

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 REEF FISH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4
5 Webinar

6
7 January 26-27, 2021

8
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- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
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TABLE OF MOTIONS

1
2
3 [PAGE 21](#): Motion to begin the process of using the snapshot that
4 NMFS took on December 31, 2020 of the number of pounds of red
5 snapper in individual IFQ accounts, in order to place those
6 pounds back in those individual accounts in 2021 to mitigate the
7 impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on that fishery. [The motion](#)
8 [failed on page 27](#).

9
10 [PAGE 31](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the preferred
11 alternative. [The motion carried on page 33](#).

12
13 [PAGE 33](#): Motion to approve the Framework Action: Modification
14 of Gray Triggerfish Catch Limits and that it be forwarded to the
15 Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem
16 the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff
17 editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document.
18 The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to
19 the codified text as necessary and appropriate. [The motion](#)
20 [carried on page 34](#).

21
22 [PAGE 37](#): Motion to approve the Framework Action: Modification
23 of the Gulf of Mexico Lane Snapper Catch Limits and
24 Accountability Measures and that it be forwarded to the
25 Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem
26 the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff
27 editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document.
28 The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to
29 the codified text as necessary and appropriate. [The motion](#)
30 [carried on page 38](#).

31
32 [PAGE 47](#): Motion to request the SEFSC add two additional
33 analysis runs to the research track red snapper assessment that
34 would replace federal recreational survey data with state
35 recreational survey data with and without Great Red Snapper
36 Count data. [The motion carried on page 60](#).

37
38 [PAGE 70](#): Motion in Action 1 to add a series of options under
39 Alternative 2 that would incorporate an increase to the
40 overfishing fishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch
41 (ABC) based on the results of the Interim Analysis as informed
42 by the Great Red Snapper Count. If the results of the review by
43 the SSC result in a minimum of zero percent or 25 percent
44 increase in ABC, the state-specific ACLs would be calibrated
45 based on Alternative 2 for the 2021 and 2022 recreational
46 fishing seasons. Regardless of the results of the Interim
47 Analysis, the state specific ACLs will be reviewed in 2022 or as
48 soon as practicable. [The motion carried on page 89](#).

1
2 [PAGE 90](#): Motion in Action 1 to add a new Alternative 4. [The](#)
3 [motion carried on page 94](#).
4
5 [PAGE 94](#): Motion in Action 1, Alternative 3, apply 23 percent
6 reduction and any quota increase across each of the states. [The](#)
7 [motion carried on page 99](#).
8
9 [PAGE 99](#): Motion in Action 1 to add a new Alternative 5 in the
10 red snapper data calibrations and catch limits framework action
11 and apply the 11.8 percent reduction in any quota increase
12 across each of the states. [The motion failed on page 109](#).
13
14 [PAGE 110](#): Motion to direct staff to initiate an amendment to
15 adjust the OFL and ABC based on the results of the interim
16 analysis for red snapper (as informed by the GRSC) and SSC
17 recommendations. The private recreational ACLs should include,
18 but not be limited to, a range of alternatives that consider
19 reallocation based on state specific biomass estimates derived,
20 in part, from the GRSC and NOAA's socioeconomic data. Allocation
21 for the commercial and CFH sectors will also be considered in
22 this amendment. [The motion carried on page 115](#).
23
24 [PAGE 116](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the
25 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 125](#).
26
27 [PAGE 140](#): Motion to direct staff to work on a plan amendment to
28 update rebuilding plan for greater amberjack and revise catch
29 limits and sector allocations based on the MRIP-FES data. [The](#)
30 [motion carried on page 147](#).
31
32 [PAGE 156](#): Motion to request a presentation on the process for
33 arriving at yearly red grouper average weight via MRIP and
34 include sample sizes per strata, PSEs, and other relevant data
35 for each year. [The motion carried on page 159](#).
36
37 [PAGE 161](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 3 the
38 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 167](#).
39
40 [PAGE 168](#): Motion in Action 2 to make Alternative 3 the
41 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 168](#).
42
43 [PAGE 168](#): Motion to take Amendment 53, Red Grouper Allocations
44 and Annual Catch Levels and Catch Targets to public hearing.
45 [The motion carried on page 171](#).

46
47 - - -
48

1 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened via webinar on Tuesday morning,
3 January 26, 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Martha
4 Guyas.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN MARTHA GUYAS:** Good morning, everybody. We've got a
11 busy day ahead of us, and our first item of business is to
12 approve our agenda for the morning, and so, before we do that,
13 are there any additions to the agenda? I will just give folks a
14 couple of minutes to raise their hands. All right. I think
15 it's safe to say no hands at this point. Okay, and so is there
16 any opposition to adopting the agenda as written? Hearing none,
17 the agenda is adopted as written.

18
19 Next, that takes us to Tab B, Number 2, the November 2020
20 minutes. Are there any changes or additions to the minutes?
21 Seeing none, is there any opposition to adopting the minutes as
22 written? Hearing none, the minutes are adopted as written.

23
24 We will go through the Action Guide and Next Steps as we go
25 through each item, like we did yesterday, and so let's go ahead,
26 and that will take us to Item IV, the Review of Reef Fish
27 Landings and Presentations from SERO.

28
29 **REVIEW OF REEF FISH LANDINGS AND PRESENTATIONS**
30

31 **MR. PETER HOOD:** I'm here, and I'm ready to present that, as
32 soon as they're up on the screen, and I can't remember if it's
33 (a) or (b), but it's the figures in that. If you open up the
34 other file, and there's one that has figures. That's it.
35 Thanks.

36
37 As I mentioned at the last meeting, I was going to try something
38 new, and, rather than presenting the tables, I will present
39 figures. Because we don't have the recreational data, I'm just
40 going to be presenting commercial landings. If you're
41 interested in what the actual landings are, either commercial or
42 the little we have for recreational, you can go in -- I'm not
43 sure what tab it is, and I think it's 4(a), that is the tables.

44
45 In terms of what the figures will show, again, we're just
46 providing commercial landings, and these landings are
47 preliminary for 2020. It's cumulative landings by month, and
48 then you'll see a series of lines. 2020 is in black, and 2019,

1 last year, is in blue, or two years ago, I guess, and we're in
2 2021 now, and then we have an average of 2017 through 2019 data,
3 and that is the red-dashed line. The 2019 is blue, and the 2020
4 is in black, and then the ACL will be in yellow-orange. In some
5 cases, where we have stock ACLs, since the recreational sector
6 oftentimes lands most of the fish, the ACL would be -- We have
7 to really change the scale, and so, basically, the ACL is just
8 listed on the figure.

9
10 This is gray triggerfish landings, and the black line is 2020,
11 and you can see that landings were below 2019, and basically
12 what we've seen for an average, and that's the trend that you're
13 going to see for many of the species. I'm not sure why 2020
14 landings are low, and it probably is a factor of effort, and
15 market conditions may have been dictating what that effort is,
16 but, in terms of why they're lower, I don't know.

17
18 This is greater amberjack, and you can see greater amberjack
19 landings were a lot lower in 2020 than they were in other years,
20 and you can see that we never reached the ACL. This is gray
21 snapper, and gray snapper is managed under a stock ACL, which
22 that is 2.24 million pounds. You can see here that, for
23 commercial landings, 2020 was lower than previous years.

24
25 Here we have mutton snapper, and, again, it's a stock ACL. Then
26 you can see that, for both 2019 and 2020, landings were below
27 that 2017 through 2019 average, which basically means that
28 probably, in 2017 and 2018, landings were much higher.

29
30 Here we have vermilion snapper. Again, we see landings in 2020
31 were less than previous years, and, as with many of these
32 others, they have tended to fall off as the year progressed,
33 with that gap between landings getting greater for each month.

34
35 This will be for the IFQ species, and we have red snapper, gag,
36 and red grouper. Red snapper, basically, this year seems
37 basically about the same as it has been for previous years, and
38 the black line lines up over both 2019 and that 2017 to 2019
39 average.

40
41 This is gag, and gag landings for 2020 are fairly close to what
42 they have been, in terms of an average over 2017 through 2019,
43 and they're below what was landed in 2019. Here we have red
44 grouper, and, again, we see that 2020 landings were below the
45 average, but they were fairly similar to what was harvested in
46 2019, and I believe that's the last slide, unless you have
47 questions, and I think that's it.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Peter. I am checking
2 here for hands, to see if there are any questions. It looks
3 like Kevin's hand is up. Kevin.

4
5 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Peter, for
6 the information. You may not know the answer to this question,
7 but what's your anticipation for having the recreational data
8 from 2020 finalized? Usually it's the April-ish timeframe, but
9 I know, due to COVID, things have slowed down a bit, and they're
10 behind what they normally would be, as far as processing that
11 data, and is there any -- Have you heard what the latest is on
12 the expectation to have that data processed for 2020, the
13 recreational data?

14
15 **MR. HOOD:** No, I have not, and, in fact, I asked that very same
16 question to some of our data folks, and they basically said
17 that, yes, the landings data, the final landings data, is
18 typically available in April or May, somewhere around there,
19 but, again, this is -- You know, 2020 has been an atypical year,
20 and it could be even later than that, and so I wish I had an
21 update, and I don't know if anybody from the Center might have
22 more information on that, but I have not heard anything.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Peter, I guess, along those lines -- Andy, go
25 ahead.

26
27 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Martha, I see Richard Cody is on, and I
28 don't know if Richard could speak to this.

29
30 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** We're on schedule for mid-April or so. Right
31 now, John Foster and his team are working on the imputation
32 methods, and we have data through Wave 5. We don't anticipate
33 any delays for the Wave 6 data being available, and so we're
34 working with an anticipated date of mid-April, which is the same
35 as previous years. There will be a few things that we will hand
36 out with the data to advise people of some of the caveats, since
37 we are dealing with some fairly significant data gaps for some
38 of the time periods, but mid-April is the date we are focusing
39 on.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. That's helpful. The question
42 I was going to ask is I'm already getting asked about amberjack,
43 since we have that split season in place, and what's the, I
44 guess, potential for the May season to occur as scheduled, and I
45 don't know if Andy or Richard -- If you want to respond to that.

46
47 **DR. CODY:** Well, I mean, I don't have the full year of data at-
48 hand right now, and so, I mean, we weren't planning to put out

1 any data before that April date, and so, I mean, that would
2 definitely impact decisions for the 2021 season, and I don't
3 know if Andy wants to add to that.

4
5 **MR. STRELCHECK:** There's really not much to add. Certainly, the
6 sooner we have the data, the better and faster we can turn it
7 around for setting seasons for the 2021 season.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you. Any other questions for
10 Peter, or Richard, for that matter, on this? I don't see any
11 hands. We do have another presentation from SERO, and I think
12 Dr. Stephen is going to give this presentation on the IFQ
13 program. I think we can go ahead and move into that. I'm
14 sorry, Susan. I see your hand. Go ahead.

15
16 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I was just going to tell Peter that I really
17 like this format. It's much easier for me to digest. Thank
18 you, Peter.

19
20 **MR. HOOD:** You're welcome.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, I agree. It's really great. Okay. Now I
23 don't see any more hands, and so I think we can go now to Tab B,
24 Number 4(c)

25
26 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** This is another presentation on kind of
27 the pandemic effects for the IFQ fishery. I just wanted to let
28 the council know that we did present some of this information to
29 the SSC, and not everything that you're seeing we had ready at
30 the time, since the SSC did meet the first week of January, and
31 we were still gathering the data.

32
33 Similar to what we've done in the past, I will have information
34 about 2020, include some comparisons to 2019, and then
35 individual years of 2017 to 2019, as well as the average by
36 share category, and I just want to caution you that the IFQ data
37 is still preliminary, and we still get some corrections in from
38 last year in the year right now, and we're working through some
39 of those corrections as we speak.

40
41 I wanted to start off with the percentage of quota landed for
42 each share category in comparison to 2017, and let's start with
43 red snapper. We have landed 99 percent of the quota, just a
44 little bit less than we've landed in past years, and so, as you
45 can see, we're a little bit closer to 99.4 or 99.6 in some of
46 the past years. Early in the IFQ program, we were closer to
47 that 99 percent.

48

1 Looking at red grouper, and, again, a caution that red grouper's
2 quota did change in 2019, and so some of the percentage
3 comparisons may not be appropriate, and we landed about 79
4 percent in 2020, compared to the 68 percent in 2019, and so,
5 here, we landed more than we have in past years. In gag
6 grouper, we landed slightly less than we've landed in past
7 years, at around 51 percent, compared to 52 to 57 percent.

8
9 As we jump into the three last categories, I have highlighted
10 the 2020 values in red, because, in these three categories,
11 we've actually landed significantly less than we have in past
12 years. For deepwater grouper, we landed around 79 percent, and
13 so that is lower than 2019, but not too much lower than 2017 and
14 2018. Shallow-water grouper had around 31 percent.

15
16 Now, that is lower than we've seen in the past years, and I will
17 caution that shallow-water grouper has always been extremely
18 variable in the percentage landed, and we have typically never
19 gotten a high percentage of landings within this category. Then
20 tilefish was around 60 percent, and that's considerably lower
21 than we saw in some of the more recent past years.

22
23 This is the same type of information, but, here, I wanted to
24 give it to you in pounds, particularly so you can identify, in
25 red grouper, where that quota change made the percentages a
26 little bit hard to look at the data. Here, you can see the 2020
27 quota, down towards the bottom, and the remaining 2020
28 allocation that has been left in the accounts.

29
30 I do want to caution you that, in this graph, there are
31 corrections going on, and there was still a small amount of
32 allocation that's being held by NMFS from the shares that were
33 reclaimed back in Amendment 36A.

34
35 You can see, in here, that red snapper by far has the smallest
36 percentage of pounds, or the smallest number of pounds, left
37 over, and we have some of the higher amounts of pounds left in
38 red grouper and gag grouper.

39
40 What this table shows you is we have looked at the OFL, the ABC,
41 and I've also shown the IFQ quota for each share category and
42 then what the buffer was between the OFL and the ABC, and so
43 that buffer is the amount that potentially we could carry over.
44 Now, keep in mind that that buffer also needs to consider
45 recreational stocks, and so we might not want to carry over
46 something completely at that buffer amount, to allow for any of
47 the recreational stocks that may have gone over.

48

1 Then you see the carryover amount is the potential amount that
2 you could carry over, based solely on the remaining allocation,
3 and I have added an extra column that kind of tells you whether
4 that number is over or under the buffer, and so, for red
5 snapper, the 67,000 pounds that could be carried over is
6 considerably lower than that buffer, and so that might be okay
7 to carry over, but, when we get into red grouper, deepwater
8 grouper, and tilefish, you can see that the full amount of
9 carryover is in excess of the buffer, and so, if we want to
10 carry over in those categories, we would need to reduce the
11 amount that was carried over and figure out some kind of formula
12 and how we would do that and how it would be distributed.

13
14 Gag grouper was also underneath the buffer considerably, and so
15 that could be another one easily carried over, and then I just
16 want to point out that, for shallow-water grouper, we don't have
17 a buffer, because there is no OFL. I believe, when I looked
18 back into this, there was a problem with the black grouper stock
19 that made it hard to create an OFL, and so, if we would want to
20 carry over in that one, we would have to do some additional work
21 to figure out what would be biologically safe to carry over.
22 One thing I will ask you to remember, again, is that shallow-
23 water grouper typically doesn't land the majority of their
24 quota.

25
26 What we wanted to do is dig into the accounts that were holding
27 the allocation and look into, now that we know how much
28 allocation is out there, where is it sitting, and so what you
29 see here is a table that shows the total amounts of accounts
30 with allocation in the second column, and then the accounts with
31 remaining allocation is in the third column, and then the
32 percentage of those accounts.

33
34 For red snapper, 178 accounts were remaining with allocation,
35 which was 128 percent of all of the accounts. Red snapper has
36 the lowest percentage of accounts with allocation remaining.
37 The rest all range around the 50 to 60 percent of the accounts
38 with it.

39
40 We also want to dig into just those accounts with remaining
41 allocation and look at how much allocation was remaining within
42 all of those accounts, and so, obviously, if you get a higher
43 number of accounts, you might have small amounts of allocation
44 remaining within them. One thing we did do is there were some
45 accounts that had a fairly significant amount of allocation
46 remaining within them, and we did do a little bit of
47 investigation into some of them.

48

1 With the red snapper accounts that were in the higher
2 categories, we did notice that there was a lot of trading going
3 on, and so it wasn't necessarily a higher amount, due to their
4 inability to land it after the -- For red grouper, which also
5 had a high number of accounts with larger poundage, most of this
6 was, again, obtained through shares, although there might be
7 some instances where they might have bought it early in the year
8 and were unable to land it. In tilefish, one of the other
9 higher categories, and, again, most of this seemed to be
10 obtained from shares and it just wasn't being landed.

11
12 I also wanted to tease apart that remaining allocation within
13 the accounts and figure out how it worked with accounts that
14 either had shares or didn't have shares, as well as had permits
15 or did not have permits. Here, the top tables are based on the
16 number of accounts, and the bottom tables are based on the
17 poundage within it.

18
19 For red snapper, by far the highest number of accounts that had
20 allocation remaining at the end of the year were those that did
21 not have shares, but did have a permit, and so there is a likely
22 chance that some of those accounts had to purchase it and were
23 unable to land it as the pandemic went through. If we look at
24 red snapper in the poundage though, the greatest number of
25 pounds is really remaining in the accounts that had shares and
26 did have a permit.

27
28 If we move over to tilefish, we see that the accounts with
29 shares and with a permit had the largest number of accounts with
30 remaining allocation, as well as the largest amount of pounds,
31 rather considerably larger than the other categories.

32
33 This the same types of graphs for gag and red grouper, and so,
34 for gag and red grouper, we see that the accounts with shares
35 and with a permit have the highest number of accounts, and,
36 likewise, also had the highest poundage.

37
38 Digging into deepwater grouper and shallow-water grouper, we see
39 a similar pattern to what we've seen in some of the other ones,
40 with the highest number of accounts being in those that had
41 shares and permits, as well as the highest poundage remaining in
42 accounts with both shares and a permit.

43
44 One of the other questions that came up, either at the SSC or
45 during earlier council presentations, was what percentage of the
46 allocation transfers were kind of occurring pre-pandemic. What
47 we did here is we looked in the January through March timeframe
48 for 2020, as well as 2017 through 2019, and we looked at how

1 much of the percentage of allocation transfers occurred within
2 that time period.

3
4 We want to caution you that remember that the majority of our
5 allocation gets transferred multiple times, and so we typically
6 have allocation transfers that exceed the total poundage of the
7 quota, but, in this graph, this is based on the poundage, and so
8 red snapper has about 45 percent of the quota transferred in the
9 January to March of 2020, which was somewhat similar to what
10 we've seen in past years, which was between 42 to 52 percent.

11
12 In the other share categories, and I will just point that RGM is
13 the red grouper multiuse, and the GGM is the gag grouper
14 multiuse. Keep in mind that these are allocation-only
15 categories, and they don't have shares. The allocation is
16 derived from the primary category of red grouper or gag for
17 those allocations.

18
19 Here, we see that we have red grouper slightly less within the
20 primary red grouper than in previous years, and a similar story
21 can be seen in the gag grouper as well. When it comes to the
22 multiuse, it's a little bit more of a convoluted story, and so
23 I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it, because the multiuse
24 cannot be transferred until all the primary category has been
25 transferred out of an account, and so there are kind of blocks
26 within the system that prohibit those transfers.

27
28 For deepwater grouper, we were right kind of in the ballpark of
29 the last few years, at 42 percent versus 40 and 41 percent.
30 Shallow-water grouper also was a little bit lower than we've
31 seen in the past, but still within the ballpark for the
32 variability within shallow water, and tilefish was about 50
33 percent, and so similar to what we've seen in past years.

34
35 I also wanted to look at, overall, how much of the quota was
36 transferred in 2020 compared to previous years, with the thought
37 that the pandemic might have inhibited the transfer of
38 allocation throughout the year, as it became harder to figure
39 out a source for the seafood once it was landed. I have each
40 year individually, and then I also did an average of 2017 to
41 2019, and I did a little comparison to 2020 for that.

42
43 For red snapper, we were about 28 percent higher for the total
44 amount of allocation transferred, at 162 percent versus an
45 average of around 134 percent. Likewise, red grouper and gag
46 were also higher than we've seen in past years, up 38 and 41
47 percent between those two.

48

1 Now, when we looked at the three categories that we saw, where
2 we have overall percentage of quota landed, we also see a
3 pattern that there was lower allocation transfers occurring for
4 those three share categories of deepwater, shallow-water, and
5 tilefish. Both deepwater and tilefish were down about 34
6 percent of the typical amount of allocation transferred that we
7 see within the year, and shallow-water grouper was only down 5
8 percent.

9
10 We were requested to show some data to kind of look at how the
11 2020 landings look at different price rates, and so I'm going to
12 spend a little time explaining these graphs. When you see the
13 2019 and the 2020 value, all the landings were 2020 landings,
14 and what we did is we applied a monthly ex-vessel value to them
15 based on either 2020 dollars or the price that we've seen in
16 2019.

17
18 The blue line is 2019 price at the 2020 landings, and so, if the
19 landings were the same in each year, based solely on the
20 difference between the price, what you see in these graphs is
21 that difference, and so you can see, and this is for red
22 snapper, that, in 2019, the value was greater than it was in
23 2020, and you can just see that, both cumulatively as well as
24 within the monthly area, what kind of draws your eye is that,
25 around April, we saw some of the biggest difference between the
26 two, and that was really the height of the pandemic initially,
27 when a lot of the states were closing, and so that seems to go
28 along the lines of what we would expect to find. Overall, just
29 probably around a million-dollar difference in cumulative value
30 for red snapper, using those two different prices.

31
32 We did similar work for gag as well, and now, here, the
33 difference isn't as extreme as what you saw with red snapper.
34 You do see that, here, the difference in the pricing came a
35 little bit later in the pandemic, more in the summer months of
36 May and June. Otherwise, the lines look pretty close to each
37 other, and this value between the value between 2019 and 2020
38 dollars is not that different.

39
40 The same set of graphs for red grouper, and, again, here, you
41 see that the price difference really was effective in April and
42 May, and we also got a little bit more of a bump-up there in
43 September and October, and, cumulatively, they showed that the
44 2019 cumulative value dollars was slightly greater by the end of
45 the year.

46
47 I am going to stop here, and I do have the slides that I have
48 typically shown at the other council meetings, and, if a council

1 member would like me to go over those, I can. If not, I will
2 stop and take questions.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Stephen. I thought
5 that was really interesting. I'm going to give folks a couple
6 of minutes to put their hands up. Leann.

7
8 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I just wanted to thank Dr. Stephen. I think
9 you did a great job of really teasing out who had those pounds
10 at the end of the year, and I think it was that one slide that
11 you had in there with shares versus no shares, and I think, on
12 red snapper, it's like ninety-three of the accounts had no share
13 ownership, and so I really appreciate that.

14
15 That, to me, kind of lays out there that there were a lot of
16 people that leased only, the next generation of fishermen that
17 have to lease their fish, by and large at the beginning of the
18 year, in order to fish for the year, and they ended up getting
19 caught holding the bag, because of the pandemic, and they are
20 the ones that -- If you can imagine anybody starting out in a
21 business that's not the well-established and been there for
22 forty years person, typically they have a lower margin that
23 they're working on.

24
25 They are more on the cusp than that well-established
26 businessman, and so I'm hoping that we can have a discussion at
27 some point about carrying forward that 67,000 pounds. Albeit,
28 it's not a huge amount, and it still is 1 percent, and, if I
29 remember correctly, we've been through a two or three-year
30 allocation battle on red snapper, where one of the options was
31 to be transferring 3 percent, and so 1 percent is significant.
32 I think, to help those next generation of fishermen, I would
33 like to carry those forward.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Other thoughts? I
36 see a couple of hands going up. Kevin.

37
38 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks, Dr. Stephen, for
39 the presentation. I had a couple of questions, and one pertains
40 to Slide Number 12, if you can go to that, please. I listened
41 to a little bit of the SSC meeting, but not this entire portion
42 of the meeting, but, as it pertains to red snapper, the large
43 difference there, did you see anything in the data that
44 indicated that there might have been some change, or shift, in
45 some of those transfers, due to weather patterns, like one side
46 of the Gulf getting more storms than the other or time of the
47 year that it could have happened, relative to storms?

48

1 **DR. STEPHEN:** No, we were not able to look at that yet in time
2 for this presentation. Obviously, we can look at it. One of
3 the concerns that we brought up to the SSC is that there were at
4 least four major hurricanes that hit the area, particularly
5 around Louisiana, that got hit numerous times, and we had
6 actually done emergency catastrophic conditions two or three
7 times throughout the year, and some of the people that we had
8 out surveying the damage with the Science Center had told us
9 that there was some infrastructure damage, and that would be a
10 longer-term effect from that than just the pandemic. If
11 infrastructure gets damaged, we tend to see that some of the
12 communities suffer a little bit more.

13
14 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. The next question, or comment, that I
15 had was the graphs that you provided on the final slides, Slides
16 13, 14, and 15, and seeing that we had COVID during 2020 and the
17 disruptions that it created, not only in the country, but also
18 as it trickled down to other industries and such that are part
19 of the broader economy.

20
21 The price really didn't change much, and I don't know, and this
22 might wake up Assane, but it just points to, I guess, there's
23 not much elasticity for at least these species, as it relates to
24 some effects, or negative effects, on the economy, and so that's
25 just a comment. I'm a biologist, or at least I think am
26 sometimes, and so, when I get into things of economics, it
27 creates a problem, but anyways. Thank you.

28
29 **DR. STEPHEN:** I also will point out that we typically do an
30 inflation adjustment between years, and we don't have that yet
31 for 2020, and so 2020 and 2019 are the actual years and not kind
32 of on the same baseline. We're waiting to see what the deflator
33 value would be for 2020.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin. Andy.

36
37 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I've got two questions. One is for Jessica.
38 Building off of Leann's comments, we know that there are
39 allocation holders that don't have shares. With the IFQ system,
40 how well are we able to tease out how many of those individuals
41 actually leased that allocation versus potentially like business
42 arrangements, where allocation might have been transferred to
43 them by a dealer or shareholder, in order to have those fish
44 then delivered back to that dealer for sale? Are we able to
45 tease that out in the system and discern truly who is leasing
46 allocation versus those more business arrangements?

47
48 **DR. STEPHEN:** We have a couple of mechanisms that might be

1 available to us. When allocations are transferred, we do have
2 what we call the related account transfer, which we realize is
3 used not just for people who have related accounts, but also is
4 being used for some business transfers. Now, that data is as
5 good as the quality of the people who enter it, and so, if they
6 don't tell us, we have a hard time looking at it.

7
8 We could probably tease out a good percentage of it, but there
9 would be some uncertainty, as we would be making some decisions
10 based on the two accounts that are transferring. We can have
11 mechanisms that we can dig into the related accounts, and it
12 would take us a little bit longer, because I have to rewrite
13 that code for the new system that we're in, but that is
14 something that we could look into more.

15
16 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right, and I'm not, at this point, asking
17 to look into it more, but I just wanted to raise it as a point
18 for the council, that, just because we're seeing allocation
19 that's going unused by non-shareholders, it doesn't necessarily
20 mean that they actually lease that allocation. Certainly there
21 is a portion of those that did lease the allocation.

22
23 My second question is back to Leann, and so you commented about
24 red snapper, in particular, and carrying that over, because of
25 the fact that these individual fishermen, smaller fishermen in
26 particular, had leased allocation, and why just red snapper?
27 Why not other species at that point? Is it because of the
28 allocation price, or what's the rationale that you're
29 considering for just red snapper?

30
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, Andy. I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Do you
32 want me to respond?

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, please.

35
36 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. So, for the grouper species, grouper,
37 generally speaking, and we probably shouldn't generalize, but,
38 generally speaking, it's really not in all that great shape
39 right now, and we have an upcoming assessment on gag, and we
40 just got one on red grouper.

41
42 If you look at the landings, back in time even, we're not
43 landing the allocation on a lot of those grouper species, and we
44 have anecdotal data from fishermen that says they're not in
45 great shape, and I really think, from a conservation standpoint,
46 it would be better to let those fish and let them reproduce
47 again and maybe get that stock in a little better shape.

48

1 That, combined with I've only had a couple of fishermen that
2 kind of mentioned to me that, yes, we might could carry those
3 grouper over, but, by and large, most of them have kind of said,
4 well, grouper is not in good shape, which speaks highly of those
5 fishermen.

6
7 Now, on red snapper, it's a very different situation, and I have
8 had fishermen calling me saying, hey, and these are fishermen
9 that lease, and they don't own. They said, you know, I've tried
10 like hell to catch these fish, and I have even leased some back
11 out at a loss to somebody that I thought could fish them, and
12 was able to fish them, but, you know, at least I cut my losses
13 on a few of the pounds, but I'm stuck with a bunch of them that
14 I just wasn't able to fish, or find somebody to fish them, at
15 least, to cut my losses.

16
17 Then, on tilefish -- Now, I only reached out to one person on
18 tilefish. Of course, it's also a very small fishery, and
19 there's not a whole lot of people in that fishery, but that
20 gentleman said that I think it will be fine on tilefish, to let
21 that ride, and so that's essentially where I'm at on that, Andy,
22 and that's why I've been putting most of my energy into the red
23 snapper discussion, because that's the one that I would propose
24 that we carry forward, the 67,000 pounds.

25
26 I appreciate the comments about trying to tease things out, but
27 I remember, in the document that Ava was working on for us, 36B,
28 I think it is, or maybe it was A, but, anyway, when you start
29 trying to tease things out, even on share ownership, you can
30 have somebody that owns a tiny, tiny, tiny fraction of shares,
31 because they just started to actually move from leasing to
32 owning, your next generation of fishermen, and that was just so
33 hard to try and define those sorts of things.

34
35 If we go forward with this, I would propose that you simply take
36 the 67,000 pounds and change and use the snapshot that we had at
37 the end of the year, on December 31. If you remember, at the
38 last meeting, I asked NMFS to take a snapshot of the exact
39 poundage that was in specific accounts on December 31 for red
40 snapper.

41
42 We would put those pounds back in those accounts, and that's the
43 only way you can make sure that the man that leased those pounds
44 and took the loss for them, because he couldn't catch them all,
45 gets them back. If you just roll it into the overall quota,
46 then you're going to send it out to shareholders, people that
47 own the fishery, because that's how we allocate the pounds every
48 year, and that's not going to benefit the man that leased them

1 and couldn't fish them, and so it's a long-winded answer, but
2 that's what I would propose, for red snapper only.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. I have heard similar comments
5 for grouper, for what it's worth. Next, I have Tom.
6
7 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thanks, Martha. This question is actually for
8 Jessica, and so are we able to get a time series for the last --
9 Over this last year that shows the price, the lease share price?
10
11 **DR. STEPHEN:** I think I might have that in the supplemental, if
12 you can bring up that other PowerPoint, which was our
13 supplemental slides, and then, once we have that up, go ahead to
14 Slide 8. Here, we have one of these for each of the share
15 categories. In the bottom-lower corner, really, what we see is
16 the kind of average weekly allocation price per pound, and so
17 that would be the leased price.
18
19 **DR. FRAZER:** So that's through Week 46, and I guess I'm
20 interested to see what happened over the last month-and-a-half
21 of the season.
22
23 **DR. STEPHEN:** We can probably pull that for you guys as well. I
24 don't think we have it ready yet.
25
26 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. I will see if I can get that from you a
27 little bit later. Thank you.
28
29 **DR. STEPHEN:** If we do it, we can do it and send it to you or to
30 all the council members, if they want.
31
32 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you.
33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. I am not seeing any more hands
35 right now, and we've had a little bit of discussion about maybe
36 how to move forward on this. Leann.
37
38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Let me try and float a motion, which I haven't
39 prepared, and so hopefully I won't muffle it up here. **To**
40 **request that NMFS use the snapshot they took on December 31,**
41 **2020 of the number of pounds of red snapper in individual IFQ**
42 **accounts to place those pounds back in those accounts, back in**
43 **those individual accounts.**
44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I think we've got that on the board. Is
46 there a second to this motion? I can read it one more time,
47 just so everybody knows what we're working with. The motion is
48 to request that NMFS use the snapshot they took on December 31,

1 2020 of the number of pounds of red snapper in individual IFQ
2 accounts to place those pounds back in those individual
3 accounts. Is there a second?

4

5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Can I add something?

6

7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes.

8

9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. **At the very end of that, and erase the**
10 **period, and then "to mitigate the impacts of COVID on that**
11 **fishery".**

12

13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there a second?

14

15 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** I will second it.

16

17 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. It's seconded by John Sanchez. Mara.

18

19 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Thank you. A couple of things. I guess the
20 first thing, is this an emergency rule request? I mean, are you
21 wanting to do some sort of document? I mean, I'm guessing
22 emergency rule, since the way it's phrased, but, I mean, that
23 would be a very specific request, and you would need to do that,
24 and the council would need to vote on it, but then my second
25 point is that, in order to do any type of carryover, because,
26 for red snapper, the ACL equals the ABC, we would need the SSC
27 to come in and somehow modify the ABC for this year to account
28 for this carryover.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, do you want to respond to that?

31

32 **MS. BOSARGE:** So I'm confused, because I thought that Jessica
33 told us that we had some wiggle room and that there was a buffer
34 in there that wouldn't go over the ABC. When the SSC looked at
35 it, that was their impression, I believe, too, and so I'm
36 confused there. Mara, as far as the emergency rule, however we
37 have to do this to push this out in a timely fashion, and I will
38 follow your lead on that.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara, you go first and then Dr. Stephen.

41

42 **MS. LEVY:** Jessica can answer, but I believe she was -- I feel
43 like she was looking at the difference between maybe the ABC and
44 the OFL, right, and so there's two different things. We can't
45 exceed the overfishing limit, but we also can't put in place
46 catch levels that exceed the ABC recommendation from the SSC.

47

48 Then I'm not really telling you how to proceed with this, but

1 there has to be some sort of council direction or action, and
2 you can't just ask NMFS to do something, and so the authority is
3 if it's appropriate for an emergency rule, for the council to
4 request an emergency rule. If it's not appropriate for an
5 emergency rule, then to do some sort of council document, and so
6 that's where I was going with that.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Dr. Stephen, do you want to add to that?
9

10 **DR. STEPHEN:** I think Mara covered it. Just remember it's
11 because that red snapper's quota is the ACL, which is also the
12 ABC, which is different than grouper-tilefish.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. It sounds like, if we want to move
15 forward with this, we need to do two things. First, we would
16 need -- Well, I don't know about first, but we would need to
17 send this to the SSC, so that they could potentially recommend a
18 change to the ABC, so that we can make this happen, and we would
19 also, if we wanted to request an emergency rule at this meeting,
20 I guess, in this committee, we would need to modify this motion
21 a little bit.

22
23 I think all we would need to do, with the current motion, is
24 just to say -- To recommend that the council request an
25 emergency rule, and that would more or less get to Mara's point,
26 but I guess I'm looking for feedback on the sequencing here, if
27 this is something that we really want to do. Do we need to
28 start with the SSC action before we moving on this motion?
29 Mara, is your hand up again to help us with this?

30
31 **MS. LEVY:** I mean, I would suggest that you go to the SSC and
32 ask them to give you a new ABC recommendation for this year that
33 accounts for this carryover that you want to do, and then, at
34 the next meeting, you could potentially request an emergency
35 rule to implement that ABC, as well as the carryover, for 2020.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Leann.

38
39 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That sounds like a good
40 path forward. **I will revise that motion just a little bit, so**
41 **that it will carry out that way. We're going to say to begin**
42 **the process of using -- Then delete "request that NMFS use", and**
43 **so to begin the process of using the snapshot, and change "they"**
44 **to "NMFS" on December 31, 2020 of the number of pounds of red**
45 **snapper in individual IFQ accounts, in order to place those**
46 **pounds back in those individual accounts, to mitigate the**
47 **impacts of the COVID pandemic on the fishery. Okay. That looks**
48 good. Thank you.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead, Ryan.
3
4 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Maybe we should put, just for clarity on that
5 fishery, for the 2021 fishing year, if that's the intent, just
6 so that it's clear where it's coming from and where it's going.
7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, are you okay with that?
9
10 **MS. BOSARGE:** I get your drift, Ryan, but I would rather than
11 put that in there, if you don't mind. I can see the SSC getting
12 hung up on that and trying to read too much into that. Sorry.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.
15
16 **MR. RINDONE:** Well, I guess, from a staff perspective, my
17 question would be, so if it's being put back into those
18 accounts, and for what year, and we would need to know what
19 years catch limits the SSC is going to have to consider when
20 this process is taking place and what they're going to have to
21 look at, and so we would need to know where it's coming from,
22 and I think, in this case, it's pretty clear that it's coming
23 from 2020, but we would also need to know where it's going.
24
25 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. **Then, after, "pounds back into those**
26 **individual accounts in 2021".** Is that helpful, Ryan?
27
28 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, and, again, it was just knowing where it's
29 coming from and where it's going.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. John Sanchez, I'm going to assume that
32 you're okay with all these little edits, but, if you're not, go
33 ahead and jump in the queue, since you were the seconder.
34
35 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I'm good.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** You're good? Okay. Leann, is your hand still
38 up?
39
40 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, I'm good. Thank you.
41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara.
43
44 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. Just one more point, and so remember that
45 red snapper, as a whole, is tied to commercial and recreational
46 and private angling and for-hire. We have an overfishing limit,
47 and we have the state calibrations that we're looking at to try
48 to address private angling overages that potentially could lead

1 to exceeding the overfishing limit, and so I think you need to
2 be aware of that and really think about the stuff that we're
3 going to talk about today, in terms of the calibration and
4 addressing the other half of the puzzle, because that half may
5 gum up the works for the other half. I would just encourage you
6 to think hard about the calibration stuff.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Noted. Thank you, Mara. Andy.

9

10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thank you, Martha. I have a question for Mara
11 first. Any emergency action that the council would propose in
12 April, would that require notice on the council agenda for them
13 to do so?

14

15 **MS. LEVY:** Well, generally, emergency stuff -- I mean, it's an
16 emergency, and so it comes up in the minutes and not necessarily
17 on the agenda.

18

19 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Okay.

20

21 **MS. LEVY:** That doesn't mean that we can't put it on there,
22 knowing that we're considering it, but we have to take these
23 steps before we can address what we have identified as the
24 emergency, which is potentially the underharvest of red snapper
25 by the commercial sector in 2020.

26

27 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I was just asking so we didn't have any
28 administrative hurdles to trip over at the next meeting, if this
29 is pursued. I guess my other comment is I'm certainly
30 sympathetic to the industry members, especially those that
31 leased allocation and were unable to use it. I'm struggling to
32 fully appreciate the emergency nature of this, given that
33 allocation is left on the table each and every year. We do have
34 a small amount of allocation that was left on the table, and
35 certainly it would benefit, obviously, those fishermen that
36 could use it.

37

38 My concern is timing, and even emergency rulemaking puts us into
39 summer, possibly late summer plus we have a looming quota
40 increase, which I know won't directly go to these allocation
41 holders, but we have heard, obviously, concerns from the
42 commercial industry over the past of these large quota
43 increases, especially late in the year, and their inability to
44 either use that quota or depressing prices, because of the
45 availability of allocation. I would ask that the council also
46 take that into consideration as they proceed forward with
47 considering emergency rulemaking.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Tom, is your hand up?
2 Are you good?

3

4 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm good. My question was answered. Thank you.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Any other discussion on this motion?
7 Leann.

8

9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you. I would just ask the council, before
10 we vote on this, to think about what other people that can pass
11 regulations have done in this country to try and get people over
12 this hump, and through this hump, and we've given -- This
13 country has given money to cruise lines, for crying out loud,
14 and big publicly-traded companies, and the money that's supposed
15 to go to fishermen that came through the CARES Act -- I guess
16 we'll see it one day, but I have yet to see any around here, for
17 sure, and I would venture to guess that it's the same in other
18 states.

19

20 Maybe it's starting to be parceled out, but, from what I hear
21 anecdotally, even in my state, for a commercial fisherman, it's
22 going to be a few thousand dollars, maybe \$4,000 or \$5,000,
23 maybe, and you see the price of snapper. These guys took a hit
24 on the dollar that they got, on the price per pound that they
25 got, and they went from five-dollars-and-something a pound to
26 four-dollars-and-something a pound.

27

28 In my world, in the shrimp world, if you take a hit of a nickel
29 or a dime per pound, that's big, and that's huge. If you looked
30 at me and said you're going to take a dollar hit per pound, we
31 would just have to throw our hands up and walk away. I have to
32 commend these guys for even hanging in there this long.

33

34 The optics, if we don't pass this, after all the different
35 industries in this country that have tried to be helped, I don't
36 think that will look very well on this council, if we say, no --
37 You know, we've got all of these amendments going on to try and
38 aid the next generation of fishermen and replacement fishermen,
39 and we have a chance, in one fell swoop with this motion, to
40 actually do some good for those men and women, and we decide
41 that, nah, it's not worth it, I think the optics wouldn't be too
42 good.

43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Kevin.

45

46 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Two things. The first is
47 did John second -- Wasn't there an edit made, and did John
48 second the motion after the edit?

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think he chimed in and said he didn't have a
3 problem with the edit. John.
4
5 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead, Kevin.
8
9 **MR. ANSON:** All right, and so, I mean, I understand the
10 situation that these individuals are in, and I can't appreciate
11 it fully, obviously, but I can understand some concerns and
12 problems that they have associated with COVID and not being able
13 to utilize all those pounds, but, you know, I am not going to
14 support the motion.
15
16 I mean, a little bit of -- The business model for everybody is
17 there is things that occur and situations that arise that are
18 out of your control, and, yes, you try to do the best and make
19 the best decisions to mitigate those, and, I mean, what about
20 other fisheries?
21
22 We talked about the other IFQ programs and their losses, and,
23 yes, they don't have as many fish, and so it's a little bit more
24 of a problem for them, to try to come with this sort of request,
25 but what about other fisheries that have impacts? This is a bad
26 precedent, and I think it's almost another poke in the eye to
27 some folks, if this were to go through, and it would help that
28 segment of this particular fishery, and so thank you.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin. One more scan for
31 hands. If I don't see any, and I do not, and I guess let's go
32 ahead and put this up for a vote. I guess I will first ask for
33 opposition, and then we might need to go to a roll call vote.
34 Let me read the motion one more time.
35
36 **The motion is to begin the process of using the snapshot that**
37 **NMFS took on December 31, 2020 of the number of pounds of red**
38 **snapper in individual IFQ accounts, in order to place those**
39 **pounds back in those individual accounts in 2021 to mitigate the**
40 **impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on that fishery. Is there any**
41 **opposition to this motion?**
42
43 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** Yes.
44
45 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.
46
47 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Let's do a roll call vote, because
2 I am hearing enough to make that seem like the best course of
3 action. Dr. Simmons.
4
5 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr.
6 Anson.
7
8 **MR. ANSON:** No.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Bosarge.
11
12 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Williamson.
15
16 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** I am going to vote no on this, because it
17 appears to me that what we have here is anecdotal evidence to
18 show an impact on the fishery by the COVID impact, by the COVID
19 virus, and for that reason.
20
21 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you. Dr. Stunz.
22
23 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** No.
24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Riechers.
26
27 **MR. ROBIN RIECHERS:** No.
28
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Schieble.
30
31 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** Based on what Mara said, I think I'm going
32 to vote no on this for now, until we can further analyze this.
33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I reserve, since I'm the Chair.
37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. Ms. Boggs.
39
40 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.
41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Strelcheck.
43
44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No.
45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Diaz.
47
48 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Yes.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dyskow.
3
4 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** No.
5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Swindell.
7
8 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** I am still not satisfied that this is not
9 going to cause more problems in the future, and so I'm going to
10 say no.
11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** General Spraggins.
13
14 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** I am going to abstain from this one.
15
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.
17
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.
19
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Shipp.
21
22 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** No.
23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas.
25
26 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** No.
27
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** **The motion fails four to ten with**
29 **three abstentions.**
30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Dr. Simmons. If we don't have
32 anything else left on this item, let's move on to Item Number V
33 on our agenda. That is going to be the final action discussion
34 on the framework to modify gray triggerfish catch limits.
35
36 While staff is preparing, or I guess wrapping up this and
37 preparing that item, what we'll do for these final action items,
38 partly I think so that I don't forget, is we'll cover the public
39 comment before we go into the document and codified text, and so
40 we've got a couple of these all in a row, but this is our first
41 one, and so I'm going to turn it over to Emily first.
42
43 **FINAL ACTION: FRAMEWORK ACTION: MODIFICATION OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH**
44 **CATCH LIMITS**
45
46 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Bernie, if you can go ahead and bring up
47 Tab B, Number 6(b). Because this is a framework action, we
48 produced the public hearing video, like we typically do, and

1 pushed that out, and we had sixty-four people watch the public
2 hearing video, and this is all as of last Tuesday, and we
3 received twenty comments on this amendment, and so we did hear a
4 lot of comments that were not necessarily specific to the action
5 in the document.

6
7 The one comment that was kind of relevant to the document itself
8 was that we heard that 150,000 pounds is not enough to add to
9 the catch limit and that the increase needs to be large enough
10 to allow for a longer season, and I presume that this was in
11 reference to a recreational season.

12
13 We did get a lot of comments that were specific to triggerfish,
14 but not necessarily the actions in the document. We did hear
15 some concern about the number of discards during red snapper
16 season and the suggestion that anglers should be allowed to keep
17 triggerfish when red snapper is open. We heard that triggerfish
18 used to be a trash fish, but is now popular, because of the
19 depleted stock and season closures. It's sort of one of those,
20 when supply decreases, demand increase issues.

21
22 We heard that the recreational data collection programs are not
23 tracking triggerfish harvest and informing quota closures well
24 enough. We also heard that the pandemic impacted fishing effort
25 and that there is no way that the quota was harvested for
26 triggerfish in 2020.

27
28 Then we did get a number of emails, and I think maybe what
29 happened is some of the captains were somehow misinformed about
30 this document and whether it considered the seasons, and we got
31 a couple of emails from the snowbirds asking for that
32 January/February opening that they have been asking for for a
33 number of years, but then we did get a bit of an email campaign
34 asking for the triggerfish season to remain as status quo and
35 not be moved to January and February, and that concludes my
36 summary.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Emily. Since those season comments I
39 think are going to go -- I guess they apply to another document
40 that we'll be looking at relative to triggerfish later, and can
41 we roll those -- Hang on to these comments, I guess, for when we
42 discuss that at a future meeting?

43
44 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Yes, we absolutely can. We'll go ahead and put
45 them in that comment form, because I did anticipate the same.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Cool. Very good. Thank you very much.
48 Are there questions for Emily before we move into this document?

1 Okay. I don't see any, and so let's go ahead. Carly, are you
2 going to take us through our document today?

3
4 **MS. CARLY SOMERSET:** I will. Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I
5 will just go through a bit of background, and so we -- The
6 previous iteration included catch limits and modifications for
7 vermilion, and so the council saw that combined vermilion
8 snapper and gray triggerfish draft framework action at the last
9 meeting in November. Based on discussion, that document was
10 split into additional documents, and, as Emily discussed with
11 the comments, there will be one in the future for seasonal
12 closures, but this document specifically addresses only
13 modifications to gray triggerfish catch limits.

14
15 There is one action with two alternatives, and it is up for
16 final action, and it does not currently have a preferred, and so
17 I will go through just some of the changes that were made since
18 you saw this document previously, for the one that included
19 vermilion, and then we can discuss some of the rationale behind
20 the alternatives.

21
22 For Chapters 1 and 2, they are very similar to what the council
23 saw at the last meeting, and there's been some minor changes.
24 If we go to Table 1.1.1, Table 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 have been
25 modified slightly to include the ACT and the adjusted ACT for
26 the commercial and recreational sectors, and so I just wanted to
27 point that out. That includes the adjusted ACTs and adjusted
28 ACLs. For those years that the ACL was exceeded, and, for the
29 recreational sector, that also is payback -- An overage
30 adjustment is when the ACL was exceeded and the stock is
31 considered overfished.

32
33 I just want to note that the percent ACL landed, that's the
34 second-to-the-right column, and that shows the percent of the
35 original ACL and not the adjusted.

36
37 Then the other addition was language that was added to clarify
38 that the gray triggerfish stock is still in a nine-year
39 rebuilding plan from Amendment 46. However, the recent interim
40 analysis does not directly address how that increase in the ABC
41 would affect the progress towards rebuilding, but the index of
42 abundance trends do suggest that it is likely that gray
43 triggerfish biomass has increased in recent years and that this
44 biomass should support additional removals, and so this is
45 important for when we discuss the two alternatives.

46
47 Since this document has changed, I just want to go over the
48 purpose and need again really quickly. The purpose of the

1 proposed action is to increase the ABC, ACLs, and ACTs
2 consistent with the gray triggerfish interim analysis and SEFSC,
3 SSC, and Reef Fish Advisory Panel recommendations. The need for
4 the proposed action is to establish catch limits that achieve
5 optimum yield, consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-
6 Stevens Act, while preventing overfishing.

7
8 Now we'll go back to the one action with the two alternatives.
9 Alternative 1 is the no action alternative that retains the
10 acceptable biological catch, annual catch limits, and annual
11 catch targets for gray triggerfish, as implemented in 2018 by
12 Reef Fish Amendment 46.

13
14 Alternative 1 retains these catch limits as well as the buffers,
15 and so the 10 percent reduction from the ACL to ACT for the
16 recreational sector and a 5 percent for the commercial.
17 Alternative 1 does not reflect the SEFSC and council SSC's
18 recent ABC recommendations, and that was the recommendation to
19 increase it from 305,300 pounds to -- You can see that, in
20 Alternative 2, the ABC would be 456,900 pounds, and that was
21 based on the 2020 gray triggerfish interim analysis.

22
23 Additionally, the Reef Fish Advisory Panel requested to set the
24 total ACL equal to the ABC, based on the interim analysis, and
25 so Alternative 1 does not reflect either of those
26 recommendations.

27
28 Alternative 2, under the current sector allocations, would
29 increase the recreational ACL to -- Well, it would increase the
30 recreational ACL and the commercial ACL, and it also applies the
31 council's ACL/ACT control rules to calculate a new buffer of 24
32 percent between the recreational ACL and the ACT and an 8
33 percent buffer between the commercial ACL and ACT. These
34 buffers were determined by comparing the sector-specific
35 landings and ACLs for the years 2016 through 2019, and that's
36 been included in the appendix, or one of the appendices, in the
37 document.

38
39 Alternative 2 does reflect the SSC's recommendation to increase
40 the ABC, and the change in the buffers may help constrain
41 landings, and so, lastly, before discussion or any questions, I
42 just wanted to point out that, in Alternative 1 and Alternative
43 2, the OFL remains the same, at 1.22 million, and both of these
44 -- I know there's been discussion with some of our other reef
45 fish documents that they are both in MRIP-CHTS, these catch
46 limits, and so there's no change from one currency to another
47 between the alternatives. Madam Chair, I will pause to see if
48 there are any questions or discussion.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Carly. Okay, and so are
3 there questions for Carly, or does anybody want to offer up a
4 motion? We are scheduled to take final action on this at this
5 meeting, and so we will need to choose a preferred, and there's
6 only two choices.
7
8 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Martha, I will make a motion.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let me get Robin. I don't know if it was a
11 question or -- I see his hand up first.
12
13 **MR. RIECHERS:** Well, I was going to do the same thing that John
14 was going to do, and, John, I will step in, just since I have
15 the mic then, but I will look forward to your second. **I move**
16 **that we make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative.**
17
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will second that.
19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, John.
21
22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That may never happen again, by the way.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** We'll take note of it. Okay. Now we've got
25 that motion up on the board, and I've got a couple other hands
26 here. J.D.
27
28 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, ma'am. I have a question on this Alternative
29 2. Why is the OFL and the ABC so far apart? I asked this
30 question yesterday on cobia, and it was answered as a
31 recommendation, and so I just want some clarification on that.
32 Why can't those numbers be squeezed a little closer together?
33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Who would like to take that one? I think I see
35 Ryan. Ryan, go ahead.
36
37 **MR. RINDONE:** When we had our last completed stock assessment on
38 gray triggerfish, the SSC was asked to examine three different
39 recruitment scenarios, a high, a medium, and a low-projection
40 scenario, for recruitment, and, given that recruitment has been
41 pretty low in the recent time series, the SSC thought it more
42 appropriate to go with the low-recruitment scenario when looking
43 at the projections for future yields or future catch limits for
44 gray triggerfish, following that assessment.
45
46 That is why the -- That's the reason for the large buffer
47 between the OFL and the ABC, and so one way that the council
48 could look at the results of this interim analysis, with respect

1 to what the ABC was and what the ABC is being proposed to become
2 in Alternative 2, is that the stock is recovering from its
3 previous overfished and undergoing overfishing condition, and so
4 it's growing, and it's getting more healthy, and so it's
5 definitely a good thing, and hopefully that trend continues,
6 and, when we have our next assessment of gray triggerfish down
7 the line, hopefully that trend has continued to that point as
8 well.

9

10 **MR. DUGAS:** Madam Chair, I have another question.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure. Go ahead.

13

14 **MR. DUGAS:** So, Ryan, at what point -- When can we review this
15 again to adjust the ABC? Do we have to wait until the next
16 stock assessment, or can we do it in a year, or what's our
17 options going forward?

18

19 **MR. RINDONE:** J.D., you have the option of conducting interim
20 analyses like the one that the SSC just reviewed, and, Bernie,
21 is it possible to bring up that interim analysis schedule that I
22 had sent in yesterday? It was Tab E, Number 5(b), I think.

23

24 You can see on here that I have put gray triggerfish back on the
25 -- I put it on the interim analysis schedule for 2023, in
26 Position 2, and I have tried to provide some sort of priority to
27 how these things are numbered, but that's up to you guys to
28 fiddle with.

29

30 This would presume the council requesting the Science Center
31 conduct an interim analysis of gray triggerfish in 2023 using
32 the combined video index, which uses the video surveys from the
33 NMFS Pascagoula Lab, the NMFS Panama City Lab, and the Florida
34 Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, and that the SSC would get
35 that interim analysis in 2023.

36

37 Again, this schedule is just a draft, but it's just showing that
38 we do have consideration for this on the calendar, and so we'll
39 work with the Science Center to try and finetune this through
40 time and keep bringing it back to you guys for additional input.
41 Madam Chair.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Clay.

44

45 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to let you know
46 that we could do the gray trigger interim analysis as early as
47 2022. We can't do it this year, simply because we didn't
48 conduct a survey in 2020, due to COVID-19. Thanks.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks for that. Okay. I don't see any other
3 hands. Could we get the motion back on the board? Ryan, do you
4 have something else?
5

6 **MR. RINDONE:** Just directly to what Clay had said, and just
7 another consideration for the council, and also the SSC, and
8 remember the SSC has actually discussed this already, is that
9 2020 will be a unique year, obviously, for a lot of our fishery-
10 independent indices of abundance, due to COVID, because some of
11 those surveys were either not conducted or were only partially
12 conducted, compared to how they typically have been performed in
13 previous years, and so the Science Center brought this up during
14 our last SSC meeting, and I'm certain that they will consider
15 this when presenting this information to the SSC, which, again,
16 is also aware of this, but that's just something for the council
17 to remember as well. That's all.
18

19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Okay. So we've got our motion
20 back on the board. I don't see any other hands at this time. I
21 will read it one more time, and then we'll see if there's any
22 opposition to this motion. **The motion is, in Action 1, to make**
23 **Alternative 2 the preferred alternative. Is there any**
24 **opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.**
25

26 We also have some codified text with this document that I think
27 we're going to want to look at before we entertain a motion to
28 send this to the council for final action, if we could go
29 through that next. I think that's Tab B, Number 6(b). I've got
30 SERO staff as the presenter on this, and I'm not sure who that
31 will be.
32

33 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Peter, are you on and able to go through this?
34

35 **MR. HOOD:** I'm on. Basically, the text has been -- The quotas
36 and ACLs have just been updated to reflect Alternative 2, and
37 you can see those denoted.
38

39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Peter. Any questions as we're
40 scrolling through here? All right. In an effort to keep us
41 like to the minute on time, I'm going to ask if there's a motion
42 to recommend that the council take final action on this, just so
43 that we're teed-up for Thursday when we go through our motions
44 report.
45

46 **DR. SHIPP:** I would so move.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dr. Shipp. Let's see if we

1 can get that motion on the board.

2

3 **MR. DIAZ:** I will second, Martha.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Dale. While they're typing, I am going
6 to see if I can read this motion for us. **I think it to approve**
7 **the Framework Action Modification of Gray Triggerfish Catch**
8 **Limits and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for**
9 **review and implementation and deem the codified text as**
10 **necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to**
11 **make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair**
12 **is given authority to deem any changes to the codified text as**
13 **necessary and appropriate. Is there any opposition to this**
14 **motion? Hearing none, the motion carries. All right. We are**
15 now scheduled for a break.

16

17 **DR. FRAZER:** Excellent, Martha, and so I appreciate everybody
18 working through this in a very focused manner, and so we will
19 take a fifteen-minute break, and we will reconvene to deal also
20 with another final action item having to do with lane snapper,
21 and so we'll see everybody at 10:45.

22

23 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

24

25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Next on our agenda is final action
26 on lane snapper. Let's do the same thing that we did with gray
27 triggerfish and start with the public comment. I will turn it
28 over to Emily.

29

30 **FINAL ACTION: FRAMEWORK ACTION: MODIFICATION OF THE GULF OF**
31 **MEXICO LANE SNAPPER CATCH LIMITS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES**

32

33 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. For lane
34 snapper, we had fifty-one people view the public hearing video,
35 and we only received one comment before last Tuesday, which is
36 when we summarized our comments.

37

38 We heard that catch levels for lane snapper should be increased
39 as soon as possible, especially because we've experienced in-
40 season closures in a healthy fishery. We also heard that quota
41 overages and closures due to management should not occur in
42 healthy fisheries, and that's it.

43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Emily. It looks like Dr.
45 Hollensead is going to walk us through the main document, and
46 so, Dr. Hollensead, whenever you're ready.

47

48 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** The action guide or the document, whichever one
3 you want to start with.
4

5 **DR. HOLLENSHAD:** I think we'll go through the document, if
6 that's all right. Okay. Bernie, would you mind taking us
7 quickly to the purpose and need? If you recall, at our last
8 council meeting, we reviewed Chapters 1 and 2 of this document,
9 and this revision of the draft has Chapters 3 and 4, along with
10 the associated analyses, and the preferreds were picked, and so
11 this document is ready for final action, should the committee
12 want to take that route.
13

14 First, I wanted to just touch on the purpose and need for this
15 document, and so the purpose is to modify the OFL, ABC, and ACL
16 for lane snapper. In this case, this is going to be referred to
17 as catch limits, based on recently updated yield projections,
18 and to consider updating the current accountability measures,
19 and so that's going to be the ACT and the fishing season
20 closure, to account for management uncertainty.
21

22 The need for this is to update the existing lane snapper catch
23 limits and AMs based on the best scientific information
24 available to achieve optimum yield consistent with the
25 requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act while preventing
26 overfishing. If there's no questions about the purpose and
27 need, I was going to move on to Action 1.
28

29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I am not seeing any hands, and so I think
30 you're good to move on.
31

32 **DR. HOLLENSHAD:** Okay. Great. In Action 1, just a quick review
33 of this, and Action 1 would update the OFL, ABC, ACL, and
34 potentially the ACT, depending on what alternative is selected.
35 If you will recall, currently what's on the books for catch
36 limits for lane snapper is calculated using the Marine
37 Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey, or MRFSS, and so
38 Alternatives 2 and 3 allow for the updating of these catch
39 limits, specifically for what will happen as a result of the
40 stock assessment update, which incorporates the MRIP-FES
41 recreational data.
42

43 That's what Alternatives 2 and 3 do. The difference between
44 Alternative 2 is Alternative 2 does not set an ACT, while
45 Alternative 3 would allow a 16 percent buffer to calculate an
46 ACT. At the last meeting, the committee selected Alternative 2
47 as the preferred.
48

1 One thing I just want the council to note is the second row for
2 each one of those tables presented in Alternative 2 and
3 Alternative 3 are in MRFSS, and those are just for reference
4 only. When we go through the codified text, you will see, in
5 the codified text, when it talks about updating these catch
6 limits, for example, if you want to use the OFL, that value,
7 that 1,053,834, is what's going to be in the codified text, and
8 that would be in MRIP-FES. Preferred Alternative 2, what is
9 selected, that is currently what's in the codified text that's
10 in the briefing book, if that makes sense, and I would be happy
11 to take any questions that anybody has on Action 1 and the
12 alternatives.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Let's just scan here for questions.
15 We do have a preferred for this one, and so we're in good shape
16 in that regard, if we wanted to take final action today, or
17 recommend the council take final action. Okay. I don't see any
18 hands, and so I think we can move on.

19

20 **DR. HOLLENSSEAD:** Okay. Great. So Action 2, this would modify
21 the fishing season closure for lane snapper, and, currently, the
22 fishery is allowed to proceed in a single year. If the ACL is
23 exceeded in that given fishing year, the next year, harvest will
24 be monitored and then closed, potentially, if the ACL is met or
25 expected to be met.

26

27 Alternative 2 would change that, and, instead of monitoring to
28 the ACL, it would monitor to the ACT, but Preferred Alternative
29 3, which was selected the last time the committee saw this
30 document, would act very similarly to like what we have for
31 recreational greater amberjack, for example, where there would
32 be an in-season fishing closure should one of the prescribed
33 triggers be met or be projected to be met, and, in this case,
34 the committee, last time, selected that prescribed trigger to be
35 the ACL. Therefore, we have the Preferred Alternative 3 and the
36 Preferred Option 3a. I will be happy to take any questions on
37 Action 2.

38

39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I do not see any questions at this
40 point. That is our last action, correct?

41

42 **DR. HOLLENSSEAD:** Yes, ma'am.

43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. If there is no further questions, I
45 guess we could take a peek at the codified text again, and, if
46 everybody is good with that, we could put forward a motion for
47 the council to consider.

48

1 **MS. LEVY:** Do you want me to go over it real quick?
2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.
4
5 **MS. LEVY:** Okay. I mean, it's pretty self-explanatory, and it's
6 just implementing the preferred, and so it is putting the new
7 catch level in there, and it's modifying the AM to be linked to
8 the ACL each year, and the agency will monitor and close if the
9 ACL is reached or projected to be reached.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Mara. Susan.
12
13 **MS. BOGGS:** I apologize, but did we actually pick a preferred on
14 Action 2 already?
15
16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Our preferred is --
17
18 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay. I didn't know that we actually --
19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It looks like it's Alternative 3, Option 3a.
21
22 **MS. BOGGS:** We moved the screen. I was looking at my notes, and
23 I was, like, wait a minute, I'm confused. Thank you.
24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It's all good. Okay. If we're good to go on
26 this document, I would be happy to accept a motion similar to
27 what we did with triggerfish to recommend the council take final
28 action on this. Dale.
29
30 **MR. DIAZ:** Madam Chair, I would be willing to make that motion.
31 If the staff would put the standard language up on the board,
32 and then insert the title of the document, that would be my
33 motion.
34
35 **DR. SHIPP:** I would second the motion.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dale, and thank you, Dr.
38 Shipp. We will get that on the board here. I think we've got
39 it now, and so let me read it. Then I see your hand, Leann.
40
41 **The motion is to approve the Framework Action Modification of**
42 **the Gulf of Mexico Lane Snapper Catch Limits and Accountability**
43 **Measures and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce**
44 **for review and implementation and deem the codified text as**
45 **necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to**
46 **make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair**
47 **is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text**
48 **as necessary and appropriate. Leann.**

1
2 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to vote in
3 favor of the motion, but I would be remiss if I didn't note one
4 thing here, and so we're going to change the ACL to just over a
5 million pounds, and, in this document, on paper page 7, it
6 actually gives us what our landings have been, in FES now,
7 commercial and recreational combined, what our total landings
8 have been over the past about twenty years, I guess, and I only
9 see one year where we got closed, and I see a big number in
10 2017, but, in eyeballing it, I'm guessing the average would be
11 somewhere around 500,000, or 400,000, pounds, even in FES-
12 adjusted numbers, plus commercial, that we're landing, and we're
13 putting in a quota of a million, and so it's double what we have
14 traditionally landed, even in FES-adjusted terms, and everybody
15 says it's fine, and hopefully it is, and I just want to throw
16 that out there, that we're building a lot more capacity for
17 landings into this fishery.

18
19 Now, it's data-poor, and so I'm going to roll with the punches,
20 but there's a lot of risk here that we could be coming back to
21 this sucker in about ten years to try and figure out how to
22 rebuild something.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Is there any other comments on
25 the motion? Let's get that motion back up on the board. **Is**
26 **there any opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion**
27 **carries.** All right. Thanks, Dr. Hollensead. John, I see your
28 hand.

29
30 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I just wanted to note that very good job, Madam
31 Chair. That's two final actions in thirty minutes, with a
32 fifteen-minute break.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Damn. I know, right? I don't think the rest
35 of our day is going to go like this, and so I guess drink it in
36 while you can. On that note, let's start red snapper, another
37 final action in front of us. We've got a whole bunch of stuff
38 to talk about here, and I think I'm going to go to Dr. Powers
39 first, but, before that, can we just pull up the action guide,
40 so that we can all be oriented on what's in front of us for this
41 item today?

42
43 **DR. JOE POWERS:** Can you hear me?

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** We can, but I don't know if someone from staff,
46 maybe Ryan or Dr. Froeschke, wants to cover the action guide
47 really quick.

48

1 **MR. RINDONE:** I will do it.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Ryan.

4
5 **FINAL ACTION: FRAMEWORK ACTION: GULF OF MEXICO RED SNAPPER**
6 **RECREATIONAL DATA CALIBRATION AND RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMITS**
7

8 **MR. RINDONE:** All right. So, you guys are going to review the
9 actions and alternatives in the document, which you have seen at
10 the last couple of meetings, and recommend any modifications to
11 the proposed management measures, as appropriate.

12
13 Dr. Powers will review the details of how the Science Center
14 plans to integrate data from the Great Red Snapper Count into
15 the council's requested interim analysis, and the Science Center
16 is on-hand to help with that part of the discussion as well, and
17 then Dr. Powers will also tell you about the SSC's thoughts on
18 that proposed approach.

19
20 You guys will hear from Emily a summary of written public
21 comment received so far, and you will review the codified text,
22 which right now is kind of blank, because we don't have a
23 preferred alternative. If prepared to do so, you guys can
24 select a preferred alternative, and so I think we should
25 probably try to get to that point before we talk about sending
26 it to the Secretary, if necessary and appropriate. Madam Chair.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Okay, Dr. Powers. I think we're
29 ready for you now.

30
31 **SEFSC INTEGRATION OF GREAT RED SNAPPER COUNT INTO RED SNAPPER**
32 **INTERIM ANALYSIS PROCESS AND SSC RECOMMENDATIONS**
33

34 **DR. POWERS:** Thank you. I don't have a presentation, and,
35 basically, what we are discussing here is the information that
36 was supplied to the SSC about the Great Red Snapper Count and
37 the SSC's response to it and how we might proceed through this
38 whole process.

39
40 Dr. Stunz presented the results of the Great Red Snapper Count
41 to the SSC, and this was the first presentation of the results,
42 and this is just a summary of the results, and there were a
43 number of responses to that from the SSC, and, first off, that
44 it's an amazingly comprehensive study, going over a wide range
45 of habitats and areas and different kinds of samples, including
46 video acoustics, depletion studies, tagging, and so on. I think
47 the SSC was very congratulatory about that.

1 There were a number of questions about details of the analysis
2 that are going to be forthcoming to the SSC, and, therefore,
3 part of this process of adjusting the ABC, but let me go
4 through, quickly, some of the questions and comments about the
5 results of the Great Red Snapper Count.

6
7 First off, one of the questions that came up was not really a
8 question, but a comment that, if you have an absolute abundance,
9 that really opens the door for estimating other kinds of
10 parameters, and possibly even estimating natural mortality rates
11 more fully, but it also changes your perception of annual
12 productivity, and that's essentially what a stock assessment is
13 doing, is trying to estimate the annual productivity, and so
14 having an annual abundance estimate really does open the door to
15 allow you to investigate a number of different things.

16
17 Another question that the SSC had was about the precision of the
18 estimates, and the number given was the coefficient of variation
19 of 11 percent, and what this basically means is that the
20 estimate is plus or minus 11 percent, and there are some
21 questions about that, and it's hard to evaluate that without
22 knowing all the details of the analysis and the sample size, and
23 the SSC has not, at this point, received those details.

24
25 That was one of, I think, the take-home messages, is that the
26 SSC and the larger community of scientists needs to have the
27 details of analysis looked at by a variety of people as we go
28 through this process.

29
30 We were also informed, at this point, that the interim analysis
31 is being scheduled now for late March or early April, or the SSC
32 review of it will be in late March or early April, and this is a
33 different sort of approach than we had considered as interim
34 analysis before, where you were updating indices and individual
35 catches and the ensuing time for an existing assessment.

36
37 This is actually -- If you're integrating an absolute abundance
38 estimate, ideally what you want to do is to actually integrate
39 that through a complete stock assessment, so you can take
40 advantage of all the other things you know about the stock, in
41 terms of indices of abundance and so on, and so adjusting the
42 ABC based on this new estimate of abundance is not a trivial
43 matter, because you have to decide what you mean by the fishing
44 mortality rate at MSY and is that still -- What you have
45 estimated before with the assessment, is that still an estimate
46 that you can use under this context?

47
48 The Center, Dr. Shannon Cass-Calay, presented a couple of

1 options about how that might proceed using the new abundance
2 estimate, but the details of that are still kind of vague, and
3 not so much in terms of -- Well, it's vague in terms of it
4 really depends on what kind of stratification the actual
5 abundance estimates come in, what sizes and what kind of size
6 frequencies by area and so on, and we really haven't gotten that
7 information there.

8
9 Essentially, what the SSC recommended at this stage, through a
10 motion, and I will just read you the motion, and it's in the
11 summary. The SSC moves to request an expedited review of the
12 Great Red Snapper Count results by an independent panel,
13 including SSC representatives and CIE or other independent
14 reviewers with expertise in the methodologies used.

15
16 Subsequent to our SSC meeting, the council has gone ahead and
17 organized a review, and Dr. Simmons can comment on that, and so
18 the upshot is that the SSC, in the late March meeting, will be
19 required to address the ABC of red snapper for, as of yet, some
20 unspecified time period and base that on the recommendations
21 about the status of the Great Red Snapper Count.

22
23 In other words, what is the abundance estimate that comes out of
24 that and what is the variance associated with this, but I remind
25 everybody as well that this also implies revisiting the other
26 side of the question, and not necessarily just the abundance,
27 but the actual estimates of productivity, the fishing mortality
28 rates at MSY, what sort of estimates can we get there, and so,
29 by the fact that this is an interim sort of temporary
30 adjustment, you are necessarily going to introduce some
31 uncertainty that might have been alleviated if you had gone
32 through a normal stock assessment process.

33
34 There is a concern about that, and exactly how the Center and
35 the assessment process provides those sorts of estimates, and
36 that's the important part of that meeting, and Dr. Porch may
37 want to comment on that approaches for that as well.

38
39 One thing that I think is adamant for the SSC members is that
40 we, collectively, have not received the actual analysis results
41 that provide some of the details that we wish to look at.
42 Through this motion, and through the council's actions, they
43 have established a review process for this, and that's quite
44 good, but I would also ask that, when the results are presented
45 to the independent reviewers and to the Center, that the SSC
46 also be provided access to whatever documents come out, because
47 there is not much time to respond to this, and, basically, the
48 projected plan now, as I understand it, is mid-March, you would

1 have some recommendations about what sort of assessment process
2 could go on, given that you have a particular abundance
3 estimate.

4
5 Then that abundance estimate itself has to be reviewed, or is
6 going to be reviewed, and the SSC will respond accordingly,
7 based on that review and other input, and so, again, I think
8 it's adamant, from the SSC's standpoint, that as much
9 information as possible be provided to all concerned, and not
10 just the SSC, and that those documents, in essence, be made
11 available as soon as possible. That's kind of where we stand,
12 and I will leave it at that.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dr. Powers. I'm going to
15 give folks a couple of minutes to raise their hands. John, is
16 your hand raised, or is that from before?

17
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** It was from before.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Leann.

21
22 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Powers, you said you
23 reviewed the Great Red Snapper Count, which is a stock
24 assessment of sorts, and it's different than the stock
25 assessments we're used to, but it's a huge undertaking, and I
26 compare it on the level of a stock assessment, if not more.

27
28 Normally, when you say you reviewed a stock assessment, you
29 actually go through all the data streams and the analysis and
30 the variance and the uncertainties and what was driving the
31 outputs, and is that the sort of review that you all had in the
32 SSC? We haven't had that yet at the council, but is that what
33 you all went through?

34
35 **DR. POWERS:** No, and, basically, it was a presentation of the
36 results by Dr. Stunz. It's that kind of review that we
37 recognize needs to get done not only by the SSC, but by
38 independent reviewers, and that was why we made our
39 recommendation that we did, because the details of the sample
40 sizes and how they're weighted and so on and so forth needs to
41 be illuminated and discussed. In other words, issues like how
42 many red snapper are actually counted by the Great Red Snapper
43 Count, and sample sizes, weighting of the sample sizes, and so
44 on.

45
46 One of the real positive things about the Snapper Count is
47 there's a breadth of methodologies being used, and that provides
48 some information, I think, and it's those kind of details that

1 we would wish to look at as we come to our conclusions.
2
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** A follow-up, Madam Chair, if I may.
4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead.
6
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** You must not have had the final report, which
8 obviously not, because we don't have it in our briefing book
9 either, and I see where it was marked through. Dr. Stunz, I'm
10 going to put you on the spot. You know, we thought we were
11 going to have this back in October of last year, and Dr. Powers
12 just said March, and I don't see how that timeline is going to
13 alleviate what recreational fishermen might experience in June,
14 and so where are we at on that final report?
15
16 **DR. STUNZ:** Madam Chair, do you want me to --
17
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Go ahead.
19
20 **DR. STUNZ:** Well, first off, Leann, it's not a stock assessment,
21 and it's very different than a stock assessment, what our team
22 has performed, and, you know, it's an estimate of absolute
23 abundance, and that's what the report will entail.
24
25 To be clear to everyone, contractually, this report is not due
26 for several months, and so our team is working really hard,
27 because we understand the management need and the need for this
28 information to produce it as fast as we can. Because there is a
29 lot of involvement with SSC members, at the SSC meeting, when I
30 gave a general overview presentation a few weeks ago, and I
31 completely agree that they suggested that there needed to be
32 this independent review, and our team is perfectly fine with
33 that, and so we agreed that we would provide a report as soon as
34 we could, hopefully by March 1, that would leave time for the
35 SSC to do their external evaluation, as well as the internal
36 evaluation, and be ready for this meeting that would occur at
37 the end of March or, really, the first of April.
38
39 That's where we are with it. I can tell you, Leann, to the
40 magnitude of what we've done and the amount of work that was
41 requested, it is quite monumental, and so this isn't something
42 that we can just turn around and produce a quick white paper in
43 a couple of weeks or something like that, and our team is
44 working as fast as we can.
45
46 We have worked closely with Clay Porch and his team at the
47 Science Center to provide them the preliminary data, so they can
48 at least begin looking at it and see what it looks like. Of

1 course, that would certainly need blessing, but at least they
2 can see what we're up against and that sort of thing, to help
3 see where they might go and directions they could take, and, of
4 course, Clay would be the person to comment on that.

5
6 The short answer to that question is we should have a report
7 coming along very shortly here, in about a month or so, that,
8 according to Carrie and the other Gulf Council staff, and with
9 the SSC timeline, should be adequate time to do what they need
10 to do to move it through our usual processes.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. I think we all can appreciate
13 that you have a lot on your plate right now. Leann, did you
14 have a follow-up?

15
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and thank you for that, Greg. I appreciate
17 it, and I think it was maybe just a management -- I mean, a
18 managing of my expectations, that I went wrong somewhere. Had I
19 known that you had a deadline of I guess March for this, I would
20 have looked at this completely differently.

21
22 I think I've been kind of counting on this coming through in two
23 weeks and two weeks and two weeks, and thinking that this was
24 going to alleviate the calibration issue, which affects the
25 season for the recreational anglers. Had I known that there was
26 actually a March deadline that was probably more realistic for
27 seeing this, I don't think I would have gotten my hopes up that
28 we could have gotten all of this done in time, and so, if the
29 final report comes out in March, that will be reviewed to come
30 up with some interim -- How to go about the interim analysis,
31 but then you have to --

32
33 Because they need that to even -- I listened to Shannon's
34 presentation at the SSC, and it was just five PowerPoint slides
35 on options for maybe how to possibly integrate this, but they
36 couldn't do anything, because they don't have the data, and it's
37 really hard to flesh out which way to go, and so I think, once
38 we get this final report reviewed and blessed, that's just going
39 to get us to the point where we can start to figure out what's
40 the best method to actually integrate it.

41
42 That will be another meeting behind, and we'll be at the June
43 meeting before we actually get interim results that have been
44 blessed, and I don't see how we can bless the final report or
45 assessment or whatever you want to call it, the Great Red
46 Snapper Count, at the SSC meeting in March, getting that to the
47 Science Center in March, and expecting them to have, before the
48 SSC meeting in March, a path to integrate it for the data they

1 just got and have it integrated and present that. That is a big
2 ask, and I think we're going to be June before we get that, if
3 then.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Greg, is it to that point? I
6 saw your hand fly up.

7
8 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To that point, also, the
9 March deadline, Leann, so you know, is a deadline that we tried
10 to agree on from just a collegial standpoint, and not
11 necessarily a contractual agreement, to try and meet some of
12 these management needs, but I would caution, and I know our
13 scientific team feels the same way, that there is really two
14 things going on here.

15
16 There is management needs, which we're obviously all aware of
17 and what we're talking about today right here, certainly, but
18 there is also science needs, and those two things don't
19 necessarily progress at the same timelines.

20
21 We want to get the science right, so we have it appropriate, and
22 there's lot of certainty, and we feel good about what we've done
23 and that sort of thing, which we do, but we want to get it
24 right, and we want to make sure it's a solid study that is well
25 received and that kind of thing.

26
27 Those timelines, while we understand there is pressing
28 management needs, and we're right in the middle of that,
29 certainly, we don't want that to guide and rush the science to
30 something that we might regret or not have done our adequate due
31 diligence, and that's what our team is concerned with, and so
32 we've felt like we can meet this March deadline, and that's not
33 our contractual deadline, from this independent study that's
34 outside of the council, and that's a much later date.

35
36 We're essentially trying to work to solve a serious problem that
37 we have, and I'm confident that we can make that, but it just
38 takes time for the science to progress to a point where it's
39 ready for management.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. Kevin.

42
43 **MR. ANSON:** I actually was going to offer a motion, but Clay had
44 raised his hand, and so, if he has something, a comment, to this
45 discussion, he can go first.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you, Kevin. Clay.

48

1 **DR. PORCH:** Sure. Thank you. First of all, thank you, Dr.
2 Powers, for that excellent summary of the SSC meeting. I think
3 it was very clear. I did want to comment to the point about the
4 review.

5
6 Best available scientific information does require the
7 information to be fully available, and that's part of the title.
8 I think that the review that Dr. Powers mentioned should answer
9 that.

10
11 To Leann's point regarding the timing, that's why the Science
12 Center is working with the Great Red Snapper Count folks to use
13 the data that they provided to go ahead with whatever we want to
14 call this interim analysis, and so we're actually working with
15 it now.

16
17 There are some gaps in the information. For instance, we don't
18 have, from the Great Red Snapper Count, much in the way of the
19 size composition of the fish in the uncharacterized bottom,
20 which is where most of the fish are, and so, fortunately, we
21 have some longline surveys out there, and we'll use that
22 information to substitute.

23
24 I think we have a way forward, and there's a couple of ways
25 forward that the SSC got a glimpse of, but, of course, since we
26 didn't have the data very long prior to when the SSC meeting
27 was, we didn't have things fully fleshed out regarding the
28 possibilities, but the bottom line is we are forging ahead with
29 the interim analysis approach.

30
31 We'll give a couple of different options and some sensitivity
32 runs, and our intention is to have that done in time for the
33 review, so that we can include it as part of that review, and
34 then just the last point that I wanted to be clear on, and Dr.
35 Powers alluded to it, and Dr. Frazer mentioned it, I think, at
36 one of the previous council meetings, but what the Great Red
37 Snapper Count showed us is that, instead of this smaller,
38 highly-resilient red snapper population that was estimated by
39 the assessment, what it appears to be is that we have a much
40 larger population, where most of the fish are outside of the
41 areas fished, and outside of the area where we get the data for
42 the assessment, and so what you really have is a much larger
43 population that is less resilient.

44
45 So you have this big relatively unfished area that is seeding
46 the highly-fished area, and so what that means, in practical
47 terms for management, is that the MSY proxy that we're currently
48 using, 26 SPR, is probably too aggressive, and it's too low,

1 and, most likely, something that's more consistent with what
2 most of the other councils are using for species like this is
3 more appropriate, something like an SPR of 40 or 45 percent.

4
5 Now, I don't expect that the council can change the FMP that
6 quickly, but the SSC, and I think Dr. Powers alluded to this,
7 certainly will need to consider these sorts of things when they
8 decide what the ABC should be, and so, even though the
9 population appears to be about three-times what the assessment
10 says, that doesn't mean that the catch advice will be three-
11 times, because there's a lot of other things that will change
12 our perception about red snapper, including how productive they
13 are. Thanks.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Clay. Kevin, I think you're up.

16
17 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. **I had sent a motion in to**
18 **staff.** If I can get a second, I will provide some discussion,
19 or rationale, for it.

20
21 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** If you need a second, I will do that. Just
22 tell me when you want it.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, General Spraggins. Kevin, we have
25 your motion on the board, if you want to read it.

26
27 **MR. ANSON:** Okay. **To request the Southeast Fisheries Science**
28 **Center add two additional analysis runs to the interim red**
29 **snapper assessment that would replace federal recreational**
30 **survey data with state recreational survey data, with and**
31 **without the Great Red Snapper Count data, and have results from**
32 **both runs available in time for review by the SSC at the March**
33 **2021 SSC meeting.**

34
35 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I would second that motion, and I will have
36 discussion about the Science Center using state data to see what
37 the quota would look like.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you.

40
41 **MR. ANSON:** Madam Chair, do you want me to provide some
42 rationale?

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure. Thanks, Kevin.

45
46 **MR. ANSON:** We have heard here, at this meeting, and it was
47 discussed at the SSC meeting, this issue about productivity, and
48 productivity is driven a lot by how much fishing mortality

1 occurs, and that's kind of why we're at this juncture right now,
2 is there is still a lot of uncertainty and disparity amongst the
3 state survey data, at least in a couple of states, versus the
4 federal survey data.

5
6 Doing this motion, we'll have that additional information, that
7 we just heard Dr. Powers and Dr. Porch describe, to help resolve
8 and reconcile the discussion of how to treat or how the impacts
9 of the Great Red Snapper Count data is going to have on the
10 assessment, and so that's what I think this -- Having this data
11 -- I'm not saying make any management decisions from it, but
12 just running this data alongside will help when they look at the
13 analysis, the interim analysis, for just using the updated
14 information for the interim assessment without the Great Snapper
15 Count as well as an update with the Great Red Snapper Count
16 data.

17
18 We're trying to get to how many fish are out there, and, short
19 of draining the Gulf of Mexico and going around and picking up
20 all the fish, we've got either an assessment or we've got the
21 Great Red Snapper Count, and, from our point of view in Alabama,
22 we've been conducting a habitat-based survey since 2011, or
23 2011, actually, and those numbers are close to what came out
24 when you look at the proportions that were provided for the
25 Alabama/Mississippi region, and they're very close.

26
27 That's what we set up our state survey, was on an amount of fish
28 that we felt that the resource could tolerate, and that was in
29 Snapper Check units, and, if you look at the data for both
30 Snapper Check and the federal data for Alabama, whether it's in
31 CHTS units or FES units, and you compare it against the Great
32 Red Snapper Count data, you're going to have to question what
33 your belief of productivity is, and it will be a lot more
34 productive if you want to look at it in those terms.

35
36 Anyways, that's my -- That's most of what I wanted to say, but
37 one last point is that, you know, when the issue came up of
38 using state data for analysis purposes at a couple of SSC
39 meetings ago, there was lots of support for using state data,
40 and the motion failed, because it was a tie vote, and so, again,
41 I think running this analysis with that data will help, again,
42 to make folks feel a little more comfortable, and it could
43 provide some more vision, as we move into the research track for
44 the next assessment, and it could help answer a lot of these
45 questions and try to get us back on track with having data and
46 the timing of science and the timing of management, because
47 we're having to use this data for management. Thank you.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. I've got a couple of names on
2 the list, and so I'm just going to work my way through. Clay.

3
4 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you. I just wanted to make it clear that the
5 interim red snapper assessment is not a full stock assessment,
6 and the research track stock assessment could better answer
7 these sorts of questions, and that doesn't happen until towards
8 the end of this year.

9
10 The interim analysis simply multiplies the current benchmark
11 reference point or something similar to that, like F 40 percent,
12 and right now it's F 26 percent, and so we would just multiply
13 that by the abundance estimate, essentially, and so the source
14 of catch estimates doesn't really figure into this. It's really
15 as simple as we have an independent estimate of abundance, and
16 we have the current fishing mortality rate that corresponds to
17 the 26 percent SPR proxy from the previous assessment, and we
18 can look at some alternative proxies and multiply the two.

19
20 We will do some sensitivity runs with the past stock assessment,
21 tuning it to the Great Red Snapper Count, but there's no
22 guarantee that would be completed in this timeframe, but I just
23 wanted to be clear that, really, this motion would apply more to
24 the upcoming full stock assessment, and it doesn't really affect
25 the interim analysis, because the source of catches are not
26 incorporated directly.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. That was helpful. Robin.

29
30 **MR. RIECHERS:** In light of that discussion by Clay and Kevin,
31 I'm really thinking I will support the motion, because, whether
32 it's for this or whether it is for, as we get to the bigger
33 assessment model, and I think doing these sorts of sensitivity
34 analyses will be important as we think about these shifting data
35 parameters that we have.

36
37 I guess I will go on the record here, and while it's speaking to
38 red snapper, but I really believe it's speaking to a lot of the
39 changes that we're going to see between these data series, and I
40 would hope that, as we go into new assessments, and while I
41 understand our SEDAR process and how we go about that, and we
42 kind of go forward with a new assessment and methodology, and I
43 say new, and it's not new, but it's a -- We look to new data
44 sources that may make changes in the model for us, much like the
45 discussions going on between SPR of F 26 percent or whether it
46 should be 40 percent.

47
48 I hope we do try to make sure we do runs where the model was as

1 it was before, meaning the last time a full model had been done,
2 before we start making any of those changes, because that really
3 gives us a benchmark of where we're at now as compared to where
4 we were then, because I will -- Certainly some of the people
5 around this table hearken back to the discussions about moving
6 that SPR number down, and we had many discussions about that and
7 what the stock was doing and the resiliency and could we
8 possibly lower that number or not.

9
10 So, while I understand the current hypothesis about a less-
11 resilient stock, I also want to, as much as we can, make sure
12 we're comparing the old modeling runs to the new modeling runs
13 without changing many knobs, and then, of course, if the knobs
14 need to be changed, because of new science, we then make those
15 decisions, but we at least get some flavor, or some approach, to
16 look at what it was before and what it is now, as opposed to
17 kind of doing all that knob-switching behind the scenes.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. General Spraggins.

20
21 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Obviously, I support the motion the way it
22 is, and I understand that we are going to bring this up more in
23 depth in the future, in this meeting this week, but, obviously,
24 we look at this, and the state data needs to be looked at in a
25 lot better angle than it is right now, because at no time were
26 we ever told that the state data had to match up to what the
27 federal data was. We were told that it would be maybe measured
28 with it, but not whether or state data was being measured the
29 same way or not.

30
31 Just to give you a little idea, and I don't want to belabor this
32 too much, but, according to what they're using to come up with
33 their assessments and the way that they're doing it, it's
34 showing that Mississippi would have to have 106,000 people that
35 had effort to catch. We don't even have that many fishermen,
36 number one, and, number two, according to what we normally would
37 see, we might see a fifth of that in a year, and nowhere near
38 it.

39
40 To say that we would be higher than Louisiana, which I love
41 Louisiana, and they're great people, but they're like about
42 twice as big as Mississippi, and their area of fishing is a lot
43 bigger than Mississippi, and so I'm sorry, and, to me, the way
44 that this has been worked, it's not really -- I am not a
45 scientist, and I'm just an old, retired general, and I just
46 happen to be in a position to be doing this job, but, looking at
47 the scientists that I see on this panel, I can't see how in the
48 world we would ever want to take something that is that far

1 skewed and think that we would want to vote on it. That, to me,
2 is -- I mean, that, to me, does not show any way in the world
3 that we could do that, and, once again, I'm not a scientist, but
4 I'm just looking from the outside, and the commonsense makes a
5 lot of things to me, in my life, and I appreciate your time.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, General. Next, I have Andy.

8
9 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Martha. Two things. First, in
10 response to Mr. Spraggins, I am going to respectfully disagree
11 with his statement that you hadn't been informed about needing
12 to have the calibrations, and I think the agency has made it
13 very clear, starting with the certification process of all the
14 state surveys and the letters that each of the states received,
15 that the data would need to be calibrated for future use in
16 stock assessments.

17
18 Then we laid, obviously, that groundwork to then inform what
19 occurred in Amendment 50 and the rulemaking that proceeded, and
20 it specifically indicated, in the Amendment 50 rulemaking, the
21 need for calibration, and so this has been a topic of
22 discussion, and I realize that there's a lot of angst about the
23 differences in the survey estimates, and that is certainly
24 something that needs to be looked at further, and I do not
25 disagree with you about that.

26
27 In terms of Kevin's motion, I am not willing to support the
28 motion, primarily because of what Clay indicated with regard to
29 the appropriateness of conducting such an analysis as part of an
30 interim analysis. It does seem to be most appropriate for a
31 research track, for a full-blown assessment, and I would support
32 the motion, if modified, to incorporate it into a research
33 track, or a full assessment, going forward.

34
35 The bottom line is my expectations, and certainly Clay or others
36 can correct me, is that, if you're going to incorporate the
37 state survey data, we're going to get lower estimated annual
38 catch limits resulting from that, because of lower yield levels
39 that are being input into the stock assessment over a long time
40 series, and that's been the case when we've made adjustments up
41 or down to landings based on prior adjustments, and it then,
42 obviously, affects the catch limits, and so I think we know the
43 directionality of the change, and I certainly understand Kevin's
44 interest in kind of understanding the magnitude of that change
45 going forward, but I don't see this as appropriate to address in
46 an interim analysis at this point.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. Next, I have Greg Stunz.

1
2 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Martha, and, in short, I support the
3 motion. I mean, I understand whether it's appropriate for this
4 interim analysis or the full research track, and I would hope
5 that maybe we could try to do it for both, and I could envision
6 that it could be done for this March as well as the other, but I
7 don't know, and that's for Clay, I guess, to really input on,
8 but I wanted to comment to the General, and maybe Kevin's point,
9 about the MRIP versus the state survey data.

10
11 We have had this discussion a little bit, about the
12 inappropriateness of MRIP for these shortened seasons, and it's
13 good for the whole Gulf, but maybe not necessarily for
14 individual states, and, I mean, certainly I think we're seeing
15 that with all the new data coming to light, but, at some point,
16 I think we've really got to consider -- While I like this motion
17 that's leading to these side-by-side comparisons, the drawback
18 with MRIP, of course, is that we don't have the long time series
19 that we would like.

20
21 At some point, I feel like we really just need to pull the band-
22 aid off and go with it. Run MRIP side-by-side with these state
23 surveys, to really see -- Get a more accurate picture of what's
24 going on, and we can begin to look at trying to figure out what
25 other regions are -- Other regions meaning other councils
26 outside of the Gulf region, and many of those -- I haven't done
27 my complete due diligence about how they handle MRIP, and some
28 don't use MRIP at all, and some go with their individual
29 separate state programs at face value without even any
30 calibrations.

31
32 I am trying to figure out exactly -- We're back to the same
33 point that we always make, and you've got MRIP as a tool, and we
34 just keep trying to force it and force it into a situation which
35 may not be working, and, with Kevin's motion here, we start
36 seeing them side-by-side and what they're doing, and, at some
37 point, I think we've just got to really decide is MRIP
38 appropriate for the management that we're trying to do here and
39 begin to develop those time series that can be built better into
40 stock assessments and that sort of thing.

41
42 Then, finally, Martha, my last comment I just want to say --
43 Because the Great Red Snapper Count is certainly related to
44 this, and Clay made a point about some of the data gaps that are
45 in the study, and, I mean, certainly no study is perfect, and
46 they always lead to more studies and that sort of thing, and
47 hindsight is 20/20, but some of the data gaps he was referring
48 to weren't necessarily supposed to be accomplished with the time

1 and money and resources that we had.

2
3 Certainly, if we had known there were that many fish on the
4 uncharacterized bottom, we would have spent a lot more time out
5 there getting age composition and different size structure and
6 that sort of thing, but that just wasn't part of the scope of
7 work that we were requested to do, and, while we recognize those
8 are data gaps, those are just things that are going to have to
9 be filled by like the bottom longline survey or other surveys in
10 the future, and I just wanted to make it clear that it wasn't
11 some flawed component that we didn't do, and that's just
12 something that study could not answer.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Greg. Kevin.

15
16 **MR. ANSON:** Two points. The response that Dr. Porch provided
17 regarding how this would be inappropriate, or not relevant, not
18 valuable, I don't know. I am trying to go back on memory and
19 such, but I always thought that, when you performed an interim
20 analysis, you actually took all the data that was used in the
21 first assessment and just input the new data and added the --
22 Didn't change any of the data, and I'm asking for a change here,
23 but I'm not asking for it to be used for management, and I'm
24 just asking for it to be helpful or provide additional
25 information to folks, since this is new information, and it's a
26 lot of information.

27
28 We are on a short timeline, and so I'm just trying to utilize
29 the opportunity of just replacing one data stream, because,
30 again, I thought that's what you did in your interim analysis,
31 is you took all the data stream and just updated the years that
32 had transpired since the last time the assessment was performed.

33
34 Then the second point is I just want to go back to the issue of
35 this disparity issue with the data, and, granted, we were told,
36 or we were given indications, that the state data wouldn't
37 necessarily be used, or it wouldn't be -- The federal data
38 wouldn't be calibrated to the state data, and that's fine, but,
39 again, when you look at the Great Red Snapper Count data, and
40 then you look at the assessment and the outputs from the
41 assessment from the last time it was run, and you compare it
42 against Alabama, we're just getting it on both ends.

43
44 We're getting it on the front end and the back end here, and we
45 show all this effort and catch, and, yet, when it comes time to
46 run through the assessment and it gets doled out, we don't have
47 what we believe to be an appropriate or an equal share or access
48 to the resource, and, again, I went and looked up some data, and

1 I've got some back-of-the-napkin calculations here, but, as far
2 as exploitation rates here in Alabama, using 2017 data, and that
3 seemed to be the most I could find, all the data available to
4 piece all this stuff together, was back in 2017.

5
6 If you look at the Great Red Snapper Count data, and then the
7 Snapper Check landings, in addition to the commercial landings
8 for Alabama that's by the federal, we're at 0.049 is the
9 exploitation rate for Snapper Check. With MRIP-CHTS, we're at
10 0.083, and, if you use FES for that year, exploitation, if you
11 compared it to the Great Red Snapper Count estimate, was 0.179.

12
13 Again, there is some issues with the assessment and how it
14 matches up and what proportion Alabama makes of that, and that's
15 -- I am just trying to get there, to where we can start using
16 this data little bit quicker, because the process is very slow,
17 and I'm just trying to do that. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Clay, I see you're next, and do
20 you want to respond to some of those points that Kevin brought
21 up?

22
23 **DR. PORCH:** Yes. Thank you. I think we have a couple of points
24 of misunderstanding here. First of all, I didn't say that the
25 points made in this motion are not valuable, and I said they are
26 not relevant to an interim red snapper assessment, and that's
27 where I think there's a misunderstanding.

28
29 Again, the interim red snapper assessment does not use the catch
30 information. It uses the abundance estimates, and it multiplies
31 it -- The abundance estimates from the Great Red Snapper Count
32 and multiplies it by a fishing mortality rate to get an estimate
33 of what the catch should be, and then we can monitor against
34 that, and so there is no catch information going into it.

35
36 What I think Mr. Anson is thinking about is what we call update
37 stock assessments, which are full stock assessments where you
38 add the most recent and relevant data, but, in this case, you
39 are adding the Great Red Snapper Count as an index of absolute
40 abundance, and a number of other new pieces of information, and
41 that will happen, but it's going to happen during the upcoming
42 what we call research track assessment, where we look at all the
43 details.

44
45 There is no way that we could actually perform that kind of
46 assessment between now and March. I mean, we just got the data
47 from the Great Red Snapper Count, and there's no way that you
48 could run it through those models in time.

1
2 We are going to try and look at some sensitivity analyses, using
3 the old stock assessment model tuned to the Great Red Snapper
4 Count information, but, again, I can't promise that we'll get
5 all that done. That's quite a bit of work, and there's a lot of
6 nuances in there, and so it's more like a sensitivity run, if we
7 can get it.

8
9 What we committed to was the interim assessment, where, again,
10 we take directly the Great Red Snapper Count estimates of
11 abundance and multiply it by a fishing mortality rate, and that
12 gets us a catch to monitor against. It doesn't use FES, and it
13 doesn't use state estimates, and it's completely independent,
14 which I think was the point of the survey to begin with, to make
15 it as independent of the assessment as possible.

16
17 Then we'll move into using all that information in a full stock
18 assessment, where we'll also do the things that are suggested in
19 this motion, and so the motion, again, would not make sense to
20 us in the context of an interim analysis, but, if you replace
21 "interim red snapper assessment" with "the upcoming red snapper
22 stock assessment", then it would make perfect sense. Thank you.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Clay. Let me just rephrase I think
25 what Clay is trying to say here, that this interim analysis does
26 not use catch information from federal or state programs, and
27 so, should the committee pass this motion, it doesn't really
28 mean a whole lot.

29
30 We can edit it to have it make sense, or I guess, Kevin, you
31 could edit it to have it make sense by replacing "interim" with
32 "research track", or even "full assessment", and I think we more
33 or less all know what that means, but it's pretty clear, I
34 think, from the discussion from Dr. Porch, that that's not this
35 interim assessment that's coming up, and that will be the
36 assessment scheduled for, I guess, a couple of years from now.
37 Kevin, I saw you put your hand up. I'm going to bounce to you,
38 so that we can figure out what's happening with this motion.
39 Kevin, do you want to edit your motion?

40
41 **MR. ANSON:** I'm still thinking about it, and I might come back
42 with an additional question for Dr. Porch.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Dr. Cody has his hand up.

45
46 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** Thanks, Martha. I just wanted to reiterate
47 Andy's point, that the need for calibration shouldn't have been
48 a surprise, and he did mention the certification process, and

1 then also the Amendment 50.

2
3 I think that another think to bring to your attention is that
4 we've had a series of workshops throughout, where we've
5 discussed how the state surveys would be improved and developed,
6 and then also transitioned, and, in 2018, we had a workshop that
7 specifically addressed the calibration options that were
8 available to us, and so that information is available through a
9 report, and it was also discussed prior to the 2020 workshop,
10 where the calibrations were presented. Thank you.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. All right. Dr. Frazer.

13
14 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm just going to try to help you out here a little
15 bit, Martha, and I think, given where we are in the discussion,
16 if we can let Kevin go ahead and decide what he wants to do with
17 this motion, and we will dispense with it before lunch, and then
18 we'll come back and we'll work through the document, if that's
19 okay with you.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds like a plan. Leann, is it to this
22 motion?

23
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, ma'am.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Go ahead, and then hopefully, by that
27 time, Kevin will have a decision about what he wants to do here.

28
29 **MS. BOSARGE:** Kevin, I am very supportive of this idea that you
30 have, and I don't think it's functional for the interim
31 analysis, for the reasons that Clay provided, and not to mention
32 timing. I don't want to delay that interim analysis if it can
33 be helpful for recreational seasons in June, but I definitely
34 would support it if you would change it to lean more towards the
35 next assessment, or whatever the next analysis is that we have
36 coming on red snapper, because you're right that it is affecting
37 management, and it's not -- It's not the assessment, and you
38 said there's something screwy with the assessment, but it's not
39 the assessment.

40
41 It's the landings streams. It's the difference between FES and
42 other methodologies, different state programs, et cetera, and
43 that's affecting management in all our species and not just
44 species that we actually have ACL monitoring in state
45 currencies.

46
47 I made the point earlier with lane snapper, and we're taking
48 lane snapper, that's been bumping up against its ACL. Even in

1 the same currencies it's been bumping up against its ACL, CHTS
2 to CHTS, and, when we switch it over to FES, and we plug that
3 into an assessment, that FES is driving things, and now we're
4 going to have a quota where, even in FES landings numbers, we're
5 only hitting about half of it, and what ramifications is that
6 going to have, from a conservation standpoint, and management?

7
8 It's the same thing in red grouper. Just because we're not
9 managing ACL, monitoring ACL, in GRFS, which is where almost all
10 the rec landings come from, you should be doing the same thing
11 with the assessment for red grouper. We should go back and plug
12 in the GRFS numbers and rip the band-aid off, as you all said,
13 and look at it and see what's really driving it, because, there
14 again, you got a big quota out of that assessment that got
15 ratcheted down with some more qualitative functions to get us to
16 the lower quota that we're at.

17
18 It's time to do it for all the species, and I'm tired of it only
19 being for red snapper, but, if you'll change your motion, to
20 make it geared towards the stock assessment, I will definitely
21 support that.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Kevin.

24
25 **MR. ANSON:** Thanks for the comments, Leann. I too am concerned,
26 or have concerns, about other species as well, and there is
27 something -- There is something in the model that we, we being
28 the management as well as the scientists, have come to an
29 agreement over the years and have established as either fact or
30 best available science to answer a particular question, and, in
31 reality, those things might not be the case, and so we'll need
32 to try to reconcile, again, these differences, and the Great Red
33 Snapper Count provides a little bit more clarity.

34
35 On Clay's comments, I guess -- I am wondering, Dr. Porch, is it
36 -- I think I know the answer, but I will ask it. What about the
37 possibility of running an update assessment, if you want to call
38 it that, but you had alluded to trying to input the Great Red
39 Snapper Count data into the model and that that would cause a
40 tight timeline. Seeing that it would be very simple to just
41 input the recreational data stream into the series for the state
42 data, is that a possibility?

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Clay.

45
46 **DR. PORCH:** It's a bit more complicated than it sounds, because,
47 I mean, you could just substitute the recreational catches, but
48 remember that the various surveys don't all get the entire

1 picture. Some of them only give you landings during the open
2 season and don't give you discards, and so exactly how you put
3 all of that together hasn't actually been determined yet.

4
5 I am not at all confident that we could turn that around by
6 March, and, in fact, I think it would be pretty near impossible.
7 What we could do, and what we're planning to do, is look at the
8 old assessment and work in the Great Red Snapper Count, to see
9 how things might change, but, again there's a lot of moving
10 pieces here, and it's a very complicated affair, and so we can't
11 even guarantee we can get that done by March.

12
13 Again, to do this properly, we really need the time to do it
14 right, and that research track assessment starts towards the end
15 of this year, and I think it really needs to be pushed off into
16 that, instead of just doing something half-baked.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. I'm going to go to Phil. He's
19 on the list, and then, Kevin, I'm going to go back to you one
20 more time, to see if you want to do something with this motion,
21 if you want to edit it, based on all the discussion that we've
22 had, and then we're going to dispense with this motion, in
23 whatever form it's in at that point. Phil.

24
25 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the effort
26 and the insight that Kevin has put into this motion, and I
27 believe that I want to support it, and I realize that it's a
28 challenge, and I realize it's difficult, and I realize that we
29 may need to make some further edits, but, that said, relevant to
30 this motion, I want to confirm that there are other councils, or
31 council, that are not using MRIP data and in fact do use state
32 data, and is that correct?

33
34 **DR. CODY:** Martha, if you wouldn't mind, I can probably address
35 that question.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** If it's very brief, because it's sort of off-
38 track.

39
40 **DR. CODY:** Yes. On the west coast, the Pacific coast, there are
41 state surveys, and MRIP doesn't operate the APAIS or the FES,
42 and so state surveys are used over there, and so Oregon,
43 Washington, and California.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you. Okay. Kevin.

46
47 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. **Based on comments, I will**
48 **go ahead and modify the motion to change, or remove, the**

1 reference to the interim red snapper assessment to the research
2 track assessment.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Joe Spraggins, are you okay with this
5 change, since you were the seconder?
6
7 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes, I'm okay.
8
9 **MR. ANSON:** Madam Chair, if I can make one more -- Madam Chair,
10 can I have one more comment?
11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.
13
14 **MR. ANSON:** So then, looking forward to the research track
15 assessment, I certainly would be receptive to Science Center
16 staff, or Regional Office staff, getting in touch with the
17 states to -- After review of the respective programs, to
18 identify those gaps and start discussing ways that we could kind
19 of frame the data or do calibrations on the data for issues like
20 closed seasons or where some programs don't survey the entire
21 year, and so I've got some thoughts on that, but certainly,
22 again, we would look forward to the agency reaching out to the
23 states to do so. Thank you.
24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Okay. I'm cutting it off after
26 Andy.
27
28 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Madam Chair, do we still need to leave that
29 last sentence in there, Madam Chair, I mean, if we're saying
30 that we can't get it done by the 2021 SSC meeting? I'm not
31 sure.
32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** You're right. Kevin, I think we probably need
34 to end that sentence after "Great Red Snapper Count data".
35
36 **MR. ANSON:** I would agree with you on that, yes.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Good catch. Thank you. Now the motion
39 reads: To request the Southeast Fisheries Science Center add two
40 additional analysis runs to the research track red snapper
41 assessment that would replace federal recreational survey data
42 with state recreational survey data with and without Great Red
43 Snapper Count data. Then just axe the rest. Very good. I am
44 going to go to these three hands, or maybe we just have two
45 hands now. Troy.
46
47 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually, Richard
48 contributed the information regarding the Pacific coast states

1 that I was going to contribute, but I would just add that they
2 did, back in 2004, stop using MRFSS, at that time, and MRIP now,
3 and they don't do any sort of calibration back to those
4 programs, and so that's just my comment. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Troy. Ryan, is your hand still up?

7
8 **MR. RINDONE:** No, ma'am.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Very good. All right. Let's go to
11 lunch, which means that we're going to vote on this right now.
12 **Is there any opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the**
13 **motion carries.** I will go back to Mr. Chair, and you can tell
14 us when we can come back from lunch.

15
16 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Martha, for helping us get through that,
17 and we will come back at 1:00, and we'll start to work through
18 the document. Have a good lunch, everybody.

19
20 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on January 26, 2021.)

21
22 - - -

23
24 January 26, 2021

25
26 TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

27
28 - - -

29
30 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
31 Management Council reconvened via webinar on Tuesday afternoon,
32 January 26, 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Martha
33 Guyas.

34
35 **DR. FRAZER:** I hope that everybody enjoyed their lunch, and,
36 before we get started, I see that we have Sam Rauch on the line,
37 and so I just wanted to acknowledge Sam's presence. Thanks for
38 being here, Sam, and I didn't know if you wanted to take an
39 opportunity to say anything or if you just wanted to listen for
40 a bit.

41
42 **MR. SAM RAUCH:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have nothing in
43 particular to say, and I occasionally do like to participate in
44 the council meetings around the country, and I'm happy to answer
45 any questions, if the council has any, and this is a time of
46 transition in D.C., and so I don't have a lot of answers at the
47 moment, but, if there are any questions, I am happy to answer
48 them, but, otherwise, I was just going to listen in on the

1 presentation.

2
3 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. That sounds good, Sam. Thanks for joining
4 us. I will wait just a second, to see if anybody does have a
5 specific question. Otherwise, we'll just let you sit and enjoy
6 our discussion on red snapper. Okay. I am not seeing any
7 hands, and so, Ms. Guyas, if you want to pick up where we left
8 off, the floor is yours.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are
11 still, of course, in our red snapper agenda item. I think, at
12 this point, we can move on to some of the other items that we
13 have here. Before we get into the document, as with trigger and
14 lane snapper, let's go to the public comments first. Emily, are
15 you ready to present that to us?

16
17 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

18
19 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I certainly am. Thank you. I do want to sort
20 of just explain a little bit about this one, because we had
21 separate comment forms for the data calibration stuff as well as
22 this document, and we also got a number of comments through
23 general comments as well, and so, when we were looking for
24 comments relevant to this document, we sort of had to comb a
25 number of different places, and we found seventeen comments that
26 were received and relevant to the issue, and so I wanted to
27 preface my summary with that, so that some of the folks who know
28 that they had submitted comment were aware that we did what we
29 could to dig them up and put them in the right place.

30
31 I will just go ahead and go into the comment summary. With
32 seventeen comments received, we heard that the implications of
33 calibrating FES data back in time are huge, and that we need to
34 take a step back and allow independent experts to review the
35 entire calibration process.

36
37 We also heard that the red snapper fishery is healthy and that
38 the recreational season should be extended. We heard concerns
39 for the lack of standardized data collection systems for each
40 state under state management, that those concerns had been
41 realized, and that appropriate ACL adjustments need to be made
42 to ensure that overharvest doesn't happen.

43
44 We heard that Texas should be held to the same standard as the
45 other states, who have made their ACL adjustments, and we heard
46 support for sound data collection and adhering to catch limits
47 to ensure that we continue to rebuild the stock and grow the
48 recreational season, and we also heard that overages in the

1 recreational sector could impact anglers in other states and
2 sectors and that the council should implement state calibrations
3 as soon as possible.

4
5 We heard that there is both scientific and legal need for
6 calibration, that a comparison of state survey landings with
7 MRIP-based ACL is statistically indefensible, and that, if the
8 calibration does not occur now, the overfishing limit will be
9 need to be reduced after the assessment, and this will
10 negatively impact all sectors.

11
12 We heard that using applied calibration ratios, even if the
13 sector lands its ACL, or OFL, will be -- The OFL will be
14 exceeded by millions of pounds and that that is a direct
15 violation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and its prohibition on
16 overfishing.

17
18 We heard that calibrating is the best way to reduce the severity
19 of paybacks. We heard that defining a strategy and timeline for
20 managing private recreational red snapper with a common currency
21 is imperative to the long-term viability of Amendment 50. We
22 heard that allocating each state a portion of the private
23 recreational red snapper ACL using federally-collected data,
24 while using state data collection programs to monitor in-season
25 harvest, would likely lead to a systemic underreporting of
26 harvest if they are not calibrated to a common currency.

27
28 We also heard that a lack of calibration to state survey
29 landings in the private angler component has caused red snapper
30 to undergo overfishing for the first time in over a decade. We
31 heard that Amendment 50 requires paybacks and revised ACLs and
32 that state ACLs must be calibrated to bring Amendment 50 into
33 compliance with the MSA.

34
35 We heard that the process for modification of state surveys,
36 adjustments of calibrations, and integration of state survey
37 data should be transparently developed. We also heard that the
38 council should quickly advance a framework action in order to
39 define recreational red snapper data calibrations and set catch
40 limits.

41
42 Given that private angler mismanagement, like the 2019 Texas
43 overage and anticipated resulting overfishing designation, has
44 real implications for commercial fishermen, and so the Gulf
45 Council should move forward for a plan that has the strongest
46 chance of preventing recreational overages once and for all.

47
48 We heard that overfishing occurred in 2019 and state management

1 is failing and continues to lack the accountability needed to
2 keep the private recreational fishing component under its ACL,
3 due to the lack of calibration to common currency, and the
4 failure to calibrate data has caused red snapper to undergo
5 overfishing for the first time, and it will have ramifications
6 that affect all sectors.

7
8 We also heard that, although the primary results of the Great
9 Red Snapper Count suggest greater biomass of red snapper, there
10 are still many questions that remain unanswered about how the
11 new data changes our understanding of the stock. For instance,
12 they may suggest that the stock is less productive than
13 previously thought. Most importantly, regardless of results of
14 the Red Snapper Count, the potential impacts to management
15 advice without common currency continues to violate federal law.

16
17 We heard that the council should adopt the SSC-recommended
18 simple ratio calibrations and use the resulting common currency
19 to end overfishing and set legally-compliant annual catch limits
20 for the 2021 season. This is the only solution which
21 incorporates state surveys to fix the critical flaws in
22 Amendment 50. The council and National Marine Fisheries Service
23 have sanctioned three years of unaccountable catch by the
24 private recreational sector, and they are running out of time to
25 solve the issue for this year's season.

26
27 We heard that the council should move quickly on Alternative 2
28 on Action 1 in the framework action to adjust state recreational
29 red snapper catch limits so that, when more fish do come, we are
30 ready with calibrated quotas to end the overrun of sub-sector
31 allocation in the private recreational sector.

32
33 Finally, we heard that the council should post for final action
34 the framework amendment to address the calibrations, because
35 time is running out to take action on the issue before the
36 season.

37
38 Now, it is reasonable for me to add that, in the last couple of
39 days, we have received an email campaign that was not included
40 in this summary. If you go to the full text of the comments
41 that is available on our home page, you will be able to read
42 those letters that we received, and they were mostly from
43 anglers in the State of Louisiana. Thank you.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Emily. Are there any questions on any
46 of the comments for Emily? All right. In that case, let's go
47 ahead and move into the document. Who is going to walk us
48 through this time?

1
2 **MR. RINDONE:** I thought you were.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I can only do so many things, Ryan.

5
6 **MR. RINDONE:** No worries. You have a hand up, Madam Chair, from
7 Mr. Dugas.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you. J.D.

10
11 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, ma'am. I wanted to ask Emily what she
12 said last, and it was something about Louisiana anglers
13 submitted some public comment, and, Emily, can you tell us once
14 again what you said about that?

15
16 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Sure. In the last couple of days, we have got
17 a number of different emails, and it's the same email, and I
18 think it's form letter, like an email campaign, and it comes
19 from anglers in Louisiana, and it is commenting on the
20 amendment.

21
22 Now, typically, these comment summaries are compiled the Tuesday
23 before the council meeting, and so that's why it was not
24 included in the summary that I just read, because the comments
25 were received in the last two days, and so later than the
26 comment summary was produced, and so, if you navigate to the
27 full text of the comments for this document, which I would
28 suggest that all of you do, because the comments themselves are
29 pretty meaty, and just to be sure that you can see what
30 everybody has written. You will see, at the bottom of that
31 comment form, a number of versions of the letter that was sent
32 to me from Louisiana anglers.

33
34 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Emily. Okay, Ryan. I think we're
37 ready for you.

38
39 **DOCUMENT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

40
41 **MR. RINDONE:** All right. The big change this time is that we
42 have included a Chapter 3 in the document for you guys, and we
43 have not gone so far as to include Chapter 4, because we don't
44 have a preferred alternative yet, and so it makes doing the
45 analyses a little bit cumbersome if we don't know exactly where
46 you guys are going to go with this. You guys may recall, at the
47 last meeting, you voted down both Alternatives 2 and 3 that are
48 currently in the only action in this document.

1
2 With that, I guess we can review the alternatives that we have,
3 if you want to scroll on down to Chapter 2. Only editorial
4 changes were made to Chapters 1 and 2, and so this is our only
5 action in this document, which is to look at modifying the Gulf
6 state-specific red snapper private angling component annual
7 catch limits.

8
9 You can see what the percent allocation of the private angling
10 component ACL is for each state there in that table under
11 Alternative 1 and what that equates to in pounds for each state
12 in the MRIP-CHTS data currency, and so Alternative 2 would
13 modify the state-specific red snapper private angling component
14 ACL using the ratio corrections developed by the NMFS Office of
15 Science and Technology for the Gulf states.

16
17 These ratios and the resulting ACLs in each state's individual
18 data currency from each state survey are shown there on the
19 right-side of that table under Alternative 2. The ratio
20 correction for each state is also shown.

21
22 Then Alternative 3 would essentially apply a 23 percent buffer
23 by establishing a state management ACL, and that 23 percent
24 buffer was calculated by the Southeast Regional Office to be
25 likely to prevent exceeding the private angling component ACL in
26 MRIP-CHTS currency, and so the ACL for each state, after
27 applying that buffer, is shown there in the table in each
28 state's data currency.

29
30 Madam Chair, that's where we are with this, and, again, we've --
31 Like I said, we've populated Chapter 3, which discusses the
32 affected environments for the physical, biological, ecological,
33 social, economic, and administrative environments, and the
34 committee should have had an opportunity to read through those,
35 but we have not done Chapter 4 yet.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you, Ryan. Hands are flying up,
38 and so we'll start working our way through the list. Tom.

39
40 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Martha. So I just wanted to step back a
41 little bit and think about where we are and where we need to be,
42 and, over the last several council meetings, we've had a
43 tremendous amount of discussion about what we're going to do and
44 how we're going to try to implement the calibration ratios,
45 whether Alternative 2 in this framework action is appropriate or
46 we should try something else.

47
48 The fact of the matter is that we're obligated to do something

1 at this point, and we need to move forward in a way that allows
2 people some understanding of how we're going to manage the red
3 snapper fishery in 2021, and so I am going to suggest a number
4 of modifications, I guess, to the alternatives in this
5 framework.

6
7 I want to walk through them, so that I can explain them to
8 folks, before we actually formalize them, and so if we can have
9 staff put them up on the screen. I am going to talk through a
10 couple of potential motions here, and then I think it's
11 important not just to say here's the motion and we're done. I
12 want to give you a little kind of background.

13
14 First of all, the first alternative essentially is keep things
15 status quo and to use the state-collected survey data to monitor
16 the catch, right, and the problem is -- I have lost my screen
17 here, and so I am going to wait until it comes back.

18
19 The first alternative is essentially using the state-collected
20 data, and what we understand at this point is, because the
21 assessment was done in CHTS units, if we simply go on without
22 calibration ratios, then we will be in violation of the Magnuson
23 Act, as many of the public comments indicated. I mean, it's
24 really not a viable option, moving forward.

25
26 Then we're left with two alternatives, and one is to simply
27 apply the calibration ratios, and the third one is to implement
28 a buffer, and it's not -- I appreciate the various concerns
29 around the table, and nothing is going to be optimal for all
30 parties involved, but, if we look at Alternative 2, and we apply
31 the calibration ratios, we have an interim analysis that is
32 coming online.

33
34 We don't know if it will be finished and we'll be able to
35 incorporate catch advice into the 2021 season, but, if we do get
36 a quota adjustment, then we can certainly try to move it along
37 as quickly as possible, and certainly try to put it in place in
38 late 2021, and certainly for 2022.

39
40 If we do that, what will happen, obviously, is that we will
41 have, using the state currency, an increase in the number of
42 fish that each of the states can catch, after using the
43 calibration ratios. That, in my opinion, is a defensible
44 alternative, and the reason that it's a defensible alternative
45 is because, when we looked at the distribution of fishes that
46 the Great Red Snapper Count provided, when you look at the
47 percentages of fishes, I guess, off of each of the coasts, it
48 closely resembles that, all right, and so you could make an

1 argument that you probably should be -- Have access to the fish
2 that are off of your coast in a proportional manner.

3
4 This is what this alternative motion does, or what it does is it
5 adds Option a and Option b, and Option a says, hey, we're going
6 to apply the calibration ratio in Alternative 2, and, if the ABC
7 is increased, right, and then I put an alternative, or an Option
8 b, in there to apply the ratio conversion in Alternative 2 if
9 the ABC is increased by 25 percent or more. That's just to give
10 us something to really think about.

11
12 If we roll up, and I will come back to this in a minute, then we
13 have the Alternative 3, which is essentially to apply a 23
14 percent reduction across-the-board, right, and the states would
15 still be able to use their state surveys, and they would monitor
16 the fish in-season using their state survey data, and, again,
17 that means that there is a proportional cut, but it doesn't
18 reflect, necessarily, the proportion of fishes that are off each
19 of the states' coasts.

20
21 However, if we were to get a quota adjustment, we might be able
22 to apply the state calibration ratios to any subsequent increase
23 in quota moving forward. As that quota adjustment is increased,
24 or becomes greater, then what you will see, or, just
25 conceptually, you would appreciate that the number of fish, or
26 the pounds of fish, that are accessible by fishermen off of each
27 coast is much more proportional, or in line, to distribution of
28 fish off their coast.

29
30 I think -- I have also got a spreadsheet, and I'm going to pull
31 up a spreadsheet, and I want to work through some numbers, and I
32 realize that I'm taking a lot of time, but we've spent four
33 council meetings trying to work through this without coming to
34 an agreement, and so I think it's worth it. If we can go to Tab
35 1.

36
37 We're going to just kind of work through this, and so what you
38 see, on the left side of this spreadsheet, are, obviously, the
39 states and two series of columns here, and one has to do with
40 economic data and the other one has to do with the number of red
41 snapper, as provided by the Great Red Snapper Count.

42
43 I am not using the economic data in the calculations moving
44 forward, but they're there for reference, and, essentially, when
45 you -- These economic data area available from the National
46 Marine Fisheries Service Sustainable Fisheries group, and so
47 it's taken directly from their website, but, essentially, what
48 you see is that it's the sales impact from fishing trips, right,

1 and you can go through the states. 56 percent is from Florida,
2 and 19 percent from Alabama, almost 3 percent from Mississippi,
3 13 percent for Louisiana, and 8 percent from Texas, et cetera.

4
5 Then, if you go over to Columns J and K, that is the number of
6 red snapper, number of fish, that is provided in the
7 presentation that Dr. Stunz provided, and what you see is that,
8 based on that presentation, about 43 percent of the fish are off
9 of Florida's coast, about 7.2 percent off of Alabama's coast,
10 1.8 percent off of Mississippi, 26 percent off of Louisiana, and
11 about 21 percent off of Texas.

12
13 If we continue to scroll across the spreadsheet, and we look at
14 -- So, I mean, I just shown here that, currently, Alternative 1
15 in the document, the framework action, says, okay, Florida is
16 going to get 44 percent of the fish and so on, and Alabama at 26
17 percent, Mississippi at 3 percent, Louisiana 19 and Texas 6.

18
19 When you actually -- So we know that that's not -- We can't do
20 that moving forward, right, because we need to adjust the
21 catches in a way that we're compliant, and we would have to
22 apply a calibration ratio in this particular case, and that's
23 what happens in Alternative 2 in its current form, and so you
24 can see the percentages there, but what I want to point out here
25 is that those calibration -- When you apply the calibration
26 ratios, it's not quite perfect, right, and it doesn't reflect
27 perfectly what is off of each other's coasts, but it's closer
28 than doing it any other way, right, and it recognizes what is
29 off the coast and what the economic value might be, and so it's
30 a defensible position to take.

31
32 If you look over at Columns S, T, and U, and so, if we were to
33 get a quota adjustment, and let's say we were to double the
34 quota, what would that look like, and so what it says is, well,
35 ultimately, using your own state currency, you will get --
36 Florida will get 4,000,000 pounds, essentially, and Alabama will
37 get a million pounds, Mississippi a little over 100,000 pounds,
38 Louisiana 1.7 million, and Texas about 530,000.

39
40 By doing that, we are -- We should be compliant, and, again,
41 it's a reflection of the number of fish, in my view, that are
42 off each of the coasts. Okay. So, let's now move to that Tab 3
43 in this.

44
45 All right, and so, if we look at this, this is Alternative 3,
46 and the same information is on the left side of this
47 spreadsheet, and, if you move, again, to the right, we have the
48 current Alternative 1, just for reference, but the current

1 Alternative 3, which is in Column P here, essentially says we're
2 going to take 23 percent off the top, using each of the state's
3 data collection programs, right, and, when you look at the
4 percentages of the catch, you see that Florida has about 44
5 percent, Alabama 26 percent, Mississippi 3.5 percent, Louisiana
6 19 percent, and Texas 6 percent, but, if you were to accept
7 this, it's not quite a reflection of what is off the various
8 coasts, and there is a disparity, obviously, between Alabama and
9 Texas, and I don't think that I need to go into that.

10
11 Nevertheless, if you were to move forward and say we'll take 23
12 percent off the top, but, if we were to get a quota adjustment
13 moving forward, we would apply the calibration ratios, and this
14 Column S shows that, using a similar example. If we were to
15 double the quota, for example, that would mean that Florida
16 would get 3.5 million pounds, Alabama would have 1.4 million
17 pounds, et cetera, as you kind of go down that Column S.

18
19 What's important here is, when you look at the Column P, and
20 that's giving you the proportion of fish, of the catch, excuse
21 me, and I think it's important to compare that to the
22 distribution of fish, again, off of each of the states' coasts
23 and the economic value, and, the more fish that we get,
24 potentially, as a result of incorporating the Great Red Snapper
25 Count and the interim analysis, we get a closer approximation of
26 what is defensible, in my mind.

27
28 That Column V is what happens if we only get -- These are just
29 examples, but what if we only get a 25 percent quota increase,
30 and, you know, so what happens is you see that the ratios, or
31 the percentages of fish, don't adjust as quickly, right, and so,
32 depending on the magnitude of the quota adjustment, the closer
33 we will get or the further we will be to the distribution of
34 fish off of each coast.

35
36 That is how I see this playing out a little bit, and then the
37 middle tab is, once we're done with this framework, or at least
38 if we can agree on something in the framework action,
39 ultimately, we're going to have to start a plan amendment, and I
40 would probably follow this up immediately with another motion
41 that says to start a plan amendment that adjusts the allocation
42 for each of the states moving forward, and we can do that, and
43 I'm going to suggest using economic data and distributional
44 data, and these are just examples of what happens with different
45 weightings.

46
47 You could use -- If you go, for example, to Column Y, we can
48 weight these by 50 percent, based on economics and 50 percent

1 based on fish distribution, or 25 percent based on economics and
2 75 percent based on fish distribution, or anything that we want
3 to do, but this would be a starting point for staff, but that
4 would be developed in a plan amendment, and I suggest we develop
5 a plan amendment immediately, or start to work on one coincident
6 with finishing up this framework action.

7
8 If we go back now to the motions, and that's a Word document,
9 I'm going to make this motion. I am going to read it first, so
10 that people know what we're talking about. Essentially, what
11 I'm doing is adding -- Modifying Alternative 2.

12
13 **The motion is to add a series of options under Alternative 2**
14 **that would incorporate an increase in the overfishing limit and**
15 **acceptable biological catch, the ABC, based on the results of**
16 **the interim analysis, as informed by the Great Red Snapper**
17 **Count. If the results of the review by the SSC result in a**
18 **minimum of zero percent or 25 percent increase in ABC, the**
19 **state-specific ACLs would be calibrated based on Alternative 2**
20 **for the 2021 and 2022 recreational fishing seasons.**

21
22 In essence, what I'm doing is putting a hard stop on this,
23 because we need to have something in place for 2021, and it's
24 not likely that our plan amendment will be finished in time for
25 2022, but I am trying to keep us moving forward with as little
26 detrimental impact to the various states' fisheries as possible.
27 That would be the first motion. If I can get a second, then we
28 can talk about it a little bit more.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there a second for this motion?

31
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** I will second it.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It's seconded by Leann. Tom.

35
36 **DR. FRAZER:** So, again, it doesn't radically change anything in
37 the document. What it does is it gives us an opportunity to --
38 It's a big more forward-thinking. It says, hey, if we get an
39 adjustment in the quota, that's great, and we can take advantage
40 of that adjustment, and we'll apply the calibration ratios, and
41 we'll be compliant with the Magnuson Act, and we -- At the same
42 time, we'll be working on an amendment that will allows us to
43 adjust the allocations based on not only fish distribution but
44 economics, and so that's the goal here.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Tom. I see lots of names popping up,
47 I'm sure with questions. Kevin, your hand was up before this
48 motion was drafted. Is your comment relative to the motion, or

1 do you want to wait?

2

3 **MR. ANSON:** I would like to wait. Thank you.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Let me go to Andy then.

6

7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Tom, I certainly applaud
8 you for thinking about this very thoughtfully, and I'm in
9 agreement with you that I think, regardless of this action, we
10 need to start an amendment to review allocation. A lot has
11 changed, based on our knowledge of red snapper and the surveys,
12 and so I think it would be helpful to do that.

13

14 With regard to this specific motion, and I guess a couple of
15 comments. In the motion, you refer to -- I guess you were
16 originally referring to zero, 25, and 50 percent, and it looks
17 like that's been removed, and so that's corrected, and the other
18 aspect of this is thinking about it from a codified text
19 standpoint.

20

21 My preference would be to state something like "until further
22 modified by the council", rather than obligating to the 2021 and
23 2022 seasons. I think we can still reflect the intent of the
24 council and ensure that we work toward making a modification
25 without specifying it, in case there's a hurdle or something we
26 run into that we couldn't get it done for 2023, and so that's my
27 suggested change.

28

29 **DR. FRAZER:** I appreciate that, Andy, and, when we're done with
30 the comments, we'll circle back to that.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Mara. I'm sorry. Robin. I didn't
33 see the pink list.

34

35 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you. First of all, Tom, I appreciate the
36 thoughtfulness of trying to come up with some sort of solution
37 that might look forward to a meeting or two down the road, or
38 even more meetings. Just as a -- Just so that I make sure that
39 there is no difference, it seems like you had this in Option b
40 of the other motion as well, and there's no difference in ratio
41 calibration versus ratio conversion here, and I think you meant
42 to have them the same, and, somewhere along the way, that
43 language got changed, and so I want to make sure about that,
44 that there's not a difference here that I'm not seeing.

45

46 Then I think there's some opportunity here. Your next motion is
47 one where I really have quite a few questions on, and I wasn't
48 certain about it, and then I'll just -- If we get that motion, I

1 will have some questions, because I'm not certain what that one
2 meant, and this one is fairly straightforward, but the other
3 part that I will just remind everyone who is -- Who are thinking
4 about this now, given the Great Red Snapper Count, we did have,
5 in Amendment 50, and it doesn't mean that we don't go back and
6 look at our work and think about things in a different way, now
7 that we have the Great Red Snapper Count, but we did have
8 biomass-based options in there at one point in time.

9
10 I might even think, if I recall correctly, that we might have
11 had some fishing effort kind of indexed options as well, and,
12 again, it doesn't mean that we can't go back and redo our work,
13 but we're not too long past having passed those amendments, and
14 so I will just remind everyone of that as well, as we try to
15 move forward, that we did work hard to get those, and not that
16 they don't need some adjustment, and we did have some of the
17 options that we are now talking about wanting to go back and
18 create plan amendments for inside of those documents at that
19 time.

20
21 **DR. FRAZER:** Real quick, I will just answer. Robin, you're
22 right, with regard to the typo, and they should be consistent in
23 language, calibration or ratio conversion, whichever is
24 appropriate.

25
26 I do appreciate the fact that we had biomass estimates in kind
27 of previous documents, right, and it was that discussion that
28 prompted me to think a little bit more about how to do this, and
29 it's the Great Red Snapper Count and that newer data that
30 helped, I think, inform that moving forward.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Thanks, Tom. Next, I have
33 Mara.

34
35 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. I guess I have a couple of questions. I
36 am trying to figure out what the intent is for how this would
37 work. You want to add an option under Alternative 2, but what
38 happens if you pick, for example, Option b and the ABC isn't
39 actually increased by 25 percent or more? Are you saying then
40 that you wouldn't apply the calibration?

41
42 **DR. FRAZER:** I mean, it's a bit of a tricky one, right, and so I
43 think, in an ideal world, what I was really trying to do, Mara,
44 was to, you know -- You would best review that with the whole
45 slate of alternatives in front of you, but what I was really
46 trying to say is, hey, if we get an increase in quota, it's
47 going to be beneficial to everybody, and it will help even the
48 states that had an unfavorable calibration ratio stabilize their

1 fishery a bit, but what it meant, to me, is that, if we don't
2 get a quota adjustment in 2021 -- What I was trying to say is
3 the default is we're still going to apply the calibration ratio,
4 and so we might have to tweak this a little bit, but that was
5 the intent.

6

7 **MS. LEVY:** Can I ask a follow-up?

8

9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

10

11 **MS. LEVY:** I guess, from that, it seems to me that we're still
12 going with the calibration, but then you're trying to address
13 the potential of an ABC recommendation, and I guess my question
14 is why would we try to comingle them in the same action?

15

16 I mean, it seems really confusing. You apply whatever you want,
17 Alternative 2 or Alternative 3, and then you do another action
18 that adjusts the catch limit, or are you trying to automate
19 this, because, also, the ABC is not just going to increase on
20 its own, and the council is going to have to take some sort of
21 action to accept it from the SSC, and it's going to affect the
22 commercial sector and the for-hire as well, and so I'm just
23 having trouble figuring out how all of this is going to come
24 into play by adding these options here.

25

26 **DR. FRAZER:** I was -- To that point, Mara, I was trying to be
27 proactive, right, because, again, I don't know when we're going
28 to get the results of the interim analysis, and what I wanted to
29 be in a position -- Looking forward, that we knew where we were
30 going to go, so we could implement that as soon as possible and
31 we wouldn't have to go through numerous council meetings, again,
32 trying to figure out how we're going to deal with the
33 adjustment, whether we're going to apply some buffers or have a
34 whole new series of potential paths forward, and I am trying to
35 set our path now and in a way that's defensible and will keep us
36 focused for the next two years while we start to work on a plan
37 amendment that will allow us to deal with what I expect is going
38 to be a hard conversation about how we are going to allocate
39 fishery resources, not only amongst the states, but across the
40 sectors.

41

42 **MS. LEVY:** Okay. Just a final comment. I mean, I'm still -- I
43 totally understand what you're trying to do, but, just
44 conceptually, I'm having a really hard time figuring out how we
45 would deal with it and implement it, and then just my last
46 comment is like, similar to what Andy said, is I guess that you
47 want to put a hard stop on something, but, from a practical
48 standpoint, we can't have a catch limit that just expires, and

1 so it would have to be in there until the council changed it.
2
3 **DR. FRAZER:** Sure, and we can work on the modification, I think,
4 of that language for Full Council, as long as we can get -- That
5 people appreciate the intent of the motion, if we can add it
6 here, and that's what I am looking for, and so there's a couple
7 of modifications that I see, and we'll clean up some of that
8 language and incorporate what Andy has to say moving forward.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Mara. Thanks, Tom. I'm
11 going to move to Greg Stunz.
12
13 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Martha. Tom, good work on doing this, and
14 it looks like you spent a lot of time really thinking about
15 this. Certainly, as we discussed, it could be tweaked and
16 things, and I like the aspect of the time certain, because we're
17 relying on, if the ABC is increased, and what if it's not, and
18 so there's a situation there.
19
20 I am interested in what your next follow-up motion is going to
21 be, because, obviously, a lot of things could be -- You know,
22 this is a stop-gap measure, that framework amendment, and does
23 your next motion really address this in a more meaningful way,
24 with more data down the line, and I think that is really going
25 to help.
26
27 To Robin's point, a little bit, just to be clear, you know, the
28 Great Red Snapper Count was -- We were asked to do that based on
29 number and not biomass. Those biomass percentage patterns don't
30 -- They are similar, but not -- There are smaller and more
31 numerous fish in the east than there is in the west, which is
32 still a large number, but they're bigger fish, and so that's a
33 consideration that will have to be worked out, and it's sort of
34 a devil in the details, which is another reason that I like the
35 time certain, if there's some unintended consequences. Just
36 keep that in mind, Tom, that the biomass patterns aren't
37 necessarily reflective of the number patterns.
38
39 Now, also, there's some exploitation and things that could be
40 used to look at those distributions as well in the Great Red
41 Snapper Count, Tom, and this is my real question, and I was just
42 responding to others' comments, and, now that we've seen this,
43 would it be possible to quickly go back to your spreadsheet now
44 and re-look at that again, now that we clearly understand? We
45 don't have to spend a whole lot of time on it, but maybe just
46 talk us through that one column one more time where this
47 applies, where that would apply.
48

1 **DR. FRAZER:** Again, what I wanted to point out here is pretty
2 straightforward. If we start with -- Actually, Bernie, if you
3 go back to Columns A and B, and, actually, I want to focus on
4 Columns J and K right now. What you see here, Greg, is,
5 essentially, based on the Great Red Snapper Count, and these are
6 data that came from your presentation, in large part, and I have
7 taken some liberties with the Alabama/Mississippi, but I think
8 those are reflective of what are the numbers off of those
9 coasts.

10
11 Essentially, there is forty-eight million fish, and they may be
12 smaller fish off of Florida and Alabama, but there is eight
13 million off of Alabama, two million off of Mississippi, twenty-
14 nine million off of Louisiana, and twenty-three million off of
15 Texas, irrespective of the size differences, right, but then you
16 look at that on a percentage basis in Column K, and then you
17 kind of compare that to -- If you move to the right --

18
19 **DR. STUNZ:** Tom, those percentages are pretty good for
20 Mississippi and Alabama. It's something that would need to be
21 maybe tweaked and talked about a little bit, but that's
22 definitely in the ballpark.

23
24 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and I was thinking that would be the case, and
25 so then -- Then, if you scroll up a little bit, so we can see
26 the headers. Again, Column M is the current Alternative 1,
27 where it says, hey, if you use your state currency, these are
28 the percentages of the total catch in state currency.

29
30 You can see that Florida's percentage of 44 percent is pretty
31 closely aligned with the percentage of fish off its coast,
32 right, based on the Great Red Snapper Count. Alabama has
33 proportionally more, and Mississippi a little bit more, and
34 Louisiana and Texas are proportionately less. When you apply
35 the calibration ratios, you get a closer approximation to what
36 we know are off the coast, at least in numbers of fish, and I
37 understand that there is a slight difference in pounds, because
38 of the size of fish, et cetera, et cetera, but those are
39 relatively small differences, and I think this gets us at least
40 on the right road here.

41
42 Then if you go -- That Alternative 2 is when you apply the
43 calibration ratios, as I said, but then, if you go over to
44 Column S, this is just a hypothetical, right, and it says, okay,
45 if you get a doubling in the quota, and these are in pounds, and
46 I get that, right, but so, if you double the quota, then you see
47 that it's a slightly closer alignment. It gets closer in line
48 of the distribution of fish off of each of the coasts. Okay?

1 So that's all it is in Alternative 2. We will go over
2 Alternative 3 when we get there, but I think it's pretty
3 straightforward, and it's just applying the calibration ratios.
4

5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Greg, do you have any follow-up, or are you
6 okay?
7

8 **DR. STUNZ:** No. Thank you, Martha and Tom.
9

10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. John.
11

12 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you. I appreciate the work and effort that
13 went into this, and I have always viewed this as we have the
14 challenge of calibration on the table in front of us, and it's
15 been in front of us for quite some time now, and we haven't been
16 able to, I guess, get our arms around it and move forward like I
17 think, in the back of our mind, we all know that we need to.
18

19 Then we have the benefit of Greg's work with the Great Red
20 Snapper Count, and I guess the hope, for me anyway, was the
21 convergence of these two activities together at somewhat the
22 same time, if we could expedite the Great Red Snapper Count
23 incorporation and analysis and assessments and such, so that, if
24 we were to move forward with calibration, then the benefits of
25 this increased biomass that have been identified by the Great
26 Red Snapper Count would offset some of the change, perhaps, that
27 some states would be potentially experiencing, and looking at a
28 payback or something, with the benefit of these fish that have
29 been out there, but, for lack of a better word, we'll call them
30 new fish, and then we kind of all keep on keeping on.
31

32 That was at least the hope that I was looking for, and this
33 concept that Tom brilliantly put together, with facts and
34 figures, kind of aligns with that, and so I would support the
35 concept and doing whatever we need to do to try to accomplish
36 the objective in those concepts, because I think we're very
37 lucky, in that we happen to have something like a Great Red
38 Snapper Count to help us out of this situation right now, and I
39 don't know if the stars are going to line up forever, where we
40 have something we can take advantage of, and that's kind of what
41 my take on this is, and so I'm curious to see what we're able to
42 do with this. Thank you.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, John. Chris.
45

46 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I've got a comment and a couple of questions
47 directed towards staff. My comment really revolves around I
48 think a lot of the apprehension here, and that is that we're not

1 quite sure how the stock assessment is going to handle the fish
2 that come off of this uncharacterized bottom. The SSC discussed
3 that, and they're not quite sure how they will get incorporated
4 into it and what the result is, and it's kind of like we're
5 looking at Louisiana, for example, having a twenty-nine million
6 number of fish, but we're not sure what proportion of that is
7 going to go into coming out off of uncharacterized bottom or
8 not, right, and that may lead to a lot of folks still not quite
9 sure of the outcome of this whole thing.

10
11 I see this as bridging the gap between alternatives a little
12 bit, kind of meeting halfway to lead to a little bit less of
13 that apprehension, especially with the 25 percent, and so, with
14 that said, I can support this motion to add it to the document,
15 and I think this is good for us to look at this, and I need a
16 little bit more time to check it over a little bit.

17
18 Also, my question, two questions, and the first one is for
19 staff, and this may be for Ryan, and I'm not sure, but, in
20 Amendment 50, are we scheduled, or required, to review the ACLs
21 in 2023 anyway, correct, and, if that's the case, I'm curious
22 why we're picking 2022 as the year to do that, if it's scheduled
23 anyway, and I may be wrong on that date, but I thought it was
24 2023. Then my second question is, after we get through
25 approving this alternative or not, can we get a copy of the
26 spreadsheet here? That's all.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Chris. Carrie, do you want to jump in
29 on that, for the questions for staff? I'm assuming it's no big
30 deal to email that spreadsheet around, or post it online.

31
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think
33 the 2023 was when we were anticipating that the research track
34 would be done, and I'm just looking that up. I'm not sure,
35 regarding the motion, and I think Dr. Frazer was just suggesting
36 that's when these might be applied and when we might have a
37 chance to look at the integration of the Great Red Snapper Count
38 and what the Science Center is able to do with that into
39 management, but that was my understanding, and so we can look
40 into the 2023, unless Ava remembers something different than
41 what we have in 50.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Carrie. Next, I have Andy.

44
45 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. The bottom line, from my
46 standpoint, is this is a timing issue. We wouldn't be
47 discussing this if we have the Great Red Snapper Count and we
48 knew exactly what the ABC increase would look like.

1
2 Similar to Mara's comments, I do have concerns about the council
3 selecting a sub-option, and the ABC maybe doesn't increase by
4 that much, and then what are we left with? We're not left with
5 a calibration, in my view, and so that, to me, is a non-starter,
6 in that we have to calibrate, and we have to put the quotas in
7 the same units as the survey methodology and ensure that that
8 calibration occurs.

9
10 While I have the mic, I guess I want to talk about this maybe
11 from a different standpoint, and, in my view, in looking at the
12 alternatives before us, and kind of looking across the council,
13 as you well know, Alternative 2 has the greatest impacts on
14 Alabama and Mississippi. In order for them to achieve the same
15 quota and ultimately get back to the same season lengths, the
16 ABC has to be more than doubled for both of those states from
17 the Great Red Snapper Count.

18
19 Alternative 3, on the other hand, does an across-the-board cut,
20 which I know then impacts all states, and not just Alabama and
21 Mississippi, but, assuming the Great Red Snapper Count then
22 achieves the 23 percent or greater increase in stock biomass and
23 abundance, then the ABC would go up, and everyone would have the
24 same quota and be able to move forward in the 2021 season under
25 that same quota.

26
27 There still is a timing issue, in terms of when that could be
28 implemented and when the seasons could be set, but, to me, that
29 kind of speaks to what we could do in the short term with either
30 option, and then, as Tom had mentioned, kind of a longer-term
31 strategy of going back and looking at the allocation and
32 revisiting the allocation to better align with whatever factors
33 that the council would want to consider for an allocation
34 decision.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. Robin.

37
38 **MR. RIECHERS:** My question is along the same line that Andy just
39 made comments towards, Tom. You, obviously, have had longer to
40 look at this, and you kind of answered with Mara, and so, in
41 your mind, if we were to select Alternative 2 as a preferred,
42 and you can pick Option a or Option b, and we'll take Option a,
43 because, the way I read Option a, if we get any increase at all,
44 you will be applying the calibration method, if we were to
45 select Option a. Option b would say you apply it only if
46 there's an increase by 25 percent or more, and so is the default
47 then back to the no action if you don't hit 25 percent or more,
48 or are you thinking then it's still the calibration method?

1 That's what I'm trying to figure out, and I'm fast-forwarding to
2 a preferred selection notion and what that might look like.

3
4 **DR. FRAZER:** To be honest with you, Robin, again, I think the
5 default -- The intent is for the default to go to the
6 calibration ratio, right, because we don't know when we might be
7 able to incorporate and implement any catch advice or adjustment
8 in the ABC that would come from this interim assessment, but,
9 moving forward, as soon as we could, any -- I would think that
10 you would want to incorporate the calibration ratios and apply
11 them to the quota adjustment, whatever it is, moving forward
12 under this particular alternative.

13
14 I was kind of thinking, originally, that I would have several
15 options here, and I was going to try to play them off of
16 Alternatives 2 and 3, but we could just as easily just modify
17 Alternative 2, I guess, a little bit and just keep Option a.

18
19 **MR. RIECHERS:** So, in some respects, if I might follow-up -- I'm
20 sorry, Martha. Can I?

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** You're fine. Yes. Please.

23
24 **MR. RIECHERS:** So, in some respects -- I mean, I'm not -- Again,
25 I applaud the work, and so I'm not suggesting that -- I applaud
26 the thinking of trying to find a way to maybe move this along,
27 knowing that we may not have that interim analysis, whether it's
28 -- We know we don't have it this meeting, and we may not have it
29 the next meeting, but, in some respects, and let me just make
30 sure that I'm understanding this correctly, if we were to choose
31 Option a, and we don't get an interim assessment, that basically
32 then becomes -- Do we default back to the current ACL?

33
34 **DR. FRAZER:** In my view -- I mean, what I was hoping to
35 accomplish here is that we would default back to the ACLs with
36 the calibration ratios. That's the only option, moving forward.

37
38 **MR. RIECHERS:** That ends my questioning, Martha, and I
39 appreciate the thoughts, Tom, and I realize that you've been
40 thinking about this, and some of us are trying to catch up.
41 Like I said, again, I applaud the effort, but I'm just trying to
42 make sure I understand, as we think about this moving forward,
43 what it is, and, of course, staff would have time to flesh some
44 of that out in discussion, but thank you.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Next, I've got Joe Spraggins.

47
48 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Tom, I do

1 appreciate everything you're trying to do, and I know that
2 you've put a lot of effort into this too, and the question that
3 I've got is, obviously, looking at Option 2, or looking at
4 Option 3, and looking at what you have done as a modification of
5 both of those as to what could be done, putting a statement in
6 there to say that we'll count it into the 2022 recreational
7 fishing season also, and so it would also state that we're not
8 only going to get penalized in 2021, but we're going to get
9 penalized in 2022 if we don't get a Great Red Snapper Count
10 assessment.

11
12 My question is why would we want to penalize ourselves? Why
13 wouldn't we push that Great Red Snapper Count assessment, to
14 make it happen, and at least be able re-address this before we
15 go to 2022 with it?

16
17 The other thing is it's such a drastic cut to Mississippi and
18 Alabama that, if you took Option 2, and, if you took Option 3,
19 or some kind of hybrid even maybe of those, and maybe get a less
20 number, then it's not such a drastic cut that you fall back on
21 the whole time, and I think every one of us believes
22 wholeheartedly that we're going to have some kind of increase
23 with the Great Red Snapper Count, but we just don't know how
24 much increase, but to fall back to that number of taking two-
25 thirds of Mississippi's allocation, which is so small anyway,
26 and, I mean, I will be honest with you.

27
28 It's so small that I don't see how it even makes a factor in
29 this thing, but, to do that, I guess in Option 3 or some hybrid
30 of it, but, to me, this does not seem that we would want to do
31 that and just continually say that we're just going to take
32 this, and you're going to take it, Mississippi, and you're not
33 even going to have a fishing season, really, but, oh, by the
34 way, you all can go over next door to Alabama or Louisiana and
35 fish, but you just can't land them in Mississippi.

36
37 I don't know what they're going to do, but, I mean, it's not
38 going to stop the people from other states coming in there and
39 fishing in our waters, and it's just going to stop the situation
40 that Mississippians can't go do it, and I'm just trying to
41 understand. You know, to me, it's such a drastic measure to go
42 to Option 2 that I wish that we could come up with some kind of
43 hybrid, and I appreciate your time.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Kevin.

46
47 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I tend to agree with
48 General Spraggins and his kind of assessment and lay of the

1 land. We would be concerned about kind of rolling the dice, if
2 you will, and hoping that the ABC is increased by a certain
3 amount that would allow us to at least stay whole, or not take
4 off as big of a bite as we would have otherwise, and we're in a
5 situation -- I mean, we get a lot of Mississippi folks coming
6 over to Alabama, General Spraggins, and we get a lot of Florida
7 folks that either go through state waters to get access to fish
8 or they just go south of the line and go off in federal waters,
9 and I know it's federal waters, and it's not our fish, per se,
10 but we're feeding two other states, if you will, access, and so
11 I appreciate. Dr. Frazer, your efforts to try come up with
12 something that, again, tries to thread the needle.

13
14 That's what I mentioned the last meeting, is that just trying to
15 get to a point that we can minimize the pain to Alabama, and I
16 know that sounds selfish, but, again, when you look at the Great
17 Red Snapper Count data, and then we have the luxury of looking
18 at our state data that we have been collecting since 2012, and I
19 know that people are probably tired of me talking about it, but
20 we have been using that as the basis for what we applied for in
21 the EFP, and using Snapper Check pounds to do so, and we did it
22 under the guise of the science that NOAA has been using, as far
23 as management goals for harvest, and we've been using that.

24
25 The issue still is there, and I know we've been talking at this
26 meeting now of trying to speed up that process and get the
27 information out ahead of the curve, if you will, so that we can
28 start looking at it more proactively, as far as allocation, but,
29 if we take off a big chunk here, either because the ABC doesn't
30 go up, or we go up a little bit and fall back to where we've
31 been fishing at here as of late, everyone else goes up, and then
32 you're -- In our opinion, you've got allocation decisions that
33 are starting to get impacted when we lose, quote, unquote,
34 historical access, and hopefully the science argument and debate
35 will be resolved as we go through this next interim analysis, as
36 well as through the research track, so that our harvest, and
37 what we record as being harvested, maps more with what is
38 actually in the water, again, because you've got to have a pound
39 of fish in the water in order to go try to go catch it.

40
41 Certainly all these points that you bring up, and I do
42 appreciate having the Excel spreadsheet spread amongst the
43 folks, so that we can start looking at this information a little
44 bit more, but, if we can get to some sort of formula that takes
45 into account the importance of the fishery, the particular
46 fishery, off of each state, through sales, through proportion of
47 fishing trips, through the amount of biomass that exists per
48 coastal mile. If you look at that metric, Alabama is almost

1 twice the next-highest state, as far as the number of red
2 snapper that exist off of that state, based on the coastal mile
3 count.

4
5 We would certainly be interested in looking at some of those
6 things, and, to the extent that we can try to avoid excessive
7 pain, from our point of view, relative to the data that's
8 available, we would certainly be willing to listen to that.
9 Thank you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. I've got a couple other hands
12 here. John Sanchez.

13
14 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we're all trying
15 to be mindful of our fellow states when we're trying to avoid
16 pain, because some of us, arguably, are in a position to
17 potentially have to endure more pain than others, but it's
18 through no fault of those states whose calibrations kind of came
19 out a little better than other states, and I'm not blaming the
20 states who didn't come out, let's say, as nicely, as having done
21 something egregiously wrong or anything like that, but we're
22 trying to find a solution to this, and I think, thanks to the
23 Great Red Snapper Count, we kind of have one, but that doesn't
24 skirt our obligations from having to address this calibration
25 issue.

26
27 Where I don't want to end up is where, all of a sudden, this
28 sharing of the pain, which, rightfully so, and some maybe
29 deserve a little more pain than others for the way that their
30 landings played out, but I don't like this notion of painting
31 everybody with the buffer brush and everybody equally sharing in
32 the pain when not everybody contributed equally to the problem.

33
34 We have to consider that too, on the flip side of the equation,
35 and I really think the way out of this is to explore some
36 semblance of a concept and get us this, so we can move on from
37 this and be compliant with Magnuson. I really would like to see
38 us move towards that. Thank you.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, John. Mara and then Tom.

41
42 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. I'm just going to try this another way, so
43 that I can try to understand, for myself better, what the intent
44 is, because, Tom, I heard you say a couple of times that if what
45 was realized in the Options a and b didn't happen, that the
46 default would still be to do the calibration.

47
48 What that tells me is that there's Alternative 2, which is do

1 the calibration, and that potentially what you're trying to
2 address is what do we do with anything that comes out of an
3 increase from the interim analysis, and so what I read, and I'm
4 trying to figure out whether I'm right, is do the calibration,
5 and then you're adding to apply that calibration as well to any
6 increase that comes out of the interim assessment, and is that
7 kind of where you're going?
8

9 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes. I think, Mara -- I mean, I think you
10 appreciate this as much as everybody else here, and, I mean, we
11 are forced to really do something now, right, and, in the short
12 term, we have to be compliant with Magnuson, and we are
13 obligated, under Amendment 50, to apply calibration ratios, and
14 the ones that we have on the table are the best, and there isn't
15 an alternative, and why I'm pursuing this right now is, even
16 though I know it's not extremely palatable to either Alabama or
17 Mississippi, and it's not a personal thing, but it's just the
18 only option that I can see, in the short term, that's
19 defensible, based on the distribution of fish off of the coasts.
20

21 We can make an argument about why we're moving forward, or at
22 least implementing that now, and you could also make an argument
23 to continue it, and it -- Essentially, what it says is you are
24 using your state data, everybody, to access some poundage of
25 fish, and what it says is I have confidence in those state data
26 collection programs, right, and they reflect, in fact, how many
27 pounds of fish are off the coast, and so it's less than Alabama
28 is accustomed to in the last couple of years, and I realize,
29 again, that that creates some instability in their fishing
30 season, as it's currently implemented.
31

32 However, when we, as a council, delegated that authority to each
33 of the states, there are other options that the state has with
34 regard to distributing their fishing days, to perhaps get more
35 days, and I would say, again, you know, it's -- I have heard a
36 lot from our public comments and stakeholders that it's about
37 access and equitability, and so, even though it seems, for
38 example, like it's a cut to Mississippi, they have a relatively
39 small state and a relatively small number of anglers, perhaps,
40 compared to Florida, and they still had seventy-something
41 fishing days, and that's twice as many as Florida or Alabama.
42

43 Again, you have to kind of step back and look at this
44 objectively, and I realize this is not going to be the most
45 popular thing moving forward, but I think that it's an objective
46 one, and one that I can stand behind and can work with this
47 council to try to rectify and improve moving forward.
48

1 **MS. LEVY:** Martha, can I ask a quick follow-up?
2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure. Go ahead, Mara.
4
5 **MS. LEVY:** So, if the intent is calibration and then a
6 calibration to an increase in the assessment, do the percentages
7 really matter? Meaning, zero percent, 25 percent, 13 percent,
8 or what would happen with the percentage of increase if it
9 didn't meet that burden? Are you saying you wouldn't apply the
10 calibration to that increase, and how would you distribute it, I
11 guess?
12
13 **DR. FRAZER:** No, I would apply it. Essentially, again, I was
14 just trying to get the ball rolling here with a number of
15 different options, but the reality is, Mara, that we're just
16 going to apply the calibration under this alternative across-
17 the-board, right, whether we get an increase or not. With the
18 increase of 25 percent, we would apply them. If it's three-
19 fold, we would apply them, and I think, again, it's just -- It's
20 one alternative.
21
22 **MS. LEVY:** Okay. Thank you.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Real quick, Tom, before I go back to -- Mara,
25 adding this and the other motion that Tom has for Alternative 3,
26 does that affect the council's ability to take final action on
27 this document this week?
28
29 **MS. LEVY:** I would say yes. I mean, we're sort of in a weird
30 situation, because we don't really have an effects analysis
31 right now for anything. I mean, I think we could kind of guess
32 at what the effects are, but we haven't even written up what
33 this means, and that seems problematic, to me. Nobody has been
34 able to comment on it, and so I think the answer would be we
35 wouldn't take final action. Again, it's not exactly clear to me
36 how we would write this, because I'm still trying to figure out
37 exactly what it means, given what's written up there versus what
38 the conversation has shown. I think it would need some work.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Tom, did you have more, before I
41 recognize Susan?
42
43 **DR. FRAZER:** Go ahead with Susan. I will come back at the end.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Susan.
46
47 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I applaud Tom's efforts,
48 because this has been so difficult for all of us to wrap our

1 hands around. I would personally lean toward the hybrid of
2 Alternative 3, with Tom's idea and Andy's idea, but, all of that
3 aside, my comments are kind of geared toward what John Sanchez
4 was saying, and this is difficult for everyone.

5
6 I can only draw I'm going to say on personal experience with the
7 Gulf Headboat Collaborative, because the first year we went into
8 the collaborative, we were all given our numbers, and that was
9 the first year we heard the word "calibration". Those seventeen
10 headboats that first year had to take that hit, and they had no
11 choice. We took that hit, but, the second year, the numbers
12 came up, and we got more allocation, and our numbers went back
13 up, and so we suffered for a year.

14
15 It may be that the recreational sector has to take that hit, and
16 it's hard, and it was hard for the headboats, and it's hard for
17 the rec sector, and it's always hard for the charter/for-hire
18 and commercial, but sometimes we have to feel a little pain. As
19 you say in football, no pain no gain, but this is hard for
20 everybody, and I get it, but it just may be a hard decision that
21 we're going to have to make, and hopefully in April, at our
22 council meeting, after the SSC meets, that pain will end, but
23 we've got to make a decision, because, as Tom said, we're kind
24 of backed into a corner right now. Thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Susan. I'm going to go to
27 John Sanchez, and then give Tom one more chance to speak, and
28 then we're going to vote this up or down. Leann, too. We'll go
29 to Leann, too. John.

30
31 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That's just my hand, and it seemingly stays up,
32 regardless of what I want it to do.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Got it. All right. Leann.

35
36 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Tom, that spreadsheet
37 alone, I hate to know many hours you spent on that, just pulling
38 to the data, and that was really amazing work, and kudos to you,
39 because I know you're a busy man with a lot on your plate, and
40 so, to take the time to try and get this ready for us, I really
41 appreciate it, and I like it. I mean, I think I get what you're
42 doing. I think I do, and I support that.

43
44 I have one question for Mara though, because she confused me.
45 So I know we have to take final action at this meeting, right,
46 in order to get something in place for June, and that is even
47 tight, and we noticed this for final action, and so I have to
48 commend staff for that, because I know there was probably a lot

1 of work that went into that, and probably you too, Tom.

2
3 Mara, the document, where it stands right now, if we pick
4 preferreds and pass all the motions we have to pass, we could
5 take final action on it today, yes or no? Then, if we do add
6 this in, which I like it, and I hope we can, if we add this in,
7 and we pick preferreds and pass all the relevant motions, we
8 could take final action after public testimony on Thursday when
9 we revisit this, yes or no?

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara, go ahead.

12
13 **MS. LEVY:** Well, so you would be taking final action on Thursday
14 no matter what, because the council would have to do it. I
15 mean, I think, if you wanted to leave the alternatives the way
16 they are currently written and explained in the document, then
17 you could take final action at this meeting, acknowledging that
18 the agency still has to do the NEPA effects analysis, but that's
19 the NEPA part, and the agency is going to do it anyway.

20
21 I think the issue I'm having with passing these motions and
22 taking final action is I think there needs to be some work done
23 on how the alternatives are written, and so we would have to
24 change how they were written, and everyone would have to
25 understand what they mean, and I'm still struggling a little bit
26 with that, and we would have to write it up, and people would be
27 able to have to comment on it, and I don't see how people are
28 meaningfully going to comment on a revised alternative that has
29 not yet been written up during public comment tomorrow.

30
31 So, I mean, my advice would be, if we're going to change the
32 alternatives, that we need to actually have a document that
33 writes them up properly and gives the public a chance to comment
34 on the revised alternatives.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Mara. Okay. I'm going to go to Joe
37 and then Tom. I think we have hit everybody else on our list,
38 and John's hand is just up forever, and so we'll just roll with
39 that.

40
41 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and just one quick
42 question. Back in September, we passed a motion, and it was the
43 second substitute motion, and it was to -- I am trying to pull
44 it up. Hang on one second.

45
46 Basically, it was under August 5, 2020 MRIP Red Snapper State
47 Data Calibration Webinar, when it was done, but there was a
48 second substitute motion that says to instruct council staff to

1 develop an appropriate document that provides private
2 recreational red snapper conversion and calibration options for
3 council consideration that includes, but is not limited to,
4 conversion ratios as presented by NOAA. No action. Buffers for
5 each state weighed by each state's current allocation
6 percentage, et cetera. Time decisions that involve converted
7 calibrated state survey data for the private recreational red
8 snapper fishery to coincide with when the results of the Great
9 Red Snapper Count are known and reviewed by the SSC. That
10 motion passed nine to seven, and is there some reason that we
11 can supersede that motion?

12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Joe, I think the council can, at a new meeting,
14 revisit topics, even if they have approved a motion for it, but
15 I will -- That's probably not the most eloquent explanation of
16 that, but I don't think the council is out of line at this
17 point.

18
19 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I just thought that's what started
20 the whole process.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Tom.

23
24 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Was it ever superseded in another motion or
25 something? I am just trying to ask, because I'm just getting
26 caught up here, okay?

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. I am going to go to Dale, because his
29 hand is still up, and he might want to speak to that.

30
31 **MR. DIAZ:** I think that's the motion that we're operating under,
32 what General Spraggins just read, and, if you read that motion,
33 really, I don't think we can move forward with final action
34 until the things that the motion says is done, but, when we made
35 that motion, I think we were getting some information from the
36 Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and it did look like, at
37 this meeting, we would have that information that that motion
38 requested, but we don't have that information, and it looks
39 like, best-case scenario, that that final sentence of that
40 motion will have been satisfied for the next meeting.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Dale. Mara.

43
44 **MS. LEVY:** I mean, I think you can decide -- So that was the
45 motion that basically says your intent is to consider them
46 together. As circumstances change, I think your intent can
47 change, as the council. If you take final action, then you're
48 voting, as a council, that you have decided not to wait, and

1 you're going to take final action. I mean, if the council still
2 wants to wait, then the option is not to vote for final action,
3 and I would advocate for taking action on this, but, obviously,
4 you're the body that decides that.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Mara. Okay, Tom. Any final words
7 before we vote this motion up or down?

8
9 **DR. FRAZER:** Just a couple. Again, I mean, I think it's
10 important, right, to understand where we are, and we are
11 obligated, and I think Ms. Bosarge said this the last time, as a
12 council to move forward in a way that allows us to manage these
13 fisheries in a responsible and sustainable way, so that we're
14 compliant with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

15
16 Under Alternative 1, we cannot do that. Under Alternative 2, as
17 it's current written in the document, the framework action, we
18 can do that, right, and I realize that it's not an incredibly
19 palatable option for at least two states, but it's also a
20 defensible alternative, based on the distribution of fishes, at
21 least in the short term, and so we could leave this out and vote
22 on the document that we have moving forward, and that would be
23 okay, too.

24
25 What I was trying to accomplish here was to allow us to think
26 forwardly, right, and incorporate the interim analyses, the
27 catch advice that results from that interim analyses, in a way
28 that would allow us to be compliant in 2021, and also in 2022,
29 while, at the same time, starting to work on a much more
30 complicated plan amendment that would address the allocation
31 issue.

32
33 I think, if people are okay with this general approach moving
34 forward, we can certainly tweak the language a bit to
35 incorporate some of the comments that Andy made and make sure
36 that we have the appropriate kind of end time on it, et cetera,
37 and so I think we can find our way forward, and so we'll just
38 see how it goes, Martha. I would like to talk about Alternative
39 3 after this.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds good. All right. I am going to read
42 this motion, because it's been changed a little bit, I think.
43 **The motion is to add a series of options under Alternative 2**
44 **that would incorporate an increase to the overfishing limit and**
45 **acceptable biological catch based on the results of the interim**
46 **analysis, as informed by the Great Red Snapper Count. If the**
47 **results of the review by the SSC result in a minimum of zero**
48 **percent or 25 percent increase in ABC, the state-specific ACLs**

1 would be calibrated based on Alternative 2 for the 2021 and 2022
2 recreational fishing seasons. Regardless of the results of the
3 interim analysis, the state-specific ACLs will be reviewed in
4 2022, or as soon as practicable. Then we have the examples.
5 Option a is apply the ratio calibration in Alternative 2 if the
6 ABC is increased, and Option b is apply the ratio conversion in
7 Alternative 2 if the ABC is increased by 25 percent or more. Is
8 there any opposition to this motion?
9

10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I oppose.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. We've got --
13

14 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I just want to ask one question real quick,
15 and I think I know the answer, but this is just to modify the
16 Option 2 motion, and it is not anything to do about setting it
17 as a preferred, correct?
18

19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Correct. This is just adding to the document.
20

21 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Thank you.
22

23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay, and so we have one opposed. **Otherwise,**
24 **the motion carries.** I saw we had some hands. John, is your
25 hand actually up? I just want to confirm.
26

27 **MR. SANCHEZ:** It was, but we voted, and I'm good.
28

29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Cool. Mara, is your hand still up?
30

31 **MS. LEVY:** No. Thank you.
32

33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Tom, I know you've got another motion to
34 offer us.
35

36 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay, and so we can go back to the Word document.
37 It's a modification, really, of Alternative 3, and it
38 essentially says that we would apply the 23 percent across-the-
39 board cut, using the state-collected data, to get us -- To
40 ensure that we're compliant, but, moving forward, if there is a
41 quota increase, then we would apply the calibration ratios, as
42 they are identified in Alternative 2.
43

44 What that would do, in the short term, for 2021, and until we
45 get an increase, and we're applying the 23 percent across-the-
46 board cut. That would keep us in compliance, but, moving
47 forward, we would just calibration ratios to -- And apply them,
48 excuse me, to any quota increase.

1
2 As the magnitude of the quota adjustment increases, then the
3 representation, or the representativeness, I guess, of the
4 state's allocation comes closer to the distribution of fish off
5 their coast, and, again, it becomes much more defensible.

6
7 In the short term, and Mara is going to have the same question,
8 I believe. If we don't have an adjustment in a quota, it
9 applies the 23 percent across-the-board, but what it does,
10 moving forward, if we do get a quota adjustment, is it applies
11 the calibration ratios in a way that, again, I think is similar
12 to Alternative 2, and so, in that regard, it's a bit of a
13 hybrid, and it's trying to step down the disparities among the
14 states in a more tolerable way.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Tom. We need to read this motion into
17 the record, and then we need to get a second. **The motion is to**
18 **add a series of options under Alternative 3 that would**
19 **incorporate an increase in the overfishing limit, however we**
20 **handled that last time, and acceptable biological catch, based**
21 **on the results of the interim analysis, as informed by the Great**
22 **Red Snapper Count. If the results of the review by the SSC**
23 **result in a minimum of zero percent or 25 percent increase in**
24 **ABC, the newly-added quota would be incorporated into the state-**
25 **specific ACLs using the calibration indicated in Alternative 2**
26 **for the 2021 and 2022 recreational fishing seasons. Regardless**
27 **of the interim analysis, the state-specific ACLs will be**
28 **reviewed in 2022 or as soon as possible. Option a is apply the**
29 **ratio calibration in Alternative 2 to any additional quota if**
30 **the ABC is increased, and Option b is apply the ratio**
31 **calibration in Alternative 2 to any additional quota if the ABC**
32 **is increased by 25 percent or more. All of those Alternative 2**
33 **need to be Alternative 3, correct, Tom?**

34
35 **DR. FRAZER:** No, because the actual calibration ratios are
36 expressed in Alternative 2.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Never mind. You're right. Okay. I'm
39 just making sure we're good here. Okay. Is there a second to
40 this motion?

41
42 **DR. SHIPP:** I will second it.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Dr. Shipp. All right. Tom, if
45 you don't mind, I'm going to some of the hands.

46
47 **DR. FRAZER:** Sure.

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let's start with Andy.
2

3 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I wanted to speak to my
4 opposition of the last motion, and it's similar, obviously, to
5 this motion. Once again, in concept, I'm not necessarily
6 opposing this, and I think it's still just lacking sufficient
7 details, and my concerns remain with regard to what happens in
8 the event of an ABC not increasing, and, obviously, we're all
9 banking on the ABC increasing, but it's not clear, in terms of
10 the motion stating what occurs at that point.
11

12 My other concern, which I mentioned earlier, was that this is
13 kind of providing a date certain for 2021 and 2022, and having
14 to specify that as part of the ACL setting, versus leaving that
15 more open-ended, with the council intent reflected maybe with
16 that.
17

18 Then the third comment, which was specific to this proposed
19 alternative -- My concern with this is now we're starting to get
20 into the territory of reallocation, and your proposal for
21 reallocating the ABC is one of many different ways that we could
22 reallocate, and, to me, there should be a broader suite of
23 methods for looking at reallocation beyond just those proposed
24 in this alternative. Thank you.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. Robin, I know you have a couple
27 of questions on this one.
28

29 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes, and, first of all, I would agree, to some
30 degree, with Andy's remarks about the allocation, because the
31 second part of this definitely moves us in that direction, and I
32 don't know whether we could get by with it in a framework and in
33 this kind of temporary kind of situation, Tom, and we might be
34 able to, and that will be up to the lawyers.
35

36 I guess I'm going to make one more comment in that regard, and
37 then I really want to walk through it with you. I do believe
38 this almost is a new alternative, because it's a hybrid of both
39 2 and 3, and I think it would just set itself apart better, as
40 trying to do it with sub-options, and that's the comment.
41

42 Now I'm going to really ask you to help explain it to me in a
43 way that I can get it. I am going to say that somebody's ACL is
44 a hundred pounds right now, and we get a 50 percent increase in
45 the OFL, and, thus, it applies down to ACLs, et cetera, and so
46 that person's -- Under a normal circumstance, under a normal
47 just proportional increase, they would go to 150, but what
48 you're saying is that, for those states that need to do the

1 calibration, and I'm going to just use simple math, and let's
2 just say the calibration is 50 percent of what their current
3 state estimates are, and so their calibration would have them at
4 25, and their state estimate has them at 50, and so, instead of
5 going to 150, they are now going to 125 pounds, and is that
6 correct?

7

8 **DR. FRAZER:** That's correct.

9

10 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay. Got it. Thanks.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara.

13

14 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. Again, I'm trying to figure out how this
15 works, and I think I understand -- Well, this is how it could
16 work, I guess, but I understand better the potential of what we
17 want for Option a and b under here, maybe, because you're doing
18 two different things, right, and so, in the other Alternative 2
19 motion that we just passed, everything was a calibration, and it
20 didn't switch the way you were doing things, and so that's why
21 the percentages of the increase didn't make sense to me, because
22 you were going to apply the calibration no matter what.

23

24 This, I can read as we're going to apply the buffer, the 23
25 percent buffer, and then we're going to consider at what point
26 we want to change that to the calibration, and, under Option a,
27 I would read it as, if there's any increase, that increase would
28 be distributed using the calibration. Under Option b, any
29 increase of 25 percent or more gets distributed using the
30 calibration, but, if it's under 25 percent, you're still using
31 the buffer, and is that how this is working?

32

33 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and, again, I understand Robin's point, and I
34 would agree. **What I was trying to do is to thread the needle,**
35 **as Kevin would say, a bit, and so this might be better as an**
36 **Alternative 4, as essentially a hybrid between Alternative 2 and**
37 **Alternative 3, and I am willing to make it an Alternative 4, in**
38 **that regard.**

39

40 **MS. LEVY:** If we did that, then what we're saying is Alternative
41 3 would have nothing that deals with an increase in the quota,
42 or would you be saying, under Alternative 3, any increase would
43 just be the buffer, as Alternative 3 is?

44

45 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.

46

47 **MS. LEVY:** Okay, and so Alternative 2 would be calibration, and
48 any increase does the calibration. Alternative 3 would be

1 buffer, and any increase uses the buffer. Alternative 4 would
2 be buffer, but any increase of a certain amount would use the
3 calibration.
4
5 **DR. FRAZER:** Correct, and I think that might capture everything.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay, and so we need to go back to the motion
8 and change it to add a new Alternative 4, and is that right,
9 Tom?
10
11 **DR. FRAZER:** Correct.
12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.
14
15 **DR. FRAZER:** I think it was Bob that seconded this motion, and
16 he would have to agree to that.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Bob, are you okay with that?
19
20 **DR. SHIPP:** I am agreeable, yes.
21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. John Sanchez, is your hand really up?
23
24 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That would be a no.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Just checking. Mara.
27
28 **MS. LEVY:** Just a question, another question. If you're going
29 to make this a potential new Alternative 4, then I guess you
30 would want to consider still modifying Alternative 3, to note
31 that any increase would use the buffer, and so I'm just going to
32 throw that out there once you're done with this.
33
34 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, we would do that.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Do we have any more discussion on this
37 motion? I think the explanation, based on Robin's questions,
38 probably helped a lot of people, based on the lack of questions
39 we have right now. Chris.
40
41 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** This is a technical question. Since this is a
42 framework amendment, if we had an alternative like this, does
43 this have to go back to public comment before we can go to final
44 action?
45
46 **DR. FRAZER:** Chris, I think we're going to have a public comment
47 period on Wednesday.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Correct. All right. Anything else on this
2 one? Dale.
3
4 **MR. DIAZ:** Tom, I just want to make sure that I fully understand
5 it. Under the Option b, if new fish are released, based on the
6 interim assessment -- I am trying to figure out how to word my
7 question. Like, for Mississippi's case, it would get the
8 calibration ratio that's in Alternative 2, is how those new fish
9 would be distributed amongst the states, correct?
10
11 **DR. FRAZER:** That's correct. As these motions evolve, right,
12 these alternatives evolve, since -- I mean, as Mara pointed out,
13 I mean, we'll probably go back and modify the existing
14 Alternative 3 to say that we're just going to apply the 23
15 percent buffer to any quota adjustment. If our intent is to do
16 that, then we can actually really get rid of Option b in this
17 alternative, and so, in that sense, it would be a true hybrid,
18 where we're applying a 23 percent buffer to the existing quota,
19 and, if there's existing quota provided as a result of the
20 interim analysis, then we would apply the calibration ratios.
21 Again, I just wanted to get these in here, to give us something
22 to chew on, so that, on Thursday, we could actually take this
23 home.
24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Tom. I will check for hands one more
26 time. I don't see any. Okay. So this is adding a new
27 Alternative 4. I am not going to read the motion again, but
28 just to clarify that part. **Is there any opposition to this**
29 **motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.** Okay. Tom.
30
31 **DR. FRAZER:** I just want to make sure we clean this up and tie
32 up a few loose ends. As Mara pointed out, what we should do is
33 modify the existing Alternative 3, and so the motion -- **This**
34 **motion would be, in Alternative 3, in Action 1, Alternative 3,**
35 **apply a 23 percent reduction in any quota increase across each**
36 **of the states.** I think staff can work on that to get that
37 squared away, but the intent is just to apply that 23 percent
38 buffer across-the-board, and, if we get a quota adjustment, we
39 would do the same thing.
40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there a second to this motion?
42
43 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I will second it.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you very much. Is there
46 discussion on this motion? Kevin, I see your hand, but I
47 suspect it's for something else, but, if you would like to speak
48 on this, you can.

1
2 **MR. ANSON:** Correct.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. John, go ahead.
5
6 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you very much. I just want to make sure I'm
7 understanding this correctly, this motion. This is referring, I
8 guess -- To me, it sounds a lot like that buffer that I've had
9 time with in applying it evenly, and so I just want to make sure
10 that, if there -- It seems that -- Let me read this again.
11 Hypothetically, say there isn't a quota increase. Then this
12 does not apply, or are we looking at this -- Does this amount to
13 a 23 percent buffer for all the states? That's my question.
14
15 **DR. FRAZER:** It accounts for a 23 percent buffer across all the
16 states, even if there's a quota adjustment, John, and, again,
17 the intent here is just to keep the full complement of
18 alternatives on the board, right, and so we've got essentially
19 one that carries the calibrations all the way through, one that
20 just --
21
22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Got you.
23
24 **DR. FRAZER:** All right. Cool.
25
26 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Robin.
29
30 **MR. RIECHERS:** Along those same lines, and we may want to -- If
31 I'm correct, Tom, we may want to reword the motion just a little
32 bit, and so what it's really doing is it's applying to Action 1,
33 Alternative 3, which is the 23 percent reduction across-the-
34 board action, but it's saying that any quota increase will be
35 applied proportionally across each of the states. Is that --
36 According to the current ACLs.
37
38 **DR. FRAZER:** I am thinking about that, real quick, Robin. You
39 would still need to apply the buffer, I mean the 23 percent, in
40 order to keep us in compliance.
41
42 **MR. RIECHERS:** So that's still the alternative, and then what
43 you're saying is, if there's an increase, it just applies
44 proportionally, based on current ACLs, to each state, based on
45 their current allocation. We'll pick me, for example. If we
46 have an increase, I get 6 percent of it.
47
48 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, with enough --

1
2 **MR. RIECHERS:** I would have had a 23 percent reduction, but I
3 will get 6 back, and is that right?
4
5 **DR. FRAZER:** No.
6
7 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay. Then I'm going to have to figure this one
8 out, or you help me.
9
10 **DR. FRAZER:** This is what I'm trying to do, Robin, and, again,
11 we can work on the language, and I can work on the language with
12 staff, but so what you're doing is you are moving forward with
13 your state data collection programs, right, and what -- To date,
14 we have applied a -- Under this alternative, we're applying an
15 across-the-board buffer of 23 percent, to make sure that we're
16 compliant.
17
18 Any adjustment, we would apply, again -- We would use the
19 allocations that exist already for each of the states, and
20 you're right that Texas is 6 percent, I guess, right, but,
21 whatever the total pounds are under that ABC, we're going to
22 have to apply an across-the-board buffer, to make sure that
23 we're compliant with Magnuson, and so it's still an across-the-
24 board buffer. We're just translating that buffer along with the
25 quota adjustment.
26
27 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay, and so I think I get it now, and, Martha,
28 I'm sorry, but I'm going to try to make sure I've got it clear
29 in my mind. What you're saying is, in Alternative 3, you're
30 opening it up to the fact that we get an interim analysis and
31 some increase.
32
33 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.
34
35 **MR. RIECHERS:** Let's just say, whatever that increase is, I get.
36 Whatever my total is though -- Everybody gets their increase,
37 but then what you're saying is we just come back in, and it's a
38 straightforward 23 percent buffer, no matter what that total is.
39
40 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes. That's exactly what I'm saying.
41
42 **MR. RIECHERS:** All right. I was totally down a different track
43 when I first read it, and so thank you.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Andy.
46
47 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I've had some similar confusion to Robin, and I
48 think what's tripping me up is the way the motion is worded,

1 that second phrase, "and any quota increase". So, really, what
2 we're doing here, if I'm understanding it, Tom, is we're
3 applying the 23 percent reduction, irregardless of whatever the
4 quota level is, and it's going to be applied to whatever the
5 quota is set at, period, and all states will be reduced by that
6 same 23 percent, and is that correct?

7
8 **DR. FRAZER:** That's exactly what we're trying to do here,
9 because that buffer allows us to essentially kind of absorb all
10 of the calibration and put us into one big melting pot, and so
11 we can work with staff to get that squared away, but that's the
12 intent of the motion.

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Tom, I guess then my comment is do we need an
15 additional motion, given what's already included as Alternative
16 3 in the amendment? It seems like the only difference here is
17 we have a catch limit that it set based on the current ABC and
18 catch limits that we have in place, and we just don't know,
19 obviously, what the Great Red Snapper Count will result in.

20
21 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and, to Mara's point, what I was saying is
22 that I think what Mara was confused about is, moving forward, to
23 be consistent with the other motions, if there isn't a quota
24 adjustment, what are we going to do, and, essentially, the
25 intent of this motion is to say, okay, we're going to just carry
26 out the 23 percent buffer, along with a quota adjustment, and so
27 we can work on that language.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Tom. Thanks, Andy. Mara,
30 is your hand still up, or you're good now?

31
32 **MS. LEVY:** No, it's up. Kind of -- Like the more I think about
33 this, along the lines of what Andy was saying, I mean, we can
34 put the language in there, but I think it's -- Under Alternative
35 2 and 3, they are what they are, and, if you got any quota
36 increase, it didn't change what you were doing, and those same
37 things would apply. I am not opposed to adding the language
38 that they carry forward, but it seems like they would anyway.

39
40 I also just want to add a couple of other things. Nothing in
41 this document -- I mean, I'm all for stating what your intent is
42 and what you want to do with a potential quota increase, but,
43 when you actually come to look at that quota increase, you're
44 going to have to do a document that addresses it, and it affects
45 more than the private angling component, and you could
46 potentially change what you want to do.

47
48 I'm just throwing that out there, because I feel like -- I get

1 where you're coming from here, but it seems to be complicating
2 this in such a way that it's going to make it so that we can't
3 take final action at this meeting, I think especially with
4 adding a hybrid that is considering both things together that we
5 have never considered, and we don't have it written out, and we
6 don't describe what it is.

7
8 I don't see how the public is going to have a meaningful
9 opportunity to comment on Thursday when we don't even have the
10 language the way we want it now, and I do not see taking final
11 action on this, come Thursday, if we're going to do this hybrid
12 thing that we have never talked about before.

13
14 **DR. FRAZER:** I appreciate those comments, Mara. In fact, we may
15 not get that far, but I felt very strongly about having this
16 type of a discussion with the council, to get us to a point
17 where we can make a decision on Thursday, and that may preclude
18 us from acting on Alternative 4, but what it does is it allows
19 us to start identifying our intent moving forward, so that, when
20 we do get results from the interim analysis in April, and I'm an
21 optimist in that regard, we will get some catch advice, and, in
22 fact, we could decide how we're going to do things moving
23 forward, and we will have already kind of known how to do that.

24
25 Also, it paves the way for us to have some informed discussions
26 about how we're going to adjust allocations moving forward, and,
27 before we leave today, there will be another motion to start a
28 plan amendment to address those allocations, and so I get where
29 you're coming from, and so let's see where it shakes out on
30 Thursday.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Andy, is your hand up again?

33
34 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No. I took my hand down.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. J.D.

37
38 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, ma'am. Thank you. So a question, and maybe a
39 follow-up, is, if I'm understanding this correctly, Louisiana,
40 right upfront, loses 23 percent, and is that correct?

41
42 **DR. FRAZER:** There is a 23 percent reduction in the available
43 quota to Louisiana. That's correct. The same to all of the
44 states.

45
46 **MR. DUGAS:** Okay, and so I want to go back to 2019, I believe,
47 when the recreational sector in Louisiana overfished, and, in
48 2020, I think we paid it back, and so I feel like Louisiana

1 shouldn't be forced, or shouldn't be -- LA Creel has done an
2 excellent job, and I think everyone agrees with that, and I
3 don't feel like we should be forced into a reduction at this
4 point.

5
6 We've done more than we have been asked to do, and I can't
7 support this, and, actually, I don't support Alternative 3 at
8 all, but, like John said earlier, it is what it is, and some
9 states have just got to face the consequences, and so I can't
10 support this.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, J.D. Okay. Tom, anything else you
13 would like to say before we vote this up or down?

14
15 **DR. FRAZER:** No, other than, again, just the full range of
16 alternatives is out there right now, and I appreciate that there
17 is going to be differences of opinion amongst the
18 representatives from each of the states, but we'll let that play
19 out later.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. All right. **Just to read the motion one**
22 **more time, in Action 1, Alternative 3, apply a 23 percent**
23 **reduction in any quota increase across each of the states. Is**
24 **there any opposition to this motion?**

25
26 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes.

27
28 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.

29
30 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I heard three in opposition.

33
34 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Add a fourth.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Four. Anybody else? Okay. **I think the motion**
37 **carries with four opposed.** Hopefully that saves us the time of
38 having to do a roll call vote. All right. Kevin, your hand has
39 been up for a very long time to offer something, and so go
40 ahead.

41
42 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. I can finally put it down. Thank you.
43 **I've been listening to the conversation and such, and, again, I**
44 **appreciate Tom's efforts to try to find the sweet spot, so to**
45 **speak, and thread the needle, as I have said, and so I have sent**
46 **to staff a motion, which is going to probably fall in line with**
47 **the motion we just talked about, and so we'll keep it in terms**
48 **of that.**

1
2 It's not worded right now the same way, because I sent it in
3 some time ago, and the discussion we just had kind of changes
4 the actual wording, but think of it in those terms, is that
5 everyone is going to get a cut, but it's going to be a cut off
6 of the calibrations, and so you would have gotten an increase in
7 the calibration, but now you're not going to actually use that
8 increase. You will just be using that increase in the pool for
9 all the states to cut.

10
11 I added Alternative 6, because I thought Tom's original two
12 motions were actually creating two alternatives, but it was only
13 one, and so it would be Alternative 5. It would either reduce
14 each state's quota by 11.8 percent, relative to their increase
15 with the calibration based on Florida and Louisiana getting an
16 increase and Mississippi and Alabama getting their decreases and
17 Texas staying the same.

18
19 Then any overage, and I was thinking of using the threshold of
20 25 percent, any overage over the ABC is 25 percent or greater,
21 and that would be part of the options down there, a or b, like
22 Tom had in the original two motions, and so I hope my math is
23 right, but that's, essentially, what it would entail.

24
25 **I don't know if I need to wordsmith it any more, but we probably**
26 **need to add that statement that Tom had in the last motion about**
27 **applying any increase, that quota increases would be applied**
28 **across each of the states.** Again, I -- Well, that's my motion,
29 Madam Chair. If I get a second, I'll talk about it a little bit
30 more, but --

31
32 **MR. DIAZ:** Second for discussion.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** We've got a second by Dale. Kevin.

35
36 **MR. ANSON:** I mean, here we are, and we're under a time crunch
37 here, and we're under a time crunch to address an issue that has
38 come up based on a couple of things, but we're having to deal
39 with that, and so, on the one hand, it needs to be addressed.

40
41 On the other hand, there might be an opportunity, if we think
42 about it a little bit in openminded terms, for lack of a better
43 term, but I reviewed the National Standards over the weekend,
44 and National Standard 6 has, in its title, "Variations and
45 Contingencies", and so, unfortunately, when Magnuson was
46 authorized, the nation was dealing with a lot of overfished
47 fisheries and fisheries that were undergoing overfishing.

48

1 Most of the focus was on trying to set the mechanisms, the
2 pathways, for science to be judged as good science to go into
3 the decision-making, at least at the science level, and then
4 that good decision-making would be carried through on the
5 management side, such that the nation would end up with
6 fisheries that were on track to rebuilding to healthy
7 conditions.

8
9 So much of National Standard 6 deals with, again, variations and
10 contingencies, and I see the Great Red Snapper Count, relative
11 to what we have available to work with right now, as the best
12 available science to be a variation in a contingency, but there
13 is some description of that that really focuses probably too
14 much on the negative side of variations and contingencies, and
15 there's a word in the National Standard 6 called vicissitude,
16 and vicissitudes are those ups and downs that generally are
17 looked upon as being negative or unfavorable, but this Great Red
18 Snapper Count is an up and down. It's an up.

19
20 Leann, you made a comment yesterday about that Congress has been
21 trying to do its best to try to help out the people of the
22 country and try to get bills passed to make this COVID thing
23 we're in, this pandemic, less painful to folks, and so I think,
24 because of the atmosphere that Magnuson was in, or what the
25 authorization was going through, with all of the negative
26 fisheries, that's where I think a lot of the focus was.

27
28 From my perspective, when you look at National Standard 6, and
29 you talk about ups and downs and the challenges of trying to
30 implement good, wise management, as it's mentioned in that
31 particular standard, we should have a little bit more wiggle
32 rooms and some flexibility in how we proceed with this
33 particular fishery, based on the information that we have at-
34 hand.

35
36 We've got a stable fishery, and we've got folks that are
37 generally happy throughout the Gulf, with their access, and so,
38 you know, on the one hand, I don't want to make it sound like
39 I'm trying to delay action relative to trying to make sure that
40 we're meeting our targets, our goals, but, on the other hand, I
41 think I just don't know if that would really be the intent,
42 based on the information that's at-hand, for us to try to deal
43 with a problem whereby we're 9,000 pounds overfished in 2019.

44
45 There's just a lot of information out there that would point to
46 -- If you asked any layperson, and gave them kind of the rundown
47 as to what had happened, or what was happening, in the fishery
48 and where we are now, relative to this Great Red Snapper Count

1 information, I think most people would say, well, do you need to
2 go that hard, do you need to press that hard, and so, anyway, I
3 am trying to look at a way that we could come up with a motion
4 that would, again, try to still keep us with checking the box
5 according to Magnuson, relative to the current management that
6 we're using, which, again, may not be actually what is out there
7 in the water, but trying to at least have some deference to
8 that.

9
10 In the meantime, trying to give some deference to the respective
11 fisheries within each state relative to the Great Red Snapper
12 Count and the amount of fish that occur off of those states and
13 the access that anglers have to that resource off of their
14 state, and so that's what this motion was trying to do.

15
16 It was trying to come up with the percentage that would appear
17 to be least painful to those that might feel like they're
18 getting the most pain, but still coming back to some pain for
19 those states where there is some overage, according to the
20 current ACLs and quota distribution, and then try to take
21 advantage of it, as quick as possible, any changes when it goes
22 to the science process, any changes, positive changes, that the
23 Great Red Snapper Count may hold for us.

24
25 Again, it's partly due to Tom's efforts, and I had just a simple
26 eleven-and-a-half percent reduction, but I have taken upon -- To
27 go and include those other options, with staying with status
28 quo, with a little bit of skin for everybody, spreading that out
29 across-the-board, and then also trying to find some
30 opportunities to move forward with the new ABCs that hopefully
31 will come to be at the next meeting. Anyway, that's all. Thank
32 you.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin. J.D.

35
36 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, ma'am. I just wanted to say, again, that
37 I'm not in favor of Louisiana having any kind of reduction, and
38 I will not be in support of this motion. Thank you.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, J.D. Andy.

41
42 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Unfortunately, the math
43 for this option doesn't work, and, Kevin, we analyzed this
44 extensively when we were coming up with the 23 percent
45 reduction, and I will try to kind of quickly explain why it
46 doesn't work.

47
48 If you look at the chart for Alternative 4, it would show the

1 new state-level quotas, and so that would be in state survey
2 units. In order to then scale those back up to MRIP, you have
3 to use the calibration estimated for each of the states.

4
5 If all of the states have the same calibration factors that
6 everyone could receive an equal reduction of their quota, then
7 this alternative would work, but, because the states have
8 highly-variable calibration factors, when you scale up the
9 quotas that are listed under Alternative 4, for example,
10 Alabama's would double to turn it into MRIP units, and so that's
11 how we had to do the math in order to achieve the 23 percent
12 reduction and why it's not a lesser reduction of 12 percent.

13
14 Certainly we would have ideally wanted to have a lesser
15 reduction if we could have been able to determine that that
16 ratio would prevent the ACL from being exceeded and prevent
17 overfishing.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. John.

20
21 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you. I can't support this. I mean, you've
22 heard me before. Coming from a state that was compliant, I just
23 can't sign onto the notion that, okay, I'm agreeing to a
24 haircut, and then, if we get an increase, I'm agreeing to a
25 lesser haircut.

26
27 Either way, we're getting a haircut for something that we didn't
28 deserve, and, again, I'm trying to find the best way to work
29 this out amongst our fellow states, but this blanket approach
30 that penalizes folks that were compliant, that effectively
31 rewards people for non-compliance, which all but encourages it,
32 and so we need to address this calibration issue, and I was
33 really hoping that we could have found something along the lines
34 of where we started from, where we all agreed to do the
35 calibrations as needed and then hope like hell the Great Red
36 Snapper Count and the biomass increase offset some of the pain,
37 but this blanket painting everybody with the same brush, when
38 some don't deserve it, I'm not going to be in support of this.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, John. Let me go to General
41 Spraggins, and then I think we're going to need to decide what
42 we're going to do here. We've heard from Andy that this may not
43 be -- That this isn't a valid option, at least from his point of
44 view, and so Joe.

45
46 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** The first thing, where you've got the yellow
47 mark there, I'm not sure that it's correct with what he's trying
48 to say, which says apply a 23 percent reduction and any quota

1 increase, and should it say apply the 11.8 percent reduction?
2 It just doesn't match up with what's above, and that's the only
3 thing. Does that make sense?
4

5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. I see what you're saying, and I think
6 that was not part of your motion, Kevin, and is that right?
7

8 **MR. ANSON:** I wasn't focusing on that screen, and so, yes, it
9 would be more like what Tom had in the previous motion that
10 passed, is that you apply the ABC increase across the states,
11 and then the ABC increase would be that zero percent and 25
12 percent option or some option, and not even an option, and it
13 would just be a or b.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.
16

17 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I will wait and let you fix that, if you
18 want to.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Did you have other comments as well?
21

22 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes, I do.
23

24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Go ahead, and we'll see if we can fix
25 this.
26

27 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I do understand that Louisiana and
28 Florida are saying that they're in compliance and they should
29 not have to have a reduction, but I think that, if you looked at
30 what we're looking at with Mississippi, we feel like we're in
31 compliance, too.
32

33 As a matter of a fact, I feel like that, if you went back and
34 looked at the past conversations over the last year or so, with
35 Amendment 50 and what we were talking about, everybody would
36 talk and say that, as far as they were concerned, Tails 'n
37 Scales is one of the best calibrations that they had ever seen,
38 and I think that even came out of Roy's mouth a few times.
39

40 The point I'm getting at with that is I think we all feel like
41 we've have followed the rules the best that we've possibly
42 could. I think we all felt that our calibrations in the states
43 were correct. However, I can tell you right now that, if
44 somebody hold told me that, hey, you can do what Louisiana did,
45 and you can do some mail-in surveys, and then you can make your
46 calibration work, we would have done it, in a heartbeat, and we
47 wouldn't have asked a question.
48

1 We would have done that, but that was not brought up to us. If
2 it was, it wasn't brought to me, and let's put it that way, and
3 the situation is that I am not -- I think that what Kevin is
4 trying to bring out here is that, if we took 11.8 percent, which
5 is a small amount compared to the 23 percent, and it's less than
6 half, that it would -- If there's an increase, you're still
7 going to get it back anyway, and, if you want to think about
8 this, if you sit there and say, well, Mississippi has got to
9 take a 60 percent cut, and Alabama has got to take a 40 percent
10 cut, but, yet, all we're going to do -- How many of those fish
11 do you think in Florida come across the line and are caught in
12 Alabama, or how many of those fish do you think in Louisiana
13 comes across the line and are caught in Mississippi or anything
14 else?

15
16 What's the difference here? It's a Gulf-wide thing we're
17 talking about. We're talking about Gulf-wide, and, according to
18 whatever they are saying, it's that they feel like we are
19 500,000 pounds over, and that's Gulf-wide, and it's not just
20 there, because nobody fishes in the state waters only. They
21 fish federal waters, and I think that's what we're talking
22 about, is federal waters.

23
24 The point I'm getting at is I'm not sure what we're getting from
25 this. I am not sure what we're gaining by doing what everybody
26 is thinking that we're going to do this, and, I mean, sure, I
27 mean, I can tell you right now that Mississippi will go fish,
28 and they just may have to land them in Louisiana, and that may
29 be how they have to do it, because they buy a double license
30 anyway, and everybody does that.

31
32 The point I'm getting at is it doesn't matter, and it's just the
33 whole thing is a Gulf-wide allocation of -- According to the
34 SSC, it came back with a 3.7 million against a 4.2 million, or
35 whatever the numbers was, and the point is it doesn't make any
36 difference. It's all Gulf. It's all in the Gulf of Mexico.

37
38 If Louisiana catches twice as much as they did last year, does
39 that mean that it took anything down if it wasn't overfishing?
40 I don't think so, and I think that you're looking at such a
41 small amount of fish, in the large scheme of things, and you're
42 making such a big thing out of it, and I think that, if we would
43 all look at this as one thing, as the Gulf of Mexico in general,
44 that we would have a different opinion of how we're doing
45 things, and I know you're saying, Joe, you're one of the states
46 that is taking the cut, and, listen, we're going to do whatever
47 we've got to do, and the law is going to make us do it, and
48 we're going to do it, okay, and, whatever you all decide, we're

1 going to do it, but I still think that this option is a
2 possibility of something to look at, and I appreciate Louisiana
3 and Florida's ideas of thinking that they complied, but so does
4 Mississippi and Alabama think they're complying too, and so I
5 wish you would look at it as a five Gulf states and not just
6 one.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I am going to Andy, and let's see if we
9 can get this motion cleaned up, and then I would like to vote
10 this up or down. I know I see a bunch of hands coming up, but I
11 think if we can maybe clarify what we're working with here, and
12 then we're going to vote on it. Andy. Sorry. Not Andy.
13 Kevin.

14
15 **MR. ANSON:** I was just going to say that I took my hand down,
16 but, I mean, if you want to address the motion, I don't have it
17 in front of me, but, again, if you could scroll back to Tom's
18 last motion.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** So would it be to apply an 11.8 percent
21 reduction in any quota increase across each of the states?
22

23 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, and leave it just like that. Yes.
24

25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Let's get that fixed up here.
26 Essentially, this is similar to the 23 percent buffer option,
27 but just 11.8. Now we've got, in Action 1, to add a new
28 Alternative 5 in the red snapper data calibrations and catch
29 limits framework action that would reduce each state's quota by
30 11.8 percent for the 2021 private recreational red snapper
31 season and apply the 11.8 percent reduction in any quota
32 increase across each of the states. Does that sound good,
33 Kevin?
34

35 **MR. ANSON:** No. If you remove the section that is right after
36 "action that".
37

38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** So that would --
39

40 **MR. ANSON:** All the way to -- So, basically, add a new
41 alternative -- It's just basically to "season". If you remove
42 "that" to the "red snapper season", that will probably do it.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.
45

46 **MR. ANSON:** You have to remove basically that whole sentence
47 right before the "and apply". Remove "season" to -- Right
48 there, yes.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Keep the "and". Okay. Let me read it again.
3 **In Action 1, to add a new Alternative 5 in the red snapper data**
4 **calibrations and catch limits framework action and apply the**
5 **11.8 percent reduction in any quota increase across each of the**
6 **states. Is that right, Kevin?**
7
8 **MR. ANSON:** I think so.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** You think so? Okay. Dale, I think you
11 seconded this motion. Are you okay with those changes?
12
13 **MR. DIAZ:** I am.
14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.
16
17 **MS. LEVY:** Martha, do you want the options under there?
18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I don't think we need the options, right?
20
21 **MR. ANSON:** That would already be applied, and so it would be
22 just for the increase, whatever -- He may not have had those
23 options in the previous motion, and I may have gotten them
24 conflated between the other two motions, but that should be
25 fine. Any quota increase would just be applied to the states,
26 as per the normal ACL distribution or allocation.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Again, this is sort of a parallel option
29 to the 23 percent buffer, but it's just an 11.8 percent buffer,
30 for everybody who is maybe confused, and it would apply to
31 whatever the quota is. Okay. We're going to vote on this. Is
32 there any opposition to this motion?
33
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.
35
36 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.
37
38 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.
39
40 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.
41
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Let's do a roll call. I heard a lot of
43 opposition, but I don't know how many.
44
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. Are you ready, Madam Chair?
46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, ma'am.
48

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

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Stunz.
2
3 **DR. STUNZ:** No
4
5 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Strelcheck.
6
7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No.
8
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas.
10
11 **MR. DUGAS:** No.
12
13 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas, did you want to vote?
14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Do I need to? What's the count?
16
17 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** It's seven to eight, and the motion
18 fails with two abstentions.
19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I am going to suggest that we take a
21 break.
22
23 **DR. SHIPP:** Martha, did we get a correct call on Greg Stunz's
24 vote? It was blurred, and I didn't hear what he said.
25
26 **DR. STUNZ:** My phone just cut out, of course, right when you
27 called on me. I'm a no on this one.
28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. All right. So let's take a
30 break, and we can come back to red snapper after that, and we've
31 had a lot of good conversation, and so, Tom, I don't know if you
32 want to go with the planned fifteen minutes.
33
34 **DR. FRAZER:** That would be great. Come back at 3:45. Thank
35 you, everybody.
36
37 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I know there were a number of hands up for red
40 snapper before we took that vote, and I just want to circle back
41 to that list, to see if there is other -- If they were relative
42 to the motion or if we have other things that we want to talk
43 about with this amendment. Robin.
44
45 **MR. RIECHERS:** It was relative to the motion. No problem.
46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks. Andy.
48

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Nothing else from me.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. How about John?
4
5 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I'm good as well. Thank you.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Tom.
8
9 **DR. FRAZER:** I think I'm looking at the agenda, and I am going
10 to make one more motion, if I could, at this point.
11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.
13
14 **DR. FRAZER:** If I could get staff to pull the document, the Word
15 document, up, or copy the final motion in the Word document.
16 Okay. I realize that there was a lot of discussion, and it's a
17 difficult discussion, and we've got some difficult discussions
18 ahead, but I think it's in everybody's best interest if we
19 recognize that we're going to have to start tackling these
20 allocation issues.
21
22 **I would like to make a motion to direct staff to initiate an**
23 **amendment to adjust the OFLs and ABCs based on the results of**
24 **the interim analysis for red snapper, as informed by the Great**
25 **Red Snapper Count and SSC recommendations. The private**
26 **recreational ACLs should include a range of alternatives that**
27 **consider reallocation based on state-specific biomass estimates**
28 **derived in part from the Great Red Snapper Count and NOAA's**
29 **socioeconomic data. If I can get a second, I can --**
30
31 **DR. SHIPP:** I will second.
32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It's seconded by Dr. Shipp.
34
35 **DR. FRAZER:** Again, I don't -- This is going to take a long time
36 to develop this amendment, but I think we need to start it now,
37 because, whatever action we decide to take with regard to this
38 framework, we need to make sure that we're compliant in 2021 and
39 in 2022, and, if we can get this work started now, we'll have an
40 updated document that should guide us in the future, starting in
41 2023, and so that's the nature and the reason for the motion.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Robin.
44
45 **MR. RIECHERS:** I will be honest that I have some reservations,
46 since we have only lived under Amendment 50 really -- We lived
47 under the premise of Amendment 50 for three years, but we've
48 lived under Amendment 50 really just one year, and so I have

1 some reservations about starting down this road again.

2
3 The other part that I have is these are -- Part of those
4 reservations are that, because numbers now, because of
5 calibration, aren't exactly what we thought they might be, we're
6 now proposing to look at ways to alter those, and, even as we
7 had those painstaking discussions about the previous
8 allocations, those were difficult discussions, and we finally
9 got to a point where we got there.

10
11 I understand the new information, though I don't really call it
12 new. We had the information regarding biomass, and you may have
13 more confidence in the current information, and I certainly
14 understand that.

15
16 With that being said, while I have reservations, I do understand
17 your desire to get this started, because maybe it would sync up
18 with an overall new complete stock assessment, and not just an
19 interim assessment, but I would say the other part to this is
20 that we've got many allocation discussions that need to come to
21 the forefront, and it seems we sometimes want to pick and
22 choose, and that's the nature of a body, and I'm not suggesting
23 that we shouldn't, but what I am suggesting is this is the age-
24 old question that we always are having in front of this council,
25 is how do we look at these allocations, how do we move forward
26 with them, what is the timeframe we should address each one of
27 them in, and I think we have even have some direction on, when
28 we should be addressing the next red snapper one, if I recall,
29 based on a template of when those things are going to come up in
30 a table that we produced for NMFS at a statutory request, as I
31 am recalling.

32
33 I don't know where I will be on the motion, just to get it
34 started, and the other problem I have is, once we get these
35 things started, they take a life of their own, and we can't seem
36 to pull the plug on things, even when we think we maybe should
37 at times, and so we get hesitant to do that, and so, like I
38 said, I just have those concerns with it coming out right now.

39
40 Maybe a year from now, maybe some longer period of time from
41 now, or maybe the next meeting even, but it just seems that
42 we're searching for a result that we want here, as opposed to
43 relying on some of the past work we've already done for a short
44 period of time.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Just a follow-up from that,
47 Tom, but a couple of similar questions. Just to be clear, are
48 we -- Is this motion addressing all allocations across the red

1 snapper fishery, since it's talking about the overall OFL and
2 ABCs, or is it adjusting OFLs and ABCs and specifically the
3 state-by-state allocations as part of the private rec sector?
4

5 **DR. FRAZER:** My intent with this is to actually address all of
6 the allocation issues, and so it's going to be a heavy lift, and
7 it's going to be a long document, and I would like the staff to
8 start thinking about how it might be constructed moving forward,
9 and so it's not something that I expect them to bring back to
10 the council in April or anything like that, but it's recognizing
11 that it's coming and looking at what they're going to need to
12 complete it, and I think it's an aspirational thing, but I think
13 we should get started, and it's in everybody's best interest, in
14 my opinion.
15

16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. So my other, I guess, suggestion for
17 this motion, and it's a picky one, but just clarifying, based on
18 comments Greg had made, but the Great Red Snapper Count doesn't
19 provide biomass estimates, and it's abundance, right?
20

21 **DR. STUNZ:** Do you want me to chime in?
22

23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.
24

25 **DR. STUNZ:** We were charged with providing a number, in terms of
26 absolute abundance, and those certainly can be converted to a
27 biomass, but that was not our charge. I mean, you could convert
28 that, but it's just that's not what was presented in my summary
29 presentations and that kind of thing. They were strictly
30 numbers, and the numbers that Tom was using, the percentages,
31 were based off of those numbers and not biomass. It would look
32 slightly different if you converted that to biomass.
33

34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. Tom, I don't know if you want to
35 adjust your motion or clarify it.
36

37 **DR. FRAZER:** Again, I mean, so there's a parenthetical statement
38 in there that says, "as informed by the Great Red Snapper
39 Count", right, and so, essentially, it's the Science Center
40 that's going to take that information and then put it into the
41 units that we need for the assessment, and so I think I'm okay
42 with that as-is.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I'm going to move down the list. Greg,
45 did you have anything else?
46

47 **DR. STUNZ:** No. That's it.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Kevin.

2
3 **MR. ANSON:** Kind of similar to what Robin made comments to, and
4 I thought I heard Dr. Frazer provide more detail, but, relative
5 to other allocations, other sectors, that would be wrapped up
6 with this, is that part of the intention, because it's not
7 explicit in that, as the motion is currently written, and then,
8 also, I mean, it might be -- I don't know what the adjustment of
9 OFLs and ABCs -- I mean, we only have one OFL or an ABC, and so
10 at least that's the way I understand it, and so just some
11 clarification of the motion.

12
13 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, Kevin. You're right, and so we only have
14 one OFL and ABC, and so we can fix that typo, and we can add a
15 sentence that just says as well that -- Let me read this. **I**
16 **guess we could add a sentence at the end of this that would say**
17 **that allocations for the commercial and charter/for-hire sectors**
18 **will also be considered in this amendment.**

19
20 **MR. ANSON:** Madam Chair, one other comment.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure. Go ahead.

23
24 **MR. ANSON:** I will be in support of the motion, Tom. As Robin
25 said, we have kind of created a document already that has kind
26 of a roadmap for us to go through species, and I can't recall
27 where red snapper fits, but certainly having the Great Red
28 Snapper Count information is some new information that would
29 warrant moving up the timeline for this species, and so we do
30 have other amendments that we're trying to deal with as well,
31 and, quite frankly, we haven't seen them in quite a while, and
32 so I'm afraid that it's one more ball in the air, and so
33 anyways, but I will be in support of the motion.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Andy.

36
37 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks. A couple of comments. I would speak
38 in support of the motion. It may be understood, but I think I
39 would feel more comfortable if there was a friendly amendment
40 that would state the private recreational ACLs should include,
41 but are not limited to, a range of alternatives. That way, it
42 opens up for other things to be considered besides biomass and
43 socioeconomic data for staff to consider.

44
45 Then the other point I will make is, relative to the earlier
46 motion that I opposed, which is specifying the 2021 and 2022
47 private ACLs in the prior motion, and now coming in with a
48 reallocation amendment that not only addresses those, but

1 commercial and charter, you're setting yourselves up for a very
2 complicated amendment with a lot of controversy, and so I just
3 would caution the council, as we talk about the calibration
4 amendment on Thursday, to maybe reconsider the timing of the
5 private recreational calibrations and obligating them through
6 2022. Thanks.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. Ryan.

9

10 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a point of
11 clarification for you guys, and so the interim analysis, using
12 the Great Red Snapper Count and SSC recommendations, are still
13 going to be in the MRIP-CHTS currency, and so there won't be, at
14 least through this, an FES conversion necessity for reexamining
15 the recreational and commercial sector allocations, as is
16 inferred by that last sentence. If that's something that you
17 guys want to consider just because, then okay, but if the
18 thinking was that you were going to have to examine that,
19 because of any conversion of the FES, that's not happening as a
20 result of the catch analysis that the Science Center is working
21 on using the Great Red Snapper Count. That will still be in the
22 MRIP Coastal Household Telephone Survey data currency.

23

24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Tom, I'm sorry. I think you
25 were trying to jump in a minute ago.

26

27 **DR. FRAZER:** That's okay. I mean, I would be respectful of
28 **Andy's friendly amendment to the motion that essentially says**
29 **the private recreational ACLs should include, but not be limited**
30 **to, a range of alternatives, or something of that nature.** Is
31 that right, Andy? We can sort that out.

32

33 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Tom.

34

35 **DR. FRAZER:** That may actually go somewhere else in the
36 sentence, grammatically, but we'll get that squared away, and,
37 with regard to including the commercial and the charter/for-hire
38 sectors, I just want to get the motion out right now, and we can
39 think about it over the next couple of days, and, on Thursday,
40 we can decide where we want to be with it.

41

42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I just wanted to check with the seconder.
43 We've made a couple of changes, clarifying what this means, and
44 I think the seconder was Dr. Shipp, but I might be getting my
45 motions crossed.

46

47 **DR. SHIPP:** No, it was, and, yes, I'm fine with the changes.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you. Kevin, is your hand still
2 up?

3
4 **MR. ANSON:** It is. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just picking up on
5 Ryan's comment, I mean, I guess, thinking of the document and
6 how long it does take for documents just to go through the
7 process and then be considering this as an allocation document,
8 I suspect that, actually, and although the motion doesn't say
9 it, and so I'm having some second thoughts here, that this is --
10 We probably would need to have some results as it goes through
11 the research track, as far as that type of thing with the Great
12 Red Snapper Count data, and so I don't know. Just to get it off
13 the ground maybe, but, for it to be fully explored and vetted
14 through a research track, it might provide more valuable
15 information relative to this particular task.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Okay. I don't see any other
18 hands. One last call for comments on this, and then we're going
19 to vote it up. All right. Let me read the motion, since we've
20 modified it, and then we'll vote.

21
22 **The motion is to direct staff to initiate an amendment to adjust**
23 **the OFL and ABC, based on the results of the interim analysis**
24 **for red snapper, as informed by the Great Red Snapper Count and**
25 **SSC recommendations. The private recreational ACLs should**
26 **include, but not be limited to, a range of alternatives that**
27 **consider reallocation based on state-specific biomass estimates**
28 **derived, in part, from the Great Red Snapper Count and NOAA's**
29 **socioeconomic data. Allocation for the commercial and**
30 **charter/for-hire sectors will also be considered in this**
31 **amendment. Is there any opposition to this motion? Hearing**
32 **none, the motion carries.**

33
34 Okay. So let's just, I guess, take a second and talk about
35 where we are with this amendment. Obviously, we have added a
36 number of alternatives to be considered by the council, and I
37 think the understanding is that some of the language in those
38 may need to be tweaked, and I'm hoping that we can get another
39 look at those later in the week, and then we'll figure out where
40 we want to go from there.

41
42 We have codified text in our briefing book, which is blank, and
43 we have not chosen any preferred alternatives at this point, and
44 so, if we wanted to do something like that, we certainly could
45 try to do some of that now, but, also, given that we just added
46 some new stuff to the document, that may be a Full Council
47 discussion, but I just wanted to, I guess, offer this one last
48 opportunity for this amendment for now. I think we've had some

1 really good discussion today, and we sort of have a path forward
2 here, but we may have gone as far as the group is willing to go.
3 I see some hands. Okay. Leann.

4
5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would suggest that we
6 at least take a stab at picking some preferreds. I think it's
7 very difficult for the public to give you feedback if you don't
8 have a preferred out there. Of course, there were only a few
9 options in this document, and we've got a few more in there now,
10 but we could at least take a stab at preferreds for what's in
11 the document in front of us, and then maybe staff would have
12 some guidance on trying to pick preferreds or something to put
13 in front of us for the actions that we're adding, either at Full
14 Council or once we get done with this one action.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. If we want to do
17 that, now would be the time to offer a motion.

18
19 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. Can we go to the page that's got the
20 alternatives on it?

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think we can do that.

23
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. Now I'm going to throw it out to one
25 of the states, because I'm a commercial person, and I shouldn't
26 be the one making this motion.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right, everybody. I am not seeing any
29 hands.

30
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right, Martha. I will try.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.

34
35 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. Let's see how many motions and
36 substitute motions we can get up here all in one fell swoop,
37 huh? **I will make a motion that we choose Alternative 2 as our
38 preferred.**

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let's give staff a chance to get that on the
41 board, and I will also ask for a second.

42
43 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will second that.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. It's seconded by John Sanchez. Leann,
46 do you want to provide any discussion, before I go to hands?

47
48 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, ma'am. I think we've had plenty of

1 discussion.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Kevin.

4

5 **MR. ANSON:** Well, going along Leann's comment, I will be the
6 first to offer a substitute motion, and that would be to make
7 Alternative 1 the preferred.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.

10

11 **DR. SHIPP:** I will second it.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** In Action 1, Alternative 1 is the preferred,
14 and we have a second by Dr. Shipp. Okay. Kevin, do you want to
15 offer any discussion?

16

17 **MR. ANSON:** It's getting late in the day, and I will just, you
18 know -- I know where we are relative to trying to comply with
19 Magnuson, but, again, from our perspective, I just feel like the
20 science and the management has not added up for years, and, with
21 the Great Red Snapper Count information, it just shines a
22 brighter light on the disparity between the science and the
23 management decisions from the science, and seeing that there is
24 a lot more fish out there, and we've got a stable system, and
25 the states have worked very hard to try to improve the system,
26 improve the data, get more accurate data, to get more precise
27 data, to get more timely data, and all those things have been
28 asked for by everyone in the process, and we felt like we've
29 done that.

30

31 We have tried to work within the system, but the system is just
32 not proving to be very beneficial to us and our needs, the way
33 we perceive things, and so we would just not want to continue
34 going down, really, with any votes or decisions of this nature
35 for this fishery based on the data that is available and based
36 on the data as it compares to the Great Red Snapper Count.
37 Thank you.

38

39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin. Susan.

40

41 **MS. BOGGS:** I was just going to ask, back to Leann's motion, but
42 is there a way that we can see all of these motions, because,
43 right now, we're just looking at the document, but we can pick
44 from any of the motions that have been thrown out there today,
45 correct, and not that I'm offering a motion, but I'm just
46 asking.

47

48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think we might be able to zoom the document

1 such that you can see the two motions that have been offered,
2 but we would have to scroll back to a specific motion, I think,
3 if there was one that you wanted to read with all these new
4 alternatives that we've added today, and there's just a lot
5 here, unfortunately.

6
7 **MS. BOGGS:** I agree, and I'm just making sure that -- Anyway, I
8 just was making sure that all the motions are out there to vote
9 on.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes.

12
13 **MS. BOGGS:** Thanks.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara.

16
17 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. Susan covered it, but I just wanted to
18 remind folks that there is another alternative that was added,
19 and we changed the alternatives, and so what's in the document
20 is no longer reflective of your choices.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks. Bob.

23
24 **DR. SHIPP:** I didn't hear Mara's comments, because it kind of
25 broke up, but my question is, if we go with Alternative 1, which
26 we're told is in violation, what happens? What is the next
27 step? What can National Marine Fisheries Service do to us or
28 for us? Where do we go from here if we adopt a motion that is
29 supposedly in violation of Magnuson?

30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara or Andy, would you like to address that?

32
33 **MS. LEVY:** I will take a stab at it. I mean, I would advise
34 that you're correct that taking no action is not really a viable
35 alternative. I mean, in terms of consequences, that is going to
36 come about when the council wants to implement increased catch
37 levels for red snapper and you haven't dealt with the
38 calibration, and then you're going to be in a situation where
39 the Fisheries Service is going to be hard pressed to approve any
40 changes, because the plan is not going to be consistent with the
41 Magnuson Act, and there may be other consequences, but I think
42 you're correct that Alternative 1 isn't really legally viable.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Andy, did you want to add to that? I saw your
45 hand go up.

46
47 **MS. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Martha. Not a lot to add, but I agree,
48 and I would encourage the council not to select Alternative 1,

1 for the reasons that Mara mentioned. I also want to remind the
2 council of the fact that we have a history of being sued over
3 red snapper, and we have lost several lawsuits because of
4 recreational overages of our catch limits, and, by not taking
5 action to calibrate the landings, we would continue to be out of
6 compliance with Magnuson and setting our catch limits according
7 to preventing overfishing and limiting overharvest.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks. Joe Spraggins.

10
11 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Just a question. I realize that everybody -
12 - The big thing about the Magnuson-Stevens Act, but, if we
13 modify it, and I am just asking if this is the case, but, if
14 Option 1 was modified not to exceed the April meeting, that we
15 would have to have an option, another option, by the April
16 meeting to -- I'm not saying that we're going to use Option 1
17 forever, but it would have to be clarified, and we would have to
18 pick another option by the April meeting, and is that something
19 that would be legal?

20
21 When I'm talking to the Senate Commerce, and talking to them and
22 talking to their aides, they are telling me that there's a
23 possibility -- They're saying that they feel that, because we
24 have the Great Red Snapper Count out there as being looked at,
25 that it could possibly be the situation that we are not in
26 violation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act if we are looking at
27 another issue that could change the allocation.

28
29 We may have not overfished. Just because there is a number that
30 showed it, there may be a situation that we did not overfish,
31 and, if it shows that we have the Great Red Snapper Count that
32 gives a better angle of that, to say that, then we may not be in
33 violation of any type of Magnuson-Stevens Act. I was trying to
34 get them to look at it, and I would love for us to ask Commerce
35 are we, if this is the situation? If we have the Great Red
36 Snapper Count, which we have seen showing a greater increase, if
37 we do not act on this, are we in violation of the Magnuson-
38 Stevens Act?

39
40 Two things. Number one, if we delayed it until the April
41 meeting, which it still gives us time to get it implemented
42 prior to the start of the season, would that be something that
43 is something that we can look at, and I guess I'm asking Mara
44 that, and the other situation is could we ask Commerce are we in
45 violation, since we have this other information?

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara or Andy, do either one of you want to
48 handle that one?

1
2 **MR. STRELCHECK:** In terms of delaying to the April meeting, that
3 wouldn't allow us to get the calibration in effect by the time
4 of the summer red snapper season, just because of the length of
5 our rulemaking process.

6
7 What I would add to your comments, Joe, is this is really kind
8 of two separate issues. You have the Great Red Snapper Count,
9 which is coming, and we know that that's going to affect ABC and
10 annual catch limit levels, and presumably they're going to
11 increase, and what we need to do though is have those catch
12 levels consistently set in the same units that landings are
13 being monitored, and so that is why we are doing the
14 calibration.

15
16 If we do not set them in the same units, then we run the risk of
17 exceeding the catch limit going forward, regardless of whether
18 it's set at the current level or some higher level under the
19 Great Red Snapper Count.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. I am looking for more hands
22 here. I don't see any. Can we scroll back to that substitute
23 motion? I think we're at a point where we can vote on it. We
24 have a substitute motion, which is, in Action 1, to make
25 Alternative 1 the preferred alternative. **Is there any**
26 **opposition to this motion?**

27
28 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.

29
30 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.

31
32 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Dr. Froeschke, I think we will --
35 Can you lead us through a roll call vote for this, please?

36
37 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes. Mr. Sanchez.

38
39 **MR. SANCHEZ:** No.

40
41 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Ms. Guyas.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Can you call me last, since I'm the Chair?

44
45 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes. Dr. Stunz.

46
47 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.

48

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

1 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Ms. Boggs.
2
3 **MS. BOGGS:** No.
4
5 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Dr. Frazer. Ms. Guyas.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I am going to abstain.
8
9 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I have eight yes, seven no, two abstain.
10
11 **DR. FRAZER:** I am not going to abstain. I vote no.
12
13 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Dr. Frazer votes no.
14
15 **DR. FRAZER:** I want to explain why I voted no. I mean, it's
16 clearly in violation of Magnuson, and it's not compliant, and,
17 in all good conscience, I cannot move forward in that direction.
18
19 **MR. SWINDELL:** I totally agree.
20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. **So the substitute motion fails, in that**
22 **case, and we are back to our original motion.** The original
23 motion is, in Action 1, to make Alternative 2 the preferred, and
24 so, just so everybody is clear, and it's written on there, but
25 Alternative 2 is to modify the state-specific red snapper
26 private angling component ACLs using the ratio corrections
27 developed by the NOAA OST and respective Gulf states. This is,
28 in other words, the calibration option. I don't see any hands.
29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** Madam Chair, I will just note that you guys have
31 revised Alternative 2 in committee, and Bernie is trying to get
32 language up, real quick, and so, before you guys vote on that,
33 if you wanted to wait just a second for her to do that. That
34 way, you have the actual new language up in front of you.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. All right, and so let's pause for a
37 minute here. I see Mara has her hand up, and I see other hands
38 going up, and so, while that's going up, let's take some hands.
39 Mara.
40
41 **MS. LEVY:** I am not opposed to looking at the new language that
42 we talked about, but recognizing that we also talked about the
43 fact that we probably need to change the new language, and we
44 were working on editing it, and so, I mean, I think the gist of
45 it is the calibration is applied, and it applies now and in the
46 future to any increase, is what this alternative is saying, as I
47 understand it.
48

1 **DR. FRAZER:** That's correct.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Mara. Thanks, Tom. Kevin.
4
5 **MR. ANSON:** I realize the desire to have a preferred for public
6 testimony tomorrow, if the goal is to try to get this voted up
7 for final action on Thursday, but we just had a couple of
8 alternatives added, and there's just been a couple of
9 screenshots talking about those, and so we're making a preferred
10 really without having a chance to look at these other new
11 alternatives, and so thank you.
12
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Does everybody understand what we've
14 voting on in Alternative 2? If not, now is the time to speak
15 up.
16
17 **MR. RIECHERS:** Martha, can I ask a question?
18
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, please.
20
21 **MR. RIECHERS:** Okay, and so this is Alternative 2 as it was in
22 the document that we started with today, and it now includes
23 Option a and b that Tom was trying to add?
24
25 **DR. FRAZER:** That's correct, Robin, and, essentially, Option a
26 is continuing with the calibration ratios. Basically, it's
27 what's in the document already.
28
29 **MR. RIECHERS:** So it's a calibration option, and then,
30 basically, you're just making room for any -- The language
31 change is making room for any upward adjustment, or downward
32 adjustment, in the interim analysis, even though we all believe
33 it's going to go up.
34
35 **DR. FRAZER:** That's correct.
36
37 **MR. RIECHERS:** Thank you for that clarification.
38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. I am not seeing any other hands,
40 and so let's just tee it up for a roll call again. Dr.
41 Froeschke, whenever you're ready.
42
43 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Dugas.
44
45 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes.
46
47 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Swindell.
48

1 **MR. SWINDELL:** Again, being that this is what our scientific
2 community is telling us, I have no choice but to vote yes.
3 Thank you.
4
5 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Williamson.
6
7 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Yes.
8
9 **DR. FROESCHKE:** General Spraggins.
10
11 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** No.
12
13 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Strelcheck.
14
15 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes.
16
17 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Sanchez.
18
19 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.
20
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Schieble.
22
23 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Yes.
24
25 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Dr. Stunz.
26
27 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.
28
29 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Diaz.
30
31 **MR. DIAZ:** No.
32
33 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Dr. Shipp.
34
35 **DR. SHIPP:** No.
36
37 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Dyskow.
38
39 **MR. DYSKOW:** Yes.
40
41 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Ms. Bosarge.
42
43 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.
44
45 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Anson.
46
47 **MR. ANSON:** No.
48

1 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Mr. Riechers.
2
3 **MR. RIECHERS:** No.
4
5 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Ms. Boggs.
6
7 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.
8
9 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Dr. Frazer. Ms. Guyas.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I'm good. I'm going to abstain.
12
13 **DR. FROESCHKE:** **Ten yes, five no, two abstain.**
14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Dr. Froeschke. Okay. Is there
16 anything else that we need to discuss today with this document?
17 Kevin, is your hand up? Yes. Go ahead, Kevin.
18
19 **MR. ANSON:** Maybe to save some stress on staff, and I don't
20 know, Dr. Frazer, if you can comment, and certainly -- Should
21 there be a motion to do away with all of the alternatives that
22 were voted on previously, so that staff doesn't have to try to
23 rush to create something for Thursday?
24
25 **DR. FRAZER:** I am actually, Kevin, looking at staff right now,
26 to see if -- I think, Kevin -- I was just talking with staff,
27 and I think what we'll at least try to do is to clean up all the
28 language in the various alternatives that are out there, to make
29 sure that they are as clearly articulated as possible by
30 Thursday, and then we'll just proceed as-is.
31
32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Joe Spraggins.
33
34 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes, Madam Chair. Just real quick, this is
35 just making a preferred, and we're not talking about doing
36 anything on Thursday or making this final, and is that correct?
37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** The vote we just took was to set a preferred,
39 and, if the committee wants to recommend that the council take
40 final action, we certainly can discuss that now, but I
41 personally think it might be cleaner for us to take up that
42 issue on Thursday, with all of the revising that we've been
43 doing.
44
45 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** If you're going to bring it up now, Madam
46 Chair, I would make a motion that we do not make this final on
47 Thursday.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I was not planning on bringing it up, but --
2
3 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** We can wait until Thursday, if you need to.
4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Tom, did you want to say something?
6
7 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm not sure what General Spraggins is asking.
8 Does he want to make a motion that we do not consider this for
9 final action on Thursday?
10
11 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Well, what I'm trying to get at, Tom, is, if
12 there's going to be a motion about whether we make it final on
13 Thursday, I would like to make a motion that we do not. If it's
14 not, and you want to wait until Thursday, I'm fine with that,
15 and we can look at it. That's all I was asking, is what does
16 the committee want to do?
17
18 **DR. FRAZER:** So my preference, Martha, and sorry to chime in
19 here, would be to have all the language in the various
20 alternatives that were put on the table today, so that they're
21 as clear as possible, and we will make that decision on
22 Thursday.
23
24 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I'm fine with that.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think that's probably the best approach,
27 based on everything we've done today, which has been a lot.
28
29 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I'm fine with that. Thank you.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Great. Ryan.
32
33 **MR. RINDONE:** I'm good. Thanks.
34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Ryan. Susan.
36
37 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to clarify. If
38 we don't take final action on Thursday, and we wait until April,
39 number one, we'll have more information that I think will really
40 help drive our decisions, but, if we don't take final action on
41 Thursday, and we wait until April, did I not understand earlier
42 that we can't get the seasons set for 2021 for the recreational
43 sector, or did I misunderstand that? Thank you.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I guess I can help here. I think maybe it was
46 Andy who talked about how, if we took final action in April, the
47 rulemaking process would not be complete in time to inform
48 states as they are setting their seasons, if they're setting

1 their seasons in the summer, and that's essentially what it is.
2 States wouldn't necessarily know for sure, 100 percent, with
3 secretarial approval, what they're working with for quotas.
4

5 **MS. BOGGS:** May I follow-up? So, that being the case, would
6 they start the season with the current allocations and then have
7 to adjust during the summer, or they wouldn't be able to start
8 fishing until that determination was made?
9

10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** This is my understanding, and, Andy, jump in,
11 and other states too, but we have -- Each state has a quota
12 written in rule right now, and that quota would be revised,
13 whenever it's revised, and so states -- It would be upon states
14 to adjust how they approach their season, if they want to adjust
15 the timing or they want to adjust, potentially, downwards. I
16 don't think you can adjust upwards without actually having the
17 quota there to back it up, in anticipation of quota changes.
18 Andy, can you weigh-in on this, please?
19

20 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and we certainly would want to consult
21 more with General Counsel, but I guess the way I would see this
22 working is that we know a rulemaking is proceeding that would
23 adjust the state quota levels, and the timing is then, of
24 course, the key issue, and so when that would be implemented.
25

26 If it's implemented before the state seasons are set, no
27 problem, and the states can move forward and set their seasons
28 based on those revised quota levels. If it's set say during
29 early summer, after the seasons have started, I guess we would
30 look at the timing before then and probably ask the states to
31 take into consideration, obviously, the pending rulemaking and
32 any regulatory changes when they set their initial seasons.
33

34 The other kind of looming factor here is the Great Red Snapper
35 Count and the ability to reopen state fisheries based on either
36 the quota not being caught or additional quota being released,
37 based on the Great Red Snapper Count, and so all of that will
38 play into state seasons as well later in the year.
39

40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Does that answer your question, Susan?
41

42 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, ma'am. Thank you.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Leann.
45

46 **MS. BOSARGE:** Madam Chair, my question is -- Before we leave
47 calibrations, I have one -- Well, two questions for Richard
48 Cody, and they're simple yes or no questions, and so they

1 shouldn't take but a second, and is that okay?
2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.
4
5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. Mr. Cody, I think you're still on the line.
6
7 **DR. CODY:** Yes, I'm still here, Leann.
8
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you. Mississippi and Alabama are the two
10 short coastlines, and their calibrations do bother me a little
11 bit, and I've been thinking about it, and my two questions are
12 this. Number one, when you -- When we came up with these
13 conversion ratios, you had to get MRIP landings for Mississippi
14 and MRIP landings for Alabama. Did you come up with a state-
15 specific average weight for each of those states when you
16 generated those state landings in MRIP?
17
18 **DR. CODY:** Well, we came up with state-specific calibrations,
19 and so that would entail the state-specific weights.
20
21 **MS. BOSARGE:** But did you come up with an average weight for
22 each state, because MRIP comes in in numbers of fish and not
23 numbers of pounds, and then you use samples from each strata to
24 generate an average weight and multiply that times fish, to get
25 pounds, which would be your landings for each one of those
26 states, and so did we generate an average weight for Mississippi
27 and an average weight for Alabama? Then I have one more follow-
28 up after that.
29
30 **DR. CODY:** Let me see if I can see how we came up with the final
31 numbers. We did an adjustment with using the -- With the FES,
32 and so we went directly to the FES and then to the CHTS, and so
33 it's -- Then you can make an adjustment for weight based on
34 that, and I think that's what Jeff did. Jeff is present too,
35 and he can probably add to this, if needed.
36
37 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. Well, while we're waiting on Jeff, let me
38 follow-up on my second question. Regardless of whether you
39 actually came up with an average weight for Mississippi and for
40 Alabama, versus a more regional average weight, or a Gulf-wide
41 average weight even, what's the minimum sample size to come up
42 with an average weight? Is it thirty? For the years that you
43 used, 2017, 2018, and 2019, was it a minimum sample size of
44 thirty fish?
45
46 **DR. CODY:** I am not sure of the specific numbers that were used.
47 I mean, you can come up with an average sample size, but you
48 will have a variance that will reflect the sample size.

1
2 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay, and so maybe we can follow-up, and it sounds
3 like you need some time to research those, and that's fine.
4 They were very specific questions, and I don't blame you for not
5 knowing them off the top of your head, but I would like to
6 follow-up on that at a future meeting, hopefully.
7
8 **DR. CODY:** Okay. I would be glad to follow-up.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Richard. Thanks, Leann.
11 Okay. It is about quarter to five, and, at 5:00, I believe we
12 have the Q&A session with council leadership and NOAA and the
13 fishermen Q&A, the fireside chat. I am going to suggest, I
14 think, that we stop here.
15
16 We still have a lot of reef fish items on our agenda, but don't
17 worry, because we'll be in Reef Fish until lunch tomorrow, and
18 so we'll try to get through everything else as quickly as we
19 can. I guess I just want to thank everybody for hanging in
20 there this afternoon. There was a lot of back-and-forth, a lot
21 of motions, a lot of good questions, and hopefully we got at
22 least a teensy bit closer to some resolution with this
23 amendment. Richard, I see your hand is up.
24
25 **DR. CODY:** Sorry. I did confer with Jeff, and the ratios were
26 all done using landings in numbers and not weights.
27
28 **MS. BOSARGE:** Madam Chair?
29
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead.
31
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** So the calibration ratios are based on the
33 difference between the numbers of fish that MRIP-CHTS shows,
34 even though you start with FES, and let's just call it MRIP.
35 The difference in the number of fish that MRIP shows landed
36 versus the number of fish that an individual state survey shows
37 landed?
38
39 **DR. CODY:** That's correct, for each state.
40
41 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. That's probably something we need to
42 look into in the future. Thank you.
43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Ed, is your hand up?
45
46 **MR. SWINDELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to let
47 everyone know that I'm getting my second vaccine shot first
48 thing in the morning, and so I will be a little bit late coming

1 back. Thank you.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Well, that's great news, and so a good excuse.
4 All right. I am going to turn it back over to Dr. Frazer.

5
6 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on January 26, 2021.)

7
8 - - -

9
10 January 27, 2021

11
12 WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

13
14 - - -

15
16 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
17 Management Council reconvened via webinar on Wednesday morning,
18 January 27, 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Martha
19 Guyas.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Since we're a little bit behind, to orient
22 everybody about what we're going to do for committee today,
23 we'll start with amberjack, as we were scheduled to do, and then
24 we're going to jump down to red grouper and cover that, and then
25 we'll go to the yellowtail assessment, and then we'll go to the
26 white paper on sector separation and then cover remaining items
27 from the SSC report and any other business that we have.

28
29 We'll try to get through as much of this as we can, but we know
30 how things go sometimes, and so there may be some things that
31 get left behind, unfortunately, but we'll do our best. I guess
32 let's start with the action guide for AJ, and then I think we'll
33 turn it over to Dr. Powers, and so I don't know who wants to run
34 through this for us. Maybe Ryan.

35
36 **REVIEW SEDAR 70 - GULF OF MEXICO GREATER AMBERJACK STOCK**
37 **ASSESSMENT**

38
39 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure. Dr. Powers is going to summarize the SEDAR
40 70 stock assessment for you guys, as it was presented to the
41 SSC, as well as the SSC's deliberations and review of the
42 projections and their recommendations. SEDAR 70 transitions
43 quota monitoring for greater amberjack from the Coastal
44 Household Telephone Survey to the Fishing Effort Survey, and so
45 you guys will hear us summarize the findings of the council's
46 Something's Fishy tool, and Emily will take care of that, and
47 provided as background are the stock assessment executive
48 summary and the one-page hot sheet for greater amberjack.

1
2 You guys should review the information and consider directing
3 staff to start a plan amendment for a rebuilding plan, because
4 amberjack are still overfished and undergoing overfishing.
5 Madam Chair.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. On that positive note, I guess
8 let's invite Dr. Powers to speak.

9
10 **DR. POWERS:** Thank you. Good morning.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Good morning.

13
14 **SSC RECOMMENDATIONS**

15
16 **DR. POWERS:** If you'll bring up that presentation for the
17 amberjack, this presentation is largely what is in the executive
18 summary, and so that's something else you can refer to. The
19 next slide, this is, again, a quick summary just of results, and
20 we'll return to this slide later on, but, as indicated before,
21 the stock is still considered overfished and undergoing
22 overfishing, and the details of the reference points of the
23 current benchmarks are presented there.

24
25 Just a little background, in terms of the landings of both
26 recreational and commercial, and, again, these are in FES
27 numbers, and, largely, it's a recreational catch, as indicated
28 there, historically, and currently, and the scales of those are
29 the same, and so you can see there that most of the catch is
30 recreational. Most of it, or almost all of it, is
31 charter/private, and very little headboat. There is commercial,
32 both handline and longline, but, again, the scale is fairly
33 small.

34
35 In terms of discards, again, the discards are almost all
36 recreational, and, again, the scales of those are in discards of
37 millions of pounds of whole weight, and, in the two graphs, the
38 vertical scales are the same, and so you can see there that
39 there are substantial discards, and they are recreational.

40
41 This is the crux of the analysis that has been done in the stock
42 assessment, and the upper slide is the spawning stock biomass,
43 expressed relative to the SSB at 30 percent SPR, and you can see
44 there that, according to the analysis, this has been below that
45 level since about 1980, and below the MSST level, the threshold,
46 since about 1990. Conversely, the recruitment has bounced
47 around, at a relatively low level over that same time period,
48 since about 1980, and you can see the scale there.

1
2 If you translate this into the diagram on the left, what you're
3 indicating there, from the assessment, is the transition over
4 the years from the green area of not overfished and not
5 overfishing to the red area, where it's currently been for,
6 according to the assessment, for a long time, and, again, this
7 is reiterated by the picture on the right, which is just a
8 restating of what was said previously.

9
10 One of the things that immediately comes to mind is, from an
11 assessment standpoint, the SSC reviewed the assessment, and, as
12 we'll get into later, they found no problem with the assessment
13 itself, but clearly there is some lack of knowledge about what
14 is happening with the stock, because, as you can see there,
15 whatever management has taken place over the years, the stock
16 has not been responsive to the reductions in catch and
17 limitations in catch and so on. That is a concern both to the
18 analysts and to the SSC.

19
20 If you go to the next slide, again, this is just the
21 conclusions, based on that, that it is overfished and
22 overfishing, and, from that, the SSC made the following
23 recommendations in the next slide.

24
25 This is just reading the motion, but the SSC determined that the
26 SEDAR 70 operational assessment represents the best scientific
27 information available and that the assessment results and the
28 stock status is overfished and undergoing overfishing. The
29 motion carried sixteen to eight.

30
31 Now, the reason that I mention this sixteen to eight is you're
32 basically seeing there that there's about a third of the people
33 -- There is differences of opinion about how to interpret this,
34 and, again, the -- This was not a question of the analysis, per
35 se, and the -- Nobody on the SSC indicated that they would do
36 anything differently, in terms of the analysis, and, in fact,
37 they were very supportive of the analysis, per se, but there is
38 clearly a lack of understanding of exactly what's going on with
39 the assessment.

40
41 I think, in terms of the people that voted no, some of the
42 rationale that they picked is the issues about the historical
43 recreational catch and the effect that that has on the
44 interpretation of the trend in abundance since then and also
45 some newer information, in terms of the amount of stock that is
46 associated with oil rigs that has been recently reported by
47 other studies, and so there is clearly a difference of opinion
48 about where we stand.

1
2 I think, from those that voted positive for this, I think they -
3 - Certainly I am not -- Well, I can't vouch for everybody's
4 opinion, but, in terms of my own opinion, basically what we're
5 saying here is that the analysis and the information that we
6 have at this time doesn't suggest that we should change from our
7 previous sort of -- Previous conclusions about the stock being
8 overfished and undergoing overfishing, but, again, clearly there
9 is some second-guessing about where we really stand in terms of
10 this, in terms of abundance and productivity.

11
12 There were a number of projections done in order to move toward
13 the OFL and the ABC, and the SSC actually asked for some
14 additional projections to be done to be more in line with what
15 the perceptions about future recruitment might be over this, and
16 recall that, in terms of what we define as OFL, and that's, of
17 course, using the FMSY, or FMSY surrogate, and then the ABC is
18 defined by F rebuild, which is the council objective, is to
19 rebuild the spawning stock biomass to the SSB MSY proxy by the
20 year 2027.

21
22 That F rebuild is shown there in the dotted line, whereas the
23 OFL essentially is the solid line, and you can see it there,
24 with the catch levels on the left and the spawning stock biomass
25 levels on the right.

26
27 Based on those projections, the SSC looked at the projections
28 and honed-in on the projection parameters that were most
29 appropriate for this and then made the following motion and
30 recommendation, and that motion and recommendation is that the
31 OFL and ABCs are as in the table there and are only expressed
32 for the years 2022 through 2024. It was felt that projections
33 beyond that point were past the point where the SSC was
34 comfortable making recommendations, and so that is essentially
35 the OFL and ABC recommendations of the SSC. Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Are there any questions for Dr. Powers?
38 Leann.

39
40 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, I'm glad you can see my hand, because I
41 can't make camera work, for some reason, but, anyway, my
42 computer did some sort of update, and everything looks
43 different, but so I had a question for Dr. Powers.

44
45 If you will go to Slide 5 on your presentation, or staff would,
46 I was just looking at this biomass, the top graph there, and I
47 can see where it's going down, down, down since the 1950s, and
48 it bottoms out about the time that -- Well, about the time that,

1 at least in this assessment, we start to show commercial and
2 recreational landings, and so, if the commercial and
3 recreational landings start in earnest around the 1980s and
4 1990s, what was driving that biomass down prior to that, all the
5 way back to the 1950s?

6
7 **DR. POWERS:** There were some projected catches, or not
8 projected, but estimated catches, but you will see there that
9 the line is kind of smooth as you go back in time, and that's
10 basically because those catches are not individual yearly
11 catches. They are an estimate of a general trend of catches,
12 and that was why I mentioned before about the perception of what
13 those catches were historically has affected a number of the SSC
14 members' interpretations of, again, how to interpret these sorts
15 of analyses.

16
17 Those interpretations of what the catches might have been back
18 then, at this point, I don't think anybody on the SSC was really
19 suggesting an alternative, but, nevertheless, it's suggesting
20 uncertainty, and that's kind of driving what productivity is
21 actually available for the stock and why the stock has not been
22 responsive over the last twenty or thirty years or so.

23
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** A follow-up, if I may, Madam Chair?

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

27
28 **MS. BOSARGE:** So what do you mean when you say it affects the
29 productivity? Are you saying, in layman's terms, that it wants
30 us to try and get back to those levels that it was in the 1950s
31 and 1960s, or does it have more to do with spawning potential?

32
33 **DR. POWERS:** If you just look at this graph, and look at the
34 left-hand side of the upper graph, there's the gray area, or
35 whatever that color is, and the line in the middle there. What
36 if that line was toward the bottom there? That would imply that
37 that decline is a lot less than either the middle or at the top,
38 and less of a decline means less productivity, and so where you
39 put that horizontal line, that 1.0, that is affected by how
40 quickly that decline occurs, and this is true of any stock
41 assessment, but, like I said, in this case, the interpretation
42 of the model is as given there, but, conversely, the management
43 and the actual observations since then -- Again, the stock has
44 not been responsive to management actions, and we are concerned
45 about that.

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

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** John. Dr. Froeschke.

2
3 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just as a follow-up, assuming that we're going
4 to start working on a management document to implement the
5 changes in catch levels based on the stock assessment, given
6 that this assessment would transition from CHTS to FES,
7 presumably that could change the perception of historical
8 landings relative to the commercial and recreational sectors,
9 and so, tentatively, our plan would be to develop a series of
10 historical landings for all the sectors and look at the
11 historical methods and things from the allocation and, at that
12 time, bring back some draft options for reallocating the stock,
13 and, as part of that, we would like to ask the SSC to run new
14 projections at various allocation scenarios, to get
15 corresponding OFL and ABC recommendations from the SSC at these
16 allocations, at a subsequent SSC meeting.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, John. I am looking for
19 more hands, if there's anybody. It does not look like it.
20 Okay, and so I'm going to take that as a sign that we are ready
21 to go through the Something's Fishy.

22
23 **SOMETHING'S FISHY FOR GREATER AMBERJACK**

24
25 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay, and so we'll get that pulled up, and then
26 I will be happy to share that with you. Okay. Just as Bernie
27 as getting this pulled up, a quick reminder, and I'm sure you
28 guys know this by now, but our Something's Fishy tool is used to
29 gather information on fish stocks from active fishermen on
30 trends and unusual occurrences that scientists and managers
31 might not have observed.

32
33 For this particular tool, we gathered responses from April 26
34 through May 26 of 2020. We always gather responses for about a
35 month, and we did generate an email, a report, to the stock
36 assessment scientists in June of 2020, and we've also given this
37 same report to the council's SSC, and I believe the Reef Fish
38 Advisory Panel as well.

39
40 We got sixty-four responses to this tool, and those respondents
41 self-identified with their sector, and they were not limited to
42 a singular response, and so some of them might have responded
43 that they were commercial and for-hire, which is why you'll see
44 a sample size of sixty-nine, which is greater than the number of
45 responses that we got. You can also see that we had a majority
46 of recreational respondents to this tool.

47
48 We analyzed the comments in two ways here. First, we analyzed

1 overall response sentiments, but then we also, as you'll see in
2 the next slide, analyzed response sentiment of abundance-related
3 comments, and so there's a little bit of a nuanced difference
4 between the overall comment sentiment and then the comments that
5 were abundance related.

6
7 Regarding the overall response sentiment, we did the analysis in
8 two ways. First, we did manual analysis, where two analysts
9 classified if the comment was positive, negative, or neutral,
10 and then those two analysts rectified any differences they had,
11 and then we also ran automated analysis using our statistical
12 software.

13
14 Based on the manual sentiment analysis, we see that a majority
15 of respondents reported a positive or neutral sentiment in their
16 overall comments. For the automated sentiment analysis, we do
17 see a majority of respondents supporting a positive sentiment or
18 a negative sentiment, and so there was less neutral comments
19 that were identified through the automated analysis, and, again,
20 this was for the overall comments.

21
22 Then we teased out the comments that were determined to be
23 related to abundance, and we do see a little bit of a shift
24 here. With the abundance-related comments, we found that
25 removing the comments that were not related to abundance
26 actually reduced the proportion of neutral comments that were
27 found through manual analysis. Through automated analysis, we
28 noticed that removing the comments that were not related to
29 abundance didn't really change the proportion significantly of
30 positive, negative, and neutral comments.

31
32 Next, we did an analysis of the response sentiment by sector,
33 and, here, you can see sort of the proportion of positive,
34 negative, and neutral comments that were reported by commercial,
35 for-hire, and private sectors. What you will notice is the
36 proportion of positive comments reported was significantly
37 higher for the private sector responses than it was for the
38 commercial and for-hire sectors.

39
40 We also teased out the number of comments that we got per
41 location, and what you will notice here is that most of our
42 responses were gathered off of central Florida and the Panhandle
43 and that there were a few areas in the western Gulf, and also in
44 the Florida Keys, that only received one response, and so that
45 makes it kind of hard for us to do analysis by location.
46 However, on the next slide, we did perform the analysis by
47 location, but what I would do is sort of take the southern
48 Florida and sort of western Texas responses with a grain of

1 salt, I guess. You can see how many responses we got in each
2 location, and that's teased out, and the numbers are really
3 small, but just keep in mind, as you're looking at this, that we
4 had few responses in sort of the extreme ends of the Gulf here.

5
6 Respondents were allowed to report observation in more than one
7 grid location, and so you'll see we do have a larger sample size
8 here, and we had ninety-four reported responses across the
9 different areas. One thing that you might also notice is, with
10 that concentration in sort of the central Panhandle of Florida,
11 there was a greater proportion of neutral comments that were
12 recognized there.

13
14 The automated analysis is also able to provide us with a list of
15 words that contributed most to the sentiments, and so here you
16 can see that some of the most frequently used words could
17 indicate that, potentially, anglers that are having negative
18 perceptions of the stock are seeing smaller fish and that
19 they're actually dissatisfied with the size limit, and that's
20 sort of just based on seeing the words "smaller", "limits",
21 "issue", "unusual problem", and "decreased".

22
23 Also, while we perform that manual analysis, we tease out any
24 sort of thematic things that we continuously hear. What we did
25 notice out of that manual analysis is that we noticed that a
26 majority of the neutral comments indicated that greater
27 amberjack are prolific, but are critical of management, and so,
28 in that case, the comments would be considered neutral, because
29 they indicated maybe a positive trend in abundance, but that was
30 negated by a negative impression of regulations, and that's why
31 we did that separate analysis of the abundance-related comments
32 versus just sort of the overall comment sentiment.

33
34 We also noticed that some of the comments classified as neutral
35 indicated that amberjack were so abundant that it was an
36 ecological problem or it was a nuisance, and so, in that case,
37 we had the positive sentiment of, yay, there's tons of
38 amberjack, and that was sort of combated by the negative
39 sentiment of it's going to cause harm to the ecosystem.

40
41 Then, finally, through manual analysis, we saw that most of the
42 responses from the western Gulf were classified as positive,
43 while responses from the eastern Gulf were more likely to be
44 neutral or negative, and that's sort of an important thing, I
45 think, to think about with this species. With that, that
46 concludes our overview of the Something's Fishy tool.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Emily. I'll give folks a

1 couple of minutes to raise their hands. Leann.
2

3 **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**
4

5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, ma'am. Emily, I like that slide where you
6 busted out the comments into private, for-hire, and commercial.
7 Would you go back to that one, because I wanted to ask you a
8 question about it. I'm going to test your memory skills.
9

10 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Don't quiz me too hard here.
11

12 **MS. BOSARGE:** It's early, right? So, on the private side, it is
13 strange to me that -- On most of them, it's the neutral and
14 negative that seem to be the preponderance of the results for
15 commercial and for-hire, but, on private, there's this really
16 big positive bar, and I was wondering -- I am trying to think
17 about this from an abundance standpoint, and do you think that -
18 - If you remember the comments, were most of the private angling
19 positive comments relative to abundance, or what was driving
20 that positive sentiment with them, and I'm asking because, to
21 me, in my time on the council, the difference that you see
22 sometimes between commercial and recreational, or for-hire and
23 private rec, the sentiment can actually be very informative as
24 to what may be happening with the stock and what may be glooming
25 in the future, and so any advice or words of wisdom you have
26 would be nice.
27

28 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** It's a good question, and I definitely looked
29 over this a little bit, because I did see that there was a
30 pretty marked difference between the private responses and the
31 for-hire commercial responses, and so that green line that is
32 indicating positive comments -- This is actually based on
33 overall comment sentiment, which is important to know when
34 you're looking at it, rather than just the abundance related
35 comments, but the primary driver of that large positive
36 perception, or comment sentiment, in the private category was
37 definitely based on positive perception of abundance.
38

39 Similarly, that huge bar of neutral comments in the private
40 sector was mostly comments that were saying abundance is awesome
41 and management is not, right, and so that would cause the
42 overall comment sentiment to be neutral, and so I think,
43 generally, the private anglers were overwhelmingly noticing a
44 positive abundance in the stock itself.
45

46 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. Thank you. That's interesting, and we saw
47 that same trend with red grouper back in 2013, 2014, 2015,
48 something like that, where the private sector was saying, no,

1 everything is pretty positive out there, and the other two
2 sectors, or maybe just commercial, and I don't remember, was
3 saying no it's not, and so I don't know. It's interesting.
4 Thank you. I really enjoyed the presentation.

5

6 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Of course.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Andy.

9

10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks. I noted the same thing as Leann was
11 pointing out, and, in looking at a couple of the geographic
12 slides that were presented, I think there might be some
13 geographic differences that are showing up, and, given that
14 private anglers overwhelmingly responded to the survey relative
15 to other sectors, it seems like Louisiana, in particular,
16 anglers have a much more positive perception of the greater
17 amberjack stock than other areas, and it could explain why we're
18 seeing at least a lot of positive responses for private anglers
19 from that geographic area.

20

21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Andy. Any other questions
22 or comments for Emily? I think it's really helpful when we can
23 go through this information when we're looking at the
24 assessment, and so I appreciate it. Okay. I'm not seeing any
25 more hands.

26

27 There's a few other documents in here for AJ, but they're all
28 background documents, and so I think we've made it to the point
29 here, in this item, where we need to think about what we want to
30 do, and we have, unfortunately, another negative assessment for
31 amberjack, overfished and undergoing overfishing, and so I think
32 staff was looking for direction on whether to start a plan
33 amendment to start another rebuilding plan for this fishery, and
34 so I think we would need a motion to do that, if that's where
35 the committee is wanting to go with this.

36

37 We will at least need to make some adjustments to quotas, and
38 John also brought up that we probably need to look at
39 allocations, given the FES data in the assessment, and we may
40 need some other management changes, and I'm not sure, based on
41 how much things need to be cut, but that would be up to the
42 committee to decide. Andy.

43

44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Martha. **I will make a motion that the**
45 **council begin work on an amendment to establish a rebuilding**
46 **plan, or update the rebuilding plan, for greater amberjack and**
47 **revise annual catch limits and overfishing limits.**

48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. We can work on an amendment to update
2 the rebuilding plan for greater amberjack and revise annual
3 catch limits and OFLs. We've got it up there, I think, more or
4 less. If that works for staff, it works for me. Is there a
5 second to this motion?
6

7 **MS. BOGGS:** I will be happy to second.
8

9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Susan. Let me read the motion
10 that's on the board. **To direct staff to update the rebuilding**
11 **plan for greater amberjack and revise the annual catch limits**
12 **and overfishing limits.** Susan, I see your hand is up. Go
13 ahead.
14

15 **MS. BOGGS:** Right, and so, I mean, I don't mind seconding this
16 motion. I do think we need to do something for amberjack, but I
17 just was thinking about Emily's presentation, and what I'm
18 seeing and what I'm hearing are, I mean, really two different
19 things, because I can at least say, from the Alabama Gulf coast,
20 everyone is telling me that amberjack are in trouble and they
21 need help, and so I guess it's good that there's some positives
22 out there, but I know, here off the coast of Alabama, it is an
23 issue. Thank you.
24

25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Susan. **Can we delete the "s" off of**
26 **overfishing limits, because we just have one for this fishery,**
27 **just real quick?** Thanks. John Sanchez.
28

29 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question. I
30 think we raised the size limit, and when was that? Was it 2017?
31 So my question is when will we see some positive biological
32 effects from that size limit increase? While we're at it, it
33 seems like the for-hire and the commercial have been seeing this
34 steady decline over time, and I am thinking now that there's
35 more involvement in certain areas, recreationally, and they are
36 starting to see the problem, but I think that trend, downward
37 trend, we've been hearing about it for quite some time from
38 commercial and charter. Thank you.
39

40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, John. Does anybody know, off the top
41 of their head, when that size limit change went into effect? I
42 know we've made a number of changes in recent years that I
43 assume are not captured in this assessment, and I know the
44 season shift that we did is not, and so was it 2017? Dr.
45 Simmons.
46

47 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was
48 implemented on January 4, 2016. The minimum size limit change

1 was to thirty-four inches fork length for the recs.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay, and so this assessment is data through
4 2018, and so a couple of years of data in there, but maybe not
5 enough to really see the effect of that. Okay. Thanks, John,
6 for putting that out. Mara.

7
8 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. I guess I'm going to ask Andy. When we
9 say, "revise annual catch limits", I am going to read that very
10 broadly to include looking at the allocation, as suggested by
11 the data in the assessment, but I guess I wanted to confirm
12 that, and, if it's not, I would suggest adding it, if you would
13 be more specific.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Andy, to that point?

16
17 **MR. STRELCHECK:** It probably would be beneficial to be more
18 specific to consider revising sector allocations.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay, and so let's see if we can work that in
21 there. **It would be revise annual catch limits, the sector**
22 **allocations and the overfishing limit.** Susan, are you okay with
23 that change, since you're the seconder?

24
25 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, ma'am, I am. Thank you.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you. All right. Ryan, did you want to
28 jump in?

29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure, Madam Chair. Thanks. Just in the interest
31 of being explicit, you guys might consider saying revise the
32 OFL, ABC, ACLs, and ACTs, since all of those are in use here,
33 and then the bit about sector allocations, and, beyond that, as
34 it pertains to sector allocations, the projections that you saw
35 and that the SSC reviewed and recommended to you are based on
36 the current sector allocations that are 73 percent recreational
37 and 27 percent commercial. If those sector allocations are
38 revised, then the projections will also have to be updated, and
39 so that will change the limits, somewhat, that you guys saw.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Ryan, do you think we should make that
42 request now, or would it be better to get started on this
43 document and flesh out what those changes might look like before
44 going back to the SSC?

45
46 **MR. RINDONE:** I think it might be useful to see what those
47 changes are before you guys start directing additional work to
48 the Science Center and the SSC. That way, we can try and hone-

1 in on what you guys are most interested in having them provide
2 feedback to you on.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. That makes sense to me. Andy, do you
5 want to further flesh out this motion, based on Ryan's
6 suggestions?
7
8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** We can add to revise annual catch limits,
9 annual catch targets, and then delete, at the end, the
10 "overfishing limit".
11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Then I think it's "and sector
13 allocations", instead of "from".
14
15 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes.
16
17 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** There you go. That works. Let me read it
18 again. Now we're at to direct staff to update the rebuilding
19 plan for greater amberjack and revise the OFL, ABC, ACLs, and
20 ACTs and evaluate sector allocations. Okay. Susan, I assume
21 you're good with that.
22
23 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, ma'am. Thank you.
24
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I know we've got a few more hands. Next
26 is J.D.
27
28 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, ma'am. Thank you. I have two questions, one
29 for Clay and maybe one for Andy. The first question is, with
30 the stock assessment, can we pinpoint where the overfishing is
31 occurring, and, if so, for Andy, can the rebuilding plan be
32 pinpointed as well?
33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Clay.
35
36 **DR. PORCH:** To the first question, when you say where the
37 overfishing is occurring, are you speaking spatially or by
38 sector?
39
40 **MR. DUGAS:** Clay, not by sector, but I'm talking about location
41 in the Gulf, like the western Gulf or the eastern Gulf or
42 southern Gulf. That's what I'm --
43
44 **DR. PORCH:** The way the assessment is structured is Gulf-wide,
45 but we could look at where the catches are concentrated and kind
46 of come up with a fractional F by region, fractional fishing
47 mortality rate by region, but we did not do that in the
48 assessment, and it is Gulf-wide.

1
2 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, and so what I'm getting at for an example
3 is, if one area is not being overfished, can we maybe work to
4 not penalize those fishermen, and I guess that's what I'm
5 getting at.

6
7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Madam Chair, can I respond?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

10
11 **MR. STRELCHECK:** J.D., when you were talking about some sort of
12 regional management approach, like we've applied to red snapper,
13 to a certain degree, the assessment, as Clay points out, is a
14 Gulf-wide assessment, and so it's looking at fishing mortality
15 throughout the entire Gulf, and there is, it sounds like, ways
16 that Clay and team could possibly tease out kind of where there
17 are some differences in mortality across the Gulf.

18
19 I don't know if, scientifically, it would be defensible to look
20 at regional management of amberjack, given the migratory nature
21 of the species and movement throughout the Gulf, and so that
22 would be something that I would want the Science Center and
23 others who are experts on amberjack to weigh in on, and
24 certainly, if it is possible, it's something the council could
25 consider, obviously. If it's not, or not recommended from a
26 scientific standpoint, because of movement throughout the Gulf,
27 then we would need measures that are Gulf-wide.

28
29 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, guys.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Andy. Thanks, J.D. Next,
32 I have Leann.

33
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** I was just going to raise the idea of, again, you
35 have a stock that's overfished and undergoing overfishing, and
36 it sounds like the amendment that we're going to start is
37 getting deeper by the second, and I really think that, at some
38 point, we have to evaluate the possibility of splitting some of
39 these documents into two, where we can get these catch
40 recommendations on the books and then flesh out the rest.

41
42 I mean, I feel like we're going to have some of these documents
43 that go on for years before we actually implement the new catch
44 recommendations, because we're going to be going back and forth
45 on allocations, which we bicker about for forever, or, in this
46 case, if you're going to some of those regional-type things,
47 that, obviously, is a lot to flesh out, and I'm not speaking
48 badly of that, but I'm just saying, from a time perspective, I

1 think, at some point, we have to make a decision on when we want
2 those catch recommendations implemented and how to go about
3 getting that done in a timely manner.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Dale.

6

7 **MR. DIAZ:** Leann just basically said what I was going to say. I
8 just wonder if we wouldn't be better off to do two documents,
9 one to just implement the catch advice and the other document to
10 tackle everything else.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dale. Susan.

13

14 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to clarify,
15 and I apologize, but these numbers that we're seeing are FES,
16 correct, from the report we just received from the SSC?

17

18 **MR. RINDONE:** Correct.

19

20 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay. Thank you. I am happy to do -- Of course,
21 Andy made the motion, but Dale and Leann bring up some good
22 points, and I'm certainly happy, as the seconder, to divide this
23 document up, but that would be up to Andy. Thank you.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let me keep moving through the list, but, Andy,
26 did you want to jump in on that?

27

28 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and I guess, specific to that comment, I
29 mean, I'm open to it, but I would like to have staff weigh-in on
30 thoughts about efficiency in dividing the document versus a
31 single document.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Carrie or John or Ryan?

34

35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I will give it a go here. My concern is that
36 the sector allocations may affect the OFL and ABC catch level
37 recommendations, and so, if you were to implement the catch
38 level recommendations on the current allocations and then change
39 the allocations later, I'm not sure -- I think you would require
40 additional catch level changes at that time, and so I could see
41 where there would be efficiency, for example, if you were
42 considering changing it to the size limit or the seasons or
43 something, to do that separately, but, based on how we've done
44 red grouper and the rationale for doing those simultaneously, it
45 seems the same in the case with the amberjack.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, John. John Sanchez.

48

1 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you. I just wanted to make that
2 observation, that, for a fleeting moment, I thought we were
3 going to proceed with a plan, a document, that was devoid of
4 sector allocations, but I guess not. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara.

7
8 **MS. LEVY:** I think we've talked about this before, and the
9 problem is that the assessment is using FES numbers, and the
10 catch levels that come out of it are going to be FES and
11 monitored in FES, which essentially results -- If you keep it
12 the same, the allocation is still a reallocation, because now
13 you're monitoring and you're giving the ACL to the rec sector in
14 a different currency, and so there has to be an acknowledgement
15 that not changing the allocation really is a change in the
16 allocation, because of the FES change.

17
18 Once we made that acknowledgement, you have to look at whether
19 that is appropriate, and it seem to me that the only way to look
20 at whether that's appropriate is to look at what the result is
21 and what might happen if you had other allocation scenarios, and
22 so that's the problem that I see with splitting out allocations
23 when you have a new assessment that is changing the recreational
24 data time series.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Mara. Leann, did you want
27 to respond to that?

28
29 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and so I think a recognition of that change -
30 - If you have two documents ongoing at the same time, one to
31 implement the catch levels that are now FES catch levels, or
32 reflective of FES, along with a supporting document, side-by-
33 side, albeit separate, which addresses allocations, and probably
34 it has some other items, bag limits and size limits, and it
35 depends on the species, then the recognition is there, but,
36 essentially, to me, it's recognizing the fact that you also have
37 overfishing occurring and that that, first and foremost, needs
38 to end by addressing the new catch level recommendations.

39
40 It seems, to me, that any document with allocation in it, if
41 it's just a Gulf allocation, that's probably going to be at
42 least a two-year document. If it's a Gulf and South Atlantic
43 allocation document, where it has to go back and forth, that's
44 going to be more than a two-year document, and we're seeing this
45 with red grouper. We have catch levels that came out -- Catch
46 level advice that came out of a stock assessment, and we're
47 about to get an interim assessment here pretty soon on red
48 grouper, and we still haven't implemented the old catch advice

1 out of the assessment, and I don't foresee us doing that anytime
2 soon with allocation in the document.

3
4 It's just a long, drawn-out, bitter battle, period. It always
5 is, and there's no way of getting around it, and, to me,
6 implementing the catch advice has to come first. You shouldn't
7 let that rock on for two or three years as you try and nail that
8 down.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. We will have
11 deadlines for making the rebuilding plan, and so I can see pros
12 and cons. If we put this all in one document, we're getting it
13 done in two years, because that's our deadline, or that's my
14 understanding at least from the MSA, but I'm going to let Mara
15 jump in, and then we'll go to Robin.

16
17 **MS. LEVY:** We can talk about the deadline, but it seems to me
18 that the prior changes to the rebuilding plan had it rebuilding
19 by I think 2027, and the catch levels that are implemented need
20 to be consistent with that, but we do need to address the
21 overfishing problem as soon as possible.

22
23 I guess my comment is a recognition is one thing, but then
24 you're also going to have to justify how this shift in
25 allocation, by essentially keeping the percentages the same, is
26 fair and equitable and all those other things under National
27 Standard 4, and, if you can come up with a reasonable
28 justification that meets the Magnuson Act standards, okay, but I
29 think it's going to be much more difficult to do that if you're
30 not looking at other options and you're just saying we're doing
31 it, and so I think those are things you need to consider, and I
32 understand that allocation is contentious, but it's something
33 that potentially needs to be addressed in a timely manner, and
34 the council motion is to proceed with it in a timely manner and
35 do what you can.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Mara. Robin.

38
39 **MR. RIECHERS:** I am kind of leaning towards supporting some of
40 the topics that Mara has brought up, in that, while this is
41 difficult, and while certainly the change in landings systems,
42 amongst all the species that we routinely manage, are going to
43 cause us this difficulty moving forward for the next couple of
44 years, we've just got to move forward as timely as we can,
45 because de facto allocations are real allocations, and so we
46 still have to address those as allocation changes in some way.

47
48 The other part to this, and just maybe to hopefully cut this

1 conversation maybe a little bit short, is I don't think the
2 start of this document changes, one way or the other, whether we
3 keep them together right now or not.

4
5 The beginning part of the document will have all the same stuff
6 in it, at least starting out, and so maybe we vote on this and
7 possibly address this issue somewhere down the road, if it
8 becomes clearer that there is some way to split them, but, right
9 now, the history and all the things that go into it are
10 basically the same document, starting out.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Let's go and vote on this. I
13 think we've made it through our list of names anyway. All
14 right. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Hearing none,**
15 **the motion carries.**

16
17 I think we've made it through amberjack, and so let's jump down
18 to the bottom of your paper agenda, if you've got it, and we're
19 going to move on into red grouper, and so let's start with the
20 action guide on that, just to orient ourselves, and I think it's
21 been a little bit since we've talked about this one, and I think
22 Dr. Freeman is going to take us through.

23
24 **PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT AMENDMENT 53: RED GROUPE ALLOCATIONS AND**
25 **ANNUAL CATCH LEVELS AND CATCH TARGETS**

26
27 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** For the action guide, I will be reviewing the
28 actions and alternatives and the public hearing draft. The
29 committee will discuss those and determine if any modifications
30 are needed, and then, if appropriate, the committee will select
31 preferred alternatives and direct staff to consider virtual
32 public hearings, and then the SSC representative will provide an
33 overview of their discussion on the recreational landings data.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Sounds good.

36
37 **DR. FREEMAN:** As a reminder of the purpose and need, the
38 purposes are to revise red grouper allocation between the
39 commercial and recreational sectors using BSIA and then to
40 modify the total and sector ACLs based on results of the recent
41 stock assessment and subsequent OFL and ABC recommendations from
42 the SSC.

43
44 The need is to use BSIA to establish Gulf red grouper sector
45 allocation and ACLs, ensuring that historical participation by
46 the recreation and commercial sectors are accurately reflected
47 by the sector ACLs and that the recreational ACL is consistent
48 with the data used to monitor recreational landings and trigger

1 accountability measures.

2
3 Some background on the document, again acknowledging that the
4 status quo sector allocations for red grouper are based on the
5 older and no longer used MRFSS data. The council had requested
6 that the SSC examine alternative sector allocation scenarios
7 considering the contemporary FES calibrated MRIP data.

8
9 The SSC reviewed those scenarios in January of 2020, and, after
10 affirming that SEDAR 61 represented BSIA, they recommended that
11 projections included in Alternatives 3 through 5 of Action 1
12 were scientifically valid estimates of OFL and ABC. The SSC had
13 previously recommended the OFL and ABC from Alternative 2 of
14 Action 1 at their September 2019 meeting.

15
16 Once I get through with the document, the SSC rep will discuss,
17 based on a council motion at the October meeting of 2020, the
18 SSC reviewed the recreational landings in the stock assessment
19 models and in the ACL monitoring dataset, and so that's the most
20 recent feedback from the SSC, and, like I said, I will let the
21 SSC rep discuss that once I finish the presentation.

22
23 This slide and the next, we don't need to spend much time on.
24 It's here simply just as a reminder that any allocation, or
25 reallocation, will need to be consistent with the Reef Fish FMP
26 objectives, which the council last modified at the October 2019
27 meeting, and so we can go through this slide and the next slide.

28
29 As well as a reminder that the council has been looking at the
30 allocation review triggers, and two review triggers were
31 previously selected by the council, time-based and public input,
32 and then, looking at the last bullet point as it relates to this
33 document, the council can initiate supplementary allocation
34 review at any time.

35
36 Before I go into the actions themselves, just as a reminder for
37 council members, the Action 1, as well as Action 2, no
38 preferreds have been selected yet, and, as a reminder, if this
39 is something that the council would like in place for 2022, the
40 window, in terms of getting that implemented, is getting a
41 little bit smaller, and so that's just something to keep in
42 mind.

43
44 With Action 1, which is to modify the sector allocations, OFL,
45 ABC, and ACLs for red grouper, Alternative 1 is no action, and
46 so it would retain the allocations for red grouper at 76 percent
47 commercial and 24 percent recreational, which was derived using
48 average landings with MRFSS data from 1986 through 2005.

1 However, Alternative 1 is not legally viable, because it would
2 not be based on the best scientific information available. In
3 addition, it would retain the current OFL and ABC, which are
4 values produced by the SEDAR 61 stock assessment and recommended
5 by the SSC.

6
7 For Alternative 2, the sector allocations, as they currently
8 stand, would be maintained at 76 percent commercial and 24
9 percent recreational. The OFL and ABC would be revised, as
10 recommended by the SSC, based on SEDAR 61, and then the stock
11 ACL would be set equal to the stock ABC.

12
13 For Alternative 3, the sector allocations between the
14 recreational and commercial sectors would be revised using
15 average landings with the FES-adjusted MRIP data. It would
16 maintain the same timeframe of 1986 through 2005, and that would
17 result in 59.3 percent for the commercial and 40.7 percent for
18 the recreational. The OFL and ABC would then be revised, as
19 recommended by the SSC, based on SEDAR 61, and, similar to
20 Alternative 2, the stock ACL would be set equal to the stock
21 ABC.

22
23 In Alternative 4, similar to Alternative 3, the sector
24 allocations would be revised based on MRIP-FES data. However,
25 we're using a different timeframe in this case, 1986 through
26 2009, and so that would be right before implementation of the
27 commercial grouper-tilefish IFQ.

28
29 The resulting allocations would be 60.5 percent for the
30 commercial and 39.5 percent for the recreational. Again, OFL
31 and ABC would be revised, as recommended by the SSC, based on
32 SEDAR 61, and then the stock ACL would be set equal to the stock
33 ABC.

34
35 For Alternative 5, similar to Alternatives 3 and 4, sector
36 allocations would be revised using MRIP-FES data, but, in this
37 case, using 1986 through 2018 average landings, which was the
38 longest timeframe currently available when the document was
39 started. The allocations that would result would be 59.7
40 percent commercial and 40.3 percent recreational. Again, OFL
41 and ABC would be revised, as recommended by the SSC based on
42 SEDAR 61, and then the stock ACL would be set equal to the stock
43 ABC.

44
45 If we go to the next slide, this is a table that shows the
46 resulting OFL, ABC, and total and sector ACLs for the five
47 alternatives, and I will pause there, to see if there any
48 comments or questions before I move forward to Action 2.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Any questions or comments? I will
3 give people a moment to put their hands up.
4
5 **DR. FREEMAN:** I can certainly answer any questions once I
6 finish, if there's additional questions for Action 1.
7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I'm not seeing any hands now, and so I
9 guess keep on moving for now.
10
11 **DR. FREEMAN:** Okay. Sounds good. We will go to Action 2, which
12 will modify the red grouper ACTs. Alternative 1 would be no
13 action, which would maintain the current buffer between ACL and
14 ACT for each sector. The commercial buffer would then be 5
15 percent, and the rec buffer would stay at 8 percent.
16
17 Alternative 2 applies the ACL/ACT control rule to revise the
18 buffer between ACL and ACT for each sector, and the resulting
19 buffers would be zero percent for commercial and 9 percent for
20 recreational.
21
22 Alternative 3 would maintain the current buffer between ACL and
23 ACT for the commercial sector, but then apply the ACL/ACT
24 control rule to revise the buffer between ACL and ACT for the
25 rec sector, and this would retain, again, the commercial buffer
26 of 5 percent and change the recreational buffer to 9 percent.
27
28 This shows the commercial and recreational ACTs when Action 1
29 alternatives are combined with the alternatives from Action 2.
30 Again, since Alternative 1 from Action 1 is not legally viable,
31 that's why there's a NA, as it pertains to Alternatives 2 and 3
32 for Action 2. These were predicted closure dates for each
33 recreational ACT currently in Amendment 53 generated from
34 predicted landings, and these were presented last year by NMFS.
35
36 Then the next steps, these, obviously, are contingent upon
37 council motions, and, if directed, could include the following.
38 SERO could send a Notice of Availability to be published, and
39 there's a forty-five-day clock on comments, and it takes a week
40 to publish after it's sent. Council staff could also schedule
41 and hold public hearing meetings, and then, as an additional
42 comment, it is currently on the agenda for the Reef Fish AP
43 meeting next month, and the Reef Fish AP did review it in
44 October of last year, and so, next month, when it goes back to
45 the Reef Fish AP, it would be sort of a status update, to notify
46 the AP members of where the document currently stands. That is
47 the last slide, and, Madam Chair, would you like for the SSC
48 representative to cover their discussion of the document before

1 questions, or how would you like to handle that?
2

3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let's do that, because I don't see any hands up
4 just yet, and, as we get into questions, we may end up talking
5 about alternatives and how to move forward here, and so I think
6 it would be helpful to hear what Dr. Powers has to say before
7 that.
8

9 **DR. FREEMAN:** Okay. Sounds perfect.
10

11 **DR. POWERS:** Okay. Thank you. The SSC was asked to review a
12 little bit about some perceived discrepancies between the
13 assessment and assessment-level catches and some of the
14 documentation of the catches, particularly the recreational
15 catches.
16

17 Dr. Sagarese of the Southeast Center presented this information,
18 and, basically, the crux of the situation, and this is a common
19 thing with assessments all around the world, essentially, is
20 that the way that the assessments work is you take the
21 information as measured. In the case of the recreational
22 catches, the basic estimate is in numbers. In the case of the
23 commercial catches, the basic estimate is in pounds.
24

25 For commercial, you take the pounds and you convert to numbers
26 by having length frequency, length and weight frequencies.
27 Conversely, for the recreational, you convert them to pounds by
28 size frequencies as well. So there's always this question of
29 converting from one to another, and the assessment has to do
30 both. It has to convert the commercial to numbers, and it has
31 to convert the recreational to weight, and that's been done
32 through this analysis.
33

34 Secondly, the stock assessment takes the catch estimates, as
35 they are measured, including the variation in those estimates,
36 and they don't assume that the estimates are measured perfectly.
37 It is scientifically appropriate to include a variation into the
38 models, and so, therefore, when you plug it into the model, that
39 model is trying to balance out the variation in the catches with
40 the variation in the indices of abundance and the variation in
41 the growth rates and the variation in the size frequencies and
42 so on.
43

44 By doing that, you get this balance, it's called, which is
45 technically called a maximum likelihood estimation, and so,
46 therefore, that estimate can be based on an estimated catch that
47 is different than the point estimate that was brought into the
48 model, because the estimated catch that comes out of the

1 assessment is adjusting for all of those other things that are
2 going on, and so there's always going to be a bit of differences
3 there, and, in particular, in this case, where the general
4 variation of the recreational data, I believe, was -- It's
5 listed there. It's 30 percent.

6
7 In other words, the recreational catches are being estimated
8 plus or minus 30 percent, where the commercial catches were
9 estimated plus or minus 15 percent, and so that balance that
10 gets plugged into the assessment model means that there is some
11 leeway for the model to adjust for this basic uncertainty about
12 what the overall catches are, and then the other thing is the
13 actual conversion, through size frequencies of the recreational
14 catch into pounds, and the FES monitoring system estimates -- It
15 obtains size frequencies in their survey process, so that they
16 can make those conversions, but sometimes those size frequencies
17 are limited, and there have been cases in the past, with other
18 assessments, that size frequencies might be supplemented if
19 there is additional information that should be included in the
20 model, and so, therefore, that conversion sometimes can be
21 different than what the FES system is, and, again, the FES
22 system is really geared more towards the estimation of numbers,
23 and so that is another area of differentiation that might occur.

24
25 To those of us involved in the assessment, this is not new, and
26 it's something that has always gone on through this process, and
27 so, therefore, we, the SSC, reiterated that the allocation and
28 the quota monitoring process needs to be fixed on what the
29 Regional Office uses through their monitoring and the base
30 estimates that come out of the FES system, because that is the
31 standard to monitor.

32
33 Obviously, from an assessment standpoint, there is some
34 balancing that goes on in the modeling, but, for management
35 purposes, what has been suggested there, through the Regional
36 Office monitoring procedures, that's really what needs to be
37 focused on, and so that's essentially the discussion that went
38 on with the SSC and our conclusions. Thank you.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dr. Powers. I'm going to
41 open it up to questions, both for Dr. Powers or on the document,
42 at this point. Leann.

43
44 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I was able to listen in to
45 part of that SSC discussion on the difference between the FES
46 landings on the ACL database and the landings that were
47 generated from the stock assessment, and it was very
48 informative, and I have to say that Skyler does a great job

1 every time she presents. She was the scientist that presented
2 to the SSC on this, and she really puts it in words and terms
3 that I can understand, and she actually dived into the numbers,
4 and it's not kind of vague statements, and she really puts it
5 down for us.

6
7 I learned a lot from her, and, in her presentation, she even
8 pointed towards working papers that would give even further
9 information, and so I did read through that, and what I got out
10 of the whole discussion, and reading the working papers, is
11 that, number one, yes, the model is functioning -- The
12 assessment model is functioning perfectly, the way it always
13 does, and the data that was put into it is similar to what goes
14 into any other stock assessment. The CVs, that variation that
15 Dr. Powers was talking about, all of that is standard, and
16 there's no differences there, and that's great. It's extremely
17 reassuring.

18
19 What seems to be driving these big differences between what we
20 see in historical FES landings versus what is generated from the
21 stock assessment is really being driven by the average weights
22 and the difference in the way MRIP calculates an average weight
23 versus what Dr. Powers was talking about, which is the age-
24 length key. I mean, the length-weight key in the stock
25 assessment.

26
27 That is something that I think we have to address, and,
28 honestly, I don't think there's anything that needs to be
29 addressed in the stock assessment. We need to figure out how
30 FES -- What assumptions and what rules are they using to
31 generate average weight, so that these two numbers are more in
32 line with each other?

33
34 When I read the working paper, it actually said that FES had
35 thought about moving towards a length-weight key, just like the
36 stock assessment does, but, for whatever reason, they did not,
37 and there were some hurdles, but the crux of the matter is, if
38 you have FES, using a methodology that generates an average
39 weight that's double, round about, and my back-of-the-envelope
40 calculate is double what is coming out of the stock assessment,
41 and that's going to cause a problem.

42
43 It causes problems in the historical landings, but it also
44 causes issues for current management. I mean, think about that.
45 For recreational fishermen, it's going to shorten their season,
46 in my personal opinion, and so, if the stock assessment says you
47 have a thousand fish that you could catch recreationally,
48 because it works in numbers of fish for recreational, and then

1 it converts that to a number of pounds.
2
3 Let's say, for ease of numbers, it uses a four-pound average
4 weight. So that's 4,000 pounds that it tells the recreational
5 sector that you can catch for that season, and so we come on
6 over here to the council side, and we say, all right, you can
7 catch 4,000 pounds, which should be about a thousand fish.
8 Well, MRIP goes out and starts doing its dockside sampling, and
9 then it has certain rules about, well, you have to have so many
10 samples before you can use that for an average weight
11 calculation, and certain strata and blah, blah, blah, and then
12 it uses this other method to fill in the holes.
13
14 You come up with an average weight that is twice, that's eight
15 pounds. Well, if you have got an eight-pound average weight,
16 you're not going to get to catch your thousand fish, because
17 you're going to hit that 4,000-pounds limit that you have a
18 whole lot quicker, and your season is going to be shortened,
19 versus what it probably should have been, all because of an
20 average weight calculation.
21
22 So I -- You know, I'm not sure how we delve into this FES
23 average weight and get a better handle on it, but I think we
24 have to, if not for the historical landings, at least for
25 current management and what its implications may be there, and I
26 was reminded that this actually came up in D.C., at a CCC
27 meeting, when I was Chairman, and so how many years ago was
28 that, that this came up there, and the question was asked by the
29 South Atlantic Council of what's the deal with these average
30 weights and why are they so much different.
31
32 It was a presentation from MRIP, and that's what the South
33 Atlantic asked, and the presenter, god bless his soul, and he
34 was just the messenger right, and he said, I can't answer that
35 question, and I'm sorry.
36
37 So I think it's time, and I think we need to get a presentation,
38 I guess, on how those average weights are calculated each year,
39 sample sizes, the percent standard error, something, so that we
40 can fine-tune that and make sure that we don't end up in that
41 kind of situation, where it's double from what's coming out of
42 the stock assessment and it causes issues for management, and
43 those are my back-of-the-envelope calculations, because I don't
44 have the data in front of me.
45
46 I think we've been given landings streams back in time, but
47 we've never had them actually presented and explained how they
48 came up with it, and all we had was a thirty-thousand-foot view

1 of we're going to back-calibrate, and we're going to take into
2 account this and that and blah, blah, blah, but the devil is in
3 the details, and the rubber hits the road when you look at an
4 actual species with actual numbers, and so that's where I'm at,
5 and I hope we can get some sort of presentation and take a
6 deeper dive into that in the future.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. I see Richard Cody
9 has his hand up. Richard, did you want to respond to that?

10
11 **DR. CODY:** Yes, if you wouldn't mind. Leann, thanks for your
12 comments on the differences in the methodology. The methodology
13 we use, and I can't get into the details here, but we would
14 probably be receptive to providing a presentation on the
15 methodology, and we also have documentation that shows what we
16 do, but it's a standard imputation methodology, and it's
17 commonly used in surveys.

18
19 There is a difference between what the Southeast Center
20 produces, in terms of their data, but they have additional data
21 available to them that allows them to change the weights, and
22 the issue is that we are using exclusively APAIS data when it
23 comes to length, that length-weight adjustment, and so the
24 imputation method works with the limitations of the survey
25 design that we have to come up with cell weights, we'll say, so
26 that we can come up with average weights that way, but we would
27 be happy to present this to you at some point, or to the council
28 at some point, if there's a desire for that.

29
30 **MS. BOSARGE:** Madam Chair, can I respond?

31
32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

33
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Richard, thank you for that, and sometimes I
35 think, Richard, you probably have a little voodoo doll of me at
36 home, and you probably stab it with a pin during these meetings,
37 because I give you hell, you know that, but you always answer
38 all my questions, and you never get an attitude with me, and you
39 keep coming back, and I love you for that.

40
41 I would love to see that presentation at some point in the
42 future, and if you could put as much hard data in the background
43 briefing documents as possible, sample sizes, how many cells
44 have zeroes that you had to make assumptions, how many samples
45 did you have to throw out because it didn't meet the minimum
46 thirty threshold or whatever you were using at that point, and
47 how did that thirty sample size, versus two sample size, versus
48 something in between, change over the years? Show me year-by-

1 year in the background documents, and I hope that I can get a
2 better handle on it, because I think that it's affecting
3 management at this point.

4
5 **DR. CODY:** If I can just add to that, the limitations -- I think
6 it's helpful for the council probably to know a little bit more
7 about the limitations of imputation, and so where you draw your
8 sample from, because, basically, you're pulling information from
9 adjacent cells, we'll call them, and using that to an estimation
10 domain, and so there are some limitations there. Generally, for
11 instance, if the nearest cell is in state waters, versus federal
12 waters, that could affect the average weight.

13
14 We try to inform the stock assessment process as best we can of
15 those nuances with the data, so that they can make adjustments
16 accordingly, but I would be happy to -- We can provide you with
17 the full documentation for the survey methodology and take it
18 from there, and so I'm receptive to a presentation.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Richard. John, I see your
21 hand, but I'm going to go back to Leann first, and so I'm
22 getting the sense that, if we want to proceed with some sort of
23 presentation, we need a motion. Leann, are you willing to
24 present a motion on this?

25
26 **MS. BOSARGE:** Sure. I will give it a stab, and, Martha, I'm
27 thinking out loud here. I mean, I want this presentation to
28 come to the council, because I want to see it, but it may have
29 to go to the SSC first, and so I'm just going to say a
30 presentation, and I won't say to the council or to the SSC, and
31 I will staff determine what they think is best.

32
33 **Request a presentation on the process for arriving at red**
34 **grouper -- Put "yearly" red grouper average weight via MRIP, and**
35 **I am not going to say FES or CHTS, because it's going to be**
36 **going backwards over a long period of time, and so it's going to**
37 **cover both.**

38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Well, I think weights come from APAIS, the in-
40 person survey.

41
42 **MS. BOSARGE:** Which is part of MRIP, and so yes. **So let's just**
43 **leave it generally MRIP. And include sample sizes for strata,**
44 **CVs, or I guess it would be PSEs, percent standard errors, PSEs,**
45 **and other relevant data on a yearly basis for each year, for**
46 **each year.**

47
48 In other words, I don't want just a -- I don't want an overall

1 presentation on how you get red grouper average weights. I need
2 to see it year-by-year, to understand what's been changing and
3 what's driving that doubling of the average weight, versus other
4 methodologies. I hope that covers it. If anybody has any
5 suggestions or questions, I'm open to that.

6

7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there a second for this motion?

8

9 **MR. DIAZ:** I will second it.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. It's seconded by Dale. John Walter,
12 you've had your hand up, but I'm sure you could probably speak
13 to this, and so go ahead.

14

15 **DR. WALTER:** Thanks. Good morning, everyone. One of the issues
16 has always been that we monitor, or at least the raw units for
17 the recreational fishery are in numbers, and that's how they are
18 input to the assessment. We can input the weights into the
19 assessment, and that would make the weights going into the
20 assessment and the weights going out very comparable, and that's
21 where I think we're probably going to go in the future, which
22 should help to reconcile what could be an apparent discrepancy,
23 depending on the mean weight that one assumes.

24

25 The other comment I will make is that the ACL is monitored in
26 the weight estimation methods that the Science Center uses, and
27 so I think that, probably, for the motion, the question is do
28 you want the MRIP weight estimation or the Science Center weight
29 estimation, and the two are slightly different, and probably
30 what you want is how the ACL is monitored. Thanks.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, thoughts on that?

33

34 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, I wanted the -- So I guess there's three
35 average weights, but I think we'll probably need both of them,
36 and I was going on the MRIP APAIS average weight, but you would
37 also need to present -- If that changes, then you probably need
38 to present on the other one that you just said, the Science
39 Center average weight I think you said, and so present both, but
40 I assume you're right though, that it would probably be the ACL
41 monitoring average weight that's the most important, but I want
42 to see how MRIP comes up with it. If MRIP is the basis, and
43 then that's slightly adjusted by the Science Center, I need to
44 understand how the basis is generated, which is the MRIP APAIS
45 one.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Andy.

48

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. A couple of things to add
2 to this. The Science Center does generate average weights that
3 differ from, or can differ from, what's produced by the MRIP
4 program, and that certainly has been a point of confusion over
5 time, and there's just different methodologies that pool
6 additional samples of fish when sample sizes are inadequate.

7
8 I would also want to note that this isn't just an MRIP versus
9 assessment issue, and you've got to keep in mind that, for the
10 species that are undergoing a stock assessment, that we're not
11 only using MRIP data, but we're also using headboat data as well
12 as data from the Texas survey and the LA Creel survey, and so
13 there's several different data sources that are input into the
14 assessment.

15
16 I think, as John points out, the main issue here is the modeling
17 itself is relying on numbers of fish input, which should exactly
18 match what's produced by all of those sampling programs,
19 including the MRIP program, and then producing a weight
20 estimation that might be different based on length-weight
21 formulas and how the model is being fit relative to our
22 computations, but I will look back, and I know we've discussed
23 this with the South Atlantic Council in particular, because they
24 raised similar concerns at one point, and, if I find our
25 presentation, I will at least share that with you for some
26 additional background, and it won't be specific to red grouper,
27 but it will at least give you some indication of the differences
28 in methodology used for the different programs.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Andy. I think that would be
31 helpful. Kevin, your hand is raised. Do you want to jump in?

32
33 **MR. ANSON:** Just a question either to Andy or to Dr. Walter
34 about -- Is that standard for all of the assessments or just
35 certain assessments, where the numbers of fish are input in at
36 the beginning of the model, numbers of fish and not weight of
37 fish?

38
39 **MR. STRELCHECK:** John, do you have an answer for that?

40
41 **DR. WALTER:** Usually, for the recreational, it's always input
42 initially in numbers, because that's the units that it's counted
43 in.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Do we have any other discussion on
46 this motion? Hopefully this discussion helps inform I think all
47 the things that we're kind of talking about here. **Is there any**
48 **opposition to this motion? Hearing none and seeing none, the**

1 **motion carries.** Let's take a break. John Walter, did you want
2 to jump in really quick?

3
4 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, if I could. I know that we've done a
5 presentation on this already to the SSC, and I believe it's
6 probably somewhere in the SSC materials archive, and so perhaps
7 that's a good place to start, to see if that does the job of
8 explaining it, and then, as we then come back to address this
9 motion, we could then determine if there's additional things
10 beyond what's in that original presentation, and so perhaps Ryan
11 can help us find that presentation, and hopefully so we can all
12 get a better understanding of this. Thanks.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. That sounds good. Thanks, John.
15 Thanks for pointing that out. Okay, and so let's take a break.
16 I will ask Tom how long. Fifteen minutes?

17
18 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and we'll come back at 10:55.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds good.

21
22 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

23
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** So we are still in red grouper, and it might be
25 a good time to think about where we want to go here, and so we
26 have a document in front of us, and Matt went through the
27 options for us, or I guess the actions and alternatives, and we
28 do not have any preferred alternatives in this document at this
29 time, and we're at the point where staff is looking for some
30 direction from us, so that they can figure out what are the next
31 steps.

32
33 We're at the point where we potentially could take this out to
34 public hearing, and so we're looking for direction on
35 preferreds, if we're going to take this out to public hearing,
36 and then, if we decide to do all of that, there's some Notice of
37 Availability stuff that will be published and public comment
38 periods that will start, and so we've got the document teed-up,
39 and so I'm going to see if there are any hands for anyone who
40 would like to offer motions to get us started on preferreds and
41 next steps, any of the above, for this document.

42
43 I think Dr. Freeman mentioned that, if we are going to get
44 modified catch levels in place in time for 2022, the window for
45 doing that is closing, and we probably need to get moving, and
46 so I'm looking for hands here. I guess, if there are no hands
47 in committee, I will bring some motions to Full Council. Andy.

48

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Not a recommendation for a preferred at this
2 point, but I would be interested in hearing from council staff
3 about timing, in terms of moving forward and when we would
4 expect to take final action on this document, as well as timing
5 of the updated interim analysis that is pending and how that may
6 or may not influence our decision on this amendment.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Dr. Freeman, do you want to take that?
9

10 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly. We are fairly ready with the document.
11 If the council were to select preferreds, I believe we would be
12 able to do public hearings via webinar prior to the April
13 council meeting, and so, in theory, and, again, this is all just
14 based on council direction, but the council could then, in
15 theory, take final action as early as the April council meeting,
16 potentially. Then, as far as the interim analysis, I believe
17 that is being looked at going to the SSC in May, and so that
18 would be after the April council meeting. I believe I answered
19 all the questions, but, if not, please let me know.
20

21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think so. Andy, is there anything
22 outstanding?
23

24 **MR. STRELCHECK:** The reason that I raised this is because of
25 timing considerations. We won't -- If we choose a preferred
26 alternative in Action 1 that reduces the commercial quota, we
27 won't be able to take back IFQ in the 2021 season, and so this
28 is really to affect the 2022 season and beyond.
29

30 I think, with our rulemaking process, if we waited until June to
31 take final action, we could still implement ACL changes prior to
32 the 2022 season that could incorporate the interim analysis and
33 updated information from that, rather than potentially the
34 council taking action on this and then having to follow it with
35 a secondary amendment shortly thereafter, and so I just raise
36 that from a timing standpoint. Obviously, it would depend on
37 when it goes to the SSC and how quickly staff could incorporate
38 any updates from that interim analysis that is approved by the
39 SSC for the June meeting.
40

41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks for bringing that up, Andy. It sounds
42 like, if we wanted to wait to incorporate the interim analysis
43 before going final, the earliest that would happen is June. I
44 think you said that may leave enough time for 2022, but we would
45 still need to get moving on this before then, I think, so that
46 we could have public hearings completed and all that, but I
47 don't know. Carrie, do you want to jump in here? Phil, I do
48 see your name as well, and I will get to you next.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Andy, I
3 know we've only briefly talked about this, but, from our staff
4 perspective, we feel like the council needs to take action on
5 the stock assessment and look at these modified potential
6 allocations, sector allocations, and then, if the council and
7 the SSC think they need to act upon the interim analysis, it
8 would follow that up with a framework action, hopefully that
9 could be done quickly, but there is quite a few limitations to
10 the 2020 data, I believe, in that interim analysis, and so I
11 don't even know if the SSC will suggest that we move forward
12 with that or not, and there's a lot of unknowns.

13
14 If the council does decide to do that, we would have to rewrite
15 this whole document, and I don't think that could be done in the
16 near future, and so, right now, we're suggesting that the
17 council try to move forward and take action on this amendment,
18 and then, if you choose to change the catch levels later on, we
19 would act upon that separately in a framework action. Thank
20 you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Carrie. I am going to go
23 to Phil next. Phil.

24
25 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Madam Chair. **In the spirit of what**
26 **Carrie just said, I would move to make Option 3 the preferred**
27 **option.**

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Let's put the motions board up. Is that
30 in Action 1, Phil?

31
32 **MR. DYSKOW:** I don't have that document in front of me right
33 now, but it's the one specific to allocation.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay, and so that's Action 1. Okay. The
36 motion is, in Action 1, select Alternative 3 as the preferred.
37 Okay. Is there a second to this motion?

38
39 **DR. STUNZ:** I will second that.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Greg. Now we're ready for
42 some discussion. Phil, if you have anything, I will let you go
43 first. Otherwise, I will look for some hands here.

44
45 **MR. DYSKOW:** Go ahead with other hands.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I am not seeing any hands up right now.
48 Just so that we're all clear, this is the alternative that uses

1 the same allocation years as the current situation, but just
2 applies the FES estimates, just so that's clear. Dale.

3
4 **MR. DIAZ:** I just want to make sure -- I've got a question for
5 Dr. Freeman, and so, all along, I've been hoping that we set
6 these allocations where they are as close to what they were
7 before FES ever came into play, where, ultimately, both
8 fisheries, recreational and commercial fisheries, have about the
9 same as what they had prior, and my question is for Dr. Freeman.
10 I believe I had asked you this before, but is this the
11 alternative that does that, Dr. Freeman?

12
13 **DR. FREEMAN:** Alternative 2 would actually maintain the same
14 sector allocations that are currently on the books, in terms of
15 the percentages. Alternatives 3 through 5, those percentages
16 are relatively close to one another, and we're talking 1
17 percent, roughly.

18
19 However, they are using the FES-MRIP data to set those sector
20 allocations, but, like I said, Alternative 2 is maintaining the
21 current sector allocation and then updating OFL and ABC, et
22 cetera, based on SEDAR 61, but just to note that Alternative 3
23 though does use the same time series that the original, or
24 current, allocation was set from, which is 1986 through 2005,
25 and so that was a long-winded answer, and so it's the same
26 years, but it's just using the updated data, the MRIP-FES data,
27 but using the same time series.

28
29 **MR. DIAZ:** In my mind, the Alternative 3 would be the closest to
30 where we were at, and so thank you, Dr. Freeman.

31
32 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dale, and thanks, Dr.
35 Freedom. I think you've got a new nickname. Just saying.

36
37 **DR. FREEMAN:** I will roll with it. I'm good with it.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I love it. Mara, you're up.

40
41 **MS. LEVY:** I was just saying that it would be helpful for folks
42 to look at Table 2.1.1 that shows what Alternative 1 is and with
43 respect to the recreational ACL, that MRIP-FES equivalent, and
44 then shows what the other alternatives do, and so you can see
45 more of a comparison, I guess, about what happens to the catch
46 limits based on the switch and how they compare to each other.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Mara. I think we've got

1 that up on the screen now. Leann.

2
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is going to be not
4 necessarily for a specific alternative, but just maybe -- (There
5 is a break in the audio.) -- 32 percent, and 68 being the
6 commercial, but, for that 32 percent sector, because they were
7 strapped, and it's not their fault, but they were strapped with
8 a voluntary data collection system that was inadequate and
9 inferior, and, for that reason, they were essentially fishing
10 off the radar for part of the time, and they far exceeded their
11 32 percent allocation.

12
13 We should have been exceeding our 68 percent too, because it was
14 a lot bigger stock out there, but we didn't get to exceed ours
15 and go tap that larger stock that was out there, and so what's
16 been happening, back to 1981, because that's what we
17 recalibrated back to, is, for almost four decades, is a de facto
18 allocation.

19
20 There was a bigger population out there that all sectors, based
21 on their allocation, should have been tapping, but we didn't let
22 the commercial sector tap it, because we manage them in a
23 different way that, unfortunately, has been historically more
24 accountable, with a data collection system that evolved more
25 quickly, was mandatory, and had a lot more enforcement teeth in
26 it than the evolution of the recreational data collection
27 system.

28
29 There has been a de facto reallocation for the last forty years
30 from commercial to recreational, and what we're doing now is
31 legitimizing that. Why didn't you let us get a shot at those
32 fish and then see what the historical landings in the fishery
33 were? The fish were there to be caught, and it was a lot bigger
34 population, and we didn't get a shot at it, because we have an
35 accountable system that doesn't let us fish off the radar, by
36 and large.

37
38 So now we're being punished for that, and the recreational
39 sector is going to get rewarded for an inferior data collection
40 system, and it makes me, as a commercial representative, say,
41 you know what, get rid of the VMS and get rid of the trip
42 tickets and get rid of the mandatory reporting, because that
43 holds us accountable, and there's no way for us to accidentally
44 fish off the radar and end up with more allocation, while the
45 other sector gets held to their 32 percent, year after year
46 after year.

47
48 So that's what is frustrating about this. That's the big

1 picture. There were more fish out there that we all should have
2 been accessing for the last forty years, and commercial wasn't
3 allowed to, and now you're going to put those allocations in
4 stone.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Susan.

7

8 **MS. BOGGS:** The only comment I have, and I don't have a lot of
9 heartburn over any of this, but I just thought that I would
10 mention -- I mean, to me, and I understand what Leann said, but,
11 to me, the Alternative 4 might be a little bit better, just
12 because it looks at a longer time series, but that's just my
13 two-cents' worth. Thank you.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Susan. Any other comments on this
16 right now? If not, let's go ahead and -- Andy, go ahead.

17

18 **MR. STRELCHECK:** A question for Matt. With Alternative 1, that
19 is status quo, and those are the existing catch limits that are
20 in place, or is that based on the most recent assessment and
21 what we would project if we hadn't changed to FES?

22

23 **DR. FREEMAN:** You're referring to what's in the table?

24

25 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Correct.

26

27 **DR. FREEMAN:** To answer your question, that is what is currently
28 on the books right now, in that first slide, where it says
29 Alternative 1 and has the two asterisks.

30

31 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right, and so the reason I raise this is
32 that there was comments about the commercial sector being
33 penalized, but we really don't have a comparable reference to
34 compare Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 to relative to the kind of what
35 would have been produced in CHTS units and what would have been
36 essentially the commercial ACL based on that, and is that a fair
37 statement?

38

39 **DR. FREEMAN:** Just a moment. I'm so sorry, but could I get you
40 to repeat your question, and I will probably get some assistance
41 from other staff on that.

42

43 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I guess, more direct, do we have, based on the
44 latest stock assessment, an estimate of what the catch limits
45 would be, using the old MRIP-CHTS units? The way it looks is,
46 if you look at Alternative 1, 3.16 million pounds, and now, all
47 of a sudden, the commercial fishery would be taking a cut of
48 more than a half-million pounds, based on the preferred

1 alternative recommended by Mr. Dyskow. That's true relative to
2 status quo, but it's also, I think, mixing apples and oranges
3 with regard to taking into account new scientific information.
4 I don't want to belabor this, but I --

5
6 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Andy, I will try. I think the inverse
7 comparison is possible, and so, if you look at Table 2.1.1. the
8 column where the total ACL is the 5.26 million pounds, and you
9 were to compare that ACL to the 4.2 million pounds, you can see
10 the percentage -- On a percentage basis, the cut in the total
11 ACL, and I don't think the opposite comparison was made, but it
12 should give you the same sort of general trend.

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Okay. Then, in response to Leann's comments, I
15 certainly appreciate Leann's comments, and I view it a little
16 bit differently, in that there was statements about the
17 recreational sector being unaccountable, and certainly they have
18 different data collection programs to manage the recreational
19 sector, and we have set catch limits and accountability measures
20 for the recreational sector over time, based on the data
21 programs that we had in place, and certainly new scientific
22 information has become available that has, obviously, changed
23 that picture.

24
25 I would argue that, if we knew back when the allocations were
26 set, and we were able to -- If we knew what we know now, that,
27 obviously, yield levels would be different, and we potentially
28 would have considered different allocations, and the argument,
29 obviously, then becomes, well, what allocation is appropriate,
30 and that's why this is such a difficult decision for the
31 council.

32
33 I think that we just need to keep that in perspective, that we
34 do have scientific information that's changing over time, and
35 we're learning new information to help improve the management
36 process, but, ultimately, it does ultimately have to change our
37 decisions, in terms of how we manage going forward.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Andy. Leann, I see your
40 hand again.

41
42 **MS. BOSARGE:** So Andy touched on something that I have asked
43 for, and I haven't gotten yet, and I don't know if it's able to
44 be gotten or not, but it will quantify what I am trying to say.
45 If we can go back in time and say this is what recreational
46 landings would have been, then we can go into the stock
47 assessment and say, all right, what would quotas have been back
48 then, because that's what you have to look at.

1
2 Those quotas, across-the-board, would have been higher, right,
3 and it tells you what the stock would look like and what yield
4 did the commercial fishery miss out on, and does that make
5 sense? There was a bigger stock out there, and both rec and
6 commercial should have been catching more fish for the last
7 forty years.

8
9 Commercial was hamstrung by their data and their management
10 program, which means it's a successful program, and I will grant
11 you that, but it means they couldn't access that bigger
12 population, and quantify what we missed out on, because that's
13 your de facto reallocation that's been happening for the last
14 forty years.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Any other questions
17 or comments? I don't see any other hands at this time, and so
18 can we get the motion back up on the board, please? Okay. Let'
19 go ahead and take a vote on this. **Right now, the motion is, in**
20 **Action 1, to make Alternative 3 the preferred. Is there any**
21 **opposition to this motion?**

22
23 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.

24
25 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.

26
27 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.

28
29 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Four opposed. Let's just do a roll call vote,
32 just in case. Sorry, Carrie.

33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** No problem. Mr. Diaz.

35
36 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.

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

39
40 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.

41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas.

43
44 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes.

45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Stunz.

47
48 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** General Spraggins.
3
4 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes.
5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Shipp.
7
8 **DR. SHIPP:** Yes.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs.
11
12 **MS. BOGGS:** No.
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Bosarge.
15
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** No.
17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Williamson.
19
20 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Yes.
21
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Schieble.
23
24 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** No.
25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dyskow.
27
28 **MR. DYSKOW:** Yes.
29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Strelcheck.
31
32 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Abstain.
33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Riechers.
35
36 **MR. RIECHERS:** Yes.
37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.
39
40 **MR. SANCHEZ:** No.
41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Swindell.
43
44 **MR. SWINDELL:** No.
45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** The motion carried nine to five
47 with three abstentions.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks. All right. So there is one
2 other action in this document. Dale, I see your hand is up.
3
4 **MR. DIAZ:** I will make a motion that, in Action 2, we make
5 **Alternative 3 the preferred.**
6
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Let's go ahead and get that on the
8 board. Once that's up, is there a second for this motion?
9
10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I will second it.
11
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Seconded by Andy. I'm just going
13 to give staff a minute here. This keeps the current buffer for
14 commercial and uses the ACL/ACT control rule for recreational,
15 and so it ends up being 5 percent and 9 percent buffer. Dale,
16 did you want to explain your motion a little bit?
17
18 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes, and I think you basically summed it up with what
19 you just said, and so we do use our ACL/ACT control rule for the
20 recreational side, and the 5 percent buffer would be there to
21 account for the multiuse provision in the commercial IFQ
22 program, to account for some fish that could be landed there,
23 and so that's my rationale for picking that over the other
24 options. Thank you.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dale. Any other discussion
27 on this motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to this**
28 **motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Okay. So I think, at
29 this time, if the committee is interested in it, it might be
30 appropriate to consider a motion to recommend the council hold
31 public hearings on this, and it would be in a virtual form,
32 based on Dr. Freeman's presentation, and so is there any
33 willingness for the committee to move forward with that? If so,
34 we will need a motion.
35
36 **MR. RIECHERS:** Martha, I will try.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin.
39
40 **MR. RIECHERS:** I would move that we direct council staff to take
41 the document out for -- Well, it would not be to take the
42 document out, but to take Amendment 53 to public hearings.
43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Is there a second for this motion?
45
46 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** Second.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Troy. While we're getting that motion

1 up on the board -- It's to take Amendment 53 to public hearings.
2 Great. Any other discussion or questions on this? It sounds
3 like this could be done before the April meeting, based on
4 previous comments. Leann.

5
6 **MS. BOSARGE:** So our April meeting is a hybrid meeting, right,
7 and it's in-person or via webinar, as you please, and this is a
8 document that is going to change allocation for the commercial
9 sector, which is going to affect the livelihoods of many men,
10 possibly, and women. Are you planning to do this only via
11 webinar, or do they get the same benefit that the council gets,
12 via a hybrid option?

13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Right now, our goal is to attempt a
15 hybrid meeting in April, Ms. Bosarge, but we really don't know.
16 We need to send a survey out again to council members and talk
17 to staff about how practical that is, as vaccines are rolled out
18 and the pandemic is evolving and some of the variants, and we'll
19 probably do that after this meeting, shortly after this meeting,
20 and so, that being said, that is our goal, and that may change,
21 and we'll let the council know that, as soon as practicable,
22 but, right now, based on the current circumstances, these would
23 be virtual meetings, and I think we would do at least two
24 virtual meetings, different days, in the evening, or maybe one
25 during the day, and I'm not sure, and I need to talk to staff,
26 but at least hold two virtual meetings.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Carrie. Go ahead, Leann.

29
30 **MS. BOSARGE:** I just want to raise some reservations here. If
31 you look at public testimony in our in-person meetings in the
32 past, versus public testimony that we have had since going to
33 webinar, which that's not a reflection on staff, and they've
34 done their job, but it's just the nature of the beast with it
35 being virtual, but it is significantly reduced, the testimony
36 and public involvement, in a webinar meeting. I just want to
37 bring that up, for something as important as this, and rushing
38 along and going to public meetings before we can hold them in
39 person.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Dr. Simmons.

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The other
44 thing we could consider is a mail-out, a federal mail-out, and
45 we've done those in the past, and I don't know if we've actually
46 received more virtual comments from that, and I think we
47 probably have received more written comments after we've
48 conducted one of those, and I think that would be a big push,

1 for us to try to get that done before the April council meeting,
2 but that is certainly something we could consider, if the
3 council would like us to do that. Thank you.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I will weigh-in on that. I guess my only
6 concern with that would be that I think we would be reaching out
7 -- We would be getting great coverage on commercial and
8 federally-permitted charter/for-hire, but not private rec, since
9 they don't have federal permits, and so I guess that's my only
10 issue with that, and my only hang-up. Leann, is your hand still
11 up?

12
13 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, ma'am. I don't think that we should punish
14 for-hire and commercial fishermen for having a federal permit.
15 They have to have an additional permit over and above what other
16 sectors have to have in order to fish out there in federal
17 waters, because we have to have a state-water permit and a
18 federal-water permit.

19
20 In the recreational world, a state permit will get you access to
21 whatever you want, and so I'm not going to punish those two
22 groups for having that federal permit. They abide by it, and I
23 think we should, at a minimum, have a mail-out. It affects
24 their livelihood, and not their recreation, and we should at
25 least mail it out, if we're not going to go to in-person
26 meetings. If we're not going to wait until we can go to in-
27 person meetings, then we at least need a mail-out.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Emily, I see your hand is up.

30
31 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay, and so one of the things that I wanted to
32 add, to sort of just discuss this idea of a mail-out, and maybe
33 concerns that it would bias the sample that we get responses
34 from, potentially we could rely on the states, which do have
35 really good rapport with their recreational anglers, to help us
36 push out information through those channels.

37
38 I am sort of thinking about some of the states like Alabama,
39 Mississippi, and Florida that do have some sort of angler
40 registry, where they can contact their anglers, and so, if the
41 council wishes, we can try and push notification through all of
42 those things, and we can also work with the app developer of
43 Fish Rules, which is where a lot of recreational anglers get
44 their information, and we can send a push notification through
45 that app, in order to sort of level that playing field, so that
46 we weren't just pursuing permit-holding anglers.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Emily. Those are some good ideas. I

1 can at least tell you, with Florida, I think doing a mail-out of
2 all anglers, or all state reef fish anglers, is going to be off
3 the table for sure, and we have emails for some of those folks,
4 but it's not a requirement to provide your email when you sign
5 up for a license, but we can explore that issue, and I like the
6 Fish Rules idea too, and I think that's pretty cool. Leann, is
7 your hand up again?
8

9 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, ma'am.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. All right. I don't see anybody else,
12 and so let's go ahead and vote on this motion. **Is there any**
13 **opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.**
14 Dr. Freeman, is there anything else we need to cover on this
15 amendment in committee?
16

17 **DR. FREEMAN:** I don't believe so. I think you all have covered
18 everything. Thank you for checking.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Good deal. All right. It looks like
21 we've got twenty-five minutes left, and do we dare start
22 yellowtail? I think we could probably at least get through some
23 of it.
24

25 **DR. FRAZER:** Martha, let's go ahead and -- There's a lot of
26 presentation material, but I think it's informational, and I
27 think we can power through.
28

29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. That sounds great. Okay. Let's
30 jump to yellowtail snapper. We can just flash our action guide
31 up there real quick, just so we know what's ahead of us on this
32 one. I don't know who would like to present this.
33

34 **REVIEW OF SEDAR 64: SOUTHEASTERN U.S. YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER**
35

36 **MR. RINDONE:** I will go through this. Dr. Powers will briefly
37 summarize the results from SEDAR 64, and specifically the
38 projections that were reviewed by the joint SSCs from the Gulf
39 and South Atlantic Councils on October 30, and the yield
40 projection -- Just as a note, the yield projections and catch
41 recommendations from SEDAR 64 used MRIP-FES data. Then Emily
42 will summarize the council's Something's Fishy tool, and the
43 stock assessment executive summary and the one-page hot sheet
44 are provided as background for you guys.
45

46 You guys should consider the information presented and consider
47 directing staff to develop a joint framework action with the
48 South Atlantic Council to look at modifying the catch levels.

1 Madam Chair.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you. I guess, with that,
4 we'll go to Dr. Powers.

5

6

SSC RECOMMENDATIONS

7

8 **DR. POWERS:** Thank you. If you can bring up the presentation, I
9 will try to go through it quickly. This is a reminder that the
10 -- It was a joint -- It's managed jointly with the South
11 Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils, and the
12 SSCs jointly reviewed this, and this is all -- The assessment
13 itself went through a complete SEDAR review, including CIE
14 reviewers through this as well.

15

16 A quick reminder of what the catches are, have been, over the
17 last thirty years or so, and commercial, headboat, and MRIP, and
18 it's more -- Compared to amberjack, it's much more of a mix
19 relative to commercial and recreational.

20

21 Discards, discards are almost entirely recreational, and we do
22 have estimates of those, and these are in thousands of fish, and
23 so you can see the magnitude is fairly large. This is the basic
24 assessment results. On the left-hand side is the spawning stock
25 biomass, and you can see the general indication there is a
26 fairly continuous increase in biomass over the last twenty years
27 or so, and it's above the SSB at 30 percent SPR, which would be
28 the MSY level.

29

30 Conversely, the fishing mortality rate on the right is below the
31 OY level, and it is operating -- Excuse me. It's below the
32 fishing mortality rate threshold, and it is operating -- It
33 fluctuates being around the OY level, which is at 40 percent
34 SPR.

35

36 Recruitment has, over the last thirty years or so, has bounced
37 around, and there isn't a lot of trend in this, which is good,
38 and it's basically saying, essentially, that there is
39 variability in the recruitment and that recent levels may be
40 lower than the previous four years, but very close to the
41 average over a thirty-year period, and so this would be
42 considered a normal fluctuation.

43

44 Again, with the table that comes directly out of the executive
45 summary that is in your report, and the key points are is the
46 stock overfished, and no, and is it overfishing, no, and so
47 that's the basis of this.

48

1 The two SSCs had to address the actual estimation of the
2 overfishing level, or agree to the overfishing level, and the
3 ABC, and there were several things that came up in this context
4 which the SSCs wanted to consider, and one of them is,
5 generally, the uncertainty in the assessment probably doesn't
6 account for the overall uncertainty, what really is and isn't
7 known, and that affects how one picks the P* values, the buffer,
8 essentially, that is chosen.

9
10 There's a couple of issues that the SSCs noted in the joint
11 report, and there has been changes in the estimated magnitude of
12 the stock biomass with this assessment compared to previous, and
13 this change was largely due to the variability in catch weights
14 at age across fleets. Also, there is some uncertainty in terms
15 of units of stock and mixing rates in particular sub-units, and
16 this particular fishery is largely in Florida, and largely in
17 south Florida, and so, when we're talking about mixing between
18 other areas of Florida, there are some uncertainties there that
19 aren't necessarily captured well within the particular
20 assessment.

21
22 Then the other thing is the uncertainty in projected
23 recruitment, which affects all assessments, but this one in
24 particular, and the committees wanted to express their concern
25 with the recruitment and the projected recruitments as we go
26 forward in time.

27
28 For those reasons, the SSCs recommended the analysts to redo
29 some of the projections for these meetings, and based on the
30 average landings for 2017 and 2019, and, when we say based on
31 the average landings, this is the interim period between when
32 the data from the assessment are completed and the gap years
33 before you are determining the OFL and the ABC.

34
35 For those reasons, the SSC recommended a P* value of 37.5
36 percent to produce the ABC for 2021 through 2025, and they also
37 recommended that the council consider adjusting the ACL, or ACT,
38 for management uncertainty, on the order of using the F 75
39 percent of the F 30 percent SPR.

40
41 Now, that gets translated in the next slide, and these are
42 actual just those projections, and let me just skip those.
43 These are the projections that lead to the next slide, which is
44 the table that gives the -- There was a newer version that came
45 out, but the table -- There is a table that was in the report
46 that just gives the numbers associated with that, with these
47 projections, which is the OFL and the ABC.

48

1 **MR. RINDONE:** Joe, we're digging it out.

2
3 **DR. POWERS:** Okay. It's taken directly out of the joint SSCs
4 report, and so, if you can find that, that would be the
5 equivalent. It's the last slide. There we go. This is the
6 basic table, and the OFL is in the left-hand column, and the
7 ABC, and then other metrics that were tested and provide
8 background information for the council. As a quick result,
9 that's all I have then.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dr. Powers. I guess, if
12 there aren't any questions for Dr. Powers, let's move into
13 Something's Fishy.

14
15 **SOMETHING'S FISHY FOR YELLOWTAIL**

16
17 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. While Bernie starts pulling that up, I
18 will just get started, in the interest of time. So we conducted
19 a Something's Fishy tool for yellowtail snapper back in January
20 of 2019, and we -- This was one of the instances where the
21 states echoed our call for responses, and so we did receive more
22 responses than we typically do. We did generate a report and
23 presented it to the data workshop on September 11, 2019.

24
25 We had 363 respondents to this tool, and, again, they self-
26 identified and were not limited to a singular response, and so
27 we had a greater number of responses to this than actual people
28 that responded, and I'm sorry for the colors here. They're not
29 coming through very well, but, again, most of our responses were
30 received from private anglers.

31
32 A vast number of the responses that we got were in the southern
33 Gulf, the southern tip of Florida, and we also got a number of
34 responses from the South Atlantic, and this map is just a heat
35 map of our Gulf-specific responses that we got, and I don't
36 think this is a huge surprise.

37
38 Again, we analyzed responses both for the overall comment
39 sentiment, and then, next, you'll see the abundance-related
40 comment sentiment. Based on the overall response sentiment,
41 both manual and automated analysis showed that a majority of
42 respondents supported a positive sentiment.

43
44 Manual analysis did show a greater proportion of neutral
45 comments, and the automated analysis did show a greater
46 proportion of negative comments. Then we did drop some comments
47 for both analyses, and you'll see there were a number of
48 comments that were dropped through the automated analysis, and

1 that happens when none of the words in the comments have a
2 positive or a negative sentiment, and the manual analysis
3 dropped comments that were not at all related to yellowtail.

4
5 Next, we looked at comments that were specifically related to
6 abundance. In the manual analysis, the proportion of neutral
7 comments was reduced, and the proportion of positive comments
8 was increased, when we were looking at just abundance-related
9 comments, and the results of the manual and automated analysis
10 are more similar for abundance-related comments than they were
11 for overall response sentiment, and so you can see here that
12 they kind of mirror each other in proportion, where they didn't
13 when we were looking at overall comment sentiment.

14
15 Next, we compared response sentiment by sector. As we noted,
16 most of our responses were private, and you can see here that
17 the private anglers actually had a greater proportion of
18 negative comments to report on yellowtail, and, again, this was
19 based on the overall comment sentiment and not just the
20 abundance-related comments.

21
22 Next, we broke down sentiment by location, and this is through
23 manual analysis, and you can see sort of the area where we got
24 most of our comments. The proportion of comments is actually
25 more positive the farther you go up the Florida coast, and sort
26 of more varied as you get closer down to the Keys.

27
28 This was automated sentiment analysis based on location, and you
29 will see there is, overall, a greater trend of negative comments
30 through that automated location analysis, but, again, sort of
31 the same trend, where the number of positive comments increases
32 as you get further up the Florida coast.

33
34 This was a little bit more of a unique analysis than usual,
35 because yellowtail is focused a lot in the southern tip of
36 Florida, and so we did a little bit of the spatial analysis for
37 the comments that we did receive from those fishing on the east
38 coast, and the squares are a little bit different, and I'm sorry
39 that this is a little bit more rudimentary, but the squares that
40 have stars in them reflect, on the left, the areas with the
41 largest number of responses, and this is by manual analysis.
42 Then we also did this by automated analysis.

43
44 Moving on, the automated analysis, again, got to tease out the
45 most frequently used words that contributed to our sentiment,
46 and you could interpret this information to think that the most
47 frequently used positive words indicated that anglers that had
48 positive perceptions of the stock are actually seeing more fish

1 and larger fish.

2
3 Again, we teased out some of the themes that we found through
4 manual analysis, and we heard that most people don't know how to
5 target them, that there is no change in numbers and size, that
6 many anglers have never caught small yellowtail in Alabama, and
7 only large ones, and so the idea here is that, as they get more
8 northern in the Gulf, they are bigger.

9
10 Some anglers recognize that they didn't see any small ones at
11 all, and some said that the small ones were based mostly on the
12 rigs, and some noticed a trend that the stock was found further
13 offshore than usual and that there were lots of small fish and
14 that the large ones were deep. We also heard that, over time,
15 they seem to be expanding their range into the northern Gulf,
16 and we also heard that there were not as many as there used to
17 be and that predators seem to be a problem for the discards in
18 this fishery.

19
20 We also heard that the fishery seems to be flourishing, and,
21 again, to the contrary, we heard that there was a decline in the
22 population in the past years. Next, we heard that they were
23 abundant, but small, that they were either huge or tiny and not
24 much in between, and we heard that anglers had seen a hybrid
25 that looked like a lane mixed with a yellowtail snapper.

26
27 We heard that there's a decrease in the fishery in the upper
28 Keys since Irma, and we also heard that fishing is better since
29 Irma, and we heard that they are abundant, but the size is
30 decreasing, and there are fewer large fish. We also heard that
31 they seem to be found deeply, and you have to go further out for
32 them than you used to. That concludes my report.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Emily. Any questions for
35 Emily? I am not seeing any hands. Let me just see if there's
36 anything else that we need to look at. There are a number of
37 background documents here, but folks can look at those on their
38 own. Let's see. It's 11:53, and we're supposed to go until
39 12:00, and so the South Atlantic, I believe, has already -- I
40 don't know if Chris is still on the line, but I think they've
41 already asked to start a joint amendment with us to work on the
42 ACLs for yellowtail snapper. I assume that would also be --
43 Kevin, I see your hand is up. Thank you.

44
45 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Emily, while you're still
46 there, I'm just curious. Looking at the last slide of your
47 presentation, and I am very supportive of what you all have done
48 in trying to engage the public in trying to utilize their

1 information and knowledge, and I am very supportive of that,
2 but, looking at that last slide, I'm just wondering if -- You
3 put a lot of effort, apparently, into doing these, and you've
4 done several of these now for various species, and, in trying to
5 relate all of this stuff back to management, back to the actual
6 stock, have you given any thought as to how all of the data that
7 you have compiled, based on this outreach and the angler
8 contacts and information, to kind of reconcile with the science,
9 maybe in a more quantitative manner, ideally, or qualitative
10 manner, less than ideal?

11
12 When you look at this slide, in trying to relate that to the
13 assessment, you've got folks that are fairly -- It's pretty much
14 all over the board. You will have one person say one thing,
15 that it's great, the best he's ever seen, or she's ever seen,
16 and the next person will say it's terrible, the worst they've
17 ever seen, but how does that then relate back to our
18 assessments?

19
20 Because, the way I look at it, I guess if you were to lump these
21 into three groups of folks, based on the analysis of the
22 responses, if you get the majority of your comments that this
23 fishery is full stop the best it's ever been, and you have to
24 throw back so many fish above and beyond what your limit is, and
25 fish are getting bigger, what have you, over a large part of its
26 range, and that's the majority of the comments, I think that
27 should kind of relate back to the assessment a little bit, in
28 some regards, whereas, if you have the middle group, they're
29 kind of like this situation that says, you know, all in all,
30 you've got some places that might be good, and some places that
31 may not be good, and some fishermen are catching a lot of fish,
32 and some fishermen are not catching a lot of fish, and that may
33 be tied back to their avidity, and that's one of the comments,
34 is most people don't know how to target them, and so there might
35 be some correlation there to those that aren't catching a lot.

36
37 Anyway, that could be the middle group, and, again, it's trying
38 to just relate this information back to the assessment, to help
39 us, and then you have another situation where every comment you
40 get is just I can't catch a fish, all the fish are small, I'm
41 not meeting my limit, it's terrible, and, I mean, that,
42 obviously, should correlate back to the assessment in a negative
43 manner. I mean, have you given much thought to how this might
44 go into the next level, if at all?

45
46 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Kevin, to jump in and answer, hopefully, your
47 question a little bit, I think it's important to remember that
48 this report is actually generated and provided to the assessment

1 scientists before the assessment is conducted, and so I guess I
2 hadn't considered changing the report afterwards, to sort of
3 differently inform the managers and align it with what the
4 assessment says in any way, or compare it to what the assessment
5 says, but, if that's what you're asking for, I think we can sort
6 of look into that.

7
8 It is also, I guess, probably relevant for you to know that,
9 when we deliver this to the analysts ahead of the stock
10 assessment, we give it to them with the full text comments as
11 well, with all of the personal information redacted, and I do
12 know that those assessment scientists have done some deeper
13 digging into this.

14
15 If they see something, while they're performing the assessment
16 in a certain area, they will sort all of those comments by area
17 and sort of look back and see if they can see what's going on
18 specifically, and so they do have the raw data that they are
19 able to sort of manipulate and get wisdom from on their own, and
20 I hope that sort of helps respond there.

21
22 **MR. ANSON:** It helps. I'm just, again, trying to maximize the
23 value of the information that is provided, again, to -- These
24 folks are taking time, and, granted, it directly affects their
25 activities, whether they be commercial or recreational
26 fishermen, but I'm just trying to maximize the value of the
27 information they do provide, is all, and so thank you.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin, and thanks, Emily.
30 Leann, I see your hand is up. I'm sorry. John Froeschke and
31 then Leann,

32
33 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Real quick, just to follow-up on Kevin's point,
34 I think it's an interesting one, and we've talked a lot about it
35 at the office, and a few things that we've done is we've really
36 standardized the way that we collect and store the data, and
37 that's why they look the same, but that also allows us the
38 opportunity to do meta-analysis and things, both across species
39 and time, as we get these more mature and do them for more
40 stocks.

41
42 The other part of this is that we have learned that, by getting
43 the states to help us amplify the number of responses, it
44 dramatically increases our sample size, and so it allows us to
45 dive a little deeper into regional trends and by sector and
46 things, and that really can be quite useful, and so I think
47 we'll continue to push on that, but I'm optimistic that there is
48 a lot of information to learn from this and that we could use

1 this either as a leading indicator, perhaps, or, in cases where
2 you see regional differences and perceptions, perhaps to inform
3 things like hyperstability, where some regions may say it's
4 quite good and others are depressed, or it could be something
5 else. There will always be limitations, but I do think there
6 could be a lot of information.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, John. All right. We're going to go to
9 Leann, and then I think we will just call it a day for
10 yellowtail, because I know we start right up at 1:00. Leann.

11
12 **MS. BOSARGE:** I think maybe the order of the slides maybe is
13 kind of getting at what Kevin was saying, and so, Kevin, I
14 think, if we had been presented this slide first, which is
15 essentially public testimony over a period of time across the
16 Gulf, right, and some anglers in some areas are seeing more, and
17 some anglers are seeing less, and some are seeing bigger and
18 some are smaller.

19
20 Then you saw the slides where Emily actually tries to capture
21 all of that geographic difference and visualize it in a picture
22 -- You know, illustrate it in a picture format, where you can
23 digest it almost all at one time.

24
25 Okay, I see that we have some positive trends over here in the
26 middle of the Peninsula, and it's a little more negative as you
27 get further south, and these are the trends we're seeing, and I
28 think that, thus far, she's doing a great job of doing that.

29
30 I think the latest thing that she has done for us, where she
31 busts out the positive, neutral, negative by sector, by
32 component, where she gives us commercial sentiment in the bar
33 graph of for-hire and recreational, I think that's extremely
34 informative too, because, if you lean more towards simply
35 looking at the total number of positives in the overall survey,
36 versus total numbers of negatives, and just give that to the
37 scientists, I think that's a lot less informative.

38
39 It's intriguing, to me, when you see which fleet is seeing what
40 and where across the Gulf that fleet is seeing that, and I think
41 that's much more informative, although I grant you it's somewhat
42 qualitative, but still I think informative and helpful.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Okay. I think that
45 was a good discussion about this, and so thanks, everybody. All
46 right. So we will call it a day on Reef Fish. If we want to do
47 anything with the yellowtail information, we can pick it up at
48 Full Council, and, the items that we did not get to today, we'll

1 just have to schedule for another meeting, and so, Mr. Chair, I
2 will pass it back to you.

3

4 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on January 27, 2021.)

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