

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SHRIMP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

IP Casino & Resort Biloxi, Mississippi

April 3, 2019

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Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
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 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS
 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
 John Sanchez.....Florida

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

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 Doug Boyd.....Texas
 Glenn Constant.....USFWS
 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
 Tom Frazer.....Florida
 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
 Paul Mickle (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi
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6 Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
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10 Rick Hart.....NMFS
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13 Michelle Masi.....NMFS
14 Jack McGovern.....NMFS
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16 Jay Mullins.....Apalachicola, FL
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19 Clarence Seymour.....Biloxi, MS
20 Casey Streeter.....Matlacha, FL
21 Mike Travis.....NMFS
22 Dustin Trochesset.....Biloxi, MS

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TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 16: Motion to recommend to NMFS that federal waters be closed out to 200 miles to run concurrent with the date that the State of Texas recommends for the 2019 Texas shrimp closure in the Texas Territorial Sea. The motion carried on page 16.

PAGE 21: Motion to recommend the council approve the Shrimp Amendment 18: Evaluation of Shrimp Effort Threshold Reduction in the Area Monitored for Juvenile Red Snapper Bycatch, and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate. The motion carried on page 21.

PAGE 29: Motion to invite the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to an upcoming Council meeting to discuss the impacts and overlaps of the permits which come before the Corps for approval and management of fisheries in federal waters. The motion carried on page 30.

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1 The Shrimp Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the IP Casino & Resort, Biloxi,
3 Mississippi, Wednesday morning, April 3, 2019, and was called to
4 order by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN LEANN BOSARGE:** I would like to call the Shrimp
11 Management Committee to order. Our members are myself, Mr.
12 Banks, Mr. Anson, Dr. Crabtree, Mr. Diaz, Mr. Dugas, Mr.
13 Robinson, and Mr. Sanchez.

14
15 Our agenda can be found under Tab D, Number 1, and it is quite a
16 lengthy agenda to jam-pack into an hour, or maybe forty-five
17 minutes at this point, and so we're going to try and push
18 forward through it. We do -- If you remember, during I think it
19 was Sustainable Fisheries, there was one presentation by Dr.
20 Travis that has been moved to the Shrimp Committee, for the sake
21 of time, and so we will take that up at the end of our agenda,
22 and so that has been added to our agenda. After the Summary of
23 the Shrimp Advisory Panel meeting, we will ask Dr. Travis to
24 please present. Are there any other changes or amendments to
25 the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved as amended.

26
27 The minutes can be found under Tab D, Number 2. Were there any
28 revisions that were needed to the minutes? Seeing none, the
29 minutes stand approved as presented. Our Action Guide and Next
30 Steps can be found under Tab D, Number 3, and I think that Dr.
31 Freeman will take us through that as we get to each agenda item,
32 and so the next agenda item is going to be the Review of Updated
33 Stock Assessments. Dr. Freeman, would you like to give us a
34 little summary of what to expect there, and then we'll turn it
35 over to Dr. Hart?

36
37 **REVIEW OF THE UPDATED STOCK ASSESSMENTS**
38 **SHRIMP STOCK ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION**
39

40 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Certainly. Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. The
41 committee will be presented with the stock assessments for
42 brown, pink, and white shrimp for 2017. None of the stocks are
43 overfished or undergoing overfishing. The committee will also
44 be presented with the Shrimp SSC summary, and this information
45 does not require any formal committee action, and so, at this
46 point, I will turn it over to Dr. Hart.

47
48 **DR. RICK HART:** Thank you, Dr. Freeman. I will go over the

1 shrimp stock assessments. This is assessments, the most recent
2 assessments, and we were at the 2017 fishing year. I will go
3 over these quickly, because I know we have a full agenda. The
4 Stock Synthesis stock assessments, we estimated spawning stock
5 biomass at MSY and an F at MSY for pink, brown, and white
6 shrimp. We modeled pink shrimp in Stat Zones 1 through 11,
7 brown shrimp in Stat Zones 7 through 21, and white shrimp in
8 Stat Zones 7 through 21, and those are outlined here, if you're
9 not too familiar with how the stat zones are laid out in the
10 Gulf.

11
12 For the pink shrimp model inputs, we used 1984 through 2017
13 monthly catch from the Gulf of Mexico, and these are in pounds
14 of tails, and we also used monthly catch by size and monthly
15 CPUE, or catch rate. As a fishery-independent index, we use
16 1987 through 2017 SEAMAP, summer and fall survey data, and those
17 data contain catch by size and a nominal CPUE index. We also
18 use 2008 through 2017 SEAMAP summer and fall survey data, using
19 the delta log normal index. These are our recruitment indices.

20
21 For brown shrimp, we used monthly catch in pounds of tails,
22 monthly catch by size categories, and we used eleven size
23 categories, the standard eight categories with the smallest size
24 being -- We have that divided into three categories, and so we
25 have a total of actually eleven size categories in the model.

26
27 We also use a monthly catch rate CPUE, and, for recruitment
28 indices, we use Louisiana's monthly shrimp trawl surveys, which
29 is the western subset. I know there were some questions about
30 that at the AP, about why don't we use the eastern subset. The
31 western subset for these Louisiana surveys were more indicative
32 of the stock and reflected what was going on with the stock, and
33 so we get those every year from the State of Louisiana. Those
34 data have shrimp catch by size, three-millimeter bins, and they
35 have a delta lognormal CPUE index that we use as well. In
36 addition to the Louisiana shrimp surveys, we also use the SEAMAP
37 summer and fall survey data, which contains shrimp by size and a
38 delta lognormal CPUE index.

39
40 For white shrimp, it's pretty much the same data as we used for
41 browns. It's monthly catch, catch by size, catch rates, and the
42 Louisiana shrimp trawl surveys, the western subset, again, which
43 contains the catch by size, and there is the delta lognormal
44 CPUE index, and we also used the SEAMAP summer and fall survey
45 data, which, again, has catch by size and CPUE.

46
47 We fit the CPUE and the size comps as well as selectivity
48 estimates are developed and spawning biomass and fishing

1 mortality estimates are produced, and I'm just going to kind of
2 go over the meat and potatoes of the assessments today.
3
4 For the pink model, the way the model is set up, it is monthly
5 time steps, and so we have to -- In order to calculate annual
6 spawning stock biomass, we get the terminal or benchmark year,
7 which is a month, and we multiply that estimate by twelve to
8 give us a spawning stock biomass MSY estimate for annual, and
9 that reference point is about 23.7 million pounds.
10
11 It's similar with the FMSY. We have an annual FMSY is 1.35, and
12 so this is the spawning stock biomass estimate, with the
13 reference point at the bottom, and spawning stock biomass is
14 above the reference point. It's at 62.8 million pounds, and F
15 increased again this year, and it's at 0.34, but it's still well
16 below the reference point. Landings increased in the pink
17 shrimp and in the CPUE, and it did show a great increase in CPUE
18 for pink shrimp.
19
20 For brown, again, we fit catch rates and size comps and size
21 selectivity, but I'm just going to show spawning biomass in MSY
22 and fishing mortality in F at MSY estimates. The brown shrimp
23 model is a little different than the pink and the white. This
24 one is actually parameterized as an annual model with seasons,
25 and we have a spawning stock biomass at MSY estimate at 6.1
26 million pounds of tails and an F at MSY of 9.1.
27
28 Spawning stock biomass is still above the reference point, but
29 it did show a decline, and we have seen a decline since around
30 2010, is when it started to really show declines, and we are
31 looking at that model and trying to figure out what's going on
32 with these stocks. They are still above the reference points,
33 but we are on it.
34
35 For F, we see F, again, increase. We have seen fishing
36 mortality rates have increased since about 2010, again, and so
37 we're looking at the model and seeing what's going on with that,
38 but they are still well below the reference point at this point.
39 Brown shrimp landings increased again this year, and a catch
40 rate increase as well. Catch rates have been high for several
41 years, and they still seem to be pretty high.
42
43 For the white shrimp model, again, we developed CPUE size comp
44 estimates and selectivity estimates were developed and fits,
45 but, again, I am just going to go through the spawning biomass
46 and F estimates.
47
48 The pink shrimp model and white model is parameterized as a --

1 It's a monthly model, but we kind of, if you would, tricked the
2 model into giving us annual estimates by using that benchmark
3 year SSB estimate to multiply that times twelve to get an annual
4 spawning stock biomass at MSY reference point, and that is at
5 365.6 million pounds of tails, with an FMSY of 3.48.

6
7 We did see a slight increase in spawning stock biomass in white
8 shrimp models, and it's still kind of lower than it was since
9 2010, but it's still above, quite a bit above, the reference
10 point at this point. F, we did see a small decline in F, and F
11 this year was about 1.6, but well below the reference point.

12
13 Landings for white shrimp in this area was about the same as
14 last year, as well as CPUE, and CPUE is still pretty high, and
15 so all three stocks right now are healthy, not overfished nor
16 undergoing overfishing. They are greater than the overfished
17 reference points, and fishing mortality rates are less than the
18 overfishing reference points. With that, I am happy to
19 entertain any questions that you may have.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Questions for the committee? Mr.
22 Banks.

23
24 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:** I heard you say that you all were watching
25 the downward trend in brown shrimp production, and can you
26 provide any possible reasons why that trend is occurring? It
27 seemed to start in 2010, and certainly most of us know that
28 brown shrimp production largely comes from Louisiana, and it
29 seems like that that coincides, obviously, with the oil spill,
30 with Louisiana releasing a lot of fresh water to try to stave
31 off the oil, 2011 being a major flood year, and it's just been a
32 pretty darned fresh environment in Louisiana for the last eight
33 or so years, and do you think that's part of what we're seeing?

34
35 **DR. HART:** We are looking at incorporating some environmental
36 parameters in the model, and I know we've been talking about
37 that. We've got, right now, an index in the brown shrimp model,
38 not in this one that we've shown, and we have run it. The only
39 issue with that one is that the last year of that index is 2011,
40 and so we are looking at some environmental parameters.

41
42 We finally were able to fill the vacant stock assessment
43 position at the Science Center, in the Galveston Lab, which was
44 my position, and it's been open for three years, and so Dr.
45 Michelle Masi took that position last fall, and so she'll be
46 looking into that, and she'll be presenting the Texas closure
47 today, but, yes, we are looking at that.

48

1 We all know that, especially with pink shrimp, that the stock
2 population really isn't environmentally driven, and so that's
3 kind of what we're thinking, and, yes, 2010 is -- We all know
4 what has happened there, and I don't want to go out on a limb
5 and say that was what it was, but it's something that we're
6 looking at, as well as biological or environmental parameters.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Hart. Excellent presentation.

9
10 **DR. HART:** Thank you. I think I'm still up here to do the next
11 one.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I was going to say that the next one is the
14 shrimp effort presentation, and I think you're on the hot seat
15 again.

16 17 **SHRIMP EFFORT PRESENTATION**

18
19 **DR. HART:** For shrimp effort, we now use the electronic logbooks
20 to calculate effort in the Gulf, and this is our program. It
21 started with Dr. Benny Gallaway, in cooperation with NMFS and
22 LGL, and we started this in the late 1990s and the early 2000s,
23 and we have updated our logbooks now with a cellular system,
24 where the logbook is on the selected vessel.

25
26 It measures the location every ten minutes and stores the data
27 in the logbook, and then, when the fishing vessel gets within
28 non-roaming cell range, it does a data dump to a server in
29 Stennis, and then we pull those data into the Galveston Lab and
30 use those to estimate, along with landings and catch rates, and
31 we extrapolate that out to get our effort estimates.

32
33 This is just a little map of distribution of effort associated
34 with the logbooks, and you can see how it changes through the
35 trimesters, and it's May through August and September through
36 December. We can look at landings and effort and catch rates.
37 Catch rates are up in the fishery this year, but the meat and
38 potatoes -- This is kind of a legacy figure that has been shown,
39 and so I include this.

40
41 I guess the bottom line is that the number that we're interested
42 in is the effort estimates in Stat Zones 10 through 21 and the
43 ten to thirty-fathom zone, or the juvenile red snapper area,
44 and, for the last year, it was at 67.03 percent from the
45 baseline, and so you're still fishing below the reference point
46 for the fleet. Any questions on that? So we are still below
47 the reference. It was at 27,302 days fished, or 67.03 percent.
48 Any questions?

1
2 That is good news, and so the red snapper zone effort is below.
3 Total offshore effort equals 72,539 days fished. Offshore
4 landings is 89.6 million pounds, and the offshore CPUE is that
5 1,235 days fished, and so CPUE is still high for the overall
6 fishery. These effort estimates couldn't be done without the
7 cooperation of the fishing industry and the management council,
8 as well as the commercial shrimp fishermen. With that, that
9 ends that report. Short and sweet.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We appreciate it. I think,
12 next, that will take us, Dr. Freeman, to the SSC Summary Report,
13 and is that correct?

14
15 **DR. FREEMAN:** That is correct. I believe Dr. Barbieri is here.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That will be Dr. Barbieri, the always short
18 and sweet and concise Dr. Barbieri.

19
20 **SSC SUMMARY REPORT**

21
22 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** Thank you, Madam Chair and committee
23 members. Yes, this is very short and sweet. It's just to let
24 you know that Dr. Hart came over and gave us these presentations
25 for all three species of shrimp stock assessments at the SSC
26 meeting, and the committee felt that the assessments were
27 conducted according to standard methodologies and met all the
28 standards that we expected to meet and is considered best
29 scientific information available.

30
31 The committee discussed a few things regarding biomass changes
32 in the stock and fluctuations in recruitment, and I am very
33 happy to hear that Dr. Michelle Masi is now part of the team
34 there working with Rick, and I know Dr. Masi from some time ago,
35 and she used to work with us at FWRI, and she has a very strong
36 background on ecosystem models, and it's really reassuring to
37 see that she's part of that team now, because some of these
38 issues with shrimp, as Dr. Hart pointed out, are potentially
39 environmentally driven, and so integrating more climate and
40 environmental factors and ecosystem components would give us a
41 better understanding of what is driving the dynamics of these
42 stocks, and so this is very reassuring, and we welcome her to
43 the team to be working with us on this. That completes my
44 report, Madam Chair. How about that for short and sweet?

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I love it. I think we have a question for
47 you, but, before we go into that, I just wanted to recognize one
48 dignitary that is in the room. I think we have the esteemed

1 Mayor of Biloxi, Mr. Gilich. It's good to have you.

2
3 **MR. ANDREW GILICH:** This is kind of special, and we're talking
4 about shrimp. My first job -- You might know what a can catcher
5 was, and my whole family came from the shrimp and oyster
6 processing and packaging, and so, when I was about eleven or
7 twelve years old, it was \$1.35 an hour.

8
9 I'm still making \$1.35 an hour right now, but I had cousins on
10 each side of the canning. As the shrimp per put into the salt
11 tablets and the hot water and came off of the top, and so you
12 take four in a can and put it in the rack to be -- It's about a
13 six-foot well to be pressure cooked, and the shrimp and oysters
14 are big-time important to me and my family in Biloxi, and so
15 your work and the science that you're trying to make these
16 decisions on are very important, but I have been around this
17 area all my life, and I haven't grown up yet, and I'm seventy
18 years old, but, anyway, I know the work you do, and it's very
19 important.

20
21 The Gulf is so important, and that's the edge we had. You know,
22 you could get -- Anything Gulf-related, you got a premium, and I
23 think that's where we maybe lost a little bit of that brand
24 quality of product, and we want to get that back, I think, and
25 we used to have ten or fifteen processors, and we're down to
26 about four right now, but innovation and the science that you
27 hear is very important, and so I welcome you here from the city.

28
29 Let me tell you that this is my forty-seventh month as mayor,
30 but, a while back -- Early on, Mitch Landrieu was the Mayor of
31 New Orleans, and I would go and see some of his conferences and
32 hear him report on some things, and one thing he did say that
33 kind of applies here is, if you're in Biloxi, or you're in New
34 Orleans, on a conference, and no felony and no DUI, but, if one
35 of my police officers writes you a ticket, you get it to me, and
36 we'll handle it, because it's a convention, and I thought that
37 was pretty good, and I went back and signed that executive -- If
38 you're here, and you're all on a conference, and one of Biloxi's
39 finest writes you up or something, you get that ticket to me,
40 and I will get it to Mitch Landrieu.

41
42 You all have a great time. Again, if the City of Biloxi can
43 help in any way, because seafood and this Gulf is part of our
44 brand name. For 320 years we've been here, 321, as a matter of
45 a fact, and, in 1900, we were the seafood capital. By the
46 1920s, we were the seafood capital of the world, and shrimp and
47 oysters and fish and those things that we do and we love from
48 the Gulf of Mexico, and it's very important to us and our family

1 and the families that will come in the future. Thank you, and
2 I'm happy to answer any questions, if you have anything, but you
3 all have a great conference. Thank you.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. I think that the last time
6 that the mayor and I were together was actually at the Seafood
7 Museum in Biloxi, and they were inducting Mr. Thomas Shultz into
8 the Biloxi Seafood Heritage Hall of Fame, and Mr. Tom is
9 actually on our Shrimp AP, and so we have the best on that AP.
10 Thank you, sir.

11
12 **MR. GILICH:** Thank you.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks, did you have a question for Dr.
15 Barbieri?

16
17 **MR. BANKS:** I did, and I just wanted to know if you guys on the
18 SSC had discussed the trend in the data for brown shrimp at all,
19 and did you guys get into that at all?

20
21 **DR. BARBIERI:** We asked questions about what might be happening,
22 and this is one of those things that, until you look at all the
23 other factors -- As well done as these stock assessments are,
24 they are single species, and they are still just dealing with
25 inputs that are not as inclusive of some of the other issues,
26 environmental and climatic and ecosystem, that will help us
27 understand what is driving these ups and downs.

28
29 I mean, we are glad to see that all three stocks seem to be not
30 just meeting, but exceeding, reference points, in terms of
31 biomass, but we see some fluctuations, which is to be expected,
32 because biological natural systems will fluctuate around
33 averages from time to time, depending on a multitude of issues.
34 We all understand that, but we would like to see -- Have a
35 better understanding of the details and what might be driving
36 them up or down and is this related to any potential impacts
37 that are negative, environmental or otherwise, or not.

38
39 I think that, as Dr. Hart mentioned, as they start including
40 more environmental parameters explicitly into their analysis,
41 and then hopefully expanding into more of an ecosystem
42 perspective, I think we're going to have a better understanding.
43 We asked questions, but, at this point, it's not many answers
44 that we can ascertain.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. All right. Next on our
47 agenda is the Biological Review of the Texas Closure, and I
48 think Dr. Masi is going to present that to us, and we're excited

1 to have you. She presented at the Shrimp AP as well, and Dr.
2 Hart kind of introduced her a little bit earlier, and so she has
3 taken over his old role over there, and we look forward to
4 working with you.

5
6 **BIOLOGICAL REVIEW OF THE TEXAS CLOSURE**

7
8 **DR. MICHELLE MASI:** Good morning, everyone. I think everyone
9 built me up a bit, and so I'm going to try not to let you all
10 down. All right, and so, today, I'm -- By the way, I'm Michelle
11 Masi, the newest member of NOAA Fisheries in Galveston, and I'm
12 going to be presenting this year's analysis, the year 2018, for
13 the Texas closure.

14
15 Just a bit of history for you. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery
16 Management Council's Shrimp FMP was implemented in 1981 for the
17 EEZ fishery. The goal here was to increase the yield of brown
18 shrimp harvested from offshore Texas waters. Historically, the
19 closure occurs from mid-May to mid-July, though there is some
20 deviation from year to year. However, it has been pretty
21 consistent, starting the 15th of May and ending the 15th of July,
22 since 2014. Since 1990, the nearshore, or less than four
23 fathoms area, has also been closed in conjunction with the EEZ
24 closure.

25
26 Looking at a bit of history now on the Texas offshore brown
27 shrimp catch, for July, shown in orange there, and August is in
28 blue, and this is from the start of the Texas closure to the
29 analysis year of 2018. What you're seeing is that the July has
30 sort of tapered off. The pounds landed in July has tapered off
31 since the closure began, and this coincides with the timing of
32 the Texas closure. Then, in August, you can see that there has
33 been some pickup in the pounds landed, starting around the early
34 1990s, coinciding with that closure of the nearshore area as
35 well.

36
37 This figure here is showing you the monthly offshore brown
38 shrimp catch for May through August, and this is for the
39 analysis year of 2018. Now, what I've done here is I have
40 separated out the catch into the market size categories, which
41 are color-coded for you there at the top, and so what you're
42 seeing is that, between May through July, the catches are pretty
43 low, which makes sense. That's when the closure is in place.

44
45 Then catches pick up again in August, but, notably, you see that
46 the catch in August is largely in those larger size categories
47 of thirty-one to forty and forty-one to fifty, and very low
48 catches in that smallest size category of greater than sixty-

1 seven, indicating that the closure seems to be doing a good job
2 of allowing shrimp to reach a larger size.

3
4 This figure here is showing the Gulf-wide shrimp landings by
5 upper Texas ports, and this is for May to August, and, again,
6 1981, starting when the closure took place, through the present
7 analysis year of 2018. What you're seeing is that there is some
8 deviation from year to year in the total landings for Texas,
9 from port to port.

10
11 Notably, there is a couple of ports that have sort of tapered
12 off in the total landings, and that is Chambers and Harris in
13 this figure here. The color codes are at the top there for you.
14 There is some pickup in other ports, and so Jefferson and Kemah
15 have picked up in the total landings, and Galveston has sort of
16 stayed pretty flat there since around 2010.

17
18 This is the middle Texas ports for the same time period, and,
19 again, you have some ports that are sort of tapering off,
20 smaller ports, and then a pickup in the total landings at Port
21 Palacios. This figure here is the lower Texas ports, again, the
22 same time period, and, again, you have some of those ports
23 tapering off, with the other port, Brownsville, picking up some
24 of those landings.

25
26 In this figure here, we're looking at the July offshore white
27 shrimp catch, and, again, for this analysis year of 2018, and I
28 have also separated out the catch here into those market size
29 categories, which are color coded there on the right of the
30 figure. You can see that, for the month of July, most of the
31 catch is occurring in those two larger size categories of less
32 than fifteen and the fifteen to twenty.

33
34 It looks to be that the shrimp are coming in at a larger size,
35 and this is also occurring in August as well, and so, again,
36 this is August for the offshore white shrimp catch for this
37 analysis year, and you can see that we do have some catch
38 picking up in those smaller size categories, but mostly the
39 catch is coming in in those larger two size categories there,
40 indicating that the closure does seem to be doing an effective
41 job at allowing shrimp to reach a larger size.

42
43 As a summary for the Texas fishing trends, and this is from the
44 report, for inshore brown shrimp catch between the months of May
45 and August, we find that it's below the historical average this
46 year, and so 0.21 million pounds is less than the 4.2 million
47 pounds that we have seen historically, and 51 percent of the
48 catch between May and August is occurring in May.

1
2 For offshore brown shrimp catch, between the months of May to
3 August, we find that it is below the historical average this
4 year, at 10.8 million pounds, and, in July to August, only 1.1
5 percent of the catch is in that smallest size category.

6
7 For a summary of the Texas shrimp landings by port, we find
8 there are some changes in the distribution of shrimp for 2018.
9 Notably, there is increased landings at Port Chambers and
10 Galveston, with decreases at other upper Texas ports. All of
11 the landings for the middle Texas ports have decreased this
12 year. For lower Texas ports, Port Brownsville and Port Isabel
13 decreased, with Aransas increasing, and, notably, Jefferson
14 County had the highest percent of landings again this year.

15
16 For white shrimp and the SEAMAP yield per recruit summary, the
17 white shrimp catch off of Texas, between July and August, is
18 below the average again this year, with the July through August
19 catch in 2018 being less than it was even in 2017. The percent
20 change in the yield values at F equals one and M equals 0.5 and
21 0.28 are at zero and 10.4 percent, and this comes from the
22 Ingram and Pollack study for this year. That concludes my
23 presentation, and I'm happy to take your questions.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Any questions for Dr. Masi? All
26 right. Seeing none, the full report and the background
27 information that Dr. Masi summarized for you is also in your
28 briefing book, Tab D, Number 5(b) and 5(c), if you would like to
29 peruse that. Dr. Freeman, do you want to go through the section
30 of the AP report that talked about the Texas closure as well?
31 Okay.

32
33 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly, and so Dr. Masi presented a very
34 similar presentation to the Shrimp AP. Following that
35 presentation, the AP made a motion to continue the Texas closure
36 for the coming year, in conjunction with the State of Texas
37 closure, out to 200 miles for 2019, and that motion carried with
38 no opposition.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right, and, just looking at our action
41 guide, this is an action item for us. We have been presented
42 with the Texas closure information and the Shrimp AP
43 recommendation, and the committee is requested to take action
44 and determine if the Texas closure should continue in 2019. I
45 will open it up to the committee for discussion. Mr. Robinson.

46
47 **MR. LANCE ROBINSON:** Nothing really to discuss, but I am
48 certainly prepared to make a motion, if the time is right.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, sir.

3
4 **MR. ROBINSON:** Okay. I previously sent a version of the motion
5 to the staff, and so if we want to put that up. There we go.
6 **My motion would be to recommend to National Marine Fisheries**
7 **Service that federal waters be closed out to 200 miles to run**
8 **concurrent with the date that the State of Texas recommends for**
9 **the 2019 Texas shrimp closure in the Texas territorial sea.**

10
11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Do we have a second? It's
12 seconded by Mr. Diaz. Is there any discussion on the motion?
13 This is consistent with what the AP and the council has done in
14 the very many recent years. If there is no discussion, is there
15 any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.

16
17 That wraps up Agenda Item V. Next on the agenda is Final
18 Action, Shrimp Amendment 18, and I think the first thing that we
19 will do is go through our public comments, and so, Ms.
20 Muehlstein, if you are prepared.

21
22 **FINAL ACTION SHRIMP AMENDMENT 18: EVALUATION OF SHRIMP EFFORT**
23 **THRESHOLD REDUCTION IN THE AREA MONITORED FOR JUVENILE RED**
24 **SNAPPER BYCATCH**
25 **PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY**

26
27 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** All right. Thank you. We did host a
28 webinar public hearing on Shrimp Amendment 18. We hosted that
29 meeting right after the Shrimp Advisory Panel met, and we did
30 have four members of the public attend that webinar public
31 hearing. However, no comments were received at that meeting.

32
33 We did receive one written comment, and, sort of briefly, what
34 that written comment suggested was that a 60 percent target
35 reduction goal, which is Action 1, Preferred Option b,
36 represents a reasonable and thoughtful approach that conforms
37 with the statutory requirements to provide fair and equitable
38 sharing of red snapper recovery benefits among all sectors of
39 the fisheries, and it also supported the preferred option in
40 Action 2, which will facilitate a timely adoption and
41 implementation of any further modifications to the shrimp effort
42 threshold.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Ms. Muehlstein. All right. I'm
45 going to turn it over to Dr. Freeman to go through his
46 presentation with us, and, Dr. Freeman, there is two actions in
47 the document, and I guess, as we go through each action, you
48 will maybe summarize what the Shrimp AP had to say?

1
2 **REVIEW OF DOCUMENT**
3

4 **DR. FREEMAN:** That is correct. I will go through the two
5 actions of Shrimp 18, and then I believe Ms. Levy will discuss
6 the codified text, and so if we can pull open Shrimp 18. Action
7 1 is located on page 33 of the document.
8

9 Action 1 would adjust the target reduction goal for juvenile red
10 snapper mortality, and the council's current preferred option is
11 Option b, which would modify the target reduction goal from 67
12 percent less than the benchmark years of 2001 through 2003 to 60
13 percent.
14

15 The Shrimp AP, during their meeting, after discussing the
16 options in Action 1, the Shrimp AP noted that, while Option c
17 would provide additional days to fish, which would be an
18 economic benefit to the shrimp industry, in the spirit of
19 compromise, Preferred Option b would be acceptable, and so the
20 AP made a motion concurring that Action 1, Preferred Option b,
21 be the preferred. I will pause there, if there's any questions.
22 Otherwise, if there aren't any, I will move ahead to Action 2.
23

24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Boyd.
25

26 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** I do have a question, and it might be Dr.
27 Crabtree that could answer this. How is the level of bycatch
28 determined? Is it through observers, and how often are those
29 observations updated with observers?
30

31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.
32

33 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** Yes, they use bycatch data from the observer
34 program to determine bycatch, and then the effort level --
35 Remember that this benchmark is just measuring effort. That
36 comes from the shrimp ELB program that Rick Hart discussed, but
37 the bycatch estimates themselves come out of the observer
38 program.
39

40 **MR. BOYD:** The second part of my question was how often are
41 those observations updated, and we've got an explosion of red
42 snapper in the Gulf of Mexico, and I would assume that the level
43 of juvenile fish is also significant, and so, if we haven't had
44 an update in those observations, it would seem that maybe we're
45 using old -- I mean, if we are using old data in the models, how
46 do we update that, and how often?
47

48 **DR. CRABTREE:** As far as I know, Doug, the observer program, I

1 think, does annual reports, but that would normally be updated
2 when they do the red snapper stock assessments. That's the best
3 that I can do off the top of my head, Doug.

4
5 **MR. BOYD:** Thank you.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Are there further questions? I
8 will say that I was at that Shrimp AP meeting, and I was very
9 proud of my industry. I don't think there's too many sectors
10 that would look at something and say, you know, yes, that would
11 be better for us, that would give us more access, but we're
12 willing to compromise, and we understand there is other users of
13 the sea, and we'll take a middle-of-the-road approach here, and
14 so I was very proud of that group. They also recommended our
15 Preferred Option b, and so any further discussion? Dr. Freeman.

16
17 **DR. FREEMAN:** If we could move to Action 2, which is located on
18 page 40 of the document, the preferred option here is a singular
19 option, which is to revise the Shrimp FMP management measures
20 framework procedure to allow changes to the target reduction
21 goal for juvenile red snapper mortality through the standard
22 open framework documentation process.

23
24 Also, modify the abbreviated documentation process to allow
25 specification of an ABC recommended by the council's Scientific
26 and Statistical Committee, based on results of a new stock
27 assessment and using the ABC control rule.

28
29 Again, this was presented to the Shrimp AP. The Shrimp AP did
30 ask for clarification on the term "ABC" and the preferred rule
31 and clarification in terms of what it would apply to for the
32 shrimp stocks. We did add a sentence, if we can scroll down
33 just slightly on this page, just a little bit further.

34
35 Upon that request, in the second paragraph on the current page,
36 the third line, right behind where it says, "yellow highlight",
37 we did add a sentence there, for clarification, that the
38 specification of an ABC would apply only to the royal red shrimp
39 stock.

40
41 In addition, the Shrimp AP asked if allowing changes for the
42 target reduction goal for juvenile red snapper mortality,
43 through the open framework documentation process, could
44 potentially bring about both reductions as well as increases in
45 that target reduction goal more quickly, and council staff noted
46 that either type of change could occur. Following that, the
47 Shrimp AP as well noted that these changes would likely happen
48 through the amendment process, regardless of how quickly it may

1 happen.

2
3 The AP then made the following motion that the Shrimp AP
4 supports Action 2, provided that the AP has an opportunity to
5 provide input to the council before final action is taken, and,
6 again, that motion was carried with no opposition. I will pause
7 there, if there are any questions.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Freeman. Is there discussion
10 on Action 2? I think what spurred the Shrimp AP there is that
11 we're taking final action on this document in April, and they
12 saw it for the first time in March, and that's because they only
13 get to meet once a year, and so they were worried that, if we
14 went down a path that was a more streamlined process, they might
15 not even get to see a document before we took final action on
16 it.

17
18 They're okay with this document going final, but this is for
19 that procedure, where it may streamline the process, and they
20 were worried that their input might not have a chance to be
21 considered in future documents if it's a quicker process. Dr.
22 Crabtree.

23
24 **DR. CRABTREE:** This just allows you to move more quickly if you
25 choose to move more quickly, and it doesn't force you to move
26 more quickly, and you can always take however much time you feel
27 is necessary to have your APs review a measure or have public
28 comment, and that's up to you as a council, and so this will
29 enable you to do something, but it doesn't require that you move
30 more quickly.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Further discussion? All right.
33 Dr. Freeman.

34
35 **DR. FREEMAN:** There was one last comment or discussion regarding
36 the document from the Shrimp AP, and that was simply regarding
37 the purpose and need. That's located on page 3. The purpose of
38 the amendment, as a reminder, is to reduce the red snapper
39 bycatch reduction target in the federal Gulf shrimp fishery in
40 response to the latest Gulf red snapper stock assessment and
41 adjust the framework procedure.

42
43 There was just some discussion from the Shrimp AP in terms of
44 that they felt that they would have liked to have seen optimal
45 yield included in that purpose, but they made no motion
46 regarding that, and so that concludes the comments from the
47 Shrimp AP regarding Shrimp 18, and so I will pause there for any
48 further discussion.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I think a lot of that discussion actually was
3 brought forward by the Chairman of the Shrimp AP, Mr. Corky
4 Perret, which, if any of you have had the pleasure of serving
5 with Corky on the council, you will know that the purpose and
6 need is always something that he hones-in on makes sure that we
7 have correct, and we appreciate him continuing that, even as an
8 AP member, to make sure that we stay on track. Mr. Perret, was
9 there anything that you wanted to add?

10
11 **MR. CORKY PERRET:** Thank you very much. Every document that I
12 picked up on the table, I purposely looked at the purpose. I
13 went to the purpose and need, and there is a purpose and need
14 section, and it all pertains, in each one that I picked up,
15 something to do with optimum yield.

16
17 This is a shrimp amendment. Yet, the purpose, and we're all for
18 reducing the red snapper bycatch and all that stuff, but it just
19 seems to me that, in your purpose and need, you should have some
20 statement, like we do in all others, to optimize yield in the
21 shrimp fishery, as we do in other plans, and so that was all I
22 had in mind.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Let me ask a logistical
25 question. If we add optimum yield to that purpose and need
26 right now, does that slow our process down, if we add those
27 couple of words, Dr. Freeman?

28
29 **DR. FREEMAN:** If the committee would like, staff could attempt
30 to update the purpose and need and present that at Full Council,
31 possibly. Would that be suitable?

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Can we go ahead and take final action, and
34 would that be considered something that would be an editorial
35 license, and we'll approve that at Full Council?

36
37 **DR. FREEMAN:** I am getting nods from folks around the table, and
38 so I believe so.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. Well, we're going to continue on and
41 try and take final action on this document, and, if you will
42 bring us that verbiage at Full Council, we will either bless it
43 or not for you and update the codified text. Ms. Levy, would
44 you like to take us through the current codified text?

45
46 **CODIFIED TEXT**

47
48 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Sure. It's Tab D, Number 6(c). The one thing

1 that I wanted to point out, and there isn't much to the codified
2 text, and so the target reduction threshold isn't codified, and
3 so we're not doing anything with respect to that.

4
5 We are doing one thing unrelated to what's in the amendment,
6 which is just updating some language in the bycatch reduction
7 device requirement section, and so, a couple of years ago, you
8 may remember that we updated the bycatch reduction device
9 testing manual, and we changed some terminology, and so that
10 testing manual and the regulations still currently refer to the
11 regulations, but the testing manual doesn't.

12
13 Letter of authorization, which is abbreviated as LOA, but that's
14 confusing, because we also have a letter of acknowledgement,
15 which is for scientific research, and so we changed the term in
16 the testing manual to say "gear test authorization", but what we
17 didn't do was update the part of the regs that still refer to
18 LOAs, and so that's what we're doing here. We're just changing
19 the terminology in this section to be consistent with what's now
20 in the testing manual.

21
22 Then the only other regulatory change is in the adjustment of
23 management measures, which is on page 3 and 4, and so we're just
24 adding the last piece, which talks about target effort reduction
25 for juvenile red snapper mortality, that you can do that by
26 framework, which is what your Action 2 is in this amendment.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Ms. Levy. All right. Mr. Diaz.

29
30 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** If we're at that point, Madam Chair, I think Ms.
31 Roy has our standard language to approve this amendment. I
32 would like to make a motion to recommend to the council to
33 approve Shrimp Amendment 18, Evaluation of Shrimp Effort
34 Threshold Reduction in the area monitored for juvenile red
35 snapper bycatch and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of
36 Commerce for review and implementation and deem the codified
37 text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial
38 license to make the necessary changes in the document. The
39 Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the
40 codified text as necessary and appropriate.

41
42 That is my motion, with the caveat that, at Full Council, we're
43 going to review the purpose and need and just bless the language
44 that Dr. Freeman is going to work on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Is there a second for the motion?
47 It's seconded by Mr. Banks. Is there discussion on the motion?
48 **Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing no**

1 opposition, the motion carries, and we will see that verbiage at
2 Full Council.

3
4 Let's see. That is going to bring us to the Summary of the
5 Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting and Dr. Freeman.

6
7 **SUMMARY OF THE SHRIMP AP MEETING**

8
9 **DR. FREEMAN:** All right. I will give the admin staff just a
10 moment to open the Shrimp Advisory Panel summary. We can scroll
11 actually to the second page, and we have covered the portion on
12 the biological review of the Texas closure already, and the next
13 part was the review of the updated stock assessments, and Dr.
14 Hart presented a very similar presentation to the Shrimp AP.

15
16 The AP did inquire about including the Louisiana east shrimp
17 survey, similar to what is being done on the west side, and Dr.
18 Hart responded that the stock's response to the eastern surveys
19 was not as indicative as it is on the west side, according to
20 the model.

21
22 The next presentation was from NMFS SERO Permits Office, and
23 that was in response to questions from the AP's meeting in 2018.
24 Mr. McIntosh provided a presentation regarding renewal of
25 federal Gulf of Mexico shrimp permits using the web-based
26 Southeast Fisheries Permits System, and there was feedback from
27 the AP that the online system has a much greater ease of use as
28 compared to the previous paper form system.

29
30 The next item, if it's fine with the committee, I will wait,
31 because it pertains to the presentation that Dr. Travis will be
32 giving in just a few minutes, and so I think it will be more
33 appropriate to provide that feedback in their motion following
34 his presentation, and so, if we can scroll down to the fourth
35 page, under Other Business.

36
37 There were several items under Other Business. The first is Dr.
38 Simmons presented the monitoring and research priorities review
39 from 2015 to 2019, and she asked for recommendations for the
40 upcoming grant cycle. The AP suggested updating Section D,
41 Estimation of Bycatch, as well as Section E, Estimation of
42 Discards.

43
44 The AP also suggested research into whether Gulf restaurants
45 label seafood products as domestic or international and
46 quantification of restaurant labeling accuracy.

47
48 The next item under Other Business was a discussion on

1 artificial reef zones, and the AP discussed two artificial reef
2 zones being proposed off the coast of Mississippi, which would
3 be placed in areas of high shrimp effort and would negatively
4 impact the shrimp industry. They were concerned that there
5 seemed to be little to no public hearings or notices, and the AP
6 stated that the shrimp industry is losing fishing grounds due to
7 placement of certain artificial reefs.

8
9 They made a motion that the AP is concerned about the potential
10 placement of artificial reef zones in federal waters off of
11 Mississippi that are proposed in historically productive
12 shrimping grounds and that the council take action with the
13 appropriate federal agencies, including sending a letter to the
14 relevant federal authorities expressing their concerns, and this
15 motion carried with no opposition. Any questions? If not, I
16 will move ahead. Okay.

17
18 The next item under Other Business pertains to a new TED tag
19 system in Louisiana. The AP discussed the new Louisiana Sea
20 Grant TED tag program, which was implemented in 2019, and the
21 program provides a visual notification, i.e., a tag, that, on
22 that date, a Louisiana Sea Grant agent found everything, in
23 terms of the TEDs, to be in compliance on a vessel.

24
25 The tags have no authority with any regulatory or enforcement
26 body, but they are intended for marketing purposes, and this
27 idea came from Louisiana Sea Grant responding to an issue that
28 shrimpers had raised.

29
30 Other than the one item that I mentioned that pertains to Dr.
31 Travis's presentation that will come in just a few moments, that
32 summarizes the Shrimp AP meeting, if any members have any
33 questions or comments.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Are there questions or comments?
36 All right. There was a motion from the Shrimp AP to write a
37 letter regarding those artificial reef zones, and I'm not sure
38 if a letter is really the only way to approach that and deal
39 with that. I think that, honestly, the bulk of their concerns
40 revolve -- This is a Corps of Engineers permit. It's from the
41 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

42
43 I think the bulk of their concerns just stem from the process
44 that the Corps of Engineers follows in order to issue those
45 permits, and it's a body that really doesn't interact with
46 fisheries, or fishermen. Yes, they have a consultation with
47 NMFS for endangered species and EFH, but they really don't have
48 a process that reaches out to the fishing community, and so I

1 think the shrimp industry -- As you know, as a federal fleet, we
2 cover the entire Gulf of Mexico, right, and we shrimp from Texas
3 all the way to Key West.

4
5 Sometimes it is difficult to reach out to us, because, even
6 though it may be in federal waters in one area of the Gulf,
7 there are going to be shrimpers from Texas and Florida and
8 everywhere else that are fishing there and using that piece of
9 bottom.

10
11 I think what they really want to see is some action to loop the
12 Corps of Engineers into the body that regulates fisheries in the
13 federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and that's this council,
14 and I think one way to do that is the same way that we consult
15 with other items that we don't approve, like exempted fishing
16 permits and things of that nature, where, although we will not
17 approve that, and that will be approved by NMFS, it is presented
18 to us, and we're allowed to give some feedback from all the
19 different user groups that it may affect and have some feedback
20 there, and this is the open and transparent meeting that the
21 fishermen attend and listen to and where they go to see what
22 regulations in federal waters are going to impact them, and so I
23 think, really, that was the crux of what the AP wants to see.
24 Now, how we accomplish that with the Corps, I'm not sure. Mr.
25 Anson.

26
27 **MR. ANSON:** Leann, I tend to agree with you that it's a little
28 bit -- It's not as transparent, I guess, the Corps' process, but
29 the Corps has a process, and they're following their mandated
30 requirements for notification of the public and such.

31
32 We could certainly request them to come and present, but that's
33 kind of outside of the process that they are mandated to do, and
34 I can just say that they are somewhat short-staffed, as other
35 federal agencies are, and that this would just be one more thing
36 that they would have to do, and I don't know how that will be
37 received, but I guess I would just encourage folks that they
38 have an opportunity to kind of register and get notices through
39 the Corps, and they can receive notices for all sorts of permits
40 related to the Corps that they review, and they can be notified
41 that way.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks.

44
45 **MR. BANKS:** I was just curious as to what the process is in some
46 of the other states of notifying the fishing community when
47 you're getting ready to do these projects. When we go through,
48 in Louisiana, to build artificial reefs, we get in front of our

1 Shrimp Task Force, and we have an artificial reef council, and
2 we have -- I wouldn't call it a dock day, but we go to the docks
3 and talk to shrimpers about these issues, and we certainly don't
4 always agree, and they don't necessarily always like for us to
5 take up certain bottom, but is there no process like that in
6 other states, which is leading to this consternation from the
7 shrimping community, because I am not so sure that trying to
8 drag the Corps in here to every meeting is going to be
9 effective, nor successful, and so I'm just wondering if there's
10 another way that we can skin the cat of your concerns.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I think this permit was applied for back in
13 June, and the Corps had a thirty-day window to submit comments,
14 but nobody in my industry really knew that this permit was out
15 there, and so, yes, that's kind of our frustration, but I'm not
16 sure what each state does, but thank you for the input on yours.
17 That is a nice model to use as a template. Dr. Crabtree.

18
19 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think there are a few permits at issue with
20 respect to these projects. There is a permit expanding some of
21 the sites, and then there is also a permit for deployment of
22 materials, and the Corps has put out, as far as I know, at least
23 two public notices, one on June 8 and one on December 11, and
24 there were written public comment periods on that, but I don't
25 believe they finalized any of this.

26
27 They have to follow NEPA, the same as we do, and they are doing
28 an environmental assessment on all of this, and they will
29 consult with my office on Endangered Species Act implications of
30 this, and we probably will be working on that over the course of
31 the summer. It may be a biological opinion, and that's not
32 clear to me yet, and it will depend on the description of the
33 types of materials that are going out.

34
35 It seems to me that you have a couple of options here. One, you
36 could write a letter to the Corps and provide them your comments
37 on this, if you chose to, and then they could evaluate those
38 comments as part of their NEPA process, or, two, if you wanted
39 to, you could ask someone from the Corps to attend the meeting
40 and address some of your concerns, either way.

41
42 I have spoken to the Corps about some of these issues, and
43 they're aware of their concerns from the shrimp industry, and I
44 think they have gotten some letters from the shrimp industry on
45 it. At any rate, they indicated to me that, if you ask someone
46 from the Corps to attend, they would probably be willing to do
47 that, and so I think those are your two avenues, a written
48 comment or invite them to come to -- I guess the next meeting is

1 in Destin, and it's really up to you as to how you want to
2 proceed.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Diaz.

5

6 **MR. DIAZ:** Just a couple of comments. First, to your general
7 comment, Leann. When I was the Chair of the Habitat Committee,
8 a couple of times, I had brought up to the committee, if we
9 wanted to get more active and maybe have staff kind of preview
10 what projects is going on in the Gulf and bring us projects to
11 look at, and there was a small amount of discussion, but,
12 ultimately, the committee never decided to take that step, and
13 so that's one way we could look at kind of seeing what's coming
14 down the pipe, if we wanted to try to get more proactive.

15

16 I think the council used to be more proactive, years ago, but,
17 over time, we have been less proactive, and there is probably a
18 lot of reasons for that. I don't think I could name them now,
19 but, with the current workload -- I mean, I don't know what is
20 the breaking point of when we say that we can't take on any
21 more, but I'm not using that as an excuse, but that is one thing
22 to potentially consider.

23

24 With this, I mean, I think we've got a very good Shrimp AP. I
25 think all of our APs are good, but we've got to be careful about
26 writing letters on a motion like this, because this is something
27 that came up to the Shrimp AP, but, had this same project come
28 before one of our other APs, I am not sure that it wouldn't have
29 been an opposite outcome. If we were to send -- If the Reef
30 Fish AP had brought this up, or the Red Snapper Private Angling
31 AP, or the Red Snapper IFQ AP, they might be urging us to write
32 a letter of support.

33

34 It's kind of a point-of-view issue there, but I don't say that
35 to diminish the Shrimp AP's motion. If I was a fisherman and I
36 was on the Shrimp AP, I think I would have voted for this motion
37 too, and I just bring that out, that we've got to be careful
38 when we consider about what stance the council would take,
39 because I do think there's a wide range of opinions on something
40 like this. That's all for now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

41

42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks.

43

44 **MR. BANKS:** Just going back to the issue of bringing the Corps
45 in here, I guess we could -- Like Roy suggested, we could bring
46 them in, and they could give us a presentation, but I don't
47 think they're going to tell us anything that we don't already
48 know.

1
2 They don't consult with the shrimp industry in a situation like
3 that, other than through a public notice process, and I don't
4 think that bringing them in here is going to get them to change
5 that process, and so I just feel like maybe this issue needs to
6 be handled in a different manner, and I don't know exactly how
7 to deal with it, but your concerns are noted.

8
9 We hear the same things in Louisiana from the shrimping
10 community. We had a topic at our Shrimp Task Force just here
11 recently about artificial reefs and their concerns over some of
12 our proposed artificial reefs, and we're trying to address
13 maintaining and rebuilding juvenile red snapper habitat in our
14 nearshore areas, generally within state waters, and they have a
15 lot of concerns over that, and so trying to help one species and
16 not hurt another industry is a difficult balance, but I just
17 don't see how bringing the Corps in for a presentation is going
18 to give us anything we don't already know.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

21
22 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, that's up to you, but, I mean, the Corps
23 makes a determination in their notice, where they say our
24 initial determination is that the proposed action would not have
25 a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally-managed
26 fisheries.

27
28 The Corps recognizes, in this, that they have to make
29 determinations about the impact on federally-managed fisheries,
30 and that's certainly something that you have a great deal of
31 expertise on, and, arguably, far more expertise than that Army
32 Corps does, and so I put that out there for you to consider.

33
34 The other thing I would say is more of a high-level comment
35 about artificial reef programs in general. I would encourage
36 you to become much more engaged and proactive in artificial reef
37 programs. They do have significant impacts on the ecosystem and
38 the environment, on catch rates, season lengths, a whole host of
39 things, and I don't have any doubt that, if you deploy large
40 numbers of artificial reefs in the waters off of Mississippi,
41 the red snapper catch rates will go up considerably, and that's
42 going to have an impact on how long Mississippi's season is, and
43 that's going to ultimately come back before you with issues with
44 respect to state-by-state allocations for red snapper.

45
46 The trouble that I see with artificial reef programs, at the
47 moment, is there is really no central body that is trying to
48 coordinate those and determine how do these reef programs fit

1 into rebuilding red snapper and how do they fit into our overall
2 fishery management plan, and it's your fishery management plan,
3 and a lot of this is going on out in federal waters.

4
5 In my view, it's a shortcoming of the Magnuson Act that probably
6 ought to be addressed, but I think there is a real need to think
7 through artificial reef programs. What are we trying to
8 accomplish with them, and how many do we need?

9
10 I don't think anybody really knows how many artificial reefs we
11 ought to have, but it just seems like the more the better, but I
12 think they do have a whole host of very different impacts, and,
13 often times, the impacts of these programs may be contrary to
14 the objectives that you lay out in your management plan, and so
15 I think there is a need for a more comprehensive look at how all
16 of this fits together, and it does seem, to me, that you, as the
17 trustees of the fishery management plan, have a real role to
18 play in that.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any further discussion? All
21 right. Dale, I liked your idea. I think that being more
22 proactive in projects that are upcoming, and the council used to
23 do that, and I think that, when you draw lines in federal
24 waters, and you shut one fishery out of that area, that it is
25 something that the council should take a look at, if it's in
26 federal waters.

27
28 I don't know that the Corps needs to come and necessarily get
29 into the details of this specific permit that is in front of
30 them, but I would most definitely like to have the Corps of
31 Engineers come to a future meeting, in June, if time allows, and
32 present on their process and how -- Let us engage with them on
33 how that affects us and the different fisheries that we have,
34 good or bad or otherwise, and them to have a real good
35 understanding of what we manage here and how they affect us and
36 our fishermen and make sure that they understand that we expect
37 to be in a feedback loop at some point and that there was an act
38 that was put in place so that federal waters would be regulated
39 by this body, when it comes to fisheries and the species under
40 our purview, because we're seen as a diverse group that has
41 expertise in various backgrounds, and is intimately familiar
42 with the fishermen and being on the water in those different
43 fisheries, and I don't think that should be overlooked, and so I
44 would like to see the Corps invited in June, if possible, to
45 have that discussion and see what we can do about having better
46 engagement with them on these applications that come before
47 them. Dr. Frazer.

48

1 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** I think, if you want to do that, or if that's
2 the will of the committee, we probably need a motion here for
3 that purpose.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Does anybody else want to make a
6 motion? If not, I will make it. **The motion would be to invite**
7 **the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to an upcoming Gulf Council**
8 **meeting to discuss the impacts and overlaps of the permits which**
9 **come before the Corps for approval and management of fisheries**
10 **in federal waters.** That is my motion. Is there a second for
11 the motion? It's seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Is there any further
12 discussion on the motion? Mr. Banks.

13
14 **MR. BANKS:** So this would be a one-time invite that they would
15 just come and talk to us, or are we asking them to come before
16 us anytime they have a permit out there? That is my concern, is
17 that it sounds like this will be a recurring issue, and I don't
18 know that we're going to be able to get them here every time.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Diaz.

21
22 **MR. DIAZ:** That's what I am trying to get clear in my mind, and
23 so this particular presentation has nothing to do with the
24 Mississippi permit, but this is about their process and more or
25 less just educating us on the Corps process, and it's general in
26 nature?

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, this is a one-time invitation for them
29 to come and talk about their process and let us talk to them
30 about how their process influences things that we do and ways
31 that maybe they could do a better job of reaching out to our
32 constituents here. Dr. Crabtree.

33
34 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think you could talk to the Corps about the
35 types of things that you would be focused on and interested in
36 and maybe get on their mailing list, so the Corps notifies you
37 of what is happening, and then I think you could discuss with
38 the Corps about the appropriate way for you to provide input on
39 some types of projects, and I think that would all be
40 productive.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any further discussion? Mr.
43 Anson.

44
45 **MR. ANSON:** I guess I don't necessarily have a problem of
46 someone from the Corps coming and describing the process and
47 such, but I would like for the motion to morph into a letter
48 that would be very explicit as to what it is that they would be

1 coming to the council meeting to present, and so discuss the
2 impacts and overlaps of the permits which come before the Corps.

3
4 First of all, it's permit applications, and the people are
5 applying, and then they develop a permit if it gets approved,
6 and so I'm just wondering what the "impacts and overlaps" would
7 be as a description in a potential letter, if this motion were
8 to be approved, and can you answer that, Leann?

9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Well, I think it's pretty much the discussion
11 that we just had around this table. I mean, there's a lot of
12 different impacts. It has positive impacts for some fisheries
13 and negative impacts for others, and the difference in their
14 process and our process for -- So they are essentially having
15 some regulatory function in federal waters of the Gulf of
16 Mexico, and we have a function of regulating federal waters, and
17 there is some overlap, especially if it's a permit that creates
18 a zone that excludes other fishermen, and just talk about the
19 details of that and see how they are analyzing it versus how we
20 are analyzing those impacts, because, from what I have read,
21 their impacts analysis is very different, and much more
22 abbreviated, with very little background information on where
23 the statistics and information come from than are the documents
24 that are presented to us.

25
26 Their documents don't seem to have any alternatives, a range of
27 options, and it's this or nothing, and so I think that that
28 would be a good discussion to have with them and the impacts
29 that they may not realize, from a fisheries standpoint, that
30 happen from these permit applications. I think it's a
31 discussion to have.

32
33 I don't want to pigeonhole what the discussion is going to be in
34 the letter. I think it should be somewhat general, but I think
35 you could use the minutes from this discussion to give them some
36 ideas and bullet points, if you wanted to. Dr. Frazer.

37
38 **DR. FRAZER:** I think that's probably, in my view anyway, enough
39 information for us to put together a letter to the Corps.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Is there any further discussion
42 on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to the**
43 **motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries.** Dr. Freeman,
44 was that the end of your report?

45
46 **DR. FREEMAN:** This concludes the AP report, and so I believe
47 that next would be the presentation from Dr. Travis.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay, and our schedule is from 9:00 to 10:00,
2 and we're at 10:30, and so I'm going to turn it over to Dr.
3 Frazer to tell us how he wants to proceed.

4
5 **DR. FRAZER:** I think what we'll do is we'll go ahead with that
6 presentation, and then, if it's okay with Mr. Boyd, we might
7 move the Law Enforcement to Full Council.

8
9 **MR. BOYD:** That's exactly what I was going to recommend.

10
11 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right, and so, Dr. Travis, are you still
14 with us, sir?

15
16 **DR. MICHAEL TRAVIS:** I am still with you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** You're a patient man. Go ahead. The floor
19 is yours.

20
21 **PRESENTATION ON UNIQUE IDENTIFIER AND RELATED ISSUES IN THE GULF**
22 **SHRIMP FISHERY DATA**

23
24 **DR. TRAVIS:** Thank you very much. Again, I want to apologize,
25 like others, that I could not be there in person for this
26 presentation, but circumstances didn't allow for that, and this
27 is sort of a follow-up presentation on Dave Gloeckner's chat on
28 Monday regarding unique identifiers, except, in this case -- His
29 presentation was specifically about unique trip identifiers, and
30 this presentation talk about unique identifiers more broadly,
31 and particularly with respect to the Gulf shrimp fishery data
32 and some related issues to those unique identifiers.

33
34 This is just a little bit of background legal information that
35 comes out of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, specifically out of
36 Section 401, and I just wanted to make sure that the council is
37 aware of this material, and this section deals with the
38 standardized fishing vessel registration information management
39 system, and this was incorporated into Magnuson in the 2007
40 reauthorization, and I'm going to read through much of this,
41 just because I think this is good background information.

42
43 According to Magnuson, it says the Secretary shall, in
44 cooperation with the Secretary of the department in which the
45 Coast Guard is operating, the states, the councils, and Marine
46 Fisheries Commissions, develop recommendations for
47 implementation of a standardized fishing vessel registration and
48 information management system on a regional basis, and the

1 proposed registration system should, at a minimum, obtain the
2 following information for each fishing vessel: the name and
3 official number or other identification, together with the name
4 and address of the owner or operator or both; and then it's a
5 variety of vessel characteristics as well, such as gross
6 tonnage, vessel capacity, type and quantity of fishing gear, et
7 cetera. Then, thirdly, identification (by species, gear type,
8 geographic area of operations, and season) of the fisheries in
9 which the fishing vessel participates. This is not new. This
10 has been around for about twelve years now.

11
12 That provides background information for what I want to discuss
13 here, which are the unique identifier and related issues that we
14 have encountered in the Gulf shrimp fishery data, and I'm going
15 to give you some examples of the most critical issues that we
16 have encountered in the last several years in the data, and so
17 we started seeing these issues when we were working on the
18 analyses for Amendment 17B and a TED rule covering skimmer trawl
19 vessels in the Southeast that the agency has been working on.

20
21 This deals with issues discovered in the data for 2011 to 2014,
22 but it seems to be -- The issues seem to be getting
23 progressively worse during those years, and then certainly in
24 years thereafter, and, to give you an example of the critical
25 issues from the perspective of economic and social analysis, we
26 found, in the 2011 to 2014 data, that there were about 1,200
27 vessel IDs that we could not verify whether they were valid or
28 not based on cross-referencing the landings data with the Coast
29 Guard and the state boat registration or license data.

30
31 In years past, some of our data managers have referred to these
32 as ghost vessels, because they don't -- If they are a Coast-
33 Guard-documented vessel, allegedly the IDs don't exist,
34 according to the Coast Guard, and they also -- Some of these IDs
35 we know are wrong, because they don't have the proper structure
36 for a Coast-Guard-documented vessel or a state-registered boat.

37
38 This becomes a problem, because now we cannot -- We cannot
39 uniquely identify vessels, and that is one of the critical
40 pieces of information for economic analysis, because a vessel is
41 generally used as a proxy for a business or a firm, and, when
42 you don't know how many businesses or firms are in your
43 industry, and you also can't determine exactly how much they are
44 producing and the value of what they are producing, we cannot
45 provide very useful information to the council when they are
46 making decisions.

47
48 This same issue comes up with respect to dealers and fishermen

1 and businesses, where we do not have unique identifiers for
2 dealers and fishermen and businesses that operate across
3 multiple states, because they do that just like vessels will
4 land in multiple states. Dealers will sometimes operate in
5 multiple states, and fishing businesses also operate in multiple
6 states.

7
8 Unfortunately, what happens is each state assigns their own ID
9 to that particular entity, but it's a different ID across every
10 state, and, as I said, this creates problems when we're trying
11 to do our analyses, and that's true with regard to permitted
12 vessels, in terms of determining whether they are active, and
13 federally-permitted vessels as well.

14
15 We have also found some issues with the shrimp size data, where
16 the shrimp size data is often missing or invalid, and so, at
17 times, we have been finding that we get odd results, such as
18 larger size shrimp, say in the ten to fifteen count, being of a
19 lower price than a forty-one to fifty count shrimp, and I'm sure
20 that everyone in the room knows as well as I do that that's not
21 likely an accurate result.

22
23 These issues came up again more recently when we were doing the
24 analysis for Amendment 18, and simply we don't trust the data
25 after 2014. The problems have simply gotten so bad that we
26 decided, for Amendment 18 purposes, to stick with the 2011 to
27 2014 data that we used for 17A and 17B purposes. This also came
28 up when we attempted to start working on an economic analysis of
29 the Texas closure, per the council's two requests that they sent
30 us, and it has also affected our ability to generate the annual
31 economic reports, which we have been doing for years, but,
32 again, those reports have not continued after 2014, because of
33 these issues.

34
35 One other point that I want to make on the vessel IDs is we have
36 had a problem in certain states with the boats sometimes --
37 Apparently some boats have dual registration, or documentation,
38 numbers, where they have both the Coast Guard number and a state
39 boat registration number, and, depending on the dealer, they
40 will give us one or the other, but it's not consistently the
41 same number over time, and our permits are based on a Coast
42 Guard number, if they have one, and so that creates an issue
43 with regard to our ability to link landings data to our permits
44 data.

45
46 I want to go back and talk about the history of how the Gulf
47 shrimp landings data has been put together, and so, prior to
48 2002, the Gulf shrimp landings data was completely collected by

1 port agents, and so the port agents were going out and getting
2 this data directly from the dealers across the Gulf. Starting
3 in 2002, we started making use of trip ticket data being
4 collected by Louisiana and Alabama, and so that data, in effect,
5 replaced the data that had been previously collected by the port
6 agents.

7
8 Then, later on, we started using, and I believe it was in 2006,
9 we started using Florida's trip ticket data, again rather than
10 having the port agents go out and collect that data directly.
11 Mississippi came in, and we started using their trip ticket
12 data, in 2015, and we are still not using the Texas trip ticket
13 data, because our data managers still have concerns with the
14 accuracy of the Texas trip ticket data, at least with respect to
15 the food shrimp fishery.

16
17 Anyway, when we started bringing in the trip ticket data, what
18 our staff would do is we would find errors, look for potential
19 errors, and then suggest potential corrections back to the state
20 data managers, and they would work with the dealers to try to
21 get the errors fixed, because, of course, NMFS doesn't have the
22 ability to correct the raw trip ticket data.

23
24 The NMFS port agents were also involved in these attempts to
25 correct the data, particularly in Florida, but one of the
26 comments that we would get back from our agents is they didn't
27 really have the ability to force the dealers to fix the errors,
28 because we don't have a federal dealer permit requirement in the
29 Gulf shrimp fishery, and so, if they didn't want to cooperate,
30 they didn't have to.

31
32 Now, this cooperative approach seemed to be pretty successful
33 when the dealers and the data managers were all being
34 cooperative, but, when that wasn't happening, then the
35 cooperative approach was not successful in getting these errors
36 fixed, and sometimes what would happen, as a result, is you
37 would end up getting different data, different estimates,
38 depending on who you got the data from, and so, for example,
39 NMFS would have one set of data that would give you one set of
40 estimates, and Gulf States would have a different set of data to
41 give you a different set of estimates, and then, if you go to
42 individual states, you would get a third version of the data and
43 the estimates, and so that was not a good situation.

44
45 Gulf States was very aware of the issue, and those of us who
46 were discussing the issues back at the time said, hey, this ad
47 hoc approach is not the most efficient way to deal with fixing
48 these data errors, and it's dependent on consistent and regular

1 cooperation from all the people who work with the data.

2
3 A project was developed by the Gulf States Commission to build
4 the database that would house all the state and Coast Guard
5 license and registration data for cross-referencing and data
6 quality assurance, quality checking, purposes.

7
8 I am just providing sort of a broad overview of this here, and I
9 will defer to Dave Donaldson on the details of this project, but
10 the bottom line is that the project was not completed,
11 unfortunately, because some of the state fisheries agencies were
12 not able to provide all of the requested data, whether that be
13 license data or boat registration data. They are providing the
14 trip ticket data, but just they weren't able to provide the
15 license and registration data in certain cases, and I will let
16 the states speak for themselves, in terms of what data they were
17 able or not able to provide and why.

18
19 Anyway, the point is that the Gulf States Commission currently
20 does not have the ability to QA/QC the vessel, dealer, or
21 fisherman business identifiers in the trip ticket data, and, as
22 I previously said, NMFS doesn't have that ability either, and
23 so, at this point, I think we concluded that the cooperative
24 approach has really broken down, and our ability to QA/QC the
25 identifiers in the trip ticket data continue to be a challenge,
26 and, as I said, the problems seem to be worsening over time.

27
28 So, the implications for management, from the council's
29 perspective, this is really only an issue for two fisheries, and
30 that would be predominantly shrimp and, to a lesser extent, the
31 commercial sector of the red drum fishery, because those are the
32 only federally-managed fisheries in the Gulf that the council
33 and NMFS rely on state trip ticket data for fishery-dependent
34 data.

35
36 Again, Amendment 18, unfortunately, relies on data prior to
37 2015, rather than the more recent years of data, and that's not
38 particularly desirable, because the data from older years
39 probably is not indicative of current economic circumstances in
40 the fishery, and, as I said, it has also affected our ability to
41 be responsive to the council's request to do an economic
42 analysis of their Texas closure and potential modifications to
43 that policy.

44
45 We really need these problems to be resolved before we can
46 proceed with that analysis, and I would also mention that
47 inaccurate or missing size data doesn't just affect the economic
48 analysis, but it also reduces the accuracy of our stock

1 assessments, and Rick Hart can speak more to that issue.

2
3 Some of these issues also apply to the commercial sector of the
4 red drum fishery, and, this, have implications for Red Drum
5 Amendment 5, which we did start working on, and will start
6 working on again soon, and this issue has also been brought up
7 with enforcement, and both NMFS Enforcement and the Coast Guard
8 have indicated that the lack of a comprehensive database
9 regarding fishery participants hampers their enforcement
10 efforts.

11
12 What can the council do to help us, and help themselves, in
13 terms of getting more accurate data to inform their decisions?
14 One of the things that we would ask is that the council consider
15 including Gulf shrimp dealers in the existing federal dealer
16 permit and the electronic reporting requirements.

17
18 If you will recall, there were discussions, back when the so-
19 called GSAD, Gulf and South Atlantic Dealer, permit was created,
20 and there were discussions about whether shrimp would be
21 included, and the decision at the time, which I believe was back
22 in 2014, was not to include shrimp in the GSAD permit
23 requirement, in part because the Permits Office did not feel
24 that they had the capacity to handle several hundred additional
25 permits from the Gulf, along with a few hundred other dealer
26 permits from the South Atlantic, and so Gulf shrimp was left out
27 of the dealer permit requirement, and, of course, if there is no
28 federal dealer permit requirement, they can't be included under
29 the federal dealer electronic reporting requirements either.

30
31 Recent discussions with our Permits Office suggest that, due to
32 the shift to the online renewal system, they feel like they
33 would be in a better position, starting next year, to handle
34 additional permits by including Gulf shrimp dealers in the GSAD
35 permit requirement.

36
37 The best guess is that we're talking about around 500, I would
38 guess at this point, and one point that I want to make is this
39 would only pull in additional dealers who do not already have a
40 GSAD permit, because they are also finfish buyers, and so some
41 of the Gulf shrimp dealers are already part of the system, the
42 electronic reporting system, because they have the GSAD permit
43 to buy finfish.

44
45 The other advantage would be that we would get the data more
46 quickly. As Rick Hart can attest to, we generally have to wait
47 several months before we get final data to use for the various
48 assessments and analyses that he does, and we have also received

1 some concerns from the industry about the accuracy of the
2 monthly Gulf shrimp statistics reports.

3
4 They come out basically a month after the fact, and they're the
5 closest thing that we have to real-time reporting for the Gulf
6 shrimp fishery. We think that, by including them in the
7 electronic reporting system, that it would enhance the accuracy
8 of those reports and be responsive to the concerns we've been
9 hearing from the industry.

10
11 In addition, we would ask, in coordination with Gulf States and
12 the agency, to work to identify and fill data gaps, ensure
13 greater consistency in the data, particularly with regard to
14 shrimp size, and just generally improve the QA/QC of the data.
15 We would also encourage more and better use of the federal and
16 state port agents in the QA/QC process, when feasible, noting we
17 don't have as many agents now as we did in the past, and we
18 would, lastly, encourage FIN to move towards a more modernized
19 data management system. We think that will improve the accuracy
20 and the timeliness and the utility of the shrimp fishery data,
21 and that's it. Any questions?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any questions for Dr. Travis? I
24 think you're in the clear, Dr. Travis. You were very thorough.
25 Thank you, sir. We appreciate it.

26
27 **DR. TRAVIS:** You're welcome.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Freeman, does that conclude our business?

30
31 **DR. FREEMAN:** Almost. As I mentioned, there was one motion from
32 the Shrimp AP regarding Dr. Travis's presentation, and so I will
33 share that, and then I promise that's it. They had a motion to
34 have the Science Center develop a presentation on ACCSP, which
35 is the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, data
36 reporting and sharing mechanisms relative to the Gulf shrimp
37 industry and that the Gulf Council convene a shrimp data
38 workshop with the appropriate stakeholders represented, and that
39 motion carried with no opposition.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any feedback from the group?
42 We're kind of over time, and so I think, if anybody has any
43 feedback -- You know, this was a presentation that was actually
44 going to be on our Data Collection agenda, and so I think,
45 either during this committee report or Data Collection, if you
46 have any feedback, please just bring it up then. Thanks.

47
48 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 3, 2019.)