

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 MACKEREL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4
5 Webinar

6
7 OCTOBER 27, 2020

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

10 Robin Riechers.....Texas
11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
13 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
14 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS
15 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
16 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
17 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
18 John Sanchez.....Florida
19 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
20 Troy Williamson.....Texas

21
22 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

23 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
24 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
25 Tom Frazer.....Florida
26 Lt. Nicholas Giancola.....USCG
27 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
28 Bob Shipp.....Alabama
29 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
30 Greg Stunz.....Texas

31
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1 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
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3

4 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

5 Shannon Calay.....SEFSC

6 Peter Hood.....NMFS

7 Tim Griner.....SAFMC

8 Phil Mickle.....MS

9 Clay Porch.....SEFSC

10 Joe Powers.....GMFMC SSC

11 Chris Schieble.....LA

12

13

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[PAGE 28](#): Motion to direct staff to start a plan amendment to look at sector allocations as well as adjust catch limits for Gulf king mackerel. [The motion carried on page 37.](#)

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1 The Mackerel Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened via webinar on Tuesday afternoon,
3 October 27, 2020, and was called to order by Chairman Robin
4 Riechers.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN ROBIN RIECHERS:** We'll call the Mackerel Management
11 Committee to order, and we'll note the time differential from
12 what was published. We're calling it to order on Tuesday,
13 October 27, at approximately 12:45 Central Standard Time.

14
15 With that, everyone take a look at C-1, and that is the agenda,
16 and do we have any changes, or suggested changes, or additions
17 to the agenda? I will give everybody a chance to get a hand up
18 if they have anything, and, if not -- I am just giving everybody
19 a moment here. I don't see any hands up. I will ask it this
20 way. Does anyone have any objections to adopting the agenda as
21 written? If they do, that's when they can pop their hand up and
22 make the suggested change. If not, the agenda then will be
23 adopted as written.

24
25 Next, you can turn your attention to Tab C-2, regarding the 2020
26 minutes from the Mackerel Committee in September. Do we have
27 any additions or deletions or corrections to the minutes? I
28 will give everyone a moment, again. At this point I am not
29 seeing any hands up, and/or any objection, and so we'll phrase
30 it the same way. Are there any objections to approving the
31 minutes as written? If we don't see any hands come up, then we
32 will assume the minutes are approved as written as well. All
33 right. That takes us to Action Guide and Next Steps, Tab C,
34 Number 3. Dr. Mendez-Ferrer, please.

35
36 **DR. NATASHA MENDEZ-FERRER:** I will go through all the items in
37 the Action Guide right now, and so the first item, Agenda Item
38 Number IV, would be the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Landings
39 Update, where staff will provide an update on the status of CMP
40 landings relative to the ACLs, and so this is for information
41 only, and no action is required of the committee.

42
43 Following will be Agenda Item Number V, which is the Review of
44 the SEDAR 38 Update, Gulf of Mexico Migratory King Mackerel
45 Stock Assessment, and so we'll have Dr. Powers summarize the
46 data, model results, and the projections resulting from the
47 update assessment for SEDAR 38. Dr. Powers will also review the
48 SSC's deliberations and review of the assessment, including the

1 projections and recommendations for the OFL and the ABC.

2
3 The projections and catch level recommendations for this update
4 assessment as using recreational data, which has been adjusted
5 to MRIP-FES. Following, council staff will summarize the
6 results from the Something's Fishy tool, and so the committee
7 should review the material that is presented and consider
8 whether the current catch limits for king mackerel should be
9 revised, in light of the update assessment and the SSC
10 recommendations.

11
12 Then you also see the stock assessment executive summary, and
13 this is the document which summarizes the results of the stock
14 assessment, and it's supposed to be a more precise way to share
15 this information with the general public, and so, if you have
16 any recommendations for this type of document, then this is the
17 opportunity for the committee to give feedback.

18
19 Then, in response to the request from the September 2020 council
20 meeting, council staff will present the king mackerel
21 recreational quotas adjusted to MRIP-FES, and so the committee
22 should review and provide recommendations, as appropriate.

23
24 Then Agenda Item Number VI, which would be the Gulf of Mexico
25 Migratory Group Cobia Draft Options Presentation, where council
26 staff will present joint management measures to end overfishing
27 of Gulf cobia, and the options include updating the Gulf cobia
28 OFL, ABC, and ACL, to incorporate the adjustment of the
29 recreational catch to the MRIP-FES.

30
31 Additional management measures for consideration include
32 modification of bag limits, vessel limits, and size limits, and
33 this is based on the motion from the September 2020 meeting.
34 Since cobia, Gulf cobia, is jointly managed with the South
35 Atlantic Fishery Management Council, staff will also present
36 options to update the CMP framework procedures to clarify the
37 language, which outlines the responsibilities for each council.
38 The committee is to review the draft options and provide
39 guidance on the range of alternatives to include in what we'll
40 be calling CMP Amendment 32.

41
42 Then, following the discussions during this item, a draft
43 document will be developed, based on the committee's
44 recommendations, and it is planned to be presented during the
45 January 2021 council meeting. Lastly, if we have time, we can
46 have other business, which could be considered. Thank you.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you. Next, that takes us into our

1 Coastal Migratory Pelagics Landings Update, Tab C-4. It just
2 indicates SERO on my agenda, and so I'm not certain who is
3 taking the lead on that.

4
5 **COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS LANDINGS UPDATE**
6

7 **MR. PETER HOOD:** Basically, remember that, with king mackerel,
8 the fishing year for the Southern and Western Zones goes from
9 July 1 to June 30, and the Northern Zone is from October 1
10 through September 30, and so, for 2020-2021, we just have
11 landings from July 1 for the Western Zone and Southern Zone, and
12 you can see about 600,000 pounds for the Western Zone and only
13 2,000 pounds from the Southern Zone, but that usually comes in
14 later.

15
16 Then, because the fishing year started on October 1, and these
17 landings go back to October 5, we haven't had a chance to pick
18 up anything in the Northern Zone, and you can see that they're
19 at 27.8 percent of the ACL, and you can see, last year, in the
20 table below, nearly all the ACL was caught, 98.7 percent, and
21 then we haven't got to the gillnet season that happened in
22 January, and so we didn't have anything -- We don't have
23 anything yet for 2020 to 2021, but, in the previous year, 98.4
24 percent were landed.

25
26 If we scroll down to king mackerel recreational, we don't have
27 the 2020 to 2021 landings yet, and we don't have any wave
28 estimates, and remember that there are the discussion points
29 that Dr. Cody made yesterday about getting recreational
30 information, and there are some landings, but we decided that
31 there really wasn't enough to really be informative for this
32 year, and so, for 2019 to 2020, 16.3 percent of the ACL was
33 caught, but realize that, for Wave 2, which is March through
34 April, and Wave 3, May through June, we didn't have full
35 sampling going on there through MRIP. For the previous year,
36 2018 to 2019, 37.6 percent of the ACL was harvested, for
37 comparative purposes.

38
39 These will be stock ACLs for Spanish mackerel and cobia.
40 Remember, for Spanish mackerel, the fishing year there starts on
41 April 1 and goes through March 31, and cobia is a January 1
42 through December 31 species.

43
44 For Spanish mackerel, combining commercial and recreational, 2.5
45 percent of the ACL has been caught, and then, for cobia, 8
46 percent has been caught. If we look at the previous year, in
47 the table below that, 27.1 percent were caught for Spanish
48 mackerel, and 38 percent of the ACL was caught for cobia.

1
2 Here I'm just going to go through some of these figures. It
3 shows the different years and what you would have seen in a
4 report at an October meeting, and this is the commercial
5 landings, and we're a little bit behind some of the previous
6 years for king mackerel in the Western Zone, and there were some
7 landings in the Southern Zone, but they're so small that they
8 really don't get picked up in this particular graph. Then, for
9 the Northern and gillnet, we don't have any landings for this
10 year, but you can see that, basically, in 2017-2018 to 2019-
11 2020, the landings have been fairly consistent.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Peter, John has his hand up, and so before
14 we get past where he was too far when his hand went up.

15
16 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It can wait. I
17 will come back when he's done with his presentation.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thanks, John. Sorry, Peter, for the
20 interruption.

21
22 **MR. HOOD:** No worries. This shows our recreational landings,
23 and, again, we don't have any 2020-2021 fishing year landings
24 that we can provide, but you can see the 2019-2020 is below the
25 previous years, but just recall that the last Wave 2 and Wave 3,
26 that March through June time period, we don't have any landings,
27 or we have fewer landings, because of the MRIP issues, and so,
28 not surprisingly, we're a little bit below what we have seen in
29 other years.

30
31 This is for cobia, and you can see that, basically, we've
32 caught, in previous years, between 300,000 to 400,000 pounds by
33 both the commercial and recreational sectors combined. In 2020,
34 we're down, but, again, we don't have the recreational landings
35 to add to that.

36
37 This is for Spanish mackerel, and, again, that season ends on
38 March 31, and it's an April 1 to March 31 season, and so, for
39 the 2019-2020 season, we pretty much got the whole year
40 captured, for that particular year. We are a little bit off on
41 2020-2021, but, again, we have the reduction in landings that
42 have been provided to us, because of MRIP. I believe that's the
43 last figure, and that would conclude my report.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you, Peter. Now, John, back to you.

46
47 **MR. SANCHEZ:** At the last meeting, I had requested some landings
48 to be converted to FES currency, some of the more recent

1 landings, and I was provided with the landings, but I had also
2 asked that the quota, or the ACL, be converted also to FES
3 currency, so you could make an apples-to-apples comparison, and
4 this is rather confusing, to me anyway, and so I would like, I
5 guess, a layman's explanation as to why we couldn't convert the
6 ACLs to FES currency.

7
8 **MR. HOOD:** Well, I guess what we have been doing is it's been in
9 CHTS currency, and so, yes, we can convert it and make that
10 apples-to-apples comparison. I've written it down, and I will
11 make sure that we do that at the next meeting.

12
13 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Okay. Thank you very much.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Peter, let me just ask this, just from that
16 same discussion point. Wouldn't it proportionally, though, end
17 up being the same?

18
19 **MR. HOOD:** I'm not sure I -- I mean, in the sense that, yes, you
20 would apply a conversion, some sort of conversion, ratio to it,
21 yes, it would be similar, yes.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Still, I mean, to -- Well, let's move
24 on then. Kevin has his hand up, it looks like.

25
26 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Peter, just on your
27 second page, or your second slide, of the presentation of the
28 recreational data, that table at the bottom, the heading for it,
29 are those still considered preliminary landings through 2019?
30 Shouldn't that have been cleared by now?

31
32 **MR. HOOD:** I don't have the answer for that. I will have to get
33 back to you, and I will have to talk to our folks who generate
34 these tables and ask why they put "preliminary landings" down,
35 rather than final.

36
37 **MR. ANSON:** All right. Thank you.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Next up, it looks like Dr. Froeschke.

40
41 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** I guess my question is just a request for a
42 clarification. My understanding is that John Sanchez was asking
43 for the historical quotas, or ACLs, to be converted to FES
44 currency for the purposes of comparing historical FES landings
45 to a currency, or an ACL in FES currency, that it wasn't
46 currently in at the time that it was done. It was my
47 understanding that we weren't doing this, and it could cause
48 some other complications, and so I apologize if I misunderstood

1 this, but I was hoping to get some clarification.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** John, go ahead.
4
5 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Just to be clear, I don't expect you to go all the
6 way back in history, and there's quite a bit of history of
7 landings in this fishery. From what I was wanting to see, it
8 would be sufficient just to go back to when we implemented the
9 three-fish bag limit, if that simplifies the request, the
10 timeframe anyway.
11
12 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** John, did that answer your question
13 sufficiently enough?
14
15 **DR. FROESCHKE:** No, and I understand that, but just, in the
16 past, I guess, with our discussions, or my understanding with
17 SERO, it's that, for example, we weren't taking a quota on say a
18 million pounds for some stock and saying, well, this is what the
19 ACL would have been in 2016, if it had been in FES, as opposed
20 to CHTS, because it seems to me that, if you were do that, then,
21 for an allocated stock, you would change the potential
22 allocations of the stock, which changes all these other
23 components, and so I'm not sure how you would generate that
24 equivalent ACL in FES for an historical one without doing a
25 stock assessment at the time or something. I was hoping that
26 Peter could answer that, or Clay.
27
28 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I think I have a solution, Mr. Chairman, and
29 my hand is up.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I see you, Ms. Bosarge. Did you want to try
32 to chime in here?
33
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir. Thank you. I think, to get at what
35 John is wanting, and I assume that John wanted that for king
36 mackerel, and you just had a stock assessment on king mackerel,
37 and so, to get that old quota, I think what you would have to do
38 is -- The stock assessment generates an OFL for each year, and,
39 now that it has the FES numbers in it, then you can get that
40 FES-generated OFL, overfishing limit, and then you just apply
41 your P*, or your ABC control rule, to it, to come down to an
42 ABC, and then from the ABC to the ACL, and that's simple enough,
43 and then you know what your ACL was.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** If I'm hearing John right, he's thinking
46 it's a little more complex than that, but I will let him speak
47 for himself. John, do you want to reply? Since John is either
48 talking or -- You may be on mute, John, or -- We're getting a

1 stay-tuned, we have technical problems, and so let's move down
2 to Dr. Cody.

3
4 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** I can give you the Office of Science and
5 Technology perspective on developing a calibration. We can make
6 an individual conversion for an actual landing, but what that
7 would fail to take into consideration is how the FES would
8 behave in a stock assessment, and so it might be that the
9 conversions to the years, or the historical years, might be
10 different, and there might be a different outcome of the
11 assessment, and so it technically wouldn't -- It would be a
12 conversion, and it wouldn't be a true calibration, and I think
13 that would take a stock assessment to do properly.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Mr. Diaz, do you have your hand up as well?

16
17 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's not a
18 simple ratio. I mean, if we look at what's coming at us right
19 now, the FES numbers are about double what we were seeing
20 before, but the recommended ACL that we're getting from the SSC
21 is just slightly more than what we had before FES.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Dale, I think you're correct. When I said
24 proportional, I mean, yes, you can just make the simple
25 switchover ratio, but that's what they're saying, is, when it
26 runs through the model, then it's not going to necessarily
27 behave that same way, which is what you're pointing out. John,
28 you still are having technical difficulties, I believe?

29
30 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I think I'm back on, but I just didn't hear the
31 question.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I think the question was that Ms. Bosarge
34 had suggested a possible way, using the most recent assessment,
35 and so we were trying to see if -- I had suggested that you had
36 just alluded to that it's a little more complicated in feeding
37 it through the model, which Dale just also suggested, and I
38 think Dr. Cody also kind of answered in that reflection, but I
39 guess, in trying to get at John Sanchez's question, and what he
40 asked for, I think we just need to clarify the best we can as to
41 what the expectations are for you being able to do that, whether
42 it's a -- If it's going to take additional modeling or if it's
43 going to just be some sort of conversion.

44
45 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I think the short answer is I guess we can
46 follow-up with the Science Center and try to get a more complete
47 understanding, but, in general, if you think about it, if you
48 were to do this -- When you change the FES, you also change the

1 historical perception of the allocation, and so, in this case,
2 we have an allocation for king mackerel, and so either the
3 landings in FES would no longer match that allocation, and/or
4 you change the selectivity, and so you have to account for
5 those.

6
7 For example, when we look at the red grouper assessment, when
8 you change the selectivity, or the allocations, between the no
9 action, 76/24, and the various alternatives, the 60/40, you
10 change the OFL and ABC values as well, and so there are a lot of
11 moving parts in there. Then my concern is that's not going to
12 be as clear-cut as we might hope.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** In the chat box, Leann had suggested that
15 maybe someone from the Science Center try to weigh-in here as
16 well, and it would, I assume, be Dr. Calay or Dr. Porch, and I'm
17 not certain who is best to respond on this subject.

18
19 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** I just got on, and so I actually did not hear
20 the question, and I don't know if Shannon did or not.

21
22 **DR. SHANNON CALAY:** I did hear the question, and I can tell you
23 what we did, which is that the latest stock assessment was
24 conducted in FES units, and, therefore, the management advice is
25 expressed in FES units, and the conversion back to the former
26 currency would be done outside of the Southeast Fisheries
27 Science Center, but I am not certain exactly what you would like
28 us to respond to.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** John.

31
32 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Shannon, what they're asking is, prior to the
33 current stock assessment, the ACLs were based on the stock
34 assessment in CHTS units, and so we have those historical ACLs
35 and the historical landings. Now we've converted the landings
36 to a new currency, and can those historical ACLs be also
37 converted to this FES currency back in time?

38
39 **DR. CALAY:** Are you asking for us, or for someone, to convert
40 the catch advice back to CHTS units, or are you asking for the
41 stock assessment to be redone using some converted series?

42
43 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Neither one. I'm asking for the annual catch
44 limit that the landings are monitored against to determine what
45 percentage of the annual catch limit is caught. We know what
46 historically -- Say take a year that 80 percent of the
47 recreational ACL was met for king mackerel, based on CHTS
48 landings, and now we've converted those historical landings to

1 FES, but we did not convert the annual catch limit to FES
2 equivalent, but, if we were to do that, would it still be 80
3 percent, or would it be less, or would it be more?
4

5 **DR. PORCH:** I think it's going to be the same thing, because
6 you're going to have to apply the same correction factor to both
7 the realized landings and the ACL, and so, before, we monitored
8 an ACL that was based in CHTS against landings that were based
9 in CHTS, and now we would be setting the ACL in FES, but
10 monitoring with FES, and so, if you adjust the -- If you want to
11 see what percentage of the ACL was being caught in the past, you
12 have to be consistent in whatever your conversion factor is that
13 you're applying, and so I don't think it would change the
14 percentage very much.
15

16 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** We've had quite a bit of discussion on kind
17 of that time series, which really isn't from discussion we've
18 had on several other species today as well, in some respects,
19 and so, John, I think you probably have enough of a flavor of
20 that conversation, and that's Dr. Froeschke in this case, John,
21 that, if we can, you can probably try to work with the Science
22 Center and provide Mr. Sanchez the request before probably the
23 next meeting, I assume, if we can. Ms. Bosarge, do you have
24 your hand up, before we move on to the next item?
25

26 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, and I think you just covered it, but I just
27 wanted to make sure that -- Whether it's a straight conversion
28 or whether you go to the -- Again, get the OFL and then apply an
29 ABC control rule to it and then go down to your ACL, and, either
30 way it goes, I just wanted to make sure that John got the
31 information to convert the old CHTS ACLs into FES ACLs.
32

33 I will go back to what Dale said. It doesn't seem to be a one-
34 to-one ratio, when we are looking at plugging FES in, and FES
35 numbers double, but our quota doesn't. I mean, the rec quota
36 doesn't double, and so it seems like there is some difference
37 there, and I think John is trying to get at that, to find out
38 where were we, apples-to-apples, FES-ACL-to-FES-landings, in the
39 past.
40

41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you for that wrap-up as well. Like I
42 said, I think we've covered that issue, and I think John's
43 request, and John with the council, have heard enough that I
44 think we can work towards getting Mr. Sanchez what he has asked
45 for.
46

47 With that, let's move on into the review of the SEDAR 38 update,
48 the Gulf of Mexico king mackerel stock assessment. It looks

1 like, for Tab C-5(a), I'm assuming that maybe Dr. Powers is
2 covering both C-5(a) and 5(b), or someone else may be on tap for
3 5(a), and I'm not certain.

4
5 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Robin, if I may, when we're done with the SEDAR
6 presentation, I have a couple of questions regarding the
7 presentation, but, for some reason, I can't get my hand to
8 elevate, and I can't type into the chat box, and so if you could
9 just kindly call on me after the presentation.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** But this is after this presentation, John,
12 and not going back to what we were just at?

13
14 **MR. SANCHEZ:** No, and this is the SEDAR. Thank you.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. Thank you.

17
18 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Mr. Chair, if I may, Agenda Item 5(a) is the
19 stock assessment, which was provided as background, and so we
20 will go to Agenda Item Number 5(b), which is the presentation by
21 Dr. Powers.

22
23 **SEDAR 38 UPDATE - GULF OF MEXICO KING MACKEREL STOCK ASSESSMENT**
24 **REPORT**

25
26 **DR. JOE POWERS:** Thank you. The SSC was presented the stock
27 assessment update, the SEDAR 38 update, for Gulf of Mexico
28 migratory group king mackerel.

29
30 If you go to the next slide, you will see that there were
31 several key things that were different in this particular
32 update. One is that the update is basically using the same
33 model for SEDAR 38, but updating with data through 2017, and
34 then the ground rules are, where practical, update the datasets,
35 as appropriate, and, in that context, the key changes from SEDAR
36 38 includes incorporating of the Fishing Effort Survey, the FES,
37 estimate, and so you get adjustments to the recreational catch,
38 and the method of estimating shrimp fishery bycatch for king
39 mackerel, and those are the two key things that were different
40 in the update.

41
42 I am going to give you the bottom line first. We went through
43 this assessment, and the SSC reviewed it, and actually agreed
44 with it, and, basically, the conclusion is the Gulf of Mexico is
45 not overfished and is not undergoing overfishing, and, in that
46 context, the SSB is at about 84 percent of the -- The fishing
47 mortality rate is 84 percent of the MFMT, the minimum fishing
48 mortality threshold. That means that it's less than the value

1 that would be considered overfishing.
2
3 The SSB was 112 percent of the MSST, and MSST is the minimum
4 stock size threshold, and that's the standard to consider
5 something overfished, and so the biomass is higher than that
6 minimum standard, and the fishing mortality rate is lower than
7 that maximum standard.
8
9 The base model projections, based on that, indicate that the
10 landings can remain at current values with a low probability of
11 future overfishing or becoming overfished.
12
13 We put this in graphical terms, and the spawning stock biomass
14 relative to the FMSY proxy, the green line, and relative to the
15 MSST, the black line, and you notice there that, as I indicated
16 in the previous slide, the biomass is above the MSST, but it's
17 still below the target SSB MSY proxy, the green line, and so
18 there is some room for improvement there. The fishing mortality
19 rate, and this gives a history of that as well, but the fishing
20 mortality rate is below the black line.
21
22 If you put this into the typical phase plot, the stock started
23 in the -- Decades ago, it was in the lower-right-hand corner,
24 and it got to a period where there was high fishing, and it's
25 now down to the 2017 level, which is in that interim area right
26 below the SSB over SSB MSY proxy, that 2017 level.
27
28 How do you get there? I mean, these are the total landings by
29 the different sectors, and these are landings in metric tons,
30 and you see the history there and basically where those landings
31 are coming from in each individual sector.
32
33 As I mentioned before, there is a key thing with the difference
34 in the methodologies and understanding of how to approach the
35 shrimp bycatch that occurs in that fishery, and the method used
36 to estimate king mackerel bycatch was changed, and so much so
37 that the median value over that time, the blue period, was
38 708,000 fish per year, and, for the updated value, it's quite a
39 bit higher, the pink area, and the median is 1,998,000 fish.
40 The actual trend was pretty much the same, but there's a
41 difference there.
42
43 If you take away the removals, and you do this by sector, and
44 the SEDAR 38 update is in black, and you see there, for the
45 commercial sector, there were additional data that were added
46 for the later years, but there were no real changes. For the
47 recreational portion, there were, and there were two levels
48 there. The one on the lower-right-hand side is the charter

1 private, and this is the adjustment for the FES, and the black
2 line, as you can indicate there, is a bit higher, or more than a
3 bit. It is higher than the red part, and that's the conversion.

4
5 There are some differences also in the headboats, which are not
6 related to the FES, and so there are some differences in how the
7 estimations of the sizes were estimated, and you will notice
8 there, on the lower-left-hand side, that it lowers the -- The
9 black line is less than the red line, and it lowers it, to some
10 extent, but you also notice, in terms of the scale, the headboat
11 catches are very small, in any case, anyway.

12
13 If you look also at the discards, the same sort of changes have
14 affected how the discards are estimated, to some extent, but,
15 again, the actual levels are small, relative to some of these
16 other things.

17
18 Based on this, and the review presentation made by the Southeast
19 Center, and a review by the SSC, the SSC determined that the
20 update represents the best scientific information, and, based on
21 the assessment results, the stock status is estimated to be not
22 overfished and not undergoing overfishing.

23
24 We went through some projections, and a short version of it is
25 here, and there were -- In terms of that spaghetti spread on the
26 right-hand side around the green line, the green horizontal
27 line, there are several different kinds of projections that were
28 done based on a percentage of the fishing mortality rate at
29 optimum yield, the current fishing mortality rate, and the
30 fishing mortality rate at the MFMT, or the FMSY proxy.

31
32 As you can see there, there are several different outcomes, and
33 the reason some of these were picked is that the assessment
34 itself -- The analysis and the results of the assessment would
35 indicate that -- Some of the results would indicate that the
36 uncertainty is much larger than what would be predicted by a
37 typical P^* approach, and so they were suggesting several
38 different approaches to projections, which the SSC evaluated.

39
40 What the SSC essentially did, at this point, was to approve one
41 of those sets of projections, and so the determination of OFL
42 was done by the SSC, and those OFLs were as indicated there,
43 10.89, 11.05, and 11.18 million pounds whole weight for the
44 fishing years 2021 through 2023, and this was based on those
45 updated assessment projections.

46
47 To adjust for P^* , or to adjust for the uncertainty, appropriate
48 uncertainty, the SSC set the ABC for those same years to 9.37,

1 9.72, and 9.99 million pounds. This was based on the projection
2 of the FOY 85 percent of F 30 percent SPR. Again, this is
3 giving the mechanisms by which projections were selected, and
4 this selection was done largely because of the understanding
5 that the uncertainty in the assessment was greater than one
6 would indicate by using a typical P* approach. That's the
7 bottom line for the recommendation.

8
9 There was a fair amount of concern, particularly about the
10 shrimp bycatch estimates, because these were -- There was a fair
11 amount of uncertainty, and uncertainty in methodologies as well,
12 in terms of estimating and comparing to the SEDAR 38 update and
13 the original SEDAR 38, and so they do have a significance.

14
15 This is a concern, in general, the Center has told us, and there
16 is a series of best practices workshops, which will be hosted by
17 the SEFSC, to try to improve these sorts of shrimp bycatch
18 estimates, not only for king mackerel, but for other species as
19 well, and it's our understanding that those workshops will take
20 place relatively soon.

21
22 The other concern that the SSC had was in terms of headboat
23 discards and how to adjust for those things, and this paragraph
24 basically just mentions some of the issues associated with that,
25 that basically you have small data samples, particularly for
26 things like king mackerel, in their headboat surveys, and then
27 how you estimate the discards with that becomes an issue, or a
28 problem.

29
30 The method that was chosen used the proxy from one fleet to
31 another, which isn't the most common way associated with this,
32 but, in this particular case, it was the best way to deal with
33 the problem, but it is an issue that I think the SSC was
34 recommending needs to get addressed in the future. I think
35 that's the crux of the SSC discussions and our conclusions.
36 Thank you.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right, and so, before we move on to the
39 other agenda items under this section, John, you had indicated
40 that you had a question regarding this presentation.

41
42 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes, and a couple of observations in reviewing
43 SEDAR 38. It seems like the headboat fishery, being a small
44 component of the fishery, had a disproportional impact on the
45 indices of abundance, and so I'm kind of not convinced as to why
46 that is, and then the second thing was, in the prior assessment,
47 it seemed like we used 86 percent of OFL, and, in this
48 assessment, we're using 96 percent of OFL, and why did we elect

1 to go 10 percent more conservative? Is this a new ABC control
2 rule, or what was going on?

3
4 **DR. POWERS:** The last question first, and the ABC was based on a
5 fishing mortality rate, and the fishing mortality was chosen,
6 and this is also a recommendation of the analysis, was 85
7 percent of the F 30 percent SPR, which is also equivalent to the
8 F as optimum yield, and so the reason that that was chosen was
9 the alternative, in terms of the control rule for king mackerel,
10 was to use a P* approach and to assign a buffer based on the
11 uncertainty.

12
13 Via the recommendations of the assessment, that uncertainty was
14 probably being underestimated, and so, for those reasons, the
15 SSC opted to adjust the fishing mortality rate at F 30 percent
16 SPR to 85 percent of that, and that was the motivation. I'm not
17 sure what the -- I've forgotten what the first part of the
18 question was.

19
20 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Basically, it seems like it translates into like a
21 million pounds, and I don't know -- If it has seemed to be
22 working for all these years at 86 percent of OFL, I am not sure
23 why the need to go so much more conservative, the 95 percent,
24 when there is uncertainty in every assessment we look at.

25
26 **DR. POWERS:** I am not sure -- When you're saying the 95 percent
27 of OFL, to what are you referring?

28
29 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will find that for you, and I will get that to
30 you later, Dr. Powers, but it seems like we took a very much
31 more conservative approach that probably translates to about a
32 million pounds. I will send you that.

33
34 **DR. POWERS:** Okay. Thank you.

35
36 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Kevin, I believe you have your hand up.

39
40 **MR. ANSON:** I do. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Powers, for the
41 presentation. Can you describe, for this assessment, why the
42 OFL projections and corresponding ABCs that were recommended by
43 the SSC are increasing for the short term?

44
45 Oftentimes, when we review these assessments, they often either
46 are flat, or they go down through time series, and, as I recall,
47 that's because there is just uncertainty in recruitment, is the
48 general response, and I'm just curious as to why it changed for

1 this particular assessment. Was it a change in the methodology,
2 or is there some other information about that, or was it not
3 related to recruitment at all?

4
5 **DR. POWERS:** I'm sure, to some extent, it was related to
6 recruitment. Also, remember, in those pictures of the spawning
7 stock biomass, it's above the MSST, but below the SSB MSY proxy,
8 and so what that fishing mortality rate is doing is trying to
9 increase the stock size, and so, therefore, because the stock is
10 slightly below what the target is, then, if you reduce the
11 catches, or if the catches are lower than the MFMT, then you
12 would expect to get some increase.

13
14 Some of the other stocks, when you have a different situation,
15 where it's fishing down, where the stock is well above the SSB
16 target, then you are going to end up -- The stock size comes
17 down with the particular catch, because what you're doing is
18 fishing down towards that target, and this is, I think, a little
19 bit of the opposite, where you're fishing upwards towards the
20 target, but I'm sure recruitment has something to do with it as
21 well.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any other questions of Dr. Powers before we
24 move on to the next items, and then we can kind of come back to
25 what we want to do overall here, after we've heard the other
26 items? Mr. Diaz.

27
28 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we swap back and forth
29 from one number to the other, it's confusing for me, and I don't
30 know if it is for other council members, but so -- I am going to
31 ask you to speculate a little bit, Dr. Powers, if you can.

32
33 Generally, the way this has been working out is the recreational
34 side leaves three or four-million pounds unharvested, and I
35 believe I heard, in a presentation earlier, that, for 2018 and
36 2019, they caught 37 percent of their ACL. Now that FES is
37 implemented, and we're using it, should we anticipate that the
38 recreational sector percentage that they catch of their ACL is
39 going to go up substantially?

40
41 **DR. POWERS:** I don't know about substantially, but I would
42 expect it to go up, but, again, this is sort of speculation. I
43 mean, it depends on how it gets implemented. I realize that
44 isn't a very satisfactory answer, and I'm really not sure.

45
46 **MR. DIAZ:** Well, that's all right, and I'm asking you to
47 speculate, and I'm just trying to figure out if the new method -
48 - If that's something that we should take into consideration,

1 and that's all I'm trying to figure out. Thank you.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. I am, at this point, not seeing
4 any other hands up, and so I think what we'll do is it looks
5 like the next two presentations are dealing with Something's
6 Fishy, and it's Tab C-5(c) and Tab C-5(d), and I assume Ms.
7 Muehlstein is handling both of those.

8
9 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** I am, and I'm just going to give you one
10 presentation.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Emily, sorry. Right as I turned to you, Dr.
13 Crabtree's hand went up, and we'll come right back to you.

14
15 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay.

16
17 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** Just in part to Dale's question, and, I mean,
18 we're going to have the same, I think, allocation issues here,
19 whereas, if you go back to the time period that the allocation
20 is based on, the landings are different, and so the percentages
21 will be different, and so we're going to have to address the
22 allocation, and, depending on what you do with that, it will
23 probably change the perception of how much -- What percentage of
24 the quota they catch.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you for that, Dr. Crabtree. Now,
27 Emily, back to you, and I'm sorry for that.

28
29 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** It's all good. Tab 5(c) and 5(d) are both
30 related to this presentation, and one of them is just the full
31 text document, and then the other is just a presentation that I
32 have prepared, and so just to clarify there that you don't have
33 to listen to two presentations. It's just one.

34
35 This is a summary of the responses that we gathered through our
36 Something's Fishy with king mackerel tool, and I think Bernie is
37 pulling up that presentation currently. Just to remind
38 everybody, and I'm sure you will get sick of this, but the
39 Something's Fishy tool is a tool that we use to gather
40 information on a fish stock from active fishermen on trends or
41 unusual occurrences that scientists and managers may not have
42 observed.

43
44 We gathered these responses for the kingfish Something's Fishy
45 tool from September 6 of 2019 through October 6 of 2019, and so
46 just one month last year, and we generated a final report and
47 emailed it to the stock assessment scientists in February of
48 this year.

1
2 We didn't get a ton of respondents for this one, and we only had
3 forty-seven responses, and a majority of them identified as
4 private anglers. You will notice that we, over time, are sort
5 of getting a little bit more sophisticated in the ways that we
6 do our analysis and present this tool, and so this is sort of an
7 old-school version, and so please excuse that as you look at it.

8
9 We analyzed the comments in two ways, first manually and then
10 through an automated response analysis, and the manual response,
11 in this case, found that most comments indicated a negative
12 trend in stock health or abundance, and the automated analysis
13 actually showed a minor trend towards positive comments.

14
15 Now, the difference here is, when we were originally doing this,
16 the manual response analysis sort of focused on comments that
17 were alluding to stock abundance, whereas the automated response
18 analysis was analyzing the overall sentiment of the comments,
19 and so these two are not necessarily comparing apples-to-apples
20 here, and it's more like oranges to tangerines, and so that's
21 probably why we had a difference in the automated and manual
22 classifications.

23
24 This is, arguably, sort of the most important piece of
25 information that we got out, and we did see this in both manual
26 and automated analysis, is that, generally speaking, responses
27 from the central northern Gulf reflected negative sentiments,
28 where Texas and sort of the peninsula region of Florida both
29 reflected positive sentiment about the stock.

30
31 We dug a little deeper with the automated analysis, and here you
32 can see the most commonly used negative and positive words, and
33 that's just presented in two different ways, and the most
34 frequently used words could indicate that, while some anglers
35 are seeing more large fish, overall, there may be a decline or a
36 negative perception in the abundance of king mackerel.

37
38 Then we have pulled out a couple of sort of themes that we got
39 through manual analysis, and this one, first, is that
40 respondents in the central northern Gulf indicated that the king
41 mackerel stock was in decline. Anglers indicated that positive
42 trends in stock abundance were occurring off of Texas and the
43 peninsula region of Florida.

44
45 Many of our negative comments did specify that there was a lack
46 of bait and that that was driving the observed decline in the
47 king mackerel up in that northern Gulf region, and, also,
48 positive comments did seem to indicate that fish were larger

1 than normal. That is sort of just a quick conclusion of what we
2 gathered, and I'm happy to take any questions.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ms. Bosarge, I see your hand is up.

5

6 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to, while
7 Tim Griner was on the line with us, and he's our South Atlantic
8 liaison today, and I just wanted to give him a kudos, because he
9 was my inspiration for the Something's Fishy tool.

10

11 I went to a South Atlantic meeting one time, and he was talking
12 about fishermen from one part of the Atlantic and a different
13 part of the Atlantic and different opinions that they had on
14 what was happening and how it would be nice to sort of be able
15 to plug those differing opinions in a little bit more to our
16 science and our management, and he didn't put it just like that,
17 but that's what sparked my idea for this, and so I just wanted
18 to tell him thanks for thinking outside the box, Tim.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** It's always good to get some quantitative
21 metrics regarding the feedback we get, as opposed to just those
22 generalities sometimes that we get, and so I appreciate that as
23 well. Mr. Anson.

24

25 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. Thank you, Emily, for the presentation.
26 Did you put any qualifiers on the questions specific to the
27 perceptions on the fishery? Is that a question that is just
28 asked for one point in time, at the time of the survey, or do
29 you break that up into a couple or two or three different
30 questions, like how long have you been fishing for king
31 mackerel, and, then, if they indicate ten years, do you break
32 that ten years into the first five years and then the most
33 recent five years? Can you describe that?

34

35 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Sure. That is an awesome question.
36 Unfortunately, we are constrained by the Paperwork Reduction
37 Act, and so we had to find a way to create this tool, hopefully
38 without sort of qualifying it so that we would have to run
39 through that Paperwork Reduction Act, and so, in order to do
40 that, we have had to make the question, just one single
41 question, very general, in order to classify it as sort of
42 public comment that we are receiving on the issue.

43

44 We are not actually allowed to ask any sort of targeted
45 question, and so, really, we just sort of prompt the anglers
46 with frontloading a little bit in the tool, and saying that this
47 is the type of information that we're looking for, but, when we
48 actually go to ask a question, it's just have you noticed

1 anything, anything interesting, about the king mackerel stock.
2 I hope that answers your question.

3
4 We haven't been able to directly ask those questions. Now, I
5 guess in the backend of the analysis, we could do a little bit
6 stronger analysis, if that was something you were looking for in
7 future efforts.

8
9 **MR. ANSON:** Maybe. I appreciate the answer, and I asked a
10 similar question in a prior meeting, and that was a similar
11 answer you gave me, and so I remember the requirements of the
12 Paperwork Reduction Act type of stuff that you need to abide by.

13
14 A workaround to that, if it is a contentious issue, or an issue
15 we would like to get some more feedback on -- Have you all
16 investigated, or is there a way, to avoid those requirements if
17 you were to ask the question of the angler of if they would be
18 interested in participate in a follow-up survey, and so then, at
19 that point, would that not trigger those paperwork requirements,
20 or the restrictions, on the questions and you can ask more
21 detailed questions of those that respond?

22
23 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** That's a really good question. I don't know of
24 a loophole like that, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't
25 exist, and so it's definitely something that I'm going to look
26 into. I have been sort of trying to find a way to get blanket
27 approval for the tool, and then I can get sort of expedited
28 approval for each instance that we use it, through the Paperwork
29 Reduction Act, and so I like that angle, and I will certainly
30 look into it, in addition to sort of doing the due diligence
31 that I am, to try and figure out if there's a way that we can
32 work within the Paperwork Reduction Act in a way that's not
33 terribly constraining.

34
35 **MR. ANSON:** Mr. Chair, if I can make one more comment.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Sure.

38
39 **MR. ANSON:** My reason for asking is that, to drill down into
40 some of these responses that you did receive, particularly here
41 in the northern Gulf, we have had some concerns of folks in
42 state waters, of which king mackerel, of course, come into state
43 waters, but, relative to Spanish mackerel, it seems to coincide
44 with the downturns in recreational catches with large freshwater
45 inputs, if you will, into the coastal environment.

46
47 When we have a lot of rainfall and such, it tends to change the
48 salinity and the clarity of the water, which could impact then

1 primary productivity, which the baitfish follow, which then the
2 mackerel follow, and so that's why I ask. Again, maybe you can
3 kind of hone that in a little bit better and try to put those
4 feelings and match it up with some environmental parameters, or
5 environmental conditions, that are going on. Thank you.

6
7 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Thanks. Yes, we can certainly look into that,
8 and you know, Kevin, we do keep a list of the people that
9 responded, and their contact information, and we do ask them if
10 we can follow-up to contact them, and so that's something that
11 you and I can maybe think about in the future.

12
13 **MR. ANSON:** Great. Thank you.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. I've got a couple of hands up now,
16 the first being Dr. Porch.

17
18 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you, Chair. I just want to second some of the
19 comments that folks have made. I mean, this is great, and I'm
20 looking at my screen over here, at the distribution, that Figure
21 2, the distribution of positive and negative responses and how
22 it changes by area, and I'm really looking forward to seeing how
23 this changes through time and how it matches up with things like
24 our, for various species, fishery-independent surveys or the
25 results of the subsequent assessments, and see if we can use
26 this -- Like, right now, it says, at the bottom of the document,
27 that it can't really be used in a quantitative way, but, as this
28 matures, it may be that we can apply crowdsourcing techniques to
29 come up with some quantitative metrics.

30
31 Emily, I don't know if you've already been talking with some
32 folks about looking into this and applying some of the
33 crowdsourcing techniques that have been published, and,
34 obviously, we've been talking here, and Mr. Anson brought up
35 some ways to maybe -- That it can be tweaked and improved, and
36 that's always possible, but I do see a lot of potential here,
37 and maybe you could talk to us a little bit about other ways you
38 could see this used.

39
40 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I would be happy to. You know, we've heard
41 back from the analysts at the Center, every time we have
42 submitted this tool, and there seems to be sort of universal
43 excitement and enthusiasm for it, and I have spoken with a
44 couple of people in your shop about sort of how to continue to
45 make this better, and I think, sort of right now, the biggest
46 issues that we have are promoting the tool and trying to get
47 them to -- Just to get anglers to use them.

48

1 Like, as you can see, there were very few respondents to this
2 one, and we've had other efforts, like cobia, where we got
3 upwards of -- I think it was like 600 responses, and that makes
4 it a little bit easier to use for crowdsourcing and things like
5 that, and so, yes, I definitely would be happy to work with you
6 guys on making this tool more useful for you, and sort of more
7 useful in general, definitely.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Next, I have Mr. Sanchez. You have your
10 hand up again, please.

11
12 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Earlier, I was bringing up
13 the differences between the 86 and roughly 95 percent, and that
14 would be represented in Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 of the SEDAR 38.
15 Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you for finding that. I assume that
18 Dr. Powers will go and take a look at that, and he may give us a
19 response, once he's had a chance to get there. With that, our
20 next item on our agenda now is the stock assessment executive
21 summary, and, Dr. Powers, I think, when you presented that, or
22 we had that occur on our agenda last time as well, for cobia,
23 you were just seeking feedback.

24
25 I will give you my own feedback, but, based on the time of today
26 and us trying to move along here, I think it's a great executive
27 summary of our longer reports, and so I think anything like that
28 is useful, as we provide that kind of information to the public,
29 so that someone doesn't have to go through sometimes an eighty-
30 page kind of document to find those kernels that are really
31 setting forth the management decisions, and so I would encourage
32 us to think about keeping doing something like that.

33
34 I will let you all mature the format in whatever way you want,
35 but I think that's always useful. Quickly, if there's any other
36 feedback, and I don't think we need a lot of hands on this one,
37 because we are trying to get ourselves through the day here, so
38 that we can get closer to wrapping up, as Tom has suggested we
39 want to do, but, if there's any direct feedback here, just
40 quickly, we can do that. If not, we'll move on.

41
42 I think the next tab, if I'm not mistaken, Dr. Mendez-Ferrer, is
43 that we basically covered that right after the background. Did
44 we not? That was really what John was talking about earlier on,
45 and so I think that's where we kind of discussed that, but did
46 you want to go into more detail in that last tab for today?

47
48 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** We can bring up the document and see if we

1 have any clarifying questions from Mr. Sanchez.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay.

4
5 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** In Figure 1, to give you a refresher, that's
6 the boundaries of the current management zones for Gulf king
7 mackerel. The Gulf migratory group boundary extends from Texas
8 all the way to the Miami/Dade/Broward County line, and this was
9 a result of CMP Amendment 26.

10
11 Table 1, we have the landings from 2009 to 2019, in MRIP-CHTS
12 and MRIP-FES, and the way -- One more caution, I guess. The
13 landings are being reported here for the current boundary, and
14 so this does not include landings from the Florida east coast
15 sub-zone, which was the previous boundary for the Gulf migratory
16 group before the CMP Amendment 26, and so that's one of the
17 things that we need to keep in mind when looking at Table 1.

18
19 Now, if we move to Table 2, when we're comparing the
20 recreational landings in proportion to the recreational ACL and
21 the stock ACL, I narrowed it down to the current boundary,
22 because those are the comparisons where I could make a direct
23 comparison to an ACL. If I would have included years before
24 2016, at the time that we did this analysis, we didn't have the
25 recreational data from the Florida east coast zone.

26
27 One of the comments by Mr. Sanchez earlier is that he wanted to
28 see I guess conversions of these ACLs to MRIP-FES currency, and
29 am I correct, and so you wanted to see it back to when the
30 possession limit was increased to three fish? Is that correct,
31 because this will be the same time series.

32
33 **MR. SANCHEZ:** If that's for me, yes, that would be correct.

34
35 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Okay. All right. Well, I guess we're going
36 to continue working on trying to do those calculations, but at
37 least, from what you have in front of you, you can take a
38 percentage of how the recreational landings compare to the
39 recreational ACL and the stock ACL. Is there any further
40 questions?

41
42 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I don't think so. I think now we're at a
43 point where we've heard all the presentations, and we have a
44 recommendation from the SSC regarding OFLs for the 2021 through
45 2023 year, which, of course, step-down then, and it gives us the
46 ABCs. I think the guide is suggesting that basically the
47 committee have a discussion or move forward with if we want to
48 make those changes.

1
2 I guess I will turn to council staff. This is almost similar to
3 the question that we've asked on a couple of previous
4 assessments. Given timing and timing of the fishing year,
5 what's the best approach here, if we're going to make those
6 changes? I realize these apparently have less maybe tentacles,
7 if you will, in that we're not meeting those catch limits now,
8 and the MFMT is not being met, and so, therefore, the ACL is
9 actually going up, or the ABC is going up, in projection, as
10 well as the overfishing limit, but I will turn to staff for some
11 guidance here to the council.

12
13 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** I think what we have on the board is an SSC
14 recommendation based on the assessment, and so, really, I think
15 what staff is looking for at this point is whether or not we can
16 get a motion to adopt those recommendations moving forward, and
17 so we would start a document, essentially.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay, and so I assume a framework amendment.

20
21 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.

22
23 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Yes, this would be a framework. Let me
24 clarify. If the committee wishes to adopt the SSC's motion with
25 respect to modifying the ACLs with respect to the SSC's OFL and
26 ABC recommendations, and this would be a framework. If the
27 committee also wants to explore allocation, as was brought up by
28 Dr. Crabtree, then this would have to be a plan amendment, and
29 so we don't have it in our framework procedure to modify
30 allocations for any of the CMP species via framework. Thank
31 you.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I have Mr. Sanchez.

34
35 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would much rather see a
36 plan amendment, and let's have allocations in there.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** The only thing I would say to that, John, is
39 a plan amendment -- I mean, we're talking about the 2021 fishing
40 year, and, I mean, given where we are, I'm not certain that
41 that's a doable option for 2021, certainly, and I'm not certain
42 even by 2022, but I won't let that stop you from making that
43 motion, but just I'm trying to be realistic here. Mr. Diaz.

44
45 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Robin. I am not sure -- This is me kind
46 of just thinking out loud, and I'm not sure this is a really
47 good one to look at reallocating. This is a fishery where the
48 rec has not been catching their ACL, or anywhere close to it,

1 for many, many years.

2
3 It looks to me like, from the last time we adjusted the catch to
4 now, we're picking up about 800,000 pounds, if my numbers are
5 correct, and the commercial guys would get their percentage of
6 the allocation of that 800,000 pounds, if we do nothing, and I
7 think this might be one that we just want to watch a little
8 while, leave it like it is, and see what the recreational guys
9 actually do, if they catch more of their ACL with the way things
10 are now, and so I don't think I'm in favor, at this time, of
11 moving forward with reallocating.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Mr. Sanchez, your hand is up again?

14
15 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes, and thank you. Well, we've waited this long
16 to look at reallocation, and so I say let's do it, and let's do
17 it as a plan amendment, if that's how we have to do it, if
18 that's the vehicle. **I will make that motion.** We'll see where
19 it goes, but I think, once we work out some of the items in the
20 SEDAR update, you might find there's a few more fish there to
21 play with, and so I would say let's proceed, and I would remain
22 in support of that. If you could help me wordsmith it, that
23 would be good. **To proceed with a plan amendment to look at**
24 **allocation as well as adjust the ACLs and OFLs.** If anybody
25 wants to help me correct that, feel free to jump in. If there
26 is a second, I will elaborate a little bit on the rationale.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Do I hear a second from a committee member?
29 Remember on this one we're not a committee of the whole.

30
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** I will second that motion, Robin.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Ms. Bosarge seconds.

34
35 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I could add some
36 rationale, the reason is we seem to be proceeding rather quickly
37 in other fisheries to look at reallocations, but, in this one,
38 there seems to be a reluctance to do it. I would just as soon
39 paint them all with the same brush, and let's look at it, and we
40 have some reallocation guidelines, and so, if they ever need to
41 be changed back, we follow our guidelines, and we revisit it,
42 but I think it's long overdue.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you, John. I've got a couple of
45 people up here. First up is Mr. Swindell.

46
47 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with John.
48 I have brought this up before, that the allocations is not as

1 equally divided as it should be between the two groups that are
2 doing the fishing. The recreational people are catching a lot
3 less than what is allocated, and the commercial people are
4 catching just about what is allocated to them, and I really
5 believe that we need to make an adjustment.

6
7 As I look at the discards from the two groups, the recreational
8 people are catching a few, but it's around -- It looks to me to
9 be around 10 percent, perhaps, of their total catch, if they
10 ever discard, and so I really believe we need to look seriously
11 at the allocation and to use the resource as we're intended to
12 do and still keep the resource healthy. Thank you, sir.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you, Mr. Swindell. Dr. Shipp.

15
16 **DR. SHIPP:** I just wanted to point out that I think, on an issue
17 like this, we need a roll call vote.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. We've had a call for a roll call vote
20 in committee, if we do that. Ms. Bosarge, do you have your hand
21 up?

22
23 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, sir. Thank you. I just would remind
24 everybody about the discussions that we had before FES came into
25 being, and we had discussions about trying to start this
26 amendment and look at this allocation in king mackerel, where
27 there is underfishing occurring by one sector, and the
28 recreational representatives, and NMFS too, said, hey, and
29 probably rightfully so, hey, you know, we better wait until we
30 get these FES numbers, and let's make sure that they're not
31 going to go up so far that you have no room for reallocation,
32 and, even before we get the ACL returned to us in FES numbers,
33 which we talked about earlier, even on the old CHTS ACLs, there
34 is still only about 37 percent.

35
36 I mean, even when you get the new stock assessment, and the
37 numbers, we still have plenty of room there that underfishing is
38 occurring, and so I think it's time -- We have waited, and we
39 waited, and we waited, and I think it's time to look at it.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ms. Guyas.

42
43 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I'll start
44 with comments, and then I've got a question for John. I mean,
45 we're -- I guess the transition to FES is, as we discussed this
46 morning, and has been discussed in other meetings, I guess Reef
47 Fish, the change to FES certainly seems to be giving us some
48 information about that part of the fishery that we didn't have

1 before, and so I'm okay with looking at allocations here based
2 on that. Of course, we've also talked about reallocation of
3 this fishery in the past, and we've put it off, for various
4 reasons.

5
6 My question, John, is are you just talking about the
7 recreational/commercial sector allocation, or are you also
8 wanting to look at some of those zone allocations, and I guess
9 gear allocations, within the commercial fishery, like the
10 gillnet hook-and-line in southwest Florida, and then all of the
11 different recreational zones? Can you let us know what your
12 thoughts are on that?

13
14 **MR. SANCHEZ:** My thoughts on that were it would be a
15 recreational/commercial allocation review, and we look at what's
16 warranted, and then we vote it up or down then. Then, as far as
17 all the sub-regions go, it filters down to them accordingly,
18 just like they are right now, and that would be gear types and
19 sub-regions.

20
21 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Anything else, Martha?

24
25 **MS. GUYAS:** No.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. Next, we have Mr. Anson.

28
29 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. When this issue came up, we were looking
30 at some sort of allocation scheme that would just do it on a
31 temporary basis. You know, if the recreational sector hit a
32 certain proportion, or percentage, of their ACL, then it would
33 kick in an opportunity for some of those pounds to be
34 temporarily transferred over to the commercial sector, and I
35 believe I supported that, and then it was kind of postponed at
36 that time, because we thought there just wasn't enough king
37 mackerel available to fishermen, and so we increased the bag
38 limit, and I don't think we saw really a big bump in that, and
39 the only big bump we've seen is because we've changed survey
40 methodologies.

41
42 I would support the motion, but I would just make a request to
43 the maker. John, if you wouldn't mind changing the language so
44 that the catch limits can go in a separate document, and,
45 therefore, they can be implemented quicker, and then the
46 allocation document is a separate document, because this is
47 going to -- All allocation decisions bog down, and so I just
48 wondered if you wouldn't mind changing the verbiage to reflect

1 that.
2
3 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Mr. Chairman, if I may respond to Kevin.
4
5 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, sir. Go ahead.
6
7 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Kevin, if you want to make a friendly amendment, I
8 guess that's up to you, but I would like to see allocation in
9 this document, unless we're agreeable to maybe doing that for
10 red grouper, because we're agreeable to maybe doing that for red
11 grouper, because it seems to me that, earlier this morning, we
12 had the same discussion, but the shoe was on the other foot.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Kevin, have you got any suggestions there,
15 or are you going to just leave it as it is?
16
17 **MR. ANSON:** I'm still thinking.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Do you want to keep thinking and let
20 me move down the list?
21
22 **MR. ANSON:** Please.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Dr. Crabtree.
25
26 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think, in all of these assessments, where we're
27 transitioning to using the FES, that you have to go back and
28 reevaluate the reallocation, because the historical mix of the
29 fishery has changed, and, to me, the allocation is linked to the
30 catch limits, because I think it affects what the ABC would be,
31 and it's hard for me to see how you implement the catch level
32 without implementing the allocation, and so I think we need to
33 be linked.
34
35 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Roy, what I hear you saying is that that's
36 because of the -- It's not necessarily that there is some
37 historical under-catches here, or under-landings here, but what
38 I hear you saying is that, really, that, as we change the
39 landing systems, or, for lack of a better term, which I don't
40 want to get into the whole discussion, but, as you calibrate to
41 a different landings system, it changes all the historical
42 landings series that these allocations were built on, and you've
43 got to go back and look at or find some way to adjust all of
44 those things, and is that what I am hearing you say?
45
46 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes, and I don't recall what the king mackerel
47 allocation is based on, and I suspect a pretty old time series,
48 but I'm sure, if you go back and calculate the allocation based

1 on the FES landings, it would shift it more recreational. Now,
2 I'm not saying that's what you want to do, but I think you've
3 got to come up with some other basis for the allocation or you
4 have to shift it, but pretty much what you said is correct,
5 Robin.

6

7 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Mr. Rindone.

8

9 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, sir. A few things to catch up on here.
10 John, just for specificity for staff, since you had said that
11 you were not necessarily interested in revisiting the commercial
12 allocations, it would be helpful if that could be noted somehow
13 in the motion, perhaps by inserting the word "sector" between
14 "at" and "allocation". If Ms. Bosarge agrees with that, that
15 would just help make it clearer what's being asked of staff for
16 development here. That's the first thing.

17

18 The motion would read: Direct staff to start a plan amendment to
19 look at sector allocations as well as adjust the catch limits
20 for Gulf king mackerel. That just makes it clearer what you
21 guys have discussed thus far.

22

23 The second thing is that historical allocations for kingfish
24 were based on data from 1972 to 1979, and FES only goes back to
25 1981, and so there are no comparative time series to use for the
26 allocations that are on the books for king mackerel, and, to my
27 knowledge, and unless somebody wants to say that I'm wrong on
28 this, and I would love to be wrong on this, you guys would have
29 to start from scratch on this. You would have to come up with
30 an alternative way of looking at how you would reallocate,
31 because the entire time series of information, from 1981
32 forward, is biased by the existing allocation, and so that's the
33 second thing.

34

35 The third thing goes to expound a little bit upon what Dr.
36 Crabtree was saying, which is that, if you change the
37 allocation, then you will ultimately have to rerun the
38 projections to account for the change in where the model is
39 predicting the fishing effort to be coming from, and so that is
40 going to result in a change in the recommended catch limits.

41

42 If you guys think back to what you are currently going through
43 with red grouper, if you -- I mean, you guys have the different
44 allocations that are represented in Amendment 53, and each of
45 those alternatives for a different allocation scenario
46 corresponds to a different ACL, and so the exact thing would be
47 true for king mackerel. It would not be exempt from that in any
48 way. That's just some information there.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ryan, can I ask you a question? What is the
3 impact to the 2021 fishing year if we're in process with this,
4 because I just don't believe that you're going to do a plan
5 amendment, with what you just described from an allocation
6 perspective, in that quick of a fashion, and so the question may
7 be really for Mara, and I don't know, but I assume we're then
8 still working under the old OFL and the old ABC?

9
10 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, sir, and so the quota monitoring is currently
11 done in MRIP-FES, and then it is back-calibrated into MRIP-CHTS
12 for king mackerel. That would continue to happen, and the
13 current ACL that's on the books for the stock, I believe, is
14 8.55 million pounds, and then that's divided according to the
15 sector and then the commercial zone allocations. That would
16 remain on the books until is changed by the council.

17
18 When you guys decide to move forward with adjusting the catch
19 limits, if you were to do that say before you looked at changing
20 the allocations, then new catch limits would take effect when
21 you guys moved to that document and they take effect, but, if
22 you change the allocations, then those catch limits would be
23 updated again, because the projections would change. We would
24 need to rerun those.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. I've got three hands up, and
27 then I'm going to suggest that we vote this up or down. Mr.
28 Swindell.

29
30 **MR. SWINDELL:** I was looking at some notes here and trying to --
31 The present ACL for recreational king mackerel is what? It's
32 just over six-million pounds -- Can you hear me?

33
34 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ed, we can hear you. There was someone else
35 on in somebody's background.

36
37 **MR. SWINDELL:** Okay. The recreational ACL now is six-million
38 pounds, and they're only catch 37 percent of it, or 38, and why
39 don't we just -- John, why don't we just say let's give an off-
40 the-cuff recommendation that -- Let's lower it to four-million
41 pounds, and they're still not catching that much, because
42 they're only catching just over two-million pounds, and so give
43 them four-million pounds to catch, and then you can transfer the
44 remainder to the commercial people.

45
46 I mean, there's plenty of room. I mean, after all, what we're
47 looking at is we're looking at the total resource abundance and
48 the total resource of what we can take out of the resource

1 without damage, and so I think what John is looking for, and
2 what I am looking for, is a way to balance it a little better,
3 and I think we're willing -- At least I am willing to give in
4 and say, look, we'll still have the recreational well within the
5 bounds of what they can catch, by an enormous amount of what
6 they're experiencing for catch over the past many years that
7 it's been in place.

8
9 The commercial people could use a few more million pounds, and
10 it's obvious that they had to end the season in the year,
11 because they have an opportunity to catch more, and they caught
12 their amount, and they are good at reporting it, and I guess I
13 have no problem with the fact that we're using data that is old,
14 but, at the same time, the data that we're using to recording
15 the way we get our data for the recreational side is difficult,
16 and so I think what the rec is reporting, and so I feel
17 comfortable that we could still maintain and stay well within
18 the total that we should allow for the resource abundance, or
19 the resource harvest, rather.

20
21 I think that's what John is asking for, and, John, correct me if
22 I'm wrong, but I think you're just looking to see what we can
23 do, and I think we don't need to nail it down to the exact
24 amount, but let's adjust it some so that we can do better for
25 the public in the United States for people to be able to use
26 this resource, as we should. Thank you.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ed, I am just going to remind you that some
29 of our earlier speakers did talk about in past amendments when
30 it was discussed if certain thresholds were met, which is kind
31 of what you're talking about, and I'm not certain that's what
32 the actual motion says at this point in time, and so, at some
33 point, if you want to change that before Full Council, if this
34 motion passes, you may want to be ready to suggest that. Ms.
35 Levy, you're next.

36
37 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Thank you. I guess I don't really have an
38 opinion on the motion, obviously, but it does seem like, based
39 on what Ryan said, that this is almost ripe for a review of the
40 allocation, or looking at it. I mean, you don't have a time
41 series that you can update with the FES landings, because the
42 time series used for the current allocation is so old, but we do
43 have a lot of data on the recreational and commercial landings.

44
45 I'm not sure that the current and more recent catches are
46 constrained by the allocation, because the recreational sector
47 is not catching their allocation, and so the commercial side
48 might be constrained by it, and not the recreational side, and

1 it just seems like there are a lot of factors that you could
2 look at to decide whether a shift is appropriate, and I don't --
3 It's a little bit different than red grouper, in that sense,
4 because that has a more recent time series that could be updated
5 with the FES numbers, and it's not clear to me how much the
6 stock assessment would change based on different allocation
7 alternatives, given the way the landings have happened in more
8 recent years, and it might be interesting just to look at that.
9 Thanks.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. I said the three that were on
12 the board, but some more have joined, and right now we have Dr.
13 Stunz.

14
15 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not on your
16 committee, and I don't know how much time we'll have to talk
17 about it at Full Council, and so I wanted to jump in now. I
18 would assume that John's motion is talking about the unused
19 portion of the recreational catch as well as any FES
20 recalibrations, and I don't know, but we've sort of been down
21 this road before, and I would say, in quotes, unused
22 recreational portion, but we get stuck so much, in just some of
23 the last comments before me, about maximizing the fish that are
24 coming out of the fishery, and that's really not the case for
25 recreational fisheries.

26
27 You know, we're optimizing what's out there, in the sense that
28 having a high catch per unit effort and a high abundance of fish
29 and that sort of thing makes for a better recreational
30 experience, and so, just because that biomass is not extracted
31 in an ice chest or something, it doesn't mean that that's not a
32 viable allocation in this fishery.

33
34 I wanted to make sure that we really seriously consider, if this
35 motion was to pass, although I'm not going to support it in Full
36 Council personally, but optimal yield is carefully considered
37 about what it means for leaving those fish in the water, to have
38 that high catch per unit effort and the desires of the
39 recreational fishery.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you, Greg. Next up is Dr. Crabtree.

42
43 **DR. CRABTREE:** Given Ryan's comments, it is a little different
44 situation than red grouper and some of the other things we've
45 talked about. I do agree with Mara that the fact that the
46 allocation is based on such an old time series would suggest
47 it's ripe for a review of that and a look at it.

48

1 Just to point that, if you leave the allocation on the books
2 unchanged, and you implement these catch limits, and we start
3 monitoring with FES, you are effectively shifting allocation to
4 the commercial fishery by doing that. Even though the percent
5 on the books remains unchanged, it is effectively a reallocation
6 to the commercial fishery. I don't know by how much, but it
7 would be.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. Next, I have Martha, and we are
10 going to wrap this up after Martha, because I have already
11 extended past when I said I was going to call for a vote here.

12
13 **MS. GUYAS:** I'm good. I forgot that you had kind of called the
14 question after that, and so I'm good.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. We'll have more time at Full Council.
17 John and Ed, you are both on the list, but beyond Martha, and
18 she has given up her slot, in lieu of us trying to move this
19 along, and I'm hoping you all will choose to do the same.

20
21 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes, I will. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. There was a call --
24 Carrie, how do you want to handle the vote here, given Dr.
25 Shipp's question?

26
27 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** I'm ready, Mr. Chair, for a
28 roll call for the committee, if you so choose.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Since Dr. Shipp asked for it, we'll do it.
31 I'm not certain that in a committee it's as important as in Full
32 Council, but go ahead, Carrie.

33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.

35
36 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.

37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas.

39
40 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** No.

41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Crabtree.

43
44 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.

45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Bosarge.

47
48 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Swindell.
3
4 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.
5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Williamson.
7
8 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** No.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas.
11
12 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes.
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs.
15
16 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Yes.
17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Diaz.
19
20 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.
21
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Anson.
23
24 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.
25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Riechers.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I can reserve my vote as Chair here.
29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** That's fine. **It's eight to two**
31 **with one abstention.**
32
33 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. Tom, I am going to turn to you
34 just for a second for directions and whether -- We've been at
35 this for a while, and whether you want to take a break.
36
37 **DR. FRAZER:** I do want to take a ten-minute break, and then
38 we'll come back and do cobia, if that's okay with everybody.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. So we'll come back at -- Tom, I guess
41 you're suggesting --
42
43 **DR. FRAZER:** 3:40. Thank you.
44
45 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
46
47 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Next on our agenda was Item Number VI, Gulf
48 of Mexico Migratory Group Cobia Draft Options Presentation, and

1 that's Tab C-6, and Dr. Mendez-Ferrer is going to walk us
2 through that.

3
4 **GULF OF MEXICO MIGRATORY GROUP COBIA DRAFT OPTIONS PRESENTATION**
5

6 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let's start cobia.
7 So where are we? Where are we with cobia? As of March of 2020,
8 after Framework Amendment 7, we increased the minimum size limit
9 for Gulf zone cobia while we retained existing possession
10 limits. When we worked on this amendment, it was kind of an
11 interim management action while we were waiting for the SEDAR 28
12 update, and we had been receiving comments from the public
13 concerned about declining landings in cobia, and so this was
14 kind of the first step to begin addressing fishing mortality
15 while we waited for the assessment.

16
17 This summer, the Science Center finalized the SEDAR 28 update
18 assessment, which determined that Gulf cobia is not overfished,
19 but it's undergoing overfishing. These results were presented
20 to the council during the September 2020 meeting, where the
21 council then directed the staff to start a plan amendment to
22 reduce fishing mortality in the commercial and recreational
23 cobia fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, which includes bag limits,
24 vessel limits, size limits, and catch limit options.

25
26 What I will be presenting to you today are the actions based on
27 the motion for you guys to consider and to provide some feedback
28 to staff of if we want to consider all of these, or if we want
29 to narrow it down, given some of the changes that were
30 implemented by Framework Amendment 7, and so this gives you a
31 chance to chime in.

32
33 Action 1 would be to modify the Gulf migratory group cobia,
34 which I will be referring to as Gulf cobia, OFL, ABC, and ACL.
35 Action 2 would modify the Gulf cobia ACL apportionment between
36 the Gulf zone and the Florida east coast zone and update the
37 zone ACLs and ACTs. Action 3 would modify the Gulf cobia
38 possession limit. Action 4 increases the Gulf cobia minimum
39 size limit, and then Acton 5 would be to modify the CMP
40 framework procedure, which outlines the responsibilities for
41 each of the councils.

42
43 The Gulf cobia is managed jointly between the South Atlantic
44 Fishery Management Council and the Gulf Council, and the
45 boundary for Gulf migratory group cobia extends from Texas all
46 the way up to the Florida/Georgia line, and then this is divided
47 into two zones, and so there is the Gulf zone, which is from
48 Texas all the way to the Florida Keys, and it ends at the Gulf

1 jurisdictional boundary, and then the Florida east coast zone,
2 which covers the Florida Keys region all the way to the
3 Florida/Georgia line.

4
5 The ACL is apportioned between both zones, and 64 percent of the
6 stock ACL is apportioned to the Gulf zone, and this one is
7 managed as a single stock, and there is no sector allocation for
8 Gulf zone cobia, and then, in the Florida east coast zone, they
9 receive 36 percent of the stock ACL, which is further allocated
10 as 92 percent to the recreational sector and 8 percent to the
11 commercial sector.

12
13 The most recent cobia action was Framework Amendment 7, and this
14 was implemented in March of 2020. The purpose was to reduce
15 fishing mortality of Gulf cobia in response to concerns that
16 harvest rates have decreased in waters of the Gulf zone. For
17 this amendment, the minimum size limit for Gulf zone cobia
18 increased from thirty-three inches fork length to thirty-six,
19 while the Florida east coast zone retained the thirty-three-inch
20 fork length minimum size limit.

21
22 Because this was just implemented in 2020, and the SEDAR 28
23 update had a terminal year of 2018, the results from this
24 management action we have not been able to account for.

25
26 Another action that was explored during Framework Amendment 7
27 was changing the possession limit, but the council decided to
28 take no action and not change the current two fish per person
29 daily recreational and commercial possession limit for cobia,
30 regardless of the number of duration of trips.

31
32 Here is kind of a recap from the SEDAR 28 update, which had a
33 terminal year of 2018. It included FES adjustments to the
34 recreational catch, and it determined that cobia is not
35 overfished, but it's undergoing overfishing, and that
36 overfishing has occurred every year from 1975 to 2018, except
37 for 1993 and 2009.

38
39 Let's go into the meat and potatoes of this document. Again,
40 the Action 1 would be to modify the Gulf migratory group cobia
41 catch limit. Then, because the ACL is apportioned between the
42 Gulf zone and the Florida east coast zone, we need to explore if
43 we need to make any changes to those ACL apportionments and then
44 update the zone ACLs and ACTs. Action 3 is modify the
45 possession limit, and Action 4 is increase the Gulf cobia
46 minimum size limit, and I can show you, for Actions 3 and 4,
47 some of the data analyses that were included for Framework
48 Amendment 7.

1
2 Then, for Action 5, we'll go over the language for the
3 responsibilities of management of Gulf cobia between the Gulf
4 Council and the South Atlantic Council.

5
6 Action 1 is to modify the Gulf cobia OFL, ABC, and ACL.
7 Alternative 1 would be no action, to retain the OFL, ABC, and
8 ACL of Gulf cobia as implemented by CMP Amendment 20B, and so,
9 in this first table that we see here, the current Gulf cobia OFL
10 is 2.66, with an ABC of 2.6 and an ACL of 2.6 million pounds
11 whole weight. Included in the SEDAR 28 update report, there are
12 hypothetical FES currency numbers for the OFL, ABC, and ACL, and
13 you can see that these numbers would be almost double.
14 Alternative 2 would be to modify these catch limits based on the
15 Gulf SSC recommendations for the years 2021 and 2022 and 2023.

16
17 If we go to the next slide, this gives you a little bit of
18 background. Here are the -- The top plot is the recreational
19 landings for the Gulf of Mexico, for the Gulf zone, and then the
20 bottom plot is for the Florida east coast zone. As you can see,
21 there is large difference on the Y-axis, and most of the Gulf
22 cobia are landed in the Gulf zone, and we've been seeing sort of
23 a decline in the landings in recent years. We are comparing
24 also MRIP-CHTS and MRIP-FES.

25
26 Then, if you go to the next slide, similarly, we can see that
27 the commercial landings are lower, compared to the recreational,
28 and that we're also seeing a declining trend, and so we have not
29 been able to do a lot more analysis since our last September
30 meeting, but I can stop here and ask any questions regarding
31 Action 1, and we can go back two slides, if we want to compare
32 the tables. If we don't have any questions, we can move along
33 to Slide Number 11.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, and that's what I would do.

36
37 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I know we're kind of short on time, and so
38 Action 2 would be to modify the Gulf cobia ACL zone
39 apportionment and update the ACTs, and so the way that the ACL
40 is divided is, like I mentioned earlier, 64 percent to the Gulf
41 zone and 36 percent to the Florida east coast zone, and this is
42 based on MRIP-CHTS currency and average landings from 1998 to
43 2012, and so that would be no action.

44
45 Given that we are considering updating this to MRIP-FES
46 currency, then Alternative 2 would be proposed to modify the ACL
47 apportionment between the Gulf zone and the Florida east coast
48 zone based on MRIP-FES average landings from 1998 to 2012, and

1 that's the same time period that we used for the current
2 apportionment, and then update the zone ACLs and ACTs.

3
4 Alternative 3 is kind of up in the air, which would be to
5 explore another way to recalculate -- It could be a different
6 time series to recalculate the average landings, and then, based
7 on that, recalculate the percent apportionment for the Florida
8 east coast zone and the Gulf zone. Then, based on those ACLs,
9 then we would run the ACL/ACT control rule to calculate the
10 stock ACT.

11
12 This is something that -- I guess do we want to leave this to
13 the IPT to explore, to explore the data, or does the council
14 have, I guess, additional suggestions on how to explore the ACL
15 apportionment between the zones?

16
17 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Can you go back up one slide, please? Dr.
18 Mendez-Ferrer, I will just ask the question. I mean, is there -
19 - What is the possible rationale, or Ryan has his hand up, I
20 see, and so it seems to me that exploring the zone, or a zone
21 reallocation, complicates what might be a fairly simple action,
22 but I am assuming you all have some thoughts about why we might
23 be considering this, and I'm just maybe not recalling, from our
24 last meeting, some of that discussion. Ryan, do you want to try
25 to take that?

26
27 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, sure. I mean, this third alternative isn't
28 really to prod you guys in another direction from Alternative 2,
29 but it's just putting it there in case you guys wanted to
30 reconsider the time series used to establish that apportionment
31 between the Gulf zone and the Florida east coast zone, and so,
32 if you guys are most comfortable with just updating that
33 apportionment under Alternative 2, using the previously agreed
34 upon time series with the South Atlantic Council, then, as you
35 correctly stated, that would be the simplest path forward for
36 this particular action.

37
38 In the case of Alternative 1, we would have to look at the
39 degree to which leaving those zone allocations the same resulted
40 in -- It's basically the same general things that we've talked
41 about between the recreational and commercial sectors for like
42 king mackerel and red grouper. Whichever zone has had more
43 recreational effort in the past would likely not benefit from
44 the existing allocations, and so rebalancing it would be in the
45 spirit of what was done originally when Alternative 1 was
46 established.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. I've now got a few hands up.

1 Ms. Boggs.
2
3 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With regard to Alternative 2,
4 and I may have missed it, but do we have those MRIP-FES numbers
5 from 1998 to 2012 that we can see, because the next graph is
6 just the Gulf zone cobia from 2012 to 2019. My assumption is,
7 the way FES has been trending, it's certainly going to be not a
8 big significant change, but I don't want to assume that. Thank
9 you.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ryan, or Dr. Mendez-Ferrer, do you all --
12
13 **MR. RINDONE:** We have those data.
14
15 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** We've got it graphically there, but I don't
16 know that -- I think Ms. Boggs is actually wanting more of a
17 tabular format, I believe.
18
19 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** We do have those data. That's something
20 that we could explore as we're developing the document.
21
22 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Ms. Guyas.
23
24 **MS. GUYAS:** I was just going to ask -- I think that allocation
25 that's in Alternative 1 -- Did we arrive at that in like
26 Amendment 18, and it was like a massive CMP document that was
27 like ten years in the making? Does anybody recall?
28
29 **MR. RINDONE:** Natasha, I believe it was actually in 20B, and is
30 that correct?
31
32 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** The ACL and ACT was originally established
33 in Amendment 18, but then Amendment 20B is when it was updated
34 and the apportionment was implemented, if I remember correctly.
35
36 **MR. RINDONE:** So the apportionment comes from 20B?
37
38 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes.
39
40 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. All right. That helps me. I guess -- I see
41 that we have, I guess on Slide 9, the data, but it might be
42 helpful, for this discussion, to see it in some stacked bar
43 graphs or something. It looks like FES introduces, certainly,
44 more ups and downs and inconsistent, I guess, from year-to-year
45 data, but at least you get a sense of how landings may have
46 shifted from one coast to the other, with the transition from
47 CHTS to FES, but I don't necessarily have any suggestions for
48 Alternative 3 at this point, and so I would just leave it as-is

1 for now, but it might be nice to have more information in a
2 future meeting.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Mara, I believe I see your hand up.

5

6 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. I mean, I think you could consider, in
7 Alternative 3, including more recent landings years, right, and
8 so this ends at 2012, and we're in 2020, and we have 2019, I
9 think. If you don't look at more recent years, I think we're
10 going to need to talk about why that's not appropriate to at
11 least explore when we're talking about shifting allocation.
12 Thank you.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Let me make sure that I understand that
15 comment, Mara. You're suggesting that, if we leave Alternative
16 3 in, and we shift an allocation, it may be, and I'm not saying
17 that we can't find a rationale, but it may be difficult to not
18 explain why -- To explain away why we didn't use more recent
19 years, but, if we leave the Alternative 2 and 1, then,
20 basically, at that point, it would be -- Part of our rationale
21 is that's the current allocation structure.

22

23 **MS. LEVY:** If I may, what I'm saying is, if you get rid of
24 Alternative 3, and you don't even look at more recent years, and
25 you're just going to update based on the current years, which
26 now cut off at 2012, I think you're going to need to explain why
27 it wasn't appropriate to at least consider including more recent
28 years.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. Does anyone have
31 suggestions for Alternative 3, other than, at this point, we
32 probably, as I think Martha suggested, leave it in, but, at this
33 point, we don't really know how we might populate the blanks
34 that are in Alternative 3. That will be us looking at that data
35 that we may get a chance to look at in more tabular format, to
36 look at how the zones may have shifted. Anybody?

37

38 Hearing none, then I think the next options, or actions, were
39 both size limits, which we've already made a change that's not
40 incorporated into the current assessment, and then the other
41 option regarding bag limits, which was rejected the last time we
42 had these discussions.

43

44 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, Mr. Chair. If we can then continue
45 with the presentation, Slide 13 is basically a snapshot of the
46 percent of the ACL that's landed by the Gulf zone, for the Gulf
47 zone cobia, and you can see, in the second-to-last column, that
48 the percent of the ACL -- The landings have been decreasing.

1
2 If we move on to the next slide, for the sake of time, Action 3
3 is to modify the Gulf cobia possession limit, and so Alternative
4 1 would be no action, to retain the two fish per person daily
5 recreational and commercial possession limit, regardless of the
6 number or duration of trips.

7
8 The rest of the alternatives could be applied to -- They could
9 be explored by the Alternative 2, and that would reduce the
10 recreational and commercial daily possession limit to one fish
11 per person, and this is one of the recommendations that we heard
12 from Martha during the September meeting, since Florida has a
13 possession limit of one fish per person.

14
15 Then Alternative 3 is create a recreational and commercial
16 vessel limit for Gulf cobia, and anglers may not exceed the per-
17 person possession limit. Options are included there of two,
18 four, and six fish per vessel, and they're the same ones that
19 were explored during Framework Amendment 7.

20
21 If we move to the next slide, the council did not take action on
22 changing the possession limit, because, when the analyses were
23 run to look at how much the percent reduction in fishing
24 mortality would be associated with changing the possession
25 limits, it was much lower when compared to the changes that
26 would be applied from increasing the size limit. If you can
27 see, this little table that is here is from Amendment 7, and so
28 reducing the possession limit to one cobia per person would have
29 a 6 percent reduction in fishing mortality from the commercial
30 and 4 percent from the recreational, and so on.

31
32 As it stands, and the little plots on the bottom are from our
33 data from 2015 to 2017, if you look at the plot on the bottom-
34 left, that's cobia harvested per angler, and we have less than
35 one, but it's related to having more than one person on a boat
36 and, only one to four, for example, and not all four of the
37 anglers caught a fish.

38
39 Then, if we look at the plot on the right, which is cobia
40 harvested per vessel, then we see the same thing, that the
41 commercial sector, charter, and private, are already catching
42 one. They're mostly catching one fish per vessel. I can stop
43 here, and we can go to the previous slide and see if this is
44 something that we still want to explore in this amendment.

45
46 During the last September council meeting, we also received two
47 or three public comments of people recommending following a
48 similar approach to the possession limits for mackerel that you

1 see.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. I've got a couple of hands on the
4 board here. Martha.

5
6 **MS. GUYAS:** Thank you. I would want to continue to look at
7 this, and then I'm hoping, and I can't remember if we talked
8 about this at the last meeting, being able to rerun these
9 analyses based on the new data that we're working with FES. It
10 also would be interesting to see if the changes that we've made
11 -- Well, I don't know what we could do and if there is a way to
12 see if the changes that we've made have had any sort of effect,
13 and I know they're obviously not included in the assessment, but
14 I can't remember when it is that they actually got implemented.
15 If it was just last year, that's probably not on the table at
16 this point.

17
18 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Mr. Chair, if I may, this was implemented in
19 March of this year, and we did not change possession limits, but
20 the size limit increased only for the Gulf zone. The Florida
21 east coast zone remained the same.

22
23 **MS. GUYAS:** Right. Okay. Well, I guess, if we can rerun this
24 in FES, I would be interested to see how that looks, this one
25 and the size limit one.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Next up is Leann.

28
29 **MS. BOSARGE:** I was trying to remember. When we talked about
30 those vessel limits before, it seems like there was a little
31 heartache from some of it, and I think it maybe had to do with
32 trying to find a one-size-fits-all for both traditional private
33 anglers for a vessel limit as well as charter boats who fall
34 under the recreational sector and a vessel limit that would fit
35 both of those fishing styles, but I could be wrong, and please
36 correct me if that was not an issue, but, if it was an issue,
37 would we be warranted to almost have some sub-actions on these
38 vessel limits where you choose a vessel limit for federally-
39 permitted for-hire vessels, and then you have a separate
40 alternative for private anglers, since you -- I mean, there is a
41 permit there, and so you can -- If you have that federal permit
42 for for-hire, you could put a limit with that permit, and all
43 others who don't have a federal permit in the recreational
44 fishery, which would be private anglers and state guideboats, I
45 guess, then they would have the other limit.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any other comments to that? If not, we'll
48 move on to Mr. Rindone.

1
2 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, sir, and so we had implemented the
3 increase in the minimum size limit to thirty-six inches fork
4 length, and that was recently implemented. However, I know that
5 some of the states went ahead and adjusted their minimum size
6 limit as well, some of which may have taken effect prior to the
7 change in the federal minimum size limit, and, since we have the
8 luxury of those in the know on the call, I was wondering if that
9 would be to the committee's benefit, to hear when the states
10 changed those over, because, although the majority of Gulf cobia
11 are still landed in federal waters, a considerable portion -- I
12 think, if I remember correctly, it's about 40 percent or so of
13 landings do still come from state waters. Mr. Chair.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** As one of those individuals you're referring
16 to, I would have to go back and look when that actually took
17 effect. Others may have it at the top of their head. Anybody
18 else?

19
20 **MR. RINDONE:** Mr. Chair, I do recall that Texas did put those
21 into effect before the federal one went into effect.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** We did, and so it probably would have been
24 last September, because we run on a September 1 to August 31
25 cycle, but I'm just not recalling whether -- Given how long
26 sometimes our federal processes take, it may have even been
27 before that, but I would have thought it would have been the
28 most recent cycle. Do any other states want to chime in there?

29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** We can put a table in there, in the document.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. You said there is table, Ryan, or --

33
34 **MR. RINDONE:** No, sir. I said that we could work to put one in
35 the document. We can talk to all the state folks and figure
36 that out.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes. I think what council staff is looking
39 for here were any additions to this suite of options that we
40 have here, and, if there really aren't any, then, as I
41 understand it, they will continue fleshing the current actions
42 out, and then we're working towards a document, I assume, that
43 we're trying to share then with our counterparts in the South
44 Atlantic as well, and is that the basic structure of where we're
45 heading, Ryan, or Dr. Mendez-Ferrer? Is that where we're
46 headed?

47
48 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, and so we will be working -- The plan

1 right now is to have a draft document by the January 2021, but
2 we will still do a short presentation with the South Atlantic in
3 December, to give them an update on the plan, since this is a
4 joint amendment.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Ms. Boggs, do you have your hand up?

7
8 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, and thank you, Mr. Chair. I had to take a
9 moment to process what Leann said, but, you know, that may not
10 be a bad idea, because, if we're going to be looking at
11 limiting, and it's just conversation here, to one fish per
12 person, your private rec guy might not look at that as fair,
13 and, when you've got a charter boat or a headboat with one fish
14 per person, I think that might be a good option to look at, is
15 what Leann suggested. Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Anybody else have any suggestions? If not,
18 then I think, Mr. Chair, there was no other business outlined in
19 the opening, as we drafted the agenda, and I'm assuming there is
20 no other business from staff to come under here, or else it
21 would have been listed. Hold on. Natasha has her hand up.
22 Sorry, Dr. Mendez-Ferrer. Go ahead.

23
24 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** It's okay, Mr. Chair, but we still have some
25 more to go through.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I'm sorry. Go ahead.

28
29 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Okay, and so we can skip to Action 4. This
30 is to increase the Gulf cobia minimum size limit, but
31 Alternative 1, no action, would retain the current recreational
32 and commercial minimum size limit, which is thirty-six inches
33 fork length in the Gulf zone and a thirty-three-inch fork length
34 in the Florida east coast zone.

35
36 Alternative 2 would retain the minimum size limit of thirty-six
37 in the Gulf, but it would consider increasing the size limit
38 from thirty-three to thirty-six in the Florida east coast zone,
39 and then the other two alternatives are thirty-nine and forty-
40 two, which were both explored during Framework Amendment 7, and
41 they could be considered by zone.

42
43 If you go to the next slide, these were the analyses from
44 Framework Amendment 7, and, as you can see, through their
45 discussions, they found that increasing the minimum size limit
46 for Gulf zone cobia had a higher reduction, percent reduction,
47 in fishing mortality when compared to modifying the possession
48 limit, and so, right now, we're at thirty-six, and we could

1 certainly redo the analyses with thirty-nine and forty-two and
2 then considering the changes to the Florida east coast zone, if
3 that's something that the committee and the council agree with.

4
5 Another thing is, right now, if we go back, this is just a quick
6 look at the landings. Most of the landings come from Florida
7 and Louisiana, and, right now, Florida has basically like four
8 different sets of regulations, depending on where you catch
9 cobia, and so you have regulations for state waters on the Gulf
10 side and then different regulations for federal waters on the
11 Gulf side and in Florida state waters on the east coast and the
12 federal waters on the east coast.

13
14 When we work on the little table, that's something that you
15 might want to look at and then consider if having some sort of
16 consistency in the regulations is something that you might want
17 to forward with, and it's just something to keep in mind.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** It looks like Martha wants to respond to
20 that. Martha.

21
22 **MS. GUYAS:** Thank you. Yes, we in Florida have different
23 regulations in Gulf and federal, or Gulf state and federal, and
24 Atlantic and Gulf, and so you all might recall, when we talked
25 about cobia a couple of years ago, that was actually in response
26 to us coming to the council, and we made changes to the vessel
27 limits, and, based on stakeholder concerns, many of the ones
28 that we heard at the council meeting, we ended up only
29 implementing changes on the Gulf side, and we just ended up
30 taking kind of a wait-and-see on the Atlantic side.

31
32 Then, of course, the council changed the minimum size limit
33 instead of changing the vessel limit, and so, at the time, our
34 commission basically said, well, let's wait and see what the
35 assessment comes out with, and we're at that point now, and so
36 it would be nice to have a little bit more consistent
37 regulations here, I think, in general, but we'll see, I guess,
38 where our commission wants to go. Since that time, I know
39 there's some interest, on the Atlantic side of Florida, in
40 making some changes to regulations, and so, at least as far as
41 Florida goes, we'll see where all that shakes out.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Go ahead.

44
45 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just also wanted to
46 kind of remind the committee that considering the minimum size
47 limit will also put more pressure into fishing the larger
48 females, and so that could also have an influence on the stock.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** So it seems to me that at least the
3 alternatives that you're suggesting here are alternatives that
4 we keep in the document, at least, at least from my perspective.
5 Then we can have this discussion about the bag limits and the
6 consistency, or Florida can have that discussion, as to whether
7 they want to match something that the South Atlantic or the Gulf
8 is doing. I think that takes us to Actions 5 and 6, which are
9 the framework procedures, if I'm correct.

10
11 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** As you may know, CMP is managed jointly with
12 the South Atlantic Council, and, through the framework
13 procedure, we outline the responsibilities of each of the
14 councils. The language that I am presenting today is directly
15 related to the management of Gulf cobia.

16
17 Action 5 would to modify the framework procedure, and
18 Alternative 1 would be no action, which would retain the current
19 framework procedure and responsibilities of each council to set
20 regulations for Gulf migratory group cobia as adopted in
21 Amendment 20B and revised in Amendment 26.

22
23 This portion, from the bottom of the slide, is extracted from --
24 It's language extracted from the framework procedure. The
25 recommendations, with respect to the Atlantic migratory groups
26 of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia would be the
27 responsibility of the South Atlantic Council, and those for the
28 Gulf migratory group of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and
29 cobia would be the responsibility of the Gulf Council, with the
30 following exceptions.

31
32 The South Atlantic Council will have the responsibility to set
33 vessel trip limits, closed seasons or areas, or gear
34 restrictions for the east coast of Florida, including the
35 Atlantic side of the Florida Keys, for Gulf migratory group
36 cobia. As it stands, the South Atlantic can do those three
37 actions through a framework without having to involve the Gulf
38 Council in voting.

39
40 If we go to Alternative 2, it's changing the text a little to
41 say that the South Atlantic Council has the responsibility to
42 specify management measures that affect only the east coast of
43 Florida, including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys, for
44 Gulf migratory group cobia.

45
46 It seems, from discussions, that it was the intent to give the
47 South Atlantic more responsibility on managing the Florida east
48 coast zone cobia, and so that's kind of what is being proposed

1 here. For things like modifying stock ACLs and catch limits,
2 that would still be jointly, and it would still have to involve
3 the Gulf Council. I see that Leann has a question.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ms. Bosarge, go ahead.

6
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** I think I have a little hesitation in throwing
8 that in there. You know, the South Atlantic Council has taken
9 management of the Atlantic stock of cobia and turned it over to
10 the Atlantic States, and I don't have a problem with that, and
11 that's what they decided to do, and they think that will work
12 great for them, and good, but I am a little concerned about
13 opening this can of worms and then making sure all of our Is are
14 dotted and Ts are crossed, and do we end up in a situation
15 where, well, we told them they could manage Gulf cobia however
16 they wanted on the east coast of Florida, and then they decide
17 that they're going to take some Gulf stock cobia and hand it to
18 the Atlantic states, and then we end up in a sticky situation
19 when we want to make changes to how we manage our Gulf stock,
20 and that's just not an interaction that we really have any
21 precedent laid out for, and I'm worried that going down this
22 Action 5 road might get us there.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** It sounds like Ryan has a direct response to
25 that point. Ryan.

26
27 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Riechers. To Ms. Bosarge's point,
28 because we still jointly manage this species, we had to sign-off
29 when the South Atlantic, in CMP Amendment 31, designated the
30 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission management authority
31 over Atlantic cobia, and so the South Atlantic Council would not
32 be able to designate management authority of Gulf cobia in the
33 Florida east coast zone to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
34 Commission without the express consent of the Gulf Council, and
35 so, because it's a joint plan, that wouldn't be able to happen
36 without you guys giving it your seal of approval.

37
38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Can I follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

39
40 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, please.

41
42 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, that may be the case, Ryan, but there's a
43 whole lot in that, buried in that, that we haven't thought about
44 yet, and I haven't even counted votes. We have seventeen voting
45 members on this council. Well, when you start looking at
46 something like that, they have liaisons, I'm pretty sure, on the
47 South Atlantic Council that are actually voting -- They get to
48 vote on certain things, and so there's just a lot in that that I

1 feel like we're opening Pandora's Box, and I think we need to
2 step back and think about that a little bit before we throw this
3 in this amendment, and maybe we don't even have the votes to
4 stop it, once we put it in the amendment.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. I've got two more on the list, Martha
7 and then Roy, and then I think we're going to wrap this and
8 bring it to a landing here. Martha.

9
10 **MS. GUYAS:** I guess it's sort of a question. I mean, like in
11 the situation we're in now, where we have a stock that's got
12 some issues, and we've got a management target that we need to
13 hit, and we've got cut harvest by about a third, and I think
14 that's going to have to come from both sides, right, and so I
15 don't know -- I guess we would just need to think about that for
16 the future, right, where maybe one side isn't pulling their
17 weight, or if there's a way to distribute that in the process,
18 so that, I guess, we don't end up in a situation where one
19 council is doing one thing and the other council is doing
20 another, towards another set of goals, but I'm fine having this
21 in there and talking about it, and I think we just need to think
22 through some of those scenarios.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, and I will -- Before I go to Roy, I
25 will share that I didn't read it quite as broadly as maybe some
26 others had read that, when I'm reading it, but, obviously, the
27 devil will be in the details, when it's fleshed out more in the
28 document, if we leave it in and flesh it out, but that's just my
29 two-cents worth there. Roy.

30
31 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just to the concerns that Leann raised, liaisons
32 don't vote at Full Council, and, at any rate, it's a joint
33 amendment, and both councils have to approve the amendment, and
34 so you would have to -- It would come down to the majority of
35 the voting members on the Gulf Council, and so there are a lot
36 of things to worry about, but I don't think the concerns about
37 the South Atlantic turning it over to ASMFC -- That's really
38 just not a concern, and I don't think you ought to be worrying
39 about that.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Well, if we do leave it in, the no action,
42 Alternative 1, is still there to keep it the way it is now, and
43 so, I mean, there is that option, as we think about it as it
44 stands, but I also understand your point, Leann, of why open a
45 can of worms if we don't need to, or don't want to.

46
47 Any suggestions for staff? I mean, we haven't made motions on
48 our suggestions at this point, but they're trying to get

1 feedback, and, obviously, they have a presentation coming up at
2 the South Atlantic, and then we will see this again, I assume --
3 We know we're seeing it again in January, and I don't know
4 whether we will see it again on our next agenda in November.

5
6 **MR. FRAZER:** Mr. Riechers, I don't think we're going to have
7 that on the agenda until January.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. So, if anyone feels, I guess,
10 strongly about inclusions of something, you need to probably be
11 prepared to make motions at Full Council tomorrow morning, if
12 you want to try to add something here that's not already been
13 included or, for instance, flesh out some of those percentages
14 in the one option. Otherwise, it's going to go forward, in
15 presentation at least, to the South Atlantic the way it is now.

16
17 With that, and we were kind of there a moment ago, and
18 rightfully so, and I was backed up, and we went through the full
19 presentation covering both the framework as well as those other
20 items that we had kind of discussed generally at the start of
21 the presentation, but we discussed them more fully, but I
22 believe, now, that does take us to Other Business, and, at this
23 point, we didn't have any other business, and so, Tom, I will
24 turn this back over to you.

25
26 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 27, 2020.)

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