to me, is probably not worth it, and so I
18 would recommend that we not do it. If things change
19 fundamentally, and the markets freeze up, then I guess you could
20 come back to it then with an emergency council meeting, but, at
21 least for what I'm seeing now, I'm not sure there's a
22 justification.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Roy. I think next on the list is
25 Kevin.

26
27 **MR. ANSON:** Well, Dr. Crabtree just made a couple of the points
28 that I was going to bring up, or question, and that was related,
29 administratively, behind the scenes, I guess, if the agency was
30 setup to do that. The market question, going into next year,
31 was another thing that I was going to bring up, but I agree with
32 J.D. and Dr. Crabtree's comments, that I also look at the
33 numbers and think, barring any significant downturn, as Dr.
34 Stephen had mentioned, I think they will be on track to meet or
35 come very close to meeting the quota, and so thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Jessica.

38
39 **DR. STEPHEN:** I just wanted to add that, much like some of the
40 past discussion, when we were looking at the percentage of quota
41 landed in general, keep in mind, for red grouper and gag, that
42 these are also limited by the longline endorsement, and so that
43 does limit who can fish for it as well.

44
45 Just in connecting with some of the comments from Leann, I do
46 want to let the council know that we do have now a loan program,
47 and we are in the point right now of processing loan
48 applications, and that will be able to be included within our

1 new catch share system, when we migrate it over.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Jessica. Phil.

4
5 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to
6 support what J.D. and Dr. Crabtree said. If we're catching 100
7 percent of the quota, there is nothing to carry over, and, if
8 someone purchased shares in excess of what he could
9 realistically fish or sell, that's a bad investment, and we're
10 not accountable for that.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Phil. Robin.

13
14 **MR. ROBIN RIECHERS:** Thank you. I think I'm going to echo some
15 of what has been said, but the one thing I will ask Jessica is,
16 since the benchmark is the 35 percent on the CARES Act, over
17 five years, I am assuming that 2016 and 2015 did not look a lot
18 different, especially on those fish there where we're not
19 actually catching -- It doesn't appear as if we're going to
20 catch our full quota anyhow.

21
22 As Martha and others indicated earlier in the discussion, it
23 seems there is other issues there. Either they are mostly a
24 species that's caught when fishing for other species, or there
25 is something else going on, because we never reach the full
26 allocation, and so, Jessica, Dr, Stephen, if you might answer
27 that. I mean, do 2016 and 2015 look similar to the percentages
28 that we would have here on the table?

29
30 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes. For red snapper, they're definitely similar.
31 We typically land at the 99 percent overall. When we look into
32 the other share categories, keep in mind that, for red grouper,
33 the quota was higher, but, in 2015 and 2016, we were landing
34 between 60 to 84 percent of the quota, and, for gag, we were
35 also similar in 2016, with 83 percent of the quota. 2015 was an
36 unusual year, with 59 percent landed, but that does kind of line
37 up with what we see in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

38
39 Deepwater grouper, that typically lands around the 85 percent,
40 overall, and shallow-water is also typically at the lower
41 percentage of landings. We were a little bit higher in 2015 and
42 2016, with 54 and 68 percent. Those were a little bit different
43 than what we've seen in past years, and then tilefish bounces a
44 little bit all over the place, when we look at the percentage of
45 quota landed, and my guess is that has to do with potentially
46 fishing for other species and when they switch to tilefish.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Jessica. Robin, are you good? Any

1 follow-up?

2

3 **MR. RIECHERS:** No, ma'am. Thank you.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Leann.

6

7 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just two points. First, to Phil's point about it
8 being a bad investment, those fishermen that lease pounds at the
9 beginning of the year, that's so that they can participate in
10 their industry, their chosen employment, right, and they have to
11 lease the pounds to be able to fish them, and you leased them in
12 January, and you had no idea that a damn pandemic was going to
13 hit and shut down your industry.

14

15 It would be like saying that people that are pilots in the
16 airline industry made a bad investment. No. COVID hit their
17 industry, and it shut down their line of employment, but, on a
18 separate note, I would like -- I don't hear a lot of enthusiasm
19 for a carryover at this point.

20

21 I would remind people that, when we went through the original
22 36, or whatever amendment, that was something that the
23 stakeholders pointed out. We had it in the original carryover
24 amendment that ended up being just a recreational carryover
25 amendment, and we said we would take up IFQ carryover at a
26 different point in time, and so I don't think this is something
27 out of the realm or that industry has never asked for, but
28 there's not much support for it right now, and I understand
29 people's point of view on that.

30

31 I would ask that we get these charts updated and presented to
32 us, since we're meeting every month, pretty much, until the end
33 of the year, at each of our meetings, so that we can keep an eye
34 on it and see if there are some trends that start to look a
35 little more negative and if we need to pull the trigger on
36 something. Thank you.

37

38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. I don't see any more hands, and
39 I know Dr. Stephen has a few more slides, and so let's go ahead
40 and let her continue on.

41

42 **DR. STEPHEN:** I will say that the rest of these slides have to
43 do with carryover, and so, if we want to just hold them, I can
44 present them next month, if we do consider going through with
45 it, or I can go through them now, whichever the council desires.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let's go ahead and go through them and see
48 where this goes, and, if we need to revisit it at the next

1 meeting, I think we can.

2
3 **DR. STEPHEN:** All right. Just to kind of remind you, these
4 slides are very similar to what I showed you last time. I do
5 want to remind everyone that, currently, the IFQ system is being
6 migrated to a new platform, and that means a new database and a
7 new frontend and a new website. Our old software is end-of-
8 life, and so we need to migrate it before the end of the year,
9 or we will not have a working system.

10
11 Currently, we're expecting the transition to be somewhere in the
12 fall or winter of 2020, and, because of this transition, we may
13 be limited in putting too much difference, or changes, into the
14 system, as we're going to be concentrating on making sure that
15 the new system is working appropriately.

16
17 Some things about carryover timelines, one of the things we had
18 talked about at the last meeting is the remaining amount of
19 carryover will need to be calculated on December 31, and so we
20 won't know the full amount, if carryover is chosen, until that
21 date. A reminder that the IFQ system shuts down at 6:00 p.m.
22 Eastern Time on December 31 and doesn't open up to the fishermen
23 again until 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time on January 1.

24
25 With that in mind, that carryover will not be immediately
26 available, because we'll have to do calculations on that, and so
27 it would come, most likely, within the first quarter, if we did
28 that.

29
30 Another reminder that the SSC does need to approve a new ABC
31 with carryover, and we did do this exact same presentation to
32 the SSC, so they're aware of where we're at, currently. With
33 that in mind, we can have no negative impact to the SSB or the
34 rebuilding timeframe for any of the stocks that we carry over,
35 and we do need to consider buffers between the ABC and the OFL.

36
37 Last time, I didn't have these values, and I wanted to show
38 people the different values of where the commercial quota is,
39 the ACL, and the difference between the OFL and the ABC, just
40 because of the point made with the SSC and what they need to
41 consider in order to carry over.

42
43 The overall carryover questions we will have to answer if we
44 move forward with it is whether we carry over in all or some of
45 the share categories, whether it's a full or partial carryover
46 of the remaining allocation, who would be the recipients of the
47 carryover, which I think the council discussed last time, and
48 the typical options are either the shareholders or the

1 allocations or those with landings.

2
3 Then how we would do that distribution, and these are very
4 typical types of distributions, and we can do it proportionally,
5 either based on landings or remaining allocation, or we can do
6 it equally, and then, finally, the one wrinkle in carryover
7 would be the impact on the multiuse carryover, and I want to
8 remind you that we have multiuse between red grouper and gag,
9 and this is frequently used by the fishermen, and so we would
10 need to consider the impacts of that and whether the carryover
11 gets carried over as straight share category or multiuse.

12
13 Then the other thing to keep in mind is we do have flexibility
14 measures between shallow-water and deepwater for three of the
15 species there that can be landed under either category. That's
16 all I have for the carryover right now, and I would be happy to
17 try and answer any questions related to that.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Robin, your hand is up?

20
21 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes, ma'am. So, in the vein of some of the
22 discussion that Leann has put on the table, and certainly, if we
23 do reach a point -- Leann, certainly I think all of us
24 understand, while we're looking at gross numbers here, there can
25 be individuals inside of those gross numbers that are in that
26 business situation and may have had a particular issue this
27 year, and I think we're all dealing with special issues in our
28 respective states and businesses, and so I think we all are
29 sensitive to that.

30
31 I wanted to just ask the one question to Jessica, or someone,
32 and, if you chose to do a carryover, and we answer these
33 questions that are on the board here, what kind of timing are we
34 looking at from the time we chose to do it until the time we
35 might get it in place, and, I mean, I know we say the first
36 quarter, but I assume that depends on us starting it at some X
37 time, and so does anyone have an estimate of that at this point?

38
39 **DR. STEPHEN:** I will try my best to answer that. We wouldn't be
40 able to even begin the process until January, and we would want
41 to -- I am not sure -- If we could get the SSC to approve the
42 carryover before the end of the year, that would take that out
43 of the steps and the process of moving forward.

44
45 We would need to have definitively answers on the multiuse
46 before we moved forward with that, because of the impact from
47 that. I would say closer to the middle to the end of the first
48 quarter, just anticipating those needs, and the other aspect is

1 that we do have to build in some kind of mechanism into the
2 system to do carryover, and, if the council decides to look at
3 the carryover in more detail, if you want to determine how that
4 carryover is used, or it has to be used first, these are more
5 in-depth questions that I don't have here that would take a
6 longer time period. The more simple the options chosen, the
7 shorter the timeline, in general.

8

9 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. I don't see any more questions.
12 Dr. Stephen, you've got a couple more slides, and is that right?

13

14 **DR. STEPHEN:** That was the end of my slides there. I don't have
15 to go over these, and these were just there if someone wanted
16 more in-depth information added on after the fact, and so
17 they're just informational, and I don't have to go over them.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. All right. I think we've had a little
20 bit of discussion about this item and whether there's an
21 appetite for a potential in moving forward with an emergency
22 rule at this time, and it seems like there is some interest in
23 moving forward, and there is interest in not moving forward.
24 Any other discussion on this at this time or motions?

25

26 **MS. BOSARGE:** Can somebody put this on our October agenda to
27 look at this again? I know that agenda has already been
28 published and noticed, and is it on there?

29

30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Dr. Simmons.

31

32 **DR. SIMMONS:** No, Madam Chair. It's not currently on there.

33

34 **MS. BOSARGE:** If I could, Madam Chair, I don't know -- Do I need
35 a motion to ask for other business for the next meeting? I
36 mean, I would like to see -- I know I need to give somebody a
37 heads-up that I just want to see a few updated numbers on that
38 and how it's looking, and I want to see them in October and in
39 November, and, for the life of me, I don't remember if we have a
40 meeting scheduled for December right now or not, but I want to
41 look at them at each meeting, and let's keep an eye on it.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think we could do that. We also have a
44 short, I think, presentation from Dr. Powers too, and so I guess
45 the motion is going to be to whether we address this again, or
46 review it again, in October, and I think we could dispense with
47 that now, if you want to make a motion, Leann.

48

1 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. I will try and make it just very general
2 then, to give staff some leeway. **I would like to review IFQ**
3 **data at each upcoming council meeting through 2020, and so this**
4 **year's council meetings, to assess the need for possible**
5 **emergency action due to COVID.**

6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. While that's going up on the board,
8 is --

9
10 **MS. BOSARGE:** I am thinking that, based on what Jessica said,
11 maybe I should say through January of 2021, because she said we
12 would look at it and do something in the first quarter of next
13 year.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Let me read the motion as it's on the
16 board now. **The motion would be have the council review IFQ data**
17 **at each upcoming council meeting through January 2021 to assess**
18 **the need for a possible emergency, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
19 Is there a second for this motion?

20
21 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Second.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It's seconded by John. Is there any
24 discussion? Troy.

25
26 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** This is kind of a general question to Dr.
27 Stephen, I suppose. The implication of the carryover, how is
28 that modified, if at all, by the funds that are being allocated,
29 like in the RESTAURANTS Act? I know the Department of
30 Agriculture has allocated, or they are making funds available,
31 to various types of crops, and isn't there some COVID funding
32 coming for our commercial fishermen, and does that alleviate the
33 need for a carryover, or is it just in addition to?

34
35 **DR. STEPHEN:** I believe this would be in addition to that, as a
36 separate action that we're taking directly for this portion of
37 the fishery, but I might let Roy or someone else answer more
38 about that. I am not as familiar with the RESTAURANTS Act.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Roy, do you have anything to add to that?

41
42 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I can't comment with respect to the
43 RESTAURANTS Act, but there was the CARES Act that had funding
44 for fisheries relief in it in the past, and that's funding that
45 will go to fishermen, and then there was stimulus checks, the
46 \$1,200 checks, and all those kinds of things, and so I think
47 that's an issue that Congress dealt with to try and mitigate
48 that, along with additional unemployment insurance, and Congress

1 did all of that to try and mitigate some of the economic impacts
2 of COVID, but I think whatever you do or don't do with respect
3 to carryover would be separate and independent of that, and I
4 think, Troy, it would be a judgment call for you guys to make,
5 as to if additional mitigation is justified or not.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Roy. Robin.

8
9 **MR. RIECHERS:** Mine is just a more general question about the
10 motion, and it could be to Carrie or Mara or someone like that.
11 I mean, as we move forward into the rest of 2020 and 2021,
12 certainly, in the near future, we believe we're still going to
13 be dealing with various impacts of the COVID situation, both
14 when it comes to IFQ programs, but also we just mentioned some
15 of the recreational data collection programs as well.

16
17 We may want to check and see how other councils are handling
18 this as well, but is there some place where we kind of notice an
19 opportunity, so that, for instance, you could umbrella this
20 discussion underneath that at each meeting, just in case -- Kind
21 of a general notice, and I don't know if we can legally do that
22 in a more general form, but it's just a question here to think
23 about.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Who would like to take that, Carrie or Mara or
26 someone from the NMFS table?

27
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I can try to take a shot at it. I
29 think that's a good point, and we can work with Ms. Levy to
30 figure out the best way to do that and then get back to the
31 committee chairs, and I think that's a good point.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Carrie.

34
35 **MS. MARA LEVY:** I just have a question. I want to understand
36 more what Robin is getting at. Does he mean notice somehow so
37 that you are able to take action, or just a little more
38 information as to what he's talking about, when he's talking
39 about noticing.

40
41 **MR. RIECHERS:** Mara, I'm talking about -- Because I think the
42 question was is it on the agenda, and could we fit it in and
43 that sort of stuff, and it wasn't apparently on the agenda that
44 was already filed, and my suspicion is we can find a way to fit
45 it in, under Other Business or something like that, but that's
46 all I was talking about and not necessarily taking action,
47 because I realize we've got to be more formal about that, but
48 just to have a placeholder somewhere in the agenda that helps

1 us, if there are some issues that have popped up from one
2 meeting to the next and that weren't inside the thirty-day
3 notice somehow, it would just give us an opportunity, and that's
4 all. I am not trying to make it difficult for anyone here, but
5 just kind of opening the door of a placeholder in the agenda
6 somewhere.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Any other discussion on this
9 motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none,**
10 **the motion carries.** Next, I would like to go to Dr. Powers, and
11 he's got some information about the SSC discussion on this
12 topic.

13
14 **DR. JOE POWERS:** I will be very brief. The discussion was
15 presented in the meeting summary, in the written version of our
16 discussion, and, to be very brief, the SSC noted that, from a
17 stock rebuilding and stock status standpoint, we kind of
18 addressed these issues in general when we were dealing with some
19 questions the council had about carryover for recreational
20 catches, and so it is entirely feasible, the level of carryover
21 that's being talked about here, to -- It would not impede
22 significantly the status or the rebuilding of the various
23 stocks.

24
25 The issues that we discussed more in detail were exactly the
26 issues you're bringing up, about, procedurally, how do you do
27 it, what are you talking about, in terms of carryover allocation
28 of an individual, who held the lease, issues like that, and so I
29 don't think, really, we're adding more to the discussion that
30 you haven't already noted and that hasn't already been noted by
31 Dr. Stephen in her final slides about, procedurally, what needs
32 to get done, and so I will leave it at that.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Joe. Anything else on this
35 topic? If not, we are --

36
37 **DR. STEPHEN:** The only thing I want to add is that we will need
38 to have some discussion of how to have the SSC weigh-in on the
39 multiuse and how that's carried over, because that is not
40 necessarily a straightforward example.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Noted. Okay. If there are no other comments
43 on this topic, let's go ahead and take a break. We're scheduled
44 for one at 10:30 anyway, and we're a little bit behind, but I
45 think that's okay. Let's go for a fifteen-minute break, and so
46 we'll come back at 10:49. See you all soon.

47
48 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** The next item on our agenda is some quick
3 updates on the status of the Gulf State recreational data
4 collection programs and the 2022 red snapper season. Ryan, do
5 you want to go through the action guide on that, really quick?
6

7 **STATUS OF GULF STATE RECREATIONAL DATA COLLECTION PROGRAMS AND**
8 **2020 RED SNAPPER SEASONS**
9

10 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure. The designees from the Gulf states will
11 provide a brief update on the status of their respective data
12 collection programs and how their 2020 private vessel red
13 snapper seasons went, and then Mr. Jeff Pulver from the
14 Southeast Regional Office is also going to provide a
15 presentation on the recreational red snapper landings, and you
16 guys should ask questions and provide feedback as you think is
17 appropriate.
18

19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Ryan. I can start for Florida,
20 and hopefully everybody is back at this point that's going to
21 have to give just a quick update here. In Florida, our season
22 was June 11 through July 15, and just a couple of notes.
23

24 You all have heard about our Gulf Reef Fish Survey, and that was
25 still in place in June, but, on July 1, we expanded that to a
26 state-wide reef fish survey, and so now we have the State Reef
27 Fish Survey.
28

29 We have the June estimates for the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, and
30 about 30 percent of our quota was harvested, about half-a-
31 million pounds, and we're still working on estimates for the
32 July portion of our season, but, by the time Gulf red snapper
33 season rolled around for us, we were doing in-person sampling.
34 The Gulf Reef Fish Survey mail survey was not interrupted by
35 COVID, and then, of course, APAIS is going on in Florida as
36 well. Kevin, are you on the line? Can you give an update on
37 Alabama?
38

39 **MR. ANSON:** Alabama announced a thirty-five-day season that
40 began on May 22, consisting of four-day weekends, Friday through
41 Monday. In late June, we announced the closure on July 3,
42 twenty days into the season, and we estimated our landings to be
43 at 994,000 pounds through July 3, and so 11 percent of the quota
44 remained, and so we have announced a three-day extension of the
45 recreational season for October 10 through 12, and the 12th is a
46 Monday, and it's a federal holiday.
47

48 I think I talked a little bit about it at the June meeting, but,

1 through the end of June, we had -- The average number of daily
2 reported vessel trips was 56 percent higher than the average
3 daily trips that were reported for the 2018 and 2019 season, and
4 so we had a lot of effort going on this year, and that's the
5 primary reason why we had to close, temporarily close, the
6 season. That's all I have. Thank you.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Mississippi.

9

10 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** We had a very good season so far, and
11 it's over with, and we basically closed our season. We started
12 on the 22nd of May, and we kept them open seven days a week,
13 until the 12th of July, I think it was, and we did -- Basically,
14 we harvested a large amount in a short period of time, and the
15 reason for it was we feel like there is obviously COVID -- A lot
16 of people were out of work, and some had spare time to be able
17 to go fishing. The price of fuel was extremely cheap, and I'm
18 sure that helped a lot, and the weather was just absolutely
19 beautiful in south Mississippi here at that time, and so we were
20 able to harvest ours.

21

22 We opened back up -- We did close and re-address it, and then we
23 reopened again for one day on the 5th of September, and then we
24 closed it, and we're going to continue closed.

25

26 Our harvest this year is 142,526 pounds, which is 93.9 percent
27 of our ACL, and we have decided not to worry about the other
28 part of it. It's around 9,000 pounds, but we will hold on the
29 151,584 that we were allocated, and we will hold that, because
30 we don't want to take a chance at going over our allocation,
31 which we have never done, and I am proud of Mississippi for that
32 and for our team that's working hard.

33

34 We had quite a few trips, and our total amount of trips that we
35 are looking at is 4,372, which is -- On the last day, that 5th of
36 September, we opened that one day, which was the holiday
37 weekend, Labor Day Weekend, and there was 470 boats, which is
38 unreal for us, and that's probably normal for most of you all,
39 but that's a lot for Mississippi, but it worked out pretty good.
40 We definitely -- We had 135,264 by private and 7,263 by state
41 for-hire, to make our 142,526, and that's our report. Thank
42 you.

43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you very much. Louisiana.

45

46 **MR. BANKS:** We had a very good season as well, and I will start
47 first with some of our data collection though, certainly, just
48 like most of us, because of COVID, we saw a large increase in

1 the number of trips, but what we did see during our creel survey
2 was far fewer people were allowing us to actually look at their
3 fish and sample their fish at the docks, which is
4 understandable. Everybody wanted to social distance.

5
6 We have far fewer actually hands-on samples of that fisheries-
7 dependent information, but the season still went along really,
8 really well, and our allocation is about 816,000 pounds, but we
9 were paying back 31,900 pounds, and so we had a functional
10 allocation in 2020 of about 784,000 pounds, and so that was the
11 number we were managing to.

12
13 We opened the season beginning May 22nd for three-day weekends
14 only, but we also included the Monday of Memorial Day, and then
15 we ended up closing on August 13th, because we were approaching
16 our quota, but, after getting all the data in and reevaluating
17 everything, we saw that we had some pounds that we can still
18 harvest, and so we reopened for the Labor Day weekend and closed
19 on that Monday of September 7.

20
21 We ended up harvesting -- Of the 784,000 pounds, we harvested
22 about 777,000 pounds, and so we left about 6,700 pounds on the
23 table, and, just based on our estimates of effort and harvest
24 per day, and the fact that, if we were to open for one day, it
25 would really entice a lot of folks to go, and we decided that it
26 probably wasn't the responsible thing to reopen, and so we left
27 those 6,700 pounds on the table.

28
29 Other than that, it was a good season, and I think our anglers,
30 by and large, are happy with it, and I only got one negative
31 comment from anglers about the season, and it was basically the
32 same comment that most of us get, why are you closing the
33 season, and there is plenty of fish out there, and so, anyway,
34 that's our report. Thank you.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Patrick. Robin, do you have a report
37 for Texas?

38
39 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes, and thank you, Madam Chair. Kind of like
40 Patrick, I will start out with -- Because it was in the earlier
41 discussion a little bit today, and we'll maybe have a chance to
42 give more of it the next council meeting, but, like Patrick, we
43 did feel the impact of COVID some as well.

44
45 We did continue to run our survey with rove counts and some
46 level of survey information, where we weren't necessarily, as
47 Patrick indicated, measuring as many fish, and, even for a
48 while, we went to not measuring fish at all, but we would still

1 do the interview and conduct the interview, and that started on
2 March 23, and, of course, that was about the time we also lost a
3 bunch of boat ramps, due to boat ramp closures, where they
4 basically shut that down for a period of time, but then we're
5 back fully operational now, and we have been for quite some
6 time.

7
8 Now, as far as snapper season goes, we, as always, kept our
9 state season, and we opened our state season on January 1, and
10 we started running our state season, and then we opened the
11 federal season on June 1 and projected to close on August 2, and
12 that's what we did.

13
14 Our state-water season is still open, and certainly, under our
15 last projection to National Marine Fisheries Service, which ran
16 through September 18, in doing the every two-week notices to
17 them, after we start on June 1 with the federal season open, we
18 have our allocation at 69.8 percent of the total.

19
20 Obviously, you all saw a notice, and I will go ahead and address
21 it here now, and it may also be appropriate to address at a
22 later period of time, but, given notification from National
23 Marine Fisheries Service to Texas regarding really the
24 calculation of the 2019 landings, there is somewhat of a dispute
25 over how those have been done, and so, unfortunately, we were
26 not able to resolve that with the temporary rule in place, which
27 basically has a thirty-day rulemaking.

28
29 Well, it's a thirty-day rulemaking, with no public comment, and,
30 in order to preserve our options, our Parks and Wildlife
31 Commission felt like, since we had not been able to resolve it,
32 we would have to file suit in that case, and so what I would say
33 is I hope that certainly we continue to talk, and hopefully we
34 reach a place of resolution, where that doesn't have to move
35 forward, but I just wanted to go ahead and say that here on the
36 record, since we're also -- That will impact where we are in
37 2020 as well, and so I felt like I needed to at least say that
38 right here.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Before we go to Mr. Pulver's
41 presentation, I just want to pause and see if there are any
42 questions of any of the state directors. I don't see any hands
43 at this point. I think we are ready to move on to the
44 presentation on red snapper landings, Tab B, Number 6(a).

45
46 **MR. JEFF PULVER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am an analyst with
47 the Regional Office, and this is a short presentation, and it
48 goes over the 2019 red snapper landings, and it's only about six

1 slides.

2
3 The first three slides here cover Texas landings, as was just
4 previously discussed, and so the first two slides are very
5 similar, and they contain two different data sources. These are
6 for the private component landings on this slide, which includes
7 private angling and state charter estimates. All landings
8 presented in this presentation will be in pounds whole weight.

9
10 The first source is from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center,
11 or SEFSC. This dataset was provided to the Southeast Regional
12 Office in late July of this year, and the Southeast Fisheries
13 Science Center dataset contains Texas landings through the high-
14 use season, which is through November 20, 2019, and I had to
15 refer to Dr. Porch on some of this, but the Southeast Fisheries
16 Science Center pulls Texas data through GulfFIN, and I believe
17 it was uploaded by Texas sometime in May.

18
19 Using that dataset provided to the Southeast Fisheries Science
20 Center, they estimated private angling landings last year of
21 almost 368,000 pounds. Using the same dataset, the state
22 charter estimate was made by the Regional Office of a little
23 under 8,000 pounds whole weight. Adding those two values
24 together results in a little over 375,000 pounds for Texas in
25 2019, through November 20.

26
27 The second data source is information provided by Texas Parks
28 and Wildlife through the EFP process, and so, as stated earlier,
29 they provide the Regional Office landings on a bi-weekly basis,
30 and so this is from the last dataset received, and also
31 presented, I think, to the council earlier in January of this
32 year. Texas reported private angling landings of a little over
33 260,000 pounds for 2019, and they do not include a state charter
34 estimate.

35
36 This is very similar, and it's the same landings as shown
37 previously on the slide, but this is just for the private mode
38 only, and so private angling, and I just wanted to show the
39 difference here in this slide, and so we have differences in
40 landings in weight, but also in numbers of fish between the two
41 datasets, and so the dataset provided by the Southeast Fisheries
42 Science Center contained a little over 65,000 fish, and landings
43 were estimated at a little over 367,000 pounds, which is about a
44 5.6 pound average weight estimate for red snapper, compared to
45 the data provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife for last year,
46 which is a little under 54,000 fish, and roughly 260,000 pounds
47 or so, which is a little under a 4.9 pound average weight, and
48 so there is differences not only in average weight estimation,

1 but also in the number of fish used to calculate private angling
2 landings.

3
4 This just kind of summarizes the impact of these additional
5 landings from 2019, and this information was published in the
6 notice earlier this year, and so, for the landings, using the
7 Southeast Fisheries Science Center landings of a little over
8 375,000 pounds, it resulted in an overage of a little over
9 110,000 pounds. This payback was applied to the current year
10 quota, and the revised quota was a little under 155,000 pounds.

11
12 This slide here goes over the private component landings for
13 each of the five Gulf states in different units, and so the top
14 table contains landings for Alabama, and the state survey used
15 is Snapper Check. For Florida, it's the Gulf Reef Fish Survey,
16 now referred to as the State Reef Fish Survey. For Mississippi,
17 it's Tails 'n Scales, and so the second column contains the
18 units reported through the EFP in pounds whole weight compared
19 to the final column in the far right, which is the MRIP Coastal
20 Household Telephone Survey, or CHTS, units.

21
22 These are the units used to monitor against the overfishing
23 limit, because that was what was used in the previous
24 assessment. In general, we can see that the CHTS units are
25 higher than each of the state survey estimates.

26
27 The next estimate below that is for Louisiana Creel. For LA
28 Creel, we only have a single estimate. Currently, the Southeast
29 Regional Office provides us these LA Creel landings, and the
30 Southeast Fisheries Science Center is in the process of taking
31 over that process. As discussed earlier, the 2019 LA Creel
32 landings were approximately 31,000 pounds over the quota for
33 that year, and Louisiana has already taken an approach of
34 reducing their current year quota to account for that.

35
36 Finally, we have the Texas landings, as reported by Texas Parks
37 and Wildlife for the EFP and the Southeast Fisheries Science
38 Center estimate, as already discussed. If you look at the
39 bottom-right value, summing the MRIP-CHTS, LA Creel, and
40 Southeast Fisheries Science Center values, it results in private
41 component landings for 2019 of a little over 5.4 million pounds.

42
43 This slide here compares the landings for the different three
44 sectors, and it compares the total against the annual catch
45 limit, or ACL, and the overfishing limit, or the OFL. As shown
46 in the previous slide, the private component landings were 5.4
47 million pounds, compared to the private component annual catch
48 limit of 4.269 million pounds, and the private component

1 exceeded their annual catch limit by approximately 27 percent.

2
3 For the for-hire sector, which is federally-permitted charter
4 and headboats, that sector landed approximately 82 percent of
5 their annual catch limit, and then, finally, the commercial
6 sector, as Dr. Stephen noted earlier, typically harvests most of
7 their annual catch limit, and they captured approximately 99
8 percent of their catch in 2019.

9
10 If you look at the bottom row, if you add up these three
11 sectors, it results in total 2019 landings of 15.65 million
12 pounds. When you compare that to the values to the right of it,
13 there's an annual catch limit of 15.1 million pounds, and it's 4
14 percent over the total annual catch limit and approximately
15 151,000 pounds over the overfishing limit of 15.5 million
16 pounds. That's all I have at this time. Thank you, Madam
17 Chair, and I will take any questions.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you very much. I am going to
20 give folks a minute or two to put hands up to ask questions, and
21 I have a couple of just clarifying questions. The slide that
22 shows -- I guess it's Slide 5 that had the MRIP-CHTS versus the
23 state survey report, and the MRIP-CHTS is what was actually
24 reported from MRIP, and it's not a calibration, so to speak, and
25 is that correct?

26
27 **MR. PULVER:** Yes, and these are landings that are provided by
28 Science and Technology to the Southeast Fisheries Science
29 Center, and I might have to refer to Dr. Cody on this, but the
30 telephone survey is no longer in use, and so these are landings
31 from the Fishing Effort Survey, that are derived from that, and
32 then that is calculated into the same equivalent currency, and
33 so CHTS units, using the calibration model.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Then my other question is so, has NOAA
36 published, I guess, an official determination that the OFL was
37 exceeded and I guess whether that has also triggered an
38 overfishing determination, and is that imminent?

39
40 **DR. CRABTREE:** If I could respond to that, Martha, and so that
41 is under review at the moment, but that is normally what would
42 be the next step to happen here, and then the council would need
43 to take action to address that, which, in this case, could be to
44 address the issues of the calibrations of the conversion ratios
45 that I think we're coming to next, and so there hasn't been a
46 letter sent or an official determination yet, but that is under
47 review.

1 I also wanted to say that, with respect to payback, and so there
2 were two notices that went to the Federal Register in the last
3 several weeks, and there was the one with the Texas
4 determination, which Robin brought up, and then there was one
5 for Louisiana as well, and I believe you were all copied with
6 the letter and reference to that as well, and both of those
7 related to the 2019 landings.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Roy. Patrick.

10
11 **MR. BANKS:** My question, just briefly, just for Robin, just for
12 clarification, is you had mentioned in your presentation that
13 you all were sitting at just under 70 percent for this year, in
14 2020, of your allocation, and your state season is still open,
15 and is that 20 percent of the original quota of 265,000 pounds
16 or of that revised quota that NMFS is claiming to have? Thanks.

17
18 **MR. RIECHERS:** Patrick, that is -- You rounded up, but, yes,
19 you're exactly right. That's 20 percent of the original quota
20 given when the notification came, and, of course, our season --
21 Based on the numbers that we had, we felt we were in really good
22 shape, and so I will just leave it at that, but it's 20 percent
23 of the quota that we started with.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Greg.

26
27 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** I've got a question concerning I guess it's
28 your Slide 2, where you've got this -- It's on the snapper
29 landings, where you've got the Science Center estimate, and so
30 you've got the Science Center estimate of 367,000, and then the
31 Parks and Wildlife estimate, and I'm wondering if you could just
32 explain a little bit better what's driving that estimate.

33
34 The reason I'm asking is, of course, many around the table know
35 we are also running iSnapper in conjunction with Parks and
36 Wildlife, and the history there is that has systematically run a
37 little higher, because we probably capture components of the
38 fishery that that creel may not, for example, but it doesn't run
39 that much higher, and so I'm trying to reconcile how do you go
40 up over 100,000 pounds between those two estimates.

41
42 **MR. PULVER:** I would ask Dr. Porch, if he could, to chime in
43 here, and so the Southeast Fisheries Science Center pulls Texas
44 data from GulfFIN, and that was, I think, uploaded in May, and
45 the majority of the difference is derived -- It's actually in
46 the difference in the numbers of fish reported for last year,
47 and there is a smaller difference in the average weight
48 estimation between the Science Center and Texas, and there's

1 also a small difference between the inclusion or not inclusion
2 of the state charter estimate.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Greg, is your hand still up?

5

6 **DR. STUNZ:** No, my hand is not up. Thanks.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Robin.

9

10 **MR. RIECHERS:** Just a note. It's been said a couple of times,
11 and I just want to clarify on the record that that data went up
12 in early April and not May, and, while I certainly understand
13 you all may not have gotten to it until then, but I just wanted
14 to make sure that people heard that.

15

16 The other part to that is, and I don't know how we'll
17 characterize what makes up more of it or less of it, but the
18 weight change as well takes up a significant portion of it, and,
19 again, I think the hope here is that we're able to resolve these
20 differences quickly and we are able to know what we had in 2019
21 as well as exactly what we have left on the table in 2020, so
22 that we can make adjustments accordingly.

23

24 **DR. CRABTREE:** If I could, Martha, and I don't think -- My
25 internet seems to be down, and so I'm on the phone only, and I
26 don't know if Clay is still on or not. Without getting into the
27 details of any of this, I got the revised estimates from the
28 Center after the June council meeting, and there is an issue
29 with how the weights are calculated, but there also is an issue
30 that the estimate of the numbers of fish in the GulfFIN database
31 increased by I think around 11,000 fish over what was previously
32 reported, and so this isn't just about assigning weights. It
33 also is the absolute number of fish.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Roy. Clay, can you speak to this?

36

37 **DR. PORCH:** Yes, and my phone cut out, but, based on what Roy
38 said, I can see where we are now. Texas uploaded more
39 information to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission site,
40 which we downloaded, and it basically indicated almost 12,000
41 more fish, and so that's a big part of the difference in the
42 estimate.

43

44 The other part is, as Jeff mentioned, our estimate of -- Where
45 it says 375,000, that includes the state charter, and then there
46 is the difference in how we calculate the weight. Texas
47 calculates weight by taking the average size of the fish caught
48 and then applying the length-weight relationship to that,

1 whereas we calculate the weight by applying their length-weight
2 relationship to each individual length, and then we calculate
3 the average weight, and it makes a big difference.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. Are there any other questions
6 for Mr. Pulver or on this presentation? Okay. Seeing none,
7 let's, I guess, move into our next item in our marathon -- Hang
8 on. Troy Williamson. I see your hand now.

9
10 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** I was -- I am not understanding the timing of
11 the determination of the overage for 2019. It wasn't determined
12 until when, in April?

13
14 **MR. PULVER:** Yes, sir. The final dataset was first sent to the
15 Regional Office in July, and that contained final -- Well, Texas
16 high-use data through November and landings and biological data
17 incorporated in it, and so that was the first time that we
18 received final 2019 data, was at that time.

19
20 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** That was in 2020?

21
22 **MR. PULVER:** Yes, correct. July of 2020 is when we received the
23 final 2019 data.

24
25 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Thank you.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Troy. Greg.

28
29 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Martha. For some reason, it takes a while
30 to get the hand raised, and I guess before you notice it or
31 something, and so I guess this question is to Roy, since he
32 wrote the letters.

33
34 You mentioned the letters went to Texas and Louisiana that we
35 saw and that went around, and so was that the same, and the
36 notifications, obviously, that went out, and was that the same
37 for the other states as well, or I'm just wondering why Texas
38 and Louisiana received those letters, or do we just not get
39 those?

40
41 **DR. CRABTREE:** There are Federal Register notices, and then a
42 letter goes to the state, essentially informing them about the
43 Federal Register notice, and what Amendment 50 requires is that
44 we make a determination of if there is an overage of the quota,
45 and then deduct it from the next year's quota, and that's the
46 payback.

47
48 In this case, Louisiana already self-deducted their overrun of

1 it, and we just basically formalized what they have already done
2 into the Federal Register. Then, in the case of Texas, when we
3 became aware that there were revisions to the landings, and they
4 were much higher than previously thought, there were a number of
5 phone calls and discussions that went on, and the notice went to
6 the Federal Register I think in late August, and so probably
7 about a month or a month-and-a-half after we got the landings
8 notification.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Greg, does that answer your question? I felt
11 like part of your question was about if other states got
12 letters.

13
14 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes, and I was wondering what the --

15
16 **DR. CRABTREE:** None of the other states exceeded their quotas
17 for 2019, based on the information we have, and so there weren't
18 any paybacks or letters or Federal Register notices for the
19 other states.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Anything else, Greg?

22
23 **DR. STUNZ:** No, Martha. That's good. Thanks.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. General Spraggins.

26
27 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Just looking at this, and I feel like, from
28 Mississippi, we need to make one little statement here.
29 Understanding that you all did the best that you could looking
30 at things, but, obviously, with the numbers that they're showing
31 between Mississippi of 150,000 pounds that we claim and what
32 they say was five-hundred-and-something-thousand, and we would
33 had to have about triple the boats we ever have and every day be
34 able to do that, and we just want Mississippi to go on the
35 record to say that we appreciate your efforts, but we do not
36 agree with what the assessment is at this time. Thank you.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you. Troy.

39
40 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Since this information has been -- Regarding
41 Texas and the 100,000-pound overage, since that's been available
42 since July, what has been done to meet with Texas and try to
43 reconcile these calculations?

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I don't know who wants to take that, if it's
46 Roy or Mr. Pulver or somebody from the Science Center end of the
47 table.

48

1 **DR. CRABTREE:** I will defer to Clay on that. There were phone
2 calls, and I spoke with Robin and Lance on a couple of
3 occasions, and there were a number of email exchanges and
4 conversations between the Science Center and some of the Texas
5 scientists. If you want more details, Clay would have to
6 respond to that.

7
8 **DR. PORCH:** I guess if you could be more specific what you're
9 looking for, but, yes, we've had quite a few conversations back
10 and forth, and I have not seen an update to the numbers from
11 Texas to account for the additional 12,000 fish, but that's --
12 At this point, all I can say is, yes, there's been communication
13 between my staff and Texas Parks and Wildlife staff and trying
14 to reconcile the differences, but I haven't seen any further
15 calculations.

16
17 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** I guess my question is have you all exchanged
18 data and that sort of thing to compare numbers?

19
20 **DR. PORCH:** Yes, and we download their data from the Gulf States
21 site, and so it should be exactly the same data, and we
22 certainly sent Texas Parks and Wildlife the details on the
23 methods that we're using, and so I guess the answer is yes
24 there.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Robin.

27
28 **MR. RIECHERS:** I just want to add a little flavor to that
29 discussion as well. I think the discussions have been somewhat
30 frustrating on both sides, and I will share that, and I am not
31 speaking for Roy and Clay, but I think they probably feel some
32 level of frustration, as I know we do, but the answer to your
33 question, Troy -- While, yes, there were some general emails
34 back and forth, we have not yet been privy to exactly how we get
35 -- When I say exactly, I mean from Point A to Point B and you
36 actually see the total being added up to 375,616. That is where
37 some of the frustration has been, and certainly, again, like I
38 said, I am still hopeful that we resolve this issue, hopefully
39 sooner rather than later.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara.

42
43 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. Well, I don't want to be a killjoy here,
44 but we do have current active litigation about this notice now,
45 right, and so, I mean, I don't have any problem with you talking
46 about the facts and what's in the notice, but I am basically
47 going to advise the agency to just not have discussion here
48 about conversations that went on and the things that happened

1 and the background. It's just not something that is appropriate
2 for this forum at this particular time.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Tom.

5

6 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Mara covered what I was going to talk about.
7 Thank you.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks. I have a general, before I go to Troy,
10 question about timing. Obviously, the Texas letter is one
11 thing, but Louisiana's went out pretty recently as well, and,
12 luckily, they knew from the get-go that they were a little bit
13 over last year, but it seems like, I guess, the formal
14 communications about that might have been a little bit late,
15 considering a lot of these state seasons were closed at that
16 point, and I'm just hoping, for future years, I guess maybe that
17 communication is a little bit more timely about overages, so
18 that it's clear that all parties are on the same page before
19 seasons are potentially over. I'm just going to put that out
20 there. Troy.

21

22 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** I guess, to Mara's point, we're not trying to
23 develop a record here for litigation, and I think more just in
24 terms of cooperative federalism and trying to interact
25 cooperative and collectively to solve common problems, rather
26 than doing things separately here, and so, insofar as that's
27 concerned, that's my comment. Thank you.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Troy. I am doing one more scan for
30 hands. Clay, is your hand up?

31

32 **DR. PORCH:** Yes, and I just wanted to say that we really can't
33 report any earlier than we receive data, and so, the sooner we
34 receive the data, the better it is for us to report and discover
35 any potential disparities.

36

37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** So was that an issue with Louisiana? I am just
38 trying to figure out why the --

39

40 **DR. PORCH:** No, and I'm just saying that the earlier -- In the
41 case of Louisiana, they do things a bit differently, and so it's
42 a little harder for us to know exactly what they did, and we're
43 trying to work with them now to get that straight, but I think
44 that, from the preliminary work we did, we would have come up
45 with exactly the same numbers, but it's just Louisiana has a
46 separate program where they collect size information, and so
47 it's just a matter of us getting both sets of data, and we could
48 do a check earlier, but, like I said, preliminary work suggests

1 that we're getting the same estimates.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Clay. Kevin.

4
5 **MR. ANSON:** To that issue, I guess, of the Science Center
6 reviewing the state data, I can understand, in Texas's instance,
7 where they aren't collecting fish weights with each interview,
8 and they're collecting lengths and then determining that based
9 on a regression, but I guess, as we talk about Louisiana, I
10 mean, these programs have been MRIP certified, and so I'm just
11 curious, Dr. Porch, if you can, I guess, describe the process or
12 the rationale for double-checking the numbers, so to speak, if
13 the program has been certified, and is that something that will
14 be done for every state program, I guess, as the data is
15 available?

16
17 **DR. PORCH:** We do it anyway for stock assessments, right, and so
18 we do participate, and we work with the Southeast Regional
19 Office in quota monitoring, but we're also calculating landings
20 for stock assessments, and so it's always important to
21 understand how the estimates are calculated and make sure that
22 we're on the same page there.

23
24 As far as certification goes, remember that, when MRIP certifies
25 something, they are just saying that the design is appropriate
26 if the assumptions are met, and they're not actually certifying
27 the estimates themselves, and that's a conversation that I think
28 Richard could chime in on.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Richard, I don't know if you want to chime in,
31 but it looks like your hand is up. Go ahead.

32
33 **DR. CODY:** I just wanted to reiterate what Clay just mentioned,
34 that that certification really pertains to the survey design,
35 and so what it says is that, if the survey design is implemented
36 as laid out in the design, or as documented, then it's a valid
37 way to collect data, and it doesn't say anything about the
38 vetting of the estimates produced by the survey. Thank you.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Now I really don't think that I see any
41 other hands. Just kidding. J.D.

42
43 **MR. DUGAS:** Thanks. A question. Due to COVID, has MRIP's
44 programs been running 100 percent throughout this process? How
45 accurate are their numbers?

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Richard.

1 **DR. CODY:** I can help address that. I did summarize, a little
2 bit earlier on, about some of the issues that we've had, in
3 terms of data collection, and there have been some gaps, and
4 that's the reason for not publishing wave-level estimates beyond
5 Wave 1 of this year, and so there are significant gaps in the
6 data collection process, and we are trying to address those, in
7 terms of our survey design specs and how it reacts to those
8 gaps.

9
10 **MR. DUGAS:** So could we ask the question that the numbers given
11 are 100 percent accurate?

12
13 **DR. CODY:** Well, the data that you're looking at is 2019, I
14 think, and 2020 information we haven't made available yet, but,
15 in terms of accuracy, we know that survey designs have certain -
16 - That there is an underlying level of bias in nearly every
17 survey, and so, in terms of where accuracy is concerned, it's
18 very difficult to say something is 100 percent accurate.

19
20 If the design is implemented and the assumption is met, then you
21 get a certain degree of precision, let's say, with those survey
22 estimates, and so, I guess in short, what I'm trying to say is
23 that we know that, for instance, the state surveys produce more
24 precise data and more timely data. They were designed to do
25 that. That's their job, but we know very little about the
26 accuracy of the different survey methods, because we haven't
27 really looked at the drivers for the differences between the
28 estimates that are produced by those various surveys.

29
30 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Anyone else? Okay. I think we are ready to
33 move on to our next stock in our MRIP-FES and red snapper
34 marathon for the afternoon and late morning, and that is Item --
35 I guess we're on VII, the MRIP-FES calibration workshop, and so
36 I think, first for this item, we're going to have a presentation
37 from Dr. Powers. Go ahead, Dr. Powers.

38
39 **MRIP-FES CALIBRATION WORKSHOP**

40
41 **DR. POWERS:** Thank you. This is a summary of the SSC review of
42 some key issues in terms of the calibration, and we're talking
43 calibration here is -- In this particular presentation, we're
44 talking about the creation of a time series to be used in stock
45 assessments that calibrates the current method FES survey with
46 the historical records going back to 1980.

47
48 This is not red-snapper-centric. The examples that were given

1 to us were not red snapper, but it gives a good background of
2 what the expectation is, in general, for how this affects stock
3 assessment, and so a quick discussion of the statistical survey
4 methods and then how that relates to calibration of the prior
5 years, to get a consistent time series, and then a few examples,
6 in terms of king mackerel and I think -- I have forgotten what
7 the other snapper was.

8
9 Remember that basically all survey methods like this -- You are
10 estimating two things, the catch rate and effort, and then you
11 multiply the two together, and you get a total catch. Of
12 course, the details are more detailed, more complex, because
13 you're dealing with different strata and how you estimate it for
14 different strata and how you adjust for missing data and things
15 like that, but, basically, remember that we're talking about
16 catch rate times effort.

17
18 A little bit about some of the acronyms that are being used
19 here. In the old method of doing things, we had the catch rate
20 was the public access dockside survey and the Coastal Household
21 Telephone Survey, CHTS, and the new system is the Access Point
22 Angler Intercept Survey, APAIS, and the Fishing Effort Survey,
23 FES, and so those are the key things. I would say that the big
24 issue has always been with the telephone survey, CHTS, and now
25 how that is being addressed through the FES.

26
27 What are the basic differences? With the CHTS, the household
28 telephone survey, it was a random-digit dial survey, where
29 whoever answered the phone answers the questions, and it's for
30 only coastal counties, and this then is adjusted. in terms of
31 effort, to get it for non-coastal counties, in-state and out-of-
32 state, and other issues like that.

33
34 There is a series of questions about household-level fishing
35 activity, and the households are being contacted with no prior
36 notification, and they expect an immediate response, and it
37 requires trip-level reporting, and it's asking about effort, and
38 it's not asking about catch rates.

39
40 Also, the biggest thing is it suffered from declining rates of
41 coverage and response, and the primary reason for this, and the
42 thing that is addressed with calibration, more so than anything
43 else, and the basic factor is the use of cellphones, and large
44 numbers of households no longer have anything other than a
45 cellphone.

46
47 The FES is a residential mail survey, and it gives respondents
48 time to consider their answers and determine who in the

1 household should actually be answering the question and in
2 consultation. It helps in terms of the recall, and it requires
3 summary reports, and it is designed to maximum coverage and
4 response.

5
6 As I mentioned before, there's a need to get -- For stock
7 assessments, you need to get a consistent time series over this
8 period, and the FES and APAIS data -- That methodology entered
9 in in 2018, and you need to calibrate the pre-2018 data, so you
10 get that time series, and so statistical methods are used to do
11 the standardization, and you base it on when both surveys were
12 conducted and then adjusting for things like state, wave,
13 cellphone, and other factors.

14
15 For those of you that know the stock assessment process, this
16 isn't all that much different, statistically, than doing a catch
17 per unit effort standardization. You are adjusting for all
18 those factors for which you have information that you can adjust
19 for, in terms of the historical perspective.

20
21 Now, what you will see here is the trends in the actual effort
22 estimation, and the upper one is the FES to base private boat
23 effort. The bottom one is the base that is traditional, and
24 then the upper one is the calibrated.

25
26 As you can see there, as expected, the calibrated effort is
27 higher, but, if you look at the next slide, if these are scaled
28 to their means, and what this means is you take the mean of each
29 one and divide each data point by that, you will see that they
30 plot very nicely on one another, and what this means is that the
31 trend that you're getting via the calibration is similar to what
32 you had before, but the scale, as shown by the previous graph,
33 is different, and, because the trend is similar, that helps, in
34 terms of the stock assessment and being able to interpret
35 historically what things went on.

36
37 One of the things that has been a criticism is that there's sort
38 of a mismatch between the uncalibrated effort and what
39 population -- Just basic population trends and fishing license
40 trends, and you can see here the calibrated effort does tend to
41 follow the trend of population and fishing license trends, which
42 is what you would expect over a twenty-year period, that there
43 has been increases like this.

44
45 There was a number of case studies that were presented to us at
46 the SSC, and there's some terminology that we used there. Base
47 is the uncalibrated estimate, and ACAL is the estimates where
48 you were only adjusting the dockside survey portion of it, the

1 catch rate portion of it, and FCAL is where you are calibrating
2 both the dockside and the Fishing Effort Survey, and so both the
3 effort and the catch rate. We looked a trends in the landings
4 and point estimates and catch ratios.

5
6 Let's take king mackerel for an example. As you can see there,
7 the base and the ACAL, the blue and the red -- Remember the ACAL
8 is just calibrating for the catch rate portion of it, and you
9 can see there that there is some changes from the base due to
10 that, but there is a major change to the green, and that's for
11 the effort, the inclusion of the effort, and, as you can see
12 there -- As I mentioned before, in the case of king mackerel,
13 the trend, in terms of landings, is very similar, but the scale
14 is higher, and you can see there that the scale is, in some
15 cases, close to twice as high, particularly back in the early
16 years. Again, if you scale them to the indexed to the mean, you
17 get a very similar trend.

18
19 Remember that, also, one of the issues is the total number of
20 releases, and that is affected by the dockside survey, but,
21 again, the driving factor is in fact the effort survey, and you
22 can see there that the release number also is quite a bit
23 higher, in the case of king mackerel, than the base case, the
24 traditional uncalibrated case.

25
26 Gray snapper is another example, and you will see similar
27 results here, and the big change, of course, is the effort
28 portion of the survey, the calibration for the effort, but the
29 general trend is similar, but the scale is changed. It's
30 similar in terms of the releases, a similar sort of thing.

31
32 The SSC made a recommendation, and one of the things that is of
33 concern is that, basically, the shore mode of the harvest and
34 some limitations, in terms of the survey and the importance of
35 the shore mode on the overall harvest, and particularly
36 discards, and so the SSC recommended the possibility of a pilot
37 program, or other sort of method, to try to ferret out how the
38 sampling location catch rates are appropriate for application of
39 the shore effort and whether there is alternative methods, or
40 more appropriate or preferable or possible, for private access
41 locations. This was basically a research recommendation to
42 begin to think about investigating this.

43
44 One of the key things that the SSC noted is that there are
45 outliers, and, even in the old method, there were outliers, in
46 terms of catch and effort, that need to be identified and
47 evaluated. Now, due to -- This program is run by the Office of
48 Science and Technology at NMFS in Washington, and so there's

1 only a certain amount of things they could use, and so what we
2 were suggesting is that they try to identify some algorithm for
3 identifying outliers that can be implemented so that would
4 facilitate what individual analysts, and, when you do the stock
5 assessment, they can be looked at in particular.

6
7 If there is a particular cell or wave or datapoint that looks
8 like an outlier, you understand the reason for that and be able
9 to adjust for it, if needed, in terms of the stock assessment,
10 and so that was, again, more of a research recommendation.

11
12 The other key thing that we noted is that, for Tier 3a and 3b of
13 the control rule -- Remember these are the data-poor stocks,
14 where, essentially, you have to -- They were based on time
15 trends of catches and whether those time trends related to a
16 stable period where there was an increasing biomass or
17 decreasing biomass, and there was a considerable amount of work
18 that was done originally to try to ferret out which one of the
19 stocks related to each one of those situations, and that was
20 done by looking at the actual time series of the catches.

21
22 What that means though is that, with the new calibrated catches,
23 that has to be revisited, because the hypothesis on which those
24 Tier 3a and 3b control rules were based have changed with the
25 calibration.

26
27 This was a general recommendation from the SSC about the
28 calibration procedure itself, and, essentially, it's saying that
29 the calibration works through the assessment and that, ideally,
30 what you need to do with the result of the calibration and going
31 through the assessment is that's going to generate ABCs and ACLs
32 and so on, and that time series really needs to be consistent.
33 The management time series really needs to be consistent with
34 the stock assessment and reviewed by the SSC to generate the OFL
35 and ABC for each stock.

36
37 Basically, this is basically just saying that the endpoint of
38 this is to have a consistent time series for both the assessment
39 and the management. That was basically it.

40
41 Now, as I mentioned, the previous motion, in many ways, in my
42 personal opinion, is kind of motherhood and apple pie, because,
43 of course, you want to have that consistency, but, as we already
44 discussed today, there are many issues that remain, and that
45 will be discussed more when we talk about the state
46 calibrations.

47
48 The other thing I would mention is the scaling up of the catch

1 for each one of the original stocks is, in general, the Fishing
2 Effort Survey is more effort, which means that the catches were
3 higher than anticipated, but, because the trends are similar,
4 what that means is you have -- From a typical stock assessment,
5 you will say that the abundance is --

6
7 That the catch is higher, but the abundance is higher, and it
8 shows a higher productivity, and so remember that, when you do
9 the stock assessment, the catches go up, but you also change the
10 status of the FMSY, which measures the amount of productivity,
11 and so some of these things are going to be fairly robust, in
12 terms of how those adjustments are made, but, in any case, the
13 results for a typical stock assessment are going to be fairly
14 predictable, because the catches go up and the abundance goes
15 up, and, if there's a decline in the stock, that steepness of
16 the decline will be larger, but, at the same time, the
17 productivity will be larger as well. The potential productivity
18 will be larger as well. With that, I will open it up for
19 questions.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Dr. Powers. I see Dale has his hand
22 up.

23
24 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Dr. Powers, I might have a couple of questions,
25 but the background material for this presentation is Tab B,
26 Number 7(b), and, if staff can pull that up, on the very last
27 page, there is a motion that failed, and I was just hoping that
28 you could give us some background on the motion that failed and
29 just explain it to me a little bit.

30
31 I have read through it, and I did not get to listen to the
32 meeting, and I apologize for that, but I just kind of wanted to
33 know what led up to that motion and explain exactly what that
34 motion means.

35
36 The motion, and they just pulled it up on the board, and I'll
37 read it real quick, and so the motion is that the SSC recommends
38 that the FES calibration of the MRIP survey be used in stock
39 assessments unless other credible landings information is
40 available on a stock basis. In these latter cases, the SSC
41 should be consulted at the initial stages of the assessment as
42 to which time series of landings to use in the stock assessment.
43 The SSC requests further review of state landings to MRIP
44 calibrations as a means of verifying the accuracy of landings
45 derived with the calibration to FES. That motion failed on an
46 eleven-to-eleven vote with two abstentions, and can you just
47 kind of set the table a little bit and explain it a little bit
48 better, Dr. Powers?

1
2 **DR. POWERS:** I will have to dig back through my memory, but,
3 basically, there was -- It's similar to the fallout of the state
4 surveys versus the MRIP and so on, and the question is how you
5 integrate in state surveys and what is the process of doing
6 that, and, as I recall, the motion was essentially -- The
7 objective of the motion, as you see here, was essentially issues
8 of protocol, in terms of how that gets integrated into the SEDAR
9 process.

10
11 A number of people I think felt like that that should be -- It
12 should go through a SEDAR, and eventually through the SSC, but
13 not in the original stages, and Ryan Rindone can maybe help me
14 on this, in terms of the discussion, because this was defeated,
15 or eleven-to-eleven, with two abstentions, but it was largely
16 about protocol. Ryan, have I got that right?

17
18 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, sir. Just to add a little bit, we don't
19 normally put failed motions in the SSC reports, but the SSC
20 members requested that this be included, and so that's why this
21 is in here the way that it is.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Dale, did you have additional questions?
24

25 **MR. DIAZ:** No, and I think my other questions will be more
26 pertinent to the next agenda item.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I see a couple more hands going up, but
29 I want to do a quick time check with Tom, since it is just about
30 noon. What's your pleasure?

31
32 **DR. FRAZER:** I think we've got a couple of hands up, and we'll
33 go ahead and entertain the two questions on the board, one from
34 Kevin and one from Leann, and then we'll take a break for lunch.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds good. Kevin.

37
38 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Going back to Dale's
39 question, I listened in to the discussion at the SSC, and I
40 agree that it was, in part, due to process, as to why the motion
41 failed, but I think it also addressed some concerns amongst some
42 of the members as to the estimations that were made for the two
43 species that were given as an example and that the SSC should be
44 allowed an opportunity to weigh-in if other data, or alternative
45 data, existed, to kind of have some judgment as to which one
46 would be better used in the assessment, rather than waiting for
47 it to go through the SEDAR process and then come out.

48

1 It could expedite the process by doing it, and so it was a
2 process issue, but I think it was also related to some concerns
3 about the data and the disparities between not only the state
4 surveys, but even the Coastal Household Telephone Survey
5 estimates, and so I just wanted to add that, and certainly, Dr.
6 Powers, if you want to respond to that, you can. Thank you.

7
8 **DR. POWERS:** I think that's a good characterization. I mean,
9 obviously, in terms of the debate that's going on in this forum,
10 just in terms of the catch estimates, are ubiquitous. I would
11 mention though that, when I refer to the SEDAR, and perhaps it's
12 the old forum, when you went to a data workshop and an
13 assessment workshop and then a review, and then you go to the
14 SSC, and I think, in terms of some our responses, some of the
15 SSC members' responses to this particular motion, having the SSC
16 weigh-in -- I mean, there's no problem with having the SSC
17 weigh-in, but it has to be early in the process, and, the way
18 things are structured now, it's always late in the process.

19
20 If you're going to integrate in new catch information, that has
21 to be early on, or else the assessment gets slowed down
22 considerably, and I think that was some of the motivation for
23 people, but not everybody. Obviously, with an eleven-to-eleven,
24 there were multiple concerns, for various reasons.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Dr. Powers. Leann.

27
28 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions will
29 probably be answered by either Dr. Cody or Dr. Porch, and so
30 just to give them a heads-up. In the SSC summary from their
31 July 8 and 9 meeting, I am trying to understand the differences
32 between FES and our older system and how the magnitude of these
33 changes and where they came from.

34
35 I always thought that it was mainly the effort portion of it,
36 right, the actual telephone survey versus the mail survey, and
37 that's where a bulk of the difference comes from, and then, when
38 I read the summary report, the other piece of the reporting
39 program for the private anglers is the APAIS intercepts, and so
40 where you actually go to the dock and get the intercepts, and I
41 always thought that that portion was simply for a catch rate,
42 that you get effort from the mail-out survey, or the phone
43 survey, and then you multiply that times your catch rate to get
44 your landings, and the catch rate comes from APAIS.

45
46 In the summary, it says the number of changes in the APAIS, or
47 Angler Intercept Survey, design in 2004 and 2013 required the
48 development of an adjustment procedure to ensure the effort

1 estimate, and not the CPUE, but the effort estimates were
2 comparable across the entire time series, and then, if you skip
3 down to the next paragraph, it says, in summary, the APAIS
4 adjustment process resulted, on average, in a 2.7-times increase
5 in recreational fishing effort. Effort and not CPUE, but
6 effort.

7
8 Then it goes on to say that -- I am going to paraphrase this,
9 but those two -- The old APAIS system and the new APAIS system
10 didn't run side-by-side like we did with the effort side of
11 things, where we ran telephone and mail side-by-side.

12
13 They didn't run side-by-side, and so there were some, I guess,
14 assumptions that had to be made about how to change it, and they
15 actually went back and weighted effort, based on days of the
16 week and time of the day and other things, and so, essentially,
17 I guess they gave more power in the calibration to certain
18 effort numbers than others. I need somebody to explain to me
19 how APAIS, which I thought was simply for catch rates, is now
20 being used to adjust effort by 2.7 times, on average.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Richard, I'm going to give that one to you,
23 since Clay has left the meeting.

24
25 **DR. CODY:** Yes, and I can address that a little bit. Leann, as
26 you correctly pointed out, there were two calibrations that were
27 applied over the time series, and they had one that re-weighted
28 the APAIS data, or the dockside survey data, and so, with the
29 procedure that we used for the APAIS, we used what's called a
30 raking procedure.

31
32 We re-weighted, or applied pseudo weights, to the data going
33 back in time, so that they matched as closely as we could get
34 them to match the survey design that we have in place right now,
35 and so that ended up re-weighting the APAIS data.

36
37 I wouldn't say that it resulted in a two to three-times
38 difference in its effect on the estimates, but the APAIS itself
39 does have an effect on the effort estimates, because it's used
40 to adjust for what we call off-frame effort, and so that would
41 be -- In the case of say most of the states out-of-state fishing
42 effort, and so they're asked a question dockside of what is
43 their state of residence, basically, and so that's used to
44 adjust for people that we don't call, or not call, but mail
45 surveys to within the state.

46
47 Then there are some other adjustments that are done to allocate
48 the actual catch to different areas fished, and so offshore

1 versus inshore, and that comes from the APAIS as well, and so
2 there are adjustments there, but, by and large, most of the
3 effect is due to the difference between the FES and the CHTS.

4
5 The adjustments that you're talking about are referring to how
6 the model was applied to the FES over time. In the 2000s
7 onward, it's used to show an increase in the amount of cellphone
8 use and the decrease in the amount of -- Or the accessibility of
9 angling households through landlines, and so that started around
10 2004. Then, in 2013, we introduced the new APAIS survey, and so
11 those, I think, are the two dates that you are referring to in
12 the report. There is a combination of both, but, by and large,
13 most of the effect is due to the difference between the FES and
14 the CHTS.

15
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just a quick follow-up, Madam Chair, and is that
17 okay?

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead.

20
21 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. I know I'm getting in between us and lunch,
22 but what struck me, Dr. Cody, was this 2.7 times, and maybe my
23 memory is failing me, but I thought, in some of the data that
24 we've seen, effort increased sometimes by sixfold, and, well, if
25 the APAIS adjustment is 2.7 times, and I round that up to three,
26 that's almost half the increase in effort that we're seeing as a
27 difference in these new numbers that we're getting, and so it
28 seems to me it does -- Whatever assumptions we're making in
29 weighting these numbers, APAIS numbers, differently is having a
30 big impact, and I hope to dive into that a little more, since we
31 didn't have a side-by-side on those, and I would assume we're
32 making some decent leaps of faith when we start weighting some
33 things.

34
35 **DR. CODY:** I would have to take a look at that number, and I'm
36 not sure what it's actually referring to, but we did see a
37 differential effect between shore versus private boat, and the
38 FES estimates for shore effort were much, much higher, and so
39 I'm not sure -- I need to just take a look at that number, that
40 2.7, but, in general, catch estimates did increase on the order
41 of three times, on average, I think, and that's broad, but I
42 need to take a look at that number, to make sure that I'm
43 understanding what you're asking.

44
45 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Ryan, I saw your hand. Is it to that point?

48

1 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, ma'am. To that point, and so we were just
2 checking the verbatim minutes, and, per the verbatim minutes,
3 the SSC summary appears to be accurate, and, in the archived SSC
4 materials that you can review, we have Mr. John Foster's
5 presentation, and it's reflected in his presentation as well
6 that that increase is attributable to changes that came about
7 through the implementation and adjustment of APAIS. I think
8 it's page 70 of the verbatim minutes, if you want to see what he
9 actually said about it. Thank you.

10
11 **DR. CODY:** I can take a look at that during the lunch break.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Ed, I see your hand. Is it a quick one?
14 I think we're going to -- It sounds like we might have to come
15 back on this after lunch anyway, and Richard is going to do some
16 research at lunch, and so, if you've got a quick question, we
17 can handle it now, if you would like.

18
19 **MR. SWINDELL:** The call list, Dr. Cody, that you used from the
20 FES comes from where? Do these states supply the fishery
21 license people or what?

22
23 **DR. CODY:** I am not sure what you're asking here, but I can let
24 you know what the survey does, or how it's structured. In
25 general, we use the U.S. postal address database, and so that's
26 the most complete list that we can sample.

27
28 **MR. SWINDELL:** (Mr. Swindell's comment is not audible on the
29 recording.)

30
31 **DR. CODY:** We use that as our base, and then we use license
32 information to augment our sample, or to refine the sampling, so
33 that it's a little bit more efficient.

34
35 **MR. SWINDELL:** Okay. Fishing licenses, and is that correct?

36
37 **DR. CODY:** Yes, that's correct.

38
39 **MR. SWINDELL:** Okay. Would it help you to use vessel license
40 owners?

41
42 **DR. CODY:** Well, we do use that, in the absence of fishing
43 license information, in some states, and it's used as a way to
44 get at matching license information, or known fishermen, with
45 our base sample, and so we don't use that in very many of the
46 states.

47
48 **MR. SWINDELL:** Okay. Well, I was just thinking that you might

1 get a little more information from a vessel owner than you would
2 from each individual person that has a fishing license. Thank
3 you. That's all.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ed. Joe, before we break, do you have
6 anything else to add, Joe Powers?

7
8 **DR. POWERS:** No, I don't.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. All right. Then I think, Mr. Chair,
11 we're ready for lunch. If we need to, we can circle back to
12 this item and address any lingering questions.

13
14 **DR. FRAZER:** I think the conversation will be a continuation,
15 and it's certainly linked, and so we'll pick up as scheduled at
16 one o'clock, and it's only going to be a forty-five-minute
17 lunch. See you guys at one o'clock.

18
19 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on September 29,
20 2020.)

21
22 - - -

23
24 September 29, 2020

25
26 TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

27
28 - - -

29
30 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
31 Management Council reconvened via webinar on Tuesday afternoon,
32 September 29, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Martha
33 Guyas.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** One thing, before I forget, is we do have a
36 break scheduled at 2:30, and that will be a hard stop, and so
37 just take a lookout for that. If we're in the middle of a
38 discussion, I'm going to kind of put that on hold, so that we
39 can take a break at 2:30.

40
41 I do want to go back to Ryan on the MRIP-FES calibration
42 workshop. We didn't go through our action guide on that item,
43 and so it probably would be good to, now that we've had a little
44 bit of discussion and had the presentation from Dr. Powers, to
45 reflect on why we received that information and then if the
46 council, or the committee, would like to take any action.
47 Thanks.

48

1 **MR. RINDONE:** Thanks, Martha. You guys had asked the SSC to
2 have this workshop and to review the MRIP calibrations, and it
3 was convened to demonstrate to the SSC the process of
4 transitioning from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey to the
5 Fishing Effort Survey and the effects of that transition and the
6 consequences for the species that we used for examples, and that
7 you guys should be considering the recommendations offered by
8 the SSC.

9
10 If we bounce back to Dr. Powers' presentation, which is Tab B,
11 Number 7(a), on Slide 15, there is the first of four SSC
12 recommendations, and, generally, this recommendation would be
13 from the SSC to the NOAA Office of Science and Technology, to
14 recommend that an examination, like a pilot program or other
15 method, be used to examine whether those publicly-available
16 sampling location catch rates that are used in FES for shore-
17 based harvest are appropriate for the application of the full
18 shore effort or whether an alternative method is more
19 appropriate or preferable or possible, whatever suits you most,
20 for those private access locations.

21
22 Now, moving to the second one, and I will explain why I am
23 moving to the second one in a second, the SSC also recommended
24 that the NOAA Office of Science and Technology prioritize
25 development of a protocol and automated check systems to detect
26 and flag extreme or unusual values, like outliers, in the MRIP-
27 FES catch estimates and determine the source of those extreme
28 values, such as input data or calibration procedures.

29
30 Both of those motions passed without objection, and both of
31 those are things that the SSC is asking that the NOAA Office of
32 Science and Technology do, and so, Madam Chair, what may be
33 appropriate, in this instance, is for -- On behalf of the SSC,
34 if the committee agrees, for the council to write a letter to
35 the NOAA Office of Science and Technology recommending the same
36 as the SSC, if it's the pleasure of the committee. Madam Chair.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Dale, I see your hand.

39
40 **MR. DIAZ:** Ryan, somewhere, in prepping for this meeting, I read
41 something to the effect that there was some talk about
42 challenges that small states have, and, whenever you talk about
43 "flag extreme and unusual values" in MRFSS and FES catches, I
44 think about the challenges of small states. Can you remind me,
45 and where did that conversation take place, and is there any
46 plan to look at how to deal with some of the challenges that
47 small states face?

1 **MR. RINDONE:** It's been spoken a few times by folks from the
2 NOAA Office and Science and Technology that, the way that MRIP
3 is designed, it makes it a little bit difficult for it to
4 accurately survey very small areas, and I will use Mississippi
5 as the guinea pig on this, because that one has been talked
6 about specifically.

7
8 The precision and accuracy of those estimates that come out of
9 those small states is not like it is for states like Florida,
10 and that's something that that program has struggled with, but,
11 in the case of at least for red snapper, the Tails 'n Scales
12 offers supplementary data to MRIP, to help try to address some
13 of those shortcomings that are endemic to the way that MRIP is
14 designed, and MRIP is designed to suit all the needs, and so not
15 all states are the same, and Mississippi, being the one that's
16 been talked about the most, is definitely a good case study for
17 that. That's been discussed at multiple junctions throughout
18 all of these reviews.

19
20 **MR. DIAZ:** I would just like to, at some point, make sure that
21 that's going to get off the ground and actually be done. I
22 don't think this is probably the perfect place for that, but
23 that motion reminded me of it, and so thank you, Ryan.

24
25 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann.

28
29 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Dale, I agree with you,
30 and I think this motion may get the ball rolling on that. It
31 may take a little time to roll down to the state level for
32 specific species, like what you're talking about, but this will
33 at least begin the process of starting to look a little deeper
34 into some of the data that looks like possible outliers or looks
35 slightly unusual, and I think that's the first step to really
36 understanding any big differences that we see.

37
38 **I would like to make that motion, and so it's essentially the**
39 **motion you have on the board, plus, at the beginning, put**
40 **somewhere that the council would write a letter to OST and then**
41 **the rest of the motion.**

42
43 **MR. RINDONE:** Ms. Bosarge, I have done that, if that's useful to
44 you.

45
46 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, are you also looking for the previous

1 motion as well, the one about shore mode? Is that right, Ryan?
2

3 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, ma'am, and so we're talking about -- There is
4 four motions in Tab B-7(a) that Dr. Powers has starting on Slide
5 15, and the first one is the one that is a little bit long. It
6 would be something like the committee recommends that the
7 council draft a letter recommending that the NOAA Office of
8 Science and Technology conduct -- We don't need all of that.
9 We'll start with this, and we'll bounce back to that.

10
11 The committee recommends that the council draft a letter, or
12 have staff draft a letter, to the NOAA OST recommending the
13 examination -- Then you can highlight from where it says, "pilot
14 program," and then all the way down to the end of the motion.
15 Between "recommending an examination", let's change "the" to
16 "an". Then delete "of".

17
18 At the end of that sentence, after "location", say, "Further,
19 NOAA OST should" -- Then go to the second motion in the
20 PowerPoint. Then highlight from "prioritize" to the end of the
21 motion. Ms. Bosarge, I believe that reflects what you were
22 trying to do, and is that correct?

23
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir, I think it does. You might have a
25 little wordsmith editing to do in there, but that captures what
26 I was needing. Thank you.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I think we've mostly got that on the
29 board now. Let me read it and make sure that it makes sense,
30 and then I'm going to look for a second here. **The motion is the
31 committee recommends that council staff draft to the NOAA OST
32 recommending an examination of a pilot program or other method
33 be used to examine whether those publicly-available sampling
34 location catch rates are appropriate for application to the full
35 shore effort or whether an alternative method is more
36 appropriate/preferable/possible for private angling locations.
37 Further, NOAA OST should prioritize development of a protocol
38 and automated check program to determine and flag extreme or
39 unusual values in MRIP-FES catch estimates and determine the
40 source of those extreme values, such as input data or
41 calibration procedures.** Leann, are you good with that?

42
43 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, ma'am.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there a second for this motion?
46

47 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will second it.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, John. I see a couple of hands.
2 Richard.

3
4 **DR. CODY:** I just wanted to make a point for Dale and Leann's
5 benefit. We have started to look at ways to flag the data,
6 different ways that we can flag potentially outlying kind of
7 estimates, and so that would include smaller states, like
8 Mississippi, and it would include any kind of an estimate, and
9 it wouldn't preclude that level of resolution. That's it.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. Is there any discussion on
12 this motion? I am doing a quick scan for hands here. I don't
13 see any hands at this time. **Is there any opposition to this**
14 **motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Ryan, have we --
15 Leann.

16
17 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to recommend
18 that, at some point in the future, and it does not have to be
19 right away, but that our SSC get some more in-depth presentation
20 on the changes made on the calibration side for the APAIS
21 changes, the 2004 and 2013 changes to APAIS which resulted in
22 some re-weighting to intercept data and 2.7-times increase in
23 effort for recreational fishing, on average.

24
25 I think it would probably be beneficial to have higher
26 resolution of what those changes were, and maybe even like a
27 case study, where you go through a specific species, and maybe
28 one that doesn't have an extreme amount of data to go through,
29 and actually parse through what got upweighted or downweighted
30 and what changes came out of that and how those decisions were
31 made, and I think that would be good for the SSC to look at in
32 the future.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Ryan.

35
36 **MR. RINDONE:** A good portion of that was reviewed by Mr. John
37 Foster during this workshop and is detailed in the presentation
38 that he gave, where he walked through the progression and
39 evolution of federal recreational data collection from MRFSS
40 into MRIP and APAIS and CHTS, and then from there into FES, and
41 so the SSC has reviewed a great deal, and I don't know if every
42 nook and cranny, but certainly a great deal of what Ms. Bosarge
43 is asking.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, do you want to follow-up to that?

46
47 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks. I went through those presentations, and
48 Dr. Powers gave us a little bit of that, but those are some

1 overall graphs that cover several decades of data, somewhat
2 generally, and I would like to know what assumptions we made on
3 this weighting of effort based on day of the week and weighting
4 of effort based on time of the day and weighting of effort based
5 on out-of-state anglers.

6
7 We need to look at what kind of assumptions we made there, and I
8 think a case study is a good example of that, because that's
9 when the rubber meets the road, right, and it's sort of like we
10 approved all of these different state methodologies, but, when
11 the rubber hits the road between the state and the federal data,
12 the numbers that come out of them are quite different, and, if
13 we don't ever start actually getting into the details of this
14 stuff, we're never going to understand the differences, and so
15 that's my attempt at starting to understand some of these
16 differences.

17
18 Let's get into the assumptions that we made when we went back
19 and started reweighting things and increased effort by 2.7 times
20 when we went through that process.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Richard.

23
24 **DR. CODY:** I just wanted to address the 2.7 times effect on
25 effort. That is not due to the APAIS alone. It's due to APAIS
26 and FES, and so I went back and looked at John's presentation,
27 and that's how it's presented, and so it may not have been that
28 clear from the presentation, but that's with both the APAIS and
29 the FES calibrations applied to the old time series, and so
30 that's how that is done.

31
32 The other point that Leann made before lunch referred to the
33 different blocks of time that we had, and we can certainly
34 provide the council with additional information on what we did
35 to adjust the weights. For instance, in 2013, we changed the
36 survey design for the APAIS to essentially what it is right now,
37 and so we had a fully weighted sampling methodology that was
38 matched with the weighted estimation process as well.

39
40 We didn't have that beforehand, and there was a mismatch between
41 the two from 2004 to 2013, and we had information available to
42 us from the sample weights that could apply pseudo sample
43 weights to the data to start the raking process, and so the way
44 raking works is you have a reference period that is used to
45 adjust the previous period, and so, for instance, you start the
46 most recent time period and you adjust backwards, and we use
47 ten-year blocks from 2004 backwards, potentially just to
48 minimize the effects of one block to another and to contain the

1 variance within those blocks, and so that's part of the
2 explanation, but I would be happy to provide the council with
3 maybe some detailed explanations as to how the weighting was
4 done initially and how it transferred backwards in time to the
5 raking process.

6
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** That would be great, Dr. Cody. Thank you for that
8 answer, but I would rather that you provide it to the SSC,
9 because I don't think I'm smart enough to ask you the proper
10 questions about it.

11
12 **DR. CODY:** Sure. Thanks, Leann.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Kevin.

15
16 **MR. ANSON:** I recall a presentation that was given to the
17 council back maybe in 2015, giving it some time to actually
18 collect some data and look at the impact of the new APAIS
19 methodology, but I recall that, in 2015, and I think maybe Andy
20 gave the presentation, potentially, where he looked at the
21 changes specific to red snapper for the states, talking about
22 the time block change and the impacts of effort. Dr. Cody, that
23 might be something you want to look, or maybe council staff can
24 go back and look, but it probably would need to be refreshed,
25 but it did address some of the issues and questions that Leann
26 has, as I recall. Thank you.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin, for that refresher. Okay.
29 Where are we? Ryan, do you have anything else on this item
30 before you give us a review of where we're going with this
31 agenda item?

32
33 **MR. RINDONE:** The only other two things that I have are the last
34 two motions that the SSC passed. The third motion is that a
35 workgroup review the stock landings for Tier 3 stocks of the ABC
36 control rule and reevaluate those assumptions, and just to say
37 that the ABC Control Rule Working Group, which is composed of
38 all of those people already, can certainly work on that, and so
39 that will -- The SSC will take care of that within itself.

40
41 Then the last one is that the SSC recommends that management
42 actions stay consistent with recreational landings time series
43 used in the assessments and reviewed by the SSC to generate
44 catch limits for each stock, and that's something that the
45 council is currently doing. It's updating catch limits to be
46 commensurate with the most recent stock assessment, and so that
47 would just be -- The SSC is essentially just recommending that
48 the council keep doing that, and so neither one of those I think

1 require specific action by the committee or the council.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Ryan. Kevin, is your hand up?

4
5 **MR. ANSON:** No, and I will lower it. Sorry.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. All right. With that, then let's move
8 to Item VIII. Ryan, do you want to go through the action guide
9 for this one before we start moving into Dr. Cody's
10 presentation?

11
12 **REVIEW AUGUST 5, 2020 MRIP RED SNAPPER STATE DATA CALIBRATION**
13 **WEBINAR**

14
15 **MR. RINDONE:** I sure can. Dr. Cody is going to summarize the
16 proceedings from the August 5 NOAA OST workshop for red snapper
17 calibrations, and this is the fifth workshop that's been held to
18 this effect. Dr. Powers will also review with the committee the
19 SSC's deliberations over the material presented during this
20 workshop at the SSC's August 11th and 12th meeting, and then the
21 Southeast Regional Office will demonstrate some options for
22 calibrating the state-generated harvest data for red snapper
23 from their data currencies into MRIP-CHTS.

24
25 You guys should consider all of these recommendations and make
26 your own to the council, as appropriate, and this is going to be
27 a long agenda item, and so I would encourage asking questions as
28 we go and try not to wait too long as presentations and
29 recommendations are moved through. Madam Chair.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Ryan, and so I will try to keep
32 an eye out for hands, on that note. Richard, once your
33 presentation is up, go ahead and start, but I may pause you, or
34 have you pause, for questions as they appear in the queue.

35
36 **PRESENTATION**

37
38 **DR. CODY:** Okay. Hopefully everybody can hear me. The summary
39 that I'm about to provide really is just a summary of the
40 calibration workshop, and, as Ryan pointed out, it's the fifth
41 in a series of workshops that we have held with the help of the
42 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission over the last six or so
43 years.

44
45 This is just some background and context. The first three
46 workshops really focused on development of the survey
47 methodology and getting to the point where we were in a position
48 to test actual survey methodology, and so the first two

1 workshops really occurred in the first couple of months, and the
2 first three within a period of thirteen months altogether, and
3 so, just to summarize what went on in those workshops,
4 basically, there was a focus on coordination between partners.

5
6 Then the idea that how we would focus on integrating specialized
7 surveys into the MRIP family of surveys, we'll call it, and then
8 a need to meet management and stock assessment needs, and so
9 there's a dual purpose here of being able to enter managed
10 stocks, managed catches, as well as provide information that is
11 needed for stock assessment purposes.

12
13 The consultant report from the first workshop basically
14 presented some options for survey development, and there were
15 two basic options that were presented, and one was integrating
16 improvements into the general survey, and then the other was
17 focused on standalone specialized or targeted surveys, and, in
18 general, I think the preference was the second option here, with
19 Florida being a little bit different, in that it was more of a
20 connection with the MRIP survey.

21
22 As I mentioned, the first three workshops really were focused on
23 development of methodology and approaches, and so the fourth
24 workshop, which was held in September of 2018, focused more on
25 the implementation of the surveys going forward. By that time,
26 the survey designs for all of the states were either certified
27 or very, very close to being certified, and so basic methodology
28 had been more or less agreed upon for the different surveys, and
29 the focus was on options for calibration and producing an
30 integrated Gulf-wide estimate.

31
32 Initial work by the consultants, in terms of coming up with a
33 way to integrate the estimates, wasn't too promising, and it
34 pointed out some issues with the differences between the surveys
35 that didn't lend themselves towards an automated way, or a very
36 efficient way, of integrating the surveys and coming with a
37 composite estimate, let's say.

38
39 The methodology that they looked at is frequently used to
40 combine information from different sources, and let's call it
41 the composite estimation, and so, with that, calibration was
42 discussed, in terms of the FES-based survey, since that was the
43 survey that we had gone to in 2018, and, going forward, that
44 would be the survey that was available to us, and that points to
45 some of the adjustments that had to be made and the recent
46 workshops, where calibrations were developed based on the CHTS.

47
48 The two methods that were essentially looked at in the workshop

1 were modeling-based approaches versus simple ratio-based
2 approaches, and it was determined, at that time, that a simple
3 ratio-based approach could be effective and available far more
4 quickly than a modeling-based approach, and that would take time
5 to investigate, and then the other point I would like to make is
6 that a simple ratio-based approach didn't preclude pursuing
7 modeling at a later point, and also refining the simple ratio-
8 based conversions, as more data became available.

9
10 A point to some documentation here, and I did notice that, early
11 on, there was some discussion of what certification actually
12 means, and we have a policy and procedure directive out there
13 that looks at the transition to state surveys, or to alternative
14 survey methods, and, also, the certification of methods and
15 what's involved, what it entails, and what it pertains to, and
16 so I would point out that the transition plan is required in
17 NOAA MRIP certification.

18
19 Once the survey goes through the certification process, a time
20 is expected to transition to that methodology, and that's where
21 the question of calibration comes up, because of differences
22 between the current or previous methodology and new methodology,
23 and so that's where calibration is part of the transition time,
24 and it may be required if there were substantial differences
25 between the estimates, as there are between the FES-based MRIP
26 estimates and the state survey estimates.

27
28 Generally, the argument for calibration is that, when you have
29 multiple surveys in use, it facilitates a common standard, or a
30 common currency, so that you can have a better way to compare
31 information that is provided by those surveys, such as catch
32 information, and this lends itself to evaluation of catch
33 trends, and so you need a way of stepping from one time series
34 to another, as the methods are different, and you have to have a
35 way to adjust for those differences. Then ACL monitoring as
36 well. If you have a situation where the ACL is set up in one
37 survey currency and monitored in another, then you would need
38 some way to adjust for that.

39
40 We approached the calibration of the general and specialized
41 surveys with a couple of things in mind, that calibrations are
42 necessary to express the MRIP-CHTS, or Coastal Household
43 Telephone Survey, based ACLs in the new survey units, for
44 monitoring purposes, and that calibrations -- A goal of
45 calibrations is to facilitate a conversion of catch estimates in
46 both directions, and it doesn't frame one survey as inferior or
47 superior to the other. It is largely agnostic to which survey
48 is preferred, and it's just a way of stepping from one survey

1 currency to the other.

2
3 Then the focus of the workshop presentations, as I mentioned,
4 was on simple ratio-based calibrations, to allow conversion
5 between the MRIP survey and state survey estimates, and so that
6 was the goal of the workshop.

7
8 The workshop was set up in two sessions, and it basically was a
9 six-hour webinar split in two. The first session largely
10 concentrated on the state presentations of their methods for
11 producing the ratios, and different factors come into play in
12 the production of ratios. Obviously, when you have very
13 different surveys, very different survey methodologies, ratios
14 may be more effective at one level of resolution versus another,
15 and so those were the things that were considered ratios as the
16 wave level versus the annual level. In general, the approach
17 was settled on for an annual level ratio.

18
19 In the workshop also, Mississippi introduced, largely for food
20 for thought, I think, and maybe Paul can elaborate on that, but
21 a new approach, which was a meta-analytical approach that could
22 be used to weight estimates and produce sort of a composite-
23 based estimate.

24
25 That was largely outside the scope of the intended goal of the
26 workshop, and I will get a little bit into that later on, and
27 the second session dealt with the SERO adjustments, and, beyond
28 the ratios produced by the states for the MRIP to the state
29 survey estimates, there were other considerations as well, such
30 as the time period that would be used for adjustments back to
31 the CHTS from the current survey methodology, since CHTS is not
32 in play anymore, and, basically, Jeff Pulver provided a
33 presentation that dealt with three versus five-year averaging,
34 for comparison.

35
36 The transition team sub-group was another component that was
37 introduced in this second session as well, and this was
38 basically a follow-on from work that we had done in the
39 transition of the MRIP surveys from the old CHTS to the new FES,
40 and we employed a transition team, and the transition team was
41 made up of state partners and regional partners from the
42 councils and commissions, as well as the Regional Offices and
43 Science Center of NOAA as well, in addition to Science and
44 Technology, so that there would be a more open and transparent
45 process for dealing with the transition from the old MRIP
46 surveys to the new ones.

47
48 We felt like this was a good model to build on for going forward

1 with the state surveys, and so we introduced the idea that there
2 would be a sub-group from this full MRIP transition team that
3 would focus on the next steps for the state surveys, after we
4 introduced the calibrations.

5
6 It dealt with, obviously, considerations around the development
7 of calibrations. For instance, with ratio-based calibrations,
8 we know that, if we add more data -- As we add more data, those
9 ratios may change, and there may be other factors that come into
10 play as well, including that, as more data become available,
11 there will be opportunities to revisit calibrations, and maybe
12 the methodology as well, whether it's modeling versus ratio-
13 based approaches.

14
15 Those were two questions that we posed that would be part of the
16 charge for this team, and it also would help in increasing the
17 level of disruption that's associated with calibrations, and
18 everybody here now is familiar with the amount of disruption a
19 change in survey methodology can cause, and so you don't want to
20 be introducing calibrations annually and then having to change
21 ACLs and all the other associated responsibilities that go along
22 with that, and so the team would be focused on determining time
23 intervals for a suitable period for revisiting calibrations.

24
25 In addition to that, we talked about the role in the data
26 management of Gulf States and the states and coordination in
27 making the data available and the formats for the data
28 available, and, obviously, Gulf States has experience in
29 handling and working with the state data, and NOAA as well, and
30 so it seemed an obvious choice that they would be involved in
31 that process.

32
33 Then Leann kind of pointed to this earlier, and it's something
34 that she has mentioned several times in other meetings, and
35 other have as well, but we really need to get a handle on
36 survey-related drivers for differences in the estimates.

37
38 We know we have very different surveys, and we know that they
39 produce different estimates, and we know that they have all been
40 certified and that they are valid approaches, but what we don't
41 know is what are the drivers for those differences between the
42 estimates that we get, and that points to the question of
43 accuracy that came up this morning in one person's question to
44 me, and so that's something that I think is a priority for
45 Science and Technology, and I think probably we would need the
46 states collaboration on that, because we have to be able to
47 compare between the states and the MRIP survey.

48

1 Then other related questions to research, and one thing that has
2 been discussed internally, and has been brought up externally as
3 well, is the idea of looking at possible ways of ground-truthing
4 or validating the data that we get for effort estimates. I know
5 a number of the states have, Alabama and Louisiana, for
6 instance, and Florida too, I think, have initiated methods that
7 they can use to get direct counts of fishing effort, through
8 video methods, I think, or visual counting.

9
10 We have started a conversation within NOAA related to that and
11 what kinds of technology we can leverage and what means can we
12 approach to looking at ways to evaluate the differences between
13 the surveys and also get an idea of how far off, if they're off,
14 in terms of their estimation.

15
16 I dealt a little bit with the discussions that went on in the
17 workshop, and I'm not going to go into the actual calibration
18 values, and I will leave that up to the Southeast Regional
19 Office and the Science Center, but I will point to the overall
20 consultant recommendations.

21
22 They had a chance, during the actual workshop, at lunchtime, to
23 deliberate with each other, and we had Virginia Lesser from
24 Oregon State University, and we had also Lynn Stokes from
25 Southern Methodist University, and they were joined by Jean
26 Opsomer from Westat, who had been at Colorado State University.

27
28 All of those three reviewers, or consultants, had been involved
29 in the development of the surveys, and so they were very
30 familiar with the methodologies that are used, and I guess the
31 take-home is that they had a chance to review the methods prior
32 to the workshop and then also during the workshop as well, and
33 their deliberations really did not result in any major concerns
34 over the methods presented by Alabama, Florida, and Louisiana.

35
36 They couldn't recommend the Mississippi meta-analytical method,
37 but they thought that it certainly could be useful, or more
38 appropriate, for other uses, and I think that was Paul's intent
39 when he presented it, was just to put it out there as something
40 for discussion.

41
42 Then they did have a minor suggestion to Florida for their
43 variance estimate for the ratio, and so that was the -- Other
44 than that, there were no major concerns about the methods that
45 were used, given that they were limited by data, and, in the
46 case of Louisiana, you had one year of side-by-side APAIS and
47 three years of side-by-side FES/CHTS.

48

1 They recommended consistency, as much as possible, between the
2 approaches, given that there were differences in the data and
3 then the preferences of the states for when they felt their
4 survey was most stable and when they felt the comparisons were
5 most appropriate with MRIP.

6
7 Then the last recommendation they had is that MRIP should
8 compile the methods into a single report, referencing survey
9 documentation as well, and this didn't have to involve a large-
10 scale process, and it could be just a compilation of the
11 workshop materials and then the survey documentation that had
12 been provided for certification.

13
14 Those were the basic recommendations there, based on the
15 consultants, and the consultants, I should add, their charge was
16 really just to look at the approach, if they had any major
17 concerns about the ratio approach as it was applied, and so that
18 was the role of S&T in this workshop, and that was our goal and
19 our focus.

20
21 I basically covered this slide already, and this has to do with
22 the transition team, but I will mention that, following this
23 workshop, the idea is that we will follow-up with state
24 partners, regional partners, including the councils and
25 commissions, to set up a date for the initial working group
26 meeting, and so we're hoping that that will occur sometime in
27 late October, and that's all I have.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Richard. I am going to give
30 folks a couple of minutes to raise hands, if they have
31 questions. Ed Swindell.

32
33 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you, Dr. Cody. One of the questions that I
34 have is I have never been asked before, but how many -- In the
35 FES system, how many of the response letters are sent out, and
36 what is the response result? How many letters do you get back
37 with a good result?

38
39 **DR. CODY:** Well, our response rate is between 30 and 35 percent,
40 overall. The number of letters we would send out, or request
41 for response to our surveys, varies from state to state. It's
42 depending on -- We use a methodology that is basically called a
43 Neiman method, and so you try to achieve a certain level of
44 precision, and so that means that, in states where you have a
45 good chance of say getting a response and reaching a fishing
46 household, you may have a smaller sample size than you would say
47 in a state where they are less likely to respond and you are
48 less likely to reach a fishing household. It just varies by

1 state. I mean, overall, it's -- I may need to verify this
2 number, but it's over 100,000 that I am aware of that we send
3 out.

4
5 **MR. SWINDELL:** All right, and I brought this up before, and what
6 about if you would use -- Have you looked at the potential to
7 use a vessel that -- The owner of a vessel that has a fishing
8 license, and he can report on three or four or five fishermen,
9 instead of 100,000, and it seems to me like you would have a
10 much better chance to get a lot more information if you were
11 able to use the vessel survey, instead of an individual
12 fisherman survey.

13
14 Have you thought about that at all, because, to me, that's all
15 right in line with the fishermen's act that was passed by the
16 legislature to improve the data collection for recreational
17 fishing, and, to me, that would go a long way to improving it,
18 is to get better data collection, and I think you could get that
19 by vessel-by-vessel, rather than individuals. Have you looked
20 at that at all, and can you look at it?

21
22 **DR. CODY:** Yes, we can, and there are some vessel-based permits
23 that are out there, or endorsements that are associated with
24 vessels, but, largely, license information is a mix, and so
25 you've got -- You have vessel-based licenses, and then you also
26 have individual licenses, and so it varies from state to state,
27 the quality of the license information and the rate at which
28 it's made available to us.

29
30 We have done some preliminary work, where we've looked at the
31 potential to shift the APAIS over to a boat-based survey, for
32 efficiency purposes, as you pointed out, and we're not quite at
33 that point yet, where we've looked at it enough to fully
34 consider the effects that it would have on the overall design.
35 We are looking into it though at this point, because, in the
36 case of the large pelagic survey that we used in the Northeast
37 to get a handle on highly migratory species, it's vessel-based,
38 and it uses the vessel-based permit as well.

39
40 The APAIS, as you know, is largely an angler-based survey, and
41 so the unit of effort that we get information on is at the
42 angler level, but there could be some efficiencies gained by
43 moving to a vessel-based approach.

44
45 **MR. SWINDELL:** Are you looking at it intently, or is that
46 something on the radar to definitely get done, or you just have
47 an eye on it and that's all?

48

1 **DR. CODY:** No, we are looking at it intently, and one of the
2 things that we are sort of charged with right now is, for the
3 Modern Fish Act, we have a report to Congress that's due at the
4 end of the year, and so we've been working with the states to
5 get information on their saltwater license databases.

6
7 The report really was a requirement to provide Congress with a
8 status update of where we are with that information, and so I
9 think, once we have that information compiled, it will put us in
10 a better position to evaluate a vessel-based approach, but it is
11 something that -- It's constantly on our mind, and we do look at
12 it on a regular basis, and it is a priority for us to look at
13 it.

14
15 **MR. SWINDELL:** Very good, and I think the FES would be greatly
16 improved with the amount of data that you could get, especially
17 if sent out the same 100,000 to vessel people, and you get one
18 hell of a lot more data, three or four times more than you're
19 getting now, from individuals. Thank you.

20
21 **DR. CODY:** Just to follow-up on your comment there, the license
22 information that we do get, and we do use, for our surveys is
23 used to make the sampling a little bit more efficient, and so we
24 try to match license information provided by the states with our
25 address-based approach, and, where we have matches, we sample
26 those at a higher rate, and they are weighted appropriately, but
27 it does provide a considerable increase in efficiency, and so we
28 are looking at those different methods.

29
30 **MR. SWINDELL:** Well, I think it would be great, and, you know,
31 in Louisiana, for instance, definitely the vessel that's going
32 to fish in federal waters has to have a separate license, and
33 they could quickly provide all those to you, and it would get
34 one heck of a better data collection. Thank you. I appreciate
35 it. That's all.

36
37 **DR. CODY:** Thank you.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ed. Thanks, Richard. I see next
40 Leann, and then I've got a question for Richard as well.

41
42 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So, Dr. Cody, that 30 to 40
43 percent response rate sounds really good, compared to some other
44 response rates I've seen in other surveys, and I was wondering -
45 - For the non-responses that you have, you have to make some
46 assumptions, and I remember that we had a presentation from
47 Florida, from Dr. Bev, Beverly, and she was talking about how
48 Florida divides its anglers up into buckets, for lack for a

1 better word, and that's my term, and I don't think she used it,
2 and, if they're out-of-state, they go in one bucket. If they
3 live on the coastline, they go in another bucket.

4
5 Then you can make different assumptions for non-responses for
6 those anglers, as to whether or not you think they fished or
7 didn't fish, and you can kind of get a better feel on what might
8 have happened, and I was wondering, for MRIP, for your
9 assumptions for non-responses, do you divide anglers up into
10 buckets and use different assumptions or not?

11
12 **DR. CODY:** Yes, and we use a variety of different methods, and I
13 will just mention one thing that we just started in Waves 4 and
14 5, and so that's September and October and then July and August,
15 those two waves. We started what we call a non-response follow-
16 up survey, and so that's a standard methodology that's used to
17 get a handle on the non-respondents in a mail-based, or any
18 other kind, of survey.

19
20 We are doing that, and we're conducting that right now, and we
21 won't have the results for a while, but that's a follow-up from
22 something we did back in 2013, and we did the same thing.

23
24 One of the other things that we do is we look at some of the
25 demographic information for our respondents, and so we look at
26 the initial demographic let's say characteristics of the sample,
27 age, gender, the various different characteristics that we can
28 look at, and then we compare it to those that respond, and,
29 obviously, there are some indicators in there that would point
30 to avidity or bias.

31
32 There is an avidity concern with any kind of response related to
33 fishing, and it tends to be the people that fish the most that
34 respond the most, and so that's been one of our major concerns
35 and one of the things that we look at when we weight let's say
36 the respondents with the demographic information. We weight it
37 to more closely match the sample, so that we can account for
38 that bias. That's two approaches that we have.

39
40 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Richard, I've got a question I guess
43 relative to this presentation and also the white paper, which is
44 background, and so, thinking about in Florida what is now the
45 State Reef Fish Survey, and so what was the Gulf Reef Fish
46 Survey.

47
48 We have -- This is a supplemental survey, and it's MRIP

1 certified, and we have a calibration methodology that I think at
2 this point is approved, I think, and so my understanding is that
3 now it's up to the SEDAR stock assessment panels and the SSC to
4 decide what years of data and estimates represent best available
5 science for assessments, and the reason I'm bringing this up is
6 for -- Like we've got a gag grouper assessment around the
7 corner, and landings for gag overwhelmingly come from Florida,
8 from the recreational sector in particular, and so can you
9 comment on that, please?

10

11 **DR. CODY:** I can't make any assertion on best available science,
12 but I will leave that up to the SEDAR process and the SSC. I
13 can reiterate Science and Technology's role in the certification
14 of the Reef Fish Survey, and, obviously, there's a slight change
15 in scope for the State Reef Fish Survey, now that it covers the
16 entire state.

17

18 That actually should improve the effectiveness of the survey,
19 because you don't have to worry about excluding part of the
20 state, but that would -- I would recommend just a review there
21 to at least look at any potential impacts that we might not be
22 considering right here, and so generally what we've recommended
23 is that, for any changes, or major changes, to a survey
24 methodology that it should be just at least presented for review
25 again, to determine whether those changes are substantial enough
26 to require a full review, and I would think, in this case, that
27 there isn't really a huge change to it, but I would defer to the
28 consultants for their expertise in that area.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** So the gag assessment is coming up later this
31 year, and, I mean, they would be looking at Gulf Reef Fish
32 Survey data, before the expansion, and I am just trying to, I
33 guess, confirm that, at this point, it is the SEDAR panel and
34 the SSC's decision as to whether the Gulf Reef Fish Survey
35 should be considered best available science for that assessment,
36 and I think that's what you just said, but I just want to
37 confirm that.

38

39 **DR. CODY:** I would ask Roy, and possibly Clay, to chime in here
40 on that. I mean, my concern is just basically with calibration
41 and certification. What happens after that is really a
42 different process, and so I don't want to speak to that process
43 at this point, and I would defer to the region for that.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Roy or Clay? Who is determining best available
46 science for an assessment?

47

48 **DR. CRABTREE:** That is ultimately the Fisheries Service that

1 makes the determination, but it's not a determination made in a
2 vacuum. It's a determination in which a whole lot of people
3 weigh-in, including the SEDAR panels that put the assessment
4 together and review it and the SSC of the council.

5
6 Normally, I would send a memo to the Science Center, asking the
7 Science Center to tell me what's the best available science, and
8 then, ultimately, there is a decision memo that's written that
9 makes the determinations, and the Assistant Administrator for
10 Fisheries would concur with it, and, along the way, the lawyers
11 would review it, and so it's a big process.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, and so, knowing there is an assessment on
14 the horizon that probably needs to consider this data, does that
15 process need to start now? What are the exact steps of the
16 process? I am just trying to clarify that.

17
18 **DR. CRABTREE:** I assume it's going to go through the SEDAR
19 process, and, generally, they will make some determinations
20 about the appropriate sources of data that go in, and, assuming
21 they make reasonable decisions that have a good rationale behind
22 it, normally the decisions they make would be borne out.

23
24 Now, on occasion, we have had the SSC disagree with something,
25 and, on occasion, we've had the Science Center weigh-in, but
26 that's a process, and so I don't really -- You are talking about
27 what dataset should be used for the recreational landings in a
28 particular assessment, and I would think that would be the SEDAR
29 group, along with the Science Center and the analysts, that
30 would do that.

31
32 Clay can talk more about that, but a lot of that will come down
33 to which data can you reconstruct the historical time series in,
34 and I don't know if you can do that with the GRFS dataset or
35 not, but you're going to need to do that to do the assessment.
36 Probably Clay would want to weigh-in.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Clay.

39
40 **DR. PORCH:** Basically, I agree with Roy. In the case of gag,
41 the plan is, at this point, to conduct the assessment using the
42 FES calibrated statistics and then also with the new version,
43 using the GRFS data. The challenge that we have with GRFS is
44 that it has not been calibrated back in time. That's a key
45 point for any stock assessment. You need a consistent time
46 series of catch.

47
48 What you don't want to have is to use one currency, especially a

1 currency that indicates higher estimates, and then, like towards
2 the end, switch to another currency that gives lower estimates,
3 because all that does is say that, oh, gee, there must have been
4 a big drop in fishing mortality, when in fact it was just that
5 you changed the currency, and so the time series has to be
6 consistent, and then you get consistent ABC advice.

7
8 Ideally, we would conduct the assessment in the same currency as
9 what we're using to monitor in, and, obviously, that's not been
10 the case with red snapper, and so we've had to come up with
11 these conversion factors.

12
13 The way the gag assessment is going to go, again, is we'll do
14 the assessment in the FES time series, because that's the only
15 one that has been calibrated back in time, as I think Joe was
16 explaining to you earlier, but we do want to look at, at least
17 as a sensitivity analysis, a sort of calibrated GRFS survey, but
18 that hasn't been done yet, and it will get some level of review,
19 but it wouldn't get the normal level of peer review that we
20 would get in say a research track assessment.

21
22 My guess is we'll give the SSC both sets, but the one that has
23 actually been reviewed and calibrated is the FES, and the other
24 one would be kind of preliminary and might be more of a
25 sensitivity analysis.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks for that, and so my understanding is
28 that, because we have a calibration methodology, we do have
29 estimates back in time, and I don't want to derail this
30 conversation too much and focus on the gag, but, I mean, this is
31 an important point, in terms of how we are, just in general,
32 working between existing FES and some of these surveys that are
33 out there that do have probably some pretty valuable information
34 that we would want to look at. I guess I will stop there, but
35 we do have a methodology, and we do have landings back in time,
36 and so this is something that I think we do need to look at.
37 Okay. Enough of that. Dale.

38
39 **MR. DIAZ:** I hope that I can articulate my point. All this
40 stuff is pretty complicated. When FES started rolling out and
41 we started seeing some of the numbers, as far as effort that was
42 related to FES, what I thought would happen is, you know, if FES
43 is basically showing there was a lot more effort in the past
44 than we thought there was, we would adjust the stock sizes from
45 the past up, and then things would kind of work out in the wash,
46 whenever we got a stock assessment.

47
48 We might have to reallocate some things, to get the fish where

1 they're supposed to go, but all that stuff would kind of -- We
2 would be able to correct it, and I'm just wondering if doing
3 these calibrations now, until we actually get this red snapper
4 stock assessment, if it's even appropriate, until we can take
5 into consideration in that stock assessment, and maybe it's
6 going to be taken into consideration before, and it doesn't
7 matter, but if somebody could explain it me, because that's --
8 It seems like we're going to impose the effort now in these
9 calibrations, but we haven't accounted for the fish in the next
10 stock assessment, and so I don't know if anybody could speak to
11 that and tell me if I'm thinking wrong or not.

12

13 **DR. CRABTREE:** If I could, Martha.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, go ahead.

16

17 **DR. CRABTREE:** You have a stock assessment that is based on the
18 Coastal Household Telephone Survey currency, and that is what
19 all of the state allocations for red snapper are based on. The
20 trouble you have now is you're using a different currency to
21 monitor it, and so we know that there are substantial
22 differences in some of the state surveys, and you have to fix
23 that.

24

25 You are not consistent with the Magnuson Act, and you're not in
26 compliance with the statute until you fix that, and so you've
27 got to fix that. I don't think you will be able to increase the
28 quotas or do anything else until you bring this program into
29 compliance with the statute.

30

31 Now, you're going to get a benchmark assessment at some point
32 that will, I guess, use the FES survey, and that remains to be
33 seen, but I think you're two or more years away from having
34 that.

35

36 In the short term, I think you are going to get the results of
37 the Great Red Snapper Count, and you're going to get,
38 presumably, a new catch level recommendation that comes out of
39 that, and maybe it will be higher, and I don't know, and that, I
40 assume, will still be generally based on the selectivity
41 patterns and things in the current assessment, and so it will be
42 in the Coastal Household Telephone Survey kind of currency.

43

44 If it gives you a quota increase, it will make all of this, I
45 think, easier, but you're not going to be able to defend the
46 position where you have quotas and allocations in one currency
47 and you're using a different currency to monitor it, and so,
48 Dale, I think you have to fix this, and I don't see how you're

1 going to be able to get anywhere until you've addressed it.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Roy. Susan.

4
5 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I think Roy and Dale and Clay have all kind of
6 touched on this, and this has been one of my concerns, is we
7 have five different states collecting data, and we have the
8 federal government, NOAA NMFS, collecting data, but even the
9 worst part about that is the five states are not all collecting
10 the same data, and so, to Martha's point, now you've got one
11 state collecting for gag, and none of the others, and this is
12 just a combobulated mess, and I just needed to get that off my
13 chest. Thank you.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Susan. Leann, and then I'm just going
16 to remind everybody that we said we were going to break at 2:30,
17 and we're creeping towards that time point, but go ahead, Leann.

18
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks. I wanted to follow-up, actually, on what
20 you were talking about, Martha, and I think that, for any
21 upcoming assessments that we have, where the species is Florida-
22 centric, and whether that means all the landings come from
23 Florida or an overwhelming proportion of the landings come from
24 Florida, I would hope that we would, at a minimum, do that
25 sensitivity analysis that Dr. Porch was talking about and run
26 that, to see what effect those two different landings streams
27 have on the overall population that we think is out there.

28
29 Everybody gets hung up on red snapper, FES for red snapper
30 versus the state numbers, and they forget that we're getting FES
31 data for every species that we have, and, by and large, when we
32 plug them into these stock assessments, we are doubling, just
33 about, the biomass that we once thought was out there. We
34 thought we had a hundred fish out there, and now we think we
35 have 200 fish, and that's just a dumbled-down example.

36
37 People all worry about what it's doing to red snapper and what
38 it's going to do to everybody's allocations there, and I'm a
39 little more concerned that, if we don't run some sensitivity
40 analyses on some of these other species, where you don't have an
41 allocation between commercial and recreational, if you go double
42 the biomass that you once thought was there, and then allow
43 people to pound it, then, well, were we right? Were there
44 really double the fish or not? You can't predict who is going
45 to catch the fish.

46
47 People say, well, as long as we use the same measuring stick for
48 recreational landings as what we put into the stock assessment,

1 it will all come out in the wash. Well, that's not the case in
2 a blended fishery, where you have both people fishing on the
3 same quota, with no set allocation. Maybe the commercial will
4 go out and catch those fish, and maybe the recreational will,
5 and, if the commercial catches them, then it finally drills down
6 to what I feel the overall problem is, is which picture of
7 reality is right. Do we have 100 fish out there or 200?

8
9 It's important to determine which one of those is more accurate
10 before you start putting them into practice, especially when
11 you're going up on the curve, when you are increasing the number
12 of fish you think you have out there and you're going to
13 increase fishing pressure as a result of it.

14
15 If we were going downward on it, and we were kind of putting a
16 chokehold on our fishermen, well, then, we would at least be
17 putting the fish first in that case, and we probably wouldn't
18 overfish, and we would underfish, but we're doing just the
19 opposite, and that's where I have some real reservations, and I
20 hope that we will run these sensitivity analyses and take it
21 seriously and really decide what is the appropriate picture of
22 reality for these stocks.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Clay.

25
26 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you. There's actually a lot wrapped up in the
27 points that Ms. Bosarge was making. Obviously, reality is a
28 difficult thing to get your hands on, just because of the types
29 of data it needs to get at what the real number of fish are that
30 are out there, and having this kind of uncertainty with
31 recreational catch statistics certainly doesn't help.

32
33 What I would say, to Dale's point earlier, with regard to things
34 coming out in the wash, I think what we mean there is, if we did
35 the stock assessment somehow in the state currency scaled back
36 in time, so that you have a consistent metric, since the state
37 currencies generally estimate fewer fish than either the CHTS or
38 FES survey, then we would estimate the population to be a little
39 bit lower, and maybe in some cases a lot smaller, and that means
40 that the ABC would be smaller, but it would be in the metric of
41 the state currencies, which are already lower.

42
43 You would basically have lower currencies that you're monitoring
44 in, but also a lower ABC, because it would be in that same
45 currency. The converse is that, right now, the only time series
46 we have scaled back in time is either CHTS, which we no longer
47 support, or the FES survey, and so the new assessments are being
48 done in the FES.

1
2 FES gives much higher estimates, all the way back in time, and
3 so the ABC coming out is going to be higher, because it's
4 estimating the population to be larger, and, in that case, if
5 you're going to monitor that ABC in FES currency, then you would
6 need to convert all the state monitoring programs to that same
7 currency.

8
9 When you do that, either way you do it, assessment in state
10 currencies and then the ACL would be in state currency, or
11 assessment in FES currency, and so the ACL is in an FES
12 currency, and then you have to convert the state currencies for
13 monitoring purposes, I suspect that you will end up getting very
14 close to the same season, because you're either getting a lower
15 ABC and monitoring with a lower currency or you're setting a
16 higher ABC and monitoring with a higher currency, but, in the
17 end, you probably will get similar seasons. I hope that makes
18 sense.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. Okay, Kevin. We have less than
21 eight minutes. Is it a quick one?

22
23 **MR. ANSON:** I think so. Dr. Porch, what I heard you say though
24 is that you're saying there's a chance. There's a chance that,
25 during the interim analysis, that we could go back in time,
26 using the parallel data collected, or estimated, through CHTS
27 currency on these state surveys and we can use that calibration
28 to go back in time and put in a proxy, if you will, for those
29 years prior to the state surveys being in place, using that
30 calibration and go forward then with the state survey data, and
31 is that what you essentially said?

32
33 **DR. PORCH:** Well, there's certainly a chance of doing that. I
34 haven't seen the analyses that the State of Florida is doing in
35 trying to go back in time, calibrating between GRFS and the FES
36 survey. It is not simple, however, because the things that
37 drive the differences in time are changing in time.

38
39 For instance, as Richard described, the calibration between the
40 FES survey and the old Coastal Household Telephone Survey is
41 looking at things like cellphone usage and how they moved away
42 from landlines over time, and so there's a lot of other
43 ancillary information that went into deriving that calibration,
44 and they had a whole statistical model behind it.

45
46 You would probably have to do something like that with the state
47 surveys, but I haven't thought about it in enough detail to say
48 exactly how you might do that, and I think you're going to have

1 to have some people really dedicate a significant amount of time
2 to figuring out the best way to try and calibrate back in time.

3

4 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Richard, do you have a point to make?

7

8 **DR. CODY:** Yes, and I just wanted to follow-up on what Clay
9 mentioned. There is another consideration, without complication
10 this any further than it needs to be. If you calibrate to each
11 of the state surveys going back in time, you do make the
12 assumption that they would perform equally in each state, and I
13 think there's a fair bit of -- I think that would be a hard
14 assumption to defend, and so that's something that complicates
15 things even further, and it was alluded to a little bit in the
16 white paper.

17

18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Richard. We've got five
19 minutes. Greg.

20

21 **DR. STUNZ:** Well, Martha, mine is not real quick, and so do you
22 want me to wait until after the break?

23

24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, and let's hold yours. I think Kevin is
25 putting his hand up, and I am going to assume it's back to the
26 point that Richard was just making, and is that right, Kevin?

27

28 **MR. ANSON:** That's correct, Madam Chair. On the face of it, I
29 agree with Dr. Cody's comments, but, as I provided, at least at
30 the last meeting, there is multiple ways to look at these
31 figures, these data, and kind of step back and try to look at
32 them, to see how they fit, to see how they fit to what our
33 perception is of what's going on out there.

34

35 I provided a couple of examples to do that in my presentation,
36 and I think that's what kind of goes into the comment that
37 General Spraggins had made earlier about Mississippi not feeling
38 confident in the estimates that are being made, and they just
39 don't reflect reality, and I think that's part of the reason why
40 some of the votes, at least, were on that eleven-to-eleven with
41 two abstention vote recommending that state surveys be used,
42 when and if they are available, at least for looking at when you
43 do an assessment.

44

45 On the face of it, I agree with Roy's comment that, you know, we
46 have the Act, and we have Magnuson that we have to deal with, as
47 we look at these calibrations and how they affect or impact
48 allocations to the states, but we need to find something pretty

1 quick here, potentially, and certainly it will help to have some
2 more clarification with the Great Red Snapper Count information,
3 to see if it's another number that we'll have to deal with, but,
4 to wait until the next assessment, which I looked at the
5 schedule the other day, and the assessment won't be completed,
6 if it goes on schedule, until the end of 2023.

7
8 Then we have to go through the SSC review, and we have to talk
9 about it at the council, and so, potentially, we would be
10 talking about the 2024 season for any of these changes to occur
11 relative to having more fish available through increased FES
12 landings or some potentially reconciliation of the Great Red
13 Snapper Count, and I hope that can be addressed in the interim
14 assessment, or interim analysis, but that's just -- I don't
15 know, and I'm just venting a little bit, but we need to go back
16 to Leann and trying to get some semblance of reality and what
17 numbers appear to really reflect what's going on on the water,
18 and so thank you.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Kevin. It is 2:28. Let's go
21 ahead and take our break. Roy, I'm assuming your hand is up to
22 that point, and we can come back to you when we return from the
23 break, and then we'll go to Greg. I think we've got fifteen
24 minutes. Is that right, Tom?

25
26 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, fifteen minutes, and so we'll see people at
27 2:45.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds great.

30
31 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Roy, are you back from the break yet? You're
34 next on my list.

35
36 **DR. CRABTREE:** I am.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Go right ahead.

39
40 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I'm worried that we're getting off-track a
41 little bit, and you could take the current stock assessment, and
42 I'm sure you could figure out some way to re-run it with state
43 data, and, if you did that, all things equal, it would give you
44 a lower total allowable catch, because the recreational time
45 series over the years would be smaller.

46
47 If that happened, then you would have a lower commercial quota,
48 and the charter boats would lose fish, and you will have a mess

1 on your hands, and so you should think about that, because I
2 don't think that's where you want to go, and I don't think it
3 fixes any of the problems that we're concerned about.

4
5 The benchmark assessment is going to be a couple of years in the
6 process, and that's when these issues are going to be addressed,
7 and so it's just not going to get resolved in the short term.

8
9 I think you need to get focused on what's happening now, and I'm
10 worried that we're taking our eye off the ball. You have a
11 couple of things coming, and one are these conversions, these
12 calibrations, that we have to deal with, but the other piece of
13 this is the Great Red Snapper Count that is coming relatively
14 soon, I think, and then the interim assessment that is going to
15 come to you.

16
17 That is what we need to be focused on right now, and, if you
18 believe that we're likely to see quota increases, then you need
19 to think about what are you going to do with them and how are we
20 going to get this done, and how are you going to deal with the
21 reality of these calibrations, because I think you will have to
22 deal with those in order to be able to raise the quotas,
23 assuming that the Great Red Snapper Count and the interim
24 assessment allow that to happen.

25
26 I don't know if that's going to happen or not, but it's all
27 going to hit you very quickly, and you're potentially going to
28 get hit with a lot of fish, and you're going to be under intense
29 pressure to get all of this done in time for next year's fishing
30 season, and, if you're going to make changes to allocations and
31 who the fish goes to and all of these things, you've got a lot
32 of decisions to be made, and they're going to come at you
33 quickly, and I think you really need to be focused on that right
34 now and not so much on all these issues about MRIP I think that
35 are going to take care of themselves over the next few years,
36 because I think a lot is going to hit you in the next few
37 meetings, and you're going to make a lot of decisions.

38
39 In the meantime, if you think about where we are today with red
40 snapper, we're in a good place, folks. The season is much
41 longer than it was eight or nine or ten years ago, and the
42 quotas are high.

43
44 There is lots of reasons to think that more good things are
45 coming to you with red snapper, and so I worry that we're
46 getting a little too gloom and doom over red snapper, but I
47 think we need to rein back in on what decisions are you going to
48 make in the next couple of meetings, because I will tell you

1 that, if you're going to get something in place for next year,
2 you've got, at the latest, the April meeting to take final
3 action on it, and so that doesn't give you a lot of time.

4
5 I don't know when you're going to know what the interim
6 assessment is going to give you, but it may be January before
7 you really have a good clue as to what's coming, and so you've
8 got a lot coming at you fast, and I think we really need to get
9 focused on the decisions that are in front of us now and let
10 these decisions that are going to come in a couple of years --
11 We'll deal with those after we deal with what's immediately in
12 front of us.

13
14 That's just my advice to you. Most of these things, you're
15 going to vote on them after I'm gone, but I'm telling you that
16 you need to be ready, and you need to be prepared, because there
17 may be a lot of things coming at you fast.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Roy. Next in the queue, I have Greg,
20 and then I do want to note that we have a couple of
21 presentations still to go on this item, and I'm certain lots
22 more discussion, and so I'm just putting that out there, and I
23 think we're scheduled to go until four, and then the fireside
24 chat, virtual fireside chat, is at 4:30, and so I assume that
25 4:30 is like the drop-dead, but I would leave that up to the
26 Chair. Anyway, Greg, take it away.

27
28 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Madam Chair, for waiting and delaying my
29 comment, because it was rather lengthy, but I just wanted to
30 comment on a couple of things related to my experience and
31 expertise on this council. I mean, obviously, science is a
32 building process, and, as scientists, we always leave room, so
33 that, as we make new discoveries, we can change the way we
34 thought in the past, and that's sort of a fundamental principle.

35
36 In reality, that's exactly what we're seeing here. The MRIP and
37 state systems are a perfect example of that, and, over the
38 weekend, I went back and reviewed some of the old National
39 Academy of Science, or NRC at the time, reports, and, if you
40 recall, what we've been talking about, that 2007 study, it said
41 that that Coastal Household Telephone Survey was flawed, that
42 that couldn't be used, because of the way it's set up.

43
44 We built on that science, and the next NAS study after that
45 showed that the MRIP-FES wasn't appropriate for short-season
46 management, and I think we all kind of realized that, and, in
47 fact, that's probably why the states developed their more nimble
48 and responsive programs, to address these issues we were having

1 with this in-season management.

2
3 That kind of brings us to where we are now, and the panel,
4 guided by the Modern Fish Act, is now supposed to consider how
5 can MRIP better be modified to better deal with this in-season
6 management, but, as we all know, the assessment and everything
7 else we've got in the air right now is a year or two out, at
8 least, I think, and so that really gave us what we've got today,
9 these really good systems, in my scientific opinion, that I
10 would have a very hard time arguing that the State of
11 Mississippi is not doing a great job and to argue that that's
12 not better than MRIP.

13
14 That is pretty difficult, given the nature of their fishery and
15 how they can monitor it, and I'm sorry to pick on you, General,
16 but your state is a good example of how you can really drill
17 down, and Louisiana too, and all the others, for that matter.

18
19 Then we add on -- You know, we've got these suites of
20 recalibration, and we've got the abundance estimate study coming
21 out from our team very soon here, and, in fact, I'm briefing
22 Congress later this week, and so we'll have those results soon,
23 and so things are very fluid. There is a lot of balls that are
24 in the air that, as Roy mentioned, are drastically going to
25 change things, and I think, until we can really get our arms
26 around this, we really need to go with what we have at hand,
27 and, in my opinion, those are the state systems.

28
29 Now, I know that Clay probably doesn't like that, because we
30 can't generate historic yield streams from that, and I
31 completely understand that, but I think that also is -- You
32 know, we can solve that problem. That's a short-term problem,
33 and we don't want to go back to programs we have less confidence
34 in. We want to move forward with programs that we do have more
35 confidence in.

36
37 Anyway, the point is this is going to be a challenge, but I
38 wanted to put that little bit of perspective of how we -- I
39 think we need to further the science, and we as a council can
40 decide what that science is, I mean, in consultation with our
41 SSC and that sort of thing, and we've got really bright people
42 on this call and around this table, and I just feel like we need
43 to move that ball forward and away from where we're at right
44 now, and so, anyway, that's my soapbox for the day, Martha, and
45 that's why I said I would wait until afterwards.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. Kevin.

48

1 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate Roy's comments
2 about the potential for lots of movement coming up in the very
3 near future for the council relative to red snapper management,
4 and I don't agree, necessarily, with his comment that we just
5 need to be focused on those other items and this is not a big
6 issue, relative to determining allocations or reductions to the
7 states allocations going forward, because, for Alabama's case,
8 in particular, we are potentially going to -- In the next
9 presentation, we're going to be looking at a scenario where
10 we're going to be cut in half, essentially, of the number of
11 pounds that we would have coming to us.

12
13 That would get us at a fourteen-day season, if you just do the
14 simple math, but we've found that, as you compress seasons,
15 effort increases per day, and so we could be looking at a ten or
16 eleven or twelve-day season, if we're trying to be proactive in
17 not going over our quota under that situation, and so, although
18 things appear to be rosy, they're not certainly rosy for the
19 recreational fishery in Alabama.

20
21 These are big decisions, and they are weighty decisions, and so
22 I will certainly be looking forward to the discussion for the
23 rest of the day, but those are some of the immediate things, is
24 what impacts this calibration and these data show relative to
25 access for the recreational fishermen, particularly in Alabama.

26
27 I wanted to ask if -- Dr. Porch briefly described it, but I
28 still was left wanting a little more in the August meeting, but
29 I wonder, Dr. Porch, if you can describe the process and under-
30 the-hood-type things that you were going to do or what's going
31 to be done for the interim analysis, relative to trying to
32 reconcile or incorporate the Great Red Snapper Count numbers in
33 there, and what does that look like?

34
35 Is that just that you're going to scale up the number to more
36 closely match what the Great Red Snapper Count estimate is,
37 since it's kind of a one-time snapshot, or are you going to
38 tweak some of the parameters that are used, based on some of the
39 data that's collected? I am just not clear as to how that
40 process is going to work, and I know you probably need more than
41 just a few minutes to respond, to provide a response, but I'm
42 just wondering if you could provide a little bit more detail on
43 that. Thank you.

44
45 **DR. PORCH:** Thanks for that question, Kevin. I can't really
46 provide a lot more detail until we really get into the nuts and
47 bolts of what Greg's group is going to provide. I mean, I have
48 a hint of it, but, until we really start working together on it,

1 it's hard for me to say exactly what we're going to do.

2
3 One thing we were floating around in our mind is to get the
4 abundance at-age estimates that the Great Red Snapper Count
5 might produce and then multiply that by the fishing mortality
6 rates that would lead to an SPR of 26 percent, since that's the
7 benchmark that's on the books, and so, to the extent that the
8 Great Red Snapper Count gives higher estimates than the stock
9 assessment, you might get somewhat higher catch estimates, or,
10 if it was the other way around, that it was more than the stock
11 assessment, you get lower catch estimates.

12
13 We can't really do that until we see what has actually been
14 produced by the survey, and, like I said, I have an inkling of
15 it, but we're really got to get into the nuts and bolts of it
16 before we determine what the best way forward is, and I don't
17 know if Greg wants to comment further on that, but I really
18 don't want to go out on a limb and say exactly what we're going
19 to do until we see what all we have.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. Next on my list, I have Joe
22 Spraggins.

23
24 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the biggest
25 concern that I've got for Mississippi on this is -- I understand
26 exactly what Roy is trying to say and what he's asking us, which
27 is something in the near future of two years or three years or
28 whatever, it's going to change a lot of things that we do here,
29 but I think that the biggest concern coming from Mississippi,
30 and I can't speak for Alabama or Louisiana or Texas or Florida,
31 but, for Mississippi, it's what is going to happen in the short
32 term, and I think that's our biggest concern.

33
34 We all know that the Great Red Snapper Count is there, and we
35 know that that's -- I mean, all indications is it's probably,
36 and I can't say it, just like anybody else cannot, that it's
37 going to be an increase in the number of quota of what's there.
38 However, we're all very scared that -- Especially like I think I
39 can for sure include Alabama with me, that, with the greatest
40 reduction that you're doing with Mississippi, saying that we had
41 550,000 pounds in 2019, and we didn't have 550,000 pounds in the
42 last five years.

43
44 To say something like that and then allow that to go forward,
45 and I think the biggest concern we have is some adjustment to
46 the ACL before we get any of the other information put together
47 and before we do anything with the other information and we make
48 sure that we are working.

1
2 I don't think there's a state here that wants to do something
3 wrong. I think we all want to do it right, and I think that
4 we're trying hard, and we're trying hard to do it. We have
5 worked hard, and we got Congress, and we got our senators and
6 our congressmen to get onboard with us, and we got them to help
7 us, to say that we could be able to do our own state management,
8 and it was a process that was put forward through NOAA and
9 through Commerce, and it was passed by Secretary Ross, but yet,
10 all of a sudden, now we're just trying to change everything and
11 say that state management is not doing what it should.

12
13 I think that's our biggest concern. Our biggest concern right
14 now is if we -- I will be honest with you. From Mississippi, if
15 I had enough warm fuzzies for myself to say that they're not
16 going to change anything, and they're going to allow the Great
17 Red Snapper Count to work, and we're going to sit down and talk
18 about what's happened between our allocation that we say that we
19 are bringing and by using our Tails 'n Scales compared to using
20 the MRIP and what it really works out, and I believe I would be
21 happy if I knew that was going to happen. I think the biggest
22 fear right now is something is going to happen before all this
23 does, and, once again, I kind of got it off my chest, and so
24 thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Joe. Next in the queue, I have Phil
27 Dyskow.

28
29 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the vein of what
30 General Spraggins said, but particularly in the vein of what
31 Greg Stunz said, and I appreciate the fact that, as a credible
32 scientist, he was able to articulate it so concisely, but so
33 much of what we've discussed today, and I'm going to be blunt,
34 and I don't want anyone to take offense, but we have this dead
35 horse, which is the old way of measuring recreational data, that
36 we're trying to kick down the road and make work in the future,
37 when we have five state systems that, in the view of most of us,
38 is far more effective, far more detailed, far more state-of-the-
39 art, far more scientifically valid.

40
41 We could spend more time on how do we get these five systems
42 working in sync with each other, and how do we react to the fact
43 that the Great Red Snapper Count is probably going to show a
44 much larger fish population than NMFS data has previously shown,
45 and so that's where we ought to be focusing all our energy.

46
47 I come from the private sector, and, in the private sector, if
48 we have a tired, old computer system, and we want to go a

1 modern, faster, state-of-the-art system that provides better
2 information, we simply find a way to bridge between the two and
3 move forward, and so let's not try to Band-Aid this thing
4 forever. We have better systems now, and let's make them work.

5
6 If, for data history purposes, we need to find a bridge between
7 these systems, let's do it, but I think we're trying too hard to
8 patch something that no longer fits the needs of the
9 recreational angler. Even though it may fit the needs of other
10 sectors, it certainly doesn't work for the recreational angling
11 community, and so that's all I have to say.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Phil. We've got a number of hands in
14 the queue. I think what we can do is go to those hands and then
15 bounce back to Dr. Powers. He's got a presentation for us that
16 we probably are going to want to see before we get too deep into
17 figuring out what we do next here. Leann.

18
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** Just a couple of things, and I think,
20 unfortunately, Dr. Crabtree is right, that we've got to make
21 some decisions and figure out how we're going to handle this,
22 because we can't -- If what we have in front of us says that
23 we're overfishing, and nobody can seem to figure out the
24 difference between the state surveys and FES, then I don't see
25 how we get around it. We've got to do something to make sure we
26 don't overfish, because that, to me, is inexcusable. We can't
27 have that.

28
29 Then now you're letting it affect everybody, people that have
30 made sure that they report everything they catch all the time,
31 although it's not pleasant, and we have to wear an ankle
32 bracelet to do that in the commercial fishery, and we're tracked
33 constantly, but we've done it, and we don't have uncertainty
34 around our data, and we're staying within our limits, and so we
35 can't let this get to the point where it overflows and starts
36 affecting other people and other sectors.

37
38 The same thing with the for-hire. Lord have mercy, but they're
39 having to underfish to account for overruns in other places, and
40 they have been for quite some time, but, on a different subject,
41 that Great Red Snapper Count.

42
43 So I only know what Greg has told us about it in different
44 presentations that he's given us, and I'm looking forward to
45 seeing it and seeing what comes out of it, and my view on it is
46 it's going to tell you what the abundance, or population, of red
47 snapper is, and so, if it's telling us about population,
48 although it's not using a stock assessment model, it is

1 assessing the stock, and I'm just wondering -- Typically, that
2 goes through the SSC, and all the data is public, and it gets
3 peer reviewed, and then it comes to us. Is that going to be the
4 case here, before we start using it for management?

5

6 **DR. PORCH:** I guess I will jump in?

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead, Clay.

9

10 **DR. PORCH:** Thanks. If we're going to give interim analysis
11 advice, and so, in other words, update the ABC in time for the
12 2021 season, the only review that it would get would be at the
13 SSC level. I mean, Greg may have some of the results published
14 in peer-reviewed journals by then, and I don't know, but
15 probably not everything about the study, and so I think the
16 primary review will be at the SSC.

17

18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. Greg.

19

20 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Martha. I just wanted to comment on the
21 Snapper Count, since it's coming up so much, and, yes, Leann, to
22 your point, that would go through our normal processes. I mean,
23 obviously, our team provides our reported estimate, and then it
24 moves on through the various processes.

25

26 I am trying to think of what I can say here, because of our
27 obligation to brief Congress first, but this is likely going to
28 help us, but, in a way, right now, what we're talking about,
29 that really doesn't matter, whether we come back with less fish,
30 the same amount of fish, or more fish than the stock assessment
31 really tells us.

32

33 We have got fundamental problems going on with the way we're
34 managing the fishery right now, through effort calibration,
35 through different systems that are feeding into that, and a
36 whole variety of things that we've been discussing pretty much
37 all day today.

38

39 What I am sort of concerned with is that it always seems like,
40 when we have problems, either the stock improves or something
41 happens, and there's more fish available to temporarily fix a
42 problem, and it's sort of like a Band-Aid on a giant wound that,
43 yes, is helping for this season or next season, but it's not
44 really helping us fix the underlying problems that are leading
45 to this in the first place.

46

47 I would be tremendously disappointed if all the hard work that
48 this team has done over the past few years is just sort of a

1 flash in the pan. I mean, I think what needs to happen is we
2 need to fix the underlying issues. If we have more fish, well,
3 that's great. That feeds into the process, and it helps out
4 every sector, and we don't look to this Snapper Count as a way
5 that's going to get us out of the current bind that we're in.

6
7 We need to take this break, as I mentioned before, and really
8 think about how do we want to manage this fishery in the future,
9 so we don't get back into this situation.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg, for that insight. Mara.

12
13 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. I guess I just wanted to reiterate something
14 that Roy said about, at least at some point during today,
15 focusing on the calibration and how to deal with the fact that
16 the current catch levels are set with MRIP-CHTS, but we have the
17 states monitoring in all these different currencies.

18
19 This isn't a new thing. I mean, we've been talking about this
20 since before Amendment 50 became final and the need to do
21 something about this, and so I think that it is an important
22 issue, and I think, to the extent you want to do other things
23 with the red snapper fishery, that this is a key thing that's
24 going to need to be addressed before all those other things can
25 happen. Thanks.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Mara. Susan.

28
29 **MS. BOGGS:** I am sorry that this may not come across correctly,
30 but now if the Great Red Snapper Count is the tell-all-be-all,
31 what do we do with state management? I mean, we keep throwing
32 all these data collection systems and analysis in the mix, and
33 we talk about kicking the can down the road, as Phil kind of
34 mentioned, and it's almost like we're kicking the can down the
35 road again, because now we're going to have a new dataset, and
36 now we've got to figure out what to do with that, and I just
37 feel like we're spinning our wheels, and we're not going to get
38 anywhere, and it's just going to create more problems down the
39 road, and not just with red snapper, but with other species.
40 Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Susan. I know we have a lot of names
43 on the list, but we've got two more presentations, and it is
44 3:15, and we're scheduled to go until 4:00, and I would like to
45 pause and to keep the queue, but I think we need to get through
46 these presentations at least today, to, if nothing else, relieve
47 our speakers, and so, if I can, I would like to go to Dr. Powers
48 at this point, so that we can go through Tab B, Number 8(d).

1
2 **SSC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUGUST 11-12, 2020 MEETING**
3

4 **DR. POWERS:** Thank you. I am not sure if this will solve
5 anything for you, because a lot of the discussion that we had at
6 the SSC sort of mimics some of the problems that have sort of
7 ensued.
8

9 In the presentation that was made earlier today with Dr. Cody,
10 he mentioned the process by which ratio estimates were generated
11 for each one of the state surveys, and that was considered to be
12 the best way to go over the short term, and so what we are
13 talking about here, in terms of the SSC, was to look at those
14 ratio estimates, what they're getting at, and to make some sort
15 of determination about their usefulness for converting from one
16 system to another.
17

18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It looks like we're having a little bit of
19 technical difficulty. Give it a minute. Perhaps what we can
20 do, instead of just staring at the black swirling circle of
21 death, is we can maybe go back to our queue, while that
22 presentation is trying to load. Richard, you were next on the
23 list.
24

25 **DR. CODY:** Okay. I have just a few points that I would like to
26 make with regard to MRIP and it being basically a dead horse. I
27 will point out that we have different types of surveys in the
28 Gulf, and they are not necessarily general surveys, and they
29 don't cover all the species that MRIP does, and so I would hope
30 that, in your considerations of any of the surveys, that you
31 will take into account the fact that they do very different
32 things and that they have different priorities other than red
33 snapper. This is just one point that I wanted to make.
34

35 The other point is that the MRIP surveys -- I mean, there have
36 been no other surveys that have been reviewed to the level that
37 MRIP has, and so there is a certain amount of credibility that
38 goes along with that.
39

40 We have always acknowledged that there were certain things that
41 it doesn't do very well. For instance, it doesn't address in-
42 season management of species very well, and the goal, the focus,
43 of developing the state surveys was to address those two
44 specific issues. One was to get more precise catch estimates to
45 handle those in-season management quotas and the second was to
46 get them a little bit more timely.
47

48 I would just urge people not to lose sight of the other things

1 that MRIP does. MRIP is charged with covering all species, and,
2 right now, we have two surveys that are certified to cover one
3 species each, and it would probably involve a re-review of those
4 surveys to align them with adding additional species, and so
5 just please keep that in mind as you make considerations or
6 deliberate on the value of MRIP.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. I am going to recognize Tom.

9

10 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, Martha. I realize that people have a lot
11 to say, but I want to try to keep us track and keep us focused
12 and not let this get off the rails. I mean, I think Roy made
13 some good points, right, and so, in fairly short order, we are
14 going to be faced with some decisions that we need to make in
15 order to effectively manage this fishery.

16

17 In the short term, and I would agree with what Greg said
18 earlier. You know, we've got five states, at this point, who
19 have invested a fair amount of effort in their own data
20 collection programs, to ensure that they can get more precise
21 estimates and be more certain with their catches, and that's a
22 good thing, right, but, at the end of the day, people have to
23 remember that the stock assessment was not conducted using those
24 state data collection programs, and we still have to use stock
25 assessment in the units that it was carried out in.

26

27 In order to manage the fishery, you have to have a reference
28 point, and so we will make improvements, moving down the road a
29 bit, and perhaps the Great Red Snapper Count will provide a way
30 to tailor that assessment a bit, to improve it, and it may in
31 fact yield more fish that we can allocate, but, at the end of
32 the day, we're still going to have to allocate those fish, and
33 we're still going to have to calibrate the state measures to the
34 assessment units, and so we can't forget about that at all, and
35 I want to make sure that, to Roy's point moving forward, that we
36 start thinking about what it is that we're going to need to do
37 and when we're going to have to do it.

38

39 Are we going to have to do it in our October meeting, or are we
40 going to have to do it in our November meeting? If we don't get
41 an interim assessment until January, what is it that we're going
42 to do, and when are we going to do it, to ensure that we can
43 give advice for each of the five states to manage their
44 fisheries in 2021?

45

46 We will continue to make improvements, and we'll learn from
47 these things, but I don't think this conversation is about
48 throwing MRIP out the window, because, as Dr. Cody said, there

1 are a lot of good things about MRIP. It was designed for a
2 number of different purposes, and so we have long-term needs,
3 and we have needs to monitor fisheries for in-season management
4 purposes, and so there's a lot going on here, and let's make
5 sure -- Again, I think we're moving forward in the right way,
6 and there will be some growing pains, as John Sanchez has said
7 in previous meetings, along the way, but let's make sure we're
8 doing the responsible thing moving forward.

9
10 Again, a couple of things that I'm sure will come up is, if we
11 happen to be allocated more fish moving forward, as a
12 consequence of the interim assessment, then we're going to be
13 faced with a couple of challenges. How do we allocate those
14 fish? Do we -- I don't want to get into that right now, but we
15 have to be thinking about what process we're going to use moving
16 forward and what decisions that we'll have to make and when
17 we'll have to make them. Hopefully that will kind of rein
18 things in a bit as we talk about the rest of this day, I guess.
19 Martha.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Tom. Okay. It looks like we were able
22 to get Dr. Powers' presentation up, and so let's go ahead and
23 proceed with that. Dr. Powers, take it away.

24
25 **DR. POWERS:** Okay. Thank you very much. Let's just go to the
26 next slide. This one is just background. This is sort of our
27 working orders for the SSC, in terms of the survey, is to -- Or
28 the state survey estimates and the August 5 workshop, in terms
29 of their marching orders that were identified by Dr. Cody as
30 well, but, basically, it's to clarify the processes and to
31 identify some ways to move forward.

32
33 The key thing here is that you have, on the left-hand side, the
34 five different state surveys, and then what you want to end up
35 with is the MRIP-FES survey and then some calibration and the
36 MRIP Coastal Household Survey calibration. The workshop went
37 through, as was mentioned, these ratio estimates, and that's
38 what those numbers in the little boxes are.

39
40 The ratios of moving from, for example, the Gulf Reef Fish
41 Survey to the MRIP survey is 2.63. From MRIP to the MRIP-FES,
42 the MRIP charter boat, it's 2.99, and, in the case of LA Creel
43 and Texas Parks and Wildlife, we just go directly, and so this
44 is the basic information that has been agreed to through the
45 workshops, in terms of the actual ratios. Now, this isn't a
46 comment about what's best, and it's simply a conversion.

47
48 If you boil it down into directly to the Coastal Household

1 Survey, you see there that the Florida, LA Creel, and Texas
2 Parks and Wildlife, by design, are close to 1.0, in terms of
3 this ratio, which is ideally what you would like to have, in
4 terms of this sort of thing, but, of course, those ratios for
5 the smaller coastal states of Alabama and Mississippi were quite
6 a bit lower. Nevertheless, those are the ratios that are
7 presented.

8
9 We reviewed those and the methodology at the SSC, and we made
10 some suggestions for modifications of the number of years to use
11 in computing the ratios, and then we came to this motion, which
12 basically specified the ratios that would amount to the best
13 available information, and, as you can see there, the actual
14 numbers and what years they related to, in terms of the ratios,
15 and that motion carried with one abstention. Again, this is not
16 making a comment on what is best, but it's simply a conversion
17 factor, or conversion factors.

18
19 That is the thing that we wanted to reiterate, and the first
20 paragraph there is the SSC notes that the FES catches are going
21 to be higher, and this is basically the same comment that Clay
22 made before about how this scales the assessment, but the ABC
23 and the OFL will be scaled as well, and so one of the key things
24 that you're all aware of is that these conversions aren't
25 handled well, in terms of the stock assessment, but, when it
26 comes down to allocations between sectors and states and the
27 historical perspective, based on previous perceptions of
28 relative catches, it's unclear how this will be addressed in the
29 allocation decisions, and that's quite obviously the conundrum
30 that the council is facing.

31
32 Sort of reiterating the current ratios are acceptable methods to
33 convert from metric to another, but there is no -- The SSC has
34 not determined a, quote, unquote, true estimate. There are
35 significant differences, particularly between the small
36 coastline states of Alabama and Mississippi, and, ultimately,
37 these things are going to have to be reconciled in order to
38 establish a consistent time series, and, to that end, the SSC is
39 supportive of the efforts of the transition teams in helping to
40 resolve these issues.

41
42 I would also make a comment that my experience with these sorts
43 of things is that it's quite often that one survey is bad and
44 another survey is good. It's rather than they are good at
45 measuring slightly different things, and I think it's the onus
46 of the transition team and this whole process to try to
47 determine what it is that is actually being measured and to,
48 again, put those in a common framework, and perhaps even by

1 meta-analysis sorts of approaches that Patrick Banks had
2 suggested, and I think that, as scientists, we have to be open
3 minded about how we proceed, but, clearly, this needs to get
4 resolved, and so that's my presentation.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Dr. Powers. Are there questions
7 specifically to Dr. Powers on this presentation? I am going to
8 give people a minute, and I know we've got hands in the queue
9 from our previous conversation, but let me get questions for Dr.
10 Powers at this point. I think I saw Patrick's hand go up.

11
12 **MR. BANKS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that the SSC
13 has not determined a true estimate, but, Dr. Powers, I just want
14 to make sure I'm clear on what the SSC guidance is from a best
15 scientific information available. What you guys are saying
16 that, in order to calibrate between the state survey catches and
17 the MRIP, our survey catches need to be multiplied by a
18 conversion factor to get the true estimate of catch, and is that
19 what the SSC is saying?

20
21 **DR. POWERS:** No, and I said that those conversion factors
22 convert from one to another, and it's not a true estimate. We
23 really don't know what the true estimates are, but what we're
24 saying is we're agreeing with the workshop that, if you're going
25 to convert from system to another, those ratios are an
26 appropriate way to approach the problem.

27
28 **MR. BANKS:** Okay. I wasn't clear. When you are trying to say
29 that we thought -- To try to put our catch data into MRIP terms,
30 we need to use those conversions, and is that your --

31
32 **DR. POWERS:** I'm sorry, but you'll have to speak up. There is
33 some background noise.

34
35 **MR. BANKS:** Somebody needs to go on mute. Okay. When we want
36 to take a look at what we estimate for our catches in our state
37 systems, but we want to put it in the currency of MRIP, we need
38 to use those conversion factors, correct?

39
40 **DR. POWERS:** That's what the recommendation is.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Did you have a follow-up, Patrick?

43
44 **MR. BANKS:** No, and I appreciate it, Dr. Powers.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there anyone else with questions for
47 Dr. Powers? I don't see any right now, and, in the interest of
48 time and moving us forward, I am going to suggest that we move

1 on to the next presentation, which I'm sure will generate lots
2 more discussion, from either Dr. Crabtree or Peter at SERO
3 regarding red snapper calibration options.

4
5 **DR. CRABTREE:** Peter is going to give that, Martha.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Peter.

8
9 **RED SNAPPER CALIBRATION OPTIONS**

10
11 **MR. HOOD:** While we're waiting the presentation to come up, I
12 would just mention that, basically, if you want to act quickly,
13 what this presentation will do is provide a couple of options
14 that can be achieved through a framework action.

15
16 Again, what I'm going to be talking about are maybe two ways to
17 address converting the ACL to CHTS currency to state currencies
18 for the management of the private angling component. There may
19 be other options, but these seem to be practical and something
20 that could be implemented quickly, if that's your desire.

21
22 Other than status quo, which is the first bullet, one option is
23 to do a straight-up conversion, and that's the second bullet,
24 where, basically, the ACL is in CHTS currency, and it's
25 converted to state currencies using the different conversion
26 ratios. The other option is where a buffer is applied to the
27 private angling component and the state ACLs are allocated based
28 on that lower ACL.

29
30 Basically, I want to go back to the previous slide just to make
31 a note that, down at the bottom there, if you want to change the
32 state allocations put in place by Amendment 50, you would have
33 to do a plan amendment, and, if you wanted to try to tackle that
34 reallocation sooner rather than later, you could do an emergency
35 rule that would then put in place that reallocation, and that
36 would be in place then while the amendment is being developed.

37
38 This basically shows what happens -- What the ACLs are doing if
39 you took those straight conversions, and, if you look at, for
40 example, Alabama, which is the first state listed there, under
41 the current private angling component, in CHTS units, they would
42 get 1.122 million pounds, roughly, and, if you multiply the
43 conversion ratio by the ACL in CHTS currency, you get roughly
44 547,000 pounds in Snapper Check currency.

45
46 Then, to sort of then see what the state landings are in CHTS
47 currency at the end of the year, and, in this case, what I have
48 in that predicted MRIP CHTS landings is sort of, assuming

1 Alabama exactly caught its converted quota, and so that quota in
2 Snapper Check, and we would take those landings, and we would
3 divide it by the conversion ratio to get the predicted CHTS
4 landings. As you can see, it converts back to the 1.122 million
5 pounds, and so this is one option.

6
7 While we're waiting for the next slide to pop up, in this case,
8 what happens is we're going to apply a buffer to the private
9 angling component ACL, and, basically, it gets reduced by a
10 certain amount, and what we found is that a 23 percent buffer
11 got us the closest to the private angling ACL of 4.269 million
12 pounds.

13
14 In this case, we have the second column labeled the current ACL.
15 If we applied a 23 percent buffer, that's listed in that third
16 column, or the center column, and that would be -- That's the
17 value that each state manages using their monitoring system, and
18 so, for Alabama, and I'm sorry, Kevin, to pick on you, the
19 1.122-million-pound ACL would be reduced to approximately
20 864,000 pounds. That's applying that 23 percent buffer, and
21 that's what they would manage using Snapper Check.

22
23 At the end of the year, the landings would be divided by the
24 conversion ratio to get back to the CHTS currency, and so, in
25 the case of Alabama, if they were able to perfectly match their
26 quota and get that roughly 864,000 pounds, we divide it by the
27 conversion factor of 0.4875, and then that gives us a predicted
28 1.773 million pounds in CHTS units.

29
30 If we do this for all the states, and assuming each state
31 catches its quota exactly, we would then sum the landings into
32 CHTS currency, which is that last row, the right-most row, and
33 then you would then compare that to your 4.269-million-pound
34 private angling component to see whether you stayed under or
35 exceeded the ACL.

36
37 In this example, if you look at the red value, the red number
38 there, that's the sum of the predicted landings, and you can see
39 it gets pretty close to the ACL, using that 23 percent buffer.
40 It's off by just a little over 5,000 pounds.

41
42 The next slide is going to be a bar chart that's going to be
43 shown for each state, and you're going to see what the
44 allocations would have been for each state, and that's in blue,
45 and the brown is each state reduced by 23 percent, and then the
46 orange is what each state's ACL, managed in state currency,
47 would be after you convert it to the CHTS units.

48

1 I would like to sort of make two points here. One is you can
2 see that fish from the buffer go to Alabama and Mississippi, and
3 so they gain some fish, compared to the other states, and the
4 other states would then lose some fish, and then the other
5 points is just, if you look at that furthest right, where it
6 says "Total", you will see that sort of going to the conversion,
7 with the buffer and everything, you end up with that orange bar
8 being roughly the same as the blue bar, and so the math seems to
9 work out using this buffer method. Madam Chair, that completes
10 my report, or presentation.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Peter. I suspect that we have
13 questions out there on Peter's presentation, and then we can go
14 back to the general queue, just to be clear. Who has questions
15 for Peter, or we can just go to the queue, I guess. Let's just
16 do that, and then we'll just roll into them. Next on the list,
17 I had Robin.

18
19 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to go back a
20 ways in this conversation, just because I thought it was worth
21 hitting again, and, in regard to the science part of this and
22 the review, and I think we all want to make sure that we go
23 through the appropriate review, but I think we also have to
24 recognize that what we're reviewing is an independent review of
25 the stock assessment, and so, in some respects, some of that
26 review and the teams that worked already to design the study --

27
28 Not that their work shouldn't be reviewed, and it should, but
29 maybe we can hurry that along, or at least have some confidence,
30 as we hurry it a little bit, so that we can impact next year as
31 much as we can, and certainly I think everyone is suggesting
32 that is the case with an interim analysis, but I think it's
33 important to recognize that there already is a lot of our
34 current SSC members and people around the Gulf who we depend on
35 for this kind of expertise involved in that study as well.

36
37 I kind of agree with actually some comments that both Roy and
38 Tom and Greg all made, that we're kind of dealing with the
39 short-term tyranny of the urgent and trying to work through what
40 maybe looks like really a difficult situation, possibly, into
41 next year, and certainly how do we do that, in terms of both
42 maybe trying to find a way through it, so that we buy ourselves
43 some time, but there's been some discussions about allocations,
44 and, folks, an allocation by next spring, I just don't see how
45 we would do anything like that, I mean, given how contentious
46 any allocation is.

47
48 I mean, I would remind this group that we couldn't get a

1 calibration type of data calibration reallocation of a minor
2 percentage passed, and, first, it took a very long time to work
3 through the council, and then, of course, it was challenged as
4 well, and so I think we just have to recognize that, and so I
5 think what we really have to focus our energy on is maybe the
6 immediacy of next year and then spend some time working through
7 some of these other issues that are really still out there.
8 Thanks, Martha.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Robin. I am going to go to Kevin
11 next.

12
13 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just first say a
14 couple of comments, like Robin said, going back a little ways,
15 and I would ask that I can be put in after Clay's queue in
16 there, if I can come back up again, and I have a different thing
17 to talk about at that time.

18
19 I appreciated Dr. Stunz's comments, and Dr. Powers' comments,
20 about scientists and that they need to be shown data for them to
21 change their minds, but they're willing to change their minds if
22 they are shown data, and so that was comforting to hear both of
23 them talk in those terms.

24
25 I don't know, and certainly Dr. Stunz can comment, and he's up
26 next, as to the scope and breadth of his concerns that he has
27 with trying to solve these issues, but I got the impression that
28 it was mostly on the management side of the house, and I am just
29 wondering -- Once we see the final numbers from the Great Red
30 Snapper Count, but, if it's significantly higher, two or three
31 or four times higher, I think some introspection needs to occur
32 relative to how then those estimates were created from the first
33 iteration that were so far off.

34
35 That's just something to be thinking about, and hopefully other
36 folks can be thinking about it as well, as to what process would
37 that be, and are the same issues that caused such a disparity
38 for this species -- Are they in the science, if you will, or are
39 they in the model for other species that we manage, because
40 certainly red snapper are not the only species that we hear
41 folks saying there's a bunch of fish out there, and it's
42 particularly those that are under ACLs. I just wanted to add
43 that, and I will come back to my other thing after Dr. Porch.
44 Thank you.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. That was a good point. Greg.

47
48 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Martha. Just to point back to the

1 snapper abundance estimate study, and I want to make sure -- You
2 know, this was never intended, and nor does our team feel that
3 this is like the end-all or it's going to replace the assessment
4 or anything like that.

5
6 I mean, it was to enhance our knowledge base and build on that
7 and give more scientific information to what we already have,
8 and so I don't want anyone to think that we're just going to
9 give it over and here's this. That's not the case at all, but I
10 think it is going to shed some very informative light on
11 potential stocks of snapper that we may have missed and that
12 sort of thing, in terms of calculating that abundance.

13
14 I just wanted to clarify that, Martha, and then, Kevin, to your
15 point, as far as how this will be built into the process, that's
16 kind of where we leave this study as the scientific team and
17 then it takes over again with the SSC, and then, of course,
18 Clay's shop figures out how that integrates into the assessment
19 or what they're going to do with that, and we don't necessarily,
20 other than I'm a member of this council -- We don't have a
21 direct role in that, other than I fully expect reports and
22 briefings to occur, and, in fact, I look forward to briefing
23 you, Tom and Carrie, whenever you all are ready after Friday,
24 this group, at least the preliminary briefing, so we can talk
25 about broad numbers that will be developed into a final report.

26
27 I expect us to have many, many meetings with Clay and his team
28 and his lead analyst, to really understand the study and how to
29 build it into the process. What that looks like right now,
30 well, I don't know, and Clay would, obviously, have to guide
31 that process.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Greg. Next on the list is Phil
34 Dyskow.

35
36 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Greg, I appreciate what
37 you've said. I am not trying to put words in your mouth, but I
38 am concerned that we don't use the Great Red Snapper Count data
39 as a one-time fix to this problem we have of calibrating between
40 state data and MRIP.

41
42 If we make the population bigger somehow, that gives everybody
43 more fish, but it doesn't solve the fundamental problem. We
44 have these formulas that may or may not make sense, and we can
45 defend MRIP until we're dead, but there is still is a real
46 concern between the better -- I shouldn't use the word "better",
47 but the more detailed state data that we get and MRIP, which
48 uses a system that I can't see how anyone would say it's a

1 better system, or a more accurate system. We have to fix that
2 problem. We can't just use the Great Red Snapper Count as a
3 one-time Band-Aid to fix this fundamental problem that we have.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Phil. Next in the queue I have Clay.

6
7 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you. I agree with Greg and everyone, and I am
8 super excited to see the results from the Great Red Snapper
9 Count. As many of you know, I was involved in the beginning,
10 hosting the workshops that we used to put together the RFP for
11 this, and I would have loved to have been involved, except I
12 drafted the RFP, and so it would have been a conflict of
13 interest, but I think this kind of thing is incredibly timely,
14 and I would say that, just so you know, this actually is not a
15 review of the stock assessment.

16
17 They are not looking at the stock assessment and figuring out
18 what's right or wrong. It's a completely independent
19 assessment, and so what they have done is used state-of-the-art
20 technology to do something that has never been done in the
21 country before.

22
23 They used a whole bunch of different technologies in different
24 parts of the Gulf, because some types of technology don't work
25 as well in the Gulf as others, and many of you, like Bob and
26 all, know this. They have stitched it all together to come up
27 with a total estimate of the abundance of red snapper.

28
29 I am as excited as anybody to see this, because one of the
30 things they've done is go all over the entire Gulf of Mexico,
31 and they're not just looking at one type of habitat, and they're
32 looking at everything, and so this is a really powerful thing,
33 and that's why it was so expensive, but I think, not only is it
34 going to inform red snapper, and, yes, as scientists, we are all
35 excited about it, because we're going to have information that
36 we've never had before, but the other thing that it's going to
37 do is help inform us how we can reinvent our entire survey
38 process.

39
40 They used smaller vessels, for a large part, and they are
41 getting other fish besides red snapper in there, and so, at the
42 same time, we've actually got a project going on with the Gulf
43 States Marine Fisheries Commission, part of the SEAMAP, and that
44 is to look at how we might reinvent our surveys, taking
45 advantage of all the things we learned from the Great Red
46 Snapper Count and many other pilot studies that we've been doing
47 internally.

1 We're trying to put that all together, not only to get better
2 species-specific estimates, but also more information for
3 ecosystem-based management, and so I just wanted to kind of make
4 that clear. This is something that we're all looking forward
5 to, and I think it's going to change the game in the Gulf.
6 Having said all that, of course, it is an expensive endeavor, as
7 Greg has explained, but I think we'll learn quite a lot.

8
9 The other thing that I do want to bring up is Phil is right, in
10 that this doesn't make the calibration conversion factor thing
11 go away. I think that's a separate issue that we need to
12 tackle. Some of you from the states know that we've been trying
13 to pursue RESTORE funding to come up with a plan where we can
14 groundtruth some of these surveys and also expand on the efforts
15 that the states and Richard Cody's group are doing in trying to
16 understand why they are different.

17
18 There is definitely two things going on. We need to do a better
19 job doing our surveys, and the Great Red Snapper Count will help
20 point the way for that, and also pursuing how do we determine
21 what's the best way to collect all the types of data we need for
22 recreational fisheries, and I think that's a separate track, and
23 both things need to happen.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. It's good to hear that you guys
26 are thinking about the big picture. Next, I have -- I thought I
27 had Kevin, but it seems to have disappeared. Kevin, do you
28 still want to speak?

29
30 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, Madam Chair. With three minutes left to go in
31 your scheduled meeting time, I will offer a motion, and I sent
32 it to staff already. Let's see if we can bring that up, and my
33 computer is running a little slower behind what's shown on the
34 screen, and so I'm just going to go ahead and read it, for
35 shortness, for brevity.

36
37 **The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council instructs that**
38 **management advice for Gulf of Mexico red snapper be derived**
39 **using the unadjusted harvest estimates from the state surveys**
40 **(Texas Parks and Wildlife, LA Creel, Mississippi Tails n'**
41 **Scales, Alabama Snapper Check and Florida Gulf Reef Fish Survey)**
42 **until such time as the causal factors and relationships**
43 **explaining the disagreement between MRIP FES survey and the**
44 **state surveys are established. That's my motion.**

45
46 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Kevin. I think the screen is a
47 little bit slow for all of us. While we're waiting for that to
48 go on the board, let's check in with Dr. Frazer and see how he

1 would like to proceed, since, as you mentioned, is about four
2 o'clock. Assuming this motion gets a second, would you like to
3 debate that motion now, or would you like to save this for
4 tomorrow?
5

6 **DR. FRAZER:** I think what I would like to do is, if it gets a
7 second, I think that I would like people to stew on it, to be
8 honest with you, and save it for Full Council. I think, if it
9 gets a second, I would allow Kevin some time to provide some
10 rationale for the motion, but I think we'll pick up discussion
11 in Full Council, and I think that would give people some time to
12 really think about it. It's too late to try to push it.
13

14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.
15

16 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I would like to second it.
17

18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you, General Spraggins. I am just
19 going to read the motion, now that it's on the board, and at
20 least I can see it, and hopefully you all can too at this point,
21 but I know, for whatever reason, late in the day, the internet
22 decides to take a nap.
23

24 The motion is the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
25 instructs that management advice for Gulf of Mexico red snapper
26 be derived using the unadjusted harvest estimates from the state
27 surveys, and I'm not going to read them all out, until such time
28 as the causal factors and relationships explaining the
29 disagreement between MRIP FES survey and the state surveys are
30 established. Kevin, do you want to just briefly give us some --
31 Give us your thoughts on this, where you're coming from?
32

33 **MR. ANSON:** Certainly. Thank you. We have had lots of
34 discussion today and presentations provided from both the agency
35 as well as summary information from the SSC and the review of
36 the various calibration workshops, and kind of the common
37 thread, or the common theme, is that the FES survey is providing
38 estimates, and the actual estimates are much larger than the
39 Coastal Household Telephone Survey.
40

41 There is not much rationale for why that exists, other than
42 there is a change in methodology, and they're getting a little
43 higher response rate and such, and so there was dissention, if
44 you will, I guess for lack of a better term, or there was
45 certainly a motion that was almost passed at the SSC that would
46 lean heavily upon state surveys, where they existed for certain
47 species, and so this -- There's just a lot of issues related to
48 the FES survey that just have not been borne out yet, and so

1 this is an attempt to try to address that in the short term, so
2 that we can address some of these other issues related to
3 allocation and in the red snapper fishery. Thank you.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Okay. I thought I saw Dr.
6 Simmons' hand, but it's gone now. Richard, it looks like you're
7 the only one right now.

8
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Madam Chair, I just wanted to
10 remind the committee that we did send a letter to Dr. Porch and
11 the Science Center after the June council meeting discussing and
12 requesting that interim analysis for red snapper and requesting
13 that, as appropriate, the data generated from the Great Red
14 Snapper Count be included.

15
16 We originally had planned a preliminary presentation during the
17 September SSC meeting to receive that, and that, unfortunately,
18 had to be pushed back, and so, right now, we are just waiting to
19 hear from Dr. Stunz and Dr. Clay Porch as to when the timing can
20 move forward, and so, right now, in a letter, we're requesting
21 that this be done in January of 2021 and go to the SSC before
22 the January 25 through 28, 2021 council meeting. We're just
23 waiting for some feedback on that timeline. Thank you.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks for the reminder on that. That's
26 probably -- I am guessing it's too soon for Clay or Greg to be
27 able to confirm that that's still a realistic timeline, but I
28 don't know if either of you all want to jump in on that.

29
30 **DR. STUNZ:** Martha, did you want me to just jump in real quick
31 on that?

32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

34
35 **DR. STUNZ:** I mean, I think that's realistic. There's no
36 problem giving a preliminary briefing to the council of what
37 we've found, but getting through the SSC in time for them to vet
38 it -- You know, that's going to take a little bit longer, and I
39 assume everyone would like to know the take-home message, and
40 then the SSC would do their thing, but I will defer that to Tom
41 and Carrie to work out how to do that.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. Richard, do you have something
44 to contribute here?

45
46 **DR. CODY:** I just wanted to address Kevin's point that not much
47 is known about the differences between the FES and the CHTS. I
48 will point out that we made presentations on that very topic to

1 the South Atlantic Council, Mid-Atlantic, and the Gulf Council,
2 where we outlined some of the reasons we feel the FES is a
3 better estimate of fishing effort than the CHTS.

4
5 Among those were the fact that you have response rates among the
6 CHTS that basically is less than 10 percent. The demographic of
7 those respondents does not match the fishing population, and so
8 there are plenty of pieces of information out there, and I just
9 don't want people to leave with the impression that this has not
10 been looked at. Thank you.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Richard. Clay, I think I saw
13 you trying to jump in, maybe to answer the question about the
14 interim analysis, but I can't see your name on the list now, and
15 so, if you have something to say, go ahead.

16
17 **DR. PORCH:** I agree with him that we -- Our goal anyway is to
18 have some estimates by the end of January, but it's just really
19 hard to say anything definitive until we've actually seen the
20 data, because the devil is always in the details, and so we need
21 to think about, one, what's the best way to use this data, and,
22 two, do we have the actual information to do what it is that
23 we're attempting to do, and so it's just hard to give you a
24 definitive answer until Greg's group shares the data with us and
25 we talk it through.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Fair enough. Okay. Dr. Frazer.

28
29 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. Again, I think it's getting late in the day,
30 and I think it's been the type of discussion that we
31 anticipated, and I think that we have a motion on the board and
32 a rationale for the motion, and we have a second for that
33 motion, but I do not want to rush into a vote on this particular
34 motion, or any motion for that matter, and I think it has some
35 pretty significant consequences for us moving forward, and I
36 want people to take some time to think about that before we go
37 into Full Council tomorrow.

38
39 I think we'll leave it there, and I appreciate everybody's time,
40 and I think it was a fairly constructive dialogue, and so, in
41 that sense, I'm pleased, but we'll see folks again tomorrow at
42 9:00. I want to remind people that we have a session at 4:30, a
43 Q&A, and Dr. Crabtree and myself will be available for that, but
44 we are going to have to switch platforms for that, and so we'll
45 leave the Adobe Connect platform and go to a Go to Webinar
46 platform, and so I will see everybody who is interested in
47 joining that session at 4:30, and, if you're not there, I will
48 see you tomorrow at nine o'clock, and so thank you for your

1 time.

2
3 (Whereupon, the meeting on September 29, 2020.)

4
5 - - -

6
7 September 30, 2020

8
9 WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

10
11 - - -

12
13 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
14 Management Council reconvened via webinar on Wednesday morning,
15 September 30, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Martha
16 Guyas.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Staff is pulling up the motion that we have on
19 the table, and this is Kevin's motion. Given that we have Full
20 Council this morning and public testimony that is a hard start
21 at 9:30, probably the most prudent thing to do at this point,
22 Kevin, if you're up for it, would be to withdraw this motion
23 from the Reef Fish Committee, and then we can maybe reintroduce
24 it at Full Council this afternoon. Kevin, are you down for
25 that?

26
27 **MR. ANSON:** Yes. I could be down for that. At the last
28 meeting, public testimony was very short, and so I'm just
29 wondering, instead of the afternoon, instead of going into
30 committee reports and bringing it up under the Reef Fish
31 Committee report, at that time, or the time scheduled for it, is
32 that we actually -- Assuming that there is time left over with
33 public testimony, is that we bring it up immediately after
34 public testimony.

35
36 Just essentially postpone the committee, potentially postpone
37 the committee, or bring it up as a special agenda item, if you
38 will, after public testimony.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I will leave that up to Tom.

41
42 **DR. FRAZER:** Kevin, I appreciate that. It's hard to say how
43 much participation we will have in the public comment period,
44 and so the intent is not to essentially discount the motion at
45 all, and my preference would be to revisit the issue during the
46 committee report.

47
48 **MR. ANSON:** I understand. Just if there is opportunity, if

1 public testimony is short and does not take up the time
2 allotted, I am requesting that we bring it up at that time, and
3 that's all.

4
5 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay, Kevin, and so we'll do is we'll see where we
6 stand with regard to the schedule, and we can, at that point --
7 If there is adequate time, we can initiate the Reef Fish
8 Committee report, perhaps first, and alter the agenda that way.
9 Okay. I understand where you're coming from. Thank you.

10
11 **MR. ANSON:** All right. **With that, then I withdraw my motion**
12 **then, based on that.** Thank you, Madam Chair and Chair.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Okay. With that motion
15 withdrawn, we do have some other business, but I would suggest
16 that maybe we roll that other business onto the council other
17 business, and, with that, I think we are finished with the Reef
18 Fish Committee.

19
20 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 30, 2020.)

21
22 - - -
23